ARMED FORCES
COVENANT

Free from Fear

Prevention of, and ***provision of routes to support*** for those affected by, domestic abuse in Armed Forces communities

Programme Guidance 2024/25

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund

Free from Fear

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Programme overview

Grants available: Grants between £75,000 and £150,000

Funding on behalf of: The Armed Forces Covenant Fund

Project length: Between one and two years

Programme aim(s): To address the impact of, and to support initiatives that will have a long-term effect in preventing, domestic abuse in serving Armed Forces communities or in supporting those affected.

Application closing date(s): midday on Wednesday 16 October 2024

Awarded projects to start between: 1 January – 31 March 2025

Application form link: Apply to the Free from Fear programme

Terms and conditions to grant: Standard terms and conditions to grant

Will grant holders be required to use the Impact Hub? Yes

How to use this guidance

It's important that you **read all sections of this guidance document** when completing your application. This information covers everything you need to know about applying for funding from the Trust. We'll ask you to confirm you have read this document as part of your application.

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The programme

Why are we running this programme?

The Trust released its three-year Covenant Funding Framework in April 2024. Our Framework, and the subsequent programmes, were developed based on insights from our public consultation; stakeholder meetings, which included representatives from the single Services; intelligence from sector research, policy papers and the Trust's own programme evaluations and grant monitoring.

The Trust's Funding Framework is centred on enhancing quality of life, ensuring that Armed Forces communities are not disadvantaged, providing support to those requiring special consideration, and addressing complex needs by identifying effective solutions. Explore our 24-27 Funding Framework here.

This programme fits under the theme of ***ensuring Armed Forces communities are not disadvantaged***. It aims to support projects that will address the complex challenge of domestic abuse, through service provision focused on prevention and support.

For the purposes of this programme, domestic abuse is defined as a pattern of behaviour used to gain or maintain power and control over another person in a familial relationship. Although most victim-survivors are women, domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any age, sex, gender, race or sexual orientation and can take several different forms.

> Applicants should note that although, in this guidance, we are using the terms 'domestic abuse' we recognise organisations' terminology of choice, such as Intimate Partner Violence and Abuse (IPVA), Domestic Violence (DV), Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) or Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
>
> In addition, whilst we have used the term 'victim-survivor' we recognise that other terms may be preferred by applicant organisations, including 'those who are experiencing/have experienced domestic abuse.'

Within Armed Forces communities, it could involve both male and female spouses/partners, children and young people and serving members of the community as both victim-survivors and perpetrators.

Projects should be tailored to address domestic abuse within the specific context of the serving Armed Forces community through either preventative measures or the provision of effective routes to support for victim-survivors.

How much funding can you apply for?

We anticipate offering a small number of grants for innovative and exemplary projects which would develop better understanding of specific challenges within Armed Forces communities and share this learning to inform good practice.

You can apply for a grant of between £75,000 and £150,000 in total towards a project being delivered over a period of up to two years.

Timetable

There will be one deadline for applications:

- If you apply by **midday on Wednesday 16 October,** you'll receive a decision before the end of December 2024

We cannot accept any late applications.

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

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Your organisation

Who is eligible to apply?

We welcome applications to this funding programme from **registered charities or Community Interest Companies** with recent, relevant specialist experience in the field of domestic abuse. **Armed Forces units/bases** are also eligible to apply to this programme.

Your application will need to clearly show that you or your project partners have a comprehensive understanding of domestic abuse within the specific context of Armed Forces communities.

Partnership working is not a requirement for this programme, and we recognise it may not be suitable for all projects. However, for some projects, programme outcomes and high-quality provision may be best achieved through strong partnerships between organisations with complementary specialisms, services or expertise. These partnerships could include charitable or statutory providers. If you are considering forming a partnership, please see the 'Working with other organisations' section below.

The following additional eligibility requirements also apply:

Charities

- Your organisation must have been registered in the UK (with one or more of the charity commissions for England and Wales, or Scotland or Northern Ireland for at least three years at the time of your application and able to provide published accounts for all three years if requested.

- Your organisation must have a minimum of three unrelated trustees at the time of applying, and, if successful, throughout the life of your grant. This must be verifiable at all times on the relevant charity regulator's website.

Armed Forces units/bases

- Your main Point of Contact will ideally be an individual who will remain within the post for the duration of the project.

- We would expect Units that apply to have engaged with, and looking to work in partnership with external organisations who can provide specific services to meet the needs of the targeted group. These do not need to be Armed Forces specific organisations.

- If your application is successful we will require the authorisation of your CO/OC or equivalent when you accept the grant offer. This is to ensure that we have buy in for the project and commitment to its delivery.

CICs

- Your organisation must have been incorporated in the UK for at least three years and you must have submitted three years' of accounts to Companies House at the time of applying.

- Your organisation must have a minimum of three unrelated directors at the time of applying, and, if successful, throughout the life of your grant, and this must be verifiable at all times on the Companies House website. Please note that Company Secretaries cannot be considered as one of your three Directors, unless they have been registered separately as a Director as well.

