




The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

Making grants for local projects: Reducing isolation in Armed Forces communities

May 2020

 THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) funds real change to support Armed Forces communities.

Over the first five years of this programme we awarded more than 700 grants to community projects. We are very grateful to all those who participated in the consultation and shared their views with us.

Your valuable ideas and insights will help us to shape how we make grants; both through our small grants programme and through some of the other programmes we offer.

We look forward to launching new programmes later this year that will make a real difference to the Armed Forces community and we thank you for engagement in helping us to develop this work.

- Melloney Poole, Chief Executive



Contents

Executive summary	4
Introduction	6
Summary of the findings	8
What types of projects we should support?	11
How should we fund projects?	36
Who took part in the consultation?	44
Questions regarding past experiences of applying for a local grant	47

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is significant support for the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust running programmes that focus on social isolation. 91% of respondents scored social isolation as being an important or very important priority for funding. 65% scored it as very important.

Mental health, veterans being at higher risk of isolation and support for Armed Forces families were the top issues described in free text responses about why reducing social isolation should be a priority.

265 responses were received from individuals and organisations. Most of the respondents to the consultation were individuals from the Armed Forces community, or local organisations.

Veterans were the largest group of individual respondents to the consultation and made up 21% of respondents across the survey. Local charities or CICs that support the Armed Forces community were the largest group of organisations that responded, making up 15% of the overall sample. Local authorities were the second, with 11% of the overall sample.

The findings showed significant support for funding projects that supported veterans and Armed Forces families. There was also significant support for projects supporting carers of veterans, and young people within Armed Forces families.

94% of respondents felt there should not be a particular focus on the age of veterans supported through funding programmes.

Top issues raised regarding funding of projects to support Armed Forces families were: funding for community projects, building relationships with civilian community, access to wider services for the Armed Forces community, mental health, support transitioning to family life and the provision of physical spaces such as community centres, hubs or play facilities.

70% of respondents agreed that funding for community engagement projects in the areas surrounding Armed Forces bases should be supported. Only 7% said that it shouldn't be supported.

Funding events and activities to enable Armed Forces communities and civilian communities to mix in the areas around a base and encourage engagement, was important. Respondents felt it was good to encourage local partnerships and that detailed consultation into local needs was important.



INTRODUCTION

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Local Grants programme has completed five years of funding. The Trust ran an open consultation to shape the new programme and to gather information regarding views on grants generally, including programmes to reduce social isolation.

The previous local grants programme supported projects that helped integrate Armed Forces and civilian communities and delivered projects that meet the needs of veterans, Armed Forces families and serving personnel. In many of the grants made under that programme, there were strong themes about reducing isolation and in joining up work locally to reduce duplication and provide better help. This includes serving personnel, families, veterans and families of veterans. In some of our programmes, the wider community around a base or in an area with an Armed Forces population can also benefit, as we will support projects under one of our programmes that will help to encourage good relations between Armed Forces and civilian communities.

The strategy for the new programme builds on the past themes of community integration and delivery of services but combines these into one overall theme of *Improving Integration and Engagement*. The new programme will take the following principles into account.

- Funding projects that reduce isolation, particularly for veterans and Armed Forces families.
- Funding projects that support local co-ordination and joining up of local projects and services.
- Projects should be supported throughout the United Kingdom.

There were 265 responses to the consultation. This was higher than previous consultations run by the Trust.

The consultation asked about the following information.

Types of projects we should support

These are questions about who our funding should support and what types of projects this might be through.

Size of grants that we award

We currently fund projects with a value of up to £20,000. Most of the grants we make are for £18,000 to £20,000 as this is the amount of funding that projects ask for. We offer larger grants through other programmes that we run. Applications for programmes where organisations can get a bigger grant are more complicated as we need to get more information.

We will fund costs of running activities and this can include staff costs where this is an effective way to make sure the project can take place. We have a fixed amount of funding that we can spend each year. If we make smaller grants, we might be able to fund more projects across the UK, but these projects might have less of an impact.

How we make grants at the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

We generally receive more good applications than we support. Your views here and in the other sections of the consultation, will help to shape our programme guidance.

Questions about you or the organisation that you are completing the consultation on behalf of

It's helpful if you could please give us a little more information about yourself or the organisation that you represent. This helps us to see if we have a range of views from different people. You don't have to answer any of these questions and we will only use your information for our consultation.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The types of projects that the Trust should support through a programme making grants in local areas

There was significant support for the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) running programmes that focus on social isolation. 91% of respondents scored social isolation as being an important or very important priority for funding. 65% scored it as very important.

Mental health, veterans being at higher risk of isolation and support for Armed Forces families were the top issues described in free text responses about why reducing social isolation should be a priority.

When asked to choose five words to describe social isolation, the top five words were: depressed/depression; loneliness/lonely; sad/sadness; anxiety/anxious and alone. More information on the words that people chose to describe isolation can be found in this report.

Respondents were asked to identify four groups of people from the Armed Forces community who should be supported through grant funding programmes. The findings showed significant support for funding projects that supported veterans and Armed Forces families. There was also significant support for projects supporting carers of veterans, and young people within Armed Forces families. Most respondents chose veterans as their first choice.

While veterans were a group that people felt should be supported, 94% of respondents felt there should not be a particular focus on the age of veterans supported through funding programmes.

Top issues raised regarding funding of projects to support Armed Forces families were: funding for community projects, building relationships with civilian community, access to wider services for the Armed Forces community, mental health, support transitioning to family life and the provision of physical spaces such as community centres, hubs or play facilities.

70% agreed that funding for community engagement projects in the areas surrounding Armed Forces bases should be supported. Only 7% said that it shouldn't be supported. Funding events and activities to enable Armed Forces communities and civilian communities to mix in the areas around a base and encourage engagement was important. Respondents felt that it was good to encourage local partnerships and that detailed consultation into local needs was important.

Encouraging good relations between Armed Forces and civilian communities was popular and most likely to be described as 'encouraging interaction'.

Veterans hubs/breakfast clubs were popular areas, but there are also people who do not consider them to be a high priority or think the focus of funding should be elsewhere. Supporting transition - particularly supporting families through the transition process to prepare for post-serving life, was mentioned across several different question sets.

Respondents selected from a range of activities which could help to reduce isolation. Projects offering new skills (19%), drop-in type projects (13%) and activity-based projects were the most popular choices. Respondents were also asked which activities on the list were less of a priority. The areas that were less of a priority for funding were less formal, sport-based projects such as Park Runs (20%), school-based projects (but not where this duplicates government provision) (19%) and in joint-third breakfast clubs and sports projects where people attend regularly (both scored 16%).

People were asked if there were other types of projects we should fund. The most frequently occurring answers were for mental health related projects, arts and creative projects, projects taking place outdoors, work to encourage military and civilian communities to engage and youth provision.

People were asked if there were other types of projects that we shouldn't fund. The largest groups of answers related to duplication, projects without evidence of community need, breakfast clubs/drop-ins and projects that cannot evidence that they have worked.

The size of grants the Trust should make through the small grants programme and how we should award grants

Respondents considered grants in all size categories to be important, but there was considerable support for grants in the £15-£20K categories. There is appetite for smaller grants being offered, but larger grants are the most popular.

When asked if it is better to fund large or small projects, funding larger projects, even if less projects are supported overall, was the most popular option, though there was still support for the concept of funding smaller projects.

Respondents were asked about the size of grant.

- 30% of respondents chose £20,000, which is the current upper limit of the Armed Forces Covenant Local Grants programme.
- 38% of respondents chose a figure which is above the current upper limit of the Armed Forces Covenant Local Grants programme.
- 10% of respondents chose a figure which was lower than the current level of £20,000.

Key issues raised were ensuring that projects had the right level of resource to make a difference, and this might mean awarding larger amounts of funding, or funding over multiple years. Some respondents felt the focus should not be on the amount of grant, but rather the impact it would have on beneficiaries. 28% discussed the current upper limit of £20,000 and felt that this was adequate.

When asked what changes might encourage more smaller applications, the most popular answers related to quicker decisions, a shorter application form and having part of the budget set aside for smaller applications.

On a list of statements regarding funding, the statements regarding *If there is evidence that the project is well planned* and *Whether veterans or Armed Forces families have shaped the project* were ahead by a significant margin.

On a second list of statements, the ones with the greatest amount of overall support and the lowest number of negative scores were as follows.

- It's ok for projects to get funding for staff costs where this will enable the project to take place.
- Projects should not always be new; it's a good idea to give support to ideas that work.
- Projects that have had a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund should be able to apply for another grant for the same activity if it has made a difference.

90% of respondents said that projects that had previously received a grant could be funded again if they were working well. The importance of effective, comprehensive project consultation or co design was raised in several question sets.

Respondents were keener to tell us what to fund, rather than what not to fund. This was seen across two different sets of questions, and in the high number of 'no/don't know' responses to questions about what should be less of a priority. There may be interesting points to consider about how we explain our work. People were keen that the projects we fund do not duplicate other work.

What can we do to make our application process easier?

People were asked if there is anything we can do to make our application process easier. The largest areas of response were comments expressing satisfaction (7%, of responders against the whole survey sample), requests for more pre-application support (6%) and a simpler application form (5%). We collected data on when people had applied for a grant, and people who had applied more recently were more satisfied with the process.

Who took part in the consultation?

Most of the respondents to the consultation were individuals from the Armed Forces community or local organisations. Veterans were the largest group of individual respondents to the consultation and made up 21% of respondents across the survey.

Local charities or CICs that support the Armed Forces community were the largest group of organisations that responded, with 15% of the overall sample. Local authorities were the second, with 11% of the overall sample.

People are keen that the projects we fund do not duplicate other work and there are considerations within this for programme design and communications.

What types of projects we should support?

Consultation responders were given the following information

Our current local grants programme supports projects that help integrate Armed Forces and civilian communities, and deliver projects that meet the needs of veterans, Armed Forces families and serving personnel. We have seen that in many of the grants we make there are strong themes about reducing isolation, and in joining up work locally to reduce duplication and provide better help.

We plan to build on the past themes of community integration and delivery of services but combine these into one overall theme of Improving Integration and Engagement. The new programme will take the following principles into account.

- Funding projects that reduce isolation, particularly for veterans and Armed Forces families.*
- Funding projects that support local co-ordination and joining up of local projects and services.*
- Projects should be supported throughout the United Kingdom.*

In these questions, we explored ideas about who should be the focus of our grants, what sort of activities the grants we make could support and what challenges our funding might offer support with.

In the consultation, we asked: *how much should our focus be on groups from the Armed Forces community who are socially isolated, including young people, veterans, families?*

People answered on a 1-5 scale from not important (1) to very important (5).

This answer scored 4.53 out of 5.

Respondents considered it appropriate for the Trust to focus on groups from the Armed Forces community who are socially isolated.

265 respondents answered this question. 91% of respondents scored social isolation as being an important or very important priority for funding. 65% scored it as very important.

A follow up question asked people ***why you think this?***

This question was a free text response and was answered by 252 people.

The free text responses were coded, analysed and placed in the following groups.

Mental health	65
Veterans at higher risk of social isolation	58
Armed Forces families	52
Relationships with civilian community	39
Social isolation is a significant issue	38
Addressing social isolation prevents wider issues	32
General health	32
Veterans	17
Focus on other issues	15
Lack of ability to make friends	14
Transitioning	11
Geographic isolation	10
Peer support	9
Younger adults	8
Children	8
Suicide/self-harm	7
Serving personnel	6
Breakfast clubs	6
Lack of access to befriending services	4
Deployment	4
Not engaging with services because they don't know they are available	4

Answers could fall into more than one category and several responses contained references to more than one of the themes identified in the table.

Of the 15 responses that related to the idea that the Trust should focus on other issues, these discussed the view that social isolation should not be a major priority at the expense of funding for other issues. Five of these, however, had also identified social isolation as being a significant issue.

“Support for socially isolated groups is, of course, very important - but so too is support for those groups who are less socially isolated but for whom funding to support health and wellbeing initiatives is equally important; such support is also essential and, moreover, very cost-effective.”

“This is a significant issue for some but restricting activity to those who are socially isolated is overly restrictive: there other areas in the Armed Forces community who need assistance but are not socially isolated.”

A selection of comments from themes with 10 or more responses coded against them are reproduced below.

