

 **THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST**



**Ministry
of Defence**

The MOD Education Support Fund (ESF) 2022/23

Helping schools in the UK mitigate the effects of mobility and separation on Service children



Programme Guidance

The Armed Forces Families Fund: Education Support Fund (ESF) 2022/23 PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust will award grants on behalf of the MOD's Armed Forces Families Fund for projects or initiatives to be delivered over a 12-month period before 31 March 2024, which help Service children and their schools overcome negative impacts of mobility and/or separation.

This Fund is open to schools and local authorities across the UK.

The Education Support Fund (ESF) is different from the Service Pupil Premium, which is provided in England by the Department for Education in respect of children of members of the Regular Armed Forces.

Applications should show how the project would be on top of resources provided through the Service Pupil Premium.

Applications can only address the needs of children who are from currently serving Armed Forces families and who are aged 4-18 and in statutory full-time education.

Applications must be received by 5pm on Friday 30 September 2022.

Transfer of the Education Support Fund from MOD to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

The Trust is now managing this funding programme on behalf of, and in partnership with, the Armed Forces Families & Safeguarding department at the Ministry of Defence.

If you have already sent an application to the AFFS at the MOD for funds for this year, your application will be transferred automatically to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, and you will receive an email from the Trust to confirm this.

If you do not hear from us, please email info@covenantfund.org.uk with ESF included in the subject line.

What are we looking for?

- Applicants should include clear evidence of the negative impact of mobility and/or separation on Service children. Service refers to Regular Forces or Reserves (Full-time Reserve Service).
- A good relationship with the local Service community.

Mobility may be defined as the whole Service family moving from one location to another resulting in a change of school for the Service child.



Service personnel often need to move for career and strategic reasons. They may move as individual families, typically every 2 to 3 years or as whole Unit moves.

- ✔ Service children may have changed schools several times.
- ✔ There may be gaps in learning, differences in curriculum covered or they may have SEND/ASN/ALN.
- ✔ Parents may need encouragement to become engaged with the school and be less inclined to participate in the extra activities as they are unfamiliar.
- ✔ They can bring experiences of living in different locations and add a richness and interest to a school's community.
- ✔ Early assessment of the child is key. Individual children may take time to settle in and classes that have high levels of mobility may find it disruptive.
- ✔ Schools may have added administrative burden or funding gaps because of fluctuating numbers.

Knowing that your school understands and caters for Service children's needs can be a great comfort to parents.

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Separation is the Service person being away from home for a continuous period of one month or more, either on an operational tour, a training exercise or course, or an assignment that means they cannot live in the family home during the working week.



Separation can be anything from one month to up to 12 months, can place a strain on family life and have an impact on the education and wellbeing of children.

- ✔ Parents should feel able to inform schools of any upcoming extended periods of separation so that the school can effectively assist the child with the challenges.
- ✔ The Service person may have increased periods away prior to an operational tour for training, they may come home for a short period of Rest and Recuperation (R&R) mid-way through and finally after the homecoming they will usually have a period of post operational leave. Each period can be disruptive to the family routine and can unsettle the child.
- ✔ Each child will have a unique way of dealing with or responding to the separation. Schools can help children and parents through these periods in several different ways. Awareness, planning and communication are key.
- ✔ Your school may wish to help children keep in touch with the parent or have a named member of staff whom the child can talk to.
- ✔ Service personnel may also be assigned away from their family home for extended periods of time, returning at weekends when they are able to. This 'weekending' lifestyle can also disrupt family dynamics and be the cause of additional stressors.

Successful bids will demonstrate a good relationship with their Service community.



A supporting statement from an **Armed Forces sponsor** will strengthen any application to the ESF and may be considered by the decision-making panel. The Armed Forces sponsor should be:

- a uniformed serving member of the Armed Forces
- not below the rank of Captain (Army/RM), Lieutenant (RN), Flight Lieutenant (RAF) and could be, for example, the Station/Unit Commanding Officer or the Unit Welfare Officer.
- if a uniformed, serving member of the Armed Forces is not available, a civilian equivalent sponsor with sufficient knowledge of the garrison/area may be used.

The Armed Forces sponsor's supporting comments should not single out individual Service children (including their own if they are a parent).

Providing Context



Engagement with an Armed Forces sponsor can be vital as they can give context to the Service community, type of units and expected training and operational tours. They will also be able to refer to any known rebasing plans. For example, they may be able to explain that within the school's catchment area is a large multinational Staff HQ with constant trickle postings, or various units with regular overseas commitments and significant foreign and commonwealth personnel.

Understanding Impact



This information will assist assessors in understanding the Service impact on the school, cluster or local authority, and evidence of this engagement may be considered if there is competition for funds.

Building relationships



Applicants will be expected to have shared their application with their Armed Forces sponsor before submission and are required to include the Armed Forces sponsor's name and contact details on the application form as the third contact. A question is asked in the application form about this relationship and the opportunity is given to provide a supporting statement. If you have not engaged with a military sponsor, you should explain why in this section of the form.

Sharing your success



Successful applicants will be expected to confirm that they have received a grant with their sponsor soon after notification.

All schools (including small schools, away from a military base or garrison area) not currently engaged with a sponsor from the Armed Forces, may wish to contact the Trust using info@covenantfund.org.uk for help in making a suitable local link. Please allow at least two weeks before the closing date for this and include the words 'ESF Military Sponsor' in your subject line.

Who can apply?

We invite applications from schools in the UK which have on their roll children of Service personnel who are subject to mobility and/or separation.

