

Armed Forces Families Fund

Early Years Programme

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE



2026/27

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

The Armed Forces Families Fund

Early Years Programme 2026/27

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Summary:

Grants available: £5,000 - £80,000

Funding on behalf of: The MOD's Armed Forces Families Fund

Project length: up to two years

Programme aim(s): to enable early childhood education and childcare settings to meet the specific needs of young service children, and their families/caregivers

Application closing date: There is a single round of funding, closing 12 noon 15 July 2026 – you'll receive a decision before the end of October 2026.

Application form link: [Apply to the Early Years programme](#)

Terms and conditions to grant: [Standard terms and conditions to grant](#)

Checklist before you submit your application

It's important that you **read all sections of this guidance document** when completing your application. It 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.

- ✓ Our project will support service children 0-5 years, not yet in primary school
- ✓ Our project meets **at least one of the** programme outcomes.
- ✓ People with **lived experience** helped us plan our project.
- ✓ Our budget is **clear and realistic**.

We highly recommend you submit your application before the deadline in case you have any unexpected problems with technology.

We can't accept late applications. Please refer to [our late application policy](#).



Common mistakes to avoid

- ! Your application isn't for a **project** with a clear purpose and evidence of need
- ! Your project doesn't **directly target** service children (0-5) and their families/caregiver(s)
- ! Your project doesn't clearly meet the **programme aims** - it is more general
- ! You've not told us how you have **consulted** with service families and shaped the project around their needs
- ! You haven't shown us that your project will have a lasting impact on your beneficiaries
- ! Your budget is unclear or doesn't fully reflect your project idea

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Section 1 - The programme

Why are we running this programme?

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust will award grants on behalf of the MOD's Armed Forces Families Fund (AF3). The Armed Forces Families Fund supports projects which meet the aims of the Armed Forces Families Strategy.

Under this programme, we want to help armed forces families to access good quality early childhood education and childcare provision close to where they are living or serving. Projects should directly address the barriers that armed forces families may experience in accessing good quality childcare for their children.

Who can apply?

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

- 1. An early childhood education and childcare provider** with service children aged 0-5 years attending your setting

Your setting must offer group-based childcare and *must be registered with, and inspected by, one of the following:*

- Ofsted (England),
- Care Inspectorate (Scotland),
- Care Inspectorate (Wales)
- Early Years Teams within Health and Social Care Trusts (Northern Ireland).

OR

- 2. A local authority**

The following additional eligibility requirements also apply

- Applicant organisations must be based in the UK.
- Applicants must be a registered charity, a CIC or company limited by guarantee or a local authority within one of the four countries of the UK.
- Early years settings must have a **minimum of five service children** on the roll (see application routes below for more details).

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.
- You must ensure that your organisation's charitable objects are sufficiently broad enough to allow you to run all elements of your proposed project, regardless of whether you are engaging with a delivery partner or not.

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 governing document and 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. Your application will not be complete without these documents.
- 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 amongst the Directors, with no single director registered as a person with significant control.

School based nurseries

- Schools must be operating nursery education that meets the definition above.
- Your project must be focused specifically on children, in early years, from armed forces families, rather than the whole school community.
- You'll need to tell us in your application what proportion of children in early years education are from armed forces families, what their needs are, and how this has been assessed.

Local authorities

- Organisations that fall within this category cannot apply for statutory local government delivery work, or for work that has a core focus on the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant/Duty.

Private ltd companies

- You must have been incorporated, and you must have submitted at least three years' of accounts to Companies House at the time of applying.
- You cannot budget for contributions to management or overheads costs (or profit/investment) in your application.
- You will need to attach a copy of your most recent, full, independently audited or examined accounts (these must include an income and expenditure statement as well as balance sheet) with your application form. We may ask to see bank accounts and other evidence of your finances.
- 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.
- We may also request additional information regarding directors and other key individuals, and financial arrangements.
- Directors must confirm that none of the Disqualification rules apply to them. [The Disqualification Rules can be found here.](#)

The following restrictions may apply:

