



Office for
Veterans' Affairs

Afghanistan Veterans Fund

**Supporting comradeship,
connectiveness and engagement with
veterans: Army Regimental, Corps,
Headquarters & Associations**

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Afghanistan Veterans Fund

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE- Supporting comradeship, connectiveness and engagement with veterans: Army Regimental, Corps, Headquarters and Associations

The Office for Veterans' Affairs has asked the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) to run programmes through the Afghanistan Veterans' Fund that will award grants to improve wellbeing, resilience and promote good mental health, responding to increased needs in veterans who have served in Afghanistan and other recent conflicts and the wider veterans community

Under this programme, the Trust will award grants of either £10,000 or £35,000 to Army Regimental and Corps Associations to enable them to develop or enhance supportive comradeship, connectiveness and engagement in veterans

This guidance is specifically for organisations considering an application under this programme

This programme will award small grants to Regimental and Corps Associations to enable them to develop supportive comradeship, connectiveness and engagement in veterans. Regimental and Corps Headquarters can also apply, providing that they are charities.

This programme is only open to Army Regimental and Corps Associations. If the programme receives more strong bids for funding than can be supported, priority may be given to supporting projects within Regimental and Corps Associations where those Regiments served in Afghanistan.

You can use a grant to help you engage and support veterans and their families, offering support and comradeship particularly to those who don't currently take part in the activities that you offer. You can use all or some of your grant to help you develop better ways of reaching engaging veterans using media and digital means of engagement.

Your project should show that you can increase comradeship, connectedness and engagement of veterans who have served in Afghanistan and other recent conflicts from 2000 onwards.

Your project will need to meet the overall theme of this programme, which we have set out below.

Programme theme	Expected outcome
Increasing supportive comradeship, connectedness and engagement to improve wellbeing, resilience and good mental health	Regimental and Corps Associations will be able to have greater reach to and/or give better support to veterans from recent conflicts

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

Here's some examples of the types of projects we could support. These are just examples.

A Regimental Association has been considering how they can reach more younger veterans. Their events are very popular with older veterans who value the opportunities to come together. They would like to ensure that younger veterans have these opportunities too. They use a grant of £35,000 to help encourage younger veterans to join WhatsApp and other online engagement groups to help them better connect with each other. They also use some funding to try running sports based events and picnics that are of interest to younger veterans, many of whom have families with children.

A Regimental Association uses a grant of £10,000 to access some support to help them develop their website and train volunteers on how to maintain the website and promote digital engagement through social media. They will use the website to help them reach out wider to veterans who would be eligible to join their organisation. They use their new skills to develop online surveys and other social media activities to help them engage with this wider community of veterans and use this information to help them plan new activities that they would like to try in future.

Your project could be focused on reaching veterans from Afghanistan and recent conflicts who are connected to your linked Regiment but don't currently engage with your organisation; or it could help you offer more targeted comradeship activities to the veterans from Afghanistan and recent conflicts who are already known to you. It could also include a combination of these activities.

Your project idea does not have to be new - you can build on previous work that you have done.

We are interested in being able to share learning and insights from the projects that we support across the wider Armed Forces charity sector, and if we award you a grant; we expect you to take part in our wider evaluation of this programme, which may include working with FiMT.

Who can apply?

Army Regimental and Corps Associations that

- ✓ Are a Charity that is registered within the UK
- ✓ Had an income of £25,000 or over in their last published accounts
- ✓ Are able to run projects that encourage comradeship or *fostering esprit de corps*

What can you apply for?



You can get a grant of £10k or £35k to help you

Reach veterans from Afghanistan and recent conflicts who are connected to your Regiment but don't currently engage with your organisation

or

Deliver more targeted comradeship activities to veterans from Afghanistan and recent conflicts who are already known to you

You can also do both of these activities

Your project needs to be focused on comradeship; which can include building connections across your veteran community

You could use a grant to

Use digital media to engage with more veterans

Use digital media to encourage more veterans to interact with each other

Offer face to face activities for veterans

Or do something else, as long as it is clearly related to building comradeship, and meets our programme guidance

Why we are running this programme

On 6 September 2021, the Prime Minister in response to the situation in Afghanistan announced in the House of Commons that

“Just as they kept us safe, so we shall do right by our veterans. we are providing another £5 million to assist the military charities that do such magnificent work, with the aim of ensuring that no veteran’s request for help will go unanswered”

This Fund, known as the Afghanistan Veterans’ Fund was awarded to the Office for Veterans’ Affairs and aims to increase capacity in services and initiatives that offer supportive comradeship, engagement and wellbeing efforts for those in the Armed Forces community impacted by events in Afghanistan, and the wider veterans community.

The Office for Veterans’ Affairs has asked the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to administer this Fund and grant decisions will be made by the Afghanistan Veterans Programme Board.