Mental health	<i>It is a huge issue for veterans and their families, particularly those who are mid 30s-late 40s and it can underpin a range of other issues such as mental health. By dealing with social isolation it not only identifies veterans so they can receive support, but also provides prevention and early Intervention for other issues.</i>
	<i>There are lots of clubs and associations that veterans and their families can access, and it may just be a funding issue or indeed a mental health issue amongst other issues that is a barrier to social inclusion.</i>
	<i>If you can reduce/prevent isolation it not only helps with that person mental health and wellbeing it also gives them confidence to join in and be able to help others who may be feeling isolated.</i>
	<i>Loneliness and social isolation is clearly an issue for many people including veterans. Helping to address this issue in partnership with others will positively impact on the Armed Forces community. Loneliness can also be related to mental health and the emphasis should be on this as well.</i>
Veterans at higher risk of social isolation	<i>I believe the elderly veterans in our community are mostly overlooked. They do not believe they are entitled to any help and quite often sit in a room on their own for days on end with no company. They were taught to have a 'Stiff Upper Lip', so keep quiet about how lonely they feel.</i>
	<i>Almost every veteran we support reports being isolated and feeling alone.</i>
	<i>Veterans have a tendency to self-isolate and are reluctant to ask for help.</i>
	<i>Loneliness and social isolation is as much of an impact on mental wellbeing as anything. We are aware that by being in such a tight knit 'family' environment when within the Armed Forces as soon as that has been removed can have huge consequences. In a rural community this issue is further compounded when a veteran is very old or immobile.</i>

Armed Forces families	<i>Integrating Armed Forces families within their local community is Important and could help avoid social isolation for some families, especially those living away from extended family.</i>
	<i>The Armed Forces community, including Armed Forces families, are exposed to events and challenges that make them more vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation. Loneliness and social isolation are health hazards and tackling them will help to alleviate related suffering experienced by members of the Armed Forces community.</i>
	<i>The military requires all members, including families, to regularly move and 'start again' in a new location. Friends and support networks of all ages are left behind and isolation in the new location easy to fall into.</i>
	<i>Being socially isolated can affect the whole family - there is sometimes a misconception that if a person is in a family then they can't be isolated. Much attention is given to the individual person who is displaying signs of isolation but all too often the effect on other family members - especially children - can be ignored. more work needs to be done in this area.</i>
	<i>Discussions with local community workers on bases indicates significant impact on children, young people and parents of deployment. Veterans also speak of isolation, and of difficulties fitting in outside non-veteran support groups and clubs.</i>
Relationships with civilian community	<i>As the funding is coming from the Covenant, it should proportionately support more people from the AF community, however, it is important that members of the wider community are also involved to enable integration and to give better chances of longevity.</i>
	<i>Understanding the difference between loneliness and isolation is key to understanding the need for appropriate intervention for veterans and their families. Are they lonely because they live on their own or geographically isolated, for example. Some of our service users often claim to feel lonely and isolated despite being surrounded by family or living in a densely populated area. Whilst engagement is important it is also useful to consider what type of engagement. Some veterans will resist community type activities unless it is veteran focussed whilst others want nothing to do with veteran services and just want to integrate into civilian life. In our experience the older veterans seem to benefit from veteran engagement activities whilst the younger ones prefer to re-integrate and engage with civilians and veterans. Families are often forgotten about and can become as isolated as the veteran themselves and arguably if we can get the family engaged in activities as the starting point, they can encourage the veteran to join in.</i>
	<i>The AFC are used to having people around them, when they leave the Army, they experience extreme isolation. Most do not settle in their home towns, they settle often far away from originally family and friends making it even more difficult to socialise and have people around who can help- Social Capital</i>
Social isolation is a Significant Issue	<i>I see this weekly in my role. We have conducted a survey of our Armed Forces community with over 700 responses analysed. Loneliness and social isolation is an issue for serving personnel, spouse of serving personnel and veterans. And our survey showed it as worse in junior ranks and at the younger end of the age ranges.</i>
	<i>Our work with veterans shows that this is a large problem and can lead to decreased health and wellbeing.</i>
	<i>Seems to be a big need with addressing social isolation and loneliness in general and especially so amongst veterans.</i>

Addressing social isolation prevents of wider issues	<i>Loneliness can lead to mental health problems and other health issues (drinking alcohol, drugs, poor diet, gambling etc), it can also affect the whole family, so it is important to prevent these issues and associated problems.</i>
	<i>Social isolation can affect many aspects of a person's life and impact on mental and physical health and well-being. By addressing this it may prevent a person having to access other services, improving their well-being and saving money.</i>
	<i>We have found that the majority of our Armed Forces community clients struggle with social isolation which exacerbates/generates other challenging issues.</i>
General health	<i>Loneliness and limited mobility leads to mental health problems or even worse if already struggling.</i>
	<i>Isolation and loneliness are the health risk equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Holt-Lunstad, 2015). It can be a struggle for some veterans and veterans' families to connect to the civilian world after serving in the Forces.</i>
	<i>Social isolation can lead to prolonged physical, mental and emotional health complications. Not everybody has a strong network or support mechanism in place to ensure that the most vulnerable can be supported.</i>
Veterans	<i>Veterans should be encouraged to be inclusive in the community in order to help maintain mental and physical wellbeing</i>
	<i>Loneliness for veterans really only comes to the fore if they have moved from areas which have supported their service career i.e. military towns RN ports etc. Those vets who remain in these areas on retirement continue to have peer support and social involvement provided by service retired organisations and charities.</i>
Focus on other issues	<i>If the AFC Grants team are having 'Loneliness and Social Isolation' as the hot topic, applications that concentrate on this will be favoured. In reality, all projects that encourage social interaction in whatever format will help to combat isolation. This will apply to most applications.</i>
	<i>There are many other bodies and charities that should be addressing social isolation. £20k per project will do little to change things long term</i>
Lack of ability to make friends	<i>Tackling social isolation is very important for reasons well known. However, focus should also remain on those who may not seem isolated (in regard to home location, access to transport etc.) but are in fact isolated due to lack of peers, friends and family.</i>
	<i>Everyone needs a friend or a place to go to with like-minded people</i>
Transitioning	<i>Veterans and serving personnel and families have trouble adjusting to civilian life and housing that was not provided for them. There was until the breakfast clubs no way of knowing if there were veterans nearby one might socialise with and thus these people became isolated. I think it important to provide ways for the veteran and forces families to integrate and support each other. The veteran charities can then focus on things the community want and can refer where relevant to the council services they may need. The breakfast clubs give them a way to network for employment or activities and it is important to fund that forum to keep it going.</i>
Geographic isolation	<i>Families are increasingly spread out as they are encouraged to settle but may end up far from traditional sources of support or in rural areas where children in particular do not feel understood by peers or teachers</i>

In addition to the categories identified above, 12 respondents shared their personal experiences in response to this question, sharing information about the impact that isolation has had on them.

"I've been a Veteran for over 30 years but thankfully I've also been married for the same amount of time to the same wonderful lady. My wife has gone on holiday with her elderly mother for two weeks and I feel very empty and at a loose end. I find it difficult to talk to people, so I cannot begin to imagine what it would be like to be in this position on a permanent basis, it must be lonely, so putting some if not all of the grant towards helping Veterans and their families in a better position with regards to contact with others would be a fantastic thing to do."

"I have been and still am an " Army wife " of 25 years. Loneliness has been one of the most difficult things to deal with in that time."

"I have been isolated due to my injuries and it's a dark place to be in."

Many free text responses contained references to mental health, the idea that veterans are at higher risk of social isolation, the impact of social isolation on Armed Forces families and the importance of relationships with civilian community. Answers reflected the idea that social isolation is a significant issue, which corresponds to the high score given to the earlier question, and that addressing social isolation prevents wider issues.

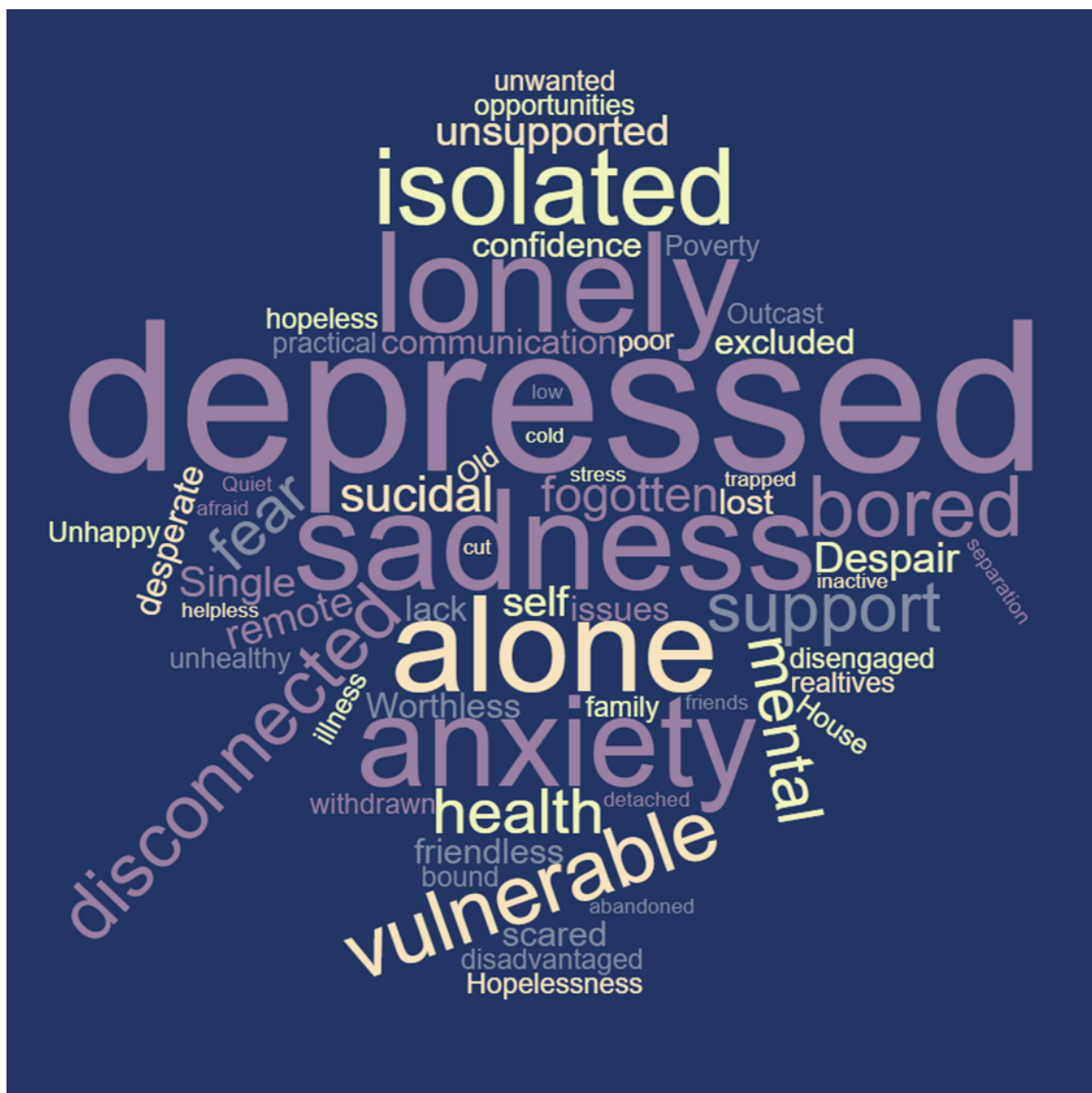
In the consultation, respondents were asked to identify **up to five words that they would use to describe social isolation**. This was to help identify the most important areas for potential future programme outcomes to consider, and also to gain a deeper insight into how the Armed Forces community - and those aligned to it - describe and talk about social isolation.

A total of 257 people responded to the question and a total of 575 unique words or short phrases were given. Data cleansing was then undertaken to combine similar words into the same category.

Depressed/ depression	55
Loneliness/ lonely	45
Sad/ sadness	44
Anxiety/ Anxious	32
Alone	19
Isolated/ isolation	15
Bored/boredom	12
Vulnerable	12
Disconnected	11
Fear	9
Forgotten	7
Suicidal/ suicide	7
Despair	6

Remote	6
Single	6
Support	6
Unsupported	6
Communication issues	5
Desperate	5
Excluded	5
Friendless	5
Lack of confidence	5
Lost	5
Mental health	5
Scared	5
Worthless	5

This is set out in the word cloud below. The larger the word, the greater the frequency of mentions by respondents.



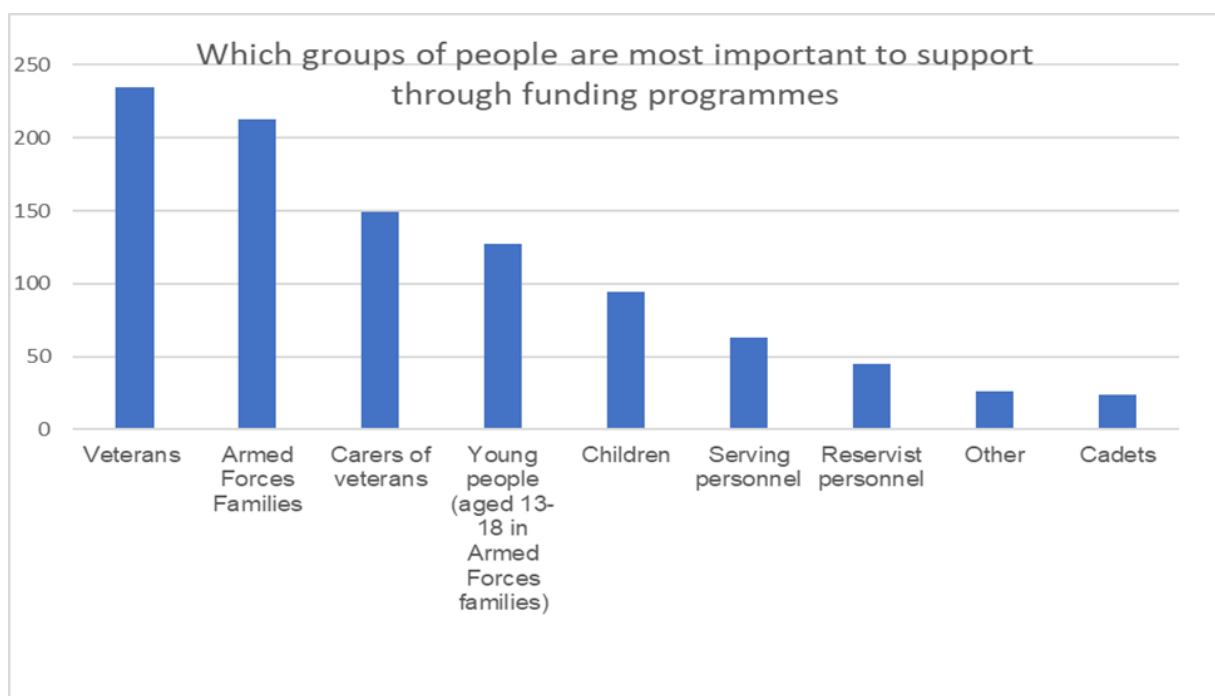
In the consultation we asked which groups of people are most important to fund?

People were asked to choose four groups from the following.

- Veterans
- Armed Forces Families
- Young People within Armed Forces Families
- Serving personnel
- Reservist Personnel
- Cadet groups
- Other, please specify

265 participants responded to this question. The findings showed significant support for funding projects that supported veterans and Armed Forces families. There was also significant support for projects supporting carers of veterans, and young people within Armed Forces families.