- Organisations cannot apply more than once per funding round under this programme, unless this is for projects in different places (e.g. a nursery chain that has two nurseries in two eligible locations).
- We generally receive more good applications for funding than we can support. We may prioritise organisations which have not yet received a grant under the Early Years programme.
- We may decline applications from current Trust grant holders if their reporting on those grants isn't up to date.
- Your grant may be withdrawn if you are found to have less than the minimum requirement of service children on roll during the life of the grant, except in exceptional circumstances which you will need to be able to evidence.
- Your grant may be withdrawn if you use funding for anything other than what is agreed or on any other cohort.
- We may also take into account funding trends in this programme over a period of time.

Who cannot apply for this programme?

- Sole traders or partnerships, including childminders.
- Commercial organisations aiming to charge for services to childcare providers – for example an organisation could not be awarded a grant to develop a training course which it then charges settings to attend.
- Organisations delivering childcare that do not hold a valid OFSTED or equivalent regulatory registration.
- Unincorporated or voluntary groups.
- An individual.
- Schools, universities, or colleges (whether private or publicly operated); unless operating nursery education that meets the definition above
- Training providers, although you could work as a delivery partner with a setting or local authority
- An Academy Trust - you cannot apply for an overarching project across your academy chain, though individual schools can apply.
- A newly registered organisation.
- Other public sector organisations - but you could work with one of the types of organisations listed above, as a delivery partner.
- An organisation that is based overseas.
- Community organisations that do not fit any of our eligibility criteria.
- An organisation that has charitable status but is an Exempt Charity.

This list is not exhaustive, only those organisations listed in the “Who is eligible to apply?” section above are eligible to apply under this grant programme.

How much funding can you apply for?

You can apply for a grant of between £5,000 and £80,000 in total towards a **project*** being delivered over a period of up to two years.

Please note:

- If you are asking for money to cover staffing costs, these must be **extra costs** on top of what you normally spend to provide childcare
- We can fund **short-term increases in staffing** if this will directly result in more childcare places for young children from armed forces families.
- We will only give funding when it is **clearly needed to deliver your project**, and not for your usual, day-to-day running costs.



We mean a piece of work with a **clear purpose and evidence of need**. Your project should include planned activities for a specific period of time, with a set budget which intend to make specific change/(s).

When we refer to a “project”, we do not mean a one-off activity such as a single-family fun day. A project is work which is in addition to business-as-usual activity. Business-as-usual is the routine, ongoing work that you already do year-round.

You must tell us:

**The problem
you are trying to
solve**

**What difference will
your project make
for service children
(0-5) and their
families/caregiver(s)**

**How this grant
funding would be
spent to deliver
your project**

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Section 2 - Your project

What we will look for in your project idea

Your application must focus only on the needs of service children, and their families/caregivers, who are from currently serving armed forces families. The children must be aged from birth to five years old, and not yet in primary school education.

Your setting may include children who are not from armed forces families. However, your project **must be designed to benefit service children**, and any benefits to other children should be a secondary result, not the main purpose.

Your project should be designed to meet the current or emerging needs you describe in your application, and must meet at least one of these five outcomes, depending on how many service children attend your setting:



Increased capacity in early years settings so that more service children can access childcare.



Improved learning environments (inside and outside) that better support the educational development of service children*



Stronger staff skills and understanding* of the needs of service children through targeted training and the resources needed to put these skills into practice.



Creation of strong networks, where early years settings or local authorities work together, share resources, and collaborate to better meet the needs of service children and their families.



Stronger engagement and connection with families, particularly at times linked to service life when additional support may be needed such as mobility, deployment, or separation.

**This can include enhancing support / undertaking specific training to better meet the needs of service children with additional support needs; Special Educational Needs (SEN/D), Additional Support Needs (ASN) or Additional Learning Needs (ALN).*

To achieve these outcomes, you will need to talk to and work closely with service families.

In your application, you should explain what you have already done to understand their needs and why this project is necessary. If your application is successful, you will also need to use your normal ways of tracking progress to provide updates to the Trust.

