

HIDDEN VOICES PROGRAMME

**Programme Guidance
2024/25**

Enabling accessible mental
health and wellbeing support
for those with seldom heard
needs in the Armed Forces
community

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund

Hidden Voices

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Programme overview

Grants available: Grants of up to £20,000

Funding on behalf of: The Armed Forces Covenant Fund

Project length: up to 12 months

Programme aim(s): To enable and deliver accessible mental health and wellbeing support for those with seldom heard needs in Armed Forces communities, with a focus on prevention and early intervention - through collaborative projects between Armed Forces organisations and non-Armed Forces specialist organisations.

Application closing date(s): Round 1: 12 noon 11 September 2024; Round 2: 12 noon 8 January 2025

Awarded projects to start by: Round 1: end of February 2025; Round 2: end of June 2025

Application form link: [Apply to the Hidden Voices 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 addresses the unique needs of seldom heard cohorts and their access to defined mental health and wellbeing support. With a collaborative approach, Armed Forces organisations and specialist non-Armed Forces organisations can work together to reach known and unknown gaps in service provision. Each funded project will be expected to meet **all of the programme outcomes**.

This programme builds on the learning from [The Trusts' evaluation of past small grants](#). Click the link to learn more.

How much funding can you apply for?

You can apply for a grant of up to £20,000 in total towards a project being delivered over a period of up to 12 months.

Timetable

There will be **two** deadlines for applications this financial year:

- If you apply by **12 noon on 11 September**, you'll receive a decision before the end of December 2024.
- If you apply by **12 noon on 8 January 2025**, you'll receive a decision before the end of April 2025.

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?

To be eligible for this funding you must be one of the following:

- a **charity** registered with one or more of the charity commissions for England and Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland
- a **Community Interest Company (CIC)** with substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities and have been registered as a CIC for more than one year at the time of your application (further detail regarding this is below).

Substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities means that either the governing documents of your organisation state that you specifically work with people from Armed Forces communities, or that you can show that working with Veterans, Armed Forces families or Serving personnel is a significant and regular part of your existing work.

This could include work with military bases or units, where the work will create the development of tangible links between civilian communities and local command and offer routes for learning and referrals.

Charities and CICs which do not have substantial recent experience of working with the Armed Forces community can apply. However, you must be planning for your project to be delivered in partnership with another organisation or organisations with substantial recent experience of working with Armed Forces communities or are Armed Forces-specific. Planned partnerships must be agreed in principle prior to an application being submitted and the partner organisation named in the relevant section of the application form.

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 one year at the time of your application and able to provide published accounts for the full year 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.

CICs

- Your organisation must have been registered in the UK for more than a year and you must have submitted one year 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 among the Directors, with no single director registered as a person with significant control.

The following restrictions may apply:

- Organisations cannot apply more than once per funding round under this programme.
- We generally receive more good applications for funding than we can support. We may prioritise organisations which have not yet received a grant under this programme.
- We may decline applications from current Trust grant holders if the reporting requirements for existing grants from the Trust are not up to date.

Who cannot apply for this programme?

- Childcare providers (including early years).
- Schools, regardless of their charitable status.
- An individual.
- 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.
- Local Authorities
- NHS Trusts or organisations delivering statutory services.

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Your project

What types of projects are we looking for?

The most effective projects will be expected to meet **all of the following outcomes; however, your project may achieve some of the outcomes more strongly than others.**

- Build collaborative partnerships between Armed Forces organisations and specialist non-Armed Forces organisations.
- Identify and address known and unknown gaps in service provision for the Armed Forces community.
- Provide accessible, preventative and defined interventions (rather than general support for the Armed Forces community).
- Increase knowledge and understanding within mainstream voluntary sector organisations of the unique needs of the Armed Forces community in a demonstrable way and create opportunities for continuing support.

Projects should be focused on supporting either serving or Veteran families who are **'seldom heard'**, to access defined or bespoke mental health and wellbeing support.

Potential beneficiaries may include, for example:

- black and minority ethnic individuals
- carers
- people with disabilities
- members of the LGBT+ community
- those for whom English is an additional language
- people from Foreign & Commonwealth communities
- other members of the Armed Forces community with seldom-heard needs that can be overlooked.

