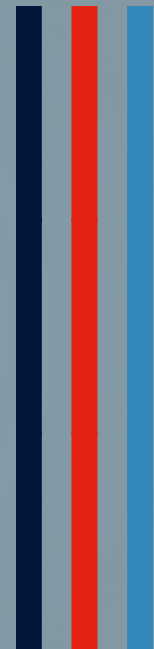


*The Armed Forces Covenant Fund*

**FORCE  
FOR  
CHANGE  
PROGRAMME**



# The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Force for Change programme 2023-24

## PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust will award grants of up to £15,000 towards local projects which support Armed Forces communities.

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### Why are we running this programme?

Under this programme, we would like to make small grants that make a big difference. We are really keen to make a big difference to Armed Forces communities that are facing particular needs due to cost-of-living challenges, or where there are hidden or complex needs within local Armed Forces communities and a local project could help address problems that vulnerable people are facing.

This year, we'll support projects that require a maximum of **£15,000** of funding from the Trust. The programme will be open to applications in two rounds of funding this year. If we award you a grant, we will expect you to engage with us and sign an agreement regarding your grant within a month of our decision. You will need to complete your project within 12 months of your start date. We will agree a start date with you.

## About Aims and Needs

Your project will need to meet the following aims.

- Address a specific need, with evidence of how the need has been identified, for Armed Forces communities within your local area.
- Be able to be completed within a year or less.
- Be able to show that the people who will benefit from your project, from Armed Forces communities, have helped to design the project, and would take part if you received funding.
- Have a clear impact, which lasts beyond the life of your grant.

## What type of project are we looking for?

Your project idea does not have to be new.

This programme welcomes continuation or extensions of existing work, where this provides a clear benefit. This can also include funding for pilot projects; or new ways of offering local support. It can also include projects that build on earlier work or focus on vulnerable Armed Forces communities who may have been impacted by cost-of-living challenges.

We will fund a wide range of projects under this programme.



Grants of up to £15,000 for local projects that respond to the hidden, compelling or complex needs of the most vulnerable members of Armed Forces communities. including those arising from cost-of-living challenges.



### Be local

Your project should clearly focus on people from Armed Forces communities within a local area. This might be within a town or city.



### Support Armed Forces Communities

Armed Forces communities include Serving personnel, including reservists, Armed Forces families and Veterans, and their families.



### Be specific

Tell us what specific needs people have, how they have been identified, and why your project will address them. These might be needs that are hidden or less well understood, or could be needs that are well known.



### What will your project change?

What impact will your work have and what long term benefits, that survive beyond the life of the grant. Will it have for Armed Forces communities.



### Cost-of-living challenges

Tell us about the challenges that your organisation has or may face due to cost-of-living impacted your organisation and project delivery?

## Your application will need to show the following.

- ✓ **Your project is needed and targeted:** You should be able to clearly explain how the need for this project has been identified and how you will target the people who have the greatest need for support including needs related to cost-of-living challenges.
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **It does not duplicate and is complementary to existing local provision:** Please show us how your project fills a gap in local support.
- ✓ **It will support longer-term change:** This means there should be a wider impact to your work, which will endure beyond the life of your grant. Your project should show that it offers a positive benefit to members of Armed Forces communities.

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

## What does a strong application look like?

A strong application would be able to show:

- how many people your project is likely to help, we call these beneficiaries. You will be asked to quantify how many direct and indirect beneficiaries will benefit from your project and the funding.
- what the specific needs are of the people that your project would help and how this has been identified.
- 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 support that others are providing (at the time of your application).
- how will you know if your project has been a success and how the impact will be measured.
- how will the positive impact of the project be sustained in the longer term.
- a budget which clearly relates to the project activities, is sufficiently broken down and includes all relevant costs, including those related to inflation.

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.