	Number	% of support
Veterans	235	24%
Armed Forces Families	213	22%
Carers of veterans	149	15%
Young people (aged 13-18 in Armed Forces families)	127	13%
Children	94	10%
Serving personnel	63	6%
Reservist personnel	45	5%
Other	26	3%
Cadets	24	2%

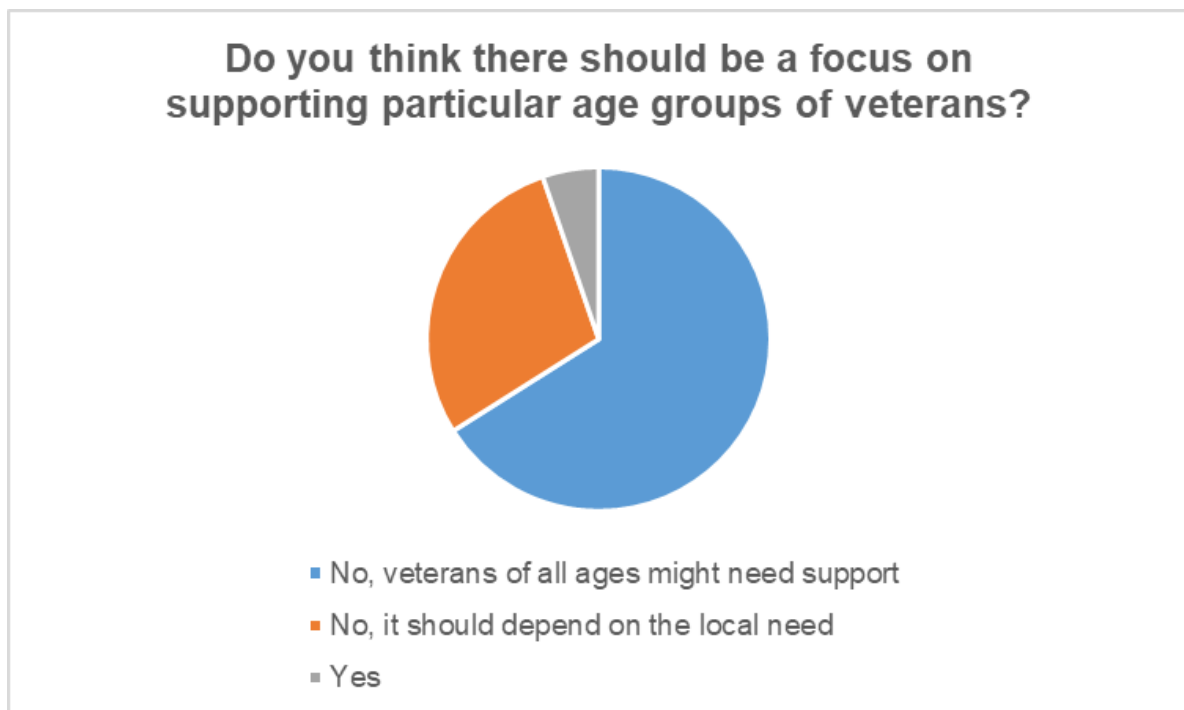


When looking at the order in which people put their choices in, veterans were overwhelmingly the most popular first choice, with 212 respondents putting them first. Armed Forces families followed, with 22 choosing them as their first choice.

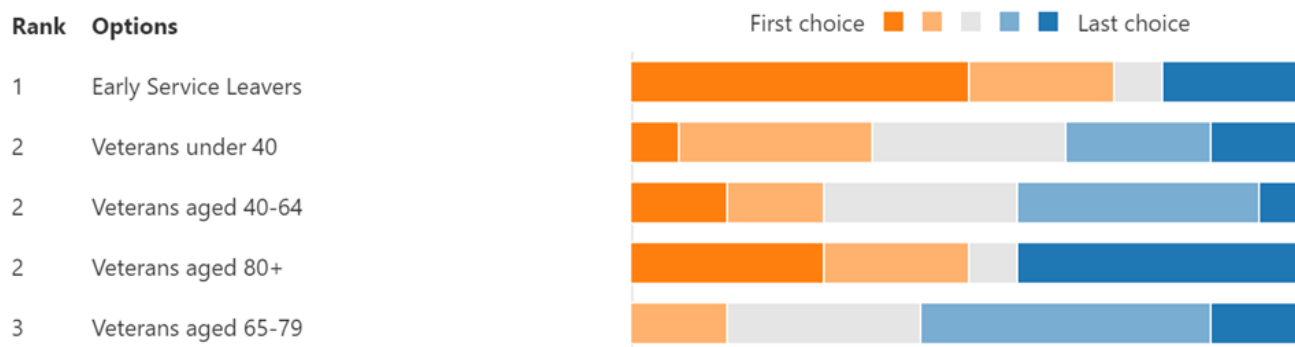
Some respondents chose 'other' as their first choice, and their answers included homeless veterans, reservists, all children and young people and the idea that all groups are important.

When asked if there should be **a focus on supporting particular age groups of veterans?** People thought that there shouldn't be. All respondents answered this question. 94% of respondents felt there should not be a focus on the age of veterans supported through funding programmes.

	Number of responses	% responses
No, veterans of all ages might need support	175	66.0%
No, it should depend on the local need	76	28.7%
Yes	14	5.3%



The 14 respondents who felt that some ages groups of veterans should be a priority were asked an additional question, asking them to rank five age ranges of veterans from top to bottom in the order that is most important to them.



There was most support for the concept of supporting projects that help early Service leavers, however, only a small sample of respondents felt that age range should be a consideration.

We asked **What would you like the small grants programme to do to help make life easier for Armed Forces families? By families, we mean those with and without children.**

This question was answered by 265 respondents. Word frequency analysis was conducted, and the 10 most frequently used words are in the list below.

	Number of times word used in responses	Percentage of respondents using this word
Support	133	50%
Families	112	42%
Community	86	32%
Children	42	49%
Projects	41	15%
Help	39	15%
Family	38	14%
Services	36	14%
Activities	35	13%

Top 10 themes identified on funding relating to families



- Community projects
- Relationships with civilian community
- Access to wider services
- Suggestions regarding how a funding programme is run
- Mental health
- Help in transition to civilian life
- Ensure good community facilities are available (capital projects or hubs)
- supporting veteran families
- Activities that people can do as a family
- Access to skills and learning

The full list of identified themes and the frequency of which they were raised by respondents, is in the table below.

Community projects	60
Relationships with civilian community	57
Access to wider services	42
Suggestions regarding how a funding programme is run	34
Mental health	27
Help in transition to civilian life	24
Ensure good community facilities are available (capital projects or hubs)	24
supporting veteran families	16
Activities that people can do as a family	16
Access to skills and learning	16
support when moving to a new area	15
Education support projects	13
Developing support networks/friendships	13
Childcare	12
Help when partner on deployment	8
Providing direct items of support	8
Don't know	6

Support that can follow people as they move around the country	6
Short breaks	6
Carers	6
Projects supporting separated families	5
Intergenerational projects	5
Support during deployment	4
Support projects that support the whole family; not just the individual	4
Not engaging with services because they don't know they are available	4
Helping WIS families	4
Community development workers	3
An MOD responsibility	3
Make sure activities are accessible to people who work	3
Support projects that have been shown to work	2
Projects supporting reservist families	2
Disagree with funding being used for family projects	1

The top ten issues are examined below in more depth.

Theme	Summary of responses	Typical comments
Community projects	Funding should be made available for projects that take place in the local community and provide social activities, bring people together and build social networks	<i>"Make access to social activities and inclusion easier"</i> <i>"Generate activities, events and support to negate loneliness and isolation in their local communities."</i>
Relationships with civilian community	Building stronger links with, or reducing barriers that exist between, local Armed Forces and civilian communities. Enable veteran families and families transitioning out of the Armed Forces to develop more confidence and knowledge in engaging with civilian families. Enable friendships to develop between Armed Forces and civilian families	<i>"Help better integration and involvement in their local community. Provide a comprehensive guide to what help groups, clubs and facilities available within their community."</i> <i>"Understand the civilian world around them better and how to navigate it."</i>
Access to wider services	Support for Armed Forces communities to be able to have better access to public services and support run by Armed Forces families. This appears to be a significant issue for families transitioning out of the Armed Forces as well as for veterans.	<i>To raise awareness of and support access to support and welfare providers - the provision is there but people often don't know about it or can't access it.</i>

Theme	Summary of responses	Typical comments
Suggestions regarding how a funding programme is run	<p>There were several suggestions regarding ease of funding, incorporating co-design. There are differing views on who should be eligible. Some respondents would like eligibility to be restricted to small local charities only. Others would like it to be wider.</p> <p>There were also comments about people being able to access more help to make an application for funds.</p>	<p><i>I would like the small grants programme to be open to a wide range of organisations including local authorities that can help support families - both in the statutory and charity sector (I think it is important that non service charities who also support the armed forces community can access funds - its shouldn't be only those that are specific Armed Forces charities</i></p> <p><i>Enable engagement and access to existing veteran support group. Not the big charities where the money is just sat on. Smaller groups and charities actually helping face to face, when the help is needed, not after 6 months of paperwork and only then if they are lucky.</i></p>
Mental health	<p>Support for projects to address mental health needs, target specific mental health problems such as anxiety, have projects that promote good mental health and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Consider the needs of spouses, carers and young people.</p>	<p><i>The programme should support organisations that can engage with parents and families to provide new skills and new insights to promote mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and good mental health. Projects should specifically target the most disadvantaged parents and families in our community, including those who do not readily engage with mainstream services because they lack confidence, or feel alienated from the wider community, regardless of the reason(s).</i></p>
Help in transition to civilian life	<p>These responses address several challenges that families can experience when leaving the Armed Forces, and a range of practical suggestions (such as helping people build social networks in the areas that they settle in) and emotional/ wellbeing support</p>	<p><i>Supporting families around transition to civvy street. Ensuring children who have had multiple school moves are given support academically if needed.</i></p> <p><i>Support groups to help to integrate recent veterans and their families.</i></p>
Ensure good community facilities are available (capital projects or hubs)	<p>These responses considered the need for physical spaces for Armed Forces families to meet and included capital funding for community centres and children's play facilities. It also included suggestions regarding ensuring that families and veterans had drop-in facilities or breakfast clubs to meet within</p>	<p><i>To help support veteran groups that have set themselves up to do this, i.e. if they have use of a building, help to pay costs of any refurbishments or upgrading of facilities for disabled people and baby changing facilities if required.</i></p> <p><i>Enhance social, recreational and sporting facilities which separation (from serving spouses/parents) and remote locations often exacerbate compared to the general population</i></p>

Theme	Summary of responses	Typical comments
Supporting veteran families	Answers highlighted the needs of spouses of veterans, and of wider veteran's families, particularly where the veteran has needs.	<i>support for family members managing the issues the veteran is facing</i> <i>limited support for spouse dealing with veterans with life changing injuries</i>
Activities that people can do as a family	Answers explored the importance of supporting activities that all in the family could enjoy together.	<i>Activities which can be done together as a family as well as addressing individual needs.</i> <i>Provide opportunities for partners and children of Armed Forces families to get -together to chat/play/do an activity as a means to share experiences.</i>
Access to skills and learning	Answers focused on skills development, mainly as a route to move towards employment for Armed Forces partners and veterans.	<i>Support key issues such as childcare / employment training for spouses and partners / issues affecting dispersed families</i>

Within the other themes raised were issues that impact upon equality of access to support. Childcare issues raised included creche-type provision to enable parents to take part in community projects or support groups. There were suggestions that not all projects should run in the daytime, as this excludes people who work. Nine responses specifically raised the issues that Armed Forces families can face when moving to a new area. There were also requests for more support to be made available to families when the serving partner has been deployed and this included specific references to supporting Reservist families where the partner has been deployed.

Some of the grants that we have made through the Local Grants programme support community engagement around Armed Forces bases. This includes projects that encourage military and civilian communities to develop closer relationships. Do you think this is something that we should keep supporting?

This question was answered by 265 respondents. 70% agreed that funding for community engagement projects in the areas surrounding Armed Forces bases should be supported. Only 7% said that it shouldn't be supported.

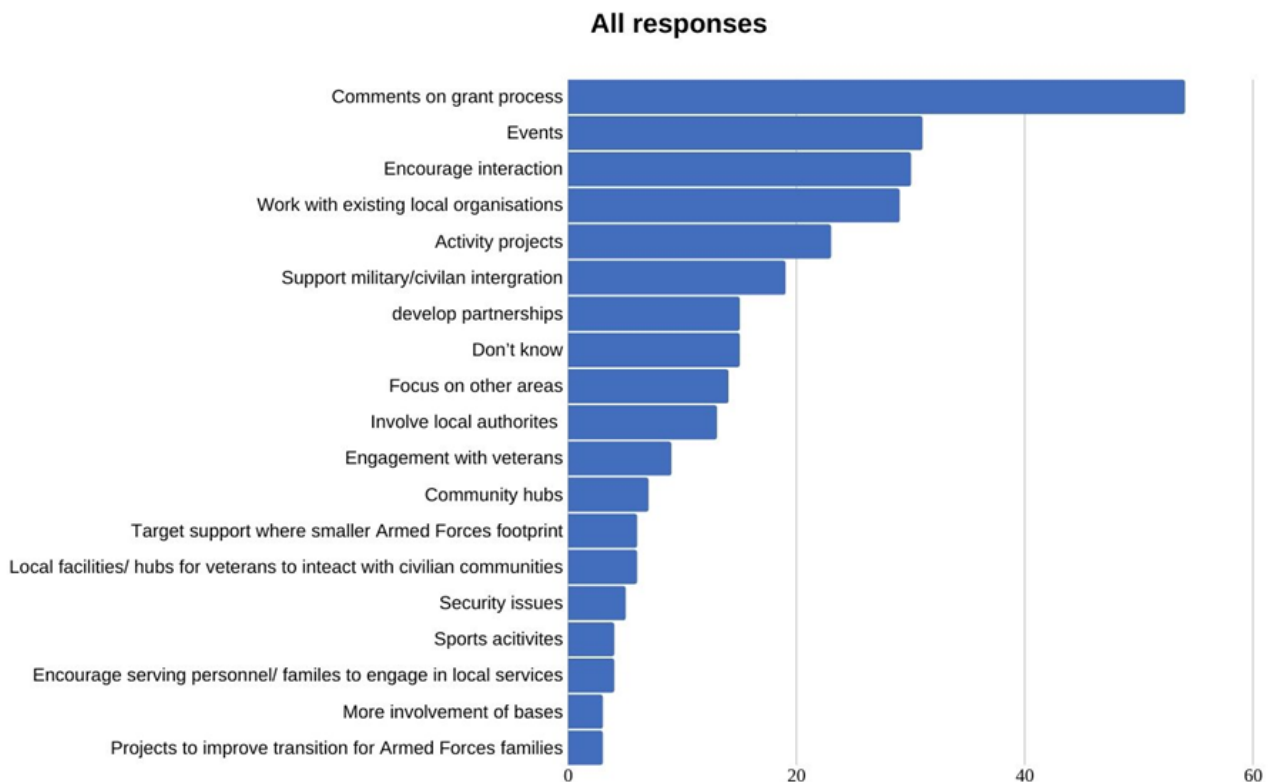


How can we best make grants to support community engagement around Armed Forces bases?