- You will need to attach a copy of your most recent, full accounts (including an income and expenditure statement and balance sheet – not just abbreviated accounts as submitted to Companies House) with your application form.

- We will carry out extra governance checks. You may not be considered for funding if your Articles of Association do not have nominated beneficiary organisation/s in the Asset Lock clause. If this section in your articles is blank or 'to be confirmed' your application may not be regarded as eligible.

- CIC Directors must confirm that none of the Disqualification rules (that prevent people from holding senior or trustee positions in a charity) apply to them. The Disqualification Rules can be found here.

- At our discretion, the Trust may look more favourably on applications from CICs that are governed in similar ways as charities i.e. with equal responsibility shared amoung the Directors, with no single director registered as a person with significant control.

The following restrictions may apply:

- Organisations cannot apply more than once under this programme. If we receive more strong applications than we can support we may give priority to funding a spread of projects which cover different approaches.
- We may decline applications from current Trust grant holders if the reporting requirements for existing grants from the Trust are not up to date.
- This programme is not open to projects which seek to address the needs of Reservists, veterans, or their families.

Who cannot apply for this programme?

- Childcare providers (including early years).
- Schools, including LA maintained, independent (fee-paying) schools and boarding schools, regardless of their charitable status.
- An individual.
- An Academy Trust - you cannot apply for an overarching project across your academy chain, though individual schools can apply.

- A charity or CIC which doesn't have substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities or is newly registered.
- Local authorities.
- Other public sector organisations - but you could work with one of the types of organisations listed above, as a delivery partner.
- A charity or CIC that is based overseas.
- Community organisations that do not fit any of our eligibility criteria, such as a sports organisation which is not a charity or CIC.
- Not-for-profit organisations that are not registered as either a charity or CIC.
- A private or for-profit company.

Your project

What types of projects are we looking for?

Under this programme, projects will be expected to achieve **one or more of the following outcomes:**

- Deliver effective, preventative and educational measures regarding domestic abuse within Armed Forces communities, by addressing emerging and current challenges.
- Provide clear routes, or remove barriers, to enable victim-survivors to access effective support, including the ability to recognise and report domestic abuse.
- Establish long-term, sustainable improvements and adaptation of support to meet the evolving needs of victim-survivors.

We will award a limited number of large grants under this programme. We are awarding larger grants rather than smaller grants as we want to help address some complex issues. By awarding larger grants over a period of up to two years; we hope to support innovative approaches that can show how to make long term sustainable difference in this complex area.
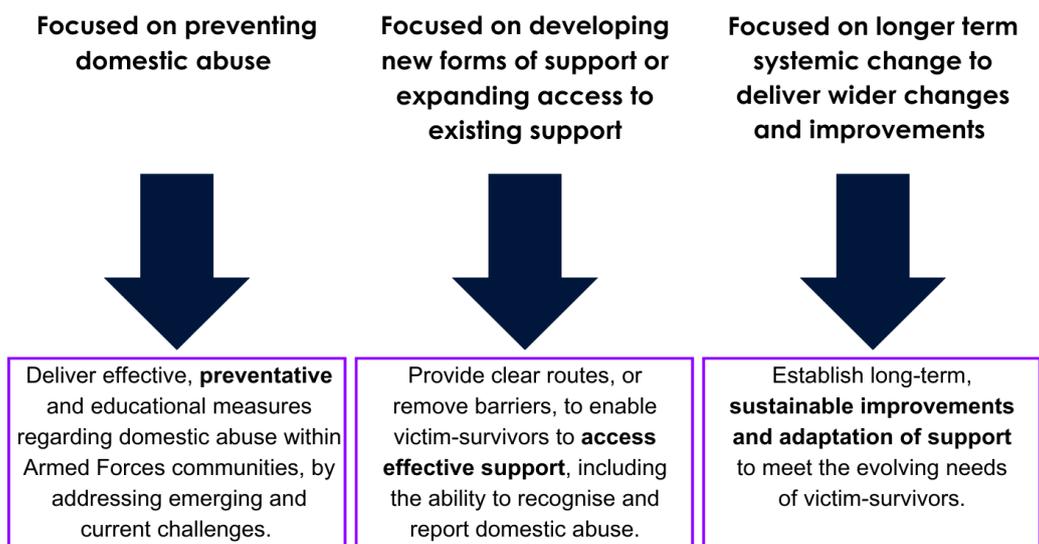
Projects should be aimed at currently serving Armed Forces personnel and their families and may be new, an established model or an expansion/adaptation of existing provision.

An understanding of Armed Forces culture is essential to this funding programme. Projects must offer bespoke interventions which recognise and take account of the specific barriers and challenges involved in seeking to prevent and address domestic abuse within the serving military community. This may be best achieved through partnerships between organisations with complementary specialisms and expertise.

Outcomes
Our outcomes set out the changes and improvements that we are seeking to support through this programme

Is your project idea mainly...