Who can apply

To be eligible for this funding under this programme your organisation must

- Be a Regimental or Corps Association that supports a specific Army Regiment (we explain more about what we mean by this below)
- Be a UK registered charity that had an income of more than £25,000 in your last published accounts. You need to be up to date with all of your reporting to the Charity Commission (or OSCR or CCNI).
- That there is a clear reference within your governing document to show that you offer Comradeship activities to veterans (we explain more about what we mean by this below)
- If you are applying for £35,000, you will need to be able to show that the size of grant you are seeking would not be increasing your organisation’s annual income by more than 50% (we explain more about what we mean by this below)

Be a Regimental or Corps Association that supports a specific Army Regiment

You'll need to tell us which Regiment your organisation supports. Regimental and Corps Associations linked with regiments and corps can be located at corps and regimental headquarters. We'll need to be able to see that your organisation has a clear and longstanding relationship with a specific Army Regiment in your organisation's governing document.

Have a clear reference within your governing document to show that you offer Comradeship activities to veterans

Regimental and Corps Associations carry out a range of good works and activities to support their Regiment, and those who are currently serving or have served. Under this programme we are looking to support projects that help boost comradeship and connectiveness between veterans. We therefore need to be able to see that these activities are included within the objects for your charity.

Your organisation will have charitable objects that set out the type of activities you can do. You'll need to confirm to us that you can carry out comradeship type activities under your governing document, as some Regimental and Corps Charities are specifically focused on fundraising, or the operational efficacy of their linked Regiment. These are not activities that we can support under this programme.

Example:

A Regimental Association has *Fostering esprit de corps and comradeship* as part of its charitable objects. They carry out social gatherings and other membership activities. They would be able to apply for this programme (as long as they met the other criteria)

If you are applying for a grant of £35,000 you must show that the size of grant you are seeking would not be increasing your organisation's annual income by more than 50%

Some Regimental and Corps Associations have modest incomes. The smallest grant you can apply for under this programme is £10,000. You can apply for a fixed grant of either £10,000 or £35,000 only.

If your organisation would like to apply for a grant of £35,000; you must have had an income of £70,000 or higher in your last published accounts. Your grant cannot increase the income of your charity by more than 50% based on your reported income in your last set of accounts.

What can funds be spent on?

Under this programme, we'll make grants of £10,000 or £35,000. You'll need to be able to finish your activities that you carry out with your grant within 12 months or less.

Within your application, you need to tell us about the costs of your project.

We can pay for most of the things you'll need for your project or activity, whether it is people's time, costs of delivering work online or buying/hiring equipment.

It's highly unlikely that we'll fund projects with budgets that are dominated by capital costs. We would not expect to fund the costs of purchasing a vehicle, but we would pay for mileage costs on vehicles used by your staff and volunteers.

Your project might include the following costs.

- Staff time, including time-managing volunteers that may be involved in your project.
- Sessional staff or freelancers that you may need to run your project and activity.
- Appropriate clinical supervision for workers who are supporting vulnerable individuals
- 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 its services.

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 Afghanistan Veterans Fund, or because of relevant legislation or tax rules.

- Where funding is not benefiting veterans or other people from the Armed Forces community.
- Making grants or donations of money or vouchers 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.
- Capital costs such as buildings or land, or large items such as minibuses
- Investments.
- Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity.
- Fundraising costs, including organising fundraising events and 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
- 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.

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 is making	
What are we looking for?	How your project would boost Comradeship and connectiveness among veterans (and their families)
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities you would do if you were awarded a grant • How this would help you to engage with veterans from Afghanistan and recent conflicts who don't currently engage with your organisation And/Or • How this would help you to offer more targeted activities to boost comradeship and connectiveness activities with veterans from Afghanistan and recent conflicts

Delivery of your project	
What are we looking for?	That you have the skills and experience to run your project.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That your organisation is well run and well managed • That you'll be able to start your grant activity quickly • That you can manage risks effectively

How to apply - the application form

You need to apply through our online application form. You can use this [link](#) to access it.

If you don't have an account for our online application portal, then you will need to create one. On our system, you can save a draft application form to complete later or send a draft copy to colleagues. You can also access copies of the application that you've submitted at any time.

Please ensure you click 'Submit' once you are ready to submit your application rather than just 'Save'. When you submit your application, you'll receive an email confirmation. **If you do not receive this, then you have not applied.** If you are not sure whether your application has been submitted, you can check the submitted applications section on your grants portal.

You will need to submit your application by 9am on 10 March 2022, and you'll receive a decision before the end of March 2022.

We cannot accept any late applications.

We highly recommend you plan to submit your application before the deadline to avoid the risk of missing the cut-off because of technological or other unexpected problems.