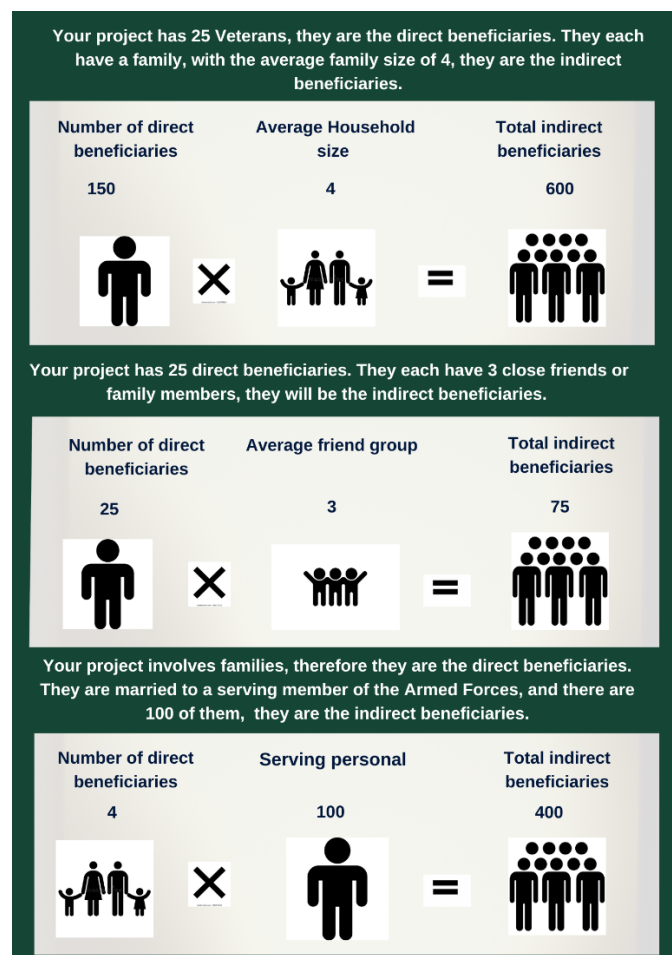
## Who will benefit?

Beneficiary groups that could be considered for support from this programme include veterans, their families and carers, serving Armed Forces personnel and their families, including Reservists and their families. You will need to tell us more about who they are likely to be – such as, older veterans living on their own, or serving families with very young children living on a base with limited access to services. A project could be addressing the needs of more than one or these groups.

## What do we mean by beneficiaries and how might they be calculated?

- The project beneficiaries are those who will benefit from your project. They are the people whose circumstances are changed by implementing your idea. They can be affected directly or indirectly by your project.
- Direct beneficiaries refer to the individuals, groups or organisations, which benefit directly from a project or activity.
- Indirect beneficiaries refer to other individuals, groups or organisations who are not the direct target of projects and activities, but may be indirectly affected and benefited by the activities undertaken by direct beneficiaries.
- For example: An app is designed to help partners to access employment information. They are the direct beneficiary. The indirect beneficiary is the family, due to the increased wellbeing of the partner and economic situation of the family, if employment is successful.

Below is an example of how direct and indirect beneficiaries could be calculated:



## Showing the change that your grant will make

We want to know what changes will take place because of your work. This means that we would like to know what will be different as a result when your project ends, and why you think your work will achieve these improvements.

### Approach

#### Why is your project the best way to support people from Armed Forces communities with these needs?

What exactly is the activity or service that you will be delivering?

How have you involved the people who would benefit in planning and shaping your project?

How do you know that people will take part?

How do you know that this does not duplicate other help that's available for these individuals?

### Change

#### What will the project achieve?

What will be different by the end of the project?

What does this change look like?

What's the wider legacy, in terms of tangible improvements that the people benefiting from the project have gained, or ongoing collaborations that have been developed?

It's really important that you think about what you will do after the end of our grant. Some projects can develop in a way that 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, to meet a specific need.

#### Example project

Several 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 report that they feel healthier, and half of the veterans are involved in wider groups within the local community.

We know that sometimes organisations are seeking a grant that would contribute to a larger piece of work that their organisation is undertaking. Sometimes a grant from us might not provide all the funding that is needed to deliver the project that an organisation would like to undertake.

