

# **The Strengthening Delivery of the Covenant Programme**

A funding programme that supported  
Local Authorities to deliver the Armed  
Forces Covenant



Under the Strengthening Delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant Programme The Covenant Fund awarded £6.6M through two rounds of funding to clusters of Local Authorities (LAs), enabling them to deliver projects linked to needs identified by their Local Covenant Partnerships, building on the concepts in the Our Community Our Covenant publication, which sought to improve consistency in the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant locally.

The evaluation of this programme has been published

**£6.6M**

**awarded  
to 43  
projects**

**In 2016; the Strengthening Delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant Programme was set up to provide a series of grants to LAs ‘enabling them to deliver projects linked to needs identified by their Local Covenant Partnerships.**

**In 2017, £3,493,296 was awarded as 23 grants to clusters of Local Authorities. Local Authorities could choose the clusters that they wishes to form. These clusters reached 107 LAs in total**

**In 2018, a further £2,768,055 was awarded to 20 clusters of Local Authorities, which included 80 Local Authorities.**

Projects typically sought to build local capacity and improve awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant. A number of projects focused on improving Covenant understanding among public sector workers to support members of the Armed Forces community to be better able to access services. In the second round, funding was also made available to establish drop-in centres in places where these did not exist.

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust commissioned an external evaluation of the programme. This was conducted by RAND Europe; who worked with Shared Intelligence.

The evaluation looked at how the work of the clusters, supported through their grants had impacted on the implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant locally, how long term these changes have been; and identifying learning and good practice from these grants.

The evaluation findings strongly indicate that the funding had a significant positive impact on delivery of the Covenant.

Insights gained through the questionnaire responses and the interviews strongly suggest that the funding received through the programme has had a positive impact across different regions and different strands of activities, and is viewed as essential to the gains achieved in this period. The vast majority of grant-holders who responded to the questionnaire felt that the grant had a positive impact on the delivery of the Covenant.

### **Key findings**

- The most successful activities in terms of both implementation and impact were:
  - (i) improving coordination and the sharing of best practice between relevant local stakeholders;
  - (ii) providing tailored support to the Armed Forces Community;
  - (iii) raising awareness among public authorities about the support available to the Armed Forces Community.
- Insights from both the questionnaire and the interviews indicate that some grant-holders produced outputs that they felt were only achievable because of the SDP grants.
- Some questionnaire respondents felt that the funding received through the SDP acted as an initial stimulus to help LAs to start implementing the Covenant and achieve further funding.
- In many cases, the funding enabled the employment of a dedicated resource, which grant-holders described as essential to increasing capacity and driving forward the implementation of the Covenant.
- Many grant-holders claimed new signposting resources had been established as a result of the SDP funding, highlighting the value of signposting in increasing awareness among the Armed Forces Community about the support available to them.
- Where funding was used to support the use of veterans' hubs, grant-holders reported that these were instrumental in providing a one-stop-shop and tailored approach to accessing various local services.
- A significant majority of grant-holders said that the activities or services undertaken as a result of the SDP projects continued after the grant ended, indicating success in achieving sustainability.

The evaluation report also contained a number of recommendations, which may be of interest for but may be of particular interest to Local Authorities and others that have an interest in the Armed Forces Covenant; and its implementation.

The full report highlights areas of good practice that Local Authority employees and others can draw upon, before turning to recommendations intended to help improve the provision of services to serving members of the Armed Forces, their families, and veterans in their areas.

**Recommendations include**

**Local Authorities may benefit from ensuring that they have the right individuals in place, and ideally invest in dedicated posts, to improve the delivery of the Covenant.**

**The Trust and Local Authorities may benefit from identifying best practices for collecting and sharing data about the nature and needs of the Armed Forces Community.**

The full evaluation report is available at <https://covenantfund.org.uk/resources/> A full list of grants awarded through the programme is available at [www.covenantfund.org.uk](http://www.covenantfund.org.uk)

The Trust is working with Shared Intelligence to collate resources developed by Local Authorities through their grants and identify resources that could support other organisations in developing their own good practices in Covenant delivery. These resources will be published in the Trust's Knowledge Network in Autumn 2021.