Focused on preventing domestic abuse	Focused on developing new forms of support or expanding access to existing support	Focused on longer term systemic change to deliver wider changes and improvements
⬇	⬇	⬇
Deliver effective, **preventative** and educational measures regarding domestic abuse within Armed Forces communities, by addressing emerging and current challenges.	Provide clear routes, or remove barriers, to enable victim-survivors to **access effective support**, including the ability to recognise and report domestic abuse.	Establish long-term, **sustainable improvements and adaptation of support** to meet the evolving needs of victim-survivors.

Your project needs to meet one or more of these outcomes

A strong project would include solutions that bring about **long-term change** in the way that support is provided, ensuring that harm is minimised and/or prevented.

Preventative projects may include development and implementation of specific support and resources for relevant people, including others within the Armed Forces serving community who are supporting this cohort. Other activities might include new resources to help those at risk of perpetrating to better handle stressful times, or information for people who are concerned that someone they know may be at risk.

Projects that are focused on developing new forms of support, or enabling existing forms of support to be expanded, could include information and signposting to tailored help from external providers.

Effective projects under this programme could offer personalised and immediate support which ensures that victim-survivors have agency to make their own choices about what is best for them and take ownership of decisions.

Under this programme we will only fund projects that are focused on Armed Forces communities. This could involve both male and female spouses/partners, children and young people and serving members of the community as both victim-survivors and perpetrators.

We would be interested in projects that are actively aware of additional factors that might present additional barriers in accessing support. This could include those with disabilities, foreign and Commonwealth families, the LGBT+ community or Armed Forces serving personnel and families who are located overseas. It could also include other groups.

Projects will most likely be regional or national in focus and can also address the needs of those located overseas.

This programme is not open to projects which seek to address the needs of Reservists or Veterans, or their families.

Your project will be time limited and must have a clear plan of what you are seeking to deliver if you are awarded a grant. It is important that you tell us how you will ensure that people who may access your project (if we award you funding) will not face a loss of support provision when your project ends. There is more information in the sustainability section later in this document.

Example for illustrative purposes only

A UK-based charity working with and supporting male members of the Armed Forces community has seen an increase in beneficiaries asking for support and advice regarding domestic abuse.

They have developed a project to help men who have been experiencing financial abuse and coercive control. Additionally, they aim to assist the partners/spouses of their beneficiaries in recognising and preventing the behaviours that have led this cohort to seek support and advice.

They form a partnership with another UK-based charity that specialises in working with perpetrators and people at risk of perpetrating domestic abuse to collaboratively work on their project. The project also collaborates with other organisations to share their learning and resources, helping these organisations to adapt their current resources to meet the needs of the Armed Forces community.

Example for illustrative purposes only

A UK- based charity, that works with Armed Forces families to recognise domestic abuse and seek support, has seen an emerging need for a project to help support parents who are finding the dynamics of their home changing, upon parental deployment/weekending.

The organisation devises a project, in conjunction with Armed Forces families, to support parents whose children and young people (CYP) might be struggling and who can lash out in frustration, due to the changing family dynamics, when the family is operating on a weekender/one parent family basis.

The project aims to help CYP from Armed Forces families to recognise how to manage their emotions in a constructive manner, whilst offering timely, effective support to parents to navigate difficult circumstances, which includes, if appropriate, support to engage with outside agencies, including the Police.

The organisation shares the learning from their project to the wider Armed Forces and non-Armed forces community, through a series of workshops and resources to facilitate long-term impact and prevention of domestic abuse.

What should your application show us?

You'll need to clearly show us that you have the **skills and experience** necessary to carry out your project. This can include working with other organisations - there is more information on working with others later in this document.

We won't fund projects which duplicate existing provision. So, you'll need to show us how your project complements other work taking place.

You'll also need to show us what evidence you have to support the approach you seek to take and, crucially, how people from Armed Forces communities have helped to shape this.

As part of your application, we'll ask you to show us that your project:

is needed and targeted	You should be able to clearly explain how you've identified the need for this project and how you will target the people who have the greatest need for support, including needs related to cost-of-living challenges.
is user-led	This means your project may stem from the results of consultation. Your organisation may be led by people who are from your beneficiary group, and you should have recent relevant experience of working with the target group. You may have a service-user steering group. Show us how the idea for your project has been shaped by the people it will benefit.
has lasting impact	This means there should be a wider impact to your work, which will endure beyond the life of your grant. Your project should show that it offers a positive benefit to members of Armed Forces communities.

Useful questions to ask yourself when completing your application:

Why is your project the best way to support your beneficiaries?

How have you **involved your beneficiaries** in planning and shaping the project?

What exactly is the activity or service you will be delivering?

How do you know this work **doesn't duplicate** existing provision for your beneficiaries?

How do you know your beneficiaries will take part?

Who should benefit from your project?

Anyone affected by the issue of domestic abuse within the context of the serving Armed Forces community.

Beneficiaries of your project can be direct or indirect. Your **direct beneficiaries** are usually the people you are **directly targeting with your work**.

For example, a grant might be focused on supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse to make choices for themselves and their children which will result in them being safeguarded and regaining control of their lives. They are direct beneficiaries.

Example

A support session is designed to help **victim-survivors of domestic abuse**. They are the **direct beneficiaries**. The **indirect beneficiaries** might be close **family members** of the person leaving the abusive situation .

