



Office for  
Veterans' Affairs

# Afghanistan Veterans Fund

## STRAND 2

**Increasing Supportive Comradeship,  
Connectedness & Engagement  
to Improve Wellbeing,  
Resilience & Good Mental Health**

# Afghanistan Veterans Fund

## PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

### STRAND 2

#### Increasing supportive comradeship, connectiveness and engagement to improve wellbeing, resilience and good mental health

You will need to read this guidance in conjunction with the overview guidance. There are four Strands. You can only apply for one Strand.

Under this programme, the Office for Veterans Affairs has asked the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) to run programmes that will award grants to improve wellbeing, resilience and promote good mental health, responding to increased needs in veterans who have served in Afghanistan and other recent conflicts and the wider veterans community.

This guidance is specifically for organisations considering an application under Strand 2

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#### Strand 2 Increasing supportive comradeship, connectiveness and engagement to improve wellbeing, resilience and good mental health

##### STRAND 2

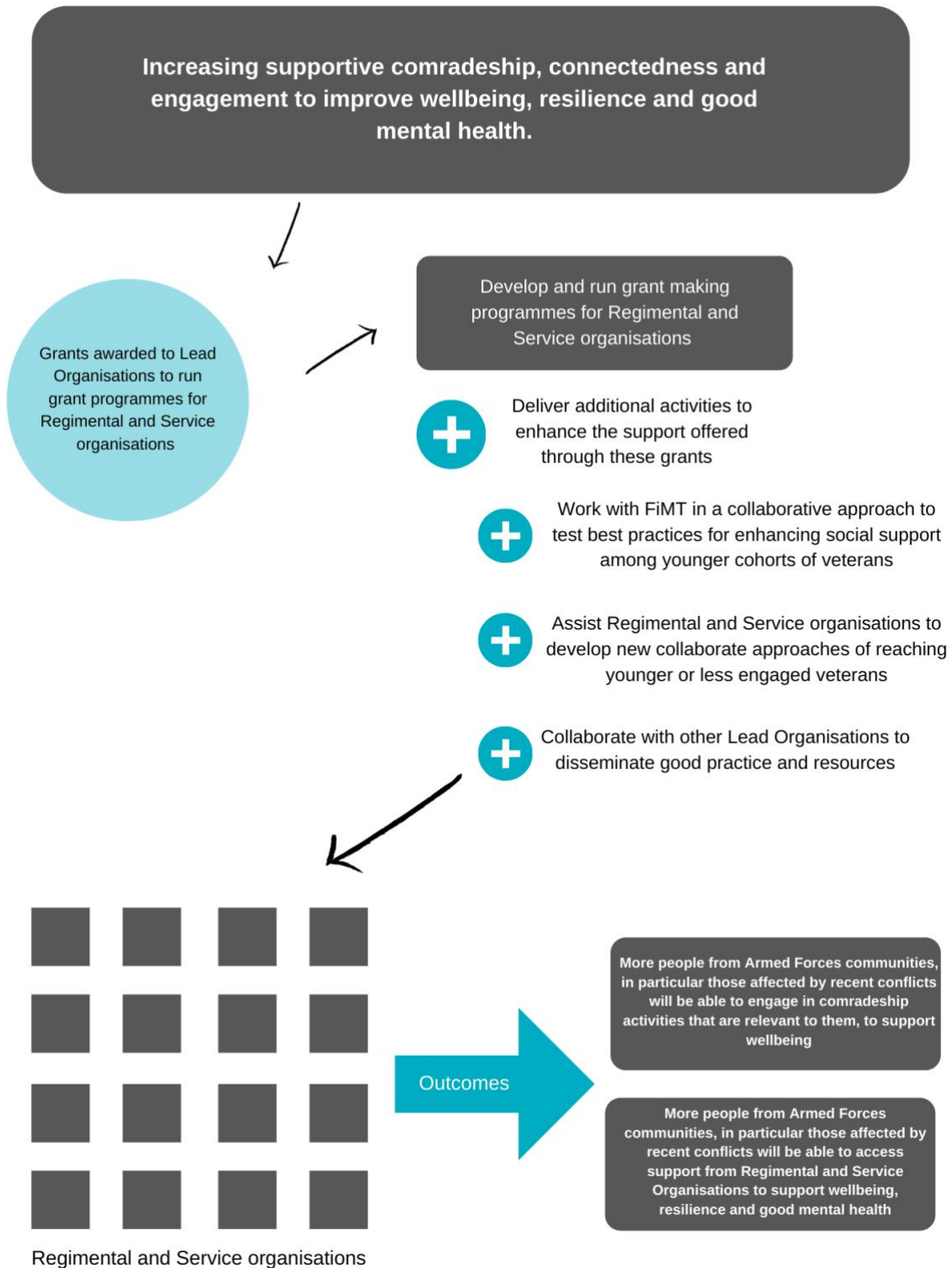
Increasing supportive comradeship, connectedness and engagement to improve wellbeing, resilience and good mental health.