The Trust may decide to visit funded projects and would expect to be able to engage with armed forces families at your setting/with the project.

If we receive more strong applications than we can fund, we may prioritise projects that support armed forces families across different parts of the UK and across all three services.

We've included more detail about the programme outcomes and the types of activities that we can fund along with some examples to help you. These are examples only and do not cover everything that we can support.

Increased capacity in early years settings so that more service children can access childcare

Activity

A temporary use of agency staff or uplift in staff hours (part time to full time for the project duration) to support more service children being able to access the setting. This may create additional places or allow extended operating hours

Activity

Recruitment of an additional practitioner (fixed term within the project period) to support more service children being able to access the setting. This may create additional places or allow extended operating hours.

Activity

Refurbishment of a space only where this will lead to an increase in spaces being available for service children.

Example

A nursery near a military base uses funding to temporarily increase staff hours and recruit a part-time practitioner. This allows the setting to open an additional session each day, creating new childcare places specifically for children from armed forces families who have recently moved into the area following a posting or who are on the waiting list.



Improved learning environments (inside and outside)* that better supports the educational development of service children

Activity

Creating and/or improvements to the indoor or outdoor learning environment

Activity

Specialist equipment

Activity

Specific projects such as landscapes for learning or dedicated sensory spaces

Activity

The creation of outdoor classrooms

Example

An early years setting creates a dedicated quiet and regulation space within the nursery using sensory resources, flexible seating and age appropriate materials. The space is designed to support young service children who may experience changes in routine or separation from a parent, helping them to settle, concentrate and engage in learning.

Example

An early years setting develops an outdoor learning area designed to support the physical development and wellbeing of young service children. Funding is used to introduce natural climbing structures, balance beams, digging areas and gardening spaces that encourage children to build core strength, balance and coordination through play. The outdoor area also includes raised planters where children grow simple fruits and vegetables, helping them learn about food, healthy bodies and how muscles are used when lifting, digging and moving. Staff use the space daily to support gross motor development, curiosity and early learning, particularly for service children who benefit from structured physical activity and outdoor regulation.



Stronger staff skills and understanding* of the needs of service children, through targeted training and the resources needed to put these skills into practice

Activity

Childcare qualification and courses relevant to supporting service children's needs at the setting

Activity

Curriculum specific training for practitioners and manager

Activity

Specific training to better meet the needs of service children with additional support needs

Activity

Funding for additional or agency staff to release permanent staff to access training

Activity

Resources or materials to allow staff to put new skills into practice to support service children's needs

Example

Staff undertake specialist training on the impact of mobility, deployment and separation on early childhood development. The training helps practitioners adapt their practice, improve transitions and provide more consistent emotional support to young service children and their families.



Creation of strong networks, where early years settings or local authorities work together, share resources, and collaborate to better meet the needs of service children and their families

Activity

Funding for a shared resource, or shared resources, for example an Armed Forces Early Years Support worker who moves between early settings to support service children's needs

