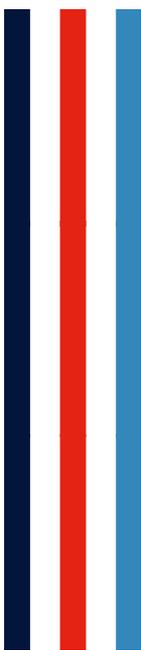


 THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund

FORCE FOR CHANGE PROGRAMME



Programme Guidance



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Force for Change 2020/21 PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) will award grants of up to £20,000 for local projects which support Armed Forces communities; particularly where they have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic or where volunteer run projects need some additional help.

Why are we running this programme?

In early 2020, the Trust ran an open consultation to explore how we should make small grants locally. The feedback from this told us that we should continue to fund grants of up to £20,000.

Mental health, veterans at higher risk of isolation, and providing support for Armed Forces families, were the top three issues that emerged from the responses received. It was felt that support is particularly needed for veterans of all ages and their carers', as well as Forces families (including Service children).

We know that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact - and the two rounds of funding we are running this year will support local Armed Forces communities as they address the needs that have arisen as a result of Covid-19.

This year, we are particularly welcoming applications for projects that help Armed Forces communities move to 'the new normal', continue to support local needs and reduce isolation, with a particular focus on ensuring that volunteers can carry out local projects that support Armed Forces communities.

This will include funding for projects that:

- give volunteers the resources they need to support more vulnerable members of the Armed Forces community
- use volunteers to build on the work of the Veterans Should Not Be Forgotten and Forces Communities Together programmes
- involve volunteers to help reduce isolation locally
- offer digital support, using volunteers to work with people from Armed Forces communities to build their digital skills.

As part of our support for Armed Forces communities affected by Covid-19, the Trust has made grants under two programmes this year.

Veterans Should Not Be Forgotten, using funding awarded in the March 2020 budget by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, awarded small grants to provide immediate support for vulnerable veterans with reduced social contact.

Forces Communities Together, funded by the Covenant Fund, awarded small grants towards creative and engaging projects, that could be delivered under social restrictions, for people from Armed Forces communities who are isolated as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

If you have a grant under either of these programmes, and you can show us there is a continuing need locally, then you can apply to Force for Change.

Project ideas do not have to be new. The programme will welcome continuation or extensions of existing work, where this provides a clear benefit. Where volunteers have been involved in existing work, we actively welcome and encourage you to build the costs of reasonable recognition events, such as tea parties or other events that can be delivered within social distancing guidelines, into your funding application.

We actively welcome applications for this year from local authorities, for projects that support the Armed Forces Covenant in their local area.

Which organisations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible for this funding, you must be

- an established registered charity or Community Interest Company (CIC) with substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities
- an Armed Forces unit or base.
- a local authority
- a school.

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.
- Other public sector organisations - but you could work with one of the types of organisation listed above as a delivery partner.

If you are a CIC, you must have been registered and operating for over a year and your Companies House details must show that you have a minimum of three unrelated directors.

If you are a registered charity you must have been registered and operational for over a year and you must be able to evidence that you have a minimum of three unrelated trustees at the time of applying.

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

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

Your application must show us the following things.

It is needed: You must tell us why this funding is needed and the difference it will make. You need to show us that your work will not be duplicating other work that is happening and fills a gap.

It helps people from the wider Armed Forces community to connect with a longer-term benefit: This might be 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's 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.

In the consultation that we ran to inform this programme, people told us that it was important to support veterans and Armed Forces families. There was also significant support for projects supporting carers of veterans, and young people within 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 be currently 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 truly complement one another rather than duplicate provision. You'll be asked in your application form how you will ensure this. We wouldn't expect to see beneficiaries playing a passive role.

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, you'll be able to list your project on our app, 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 towards a project that will last for up to one year and can only be used to fund the project that you have detailed in your application form.

We do not provide funding to meet general running costs.

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 don't need additional funds to continue. They may be designed to deliver support or an activity that will only take place for a specific period of time to meet a specific need.

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.

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.

What can funds be spent on?

Under this programme, we'll make grants of up to £20,000 for projects lasting up to a year. You can apply for less than this and, as funding is competitive, we ask that you think carefully about what you need in terms of grant funding to deliver your project.

We can pay for most of the things you'll need for your project, whether it's 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 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.
- General running costs.
- Making grants or donations of money to individuals or families.
- Topping up existing grants and grant-in-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.
- Organisational fundraising 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 before the decision date for your application
- 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 will need to submit your application before:

Midday on Friday 11 September 2020. You'll receive notification about the outcome of your application in the week commencing 16 November 2020.

OR

Midday Monday 30 November. You'll receive notification about the outcome of your application before the end of February.

We highly recommend you plan to submit your application well in advance of the deadlines listed above to avoid the risk of missing the cut-off because of technological or other unexpected problems. Any applications received after the cut off in September will automatically be entered in the next round, for a February decision. No late applications for the February deadline will be accepted.

Making sure we can get in touch with you

It's important that we can contact your organisation, particularly if you are offered a grant. You'll need to provide two contacts from your organisation on the application. We have provided some guidance below.

- Please consider who should be the main point of contact when you complete the form. We need to know who will be delivering the project if you are successful, rather than, for example, details of a person in your fundraising team.
- At least one contact must also hold the relevant authority to agree the grant contract and payment details if you are successful.
- At least one of your points of contact should have an email address that belongs to your organisation. This can be something such as persons.name@organisationname.org or a group mailbox such as info@organisationname.org
- **There must be different email addresses for each of the two contacts.** Without these we will not be able to consider your application.

You can find out more about the process you will need to follow should you be offered a grant in the *Managing Your Grant* section of our website.

Please Note

- If any contact detail change, even before we have contacted you with a decision, do let us know as soon as you can. **Remember: by not providing the right contact information, it will delay your payment if you are successful.**
- If you have any questions relating to contact details, please contact us at info@covenantfund.org.uk

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 unless you are contacted directly to ask for it. 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 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. For this year, we will also consider projects that provide support for volunteers so that they can keep helping people from the Armed Forces community

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 you have experience of supporting and working with the Armed Forces Community. • That you have thought about the implications of the Covid pandemic, as well as current government guidelines, and taken this into account when designing and planning your project. • That you have, or will have, the right management structure, partner organisations, staff and volunteers in place to run the project. • That you have fully costed your project and that it is good value for money. • What will happen to the beneficiaries after the project ends.

Checks we may carry out on your organisation and accounts

We may carry out several checks on the information you provide to 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 before or after making a grant:

- 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 two named points of contact 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 Local Covenant Partnerships

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 would expect you to contact your LCP and also any other relevant local emergency planning or resilience forums, and if your work is related to meeting challenges faced by the Covid-19 pandemic, to take every reasonable step to work with these bodies as part of a co-ordinated local response.

Working with others

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 main 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/Directors 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. We have also provided a short video on our website that explains the post award process.

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 in an interim report and then on completion. The final payment of the grant will not be made until a satisfactory final report is received.

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

About us

The Armed Forces Covenant Trust manages the grant programmes funded by the Covenant Fund.

We also run wider funding programmes that support the Armed Forces community.

You can find out more about our work at www.covenantfund.org.uk



Contact us:
info@covenantfund.org.uk
www.covenantfund.org.uk