Reaching & Supporting Armed Forces Communities programme
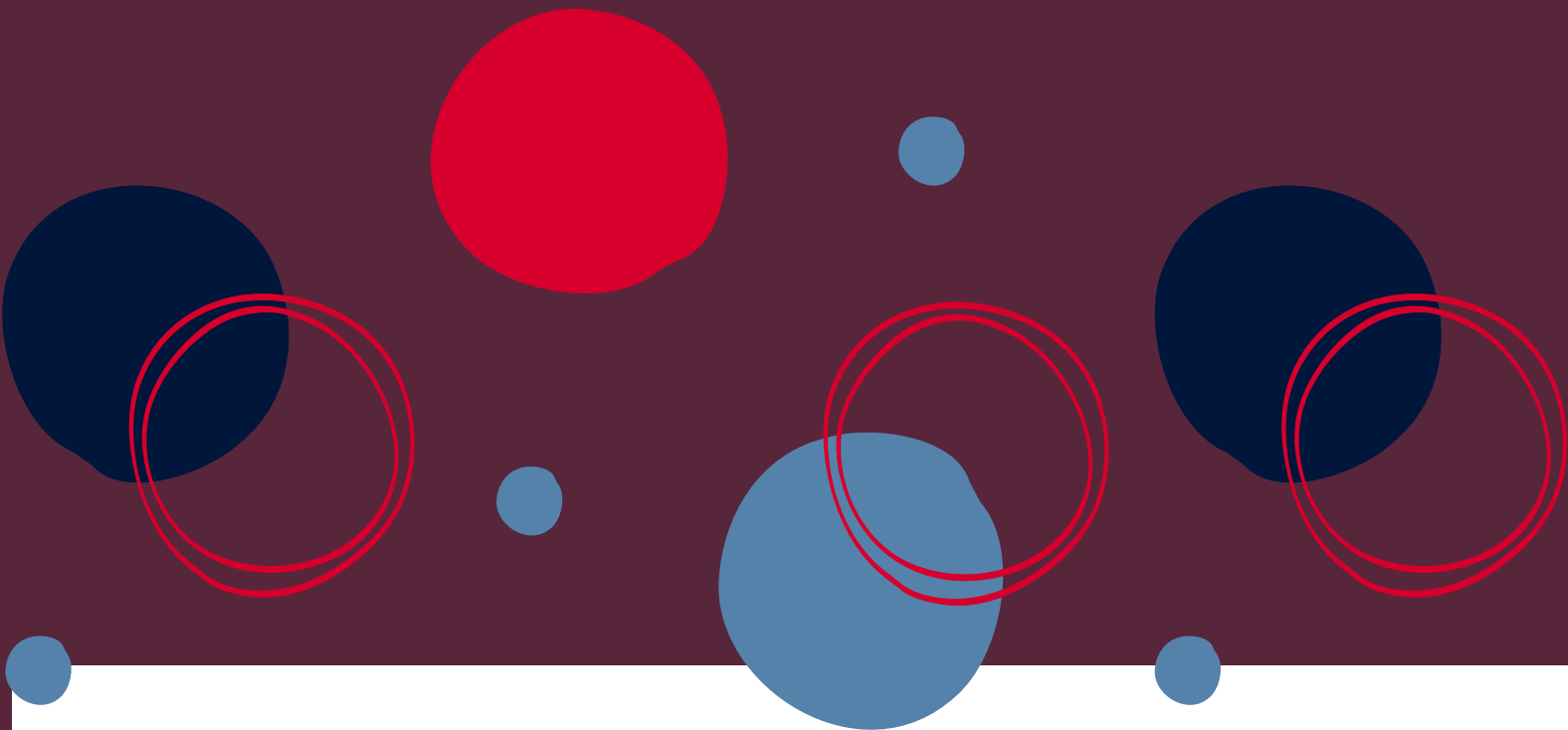
Programme Guidance

THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund:

Reaching and Supporting Armed Forces Communities

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) will award grants of up to £100,000 for projects which support hidden or compelling needs in Armed Forces communities.

Why are we running this programme?

