



Office for  
Veterans' Affairs

# Afghanistan Veterans Fund

## STRAND 1

Supporting Veteran's  
Community Mental Health

# Afghanistan Veterans Fund

## PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

### STRAND 1

#### Supporting veterans' community mental health

You will need to read this guidance in conjunction with the overview guidance. There are four Strands. You can only apply for one Strand.

Under this programme, the Office for Veterans Affairs has asked the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) to run programmes 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

This guidance is specifically for organisations considering an application under Strand 1

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#### Strand 1 Supporting veterans' community mental health

##### STRAND 1

Supporting veterans  
community mental health

This Strand will award a limited number of grants to Armed Forces charities that already provide mental health clinical support and treatment.

Eligible organisations can apply for a grant to invest in an increase in their capacity to meet additional needs in terms of both increased ask for help, and the increased complexity of those already receiving support.

This could include meeting the needs of a wider group within the Armed Forces community than already provided for, (e.g. a wider geographic region across the UK, different age groups or veteran partners and families.)

Applicants should be undergoing accreditation from the Contact Group's pilot scheme for mental health charities; and must be able to show how their application could support veterans across the UK.

Grants of up to £100K are available.

Specifically, this Strand will fund projects delivered by Armed Forces charities that already provide clinical support and treatment, and where a grant would invest in an increase in their capacity to meet additional needs in terms of both increased ask for help, and the increased complexity of those already receiving support.

**Applications must meet the following criteria:**

- The applicant must be an Armed Forces Charity that is an established mental health treatment provider (and is ideally undergoing accreditation with Contact’s pilot scheme for mental health charities). The Contact Group (‘Contact’) is a collaboration of statutory and non-statutory (charity, academic and professional) organisations working to improve mental health support to the UK armed forces community including serving personnel, veterans and their families. More information about Contact can be found at <https://www.contactarmedforces.co.uk/>
- Proposals are to provide treatment for the mental health of veterans who have been involved in or affected by military operations since 2000 (by this we mean veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan and modern conflicts).
- Funding must be used to increase capacity within existing services for a period of time, specifying how many people it is anticipated they can support, with funds used either to:
  - meet the mental health needs of additional beneficiaries or
  - meet more complex and intensive mental health needs of existing beneficiaries or
  - meet the needs of a wider group within the Armed Forces community than already provided for, for example a wider geographic region, different age group or veteran partners and families.
- Proposals should include the geographic reach, with the programme overall providing increased capacity across the whole UK (organisations providing UK-wide services will be preferable)

**You need to show us how your project meets the programme outcome for the Strand 1**

Programme theme	Expected project outcome
Supporting veterans’ community mental health	Greater numbers of veterans who have served in Afghanistan or other recent conflicts and who have complex mental health needs (or their families) can access timely, good quality and safe support.

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.

To the best of your knowledge, the activity that you plan to offer should not be currently offered to people from Armed Forces communities by other organisations. You can continue to 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 rather than duplicate other provision. You'll be asked in your application form how you will ensure this.

## **Who can apply?**

To be eligible for this funding under Strand 1 your organisation must:

- Be a registered charity that specifically supports Armed Forces communities, that has been registered for at least three years at the time of your application.

*Specifically supporting Armed Forces communities* means that your charitable objectives clearly state that you support people from Armed Forces communities. We refer to these types of organisations as “Armed Forces charities” within this guidance.

- Have demonstrable experience in providing mental health clinical support and treatment to veterans.

Ideally, applicants will be currently undergoing accreditation with Contact's pilot scheme for mental health charities.

## **This programme will not support**

- Applications where there is no clear demand for the project from people from Armed Forces communities or
- Projects that don't have a clear focus on meeting the needs of veterans from Afghanistan and other recent conflicts, (or for their families and carers).

## **A strong application would be able to show:**

- Why your proposed project or service is needed at this time.
- Why you need support with funding the project or service.
- Why this project or service will be good value for money.
- How many veterans or family members your project is likely to help.

- How you know that your proposed support is additional/complementary to that which others are providing (at the time of your application).
- Your experience in providing clinical mental health support to veterans.
- How your Trustees are confident that your project has appropriate clinical governance structures in place to manage risks and to ensure that good quality care is provided.
- How you will measure and evidence the impact of the project on individuals.
- What longer term impact the project might have on your organisation, in terms of sustaining support and/or changing practice or delivery.

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.

## **What can funds be spent on?**

Under this programme, we'll make grants of up to £100,000 for projects lasting up to two years. You can apply for less than this, or for a shorter period of time but the Afghanistan Veterans Programme Board will be looking to fund substantial, not short-term, projects.

We can pay for most of the things you'll need for your project or activity, whether it is people's time, the 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. Your project might include the following costs:

- Staff time, including time-managing volunteers that may be involved in your project.
- Appropriately qualified 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 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.
- 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: Strand 1

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.

<b>The difference that your project is making</b>	
What are we looking for?	Greater numbers of veterans who have served in Afghanistan or other recent conflicts and who have complex mental health needs (or their families) can access timely, good quality and safe support.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What your project does.</li> <li>● How this helps people from Armed Forces communities.</li> <li>● How you know that people will access this project or service.</li> <li>● How many people this is likely to help, and what difference this will make.</li> </ul>

<b>Delivery of your project</b>	
What are we looking for?	That you have the skills and experience to run your project.

<p>What do you need to show us?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● That your organisation is well run and well managed.</li> <li>● That you'll be able to start your grant activity quickly.</li> <li>● That you can keep people on your project safe.</li> <li>● That you have clinical governance and risk management structures in place, and that your Trustees are content that your organisation has the right controls in place for the level of risk that you manage.</li> </ul>
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Please ensure that you read the full programme guidance for the Afghanistan Veterans Fund.

If you are applying for a grant through Strand 1, please ensure that you use the correct application form in our grant application portal.

## How to apply - the application form

You need to apply through the link [here](#) to the online application forms. There are specific forms for each funding Strand.

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.

When you submit your application, you'll receive an e-mail confirmation.

### **If you don't receive this, then you have not applied.**

You will need to submit your application by midday on **17 January 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 e-mail 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 e-mail 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 e-mail 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 e-mail to confirm that your application has been submitted.

**If you have not received this e-mail, 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, especially if this would impact on the provision of qualified clinical staff.

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

Final decisions will be made by the Afghanistan Veterans 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 Afghanistan Veterans 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 Afghanistan Veterans Programme Board has met, we will send an e-mail to you using the primary contact e-mail 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 e-mail you in the first instance to advise you that you have been successful. This e-mail 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 e-mail [info@covenantfund.org.uk](mailto:info@covenantfund.org.uk)