Others outside of this target group(s) may also benefit from this intervention. These are called **indirect beneficiaries**. In this example, they would be the close family members of the person leaving the abusive situation.

The following illustrations can help with undertsanding how to calculate your direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Your project works with 25 spouses. They are your **direct beneficiaries**.

They each have a family. The family members are the **indirect beneficiaries**.

So, your total indirect beneficiaries would be:

25 direct beneficiaries × Average household size (4) = 100 indirect beneficiaries

Your project works with 50 Service families. They are your **direct beneficiaries**.

Each family includes a serving person. The serving person is the **indirect beneficiary**.

So, your total indirect beneficiaries would be:

50 Service families × each with 1 serving person = 50 indirect beneficiaries

Your project works with 25 **direct beneficiaries**.

Each direct beneficiary has close friends or family members. The friends and family are the **indirect beneficiaries**.

So, your total indirect beneficiaries would be:

25 direct beneficiaries × Average friend group (3) = 75 indirect beneficiaries

Showing the change your grant will make

We want to know what changes will take place because of your work. This means that we would like to know what will be different when your project ends and why you think your work will achieve these improvements.

At the end of your funded project, the people who have taken part should 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.

Measuring impact

It's important to have clear plans for how you will measure the impact of the project. This might include looking at the evidence you have gathered during your project about the needs of your beneficiaries. The application form will ask questions about how you will measure and evidence the impact of your project.

Impact Hub

The Trust is committed to effectively monitoring & evaluating the impact of our funding programmes. The requirement for grant holders to submit regular progress reports enables us to monitor individual projects and feeds into overall grant programme evaluation.

Another measure we use to help us measure the effectiveness of our programmes is our Impact Hub. **The Impact Hub** is the Trust's own online resource, which gathers information directly from individual project beneficiaries through brief surveys. As a grant holder using the Impact Hub, you can benefit from the data it will provide you. You can download project and individual beneficiary data. This data belongs to you and can be used to prove the impact of your project.

When you accept your grant offer, we create a record on the Impact Hub for your project. You are then responsible for ensuring that consenting project participants are registered and that their wellbeing journey is monitored over time via completion of *ONS 4* survey questions.

There are a small number of specific exemptions to use of this tool. However, **for many of our funding programmes, if a funded project is delivering support to adults, it is a contractual condition that grant holders agree to use the Impact Hub even if they already have their own impact recording systems.** You should carefully consider this requirement when deciding whether to apply to us for funding.

Applicants may consider cost implications when planning their project budget. For the majority there will be no additional admin costs, but for some projects, we appreciate that information may need to be uploaded on behalf of beneficiaries and in these cases additional admin time may be factored in.

For full information, we recommend you look at the relevant section of our website, here: Impact Hub : Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

Sustainability

We want to fund projects with sustainable benefits. This means that we are interested in what will happen in the long term, after your funded project has ended. The application form will ask questions about sustainability which are relevant to the individual grant programme.

Types of sustainability: how will your work sustain beyond the life of your grant?

Ongoing improvements for project beneficiaries

Your project might look 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.

Accessing funding for ongoing delivery

Your project may be a pilot project, or you might be planning to keep running your project or service in future. In which case you may plan to raise funding from donations, grants or local commissioning.

Ongoing partnership and collaboration

You may 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

You might look at the evidence you have gathered through your project about the needs of a specific group of people within the wider Armed Forces community. This evidence base might help to ensure that Armed Forces communities in future could have access to better support that meets their needs.

Working with other organisations

We encourage you to work with other organisations as part of your project. Working with other organisations is a criterion of some of our programmes.

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.

If any of the organisations that you will be working with meet this definition, you need to read our guidance below on delivery partners.

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 deemed to be compliant (with our terms and conditions) by us and finalised prior to us releasing any funding. 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.

Considerations when applying

Our assessment criteria

Our criteria are set out below. We will consider each application to see how well it meets these criteria and fund those that we believe will best achieve the programme aims.

The difference that your project is making	
What are we looking for?	That the project is addressing a specific need for a specific group of people within the Armed Forces community and that it will • Be able to make a significant difference to people's lives • Be able to show that the grant will have longer term sustainable benefits that will have an ongoing legacy after the end of the grant
What do you need to show us?	● What your project would do ● How this would help specific Armed Forces communities ● 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, and what difference this will make ● What the long-term benefits will be?

Delivery of your project	
What are we looking for?	That you have 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 bring about.
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 quicky ● That you can keep people involved in your project safe ● That you will deliver your project in line with our ethical values ● That your budget is accurate and well-costed ● 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 ● Your plans to ensure a long-term legacy of your work that will continue after the end of the grant

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.

The Trust has an Ethics Advisory Panel, which includes Trustees and independent experts, that provides guidance and leadership on ethical issues. This includes activities and interventions proposed in grant applications where necessary.

You can access our ethics resources [here](#)

What financial information should you include in your application?

The application form will ask you to give details of your project budget.

It is fine to show these in categories where relevant, for example 'IT Equipment', rather than listing every item of the IT equipment you require.