The Covenant Fund makes grants that deliver real change to Armed Forces communities.

This is a programme that will fund projects that will deliver significant changes or improvements for Armed Forces communities where there are hidden or compelling needs. 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 to address hidden, compelling and complex needs, for specific and identified beneficiaries, in a meaningful way, and where evidence has highlighted gaps in support and provision

Hidden and compelling needs

We use the terms 'hidden' and 'compelling' to describe some complex needs that some people in Armed Forces communities experience.

A **hidden need** would be a less well understood or emerging need within Armed Forces communities, where a grant would make a significant difference. This could include projects for specific groups within Armed Forces communities who have not previously been able to access any sort of help, including charitable support or funding.

A **compelling need** would be a challenging and pressing need within Armed Forces communities which has a significant and limiting impact on a person's life. Projects looking at compelling needs might be looking at issues that are well known within Armed Forces communities, but where a specific and targeted project would make a significant and lasting difference.

You can apply for funding for a project that addresses either a hidden, or a compelling need, or both.
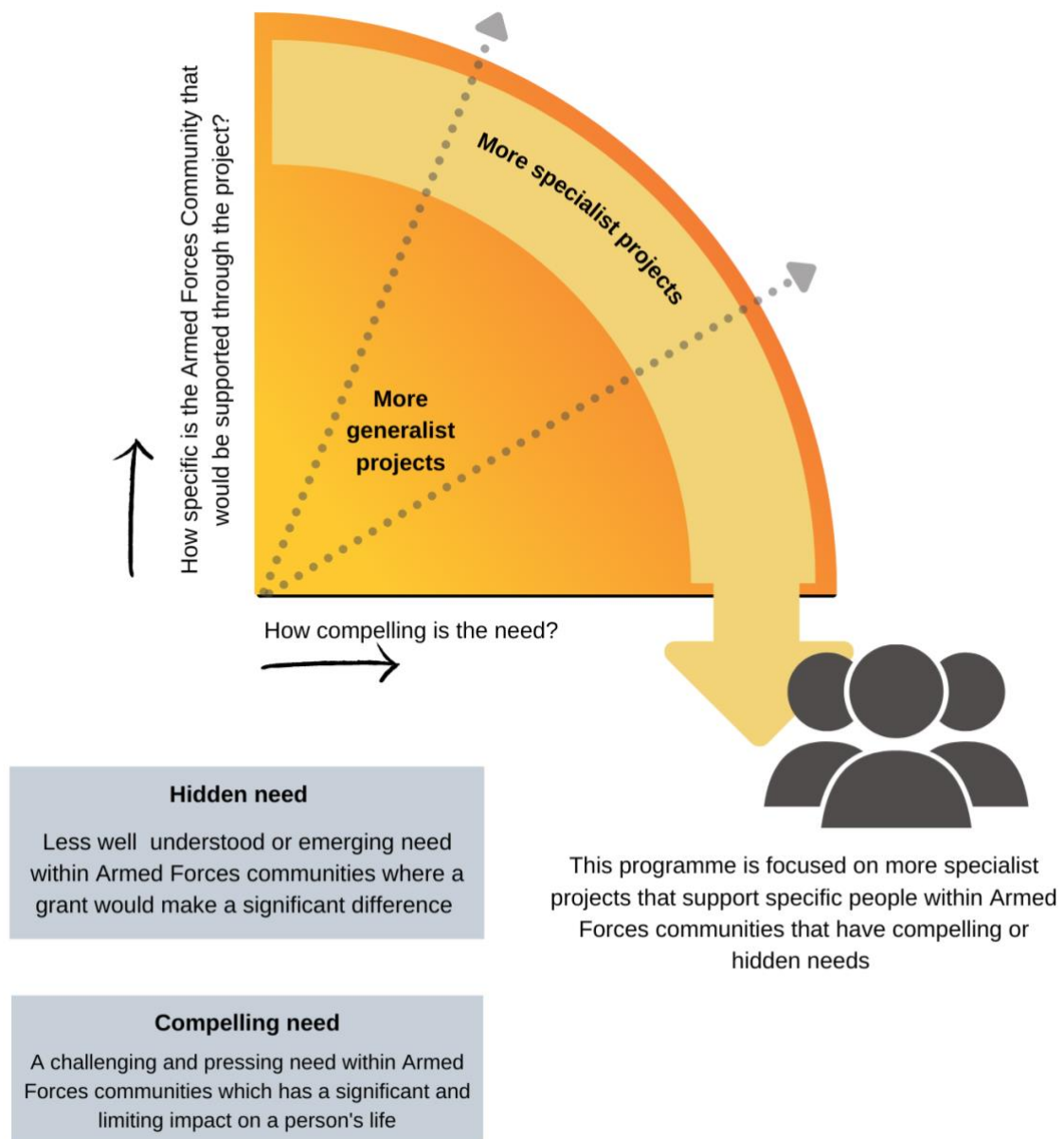
What are we looking for?

