

 THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund

FORCE FOR CHANGE PROGRAMME



Programme Guidance



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Force for Change 2022-23

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) will award grants of up to £10,000 for local projects which support Armed Forces communities

Why are we running this programme?

Through this programme, we fund projects which make a real difference to Armed Forces communities locally. We will support projects that offer support to Armed Forces communities to help with needs that may not have been addressed in the past. This can also include funding for pilot projects; or to try new ways of offering local support. It can also include projects that build on earlier work that you have done

This year, we'll support ideas that need small amounts of funding to deliver changes or improvements for Armed Forces communities. We want to hear from those who know the most about what is needed and that's why this year we are running such a broad programme.

If you apply for a grant, you need to show how this would help specifically help to address compelling or specific needs in a meaningful way; and where you can clearly tell us about the current gap that exists in provision and why this project might help.

Your project will need to

- Address a specific need for Armed Forces communities within your local area
- Be able to be completed within a year or less
- Be able to show that the people from Armed Forces communities that your project will work with have helped to design the project, and would take part if you received funding

You will also need to tell us about what change your project will make. We are particularly interested to hear about changes that last beyond the life of your grant.

Project ideas do not have to be new. The programme will welcome continuation or extensions of existing work where this provides a clear benefit.

We are seeking to fund projects that are targeted on meeting local needs quickly. If we award you a grant, we expect you to begin your work within a month from signing your terms and conditions.



FORCE FOR CHANGE 2022/23

Grants of up to £10,000 for local projects that respond to hidden or compelling needs within Armed Forces Communities.



Be local

Your project should clearly focus on people from Armed Forces communities within a local area. This might be within a town or city



Support Armed Forces Communities

Armed Forces communities include Serving personnel, including reservists; Armed Forces families and Veterans, and their families



Be specific

Tell us what specific needs people have, and why your project will address them. These might be needs that are hidden or less well understood; or could be needs that are well known.



What will your project change?

What impact will your work have; and will there be longer term benefits that survive beyond the life of the grant

Which organisations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible for this funding, you must be:

- a registered charity or Community Interest Company (CIC) with substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities and have been registered for at least a year at the time of your application
- an Armed Forces unit or base
- a local authority
- a school
- a statutory body that delivers or co-ordinates NHS care

Substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities means that either the governing documents of your organisation state that you specifically work with people from Armed Forces communities, or that you can show that working with veterans, Armed Forces families or serving personnel is a significant and regular part of your existing work.

If you are a CIC, you must have been registered for over a year at the time of your application, that is, long enough to have a set of published accounts. You'll need to send us a copy of your most recent accounts with your application form.

Your organisation must have a minimum of three unrelated trustees (for charities) or directors (for CICs) and this must be verifiable on the relevant charity regulator or Companies House website.

Local Authorities are welcome to apply for direct delivery of projects that have clear and direct benefits for local Armed Forces communities (not for general work related to the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant).

If you are a school, your project must be focused specifically on children from Armed Forces families; rather than the whole school community. You'll need to tell us in your application what proportion of children in your school are from Armed Forces families and what their needs are. We will consider applications from schools with small proportions of children from serving families if they have particular needs that are not met through other sources. You can only apply as an individual school. An overarching academy chain or Trust cannot apply.

Statutory bodies that deliver or co-ordinate NHS care are eligible to apply. This includes hospital trusts and co-ordination organisations that address access to healthcare as part of their work. Organisations that fall within this category cannot apply for statutory healthcare delivery work; or for work that has a core focus on the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant.

UK Armed Forces bases and units that are located overseas are welcome to apply, but only UK-based charities and CICs that meet the eligibility criteria can apply under this programme.

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

- An individual.
- An Academy Trust - you cannot apply for an overarching project across your academy chain, though individual schools can apply.
- A charity or CIC, which doesn't have substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities or is newly registered.
- Other public sector organisations - but you could work with one of the types of organisation listed above as a delivery partner.
- A charity that is based overseas.
- Community organisations that do not fit any of our eligibility criteria; such as a sports organisation which is not a charity or CIC
- A private or for profit company

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

We will fund a wide range of projects under this programme

Your project will need to show that

It is needed: We need to know why you need this funding and the difference it will make. Please show us that your work will not be duplicating other work that is happening and tell us if it fills a gap in support locally.

