
Supporting Partners: Innovation Grants

A programme for practical new solutions that will support Partners of serving personnel, including Reservists, to reduce the challenges of service life.



ARMED FORCES FAMILIES FUND

Supporting Partners Innovation Programme 2022/23

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust will award grants of between £20,000 and £50,000 on behalf of the MOD's Armed Forces Families Fund towards projects which will pilot practical new solutions that will support partners of serving personnel, including Reservists, to reduce the challenges of Service life.

Supporting Partners Innovation Programme

Projects need to meet one of the following aims

Encourage new ways of enabling peer to peer support

Enable better access to employment, education & training; or wider support

Reducing duplication and make it easier for partners to access knowledge and information that's relevant to their lives

Projects need to show that they offer clear benefits for partners of serving personnel; and are focused on meeting the needs of partners experiencing challenges

Projects ideas could include

- Supporting partners to access paid employment or education (particularly finding ways to connect more partners to existing support rather than creating new mechanisms)
- Finding solutions for partners facing challenging situations with overseas postings (whether going overseas or coming from overseas)
- Piloting specific support for partners; who may have different challenges to spouses
- Exploring solutions to challenges arising to family life from newer forms of hybrid working and deployments
- Helping partners located overseas to better understand their options regarding employment and training
- Exploring issues specific to non traditional families; and finding new ways to better empower Partners of serving personnel

Applicants can apply for a grant of between £20,000- £50,000.

Projects must be completed within 1 year

What are we looking for?

Projects need to meet one of the following aims.

Encourage new ways of enabling peer to peer support

Enable better access to employment, education & training; or wider support

Reduce duplication and make it easier for partners to access knowledge and information that's relevant to their lives

You only need to meet one of these three aims - an application that contains a detailed proposal under one of the aims that evidences a clear impact for partners of serving personnel.

The programme will fund new, innovative ideas that pilot new approaches that should lead to positive lasting impacts for partners of serving personnel. Applicants must be able to clearly:

- show that their project is specifically focused on meeting the needs of partners of serving personnel (including partners of those serving in Reservist forces)
- explain (and evidence) the needs that partners are experiencing
- show why their proposed project will meet the needs that they have identified.
- show the likely impact that the project will have.

Your project idea can build on existing work that your organisation has done, but it must be innovative in nature and offer new, inclusive and distinctive approaches.

Project ideas could include proposals in relation to, for example:

- supporting partners to access paid employment or education (particularly finding ways to connect more partners to existing support rather than creating new mechanisms)
- finding solutions for partners facing challenging situations with overseas postings (whether going overseas or coming from overseas)
- piloting specific new types of practical support for partners, who may have different challenges to spouses
- exploring solutions to challenges arising to family life from newer forms of hybrid working and deployments
- exploring issues specific to non-traditional families; and finding new ways to better empower partners of serving personnel
- helping partners who are living overseas with their serving person to be able to better understand their rights and options regarding employment and training (upskilling).

Projects can be delivered in the UK or overseas. If a project is being delivered overseas, then the application must come from a UK Armed Forces base or Unit that is located overseas.

This programme will consider research projects that work with partners of serving personnel to better understand the challenges that they face. Projects of this type must have clear evidence of co-design approaches and produce tangible outputs. They must also fit all other parts of this programme guidance.

This programme is designed to fund innovative time limited projects and has limited funds. There are some types of projects that we are not anticipating funding under this programme which includes general existing activities such as participatory activities such as fitness, craft or music-based projects; coffee mornings/stay and play sessions; mental health support and counselling; and additional rollouts of existing family support services. However, we may consider applications that meet access or other significant barriers that partners of serving personnel face.

Your application must show that it is

Targeted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It must focus specifically on partners of serving personnel• It must be delivered in a year or less
Innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It must be a new idea, or an extension of existing work conducted in a way that has not been done before
Has lasting impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your project must be able to show a clear change or improvement that will last beyond the length of your grant

Example

A university and Armed Forces charity work together on a project to help serving partners understand more about their rights and to put information on housing, careers and other important aspects of family life into new resources that makes information more accessible to partners of serving Armed Forces personnel. The project works specifically with Reservist partners and with partners who are not married to their serving person to ensure that the end resources produced by the project incorporates relevant information and resources for these groups.