We are looking for projects that are specific and targeted, rather than taking a generalist approach.

We are also looking for applications that can be clear about the evidence of why their project is needed, and how the impact of the project will continue after the grant has ended.

Your application should explain why the hidden or compelling needs that your project will address require resource, and explain the difference that this will make to people's lives.

We will be more likely to fund projects that focus on specific groups within Armed Forces communities. We explain more about what we mean by this later on in this guidance.

How specific is the Armed Forces Community that would be supported through the project?

More specialist projects

More generalist projects

How compelling is the need?

Hidden need

Less well understood or emerging need within Armed Forces communities where a grant would make a significant difference

Compelling need

A challenging and pressing need within Armed Forces communities which has a significant and limiting impact on a person's life

This programme is focused on more specialist projects that support specific people within Armed Forces communities that have compelling or hidden needs

Who can apply

We invite applications from charities and CICs registered in the UK for at least three years.

We will consider applications from charities or CICs that are not Armed Forces specific, but they will be expected to show that they will work in partnership with Armed Forces organisations, and if working with this sector is new to them, will need to make a strong case for why they are now wishing to do so.

All applicant organisations must have a minimum of 3 unrelated trustees or directors at the time of application. CICs will be expected to be able to provide, on request, accounts which have been verified by a qualified independent professional.

We would welcome applications that can show collaborative working with other organisations to deliver effective solutions for people in Armed Forces communities. Local Authorities, Health Bodies and other organisations that are not eligible to apply directly could play a highly effective role in delivering projects, in collaboration with an eligible organisation. There is more information on working with others later in this guidance.

Similarly, armed forces charities or CICs which are aiming to support new beneficiary groups, with previously hidden, complex or newly identified needs, will be expected to show how they are working with specialist or dedicated organisations who will bring expertise and experience to the project.

Who can benefit?

We will consider projects that support serving personnel and/ or their families or veterans and their families. The grants that we have previously awarded which support serving personnel have only had limited reach to Reservists. We would be therefore be particularly interested in project proposals that would support specific needs faced by Reservist personnel and their families.

Projects could include support for people who have been bereaved, those with unmet needs from physical injury, people serving in the Armed Forces who were born overseas or who have immediate family overseas, the needs of Armed Forces families coming to the UK, veterans from LGBT+ communities, female veterans, and veterans and families with needs that make them particularly vulnerable.

For example:

A group of working age female veterans had some negative experiences while serving. They have started to engage with each other online to talk about their experiences; and provide support to each other.

They have started to work with a veterans' charity; but feel that what would help most would be to be able to receive support from a specialist organisation that supports women that have experienced harassment and bullying, but delivered in a way that understands their experiences whilst serving.

Therefore, in their application the veterans' charity proposes to collaborate with the specialist women's organisation to develop a highly targeted project to meet the needs of these female veterans. They will also work with relevant NHS organisations to ensure that the veterans can access wider mental health support if needed.

Projects could also consider specific needs within Armed Forces communities where people have language, cultural or other barriers that stop people coming forward for help. Your project might also be addressing a specific need that we have not mentioned within this paragraph.

It is important that you show us what evidence you have of need, and evidence that you have to support the approach that you seek to take. Crucially, you also need to show us ***how people from Armed Forces communities have helped to shape this***.