However, you will need to give us sufficient information to assure us that you have fully considered how much the work will cost and how you know this.

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.

> **Some useful points to consider include:**
>
> - If you are applying for training costs, state what training this is and for how many people.
> - If you are applying for staff costs, show us how many hours we'll be paying for, ensuring these are new or additional, and at what rate of pay.
> - If you are requesting funding for sports equipment, tell us what equipment this is and how many items you intend to purchase.

Preparing your project budget

What can funds be spent on?

We can pay for most of the things you'll need for your project or activity. This includes people's time, costs of delivering work online or buying/hiring equipment.

We understand that, currently, the real value of your income may have dropped due to inflationary pressures of running your organisation. You may have also found the rising cost of living has increased demand on your services. The Trust will consider applications that include a reasonable contribution to overhead/core costs. We would expect to see this reflected within your budget breakdown.

It is 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
- Staff time for this fixed-term project.
- Direct project work or for admin or to manage volunteers that may be involved in your project.
- Sessional staff or freelancers that you may need to run your project.
- Appropriate clinical supervision for workers who are supporting vulnerable individuals.

Travel costs
- Reasonable travel costs
- Fares or mileage for project staff, volunteers or beneficiaries to enable participation in the project.

Items to support your project

- Purchasing items that enable activities to take place.
- Art materials; sports/games/outdoor equipment; supplies for breakfast or social hubs.
- Purchasing items that will help you to deliver your project, such as additional telephones or laptops or IT equipment.

Reasonable overheads

- Reasonable costs for storing and transporting items, including wear and tear on private vehicles.
- Reasonable overheads, which reflect the cost to your organisation of delivering this project, taking account of recent cost increases.

What can't funds be spent on?

Where money only benefits one person. By this we mean where your whole project would only benefit one person.	Making grants or donations of money or items of value to individuals or families.	Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding.	Endowments (to provide a source of income).
Topping up existing grants and aid from a government department.	Investments	Fundraising costs, including organising fundraising events and activities.	Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity.
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.	Projects with budgets that are dominated by capital costs - unless this is a capital programme.

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be specific exclusions for some programmes.

Any grant that we award under this programme must be in line with our charitable objectives. As a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) we cannot fund any lobbying activity.

Defining capital costs

When formulating your budget, it is useful to understand where costs sit in relation to the maximum amount available for capital and non-capital funding, within a specific programme. **While the Trust's programmes may allow non-capital costs, some capital costs – or both – it's important to note that any costs we support must be related to a defined project. We cannot support ongoing revenue costs (sometimes described as 'core costs').**

Here is a guide to allocating your cost headings:

Capital costs: These are the costs of buying equipment, furnishings, premises or other items that cost a significant amount and will last beyond the project duration. They can cover one-time large purchase, refurbishment, extension, or build of a fixed asset that will be used for a long period of time. This includes buildings, and can also include fixtures and fittings, and equipment. **Note that many of these items are specifically excluded under many of our funding programmes. Do check the individual Programme Guidance for this information.**

Examples of Capital costs

- New buildings and repairs, refurbishment to existing buildings, extension of existing buildings.
- Purchasing computers or other IT infrastructure
- Alteration of Land, or purchase or alteration of outside space, playgrounds, sports grounds and equipment.
- Alteration or refurbishment of indoor space, village/community halls, offices, equipment.
- Professional fees for architects, quantity surveyors, feasibility studies etc.

Non-capital costs: The day-to-day costs of a project and the activities that take place during the project can be considered revenue costs. This includes salaries, utilities, and events. For consumables, such as small IT equipment, deciding to categorise the item as revenue or capital funding depends on the scale of the purchase and its purpose within the project. Consider if the item(s) will be used where there is no lasting asset. For example, will it appear on an asset register or on a balance sheet for depreciation? If it does, it is probably a capital cost.

Examples of non-capital funding

- Salaries and on costs, sessional staff.
- Training, project running costs such as travel.
- Project activities and events outlay
- Purchase of consumables, such as IT equipment for the project team.
- Management/overheads (This may include a contribution to management time and to overheads such as utilities, rent, stationery etc)