For The Trust, **'seldom heard'** refers to groups or individuals whose voices, opinions or needs are not frequently or adequately represented in mainstream policies or services.

These groups face barriers to participation and may be marginalised or overlooked in various contexts.

It encompasses anyone who is under-served and may have barriers to, or specific needs when accessing support services.

Please note we cannot fund statutory organisations, please see our eligibility criteria for more information.

Achieving these outcomes requires collaboration, and consultation with Armed Forces communities. We will ask you to explain in your application how the Armed Forces community has helped to inform your project and how you know the project is needed.

If your application is successful, we will also expect ongoing evaluation to enable you to deliver informed reporting, against programme outcomes, back the Trust.

This programme welcomes new projects, but we will also consider the continuation or expansion of existing work which offers collaborative approaches to support under-served cohorts. We also welcome innovation where these partnerships have not existed before, to both increase knowledge and understanding of Armed Forces communities and build future capacity. By collaborative working we mean organisations working together for the benefit of Armed Forces communities and beneficiaries.

Both local and regional projects are eligible to apply.

We will accept applications from:

- specialist non-Armed Forces organisations working with Armed Forces organisations or Armed Forces units or bases for learning or referrals
- Armed Forces organisations working with non-Armed Forces specialist organisations in partnership.

See our *Working with Other Organisations* later in this guidance for more information on what we expect regarding partnership working.

Project examples are shown for illustrative purposes only.

Example



An Armed Forces charity has been approached by a small number of beneficiaries who they have not previously supported under their wellbeing programme, due to the seldom heard needs of the cohort.

The charity recognises it would benefit from the expertise and knowledge of a specialist non-Armed Forces charity who works on a local and/or national level, to better understand the needs of these beneficiaries and to adapt their current wellbeing programme to become more inclusive.



The Armed Forces charity and the specialist non-Armed Forces charity work collaboratively together which enables both charities to learn from each other, create bespoke resources and services to improve inclusivity, and access to support for the seldom heard needs of Armed Forces communities.

Example



A large, specialist charity working within the mental health and wellbeing sector has developed interventions that they feel the Armed Forces community would benefit from.

Although the charity has only worked with a small number of beneficiaries from the Armed Forces community previously, they recognise they do not currently know enough about the specific needs of the Armed Forces community, and how effectively their interventions could fill an existing gap.

They want to work collaboratively with an Armed Forces charity to better understand the needs of the community, to enable them to adapt and create bespoke interventions for the Armed Forces community.



The specialist charity forms a partnership which enables both charities to work together and learn from each other. This collaborative approach helps the specialist charity to understand and adapt their current provision to include members of the Armed Forces community and helps the Armed Forces charity to access another referral route for their beneficiaries, therefore increasing the amount of support available for members of the Armed Forces community.

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:




Who should benefit from your project?

The direct and primary beneficiaries must be current serving Armed Forces personnel, Reservists (including RFA Royal Fleet Auxiliary), Veterans, and their families, whose needs are seldom heard.

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, Veterans aged 45-60 years. They are the people who will access the services or participate in activities paid for by the Trust's grant.


However, others outside of your target group(s) may also benefit from your project. These are called **indirect beneficiaries**. For example, the family members of the Veterans aged 45-60 years.

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




Example

An app is designed to help **Veterans aged 45-60** to access local activities to reduce isolation. They are the **direct beneficiaries**. The **indirect beneficiaries** are the **rest of the Veteran's family**, due to the increased wellbeing of the Veteran and the wider impact this may have.






Your project works with 25 Veterans. 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 and how your project will meet the project outcomes. 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 this programme.

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.

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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?	<p>That the project is addressing a specific need for serving or Veteran Armed Forces families, and that it will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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?	<p>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.</p>
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That your organisation is well run and well managed• That you'll be able to start your grant activity quickly• That you can keep people on your project safe• That 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?

 <p>Where money only benefits one person. By this we mean where your whole project would only benefit one person.</p>	 <p>Making grants or donations of money or items of value to individuals or families.</p>	 <p>Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding.</p>	 <p>Endowments (to provide a source of income).</p>
 <p>Topping up existing grants and aid from a government department.</p>	 <p>Investments</p>	 <p>Fundraising costs, including organising fundraising events and activities.</p>	 <p>Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity.</p>
 <p>Projects, activities or services that the state has a legal obligation to provide.</p>	 <p>Retrospective funding for projects that have already started or taken place</p>	 <p>Excessive management or professional fees or contingency costs.</p>	 <p>Projects with budgets that are dominated by capital costs - unless this is a capital programme.</p>

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.