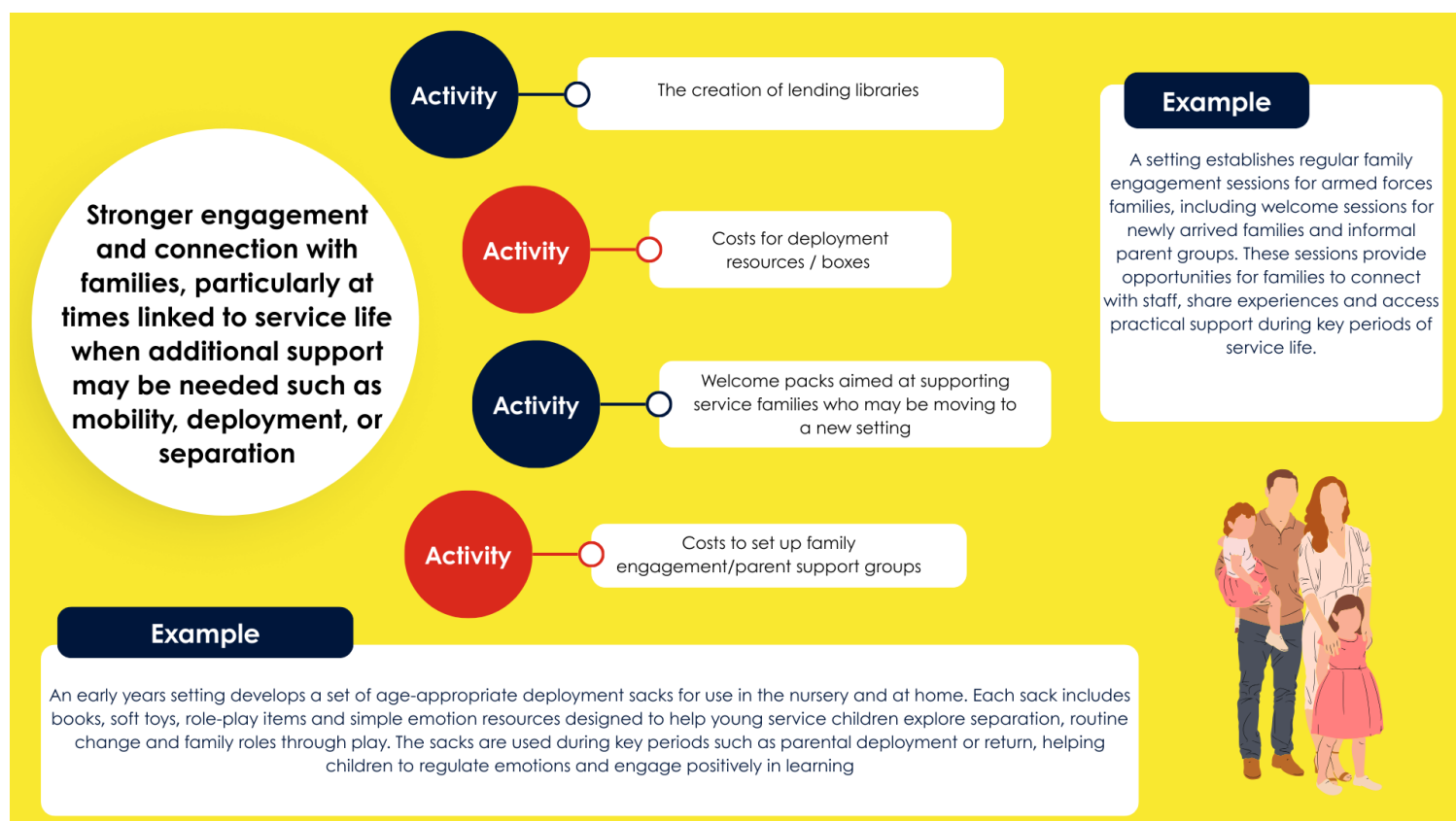
Activity

Creation of armed forces networks between settings and local authorities to share learning and best practice when supporting service children and their care givers

Example

Three nurseries with smaller numbers of service children work together. An early years support worker is funded to work across all three settings. They work to co-ordinate staff training, support families and help share learning and resources between settings.





Application routes

		Increased capacity in early years settings so that more service children can access childcare	Improved learning environments (inside and outside)* that better supports the educational development of service children	Stronger staff skills and understanding* of the needs of service children, through targeted training and the resources needed to put these skills into practice	Creation of strong networks, where early years settings or local authorities work together, share resources, and collaborate to better meet the needs of service children and their families	Stronger engagement and connection with families, particularly at times linked to service life when additional support may be needed such as mobility, deployment, or separation
1	Settings with fewer than 40% service children on roll. Note, your setting must have a minimum of 5 service children on roll.	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
2	Settings with more than 40% service children on roll	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Applying as a local authority	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓

For those operating on defence owned land: DIO should not need to be involved at all in your project, either for permissions or undertaking work.

Who should benefit from your project?

Your project must primarily focus on service children aged 0-5 years and their primary care giver. These are your 'project beneficiaries'.

