

Transformational Grants programme

A highly specialised programme to create systemic change
for Armed Forces communities

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust:

Transforming Approaches to Supporting Unmet Needs

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme we expect to make between five and seven grants of up to £300,000 towards innovative projects that have a national focus and can evidence that the project will deliver long term systemic change for specific, unmet needs within Armed Forces communities.

Grants will be awarded for projects which begin in April 2023 and run for between three and five years. There will be a two-stage application process, with expressions of interest required by early September. A limited number of organisations will then be invited to make detailed second-stage applications by early January 2023.

Why are we running this programme?

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

This programme will fund a very small number of projects that will deliver permanent and significant changes or improvements for Armed Forces communities, where there are hidden needs not being met by current service provision.

By this, we mean people from Armed Forces communities who have needs that are having a significant impact on their lives, but who cannot access specialist services because these services are not available or accessible to them.

What are we looking for?

Highly focused: We are looking for projects that are highly specific and targeted to the needs of a particular and specific community of people within the wider Armed Forces community.

This could be a community that has experienced significant disadvantages, who are part of a wider protected characteristic, such as their race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment, and who have a need to access specialist services that can address their complex needs, rather than more generalist provision.

For example: Veterans who are from LGBT+ communities may find it challenging to access specialist services that meet their needs; particularly where these needs are complex.

It could also include thematic areas where there is a strong evidence base that people with specific needs linked to mental health or other challenges do not currently have access to specific services that meet their needs.

Evidence of need: We are also looking for applications that can be clear about the evidence of why their project is needed. Your application should explain why the needs that your project will address require resource and explain the difference that this will make to people's lives.

Transformational impact: We are expecting deliver systemic change, through funding projects that demonstrate an intent for long term transformation, which extends much further than the initial beneficiaries and the organisation receiving the grant. This may relate to how, what, where and by whom services are delivered in the future to this specific cohort or instigate wholly new strategic solutions. The application must describe how the impact of the project will continue after the grant has ended.

Consultation and collaboration: You should be able to show how the people who will benefit from this project will be able to shape it; and that you will work collaboratively with other organisations over the life of your grant.

A good application would include:

- evidence of the needs within the specified/targeted community and that these are not met by current provision
- evidence from the community about the difference that having access to better services and support would make
- a plan to develop new services, co-designed by the people who will be using them, working collaboratively with other organisations
- plans on how to ensure that this approach will be transformational and that there will be a long-term impact, nationally, from this project after the funded period.

Important

This is a two-stage application process. There is more information on how to apply later in this document.

You will need to submit a short expression of interest by **9am Monday 12 September 2022**.

There is only one opportunity to submit this expression of interest.

Your expression of interest will be reviewed against the criteria in this guidance, and the strongest applications will be contacted before the end of October and invited to submit a full application form by early January 2023. Final decisions will be made in February 2023.

We expect that this programme will be highly competitive, and that we will receive more good applications than we can support.

We will only fund one project for each specific community within the wider Armed Forces community. We explain more about this later in this document.

If you are invited to submit a full application form, you will need to do this by **9th January 2023**.

TRANSFORMATIONAL GRANTS

CREATING CHANGE

Funding for distinctly targeted projects

FOCUS



That work with specific communities within the wider Armed Forces community

Where the **specialist support** that people need does not yet exist



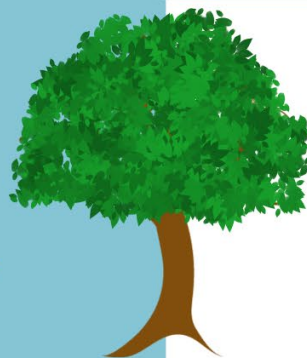
COLLABORATE

Your project will need to be able to work with the people that are affected by these significant challenges; and other organisations



BUILD

To build new approaches & understanding of needs and services across the UK



SUSTAIN

That will keep delivering systemic change long after the grant has ended

Who can apply?

We invite applications from charities that have been registered in the UK for at least two years at the time of grant award, which can demonstrate relevant experience and engagement.

Organisations that have been registered for less than three years should provide clear evidence of their governance arrangements; and why they are confident they have the expertise to take on a grant of this size.

Organisations that have been registered for less than three years may be subject to enhanced monitoring arrangements were a grant to be awarded.

We would expect clear evidence of existing work with the specific Armed Forces community that the application would support, including evidence of how people with lived experience will be able to strategically shape the project. Applications that can show effective partnership working between Armed Forces charities and specialist or dedicated organisations who will bring expertise and experience to the project, are particularly welcome.

We will consider applications from charities 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 three unrelated trustees at the time of application and throughout the life of their project if their application is successful.

Community Interest Companies (CICs), 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 expert organisations, perhaps outside the Armed Forces sector, to ensure they have the necessary skills and insight for the project.

Who can benefit?

We will consider projects that support specific groups of people with serving personnel and/or their families or veterans and their families, who do not currently have access to services that meet their needs.

What can we fund?

We can fund projects that deliver transformational impacts for **specific** Armed Forces communities.

- A **specific community** is a defined group of people within the wider Armed Forces community who:
 - have needs that are clearly unmet
 - have an evidence base about why a different approach is needed
 - have evidence that there is no or limited provision or services that address the specific needs of this group.
- Applications must be either:
 - delivered through a partnership approach, with one organisation as a lead applicant
 - OR
 - a lead applicant must present a clear approach to build a sustainable partnership over a 3–5-year period that can provide ongoing support.

Eligible activities include detailed scoping and consultation activities within the first year of the grant.

