

 THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund

FORCE FOR CHANGE PROGRAMME



Programme Guidance



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Force for Change 2021-22

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) will award grants of up to £10,000 for local projects which support Armed Forces communities; particularly where they have been affected by Covid.

Why are we running this programme?

Through this programme, we fund projects which make a real difference to Armed Forces communities locally. We support projects that help isolated members of the Armed Forces community take part in activities that improve their general wellbeing or that help them to be more connected and engaged in their local area.

This year, we'll support ideas that need small amounts of funding to deliver nimble and focused local projects to Armed Forces communities. Or we'll make small grants to support services, projects and activities that are used by Armed Forces communities, but which are struggling as a result of the impact of the Covid pandemic.

We know the Covid pandemic has had a significant impact, and the three rounds of funding that we are running this year will support local Armed Forces communities as they address the needs that have arisen as a result of Covid.

We want to consider applications for projects that help address isolation and related needs within Armed Forces communities that are linked to the challenges that have arisen from the Covid pandemic. We welcome applications that will support veterans of all ages and their carers, and Forces families including Service children. We also want to support local projects that Armed Forces communities use and value, that may need some additional help as a direct result of Covid.

Here are some examples of the types of projects that we might prioritise.

- Projects that encourage veterans and Armed Forces families to be less isolated.
- Projects supporting children and young people from Armed Forces families who found lockdown challenging. This might include play projects, sports or arts projects and projects encouraging friendships and interaction with children and young people from local civilian communities.
- Projects supporting parents from Armed Forces families with pre-school aged or very young children.
- Projects that will have a positive impact on wellbeing for veterans or carers of veterans, or Armed Forces families.

- Projects that help local Armed Forces charities or CICs to keep delivering help to local Armed Forces communities, where Covid has made this more challenging.

This list is not exhaustive, and we'd expect to see some projects that meet the programme criteria that are not on this list - particularly where the idea for the project has come from Armed Forces communities.

Project ideas do not have to be new. The programme will welcome continuation or extensions of existing work where this provides a clear benefit.

We are seeking to fund projects that are targeted on meeting local needs quickly. **If we award you a grant, we expect you to begin your work within a month from signing your terms and conditions.**

Which organisations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible for this funding, you must be:

- a registered charity or Community Interest Company (CIC) with substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities and have been registered for at least a year at the time of your application
- an Armed Forces unit or base
- a local authority
- a school.

Substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities means that either the governing documents of your organisation state that you specifically work with people from Armed Forces communities, or that you can show that working with veterans, Armed Forces families or serving personnel is a significant and regular part of your existing work.

If you are a CIC, you must have been registered for over a year at the time of your application and have a minimum of three unrelated directors. You'll need to send us a copy of your most recent accounts with your application form.

Charities and CICs must be able to evidence that they have been the recipient of income from other sources in the past 12 months of at least the equivalent of their application to the Trust.

Local authorities are welcome to apply for direct delivery of projects that have clear and direct benefits for local Armed Forces communities (not for general work related to the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant).

If you are a school, some of the children in your school must be from serving Armed Forces families. You'll need to tell us in your application what proportion of children in your school are from Armed Forces families and what their needs are. We will consider

applications from schools with small proportions of children from serving families if they have particular needs that are not met through other sources.

UK Armed Forces bases and units that are located overseas are welcome to apply, but only UK-based charities and CICs that meet the eligibility criteria can apply under this programme.

You **cannot** apply if you are any of the following.

- An individual.
- An Academy Trust - you cannot apply for an overarching project across your academy chain, though individual schools can apply.
- A charity or CIC, which doesn't have substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities or is newly registered.
- Other public sector organisations - but you could work with one of the types of organisation listed above as a delivery partner.
- A charity that is based overseas.

What types of projects can you apply for under this programme?

We will fund a wide range of projects under this programme

Your project will need to show that

It is needed: We need to know why you need this funding and the difference it will make. Please show us that your work will not be duplicating other work that is happening and tell us if it fills a gap in support locally.