Incidental beneficiaries are non-service children who may indirectly benefit from the project. Your incidental beneficiaries should be limited in number, and you need to show us that your project is primarily focused on service children and their primary care givers.

What makes a strong application?

You'll need to 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 work which is already happening. So, you'll need to show us how your project complements or builds from other work.

You'll also need to show us how the people you'll be supporting have helped to shape your project and the way it'll be delivered, using their lived experience.

Explain the need for your project, and why you need the funding, in plain English. Use brief facts or quotes from people with lived experience.

Show who your partners are and what each will do.

Describe what you will do, how often, and where.

Show how you will check progress and share what you learn

Link your activities to both programme outcomes.

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.

If we fund your project, you'll need to send us progress reports and **information on how your project is doing**, using simple measures we give you. This will be discussed with you if funding is awarded,

All of this information forms part of the programme's evaluation. Evaluations may take place during the project and after it has finished. If programme evaluators are appointed, you will be expected to work with them and share learning from your project

Sustainability

We'll ask you in your application how your project will have longer term sustainable benefits after it's finished. It means we want to know how the change you've made will continue beyond the funding period.

Working with other organisations

We encourage you to work with other organisations as part of your project, where it is possible

- Name your partners and why you chose them.
- Be clear on who does what. Avoid duplication.
- Explain how you will share what you learn (e.g. briefs, webinars, toolkits).

A delivery partner is an organisation which is either:

- receiving part of the grant OR
- critical to the delivery of the project (through providing resources or some other means).

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

The lead organisation (the applicant) has legal and financial responsibility for the grant and any funds given to 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. See our guidance on what a delivery partnership agreement should include on our website. We may ask for changes before approval.

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Section 3 – Your application

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 young service children and their families and that it will • Be able to make a significant difference to young service children and their families • Be able to show that the grant will have longer term sustainable benefits • That there will be an ongoing legacy, after the end of the grant. • Does not duplicate existing statutory or other services. • Cannot be funded by another funding source.
What do you need to show us?	• Exactly what your project is • How this would help service children and their families. • How service families have shaped this project and how you know that they will use it • How many service children/families this is likely to help • 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 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.

<https://covenantfund.org.uk/ethics/>

[Read about what we expect of funded projects and what you can expect from us.](#)

Preparing your project budget

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

Your budget must be **simple, realistic**, and focused only on costs that directly support your project. Please keep **value for money** in mind.

We can fund most things you need, like people's time, online delivery, or hiring/purchasing small items. We may consider a reasonable share of your overheads.

Helpful tips:

- For training: say what the training is and for how many people.
- For staff costs: show hours, that they are new or additional, and the pay rate.
- For equipment (e.g., sports items): list what and how many.

Your project might include the following costs.

- ✓ Temporary uplift in staff hours (in line with current legislation) to support more service children being able to access the setting.
- ✓ Training opportunities for staff.
- ✓ Temporary use of agency staff or uplift from part time to full time to enable permanent staff training opportunities that benefit the service children.
- ✓ Sessional staff or freelancers that you may need to run your project and activity.
- ✓ Reasonable travel costs including fares or mileage for project staff and volunteers to enable participation in the project (this would not include the costs for service children to attend the Early Years setting).
- ✓ Purchasing items that can enable activities to take place.
- ✓ Shared resources such as lending libraries.
- ✓ Costs to set up family engagement/parent support groups
- ✓ Reasonable overheads, which reflect the cost to your organisation of delivering this project, taking account of recent cost increases.
- ✓ Refurbishment of a space only where this will lead to an increase in spaces being available for service children

Any grant that we award under this programme would be in line with our charitable objective that seeks to removing barriers to family life for armed forces families.

Example for illustrative purposes only

What you're requesting	What to include
Staff time	Number of hours, pay rate, and confirmation that the hours are new or additional (one line per role).
Items to support your project	What you need to buy and how many units (one line per budget category).
Refurbishment of a space to increase capacity	The area and what costs are involved with this (is it based on quotes from suppliers)
Staff training	What is the course, how many staff will be trained, cost per person and total cost. If applicable temporary use of agency staff to allow permanent staff to attend training: how many days, the rate of pay, total cost.
Enhancement of outdoor / indoor learning environment	Have you sought quotes? Amount, what's included (types of equipment/resource) cost per resource or activity.