These are examples only and you should categorise each item as appropriate to your project and check the specific Programme Guidance for eligibility.
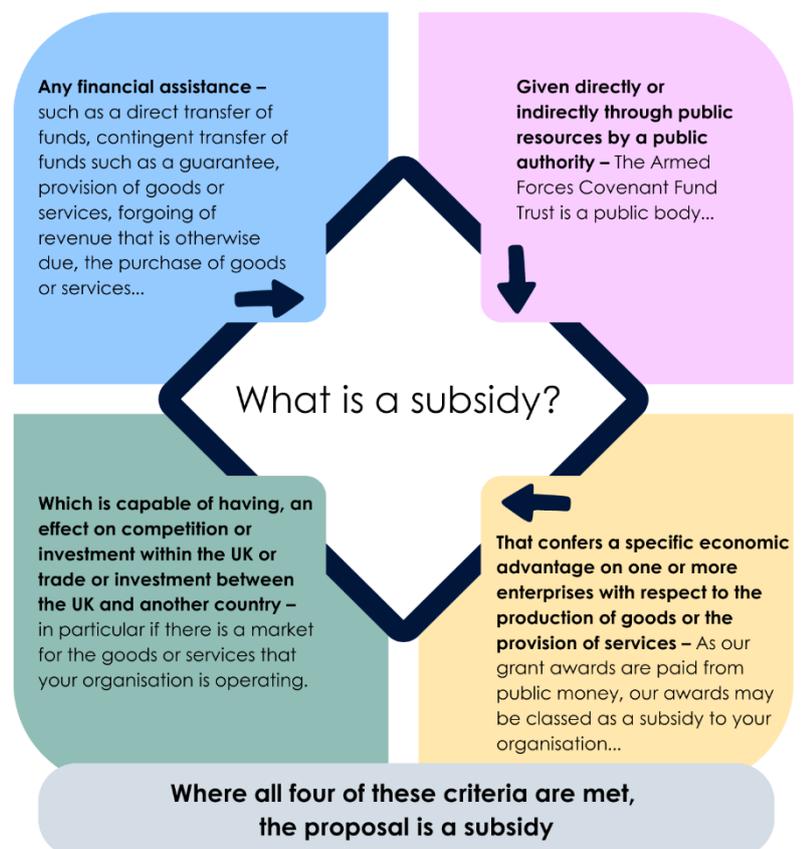
Subsidy Control Act 2022

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust is a public body. We are required to follow specific rules under the Subsidy Control Act 2022. This law requires us to be transparent about how we use public funds, which we provide as grants.

The Subsidy Control Act is important for anyone thinking about applying for our grants. We encourage you to understand its requirements, which are outlined in the guidance from the Department of Business and Trade. This guidance helps organisations like ours distribute funds responsibly, making sure they are used effectively and fairly, without negatively impacting competition or investment.

What does this mean for you?

- **Grants as public funding:** Our grants come from government money. This means they may be considered subsidies or financial support which is different from private funding. Other organisations might need to use their own funding for similar activities, so it's important to recognise this distinction.

- **Publishing Details of Large Grants:** If a grant exceeds £100,000, we must publish its details on our website and on a national database managed by the Department for Business and Trade. This helps to ensure the process is open and transparent.

- **Your Input:** When you apply for a grant, please complete your application form accurately. We have designed the questions to ensure compliance with subsidy control requirements, so your main task is to provide thorough and specific answers. We may also update the terms of the grant agreement based on these principles and could add further conditions. This will only be done for transparency and accountability purposes.

What is a subsidy?

Any financial assistance – such as a direct transfer of funds, contingent transfer of funds such as a guarantee, provision of goods or services, forgoing of revenue that is otherwise due, the purchase of goods or services...

Given directly or indirectly through public resources by a public authority – The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust is a public body...

Which is capable of having, an effect on competition or investment within the UK or trade or investment between the UK and another country – in particular if there is a market for the goods or services that your organisation is operating.

That confers a specific economic advantage on one or more enterprises with respect to the production of goods or the provision of services – As our grant awards are paid from public money, our awards may be classed as a subsidy to your organisation...

Where all four of these criteria are met, the proposal is a subsidy

We are committed to ensuring that our funding process is as clear and straightforward as possible. While we need to follow these regulations to ensure fair and responsible use of public money, we also aim to support you through the application process with clear guidance and support.

How to apply - the application form

You need to apply using our online application form which you can access via our website, via each programme page and at the top of this document. The questions on the application form may be different for each of our programmes.

If you don't yet have an account for our online application portal, then you will need to create one. (You will need this anyway if you are successful in receiving a grant, so that you can submit reports and receive grant payments). 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.

To apply to some programmes, we may require you to attach documents to the application form. Please read the Programme Guidance carefully to check what these might be.

You do not need to send any additional information once you have submitted your application. We will not consider any additional information received unless specifically asked for by our assessors or Trust staff.

TOP TIPS for completing your application form

1 Complete your application in a **Word document**, save it locally as you work on it. When it is complete, cut and paste the answers into our online form.

You will find a Word document with a list of the project related questions on our website

2 **Don't use any formatting**, such as tables or numbered lists, in your Word document. The online form may not accept this formatting and you might have trouble submitting the form.

3 **Save your online form** every 10-15 minutes while completing it, to avoid the risk of it 'timing out'.

If either contact changes, do let us know as soon as you can

4 You'll need to **provide two contacts from your organisation** on the application. At least one should have an organisation email address. At least one must hold the relevant authority (CEO/ CO or equivalent) to authorise any grant contract and bank account if successful.

5 You will be emailed when you both save and submit the application. **Check the 'Submitted Applications' tab** on your grant portal, to ensure your application has been fully submitted.

We can only consider applications that have been fully submitted

You must make sure that the trustees/directors/senior staff within your organisation know that you are submitting this grant application. We recommend making a trustee or director your second contact on your application.

Do not send your application by email or post to the Covenant Fund Trust – we will only consider applications submitted via the online form.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in completing application forms

We understand that AI is a powerful tool that can help organisations work in more efficient ways, one of those may be in supporting you in generating your application form.