Any funding that you request from us under this programme must be for a project that you can deliver in a timely way if we award you a grant. You cannot delay the start of your project while you raise additional funds. This example sets out how our funding could be used towards a part time post, which could then be extended if more funding was available from a different source.

**Example project**

A veterans' drop-in centre has contact with several vulnerable working aged veterans that have complex needs relating to isolation 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 £15,000. They will use this grant to pay a part-time pro-rata salary and expect to support 50 veterans over 12 months. If they can obtain funding from another source, then they will then increase the project co-ordinator's hours and anticipate that an additional 15-20 veterans will be able to attend.

We want to fund projects with sustainable benefits. This means that we are interested in what will happen in the long term after your project has ended. There are different ways in which sustainable benefits can be achieved.

Some projects might have a clear plan to be able to finance future work through social investment, social business models or commissioning; once they have been able to run an effective pilot to see if a new approach does work.

Some projects may focus on the legacy value for the people who take part in their projects; looking to address complex issues or engage in effective preventive work targeted at those who might be at risk of crisis. At the end of the grant, people who have taken part in these projects would be in a far stronger position than at the project's beginning and more able to live the life they want to have. For these projects, it's important to have clear plans on how you will measure the impact of your work. The Trust has an Impact Hub, and you can have access to this if it would support you to understand the impact of your work. You can find out more about the Impact Hub [here](#).

Other projects might seek to build a long-term legacy through better collaboration between organisations to improve how people from Armed Forces communities access support now and in the future. For projects like these, we would anticipate seeing evidence of changes in practice and collaboration that extend beyond the life of the grant.

Some projects might look at the evidence they have developed about the needs of a specific group of people within the wider Armed Forces community, who have needs that might not be well understood, or who don't access services that are available. We would not expect to fund projects that focus solely on research, but we would be keen to understand the longer-term implications for your work if it could help to ensure that Armed Forces communities in future could have access to better support that meets their needs.

We will ask you about sustainability in the application form.

### **Types of sustainability: how will your work sustain beyond the life of your grant?**

#### **Ongoing improvements for project beneficiaries**

Some projects may focus on the legacy value for the people who take part in their projects; looking to address complex issues or engage in effective preventive work targeted at those who might be at risk of crisis. At the end of the grant, people who have taken part in these projects would be in a far stronger position than they were at the beginning of the project; and more able to live the life that they want to have.

#### **Accessing funding for ongoing delivery**

Some projects might be carrying out a pilot project or might be planning to keep running their project or service in future; raising funding from donations, grants or local commissioning

#### **Ongoing partnership and collaboration**

Some projects might seek to build a long term legacy through better collaboration between organisations to improve how people from Armed Forces communities access support now and in the future. For projects like these, we would expect to see evidence of changes in practice and collaboration that extend beyond the life of the grant.

#### **Improved knowledge and evidence**

Some projects might look at the evidence they have developed about the needs of a specific group of people within the wider Armed Forces community, who have needs that might not be well understood, or who don't access services that are available. This evidence base might help to ensure that Armed Forces communities in future could have access to better support that meets their needs.



## How much funding can you apply for?

- ✓ Under this programme, we will make grants of up to £15,000 towards projects lasting up to a year. You can apply for less than this or for a shorter time. You cannot apply for a grant of less than £1,000.
- ✓ We can pay for most of the things you will need for your project or activity, whether it is people's time, costs of delivering work online or buying/hiring equipment.

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

## Ethics

Our work supports the Armed Forces Covenant through funding projects that deliver real change to Armed Forces communities. The projects we support need to be carried out to the highest possible ethical standards.

We therefore would expect you to have the skills and experience to work with the groups of people that your project focuses on, can ensure that they are kept safe, and that you take an ethical approach to your work.

Our ethical values are Respect, Competence and Integrity.