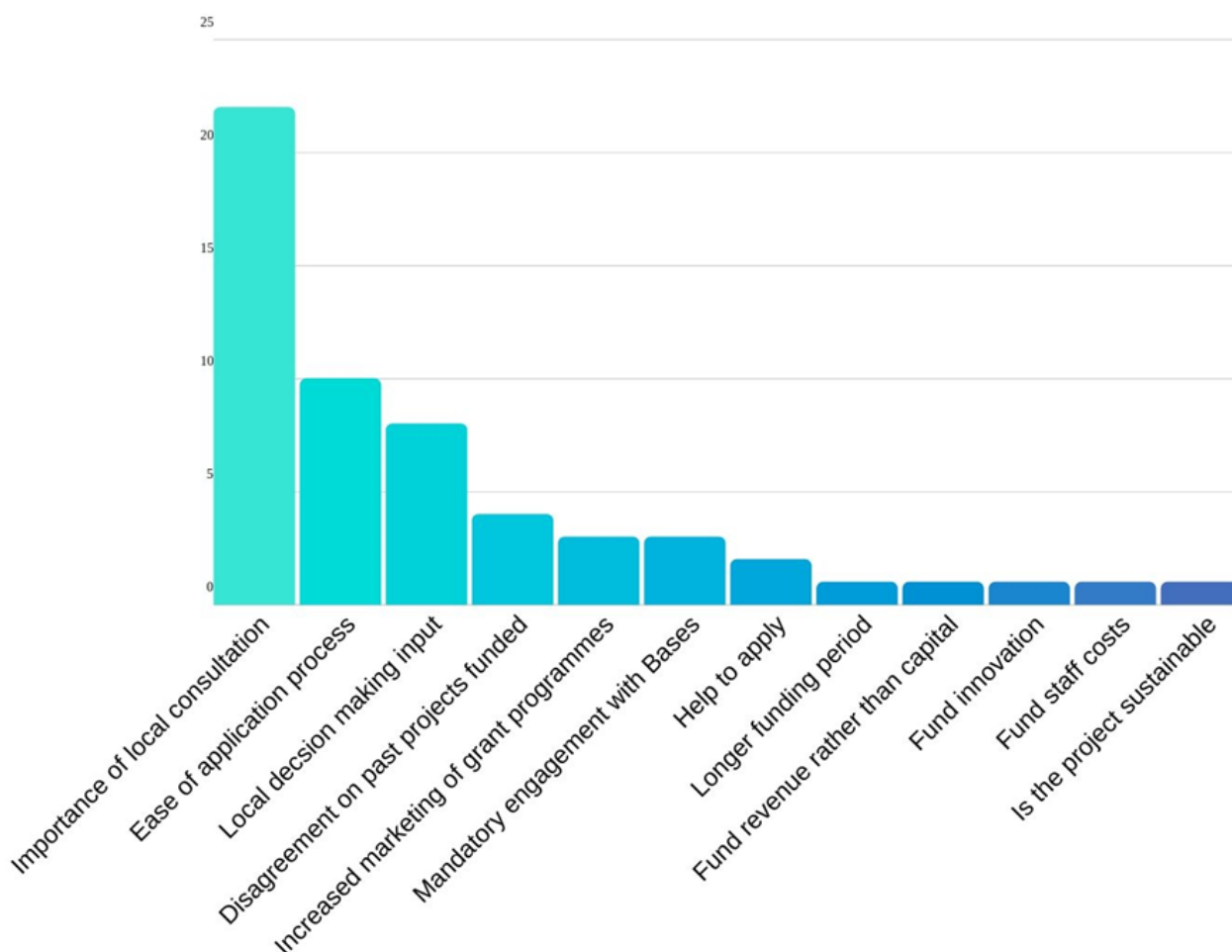
234 people responded to this free text question. Key issues related to comments on grant process, funding local events for Armed Forces and civilian personnel to engage together, funding activities, and the importance of local partnerships.

The largest category of comments related to grant process issues. This was further broken down into sub-categories. Ensuring that funded projects were based on effective local consultation was the biggest issue raised. Views were also expressed on making the application process simple and the importance of local involvement in decision making; but these only formed a small proportion of the responses received.

How can we best make grants to support community engagement around Armed Forces bases?



Breakdown of responses on grant process



The table below explores the top ten issues in more depth.

Theme	Summary of responses	Typical comments
Grant process issues	Local consultation and proper engagement with communities, families and veterans is important. The application process should be simple and there should be some local involvement in decision making.	<p><i>By exploring individual needs and requirements through consultation with individuals or representatives of Armed Forces personnel.</i></p> <p><i>Keep the criteria as flexible as possible to enable applications that meet local need and keep the application and grant monitoring process proportionate and where possible light touch. Enable applications to be made at any time of year.</i></p>

Theme	Summary of responses	Typical comments
Events	Fund a range of events including support for commemorative-type events, and more informal local community activities such as 'party in the park' events or summer fetes.	<p><i>Funding to organise whole community fun engagement events</i></p> <p><i>Allow some funding towards military-based events in town centres, such as support to Armed Forces day... VE75, councils struggle to assist these events financially, and commemorative occasions are run directly from volunteer donations. Road Closures etc, are costs that AFC volunteers shouldn't have to fund.</i></p>
Encourage interaction	<p>Fund projects that encourage positive actions between civilian and Armed Forces communities. Contained practical ideas for the types of activities that might be supported.</p> <p>These answers also contained reflections by respondents of the survey on how interactions between communities have affected them.</p>	<p><i>Update community centres encourage families to mix with each other. Regular coffee mornings, day trips, social gatherings where everyone is made to feel welcome.</i></p> <p><i>Not sure but we need to reduce this feeling of us and them and that 'civvies' don't understand. As someone who has left the Army with MH issues, I quickly realised that the military weren't there for me anymore and if I pushed away the civvies that were trying their best to support and understand me I'd have been on my own and potentially in a very different place to what I am now.</i></p>
Work with existing local organisations	Funding could be targeted to existing organisations that have the infrastructure and contacts to deliver the activity, and may have been running the activity already, or need funding to upscale.	<i>By supporting projects which operate in the local areas and not being restrictive around whether routine costs such as staffing would be covered.</i>
Activity projects	Funding activities that can be done jointly between Armed Forces and civilian communities. Some suggestions included sharing practical skills, such as car maintenance.	<i>Support schools and community groups to develop and implement activities bringing AF and civilians together.</i>
Support military/civilian integration	Fund projects that encourage positive actions between civilian and Armed Forces communities. This was similar to 'encourage interaction', but these responses specifically referred to the Armed Forces and civilians or integration.	<i>Ensure that there are clear links between the Armed Forces and civilian communities to build understanding and relationships between the two.</i>
Develop partnerships	These answers stressed the importance of cross sector partnership work.	<i>Partnership working is key - local services/groups working with Armed Forces bases would work well but it is difficult trying to find the correct person/officer within a base.</i>

Theme	Summary of responses	Typical comments
Don't know	Included where the respondent stated that they didn't know, rather than leaving blank.	
Focus on other areas	Respondents felt that funding community integration activities around Armed Forces bases was not a priority for funding.	<i>I really do feel that the local service organisation should take it upon themselves to cater for community support amongst Service families - any funds available should be targeted at Vets who do not live local to Service bases.</i>
Involve local authorities	These responses discussed the involvement of local authorities.	<i>Support the local authorities in their Covenant work. Fund engagement events and programmes across counties.</i>

Respondents suggesting that this was not a priority formed 6% of overall responses. A word cloud was generated showing the frequency of words contained within the free text response to this question.

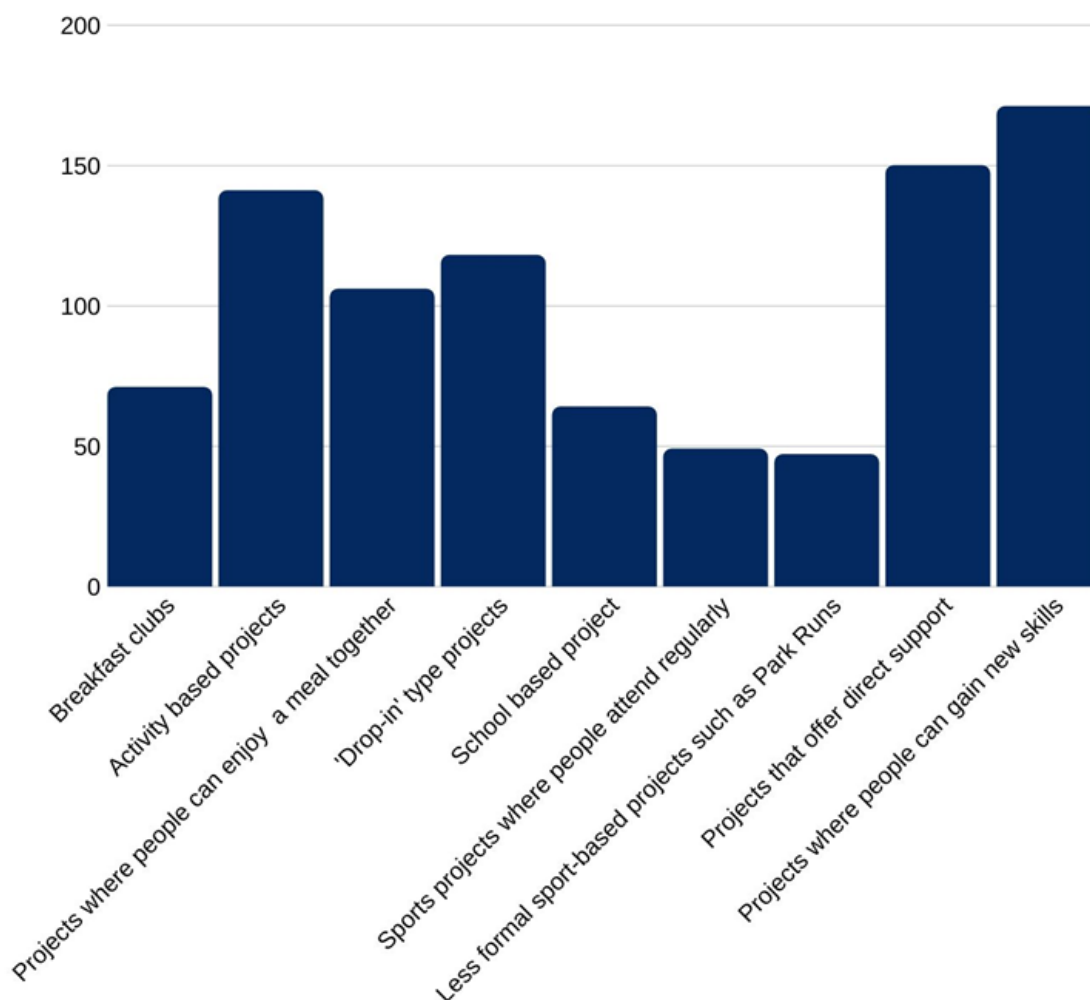


**What sorts of activities should we fund that might help reduce isolation?
Please choose three that you think would be most important to support**

263 respondents answered this question. Respondents could choose up to three options from a predefined list. Almost everyone chose three options. Projects offering new skills (19%), drop-in-type projects (13%) and activity-based projects were the most popular choices.

Breakfast clubs	8%
Activity-based projects such as shed-based projects, or projects operating out of sports clubs	15%
Projects where people can enjoy lunch or another meal together	12%
Drop-in type projects	13%
School-based projects (but not where this duplicates government provision)	7%
Sports projects where people attend regularly	5%
Less formal sport-based projects such as Park Runs	5%
Projects that offer direct support	16%
Projects where people can gain new skills	19%

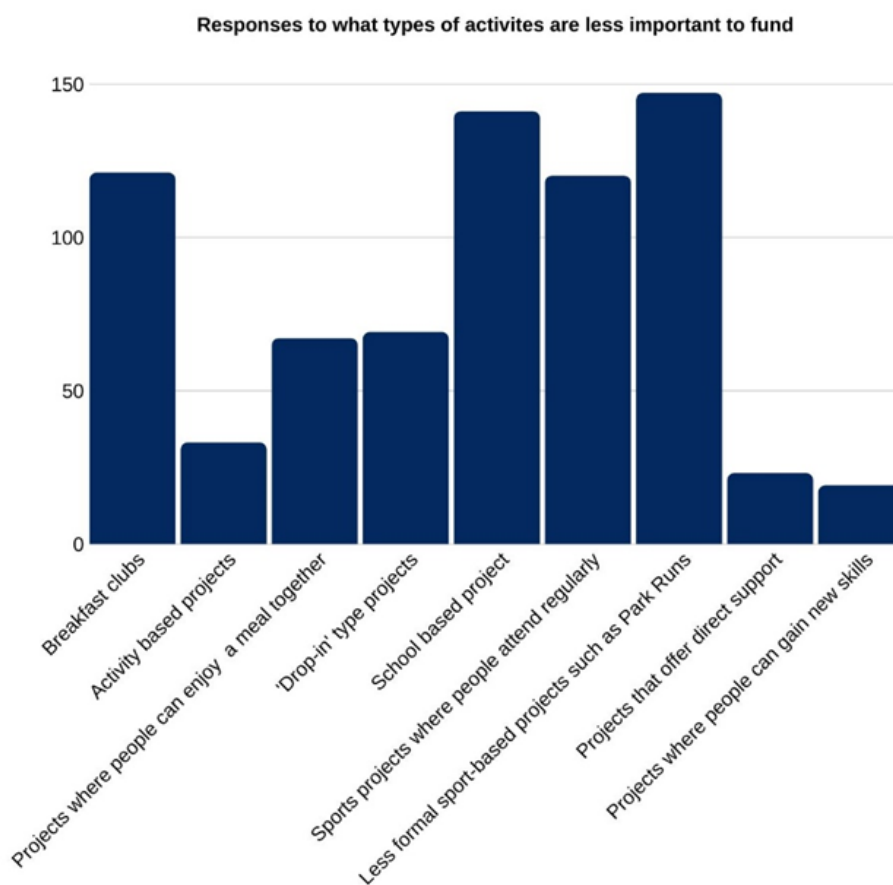
Responses to what types of activities are most important to fund