Whilst we will consider applications that have been partially generated using AI, there are some important factors to be aware of. We would strongly recommend that you review the application ahead of submitting it to ensure it: reads properly and makes sense; is factually accurate; and is an accurate representation of the project you are intending to deliver.

If you use AI to generate any part of the application form, you will also be expected to review elements that refer to project delivery, in detail, to make sure your organisation has the skills and capabilities to run the project. We would not expect any AI generated answers relating to questions on project need; for these questions you will need to be clear on any consultation work, or otherwise, you have undertaken to demonstrate why the project is needed.
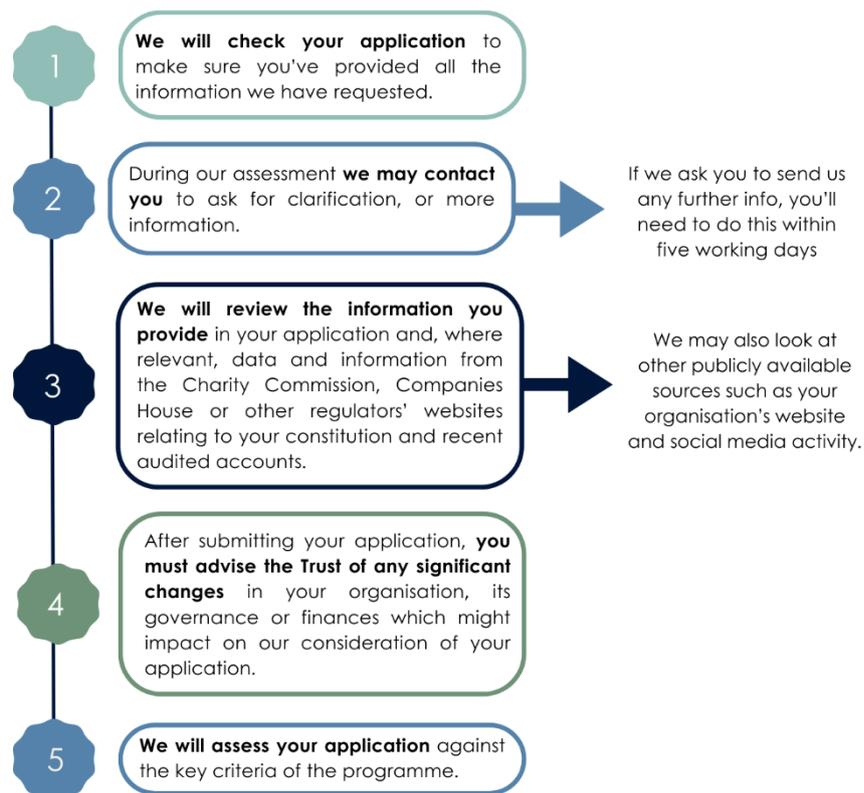
The Trust reserves the right to reject any AI generated applications if we have concerns around the factual accuracy of them.

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. Please note that this is a 'no reply' email address.

If you have not received this email, then your application was not submitted successfully. Please log back into the portal to submit it.

1 We will check your application to make sure you've provided all the information we have requested.

2 During our assessment **we may contact you** to ask for clarification, or more information.

If we ask you to send us any further info, you'll need to do this within five working days

3 We 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.

4 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.

5 We will assess your application against the key criteria of the programme.

Please note: If your application is handled by one of our external grant assessors, you may be contacted by them from a non-Trust email address.

Be assured that our external assessors will always clearly identify their role and copy the Trust Grants Manager for the programme into their email.

However, if you have concerns after receiving an email from a non-Trust email address, you can contact us at info@covenantfund.org.uk

If you have any further queries about your application after you have submitted it, you can contact us at info@covenantfund.org.uk

Checks we may carry out on your organisation.

We may carry out several checks on the information you provide and about your organisation This is to make sure the information is correct and there are no significant risks we can identify when awarding grants.

This might 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. Please note, we **do not** class company secretaries as Directors of CICs, unless they are registered separately as a Director as well.
	that your governing documents (such as constitutions and memorandum and articles of association) are up to date, correct and properly signed
	that your governing documents allow you to undertake the activities for which you are applying (N.B. it is, however, your responsibility to ensure that your organisation would not be acting outside any constitutional restrictions if you are awarded a grant)
	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 the signatories are valid and well informed about the project
	on your annual report and on your website/social media activity and other publicly available information, to ensure 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
	if your organisation is a branch of a larger organisation (such as charities with regional branches or offices), as part of our due diligence checks we may be sharing key details of the application with your head office to confirm eligibility to apply for this funding. We may also require the second contact from your organisation to be from head office depending on your structure
	if you are awarded a grant, 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 is held elsewhere in the public domain. We'll need you to explain any inconsistencies
	if you are awarded a grant, that your bank statement shows that your account is being managed in line with your own financial procedures and our programme requirements

Decisions about your application

Final decisions will be made by the Board of 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 Board will use their discretion to choose which projects to fund, ensuring a good spread of funded projects and to differentiate between projects that are considered fundable.