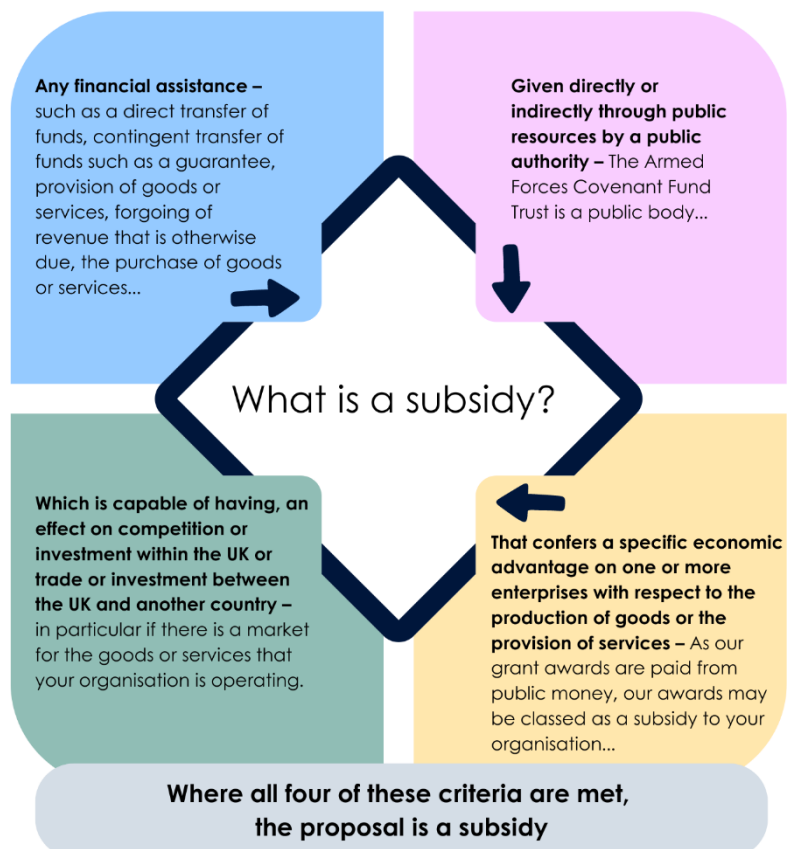
Subsidy Control Act 2022

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.



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.