Applications can be accepted from:

- maintained schools
- academies
- free schools
- sixth form colleges
- groups of schools as described above (referred to as 'Cluster bids' and strongly encouraged – full details of all schools in the cluster will need to be provided, and one school, or the local authority, will need to act as lead applicant)
- local authorities on behalf of the publicly funded schools in their area.

Schools may submit their own bid, as well as being part of a 'cluster bid', if these are for different initiatives.

A cluster bid may be stronger than an individual school bid as resources are shared, helping to achieve better value for money outcomes.

Where possible, applicants are to make their local authority aware of their application and are given the opportunity in the application form to say whether the local authority is supportive of the proposal.

Who is ineligible?

The following types of organisation are not eligible for funding from the ESF.

- Childcare providers (including early years).
- College of higher education or further education (excluding those that meet the definition of a sixth form college above).
- Commercial organisations or those that would seek for their solution to be provided to a school, for example, an organisation could not be awarded a grant to develop a training course which it then charges schools to attend.
- Independent (fee-paying) schools including boarding schools, whether or not registered as charities.

Who can benefit?

The ESF will provide grants to schools and local authorities to support pupils who are directly affected by mobility (including rebasing activity) and/or separation.

What sorts of projects are we keen to support?

As long as the needs of the Service children are identified and evidenced in the application, a variety of projects/activities could be supported. Proposals could include requests for funds towards:

- meeting specific staffing needs due to unforeseen increases in Service pupil numbers
- training for staff in relation to supporting Service pupils
- providing community support to help build and maintain relationships between schools, local authorities and Service families
- providing education resources linked to Service pupil intake
- providing funding for refurbishment of existing resources within the school (but not for capital works).

What costs can you apply for?

Staffing costs: Any successful application that requires the hiring of staff should ensure that all parties are aware they are being employed by the successful applicant (school/local authority) and not by the Trust or the MOD.

Resources: In line with the examples given below.

Reasonable overheads: Those that are directly related to the project/programme of activities.

What costs you can't apply for

Capital projects: The ESF cannot be used for infrastructure projects. Contributions to smaller scale refurbishments, such as adapting current spaces, and indoor and outdoor equipment are acceptable.

More than one project: Applicants can make one individual bid each and can also be included in a joint cluster bid with other schools, providing it is for a different initiative.

Long-term funding: The award of a grant from the ESF is not a commitment to future funding and should be regarded as a one-off contribution. Repeat funding requests for projects previously funded by an ESF grant cannot be considered without clear evidence of why this funding is vital and why the school/LA could not secure it via other means.

Examples of qualifying projects and what doesn't warrant ESF funding. The lists below are not exhaustive and meant to be a guide only:

ESF can be used for	ESF cannot be used for
Funding for temporary staff (teachers, teaching assistants, Service Pupil Liaison Officer, breakfast/after school staff)	Capital works (large infrastructure projects, building works such as toilet block replacement, building a community café)
Staff training (ELSA, Thrive, Forest School)	IT refresh (large ICT requests including PCs, tablets, whiteboards)
Classroom resources (books, sensory items, Forest School)	Any funding shortfall unless linked to increase in service pupil numbers after the census date
Refurbishment of existing spaces (library, sensory rooms, forest school)	Funding for multiple years (Family liaison officer for 2 years, licences for 5 years)
ICT when this forms part of the project applied for (e.g. tablet for library/reading bus)	Outdoor classrooms, playing surfaces and playground equipment
Breakfast and after school club resources	Musical instruments
Temporary licences for numeracy, literacy and maths programmes	School trips
Educational psychology support (requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis)	Uniforms
	Purchase or lease of any vehicle (e.g. school minibus)

What your application should tell us

Bids for the ESF can be for a range of projects, schemes or initiatives and should articulate:

- how the negative impact of mobility and/or separation will be addressed
- engagement with Service and civilian communities
- planned outcomes
- how you know your proposal will be good value for money
- about plans for sustainability beyond the funded period
- You will need to tell us the level of admissions and departures of Service children within the school(s) that are involved within your project outside that of the standard entry and exit groups for the previous academic year. You should give us this as both a number and percentage.
- If you are submitting a joint or cluster bid, please ensure you provide a list of all schools included in the bid with their address details, last inspection grade and date, total number of children, total number of Service children, admission number, Service Pupil Premium allocation (England only).

No personal data relating to children should be included.

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 your project is making	
What are we looking for?	That the project is addressing an identified need for Service children in a specified school or schools and that it will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to make a significant difference to the children/families • have longer-term sustainable benefits that will have ongoing legacy after the end of the grant • have the support of an Armed Forces sponsor • 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 Service children/families. • How this need has been identified. • How you know that Service children/families will participate and benefit. • Who supports the project, and why they support it. • How many children/families 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That you can manage your project. • That you'll be able to start your grant activity quickly.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Where appropriate, your plans to ensure a long-term legacy of your work that will continue after the end of the grant.
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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.

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 this project

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 is 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 through this [link](#), which is also available on our website.

You must make sure that senior staff within your organisation know that you are submitting this grant application.

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.

If you have an Armed Forces sponsor you should include their contact details as the third contact.

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.

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 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 in respect of OFSTED and checks to ensure you are up to date on all reporting with any active grants you hold with the Trust.

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.

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.

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 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 and 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.

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. Projects should be completed before 31 March 2024.

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 Friday 30 September 2022**.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application early in January 2023. Successful applicants will then be expected to start their projects before 1 April 2023.

Please note that 'in-year' applications can no longer be considered. Only applications submitted according to this Guidance and timetable will be accepted.