It helps people from the wider Armed Forces community to connect with a longer-term benefit: This can be about helping people become less isolated and more active in their local communities. This can include projects that help people from Armed Forces communities engage more with people from outside the Armed Forces. We would be unlikely to fund single events where engagement would be limited.

It was developed with people from Armed Forces communities: Show us how the idea for your project has been shaped by the people it will benefit. We can consider projects that support serving personnel, veterans and Armed Forces families.

You need to show us how your project meets one of these outcomes.

Programme theme	Expected project outcome
Empowering Armed Forces communities to become more engaged in their local area	People from Armed Forces communities form new friendships, support networks and feel they have a role in their local community
Providing opportunities for more isolated members of the Armed Forces community to take part in activities that improve general wellbeing	People from Armed Forces communities have better health, wellbeing or skills and the project has a clear benefit that it will achieve

We also need to be able to see that you have the skills and experience necessary to be able to carry out your project idea.

To the best of your knowledge, the activity that you plan to offer should not already currently be offered to people from Armed Forces communities by other organisations. You can 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 one another rather than duplicate provision. You'll be asked in your application form how you will ensure this.

This programme will not support projects based around:

- therapies
- advice services
- clinical services
- projects that don't clearly meet at least one of the programme's outcomes.

A strong application would be able to show:

- how many people your project is likely to help
- how you will target people from harder to reach groups, and how you are confident that they would like to take part in the project you're proposing
- how you will reach the people who you'd like to support through your project
- how you know that your proposed support is additional/complementary to that which others are providing (at the time of your application).

If your project involves delivery with children or vulnerable people, you will need to ensure that you manage relevant risks, such as relevant safeguarding training to ensure keep people safe.

If we award you a grant, we will list your project on our app, the AFCT Project Finder, which makes it easier for people to find projects we've funded in their local area.

If you do receive a grant, it will be for activities taking place within the 12 months following your award and only can be used to fund the project that you have detailed in your application form.

It's really important that you think about what you will do after the end of our grant. Some projects are able to develop in a way which doesn't need additional funds to continue. They may be set up to deliver a project that will only take place for a specific period of time, to meet a specific need.

Example project

A number of Armed Forces families have moved to the local area and don't live close to the base. Many of these families have children under 5. A local charity, which has worked with the base in the past, talks with the families about what would be helpful. The families would like to be able to make some friends in the local area and have an activity that is suitable with young children. The charity applies for funding for a parent and toddler group, but makes it open to families from non-Armed Forces families too, enabling the families to meet more people within the local area and develop friendships.

The group seeks funding for a year, which covers the set-up costs and training of volunteers to run the project in the longer term.

Example project

A veterans' community centre is concerned that some older veterans in their area have become more isolated. They work with the veterans to set up a gardening project, encouraging older veterans to take part in activities outside and mix with others in a safe way. They encourage the older veterans to engage with wider projects in the local community, where they can bring their skills and experience as volunteers. At the end of this successful project, the veterans who have taken part are healthier, and half of the veterans are involved in wider groups within the local community.

We know that Covid has had a significant impact on Armed Forces communities and the organisations that support them.

This year, you can apply for a grant of up to £10,000 that can support existing projects or activities that you are doing as long as:

- you need support to continue running a service or activity that supports Armed Forces communities and has been impacted by Covid
- a grant of £10,000 or less would make a meaningful difference to your work
- without a grant, the activity, project or service that you offer would need to reduce or cease.

We would also need to be able to clearly see in your application that the work you would deliver using the grant meets one or both of our programme aims.

What can funds be spent on?

Under this programme, we'll make grants of up to £10,000 for projects lasting up to a year. You can apply for less than this, or for a shorter period of time.

We can pay for most of the things you'll need for your project or activity, whether it is people's time, costs of delivering work online or buying/hiring equipment.

It's highly unlikely that we'll fund projects with budgets that are dominated by capital costs. We would not expect to fund the costs of purchasing a vehicle, but we would pay for mileage costs on vehicles used by your staff and volunteers.

Your project might include the following costs.

- Staff time for this fixed-term project, including time-managing volunteers that may be involved in your project.
- 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 this project.

