

Ulster Unionist Party

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<http://www.uup.org/newsrooms/latest-news/general/former-soldiers-of-udr-and-rir-are-not-receiving-full-benefits.php>

Former soldiers of UDR and RIR are not receiving full benefits



Ulster Unionist Assembly member for Fermanagh & South Tyrone and former member of Ulster Defence Regiment and Royal Irish Regiment, Tom Elliott MLA has said that welfare services promised to former soldiers is not being delivered and soldiers are not receiving the opportunities that they were assured they would.

Tom said: "One of the key elements of the disbandment programme is the after care system that will be available to some 60,000 men and women who served in the UDR and Royal Irish, as well as their families who for many years felt as if their contribution and sacrifices were forgotten.

"Sadly, I have discovered that some ex members are experiencing difficulties in relation to war pensions entitlement and being told that it could take up to 1 year to sort out. I have just discovered another problem in that locally based physiotherapy services for the West of the province will not be in place for many months and ex members will have to either travel to Belfast for treatment or do without it. Medical sources indicate that to travel more than 40 miles for this treatment could be counter-productive for the patient. I have huge concerns at the undue delay in this matter and the discrimination of former soldiers from the west of the province.

"In December last year I welcomed the announcement that a new welfare service worth £2m a year to help former soldiers deal with the legacy of the Troubles. However it appears that many soldiers are not receiving the benefits that was promised to them when government decided they no longer required them and disbanded the Home Service Royal Irish Regiment.

"This service launched last year combines existing welfare provision with the offer of medical and vocational programmes to meet the needs of former UDR and Royal Irish personnel as they seek to adjust to civilian life."