What sorts of projects are we are keen to support?

There are a wide range of needs that could be supported through this grants programme, so you will need to tell us what the **specific need** is and **who specifically will benefit**.

Projects could explore socio-economic considerations or needs relating to disabilities, or mental health needs such as addiction. Additional support for Armed Forces communities that have been negatively impacted by the Covid pandemic could be considered.

We are also interested to support a small number of projects that would specifically and strategically address challenges of perceptions of Armed Forces communities within the wider civilian population. Your proposal would need to show a clear and ongoing sustainable legacy of this work.

What need is your project trying to address?
It should be a specific need. You should be able to clearly explain what the need is; and the impact is has on people's lives. The need should be either compelling, or hidden, or it can be both

Examples might be addiction, high levels of isolation, bereavement, mental health needs or not being able to access services or support that would meet underlying needs

Who will your project help?
You should be able to tell us who will benefit from the project, and should be specific.

Examples of general groups	*Examples of specific groups*
Veterans $\longrightarrow$	Veterans aged 40-50 with complex isolation and mental health needs living in a specific city
Armed Forces Families $\longrightarrow$	Armed Forces Families where the family is in need of support with SEND needs
Serving personnel $\longrightarrow$	Reservists and their families; who have been negatively impacted by separation

Your project idea does not have to be new, as it might build on previous work that you have done.

You will however need to be clear about the specific needs of the people who will benefit; why you require investment in this approach now; and why your organisation has not addressed this need or these communities, groups or cohorts previously.

What can you apply for?

You can apply for up to £100,000 for two or three year programmes of work. If you apply for a grant over three years we will expect to taper your grant over the three years. That is, we will commit to pay you equal amounts of funding in years one and two and then a reduced amount in year three. If you apply for a tapered grant, we would expect you to find additional funding from another source to support your third year of project delivery.

You will need to demonstrate how the project will be delivered in year three and where the additional 'matching' funds will come from to enable this to happen. Please note that the full grant will be awarded initially, and the tapering reflected in your payment schedule.

Example:

A project supporting Reservist families in Wales who have been negatively impacted by separation seeks funding for three years. They request a total amount of funding

of £100,000: £40,000 in the first year, £40,000 in the second year and £20,000 in year three.

We are very unlikely to support projects that are less than two years in length. You can apply for a project that will only take place over one year; but you can only apply for a maximum of £50,000. You would need to be able to show that your project would have a significant impact. You cannot apply for less than 1 year.

Enhanced grants

Exceptionally, the Trust may consider making enhanced awards of up to £150K in total in some circumstances. If you do wish to apply for this, you will need to indicate in your application what your expanded plans might be – eg. additional locations, or wider beneficiary cohorts.

Along with your original project proposal, you can request an additional grant of £50,000 to expand your work and provide additional elements to your project delivery.

This means your project has both core and enhanced elements. Your core project must be a stand-alone project, that could be delivered for £100,000 or less.

However, you can also tell us what **additional** work your project would be able to deliver *if* you were to receive a grant that was substantially larger than £100,000 (but no larger than £150,000).

> **Example**
>
> A charity applies for a basic and enhanced grant
>
> Under their basic proposal, they would deliver a project that has been designed with working aged veterans and Armed Forces families in the North East who have been impacted by gambling addiction; to develop new ways of offering support to reach those with unmet needs and develop sustainable new services that would keep running beyond the life of the grant.
>
> Under their enhanced proposal, they would be able to run an additional element to their project to work specifically with teenagers and young people from Armed Forces families who have encountered negative impacts from gambling addition within their family.

If you choose to request an enhanced element, you should be able to clearly explain why this additional funding would have a greater impact on Armed Forces communities in a clear and tangible way; and how these benefits would be sustained beyond the life of the grant.

We will only award funding to exceptional projects under this option, however, if we do not agree to the enhanced element, you may still be considered for your original proposal.

What your application should tell us

Identify

Who is your project helping?

- What are their specific hidden or compelling needs?
- How do you know this?

Approach

Why is your project the best way to support people from Armed Forces communities with these needs?