It's important that we can contact your organisation, particularly, of course, if you receive a grant. You will need to provide two contacts from your organisation on the application. At least one of these should have an email address that belongs to your organisation. At least one contact must hold the relevant authority (CEO or equivalent) to authorise any grant contract and bank account to be used should you be successful. The main contact must have an email address that belongs to your organisation. If this is not provided, your application may be considered ineligible.

Please think carefully about who these should be, as they will need to be able to sign acceptance of the grant and use of the bank account on the Offer Letter/ Terms and Conditions if your application was successful.

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.

Checks we may carry out on your organisation and accounts

We may carry out several checks on the information you provide us. This is to make sure that the information is correct and there are no significant risks we can identify when awarding grants.

These may include checks:

- on whether financial information on your application form matches that held by your regulatory body (Companies House, Charity Commission etc.)
- that your governing documents (such as constitutions and memorandum and articles of association) are up to date, correct and properly signed
- on your accounts that are accessible through regulatory bodies
- on any identified concerns about a person named as a contact or who has a position within your organisation
- that your organisational name and address on your bank statement are consistent with the details you've provided in any completed form or the information that's held elsewhere in the public domain
- that your bank statement shows that your account is being managed in line with your own financial procedures and our programme requirements, and
- that the signatories are valid and well informed about the project
- on your published accounts and on your website/social media activity that your organisation is undertaking the activities as described in your application.
- to ensure you are up to date on all reporting with any active grants you hold with the Trust.

We may ask you to send us additional information or answer specific questions about your organisation. If we ask you to do this, you'll need to send us this information within five working days.

Working with delivery partners

If you are already working with other organisations who will receive any part of the grant, then you need to read our guidance below on delivery partners.

A delivery partner is an organisation which is either:

- receiving part of the grant OR
- their involvement in the project, through providing resources or some other means, is critical to the delivery of the project.

Role of the lead organisation

The organisation that submits the application is the lead organisation. It will have legal responsibility for all funding we award and will be financially accountable for any funds that may be distributed by the lead organisation to delivery partners.

Delivery partnership agreements

If we award you funding and you plan to work with one or more delivery partners, it will be a term and condition of your grant offer that you have a formal signed partnership agreement with them. If you're successful, the draft delivery partnership agreement must be approved by us and finalised prior to any funding being released. We may request changes to the draft agreement before it's finalised. You can find guidance on what a [delivery partnership agreement](#) should include on our website.

After you submit your application

You will get an automated email to confirm that your application has been submitted.

If you have not received this email, then your application was not submitted successfully. Please log back into the portal to submit it.

The Trust 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 issues, we are unclear about – please do not assume any contact or lack thereof is an indication of your likelihood of being successful or declined.

The Trust will review the information you provide in your application and, where relevant, data and information from the Charity Commission, Companies House or other regulators' websites relating to your constitution and recent audited accounts. We may also look at other publicly available sources such as your organisation's website and social media activity.

After submitting your application, you must advise the Trust of any significant changes in your organisation, its governance or finances which might impact on our consideration of your application.

We will assess your application against the key criteria of the programme.

Final decisions will be made by the Afghanistan Veterans Fund Programme Board, who will review the applications, using balancing criteria in addition to the key criteria. The balancing criteria include the relative strength and value for money of the project when viewed as part of a national portfolio of projects.

Funds are limited. Therefore, the Programme Board will use their discretion to choose which projects to fund, ensuring a good spread of funded projects and to differentiate between projects that are considered fundable.

Please note: they may also take the decision to part-fund proposals (this may involve awarding less money than was applied for).

After the Programme Board 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've been awarded a grant.

Our [terms and conditions of grant](#) can be accessed on our website. If we offer you a grant, you will need to confirm that you will follow these terms and conditions of grant before we can release any of your grant to you. You must also make sure that the Trustees and senior staff within your organisation know that you are submitting this grant application.

If we plan to fund your project, you'll need to accept our grant offer and the terms & conditions of the grant **within four weeks of receiving the offer letter** or risk the offer lapsing.

We will email you in the first instance to advise you that you have been successful. This email will give you full instructions of what you need to do next in order to receive your official offer letter, how to accept the grant and what documents you need to provide. We may also invite you to a post award webinar to provide you with further information and answer any questions you may have.

Once we have all the necessary documents back, we will pay the first instalment of your grant. If there are any discrepancies/queries within these documents, this will delay your payment, so please read the accompanying information we provide, thoroughly. Grants will be paid in instalments, and the number and size of these will depend on the size and duration of the grant. A small proportion of the total amount awarded will be retained pending a satisfactory End of Grant report.

If you receive a grant, you will need to keep good records of how the funds were spent and how many people you helped and how. We will ask you to report on this later.

If we're not able to fund your project, we will write to you to tell you this.

If you have any questions relating to this programme, please look at the programme information that we have on our website.

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