

# The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Forces Communities Together Programme



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## PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) will award small grants of up to £10,000 towards creative and engaging projects, that can be delivered under social restrictions, for people from Armed Forces communities who are isolated as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Here is some useful guidance for applicants seeking a grant for their project.

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Note: having a grant from the **Covid-19 Impact Programme** or the **Veterans Should Not be Forgotten programme** will not prevent you from applying to this programme.

### Why are we running this programme?

The Trust works to fund real change for Armed Forces communities by awarding grants to projects that will make a positive difference.

This programme is part of a package of support we've put in place to provide support to Armed Forces communities during the Covid-19 pandemic and the social restrictions that are in place.

In total, our package of support has three parts.

1. Providing support to all our grant holders to help them continue their work.
2. Delivering emergency funding quickly to support veterans who are particularly vulnerable.
3. Launching programmes to support the Armed Forces community with funding from the Covenant Fund and from HM Treasury, with special focus on: those who have faced hardships as a result of the pandemic; projects to help isolated people reconnect with wider communities; projects that support improved mental health and encouraging stronger links between Armed Forces charities.

The **Forces Communities Together programme** is part of a wider group of programmes that will provide support for projects tackling some of the social challenges that have arisen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Which organisations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible for this funding, you must be:

- a registered charity or Community Interest Company (CIC) and able to show that you have three or more unrelated Trustees/directors
- a school
- an Armed Forces unit or base.

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

- An individual
- A local authority and similar organisation - but you could work with one of the types of organisation listed above as a delivery partner.

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

You can apply for up to £10,000 for a six-month project, focusing on supporting people from the Armed Forces community.

We want to fund projects that are enjoyable and entertaining; benefiting people who are isolated and unable to access services or have limited social contact during self-isolation and ongoing restrictions relating to the pandemic.

People benefiting from projects could be Armed Forces families including veteran families, veterans, or serving personnel including Reservists.

**You should follow all appropriate government advice regarding Covid-19 during the delivery of your project**

It's important that you can deliver your project while movement restrictions are in place. This might mean that you use online tools, telephone conversations or video conferencing to help you deliver your project. If we award you a grant, we would expect you to be able to start your project **by mid October 2020 at the latest**.

We will let you know if we can fund your project by the end of August 2020.

We want to encourage you to get creative in how you support your beneficiaries!

If your project will:

- provide a fun or engaging experience for people from the Armed Forces community **or**
- reduce isolation and encourage social interaction between people from Armed Forces communities **and**
- you can deliver it successfully while whatever social isolation measures the government recommends are still in place,

Then your project should be eligible.

You cannot apply for funds for:

- making grants or donations of money or household items to individuals or families
- buying vehicles or equipment (other than small items of equipment that are essential for this project).

The programme is focused on providing support and engagement rather than welfare activities. We'll look to fund engaging activities for people who are isolated.

If your project is focused more on delivering support rather than activities, then you may find the **Armed Forces Covenant: Force for Change programme** could be a better fit for your work. This programme will launch in August 2020 and will award grants of up to £20,000 for community projects that promote integration and engagement for people from Armed Forces communities, helping to tackle loneliness and isolation.

Remember: having a grant from the **Covid-19 Impact Programme** or the **Veterans Should Not be Forgotten programme** will not prevent you from applying to this programme.

A strong application would be able to show:

- how many people your project is likely to help
- who the people your project will help are (such as children from Armed Forces families or veterans) and how you are confident that they would like to do 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)
- that you can start your project by mid-October at the latest.

If we fund your project, and you are delivering it within a local area, you will need to offer to work with your Local Covenant Partnership and local emergency planning or resilience forums, as relevant, to ensure that your delivery is appropriate and complementary to what else is being provided.

If you become aware of emergency or other pressing needs that people might have while you are delivering your project, we'd expect you to signpost or refer them to appropriate sources of support.

If your project involves online 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.

To the best of your knowledge, the activity that you plan to offer should not be currently being 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.

## What can funds be spent on?

Under this programme, we'll make awards of up to £10,000.

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 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.

### An example project...

A project is working with children from Armed Forces families. They are going to deliver art materials and run online art classes. They need all the children to have the same materials to enable the classes to run smoothly; and to give the children a positive project.

The project costs would be:

- staff time to run the project and the sessions
- costs of the art materials
- transporting the art materials to the children
- costs of a subscription to an online platform needed to run the sessions.

## 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.
- 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 end of August 2020).
- 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 by **noon on 30 June 2020**. No late applications will be accepted.

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.

We will not be able to accept any applications submitted after the cut-off due to the urgency of this programme. So please do ensure you have submitted within good time. It also helps us to assess the applications if we start receiving them before the deadline. You'll receive a decision before the end of August 2020.

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.

<b>The difference that your project will make</b>	
What are we looking for?	That your project will provide a clear activity that will enhance mood or wellbeing or reduce isolation among people from Armed Forces communities who are affected by movement restrictions.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What your project will do.</li> <li>• How this will help.</li> <li>• How you know that people would like to do this.</li> <li>• How many people this is likely to help.</li> </ul>

<b>Delivery of your project</b>	
What are we looking for?	That your organisation has the skills, experience and other resources, such as staff and volunteers, to enable you to deliver your project quickly and safely.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That you have existing contact with Armed Forces communities through other services and projects that you run.</li> <li>• That you have appropriate safeguarding and governance policies in place to protect children and vulnerable people.</li> <li>• That you have existing working arrangements and referral processes with other organisations in your area that support people from other Armed Forces communities.</li> <li>• That you will be able to start the project quickly if you receive a grant offer.</li> <li>• That you have reasonably estimated the number of beneficiaries and costs of supporting them in terms of viability and value for money.</li> </ul>



## 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 would expect you to contact your LCP and also 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 in August 2020, 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](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](http://www.covenantfund.org.uk)



Contact us:  
[info@covenantfund.org.uk](mailto:info@covenantfund.org.uk)  
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