We have a Code of Conduct, and free online training to explain our approach to ethics. We will ask you to confirm in your application form that you will run your project in line with our Code of Conduct. If your organisation has its own Code of Ethical Conduct, then you will need to explore whether your Code is compatible with ours.

You can access our ethics resources [here](#).

## 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.

<b>The difference that your project will make</b>	
What are we looking for?	That your project will address an identified need for a specific group of people within the Armed Forces community
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What your proposed project will do.</li> <li>• How this will help specific beneficiaries.</li> <li>• How you know that people would like to do this.</li> <li>• How many people this is likely to help.</li> <li>• What difference this project will make.</li> <li>• How the impact of your project could continue after the end of your grant.</li> </ul>

<b>Delivery of your project</b>	
What are we looking for?	That your proposed project is feasible, and that your organisation has 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 and finish your grant activity within the time frame as set out above.</li> <li>• That you can keep people on your project safe.</li> <li>• That your work does not duplicate the work of other projects or services locally.</li> </ul>

## Which organisations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible for this funding you must be one of the following:

- a charity registered with one or more the charity commissions for England and Wales, or Scotland or Northern Ireland
- a 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 (further detail regarding this is below)
- an Armed Forces unit or base
- a local authority
- a school
- a statutory body that delivers or co-ordinates NHS care.

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

servicing personnel is a significant and regular part of your existing work.

If you are a **CIC**, you must have been registered as a CIC for over a year at the time of your application and have at least one set of published accounts. You will need to attach a copy of your most recent, full accounts (that include an income and expenditure statement as well as a balance sheet) and your governing document with your application form.

**Charities and CICs** must have a minimum of three unrelated trustees (for charities) or directors (for CICs) at the time of applying, and, if successful, throughout the life of your grant, and this must be verifiable at all times on the relevant charity regulators or Companies House website.

**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**, your project must be focused specifically on children from Armed Forces families rather than the whole school community. You'll need to tell us in your application what proportion of children in your school are from Armed Forces families, what their needs are, and how this has been assessed. 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. You can only apply as an individual school. An overarching academy chain or Trust cannot apply.

**Statutory bodies** that deliver or co-ordinate NHS care are eligible to apply. This includes hospital trusts and co-ordination organisations that address access to healthcare as part of their work. Organisations that fall within this category cannot apply for statutory healthcare delivery work, or for work that has a core focus on the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant/Duty.

**UK Armed Forces bases and units** including those located overseas, are welcome to apply. For units and bases your main Point of Contact will ideally be an individual who will remain within the post for the duration of the project. If your application is successful, we will require the authorisation of your CO/OC or equivalent when you accept the grant offer. This is to ensure that we have buy in for the project and commitment to its delivery.

**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 organisations listed above, as a delivery partner.
- A charity or CIC that is based overseas.
- Community organisations that do not fit any of our eligibility criteria, such as a sports organisation which is not a charity or CIC.
- A private or for-profit company.

## The following restrictions may apply

- Organisations cannot apply more than once per funding round (by which we mean to each of the two deadlines this year) on this programme.
- We generally receive more good applications for funding than we can support. We may therefore place a limit on the number of 'live' Force for Change grants held at any one time, by individual organisations.
- Applications may be declined from current Trust grant holders if the reporting requirements for existing grants from the Trust are not up to date.

## Working with other organisations

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 other means, is critical to its delivery.

## 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.

## Working with local organisations

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.

We encourage projects we fund to work with LCPs to ensure they are well-connected and needed locally and do not duplicate other provisions. Your local authority may have an

'Armed Forces Champion' or someone in a similar role who should be your first point of contact.

## Preparing your project budget

### What can funds be spent on?

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.

We understand that currently the real value of your income may have dropped due to inflationary pressures of running your organisation. You may have also found the rising cost of living has increased demand on your services. The Trust will consider applications that include a reasonable contribution to overhead/core costs. We would expect to see this reflected within your budget breakdown.

We would generally 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.