Now please choose three from the same list that you think are less important to fund

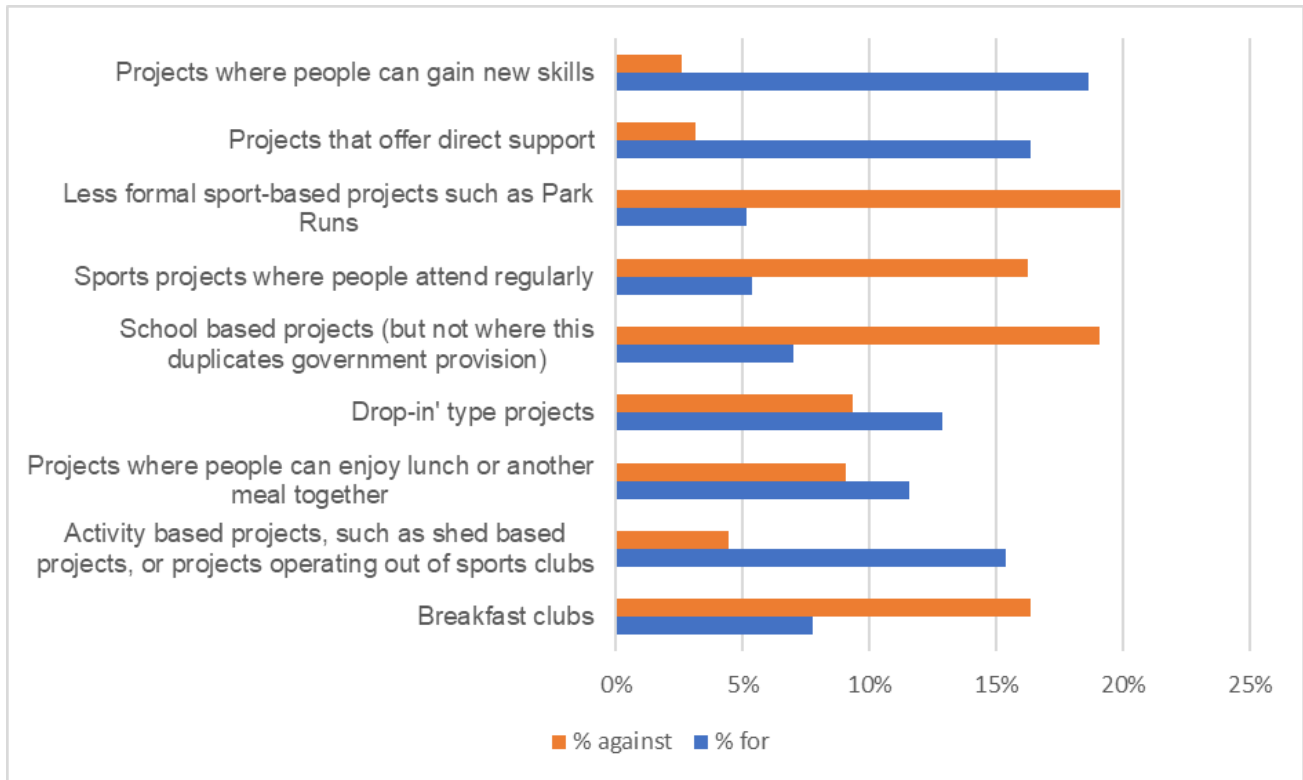
This question used the same predefined list as question 9, but this time asked people which types of activity would be less of a priority to fund. 260 people answered this question, which was fewer than question 9. Less people chose three options than on question 9.

The three areas that were less of a priority for funding were: less-formal sport-based projects such as Park Runs (20%), school-based projects (but not where this duplicates government provision) (19%) and, in joint third, breakfast clubs and sports projects where people attend regularly (both scored 16%).



Breakfast clubs	16%
Activity-based projects, such as shed-based projects, or projects operating out of sports clubs	4%
Projects where people can enjoy lunch or another meal together	9%
Drop-in type projects	9%
School-based projects (but not where this duplicates government provision)	19%
Sports projects where people attend regularly	16%
Less-formal sport-based projects such as Park Runs	20%
Projects that offer direct support	3%
Projects where people can gain new skills	3%

Comparisons were made between the data sets for questions 9 and 10, and this is represented in the table below. Projects offering skills development and direct support had high levels of support (shown in blue), and low levels of respondents identifying them as less of a priority. Drop-in and shed type projects had greater support than breakfast clubs.

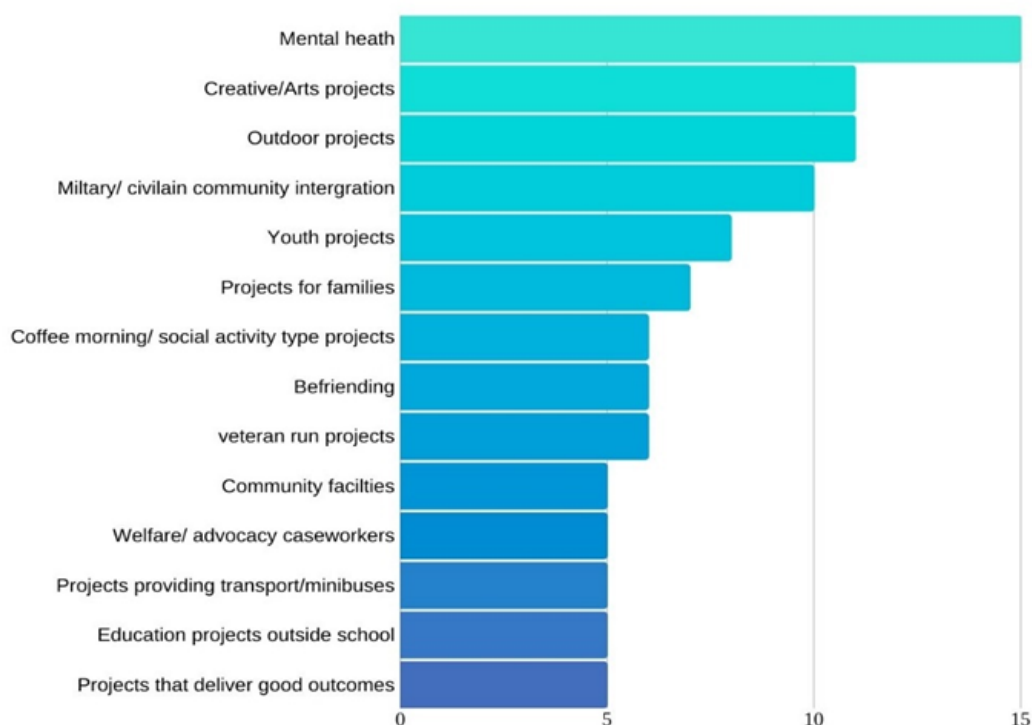


Are there other types of projects that you think we should fund?

This was a free text response question, answered by 208 respondents. Answers were coded and grouped.

The most frequently occurring answers were for mental health related projects, arts and creative projects, projects taking place outdoors, work to encourage military and civilian communities to engage and youth provision.

Highest ranking answers: Are there other types of projects that you think we should fund? (excluding no/don't know)



The full list of coded groups is below.

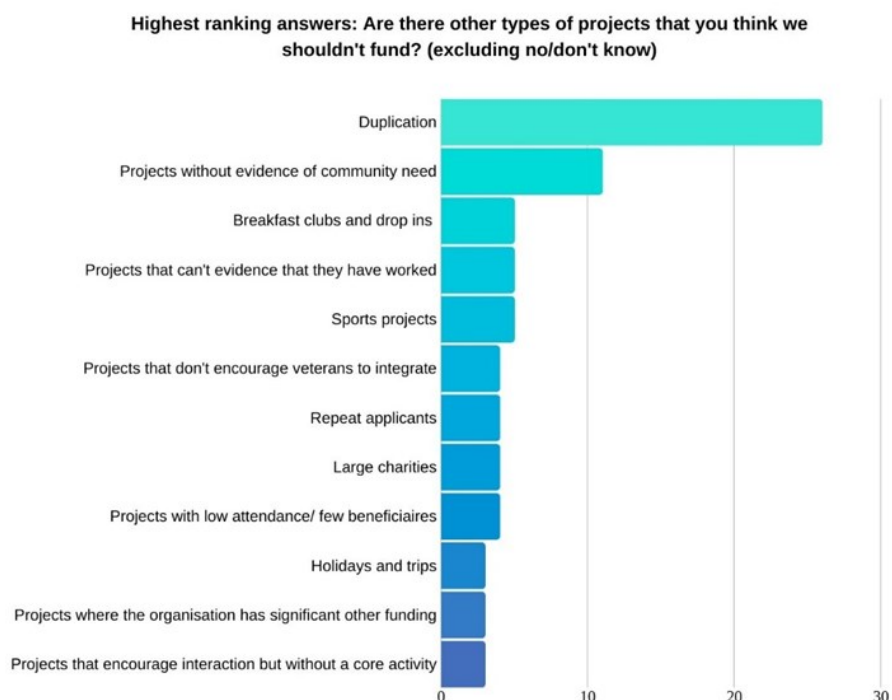
Are there other types of projects that you think we should fund?		% in category
Mental health	15	9%
Creative/Arts projects	11	6%
Outdoor projects	11	6%
Military/civilian community integration	10	6%
Youth projects	8	5%
Projects for families	7	4%
Don't know	6	4%
Coffee morning/ social activity type projects	6	4%
Befriending	6	4%
Veteran-run projects	6	4%
Community facilities	5	3%
Welfare/advocacy caseworkers	5	3%
Projects providing transport/minibuses	5	3%
Education projects outside school	5	3%
Projects that deliver good outcomes	5	3%
Remembrance projects	4	2%
Transition support projects	3	2%
Projects delivered by volunteers	3	2%
Community development workers	3	2%
Projects in schools	3	2%
Advice services	3	2%
Health projects	3	2%
Start-up funding	3	2%
Housing projects	3	2%

Are there other types of projects that you think we should fund?		% in category
Housing projects	3	2%
Projects delivered online only	3	2%
Play facilities	2	1%
Telephone-based isolation reduction projects	2	1%
Ensure partnership working	2	1%
Veterans in CJS	2	1%
Carers	2	1%
Research projects	2	1%
Veteran drop-ins	2	1%
Mentoring	2	1%
Only fund Armed Forces organisations	2	1%
Sheds	1	1%
Short breaks	1	1%
Direct grants to individuals	1	1%
Childcare	1	1%
Day trips for older veterans	1	1%
Intergenerational projects	1	1%
Choirs	1	1%
Projects for female veterans	1	1%
Disagree with funding processes	1	1%
Recruitment events	1	1%
Projects that protect or reduce risks for more vulnerable people	1	1%

Are there other types of projects that you think we shouldn't fund?

This was a free text response question, answered by 157 respondents. Answers were coded and grouped.

The largest groups of answers related to duplication, projects without evidence of community need, breakfast clubs/drop-ins and projects that cannot evidence that they have worked.



The largest overall answer was no/don't know; and it is interesting that respondents generally were more likely to tell us what to fund, than what not to fund.

Duplication was a key area. Within this, most of the answers relate to where projects may duplicate services that others are offering. There were concerns that mental health projects offering support may be duplicating NHS provision. There were also concerns about Covenant funding picking up areas that MOD should be responsible for.

Within this data set there were some negative comments regarding household name charities that have received prior grants.

The full list is below.

Are there other types of projects that you think we shouldn't fund?		% in category
No/ Don't know	41	27%
Duplicated work	26	17%
Projects without evidence of community need	11	7%
Breakfast clubs and drop-ins	5	3%
Projects that have failed/ can't evidence that they have worked/ limited impact	5	3%
Sports projects	5	3%
Projects that don't encourage veterans to integrate	4	3%
Repeat applicants	4	3%
Large charities	4	3%
Projects with low attendance/ few beneficiaries	4	3%
Holidays and trips	3	2%
Projects where the organisation has adequate reserves or significant other funding	3	2%
Projects that encourage interaction but without a core activity	3	2%
Memorials	2	1%
Religious projects	2	1%
Mental health related projects without proper oversight in place	2	1%
Projects run by non-Armed Forces organisations where veterans are bolted on	2	1%
Cadets	2	1%
Digital only projects	2	1%
Research projects	2	1%
Direct grants to individuals	2	1%
Projects without Local Covenant Partnership support	1	1%
Projects that do not offer progression for people and just offer an activity	1	1%
Expensive projects	1	1%
Breakfast clubs held in pubs	1	1%
Projects not affiliated to the Veterans Gateway	1	1%
Projects that are not sustainable	1	1%
Art and plays relating to PTSD	1	1%
Indoor only projects	1	1%
Projects where funding is used to pay salaries	1	1%
Projects that don't work collaboratively	1	1%

Are there other types of projects that you think we shouldn't fund?		% in category
Capital projects	1	1%
Organisations that are not charities	1	1%
Fun days	1	1%
Shed projects	1	1%
Political projects	1	1%
Education projects	1	1%
New charities	1	1%
Self- seeking projects	1	1%

How should we fund projects?

Within this section, we asked questions about the size of grants, whether projects that have received a previous grant should be able to receive more funding and how we might be able to support organisations to apply for smaller sized grants.

Question regarding size of grants (Please give us your views on the following questions relating to the Armed Forces Covenant: Local Grants programme)

Respondents in this section were given the following information.

We currently fund projects with a value of up to £20,000. Most of the grants we make are for £18,000 to £20,000 as this is the amount of funding that projects ask for. On other programmes that we run; we offer larger grants. Applications for programmes where organisations can get a bigger grant are more complicated as we need to get more information.

We will fund costs of running activities and this can include staff costs where this is an effective way to make sure that the project can take place.