This Strand will award grants to Armed Forces charities that can act as a Lead Organisation which can run and deliver grant programmes making small grants to Regimental and Service Associations, to enable them to develop new approaches to deliver supportive comradeship, connectiveness and engagement activities with veterans.

Applicants must have extensive experience in managing UK-wide grant making programmes, and must have detailed knowledge of, and links to the Army, RAF or Navy, or all three.

Applicants should show how they could work with Regimental and Service Associations to measure impact, share best practices and support evaluation. Grant-making programmes must take into account the need to serve beneficiaries across the UK.

The amount of grant which might be awarded will reflect the potential number of Regimental and Service Associations that will be able to benefit from the proposed grant scheme. Grants of up to £300K are available. Exceptionally, larger grants may also be awarded; particularly if a proposed grant scheme would cover a large amount of Regimental and Service Associations.



Specifically, this Strand will make a small number of grants to experienced grant-making organisations with detailed knowledge of Regimental and Service Associations. These grants will support capability building amongst Regimental and Service Associations so that they are better equipped to engage and support their members, drawing on best-practice guidance and evidence of where this works, including how to best utilise social media and digital means of engagement. Grant funding programmes delivered by Lead Organisations could have a focus on engaging with younger veterans who are less engaged with Regimental and Service organisations.

This onwards distribution of funding will be done by the Lead Organisation under an externally delegated grant scheme.

The Lead Organisation will need to evidence their ability to run an efficient and effective grant programme. For example, they will need to:

- Describe their grant making operations and processes.
- Provide information about how they collect, manage, and use grant data.
- Provide detail of risk and fraud controls for grant making.
- Make available, if required, copies of grant documentation such as offer letters, terms and conditions, grant reports etc.
- Nominate a senior member of their executive to act as 'accountable officer' for the handling of the funds.
- Give information on how, if successful, they would raise awareness of the funding opportunity to eligible organisations.
- Give information on how they will manage grant payments.

As part of the grant agreement with the Trust, Lead Organisations will be required to track agreed impact metrics, share best practices and support evaluation, and have similar agreements with associations/organisations to do likewise.

In the grant programme that will be run by the Lead Organisation, funding could be used by Regimental and Service Associations to augment their existing activities, to scale up the support on offer for example, or enable new activity to be undertaken to facilitate supportive comradeship in new ways. Activities could include identifying armed forces communities including those hard to reach; reaching out via social media and other means; support and social activities.

Grant awarded to Lead Organisation



Lead Organisation runs an open grants programme for Service Associations; ensuring that eligible organisations can access information about the scheme



Awards grants to Service Associations to enable them to increase the supportive comradeship, connectedness and engagement on offer for veterans from Afghanistan and other recent conflicts



Lead Organisation manages the grants that have been awarded to Service Associations



Lead Organisation reports on grant management, compliance with terms and conditions of grant and overall impact of the grants programme

As part of the delivery of your grant programme; you should also consider how you can deliver additional activities that will enhance the grants that you will offer; and support better outcomes for veterans who have served in Afghanistan, and other recent conflicts.

The Forces In Mind Trust (FiMT) has conducted research exploring engagement in Regimental and Service Associations among younger veterans; and has developed resources, including a social media toolkit which complements the overall aims of this programme in a significant way.

Potential applicants can contact Isabel Summers, Assistant Head of Policy at FiMT([isabel@fim-trust.org](mailto:isabel@fim-trust.org)) for more information about the research and available resources, if this would be of benefit.

It is anticipated that Lead Organisations would work collaboratively with FiMT, and with other Lead Organisations to share learning and good practice in building connectiveness and comradeship in veterans from Afghanistan and other recent conflicts, who tend to be younger.

Lead Organisations can consider making provision in their project budgets for development or co-ordinator posts that will work alongside the grant making programmes on offer to assist Regimental and Service organisations in adopting tools or other areas of practice to enable them to reach more veterans from Afghanistan and other recent conflicts.

Lead Organisations will be expected to work with FiMT to provide standardised data to measure the overall impact of the connectiveness and comradeship projects.

Potential applicants for Strand 2 should read the Delegated Grant Scheme Agreement (which is available on the Trust's website). You will have to confirm, as part of the application process that your Trustees have reviewed the Delegated Grant Scheme Agreement and would adopt this agreement in full were a grant to be awarded.