It is highly unlikely that we will 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. This could be direct project work or for admin or to manage volunteers that may be involved in your project.
- ✓ Sessional staff or freelancers that you may need to run your project and activity.
- ✓ Reasonable travel costs including fares or mileage for project staff, volunteers or beneficiaries to enable participation in the project.
- ✓ Purchasing items that can enable activities to take place. This may include art materials, sports/games/outdoor equipment, supplies for breakfast or social hubs.
- ✓ Purchasing items that will help you to deliver your project, such as additional telephones or laptops.
- ✓ Reasonable costs for storing and transporting items, including wear and tear on private vehicles.

- ✓ Reasonable overheads, which reflect the cost to your organisation of delivering this project, taking account of recent cost increases.

### **Activities may include:**

- ✓ Information, advice & guidance, including debt advice where this doesn't duplicate other local projects.
- ✓ Projects connecting isolated and vulnerable veterans and Armed Forces families with advice or welfare support that could have a positive impact.
- ✓ Projects which help armed forces families with needs connected to cost of living challenges such as debt advice or mental wellbeing.
- ✓ Activities which will improve quality of life.

This is not an exhaustive list and is for guidance only.

### **What types of projects and costs are we unable to pay for?**

There are several items, activities and types of projects that **we can't pay for**, either because they are not in the spirit of the Covenant Fund, or because of relevant legislation or tax rules.

- ✗ Where funding is not benefiting people from the Armed Forces community.
- ✗ Projects that do not clearly meet the aims of the programme.
- ✗ Therapies – that is, projects which wholly involve therapeutic interventions only.
- ✗ Clinical services.
- ✗ Single events or visits.
- ✗ Where money only benefits one person. By this, we mean, where your whole project would only benefit one person.
- ✗ Making grants or donations of money or items of value to individuals or families.
- ✗ Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding.
- ✗ Endowments (to provide a source of income).
- ✗ Topping up existing grants, contracts and aid from a government department.
- ✗ Investments.
- ✗ Fundraising costs, including organising fundraising events and activities.
- ✗ Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity.
- ✗ Projects, activities or services that the state has a legal obligation to provide.
- ✗ Projects within statutory organisations that are solely or mainly focused on your day-to-day delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant - your project must be clearly additional to your core activities.

- ✘ Retrospective funding for projects that have already started or taken place.
- ✘ Excessive management or professional fees or contingency costs.
- ✘ Projects with budgets that are dominated by capital costs. We would not expect to fund the costs of purchasing a vehicle, for example.

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.

### What financial information should you include in your application?

The application form will ask you to give details of your project budget, so that we can understand the costs for which you are asking for funding towards. Whilst you can show this in categories (rather than, for example, listing every item of the IT equipment you require) we will need to have sufficient information to assure us that you have fully considered how much the work will cost and told us how you know this.

The example below shows the difference between a strong and a weak budget description (actual numbers have been excluded in this example but are of course needed in your application).

<b>Brief project description:</b> A small community football club will offer a 12-week programme of multi-sports, based at its floodlit pavilion. The project will be overseen by the club chair and run by two club coaches. The target beneficiaries are 20 local veterans who are socially isolated and affected by cost-of-living challenges. In addition to participating in sports, beneficiaries will also be able hang out in the pavilion and have a chat over a pie and a bowl of soup at the end of each session.	
<b>Strong budget description:</b> <b>This includes clear budget headings and categories, with itemised costs which are also broken down. All costs relevance to the planned project is explained</b>	<b>Weak budget description:</b> <b>Budget headings are general and insufficiently broken down. Need for laptops and equipment not explained</b>
Project management x 4 hours a week @ £23 per hour x 12 weeks	Staff
Freelance/sessional staff x3 x £18 per hour x 4 x 12 weeks	Staff
Laptop and case - for project manager for admin and to measure impact. (If project not continued after one year, will be used to replace CEO's ageing machine)	IT equipment
Venue Hire currently priced £40 per hour x 4 hours x 12 weeks (but price expected to rise by 5% in 23/24 so allowance for this included)	Venue hire
Refreshments for veteran participants, at discounted rate by supplier	Refreshments
Beneficiary travel @ £3 per week per person	Travel
Sundries (stationery, certificates of achievement)	Admin
Overheads (contribution to wear & tear, insurance, utilities and project admin) calculated as 10% total project costs	Overheads
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>Total costs</b>

## Timetable:

There will be two deadlines for applications this financial year:

- If you apply by **5pm on 17 July 2023**, you'll receive a decision before the end of October 2023
- If you apply by **5pm on 13 December 2023**, you'll receive a decision before the end of March 2024

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.