It helps people from within the Armed Forces community to address a specific need that they are experiencing: This could be a need that is more hidden or less well understood; or a need that is well known. It should address a specific challenge that people are experiencing in a meaningful way.

It was developed with people from Armed Forces communities: Show us how the idea for your project has been shaped by the people it will benefit. We can consider projects that support serving personnel, veterans and Armed Forces families.

It will support longer term change: This means that there should be a wider impact to your work; with change that will endure beyond the life of your grant. Your project should be able to show that it offers a positive benefit.

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

You can work together with other organisations as part of your project. There is more information on working with others later in this guidance.

It is important that the projects we award funding to complement one another rather than duplicate provision. You'll be asked in your application form how you will ensure this.

This programme will not support projects based around:

- therapies
- advice services
- clinical services
- projects that don't clearly meet the programmes aim

A strong application would be able to show:

- how many people your project is likely to help
- what the specific needs are of the people that your project would help
- how you will reach the people who you'd like to support through your project
- how you know that your proposed support is additional/complementary to support that others are providing (at the time of your application).

If your project involves delivery with children or vulnerable people, you will need to ensure that you manage relevant risks, such as relevant safeguarding training to ensure keep people safe.

If we award you a grant, we will list your project on our app, the AFCT Project Finder, which makes it easier for people to find projects we've funded in their local area.

If you do receive a grant, it will be for activities taking place within the 12 months following your award and only can be used to fund the project that you have detailed in your application form.

Working with others

You can work with other organisations as part of your project. If any of the organisations that you will be working with will receive part of your grant, then you need to read our guidance below on delivery partners.

A delivery partner is an organisation which is either:

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

Role of the lead organisation

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

Delivery partnership agreements

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

Working with local organisations

Local Covenant Partnerships (LCPs) are formed of the public, charitable, voluntary and business sectors and representatives from the Armed Forces for each area of England, Scotland and Wales, and are administered by local authorities.

Your local authority may have an 'Armed Forces Champion' or someone in a similar role who should be your first point of contact.

We encourage projects that we fund to work with LCPs to ensure the projects we fund are well-connected and needed locally, and do not duplicate other provision.

It's really important that you think about what you will do after the end of our grant. Some projects are able to develop in a way which doesn't need additional funds to continue. They may be set up to deliver a project that will only take place for a specific period of time, to meet a specific need.

Example project

A number of Armed Forces families have moved to the local area and don't live close to the base. Many of these families have children under 5. A local charity, which has worked with the base in the past, talks with the families about what would be helpful. The families would like to be able to make some friends in the local area and have an activity that is suitable with young children. The charity applies for funding for a parent and toddler group, but makes it open to families from non-Armed Forces families too, enabling the families to meet more people within the local area and develop friendships.

The group seeks funding for a year, which covers the set-up costs and training of volunteers to run the project in the longer term.

Example project

A veterans' community centre is concerned that some older veterans in their area have become more isolated. They work with the veterans to set up a gardening project, encouraging older veterans to take part in activities outside and mix with others in a safe way. They encourage the older veterans to engage with wider projects in the local community, where they can bring their skills and experience as volunteers. At the end of this successful project, the veterans who have taken part report that they feel healthier, and half of the veterans are involved in wider groups within the local community.

We are interested in the longer term impact of the projects that we fund. We call this sustainability.

We want to fund projects with sustainable benefits. There are different ways in which sustainable benefits can be achieved.

Some projects might have a clear plan to be able to finance future work through grants, social investment, social business models or commissioning; once they have been able to run an effective pilot to see if a new approach does work.

Some projects may focus on the legacy value for the people who take part in their projects; looking to address complex issues or engage in effective preventive work targeted at those who might be at risk of crisis. At the end of the grant, people who have taken part in these projects would be in a far stronger position than they were at the beginning of the project; and more able to live the life that they want to have. For these projects, it's important to have clear plans on how you will measure the impact of your work. The Trust has an Impact Hub, and you can have access to this if it would support you to understand the impact of your work. You can find out more about the Impact Hub [here](#).