The project is highly **targeted**; addressing needs of specific partners of serving personnel, and working with them to ensure that the end result of the project meets their needs and addresses queries and challenges that they have experienced

The project is **innovative**; as it will be delivered in a way that has not been tried before; adds to, rather than duplicates existing provision and addresses a significant need. The end resources are available digitally

The project has an **ongoing impact**. It works with partners to produce resources that will continue to be available for more partners of serving personnel after the project ends

Who can apply?

We invite applications from the following organisations.

- Armed Forces Bases, Stations or Units
- Charities registered in the UK
- Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Universities in the UK

Charities and CICs must be able to evidence that they have at least three unrelated trustees/directors at the time of application. CICs will be required to provide accounts at application stage, and evidence of all project expenditure if successful in receiving a grant .

Who is ineligible?

The following types of organisation are not eligible for funding under this programme

- Unincorporated community groups
- Schools
- Private limited companies
- Local authorities, NHS Trusts, government departments

If your organisation is not eligible to apply for funding, it may be possible to work with an eligible project partner. There is more information on working with others later in this guidance.

What costs can you apply for?

You can apply for a grant of between £20,000 to £50,000 and need to complete your project within one year of any grant award. We expect that this programme will be competitive and that we will not be able to support all of the applications we receive.

Your application should clearly be able to show why partners of serving personnel will benefit from your proposal, and why this offers good value for money.

You can apply for:

- reasonable staff costs for your project
- appropriate technical or other professional support linked to your project (such as the costs of developing a website or app)
- the costs of developing or producing resources for partners of serving personnel, delivered through your project
- items that you need to deliver your project, such as computers
- reasonable overheads that are directly related to the project/programme of activities
- evaluation costs
- research costs are eligible; but any research proposal must contain practical and tangible outputs such as reports or other dedicated resources that will have a clear benefit for partners of serving personnel.
- research projects that work with partners of serving personnel to better understand the challenges that partners face. Your research should have practical outputs.

What your application should tell us

Your application should clearly tell us

- How your project will address challenges experienced by partners of serving personnel in a targeted way.
- What needs partners have and how you have identified them.
- Why your project will meet these needs.
- What difference you are expecting for partners, and how you will know if your project has made a difference.
- How you know your proposal will be good value for money.
- Why the impact of your project will last beyond your year of project delivery.

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](#)

No personal data relating to children should be included in your application to us.

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 your project is making	
What are we looking for?	<p>That the project is addressing an identified need for partners of serving personnel and that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to make a significant difference to partners of serving personnel • Have longer term sustainable benefits that will have ongoing legacy after the end of the grant • Not duplicate existing statutory or other services
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What your proposed project will do • How this will help partners • How this need has been identified • How you know that partners will participate and benefit • Who supports the project, and why they support it • How many partners 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 you have proposed would be likely to lead to the impact that you are seeking to have.
What do you need to show us?	<p>That you are able to manage your project</p> <p>That you'll be able to start your grant activity quickly</p> <p>That you can keep people on your project safe</p> <p>That your project will be delivered in line with our ethical values</p> <p>Why your project offers good value for money</p> <p>How you will measure the impact of your project</p> <p>Your plans to ensure a long-term legacy of your work that will continue after the end of the grant</p>

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. See also the section above 'What costs can you apply for'.

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 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 before the decision is made on a grant
- 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 our online application form. You can access the application form via our website.

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.

We highly recommend you plan to submit your application well 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 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 unless you are a CIC or a private limited company. [See below] 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.

If you are a CIC please ensure that you upload a copy of your most recent published accounts and your governing document. The accounts should include your income and expenditure statement, not just the balance sheet. Your application will not be complete without this.

What happens next

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.

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 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. Each application is considered on the evidence provided and is not linked to the success of a previous bid.

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 have been awarded a grant.

If we are not able to fund your project, we will write to you to tell you this.

If we plan to fund your project, 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.

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. 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 senior staff within your organisation know that you are submitting this grant application.

Checks we may carry out on your organisation and accounts

We may carry out several checks on the information you provide us – either during assessment or if you are offered a grant. This is to make sure that the information is correct and there are no significant risks we can identify when managing grants.

These may include checks:

- on whether information on your application form matches that held by your regulatory body (Companies House, Charity Commission, OFSTED etc.)
- that we can see that charities or CICs 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
- 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.

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 written updates on the progress of your project and evidence of activity and spend, 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 must 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 and may ask for case studies to share best practice.

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

Timetable:

Applications must be received by 5pm on 12 December 2022

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application before the end of February 2023

Successful applicants will then be expected to start their projects before 1 May 2023