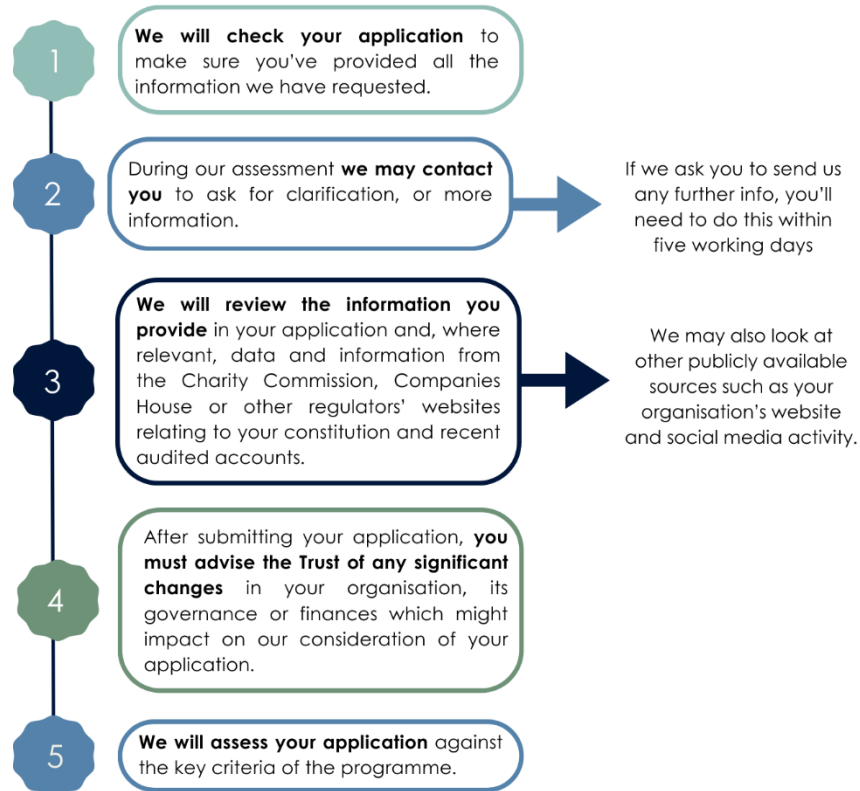
After you submit your application

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.



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 Grants Committee, 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 Grants Committee 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.

Committee members 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 Committee members 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.

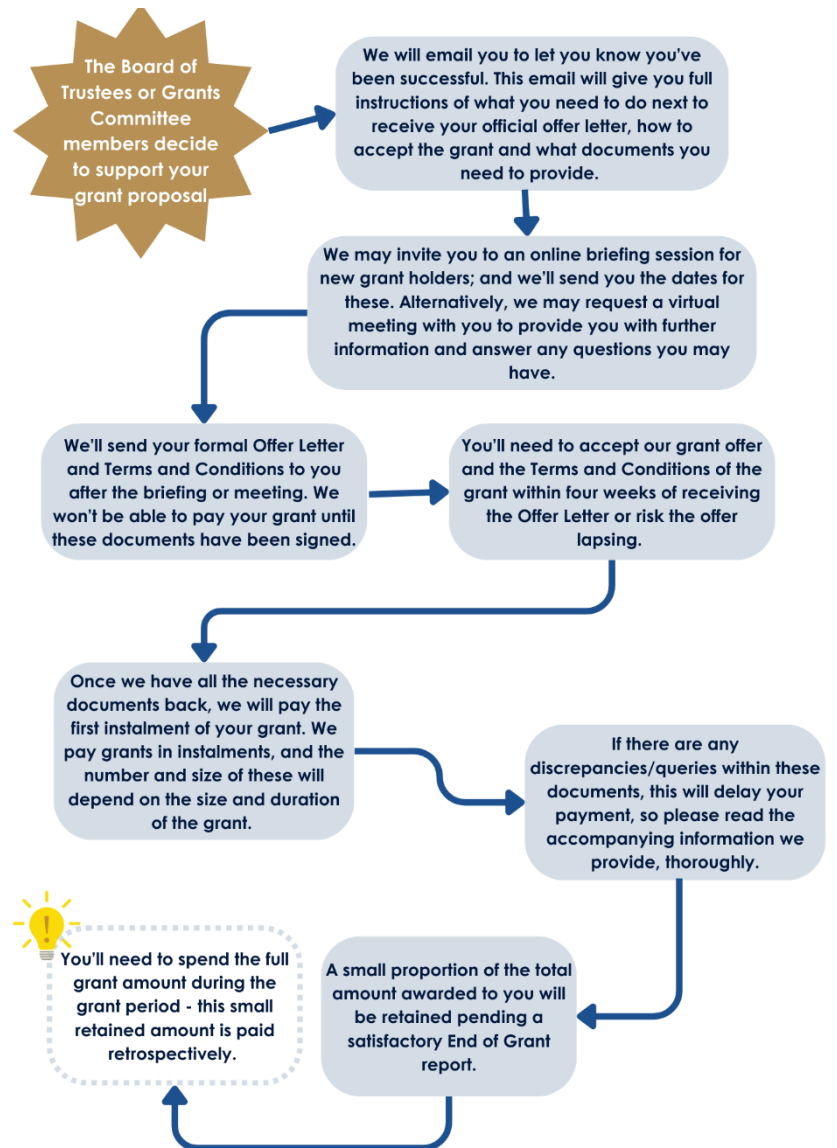
What happens next if we award you a grant?

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.

Continuation Funding

The Trust may consider awarding continuation or completion funding to successful projects under this programme, which meet all outcomes. This will be subject to the submission of satisfactory grant reporting and additional criteria. Details about this opportunity will be shared with successful applicants during the first phase of their project delivery.



The Trust has a Privacy Policy which explains what data we collect from our grant applicants, and how we use it. Please read this before 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.

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