## How to apply – the application form

You need to apply using our online application form which you can access through this [link](#).

If you don't have an account for our online application portal, then you will need to create one (you will need this anyway if you are successful in receiving a grant, so that you can submit reports and receive grant payments). 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.

We strongly recommend that you complete your application in a Word document, save it locally as you work on it and when it is complete you then cut and paste the answers into the online form. You will find a Word document with a list of the project related questions on our website. 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.

When you are entering data onto the online form, we suggest you save your form every 10-15 minutes whilst you are completing it, to avoid the risk of it 'timing out'.

You will be emailed both when you save and when you submit the application, please be aware of this when completing the application. We can only consider applications that have been fully submitted. Please check the "Submitted Applications" tab on your grant portal, to ensure the application has been fully submitted.

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 email address that belongs to your organisation. At least one contact must hold the relevant authority (CEO/ CO 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.



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

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

If you are a CIC, please do ensure that you upload a copy of your most recent accounts and your governing document. Your application will not be complete without this. You do not need to send any additional information once the application has been submitted. Any additional information sent will not be considered.

If you are not a CIC do not submit any other documents with your form. Any other documents will not be considered.

You do not need to send any additional information once the application has been submitted. Any additional information received will not be considered unless specifically asked for by our assessors.

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

You must also make sure that the Trustees/Directors/ senior staff within your organisation know that you are submitting this grant application.

## **After you submit your application**

You will get an automated email to confirm that your application has been submitted. This email will come from an address called [mailuk@grantapplication.com](mailto:mailuk@grantapplication.com). You may wish to add this email to a safe senders list on your email system to ensure that it can come through to you.

**If you have not received this email, then your application was not submitted successfully. Please 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 is 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 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.

## Checks we may carry out on your organisation

We may carry out several checks on the information you provide us with and about your organisation. 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 we can see that you have a minimum of three unrelated Directors or Trustees listed on your regulator's website.
- 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 the signatories are valid and well informed about the project.
- on your annual report 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.
- If you are awarded a grant, 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.
- If you are awarded a grant, that your bank statement shows that your account is being managed in line with your own financial procedures and our programme requirements.

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.

## Decisions and what happens next

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 that to minimise the risk to public funds the Trust may prioritise funding those applicants which have good track records on reporting to regulators, demonstrate transparent and appropriate governance arrangements and have comprehensive published accounts. For organisations which previously had grants from us, we expect all reporting on these grants to be up-to-date and may consider this when considering new applications.

Trustees may also take the decision to part-fund proposals. This may mean you are awarded less money than was applied for. If this is the case we will talk to you about what elements of the project were supported and why and discuss this with you.

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 or not you've been awarded a grant.

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, we will email you to tell you.

## What happens next if we award you a grant?

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.

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.

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 to receive your official offer letter, how to accept the grant and what documents you need to provide.

If we offer you a grant, we may 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. Alternatively, we may request a virtual meeting with you to provide you with further information and answer any questions you may have.

Your formal Offer Letter and Terms and Conditions will be sent to you after the briefing or meeting. We won't be able to pay your grant until these documents have been signed.

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. As part of the Terms and Conditions of funding we will ask you to update us on the progress of the project, this will include detailing how the funding has been spent.

We may also expect you to take part in evaluations, impact studies or other research related to the funding you have received. We will let you know what is required and how to participate.

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](mailto:info@covenantfund.org.uk).