If your application is successful, you must submit a **detailed budget** and **project milestones** before we release the first instalment of your grant.

Real Living Wage

Like lots of funders, we seek to support the [Real Living Wage](#) wherever possible. It's reflected in our own remuneration policy and benchmarking, and we encourage project applicants to pay their staff the Real Living Wage if they are able to.

This isn't a requirement or an assessment criteria for any funding programme that we run. It's a commitment to support pay at Real Living Wage levels whenever possible, and to contribute to wider understanding of and learning about the challenges and opportunities in reaching Real Living Wage pay levels in the voluntary and community sector, where it is often particularly difficult to do so.

Please note you cannot request grant funding to top up existing salaries that are not being paid at this level.

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.

In addition, we cannot support the following costs under this programme:

- Funding for existing staff posts. If staffing costs are included the applicant must be able to evidence that this is a new activity to benefit service children, e.g. a part time person goes to full time whilst they grow their numbers to sustain additional wages.
- Where funding is not benefiting people from the armed forces community
- Large scale refurbishments, changes to infrastructure or projects that would be classed as having capital costs.
- Projects that do not clearly meet the aims of the programme.
- Projects that are not targeted to the young children from armed forces families, or that provide benefits to ineligible beneficiaries that are more than incidental.
- Purchasing or leasing of vehicles
- Purchase of any live animals or insects for example worms for a wormery
- Business as usual costs; including but not limited to. replacing cots or tables and chairs.

This is not an exhaustive list as we feel it's more useful to focus on what you're trying to achieve and how you're going about this, than to issue long lists of eligible and ineligible costs.

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

Understanding Capital vs Non-Capital Costs

Below is a simple visual summary:

Capital Costs

Long-lasting, one-off items (Things that become an asset)

Examples:

- Building repairs or extensions
- Computers or IT infrastructure
- The purchase or alteration of land
- Fixtures, fittings, long-term equipment
- Professional fees (architects, surveys, feasibility studies)

Non-Capital Costs (Revenue Costs)

Day-to-day project expenses

Examples:

- Salaries and sessional staff
- Travel and training
- Activities and events
- Consumables (e.g., small IT items not recorded as assets)
- Overheads such as utilities or rent

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

How to apply - the application form

1. Read this guidance and the FAQs on our programme page.
2. Prepare your project plan, budget and partner details.
3. Apply through our online grants portal (link on the programme page and at the top of this document). **Do not send your application by email or post.**

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.

For some programmes, you may need to attach documents to the application form. Please check the programme guidance. Please don't send any additional information once you have submitted your application unless we ask for it.

Please make sure your trustees/directors/senior staff know you are applying; we recommend adding a trustee or director as your second contact.



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

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** regularly while completing it, to avoid the risk of it 'timing out'.

 If either contact changes, 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

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

Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help you apply

You can use AI to help start your answers and save time. Please check and improve anything AI writes and never-use AI to invent stories or quotes. We may reject applications if we have concerns about accuracy. If you use AI, please tick the box to tell us—this helps us improve our support.

Your application must reflect your real work, your real setting and the real needs of the service children and families you support. AI should never be used to invent experiences, quotes or needs, or to produce answers that don't genuinely reflect what is happening in your setting.

We are looking for honest, thoughtful responses written in your own voice. The strongest applications come from people who know their children and families well and can clearly explain what difference their project will make.

If you use AI to help you draft your answers, take time to review to make sure it is accurate, personal and true to your experience.

After you submit your application

You'll get an automated email from mailuk@grantapplication.com to confirm submission (it's a no-reply address; consider adding it to your safe senders). **If you don't get this email, your application wasn't submitted**—please log back in and submit. We will review your application against the criteria and may contact you to clarify details. You will receive a decision by the date on the programme page.

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

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.

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.