Other projects might seek to build a long-term legacy through better collaboration between organisations to improve how people from Armed Forces communities access support now and in the future. For projects like these, we would anticipate seeing evidence of changes in practice and collaboration that extend beyond the life of the grant.

Some projects might look at the evidence they have developed about the needs of a specific group of people within the wider Armed Forces community, who have needs that might not be well understood, or who don't access services that are available. We would not expect to fund projects that focus solely on research, but we would be keen to understand the longer-term implications for your work if it could help to ensure that Armed Forces communities in future could have access to better support that meets their needs.

We will ask you about sustainability in the application form.

Types of sustainability: how will your work sustain beyond the life of your grant?

Ongoing improvements for project beneficiaries

Some projects may focus on the legacy value for the people who take part in their projects; looking to address complex issues or engage in effective preventive work targeted at those who might be at risk of crisis. At the end of the grant, people who have taken part in these projects would be in a far stronger position than they were at the beginning of the project; and more able to live the life that they want to have.

Accessing funding for ongoing delivery

Some projects might be carrying out a pilot project or might be planning to keep running their project or service in future; raising funding from donations, grants or local commissioning

Ongoing partnership and collaboration

Some projects might seek to build a long term legacy through better collaboration between organisations to improve how people from Armed Forces communities access support now and in the future. For projects like these, we would expect to see evidence of changes in practice and collaboration that extend beyond the life of the grant.

Improved knowledge and evidence

Some projects might look at the evidence they have developed about the needs of a specific group of people within the wider Armed Forces community, who have needs that might not be well understood, or who don't access services that are available. This evidence base might help to ensure that Armed Forces communities in future could have access to better support that meets their needs.

What can funds be spent on?

Under this programme, we'll make grants of up to £10,000 for projects lasting up to a year. You can apply for less than this, or for a shorter period of time. You cannot apply for a grant of less than £1000.

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 for this fixed-term project, including time-managing volunteers that may be involved in your project.
- Purchasing items that can enable activities to take place (such as art materials, sports/games/outdoor equipment etc).
- Purchasing items that you may need to provide support, such as additional telephones or laptops.
- Reasonable costs for storing and transporting items, including wear and tear on private vehicles.
- Reasonable overheads that reflect the cost to your organisation of delivering this project.

What can't funds be spent on?

There are several things **we can't pay for**, either because they're not in the spirit of the Covenant Fund, or because of relevant legislation or tax rules.

- Where funding is not benefiting veterans or other people from the Armed Forces community.
- Making grants or donations of money to individuals or families.
- Topping up existing grants and aid from a government department.
- Where money only benefits one person. By this we mean where your whole project would only benefit one person.
- Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding.
- Investments.
- Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity.
- 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.
- Projects within statutory organisations that are solely or mainly focused on your day to day delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant- your project must be clearly additional to your core activities
- 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.

We know that some organisations have been affected financially by the Covid pandemic, which has made charity finance more complex. We understand that your income for your most recent year may have dropped. We would expect to be able to see that you have funds coming in from several different sources for your organisation as a whole and would not solely be relying on a grant from us.

Your project must be able to be delivered as a stand-alone piece of work. You can apply for funding that would contribute to a bigger project, but we will not fund proposals that could not go ahead if you are unsuccessful in securing additional funding.

Example project

A veterans' drop-in centre has contact with a number of vulnerable working aged veterans that have a hidden need of isolation and wants to run drop-in sessions to encourage veterans to mix with others and be more active. They need funding for a project co-ordinator to do this. The project coordinator's full-time salary with on costs is £23,500. The drop-in centre applies for a grant under Force for Change for £10,000. They will use this grant to pay a part-time pro-rata salary. If they can obtain funding from another source, then they will then increase the project co-ordinator's hours.

Ethics

Our work supports the Armed Forces Covenant through funding projects that deliver real change to Armed Forces communities. The projects we support need to be carried out to the highest possible ethical standards.

We therefore would expect you to have the skills and experience to work with the groups of people that your project focuses on; can ensure that they are kept safe; and that you take an ethical approach to your work.

Our ethical values are Respect, Competence, and Integrity.

