



Office for
Veterans' Affairs

Afghanistan Veterans Fund

STRAND 4

**Regional and More Localised Projects
That Increase Capacity in Services
& Initiatives That Offer
Support and Comradeship,
Engagement & Wellbeing Efforts**

Afghanistan Veterans Fund

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

STRAND 4

Regional and more localised projects that increase capacity in services and initiatives that offer support and comradeship, engagement and wellbeing efforts

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 4

Strand 4 Regional and more localised projects that increase capacity in services and initiatives that offer support and comradeship, engagement and wellbeing efforts

STRAND 4

Regional & more localised projects that increase capacity in services and initiatives that offer support & comradeship, engagement & wellbeing efforts

Grants of up to £35,000 will be awarded under this Strand to Armed Forces charities and CICs for regional and more localised projects. These projects will increase capacity in services and initiatives that offer support and comradeship, engagement and wellbeing efforts for those in the Armed Forces community impacted by events in Afghanistan.

Support must be particularly focused on veterans since 2000 or those who served in recent conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan and aimed at reaching veterans who may not already be engaged. This can include families of serving personnel, and of veterans. It can include families that have been bereaved. It can also include family members that care for veterans.

Grants can be awarded for regional and more localised projects that would increase capacity in services and initiatives as outlined above.

It is hoped that through this programme local and regional projects will be supported. When considering applications, preference may be given to proposals that will ensure funding across this Strand is distributed across the whole of the UK.

The Afghanistan Veterans Programme Board reserve the right to vary the amount awarded to any exceptional application. See below for information about applying for Exceptional Grants of up to £70,000.

You need to show us how your project meets the programme outcome for the Strand 4

Programme theme	Expected project outcomes
Regional and more localised projects that increase capacity in services and initiatives that offer support and comradeship, engagement and wellbeing efforts	<p>Veterans and their families, from recent conflicts (or other beneficiary groups such as bereaved families) have more local and regional opportunities to access and take part in comradeship and engagement that is relevant to them.</p> <p>Veterans and their families from recent conflicts (or other beneficiary groups such as bereaved families) have more local and regional opportunities to access relevant support that can boost wellbeing.</p>

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 provisions. You'll be asked in your application form how you will ensure this.

Who can apply

To be eligible for this funding under Strand 4 your organisation must be:

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

or

- A registered charity with substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities that has been registered for at least two years at the time of your application.

or

- A Community Interest Company (CIC) that specifically supports Armed Forces communities, that has been registered for at least two years at the time of your application.

Definitions:

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.

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 and has been a significant and regular part of your existing work.

Community Interest Companies (CICs) need to have 3 or more unrelated Directors and will need submit additional documents as part of the application. You will need to attach a copy of your governing document, and your most recent accounts.

You can only receive funding from one Strand of the Afghanistan Veterans Fund. You cannot apply for funding if you received a grant in November 2021 from the Afghanistan Veterans' Fund or through the Sustaining Support: Supporting veterans and families impacted by the Afghanistan conflict programme.

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

- A charity or CIC that received funding in November 2021 from the Afghanistan Veterans Fund or through the Sustaining Support: Supporting veterans and families impacted by the Afghanistan conflict.
- An Armed Forces base or unit.
- A school.
- A local authority.
- An individual.
- An organisation which does not have substantial, recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities.
- An organisation which is newly registered (as a charity or CIC).
- Other public sector organisations.
- A voluntary or community group which is not registered in the UK.

This programme will not support

- Projects based around clinical services.

- 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, if applicable, their families and carers) and other recent conflicts.

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 (and, if applicable, their families and carers) your project is likely to help.
- How you know that your proposed support is additional/complementary to those which others are providing (at the time of your application).
- Why you are confident that veterans (and, if applicable, their families and carers) would want to access your project.
- What benefits you expect the project to have for veterans from recent conflicts (and, if applicable, their families and carers).
- How you will know that your project has made a difference.

We expect demand for this Strand to be high.

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.

We have included some examples of the types of projects that may be supported below. These are included as illustrations only.