After submitting your application, **you must advise the Trust of any significant changes** in your organisation, its governance or finances which might impact on our consideration of your application.

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

Please note: If your application is handled by one of our external grant assessors, they may contact you 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 will carry out several checks on the information you provide and about your organisation, to make sure the information is correct and that 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

How we make a decision on your application to this programme

Final decisions will be made by the grants committee, who will review the applications against the criteria detailed in this document. Funds are limited; therefore, committee members will use their discretion to choose which projects to fund, ensuring a good spread of fundable projects. There are occasions where we have to turn good projects down, you will always receive feedback to explain why.

If you've had a grant from us before, we expect your reporting to be up-to-date and may consider this when looking at new applications.

Committee members may take the decision to part-fund your proposal. This could mean you are awarded less money than you applied for. If this happens, we will talk to you about your proposal and which elements we can and cannot fund, and why. You have the option to accept the grant offer, or not.

Please note, to minimise the risk to public funds, we may prioritise funding those applicants which have a good track record on reporting to regulators (such as the relevant charity commission), demonstrate transparent and appropriate governance arrangements and have comprehensive published accounts.

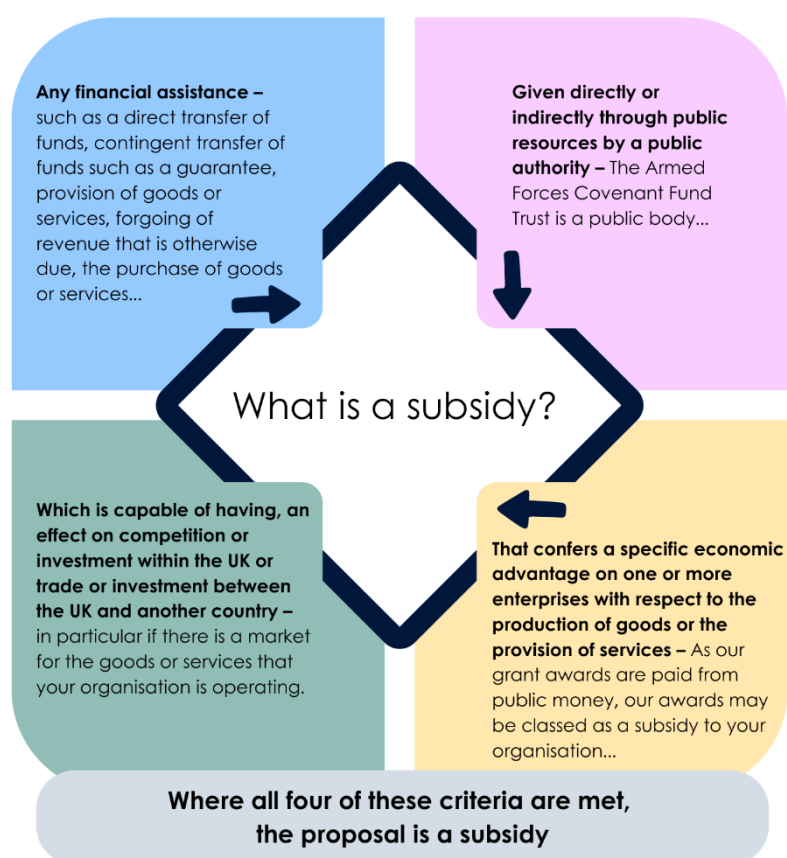
Subsidy Control Act 2022

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.

What happens if we award you a grant?



Our Privacy Policy explains what data we collect from our grant applicants, and how we use this. Please read this before you apply: <https://covenantfund.org.uk/privacy-policy/>

We may also expect you to take part in evaluations, impact studies or other research related to the funding you receive. We'll let you know what's required and how to participate.

If you have further questions, you'll find lots more useful information on our website.

If you can't find the answer to your question in these guidance notes or on our website, please email info@covenantfund.org.uk

So that we're fair to all applicants, we can't advise you on whether your proposed project is a good idea, or whether it is likely to be funded. We can only offer technical advice.

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