

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Tackling Loneliness Continuation Grant Programme

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) will award one-year fixed grants of £10,000 to organisations which are already funded under the Tackling Loneliness programme towards extending their projects for a third year.

Grants will be awarded to organisations that can meet all the criteria and can evidence 'match' funding of at least £20,000 to pay for the third year of activity.

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

Why are we running this programme?

The Tackling Loneliness programme awarded 60 grants in February 2021. These were fixed grants of £70,000 for a two-year period, that aim to reduce social isolation in Armed Forces communities. Grants will expire in 2023. The projects work with traditionally 'harder to reach' groups of beneficiaries to encourage more people to engage in their community, access services and provision and build stronger networks with peers, support organisations and service providers.

Grant management insight has highlighted that the majority of these projects are performing strongly, successfully targeting those within the Armed Forces community who traditionally do not engage with available provision by developing vital services to support these vulnerable Armed Forces communities.

The Trust is keen to sustain this good work, and resource embedding this vital work into organisations through a tapered grant. A tapered grant is where you receive a smaller level of grant in the final year of your award and fund the balance from another source.

Tapered Grants

All organisations currently holding a Tackling Loneliness grant have the opportunity to apply for a **conditional continuation grant of £10,000** towards extending their Tackling Loneliness for a further full year.

We will be able to consider awarding your organisation a grant of £10,000 providing that you

- Run a third year of activity AND
- Secure the required additional funding of at least £20,000 to do so

The required additional funding can be from an internal or external source. Continuation grants are limited to one per organisation

We recognise that not all organisations may wish to continue into a third year, perhaps because you have planned a definitive end to your project.

Which organisations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible for this funding, you must be:

- an existing grant holder from the Tackling Loneliness Programme, on track to meet its agreed outcomes and timescales at the time of consideration.
- up to date on all grant on all grant monitoring requirements related to any active grants you hold with the Trust.
- up to date on all reporting that can be viewed through the relevant regulatory bodies' website.

You **cannot** apply

- for more than one project if you hold multiple grants under the Tackling Loneliness programme. This extension programme is limited to one grant per organisation
- if you cannot prove you can secure the required additional £20,000 from other funding sources in order to extend your activities into a third year.

More about Commitment to fund outstanding costs into year 3 of programme

Because we are hoping to make grants towards a further full year's of activity, we anticipate that your organisation will need at least £30,000 in total to continue the project. Your organisation might undertake fundraising, might use reserves, or might divert other budgets to this work. In order to confirm an award, the Trust will need to see evidence of these required additional funds having been secured and committed to the third year of your Tackling Loneliness project by the time you apply. We will therefore ask you to include in your application an electronic scan of a signed letter on headed paper from either your CEO or Director of Finance, which confirms

the source of the funds and that they will be committed to this activity in the 12 months' commencing 1 April 2023.

Helping you if you are awarded a grant

You will be able to extend the timeline of your project listing on our app, which will continue to make it easier for people to find your project in their local area, alongside others we have funded, to prevent duplication and aid collaboration in the sector.

You will also have extended access to the Impact Hub, which will offer you options on how to continue to measure the impact of your grant, while supporting your beneficiaries and providing a warm and welcoming environment.

All projects supported through the Tackling Loneliness programme are currently supported by mentor organisations funded through the Tackling Social Isolation programme, a sister programme designed to further support our goal in reducing social isolation.

While mentoring will not extend into the delivery of this Continuation Programme, the vital networking and shared learning that has taken place through this support will aid your organisation to develop a sustainable service beyond the life of the award, and this tapering award is intended to aid this next phase in the process of embedding this vital work into your organisation should it choose to do so

What can funds be spent on?

Under this programme, we will make fixed awards of £10,000 for projects to extend delivery into a third year.

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.

As this is the final year of delivery, we would not expect to fund any further 'set up' costs

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, facilitating an effective exit strategy, embedding the developmental work that has been achieved into the organisation going forward
- 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 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 February 2021).
- 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 will need to register your interest in applying by selecting the tick box found in your invitation to apply letter that will be circulated to all our Tackling Loneliness grant holders once the application form is live on our website.

Subsequently, you will need to apply online through the link that we'll provide to our short online application form. (A version of this in Word will be sent to you by email so that you can draft your response offline).

As an existing grant holder, you will have an account on our Grants Portal. 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 will receive an email confirmation. **If you do not receive this, then you have not applied.**

As we are accepting and assessing and making decisions about applications on a rolling basis between the **27th May 2022 and 1 August 2022**, we would strongly encourage you to apply as soon as you can evidence proof of securing the additional £20,000 to facilitate the third year of delivery.

You will need to submit your application by **Midday on 1 August 2022**. 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. No late applications 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 will 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, for example, details of a person in your fundraising team.

This contact may have changed since you submitted your Tackling Loneliness application.

- **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 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

Completing the online form

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? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability of projects that will reduce isolation for those within the Armed Forces community who traditionally do not engage with available provision for a further year. • Supporting an effective exit strategy to your current Tackling Loneliness award that will ensure no harm to beneficiaries accessing these new vital services. • Embedding services that have been developed to reach this cohort effectively into your organisation's DNA. |

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| What do you need to show us? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What your project will do. Is it more of the same or could it be that your organisation can make a strong case for some change/ progression? • 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? | <p>That you have the skills and experience to continue to run your project for a further year.</p> <p>That you have secured the additional funding to support one further year of delivery.</p> |
| What do you need to show us? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That you have fully costed your continuation project and that it is good value for money • Proof of additional funds that are available to augment the award to cover the third year of delivery. • What will happen to the beneficiaries after the project ends |
| Note also: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will want to see that you have thought about the implications of delivery thus far in light of the Covid pandemic and other challenges and taken this into account when designing and planning your project for one further year. |

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 continuation 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.

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 any areas of your application, 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 Senior Executive and 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.

After the Moderation committee has 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 have been awarded a continuation 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 continuation project, you will 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 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.

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 in interim reports and then on completion. Payments of the grant will not be made until satisfactory reports are 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 contact your allocated mentor or the grant manager for this programme megan.greatrex@covenantfund.org.uk or look at the programme information that we have on our website. FAQs will be published and updated regularly.

Following this, if you still have queries and cannot find the answer in these guidance notes, please email info@covenantfund.org.uk