We have a fixed amount of funding that we can spend each year. If we make smaller grants, we might be able to fund more projects across the UK, but these projects might have less of an impact.

We are interested to know what you think is important.

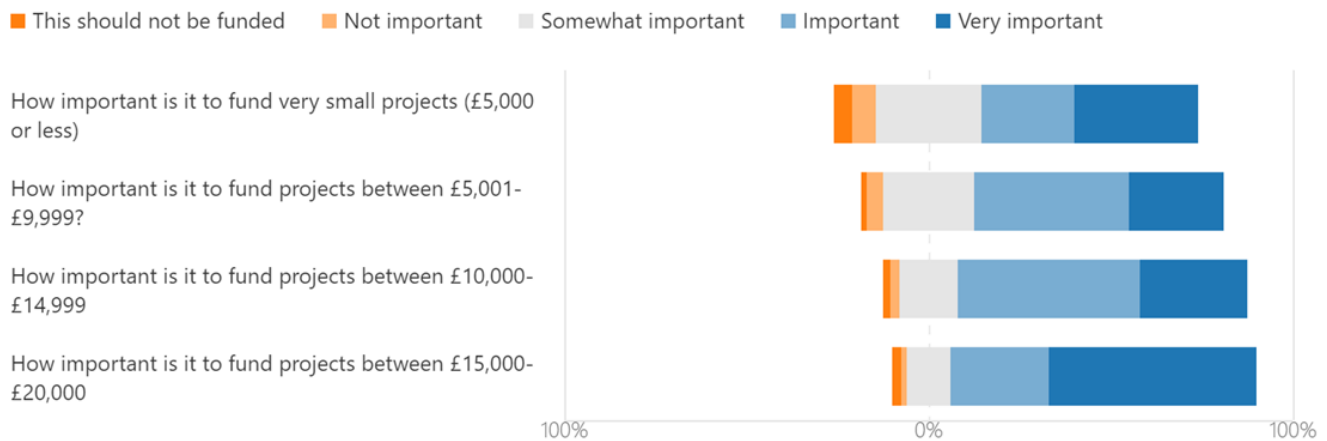
Respondents were asked to fill in the following table.

	This should not be funded	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How important is it to fund very small projects (£5,000 or less)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How important is it to fund projects between £5,001-£9,999?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How important is it to fund projects between £10,000-£14,999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How important is it to fund projects between £15,000- £20,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

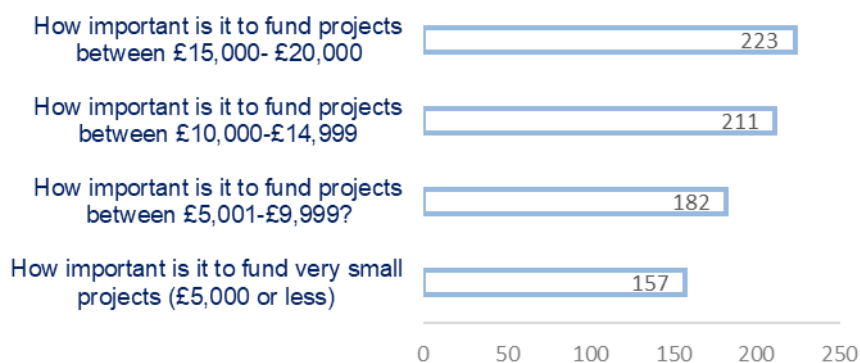
This question was answered by 265 people. The results were as follows.

	How important is it to fund very small projects (£5,000 or less)	How important is it to fund projects between £5,001-£9,999?	How important is it to fund projects between £10,000-£14,999	How important is it to fund projects between £15,000-£20,000
Very important	90	69	78	151
Important	67	113	133	72
Somewhat important	77	67	42	31
Not important	17	11	7	5
This should not be funded	14	5	5	6

Respondents considered grants in all size categories to be important, but there was considerable support for grants in the £15-20K categories.



Combined important categories



There is appetite for smaller grants being offered, but larger grants are the most popular.

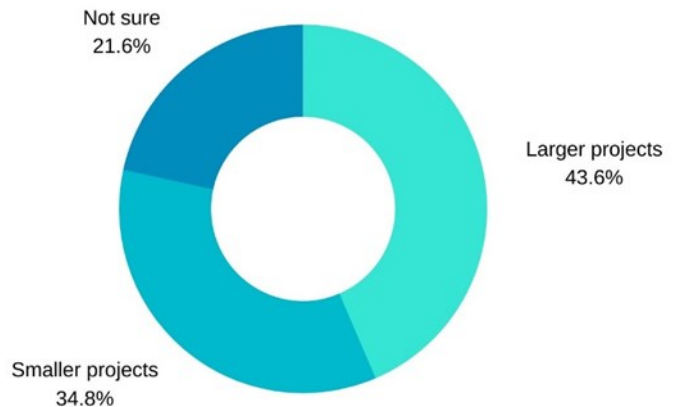
39 respondents chose 'very important' across all categories. One respondent chose 'this should not be funded' across all categories.

Should we try to fund larger or smaller projects?

265 respondents answered this question and were given the choice of three answers.

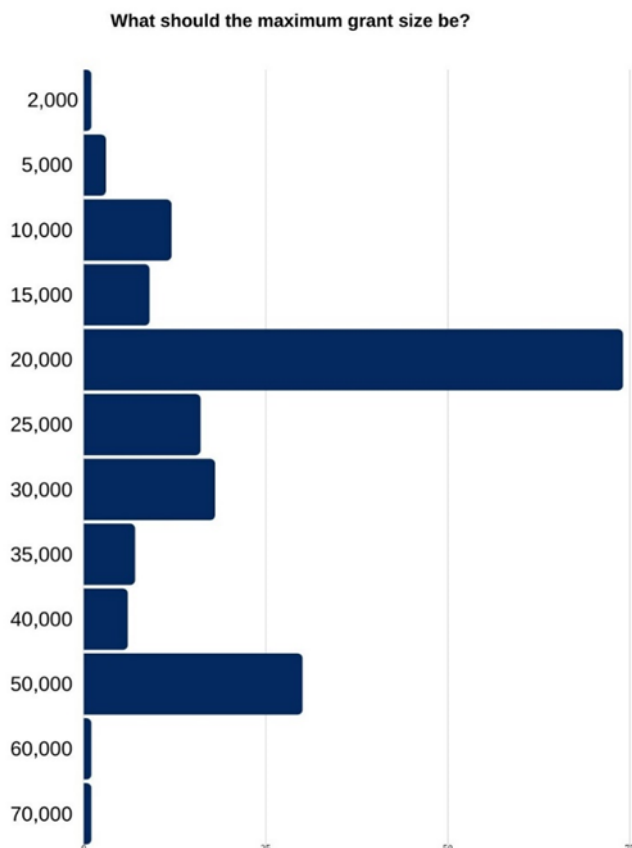
- Larger projects at £20,000. This gives projects more funding so they can achieve more.
- Smaller projects. This means that more projects get supported.
- Not sure.

Funding larger projects, even if less projects are supported overall, was the most popular option, though there was still support for the concept of funding smaller projects.



What do you think the largest size of grant that we make under this programme should be?

This was a free text response question answered by 246 respondents.



30% of respondents chose £20,000, which is the current upper limit of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Local Grants programme.

38% chose a figure which is above the current upper limit of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Local Grants programme.

10% of respondents chose a figure which was lower than the current level of £20,000.

Several respondents gave narrative responses. Where they gave a range of grant size (such as £30,000-£50,000) the largest of these figures was selected. Once this data had been reviewed, 48 responses, or 20% of this group, had given answers which did not specify a figure.

Some of the narrative responses suggested that respondents were considering the size of grants in general rather than as a small grant programme.

Size of grant	Number of responses	% response
2,000	1	0.4%
5,000	3	1.2%
10,000	12	4.9%
15,000	9	3.7%
20,000	74	30.1%
25,000	16	6.5%
30,000	18	7.3%
35,000	7	2.8%
40,000	6	2.4%
50,000	30	12.2%
60,000	1	0.4%
70,000	1	0.4%
80,000	1	0.4%
100,000	11	4.5%
200,000	1	0.4%
300,000	1	0.4%
Unsure	5	2.0%
Narrative-only answer given	48	19.5%

Please tell us why you think this

This question asked people to consider the reasons behind their answer to the previous question. 234 people responded to this free text question, and the responses were analysed and coded.

Key issues raised were ensuring that projects had the right level of resource to make a difference, and this might mean awarding larger amounts of funding, or funding over multiple years. Some respondents felt the focus should not be on the amount of grant, but rather the impact that this would have on beneficiaries. 28% discussed the current upper limit of £20,000 and felt this was adequate.

Some people felt that grants should be at a level to fund suitably qualified staff. People who expressed this view had mainly given a figure of more than £20,000 in the answer to question 15.

Larger grants than £20,000 give more resources to projects and/ or offer multi-year grants	78
£20,000 is the right amount	66
It should be enough to properly support veterans/ beneficiaries	31
Fund less than £20,000; this gives funding to more organisations	25
It should be enough to fund suitably qualified staff	13
Offer continuation funding on top	3
Have a small grants and medium grants pot	2
Be wary of funding short-term solutions	2
The upper grant size should rise each year in line with inflation	2
Don't fund staff costs	2

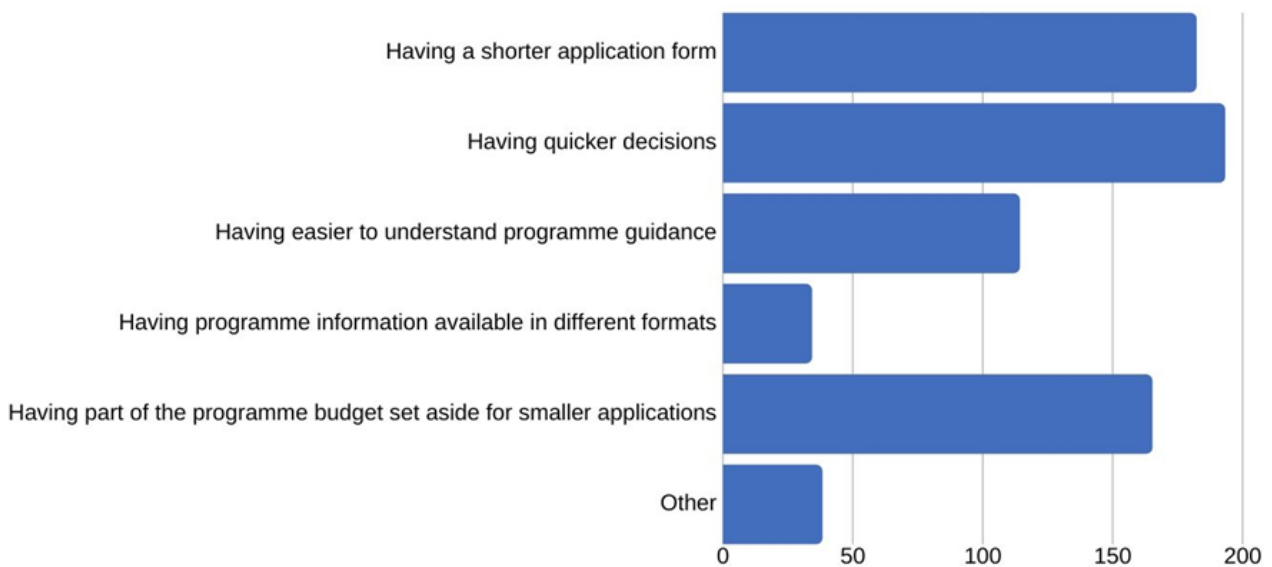
Run a childcare bursary scheme instead	1
Enough to make a project sustainable so that it doesn't need more funding in future	1
Have a funding programme for hubs and fund them continually	1
Be wary of applicants applying up to the upper grant limit	1

Which three items on the list below do you think are the most important things we can do to encourage more smaller applications?

263 respondents answered this question where they were asked to choose three items from a pre-defined list, plus an 'other' option. The most popular answers related to quicker decisions, a shorter application form and having part of the budget set aside for smaller applications.

Having quicker decisions	193	27%
Having a shorter application form	182	25%
Having part of the programme budget set aside for smaller applications	165	23%
Having easier to understand programme guidance	114	16%
Other	38	5%
Having programme information available in different formats, such as videos	34	5%

How can we encourage more smaller applications for funding?



What do you think is important for us to consider? Please rank all these statements in order, with the most important item for you at the top, and the least important at the bottom

254 respondents answered this question. They were asked to rank a series of statements from most to least important. The statements were as follows.