In your application, you will need to show how you intend to make decisions regarding which applications receive funding. You should tell us about your plans to form a committee of no less than three Trustees from your organisation. You can also include people from outside your organisation. You should tell us about the planned governance arrangements for this committee.

If you are awarded a grant, you will be responsible for ensuring that Terms and Conditions of grant are in place, and the grant can only be made after the grant recipient has accepted the terms and returned a signed copy. You will be responsible for monitoring and, if needed, enforcing the terms of grant among the Regimental and Service Organisations that you award grants to.

You will be responsible for monitoring the grants that you make under this programme, and this will include

- Taking actions required to ensure grant holders comply with their obligations to report on progress and achievements.
- Visiting a sample of grant holders in each year of the Grant Scheme (the size of that sample to be agreed in writing with the Trust).
- Recording the details of assets funded by grants as required from time to time by the Fund and supplying such details to the Trust on an annual basis; and
- Taking appropriate action to investigate any matter giving rise to a reasonable possibility that a breach of the terms and conditions of grant has occurred or is likely to occur.

If awarded a grant as a Lead Organisation, we would expect you to be able to launch your grant programme for Regimental and Service organisations before the end of June 2022.

**You need to show us how the grant making programme that you will plan and run meets the programme outcomes for the Strand 2**

Programme theme	Expected outcomes
<p>Increasing supportive comradeship, connectedness and engagement to improve wellbeing, resilience and good mental health</p>	<p><b>Outcome for Lead Organisation</b></p> <p>Regimental and Service Associations will be able to have greater reach to and engagement with potential members who were involved in from recent conflicts.</p> <p><b>Outcomes to be delivered through the grant making programme for Regimental and Service Associations, delivered by the Lead Organisation</b></p> <p>More people from Armed Forces communities, in particular those affected by recent conflicts will be able to engage in comradeship activities that are relevant to them, to support wellbeing, resilience and good mental health.</p> <p>More people from Armed Forces communities, in particular those affected by recent conflicts will be able to access support from Regimental and Service Organisations to support wellbeing, resilience and good mental health.</p>

We also need to be able to see that you have the skills and experience necessary to be able to carry out your planned grant making activities.

To the best of your knowledge, the activity that you plan to offer should not be currently offered to people from Armed Forces communities by other organisations. You can continue to work together with other organisations as part of your project. There is more information on working with others later in this guidance.

It is important that the projects we award funding to complement rather than duplicate other provision. You'll be asked in your application form how you will ensure this.

## **Who can apply**

To be eligible for this funding under Strand 2 your organisation must:

- Be a registered charity that specifically supports Armed Forces communities, that has been registered for at least three years at the time of your application.

Specifically supporting Armed Forces communities means that your charitable objectives clearly state that you support people from Armed Forces communities. We refer to these types of organisations as “Armed Forces charities” within this guidance.

- Have at least 5 years of experience in running and managing grant funding programmes.

In your application, you will need to tell us about the grant funding programme that you will run for Regimental and Service Associations. You should tell us about the type of grants your funding programme would offer.

The grant funding programme that you run can't make any of the following types of grants:

- Projects based around clinical services.
- Applications where there is no clear demand for the project from people from Armed Forces communities or
- Projects that don't have a clear focus on meeting the needs of their members from Afghanistan and other recent conflicts.
- Grants that only benefit one person.

## **A strong application would be able to show:**

- Why there would be demand from Regimental and Service Associations for the types of grants that you plan to award.

- The difference the grants you would make would have; and how these would increase the capacity of the Regimental and Service Associations to offer better support to their members from more recent conflicts.
- How you will ensure that the grants you award will be good value for money.
- How you will assess applications in a fair and equitable way.
- How many grants you think you will award, what the size of the grants will be and what you will expect the grants to be spent on.
- How you will monitor and manage the grants that you award.
- Any other support that you may offer to Regimental and Service Associations that complements the grants you will make.
- How you will measure the overall impact of your grant funding programme.
- How you will manage risks in the grants that you award, including safeguarding risks.
- What types of additional activities that you would deliver alongside the grants to enhance the overall impact of this programme.
- How you will work with FiMT and other organisations (such as other Lead Organisations) in a collaborative way.

## **What can funds be spent on?**

Under this Strand, grants will be made which reflect the likely number of Regimental and Service Associations that will benefit from your grant programme. Grants that you award should run for a year or less.

Within your application, you need to tell us about the size of the grants that you plan to award, and your costs of managing these grants. You can also include additional activities such as training or support for the Regimental and Service Associations where this would boost their capability to support younger veterans; but your plans on this should be proportionate and offer good value for money. The main focus of your activity should be the grant making programme that you plan to run.