A specific group of people within the Armed Forces community have complex needs that are not being met. Very limited formal, published work has been done with this community to really understand their needs in depth and understand what targeted work would make the biggest difference to addressing complex needs they are currently facing. There is, however, a clear and compelling emerging case of unmet need.

This community is geographically dispersed throughout the UK and some people within the community have had particularly negative past experiences when they have sought support.

The application proposes a small consortium of charities that, in the first year of the grant, would:

- conduct a detailed consultation with the specific group exploring current gaps in service provision
- implement co-design approaches to develop strategic plans with the community
- identify other organisations delivering support to this community and develop a stronger consortia
- use this information to develop new service provision
- undertake detailed planning on how to sustain the new service provision beyond the end of the grant.

Applications focused on the *prevention* of problems are eligible but must be highly targeted to a specific group of people within the Armed Forces community that are at particular risk of the problem(s) that the project will be attempting to prevent.

Applications that will develop *new services* targeted at meeting the needs of specific communities are eligible

Applications that will continue to run *existing services* are **not eligible**.

Applications must include *strong evidence of engagement* with the specific Armed Forces communities that would benefit from the project. If co-design of the project is not viable at this stage, then the application must make the reasons for this clear. We would expect any services that are ultimately developed to use co-design principles.

Applications should include a *clear strategic focus* on how the project will deliver systemic change; and that these changes will continue following the end of the grant.

Where new services will be developed, your application should indicate how you will develop a plan for how access to these services will be maintained after the end of the grant, should they still be needed. Sustainable access does not have to be through the applicant organisation; and could include solutions where they are mainstreamed into existing service provision or into new organisations. The application should contain an outline of the plan. If the application is successful, a full strategic plan must be developed in the first 18 months of the grant.

You will 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.

Your application can include approaches that will develop, test and then scale-up new approaches.

We would expect any project working with veterans to make appropriate links with relevant projects funded under the Veterans' Places, People, Pathways programme.

What can you apply for?

You can apply for up to £300,000 for three-to-five-year programmes of work.

We will only award one grant per organisation under this programme. You should submit a single expression of interest only.

We are likely to only award one grant in each thematic area. The thematic areas are broad. Examples of thematic areas are:

- veterans from LGBT+ communities
- female veterans
- Armed Forces families from BME communities
- veterans with a specific unmet mental health need, such as gambling addiction

- Armed Forces families where children have SEND needs and the families are not currently able to access the support they need.

There are other eligible groups in addition to this and we anticipate applications in respect of groups we have not considered to date.

Your transformational aims should ideally be national in focus, even if the initial delivery is in a specific region or country. Applications which are aiming for transformation in (only) one of the four countries will be considered where a strong case is made.

What your application should tell us

At Expression of Interest stage

- The specific group that your project will work with.
- The challenges that this group has.
- What evidence you have that this group does not have access to specialist services that meet their needs?
- What future service provision you are proposing?
- Who you will work with to achieve this?
- Why and how this proposed approach is or could be transformational.

You will only need to provide an overview of this information at expression of interest stage. If you are invited to full application stage, then you will need to give us more details. You can add additional partners to your project at full application stage.

At Full Application stage

Your application must tell us about the following.

- The specific group that your project will work with.
- The challenges that this group has.
- The evidence you have that this group does not have access to specialist services that meet their needs.
- The future service provision you are proposing.
- How people from Armed Forces communities have shaped these services.
- How you will deliver these services safely and appropriately.
- How you will ensure that this project or approach will be transformational beyond the life of the grant.
- How you will measure impact.
- Who you are working with to achieve this.

Please note that being invited to apply for the second stage does not guarantee that your application will be successful. We anticipate considerable competition for funds.

Showing the change 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 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.

Transformational grants delivering

Systemic Change



We will only fund projects where transformational benefits are highly likely to be achieved; and where we can see that these are benefits that are transformational for the wider Armed Forces sector. Your project should be highly targeted and likely to achieve high levels of impact

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 preventative 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 they choose.

For these projects, it's important to have clear plans on how you will measure the impact of your work on individuals, and beyond. All projects that are awarded funding for direct delivery of services to individuals 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](#).

We would be less likely to support a project under this programme that **only** provided sustainable benefits for people who were able to take part in the project, as we would want to see that the project would have an impact for people from Armed Forces communities who may have similar needs in future. This is what we mean by *systemic change*.

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. Sustainable access does not have to be through the applicant organisation; and could include solutions

where they are mainstreamed into existing service provision or into new organisations.

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 will not 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.

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 will make	
What are we looking for?	<p>That the project is addressing an identified need for a specific group of people within the Armed Forces community and that it will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. be able to make a significant difference to people's lives2. provide new services that meet needs within specific Armed Forces communities3. not duplicate other emerging service provision4. be able to show that the project will have longer term transformational benefits that will have an ongoing legacy across the UK after the end of the grant.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 and systemic change is hoped to be?

Delivery of your project	
What are we looking for?	<p>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.</p>
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 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.

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.

Preparing your project budget

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

If you are invited to the second stage and asked to submit a full application, you will need to send us a full budget and project milestones.

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.

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.

How to apply - the application form

You need to apply through the link that we'll provide to the online application form.

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.**

There is a two-stage application process.

You will need to complete a short expression of interest by **12 September 2022**

Your Expression of Interest will be assessed in line with this guidance, and you will be notified of the decision by the **end of October 2022**.

If you are invited to submit a full application, you will need to do this by **9 January 2023**.

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.

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 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 to minimise the risk to public funds the Trust may prioritise funding those applicants who 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 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