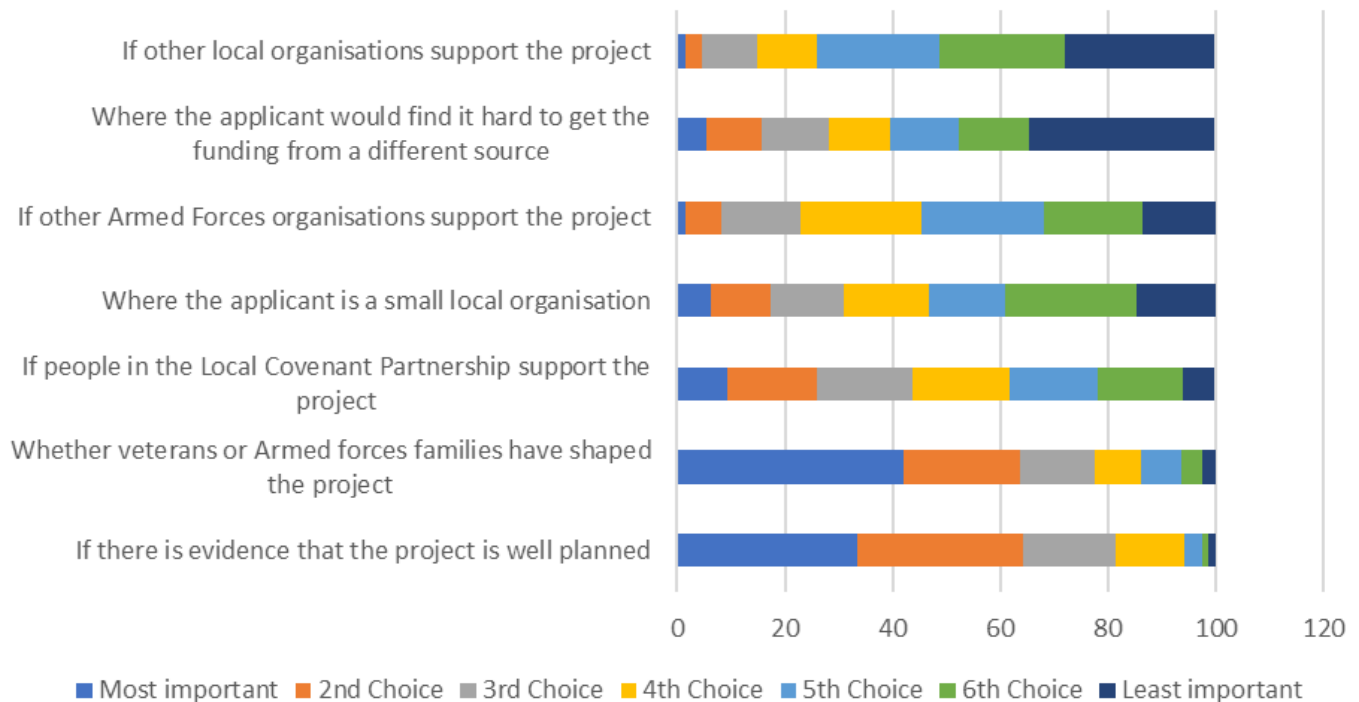
- Whether veterans or Armed Forces families have shaped the project.
- Where the applicant is a small local organisation.
- If there is evidence that the project is well planned.
- If other local organisations support the project.
- If people in the Local Covenant Partnership support the project.
- If other Armed Forces organisations support the project.
- Where the applicant would find it hard to get the funding from a different source.

Ranked top to bottom, based on averages of scores, respondents ranked the statements in the following ways.

1-top score	If there is evidence that the project is well planned.
2	Whether veterans or Armed Forces families have shaped the project.
3	If people in the Local Covenant Partnership support the project.
4	Where the applicant is a small local organisation.
5	If other Armed Forces organisations support the project.
6	Where the applicant would find it hard to get the funding from a different source.
7- bottom score	If other local organisations support the project.

The statements regarding *If there is evidence that the project is well planned* and *Whether veterans or Armed Forces families have shaped the project*, were ahead by a significant margin.

What's most important to consider?



Respondent views on a range of statements

Respondents were asked to tell us what they thought about the following statements.

Having a quick decision on an application is important.
It's ok for projects to get funding for staff costs where this will enable the project to take place.
Projects should not always be new; it's a good idea to give support to ideas that work.
Projects that have had a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund should be able to apply for another grant for the same activity if it has made a difference.
All applications should be considered against the same criteria.
There should be different criteria depending on different needs in different areas.
Projects that are working with other organisations locally in collaboration should be supported over projects that are working on their own.

They were asked to select a response for each statement: disagree strongly, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, agree strongly. 265 people responded to this question.

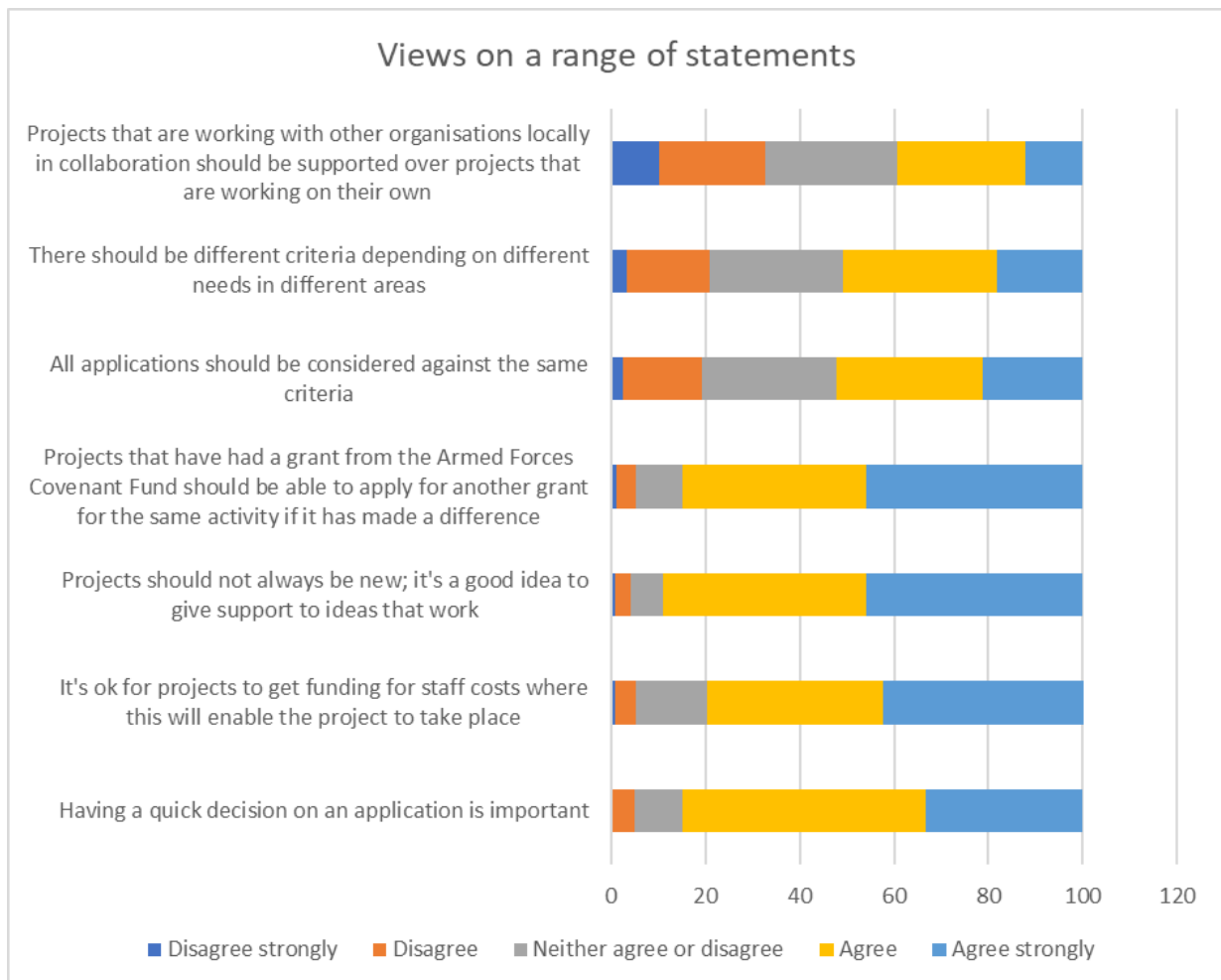
The statements with the greatest amount of overall support and the lowest number of negative scores were as follows.

- It's ok for projects to get funding for staff costs where this will enable the project to take place.
- Projects should not always be new; it's a good idea to give support to ideas that work.
- Projects that have had a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund should be able to apply for another grant for the same activity if it has made a difference.

These were the statements that people disagreed with most.

- There should be different criteria depending on different needs in different areas.
- Projects that are working with other organisations locally in collaboration should be supported over projects that are working on their own.

However, there was still a range of support for these statements. There are points of consideration on how a local grants programme is consistent, but considers local needs. The dissenting views on the collaboration statement are interesting, as partnership working and avoiding duplication scored highly in response to other questions.



Do you think we should give funding to projects we've previously supported if they are working well?

265 people answered this question.

73% answered yes, give extra support. When both 'yes' categories are combined, the figure rises to 90%.

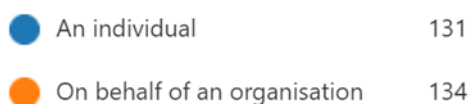


Who took part in the consultation?

Veterans were the largest group of individual respondents to the consultation and made up 21% of respondents across the survey. Local charities or CICs that support the Armed Forces community were the largest group of organisations that responded, with 15% of the overall sample. Local authorities were the second, with 11% of the overall sample.

Are you completing this survey as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

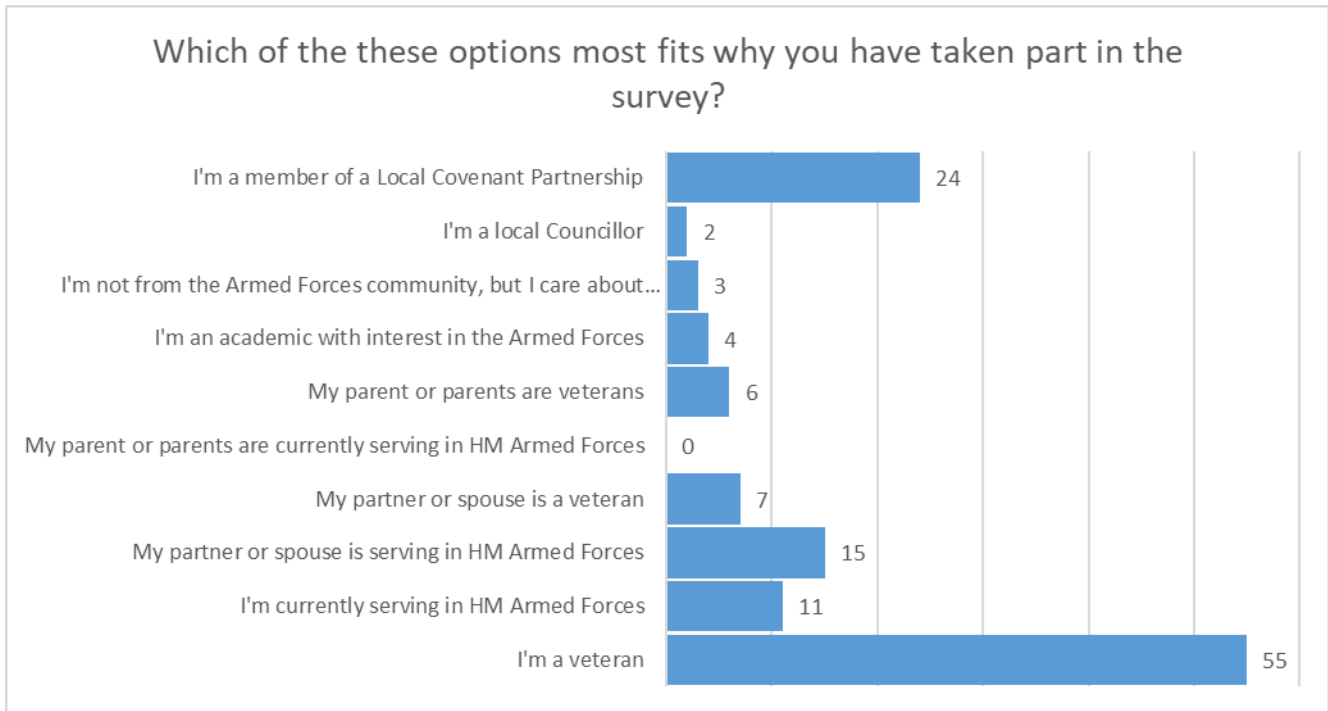
The number of responses from organisations (51%) was only slightly higher than the number of responses from individuals (49%). 265 people responded to this question.



Please can you tell us which of these options most fits the reason why you have taken part in this consultation?

This question was only asked of the 131 people who identified themselves as completing the survey as an individual. 127 people answered this question.

Veterans were the largest group of respondents and made up 21% of respondents across the survey.

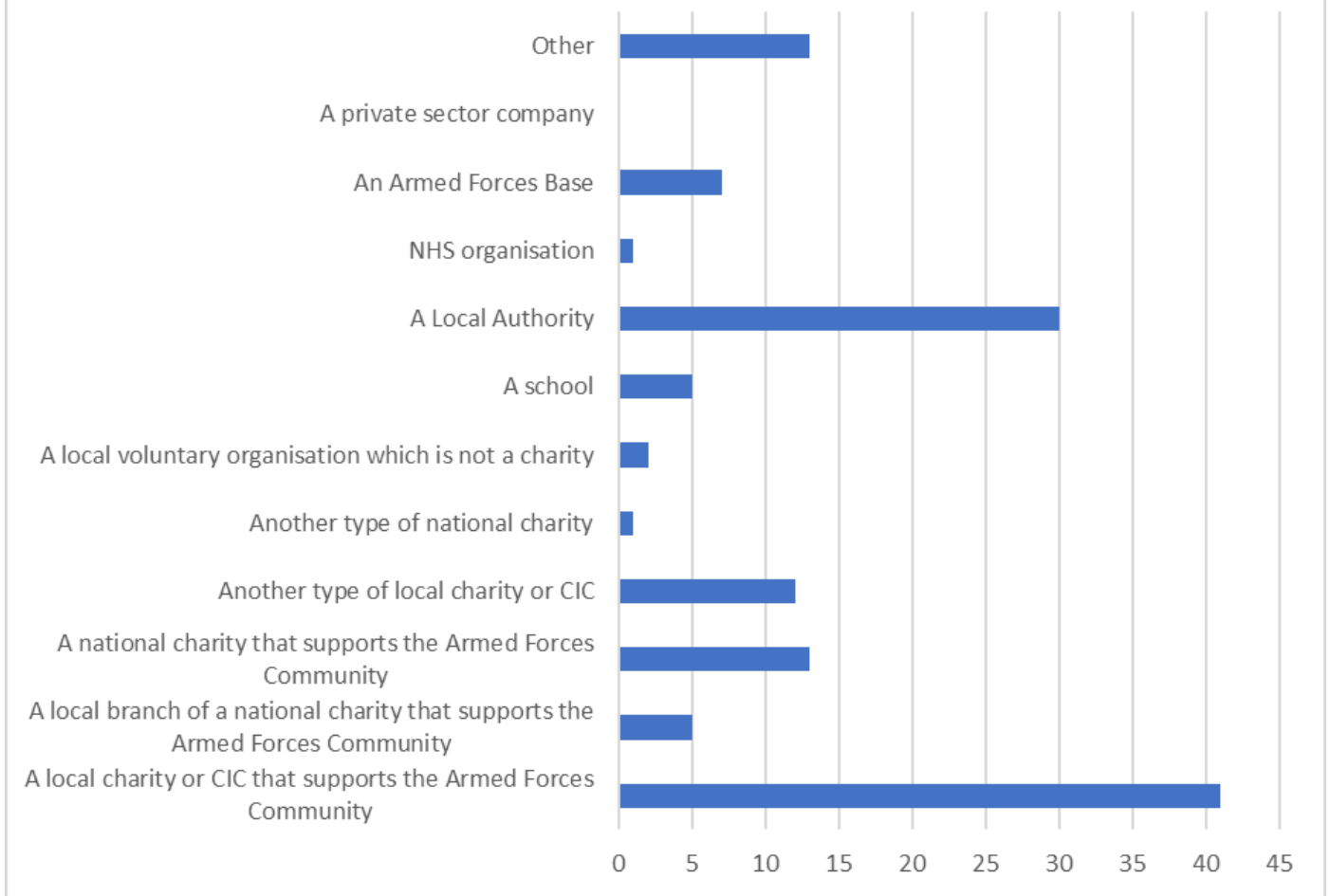


Please tell us what type of organisation you are from

This question was only asked of the 134 people who identified themselves as completing the survey on behalf of an organisation. 130 people answered this question.