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 Covenant 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.

How to apply - the application form

You need to apply through the link that we'll provide to our online application form.

If you don't have an account, 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 email confirmation. **If you don't receive this, then you have not applied. You can check the status of your application 'In Progress' section in your account.**

- If you apply by **midday on 12 April 2021**, you'll receive a decision by the end of June 2021.
- If you apply by **midday on 2 August**, you'll receive a decision in late October 2021.
- If you apply by **midday on 19 November**, you'll receive a decision in late February 2022.

If we offer you a grant, we will invite you to come to a briefing session for new grant holders; and we'll send you the dates for these. The briefing will be held online and explains the next stages of your grant. Your formal Offer Letter and Terms and Conditions will be sent to you after the briefing has taken place. We won't be able to pay your grant until these documents have been returned.

Covenant Funding is often oversubscribed and, unfortunately, we often have to turn good applications down due to lack of available funding. If you have been unsuccessful, then we will contact you by email to let you know.

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'll need to provide two contacts from your organisation on the application. At least one of these should have an email 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 email address that belongs to your organisation. If this is not provided, your application may be considered ineligible.

If either contact changes, do let us know as soon as you can.

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 email or post to the Covenant Fund Trust – only applications submitted via the online form can be considered.

Our assessment criteria

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.

The difference that your project will make	
What are we looking for?	<p>That your project will achieve at least one of the following aims.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering Armed Forces communities to become more engaged in their local area. • Providing opportunities for more isolated members of the Armed Forces community to take part in activities that improve general wellbeing.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What your project will do. • How this will help. • How you know that people would like to do this. • How many people this is likely to help

Delivery of your project	
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"> • That your organisation is well run and well managed. • That you'll be able to start and finish your grant activity within the time frame as set out above. • That you can keep people on your project safe. • That your work does not duplicate the work of other projects or services locally.

We know that some organisations have been significantly affected financially by the Covid pandemic, and we understand that your income for your most recent year may have dropped. We would expect to be able to see that you have funds coming in from

several different sources for your organisation as a whole and would not solely be relying on a grant from us.

Your project must be able to be delivered as a stand-alone piece of work. You can apply for funding that would contribute to a bigger project, but we will not fund proposals that could not go ahead if you are unsuccessful in securing additional funding.

Example project

A veterans' drop-in centre has contact with a number of vulnerable isolated veterans and wants to run drop-in sessions to encourage veterans to mix with others and be more active. They need funding for a project co-ordinator to do this. The project coordinator's full-time salary with on costs is £23,500. The drop-in centre applies for a grant under Force for Change for £10,000. They will use this grant to pay a part-time pro-rata salary. If they can obtain funding from another source, then they will then increase the project co-ordinator's hours.

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.

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 others

Local Covenant Partnerships (LCPs) are formed of the public, charitable, voluntary and business sectors and representatives from the Armed Forces for each area of England, Scotland and Wales, and are administered by local authorities.

Your local authority may have an ‘Armed Forces Champion’ or someone in a similar role who should be your first point of contact.

We work with LCPs to ensure the projects we fund are well-connected and needed locally, and do not duplicate other provision.

If we award you a grant that you will deliver within one local authority area, we expect you to contact your LCP and any other relevant local emergency planning or resilience forums, and to take every reasonable step to work with these bodies as part of a co-ordinated local response.

You can work with other organisations as part of your project. If any of the organisations that you will be working with will receive part of your 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 email to confirm that your application has been submitted.

If you have not received this email, then your application was not submitted successfully, and you will need to log back into the portal to submit it.

We 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 things we are unclear about – but do not assume any contact or lack of contact as an indication of your likelihood of being successful or declined.

We 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 will look at your organisation's website and social media activity.

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

Final decisions will be made by the Trustees of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, 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, our Trustees 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 Trustees have met, we will send an email to you using the primary contact email 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 three weeks of receiving the offer letter** or risk the offer lapsing.

We will email you in the first instance to advise you that you have been successful. This email 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.

Once we have all the necessary documents back, we will pay you the majority 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.

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 email info@covenantfund.org.uk