Please note that 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 previously had grants from us, we expect all reporting on these grants to be up-to-date and may consider this when considering new applications.

Trustees may also take the decision to part-fund proposals. This may mean you are awarded less money than was applied for. If this is the case, we will talk to you about what elements of the project were supported and why and discuss this with you.

After the Trustees have met, 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.

Our programmes are often oversubscribed and, unfortunately, we often have to turn good applications down due to lack of available funding. If you have been unsuccessful, we will email you to tell you.

What happens next if we award you a grant?

The Board of Trustees decide to support your grant proposal

We will email you to let you know you've 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 invite you to an online briefing session for new grant holders; and we'll send you the dates for these. Alternatively, we may request a virtual meeting with you to provide you with further information and answer any questions you may have.

We'll send your formal Offer Letter and Terms and Conditions to you after the briefing or meeting. We won't be able to pay your grant until these documents have been signed.

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.

Once we have all the necessary documents back, we will pay the first instalment of your grant. We pay grants in instalments, and the number and size of these will depend on the size and duration of the grant.

If there are any discrepancies/queries within these documents, this will delay your payment, so please read the accompanying information we provide, thoroughly.

You'll need to spend the full grant amount during the grant period - this small retained amount is paid retrospectively.

A small proportion of the total amount awarded to you will be retained pending a satisfactory End of Grant report.

Good to know...

- If you receive a grant, you will need to **keep good records** of how you spent the funds and how many people you helped and how.

- As part of the Terms and Conditions of funding, we will ask you to **update us on the progress of the project**, this will include detailing how the funding has been spent.

- We may also expect you to **take part in evaluations**, impact studies or other research related to the funding you have received. We will let you know what is required and how to participate.
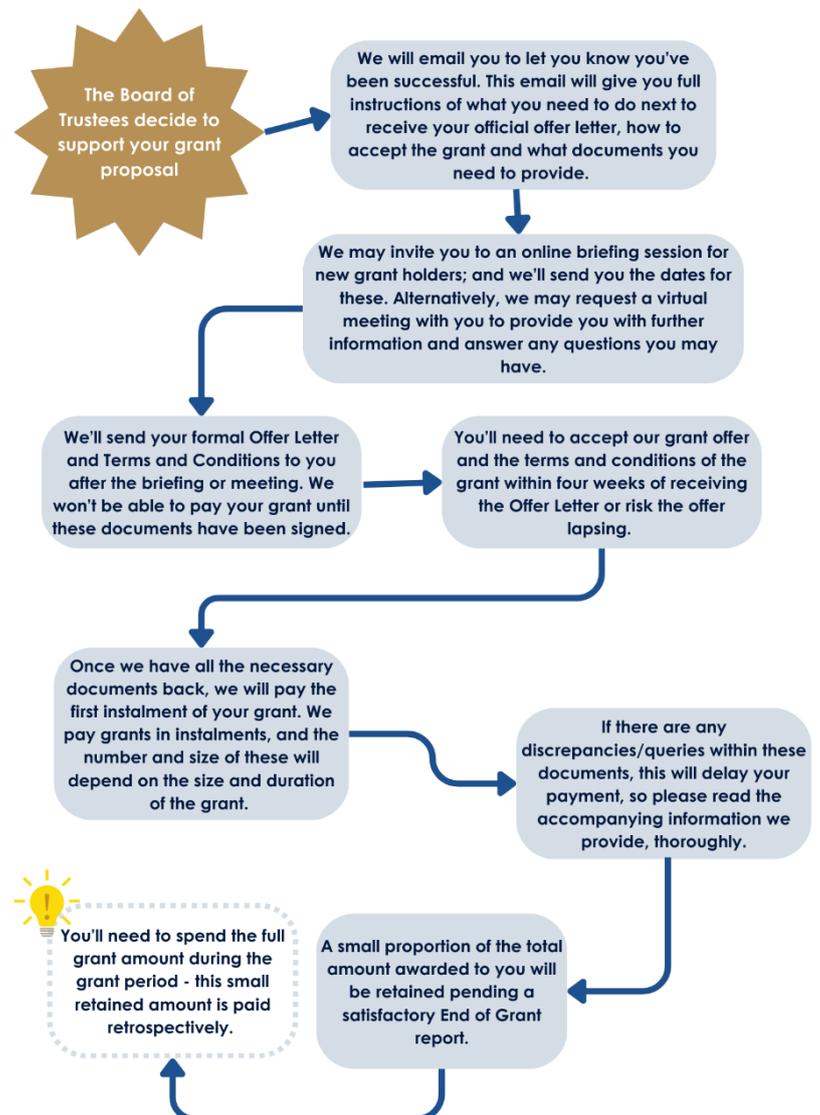
The Trust has a Privacy Policy which explains what data we collect from our grant applicants, and how we use this. Please read this in advance of applying: https://covenantfund.org.uk/privacy-policy/

If you have any questions relating to applying for grant funding, please refer to all the programme documentation for support. There is a wealth of useful information available 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

Please note: We are only able to offer technical advice to applicants. We cannot advise on whether your proposed project is a good idea, or whether it is likely to receive funding.