Local charity or CIC that supports the Armed Forces community was the largest group of responses with 15% of the overall sample. Local authorities were the second with 11% of the overall sample.

Please tell us what type of organisation you are from

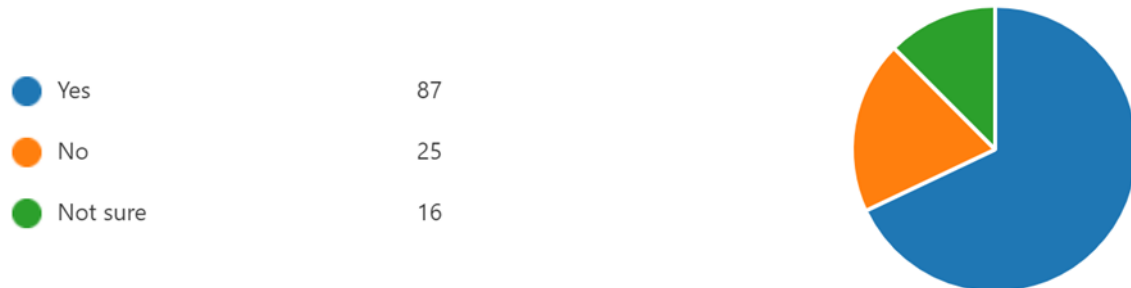


11 organisations who selected the 'other' category identified themselves, and the list is as follows.

Local Voluntary Council
MOD Civil Service (AWS)
Town/community council
Active Partnership
WLGA - SSCE Cymru
Veterans' charity
Veterans' sports team
University
Housing association
The Royal British Legion
Argyll and Bute Armed Forces and Community Partnership

Are you a member of the Local Covenant Partnership in your area?

Respondents were asked if they were a member of the Local Covenant Partnership in their area, 128 responded, with most of this sample choosing yes. This means that 33% of all respondents to the consultation were part of their Local Covenant Partnership.



Where in the UK are you located?

261 people responded to this question, with most choosing England.



Questions regarding past experiences of applying for a local grant

In these questions, we wanted to understand people's past experience of applying for a grant so that we could gather views and ideas to help us improve in future. Most people who took part in the consultation had not previously applied for a grant.

Have you applied for an Armed Forces Covenant Fund grant previously?

260 people responded to this question. 57% had not previously applied for a grant.



Were you successful in your application?

This question was only asked of people who replied 'yes' to question 26. 108 people responded to this question. 76% of the people who applied for a grant had been successful in their application



For your most recent grant application, can you please tell us if this was...



This question was asked to see if there were any differences in answers between people who had applied for a grant recently, rather than longer ago. 111 people responded to this question.

Views on the grant application process

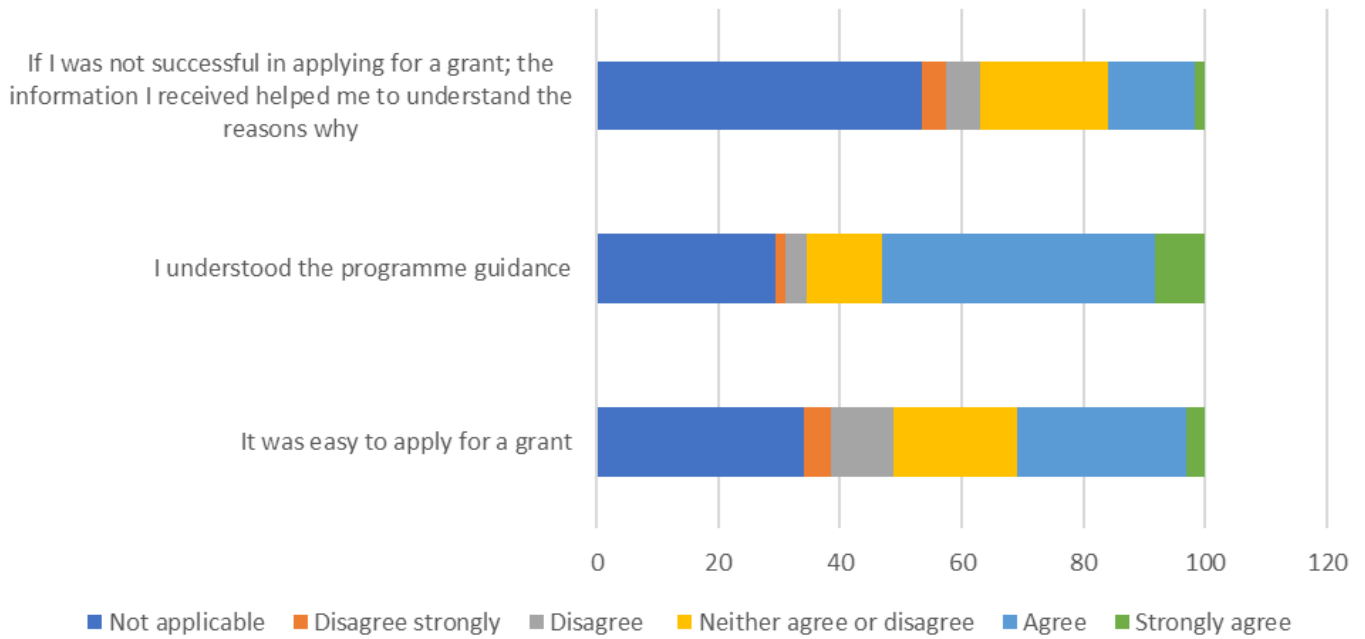
Respondents were asked to please tell us what they thought about the following statements.

It was easy to apply for a grant
I understood the programme guidance
If I was not successful in applying for a grant, the information I received helped me to under-

They were asked to select a response for each statement: disagree strongly, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, agree strongly. 233 people responded to this question.

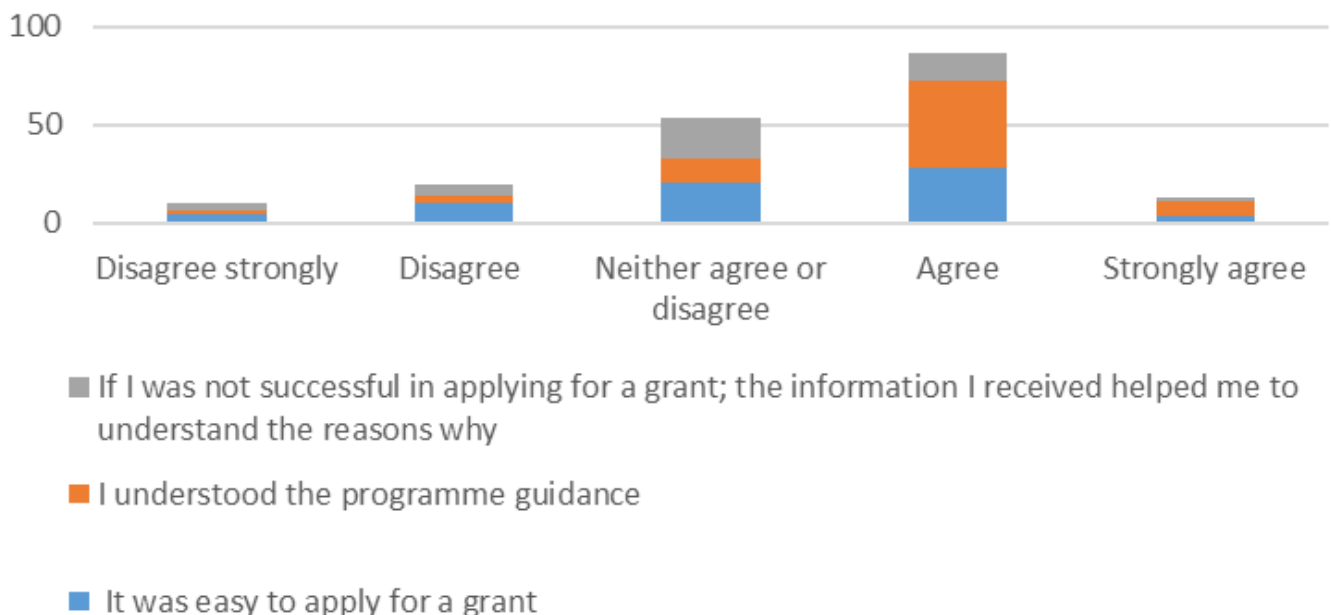
The largest sections of response were 'not applicable'.

The grant application process; all responses



With the 'not applicable' removed, the largest area of responses reflect broad satisfaction, or neutral feelings, towards the grant application process. The numbers of people giving an option on the phrase *If I was not successful in applying for a grant, the information I received helped me to understand the reasons why* was relatively low; but this reflects the high numbers of the sample that were successful in applying for a grant as indicated in the earlier question.

Grant application process (not applicable responses removed)

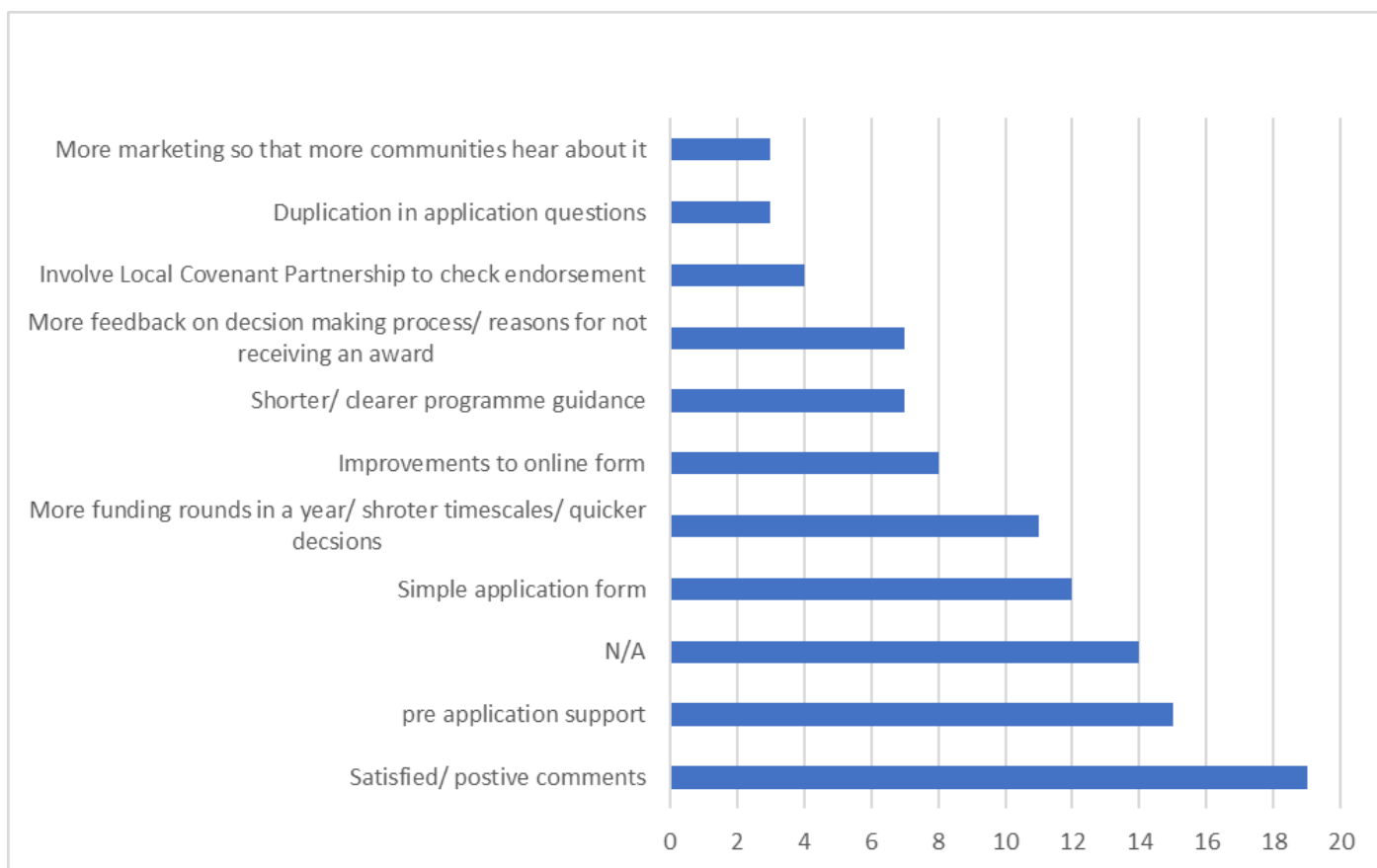


Data relating to the question *It was easy to apply for a grant* was cross referenced against the data from an earlier question which explored when people applied for their most recent grant.

Satisfaction with the grant application process has risen over time. 45% were satisfied with the process before April 2018, but this rose to 69% after April 2018. The percentage of dissatisfied applicants fell from 34% to 14%.

Please tell us if there is anything we can do to make our application process easier

This was a free text response question answered by 129 people. Answers were analysed and coded. The largest areas were comments expressing satisfaction (7%, of responders against the whole survey sample), requests for more pre-application support (6%) and a simpler application form (5%).



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



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