- What exactly is the activity or service that you will be delivering?
- How have you involved the people who would benefit in planning and shaping your project?
- How do you know that people will take part?
- How do you know that this does not duplicate other help that's available for these individuals?

Change

What will the project achieve?

- What will be different by the end of the project?
- What does this change look like?
- What's the wider legacy, in terms of tangible improvements that the people benefitting from the project have gained, or ongoing collaborations that have been developed?

There will be two rounds of this funding programme, with two deadlines during 2022/23.

For a decision in October 2022, you will need to submit your application by 8th August 2022, for a decision in February 2023 you will need to submit your application by 14th November 2022.

The Trust does not commit to making equal amounts or numbers of awards in each round.

Showing the change that your grant will make

We want to know what changes will take place as a result of your work. This means that we would like to know about

- the anticipated outcomes for beneficiaries during the project;
- what will be different in two to three years when your project ends;
- what will happen in the long term after your project has ended – and in each case, why you think your work will achieve these improvements.

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 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. All projects that are awarded funding are expected to use the Trust's Impact Hub, which gathers impact data directly from people who use your projects. 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 expect to see 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.

Ways of sustaining the impact beyond the life of your grant

Accessing finance for ongoing delivery

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

Legacy of improvements for 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, there may be permanent or long-lasting changes for people who have taken part in these projects. They would then 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.

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 would include policy change and preventative work. The evidence base might help to ensure that Armed Forces communities in future could have access to better support that meets their needs.

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 need to know that you 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 and tell us about this.

You can access our ethics resources here

Our assessment criteria

Our criteria are set out below. They are important, as we consider each application against 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?	That the project is addressing an identified need for a specific group of people within the Armed Forces community and that it will 1. Be able to make a significant difference to people's lives 2. Be able to show that the project will have longer term sustainable benefits that will have ongoing legacy after the end of the grant 3. That the project does not duplicate existing statutory or other services
What do you need to show us?	● What your proposed project will do ● How this would help specific Armed Forces communities ● Why this need/these communities have not previously been supported in this way ● How people from Armed Forces communities have shaped this project or service; and how you know that they will use it ● How many people this is likely to help ● What difference this will make ● What the long-term benefits will be?

Delivery of your project	
What are we looking for?	That your proposed project is feasible, that your organisation has the skills and experience to run your project; and that the approach to running your project would be likely to lead to the long-term legacy that you are seeking to have.
What do you need to show us?	- 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 your project will be delivered in line with our ethical values - Why your project offers good value for money - Whether you will be working with others to achieve your aims, and how you will do this - How you will measure the impact of your project in the short, medium and longer term - Your plans to ensure a long-term legacy of your work that will continue after the end of the grant

Preparing your project budget

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 will 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 required to manage 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 can enable the project's activities to take place (such as art materials, sport/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 its services

You don't need to give us a detailed budget when you apply, though you do need to give us your overall costs and key budget headings in a clear way.

If we award you a grant, you will need to send us a full budget, and project milestones before we can pay the first instalment of your grant.

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 Armed Forces Covenant Fund, or because of relevant legislation or tax rules:

- Where funding is not benefitting 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.

Working with delivery partners

If you will be 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.

How to apply - the application form

You need to apply through our online application form.

You can access the application form through this link.

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 email confirmation. **If you don't receive this, then you have not applied. Please remember to check your junk or spam folders.**

After your application has been successfully submitted, it will show under the Submitted Applications tab on your online grants portal. Please ensure your application shows under the Submitted Applications tab. If it does not show here; then your application has not been submitted.

We cannot accept any late applications, and any applications that are received after the first deadline will be considered as part of the second round.

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

Your organisation can only apply once in each round (and this includes any subsidiaries, branches or regional departments of your organisation) but may reapply if unsuccessful in the first round.

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 with two different email addresses. 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 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. 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 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 about which we are unclear – 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 Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trustees 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 Trust will use its 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: We may also take the decision to part-fund proposals (this may involve awarding less money than was applied for).

After the decisions have been made, 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, and any initial conditions of grant have been met, 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 on receipt of updates on the progress of your project, 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