In addition to your grant programme, your application might include some of the following costs:

- Staff time, including time-managing volunteers that may be involved in your project.
- Sessional staff or freelancers that you may need to run your project and activity.
- Purchasing items that provide practical support, or that can enable activities to take place.



- Purchasing items that you may need to provide support, such as additional telephones or laptops.
- Reasonable costs for storing and transporting items, including wear and tear on private vehicles.
- Reasonable overheads that reflect the cost to your organisation of delivering its services.

## What can't funds be spent on?

There are several things **we can't pay for**, either because they're not in the spirit of the Afghanistan Veterans' Fund, or because of relevant legislation or tax rules.

- Where funding is not benefiting veterans or other people from the Armed Forces community.
- Making grants or donations of money to individuals or families.
- Topping up existing grants and aid from a government department.
- Where money only benefits one person. By this we mean where your whole project would only benefit one person.
- Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding.
- Investments.
- Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity.
- Fundraising costs, including organising fundraising events and activities.
- Endowments (to provide a source of income).
- Projects, activities or services that the state has a legal obligation to provide.
- Retrospective funding for projects that have already started or taken place
- Excessive management or professional fees or contingency costs.

This is not an exhaustive list as we feel it's more useful to focus on what you're trying to achieve and how you're going about this, than to issue long lists of eligible and ineligible costs.

## Our assessment criteria: Strand 2

Our criteria are set out below. We will consider each application to see how well it meets these criteria and fund those that we believe will best achieve the programme aims.

<b>The difference that your project is making</b>	
What are we looking for?	How you would award and manage grants to build capability amongst Regimental and Service Associations to enable them to develop supportive comradeship, connectiveness and engagement activities so that they are better equipped to engage and support veterans and their families.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The types of grants you will make.</li> <li>• Why you are confident that your planned approach will be successful.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How your work will build capability within the sector to offer better support and reach to veterans from recent conflicts.</li> <li>• How you will measure the impact that your grants make.</li> </ul>
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<b>Delivery of your project</b>	
What are we looking for?	That you have the skills and experience to run your project.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That your organisation is well run and well managed.</li> <li>• That you'll be able to start your grant activity quickly.</li> <li>• That you can manage risks effectively.</li> <li>• That you will be able to monitor grants awarded and be accountable for the public funds that you are distributing.</li> <li>• How you will ensure that assessment and decision making is transparent.</li> </ul>

Please ensure that you read the full guidance for the Afghanistan Veterans' Fund.

If you are applying for a grant through Strand 2, please ensure that you use the correct application form in our grant application portal.

### **How to apply - the application form**

You need to apply through the [link that we'll provide to the online application forms](#). There are specific forms for each funding Strand.

If you don't have an account for our online application portal, then you will need to create one. On our system, you can save a draft application form to complete later or send a draft copy to colleagues. You can also access copies of the application that you've submitted at any time.

When you submit your application, you'll receive an e-mail confirmation.

### **If you don't receive this, then you have not applied.**

You will need to submit your application by midday on **17 January 2022**, and you'll receive a decision before the end of March 2022.

We cannot accept any late applications.

We highly recommend you plan to submit your application before the deadline to avoid the risk of missing the cut-off because of technological or other unexpected problems.

It's important that we can contact your organisation, particularly, of course, if you receive a grant. You will need to provide two contacts from your organisation on the

application. At least one of these should have an e-mail address that belongs to your organisation. At least one contact must hold the relevant authority (CEO or equivalent) to authorise any grant contract and bank account to be used should you be successful. The main contact must have an e-mail address that belongs to your organisation. If this is not provided, your application may be considered ineligible.

**Please think carefully about who these should be, as they will need to be able to sign acceptance of the grant and use of the bank account on the Offer Letter/ Terms and Conditions if your application was successful.**

We strongly recommend that you save an offline version of your application form.

You may also find it helpful to complete your application in a Word document and then cut and paste the answers into the online form. Please don't use any formatting, such as tables or numbered lists, in your Word document, as the online form may not accept this formatting and you might have trouble submitting the form.

**We suggest you save your form every 10-15 minutes whilst you are completing it, to avoid the risk of it "timing out".**

Do check that you have fully answered all the questions because, if not, we might not be able to consider your application.

You do not need to send any additional information. Any additional information received will not be considered.

Do not send your application by e-mail or post to the Covenant Fund Trust – only applications submitted via the online form can be considered.

## **Checks we may carry out on your organisation and accounts**

We may carry out several checks on the information you provide us. This is to make sure that the information is correct and there are no significant risks we can identify when awarding grants.