We have a Code of Conduct, and free online training to explain our approach to ethics. We will ask you to confirm in your application form that you will run your project in line with our Code of Conduct. If your organisation has its own Code of Ethical Conduct, then you will need to explore whether your Code is compatible with ours.

You can access our ethics resources [here](#)

Our assessment criteria

Our criteria are set out below. We will consider each application to see how well it meets these criteria and fund those that we believe will best achieve the programme aims.

The difference that your project will make	
What are we looking for?	That your project will address an identified need for a specific group of people within the Armed Forces community
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What your proposed project will do. • How this will help specific beneficiaries • How you know that people would like to do this. • How many people this is likely to help • What difference this project will make

Delivery of your project	
What are we looking for?	That your proposed project is feasible, and that your organisation has 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 and finish your grant activity within the time frame as set out above. • That you can keep people on your project safe. • That your work does not duplicate the work of other projects or services locally.

How to apply - the application form

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

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

When you submit your application, you'll receive an email confirmation. **If you don't receive this, then you have not applied. You can check the status of your application 'In Progress' section in your account.**

- If you apply by **midday on 30 May 2022**, you'll receive a decision by the end of August 2022.
- If you apply by **midday on 8 August 2022**, you'll receive a decision in late October 2022.
- If you apply by **midday on 14 November 2022**, you'll receive a decision in late February 2023.

If we offer you a grant, we will invite you to come to a briefing session for new grant holders; and we'll send you the dates for these. The briefing will be held online and explains the next stages of your grant. Your formal Offer Letter and Terms and Conditions will be sent to you after the briefing has taken place. We won't be able to pay your grant until these documents have been returned.

Covenant Funding is often oversubscribed and, unfortunately, we often have to turn good applications down due to lack of available funding. If you have been unsuccessful, then we will contact you by email to let you know.

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'll need to provide two contacts from your organisation on the application with two different email addresses. At least one of these should be an email address that belongs to your organisation.

At least one contact must hold the relevant authority (CEO or equivalent) to authorise any grant contract and bank account to be used should you be successful. The main contact must have an email address that belongs to your organisation. If this is not provided, your application may be considered ineligible.

If either contact changes, do let us know as soon as you can.

We strongly recommend that you save an offline version of your application form.

You may also find it helpful to complete your application in a Word document and then cut and paste the answers into the online form. Please don't use any formatting, such as tables or numbered lists, in your Word document, as the online form may not accept this formatting and

you might have trouble submitting the form.

We suggest you save your form every 10-15 minutes whilst you are completing it, to avoid the risk of it ‘timing out’.

Do check that you have fully answered all the questions because, if not, we might not be able to consider your application.

You will be emailed when you both save and when you submit the application, please be aware of this when completing the application. We can only consider applications that have been fully submitted. Please check the “Submitted Applications” tab on your grant portal, to ensure the application has been fully submitted.

If you are a CIC, please do ensure that you upload a copy of your most recent accounts and your governing document. Your application will not be complete without this. You do not need to send any additional information once the application has been submitted. 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 we can see that you have a minimum of three unrelated Directors or Trustees listed on your regulator’s website.
- 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.

Please note that in order to minimise the risk to public funds the Trust may prioritise funding those applicants which have good track records on reporting to regulators, demonstrate transparent and appropriate governance arrangements and have comprehensive published accounts. For organisations which have previously had grants from us we would expect all reporting on these grants to be up-to-date, and may take this into account when considering new applications.

After you submit your application

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

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

We will check your application to ensure that you've provided all the information we have requested. We may contact you during our assessment if there are things we are unclear about – but do not assume any contact or lack of contact as an indication of your likelihood of being successful or declined.

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

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

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

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

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

After the Trustees have met, we will send an email to you using the 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.

You will get an automated email to confirm that your application has been submitted. This email will come from an address called mailuk@grantapplication.com. You may wish to add this email to a safe senders list on your email system to ensure that it can come through to you.

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.

Once we have all the necessary documents back, we will pay you the majority of your grant. If there are any discrepancies/queries within these documents, this will delay your payment, so please read the accompanying information we provide, thoroughly.

If you receive a grant, you will need to keep good records of how the funds were spent and how many people you helped and how. As part of the Terms and Conditions of funding we will ask you to update us on the progress of the project, this will include detailing how the funding has been spent..

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