A veterans' organisation is aware that fewer numbers of younger veterans access their services. They are keen to offer comradeship activities to veterans from more recent conflicts. They speak with veterans from more recent conflicts. They would like different types of activities; which could also include opportunities for veterans with young families to engage with similar families; and more events in the evening to fit around work commitments.

They apply for a grant of £25,000 for a year, which will fund a part time project co-ordinator who could also manage local social media groups for veterans. The project budget also includes the costs of running activities that are appealing for veterans from more recent conflicts, enabling them to come together.

A project runs outdoor activities that improve mental wellbeing in veterans. Some of these veterans served in Afghanistan. They are aware that more veterans from recent activities would also like to access their project.

Recently, the project has also been approached by family members and carers of those veterans. It has been a painful time; and the families would like some support so that they are better resourced to help their loved ones through a difficult period; and to help the families better manage their own mental wellbeing needs.

The project applies for £35,000 to help them to expand their project so that they can increase their capacity to help more veterans and provide support directly to their families and carers. As part of this work, they will also signpost and refer veterans and their families to other services that may be able to help further.

What can funds be spent on?

Under this programme, we expect to make grants of up to £35,000 for projects lasting up to a year. You can apply for less than this, or for a shorter period of time.

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.

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 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.

Enhanced grants

If your project is especially innovative; you can apply for an enhanced grant. This can take the value of your application up to £70,000.

To apply for an enhanced grant, your project will need to show that:

- It is particularly innovative; and has new approaches that could offer better outcomes for veterans. This can include families of serving personnel, and of veterans. It can include families that have been bereaved. It can also include family members that care for veterans.
- It will reach significant groups of veterans from Afghanistan and other recent conflicts who have needs but are not yet connected with services that could support them.

Enhanced grant application process



Apply for up to £35,000 through the main programme; for a project that will meet the programme outcomes

- Veterans and their families from recent conflicts have more local and regional opportunities to access and take part in comradeship and engagement that is relevant to them
- Veterans and their families from recent conflicts have more local and regional opportunities to access relevant support that can boost wellbeing

Does your project meet any of these additional criteria?



- It is particularly innovative; and has new approaches that could offer better outcomes for veterans
- It will reach significant groups of veterans from Afghanistan and other recent conflicts who have needs but are not connected with services that could support them



Would additional funding enable your project to make a more significant difference to veterans?



Complete the enhanced grant application section on the application form

The enhanced grant process allows you to apply for up to £70,000, through a 'basic' grant of £35,000 that meets the wider programme criteria, and an additional amount of up to an extra £35,000 if you meet the additional enhanced grant criteria. You can therefore apply for up to £70,000 through this process.

Strand 4 is likely to be competitive; and it is highly unlikely that all good applications will be able to be supported. You may be awarded a grant of a lower amount than you have requested. This could include being awarded a 'basic' grant of £35,000.

If you are applying for an enhanced grant; you should complete the enhanced grant section in the application form. You will need to tell us about how your project meets the enhanced grant criteria, and what you would do with the additional funding if it was awarded.

Our assessment criteria: Strand 4

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?	<p>Veterans and their families from recent conflicts (or other eligible beneficiary groups such as bereaved families) have more local and regional opportunities to access and take part in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comradeship and engagement that is relevant to them and/or • Access relevant support that can boost wellbeing.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What your project does. • How this helps people from Armed Forces Communities. • How you know that people will access this project or service. • How many people this is likely to help, and what difference this will make.

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 keep people on your project safe. • That you can measure the impact of your work.

You can use the Trust's Impact Hub to measure the impact of your work. You can find out more about it here <https://covenantfund.org.uk/impact-hub/>

If we award you a grant, we will talk with you about whether you'll be using the Impact Hub, or if there a different way in which you will measure the impact of your work.

Please ensure that you read the full programme guidance for the Afghanistan Veterans Fund.

If you are applying for a grant through Strand 4, 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 [that we'll provide 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.

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.

Do not send your application by e-mail or post to the Armed Forces 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.

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 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