These may include checks:

- On whether financial information on your application form matches that held by your regulatory body (Companies House, Charity Commission etc.).
- That your governing documents (such as constitutions and memorandum and articles of association) are up to date, correct and properly signed.
- On your accounts that are accessible through regulatory bodies.
- On any identified concerns about a person named as a contact or who has a position within your organisation.
- That your organisational name and address on your bank statement are consistent with the details you've provided in any completed form or the information that's held elsewhere in the public domain.

- That your bank statement shows that your account is being managed in line with your own financial procedures and our programme requirements, and that the signatories are valid and well informed about the project.
- On your published accounts and on your website/social media activity that your organisation is undertaking the activities as described in your application.
- To ensure you are up to date on all reporting with any active grants you hold with the Trust.

We may ask you to send us additional information or answer specific questions about your organisation. If we ask you to do this, you'll need to send us this information within five working days.

## **Working with delivery partners**

If you are already working with other organisations who will receive any part of the grant, then you need to read our guidance below on delivery partners.

A delivery partner is an organisation which is either:

- Receiving part of the grant OR
- Their involvement in the project, through providing resources or some other means, is critical to the delivery of the project.

## **Role of the lead organisation**

The organisation that submits the application is the lead organisation. It will have legal responsibility for all funding we award and will be financially accountable for any funds that may be distributed by the lead organisation to delivery partners.

## **Delivery partnership agreements**

If we award you funding and you plan to work with one or more delivery partners, it will be a term and condition of your grant offer that you have a formal signed partnership agreement with them. If you're successful, the draft delivery partnership agreement must be approved by us and finalised prior to any funding being released. We may request changes to the draft agreement before it's finalised. You can find guidance on what a [delivery partnership agreement](#) should include on our website.

## **After you submit your application**

You will get an automated e-mail to confirm that your application has been submitted.

**If you have not received this e-mail, then your application was not submitted successfully. Please log back into the portal to submit it.**

The Trust will check your application to ensure that you've provided all the information we have requested. We may contact you during our assessment if there are any issues we are unclear about – please do not assume any contact or lack thereof is an indication of your likelihood of being successful or declined.

The Trust will review the information you provide in your application and, where relevant, data and information from the Charity Commission, Companies House or other regulators' websites relating to your constitution and recent audited accounts. We may also look at other publicly available sources such as your organisation's website and social media activity.

After submitting your application you must advise the Trust of any significant changes in your organisation, its governance or finances which might impact on our consideration of your application.

We will assess your application against the key criteria of the programme.

Final decisions will be made by the Afghanistan Veterans' Fund Programme Board, who will review the applications, using balancing criteria in addition to the key criteria. The balancing criteria include the relative strength and value for money of the project when viewed as part of a national portfolio of projects.

Funds are limited. Therefore, the Programme Board will use their discretion to choose which projects to fund, ensuring a good spread of funded projects and to differentiate between projects that are considered fundable.

Please note: they may also take the decision to part-fund proposals (this may involve awarding less money than was applied for).

After the Programme Board has met, we will send an e-mail to you using the primary contact e-mail address you provided in your application. This will tell you whether you've been awarded a grant.

Our terms and conditions of grant can be accessed on our website. If we offer you a grant, you will need to confirm that you will follow these terms and conditions of grant before we can release any of your grant to you. You must also make sure that the Trustees and senior staff within your organisation know that you are submitting this grant application.

If we plan to fund your project, you'll need to accept our grant offer and the terms & conditions of the grant **within four weeks of receiving the Offer Letter** or risk the offer lapsing.

We will e-mail you in the first instance to advise you that you have been successful. This e-mail will give you full instructions of what you need to do next in order to receive your official offer letter, how to accept the grant and what documents you need to provide. We may also invite you to a post-award webinar to provide you with further information and answer any questions you may have.

Once we have all the necessary documents back, we will pay the first instalment of your grant. If there are any discrepancies/queries within these documents, this will delay your payment, so please read the accompanying information we provide thoroughly. Grants will be paid in instalments, and the number and size of these will depend on the size and duration of the grant. A small proportion of the total amount awarded will be retained pending a satisfactory End of Grant report.

If you receive a grant, you will need to keep good records of how the funds were spent and how many people you helped and how. We will ask you to report on this later.

If we're not able to fund your project, we will write to you to tell you this.

If you have any questions relating to this programme, please look at the programme information that we have on our website.

Following this, if you still have queries and cannot find the answer in these guidance notes, please e-mail [info@covenantfund.org.uk](mailto:info@covenantfund.org.uk)