



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund **Tackling Loneliness Programme**

*Tackling social isolation in the
Armed Forces community*

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Tackling Loneliness programme

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (the Trust) will award two-year fixed grants of £70,000 to projects that reduce social isolation by tackling loneliness amongst the Armed Force community.

Here is some useful guidance for applicants seeking a grant for their project.

Why are we running this programme?

In early 2020, the Trust ran an open consultation to discover how important it was to reduce social isolation and improve integration and engagement with provision within the Armed Forces community.

Our findings showed the importance of tackling this issue and so **Reducing Social Isolation** is a major funding theme for the Trust in 2020/21.

Our consultation highlighted loneliness as a major factor of social isolation. It can affect people of all ages and from all backgrounds. The Tackling Loneliness programme will address this challenge by targeting specific groups within the Armed Forces community who are traditionally harder to reach.

The package of support

The Tackling Loneliness programme is not the Trust's only programme addressing this challenge.

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Force for Change programme will also focus on reducing social isolation, by improving integration and engagement. It will award smaller grants of up to £20,000 that support social inclusion. More details will be available on the Trust's website.

The Tackling Loneliness programme will have a more specific focus on reducing isolation, meeting the Covenant themes of *non-core healthcare services for veterans; removing barriers to family life; and extra support both in and after service for those that need help.*

All projects supported through the Tackling Loneliness programme will be supported by mentor organisations funded through the Tackling Social Isolation programme, a sister programme designed to further support our goal in reducing social isolation.

Which organisations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible for this funding, you must be:

- an established registered charity or Community Interest Company (CIC) with substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities
- an Armed Forces unit or base.

You **cannot** apply if you are any of the following.

- An individual.
- A school.
- A charity or CIC, which doesn't have substantial recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities.
- A local authority and similar organisation - but you could work with one of the types of organisation listed above as a delivery partner.

If you are a CIC, you must have been registered and operating for over a year and your Companies House details must show that you have a minimum of three unrelated directors.

If you are a registered charity you must have been registered and operational for over a year and you must be able to evidence that you have a minimum of three unrelated trustees at the time of applying.

What types of projects can you apply for under this programme?

This programme seeks to target those within the Armed Forces community who traditionally don't engage with available provision. This could be local activities, NHS services or other third-sector provision they choose not to access.

This might include one or more of the following groups of beneficiaries.

- Bereaved families
- Dual serving families
- Foreign and Commonwealth families including Gurkhas
- Older Service children aged 16-24 years
- Reservists and Reserve families
- Serving families with young children, or who are new to Service life or who have family members with SEND.
- Single serving parents
- Carers of veterans
- Veterans of any age and in particular, female veterans and older veterans

We will also welcome projects that specifically work any of the following beneficiaries.

- LGBTQ+ Armed Forces community members
- Those who have suffered relationship breakdown
- Serving families, veterans and veteran families that live in rural or remote locations.
- Transitioning personnel and families (including any children).

This list is not exhaustive but is designed to give an idea of the type of beneficiaries we would expect projects to be supporting.

This could be through projects such as those identified in the results of our consultation as being important to this group of people.

- Engaging activities designed to improve mental health.
- Arts and creative projects.
- Activities taking place outdoors.
- Military and civilian integration projects.
- Youth activities.

In order to reduce social isolation by tackling loneliness, we are specifically looking at projects that fit with one or more of the following programme themes.

Programme theme	Expected project outcome
Building stronger social networks and friendships	Beneficiaries form new friendships, support networks and feel they have a role in their local community
Improving access to local activities and provision	
Building emotional resilience to overcome the causes of loneliness	Beneficiaries feel confident in recognising when they feel lonely and can identify the best ways to deal with it.
Empowering Armed Forces communities to become more independent	Beneficiaries take an active role in their community, becoming less dependent on local services and can help themselves and others who are not as far along their 'personal development path'.

This programme is about proactively enabling people to become engaged with their community, by strengthening their support networks and building their confidence to access opportunities available to them.

A project that fits well with the themes of this programme will be able to demonstrate that beneficiaries:

- feel empowered and become more independent
- are encouraged to take a leap or try something new
- become part of a community – this may be a local community or a community of interests
- use the project as a stepping-stone or helping hand to something bigger (e.g. they then meet their new friends outside of the project).

It's also very important that the projects we award funding to complement one another rather than duplicate provision. You'll be asked in your application form how you will ensure this.

We wouldn't expect to see beneficiaries playing a passive role. In short, this programme will not support projects based around:

- therapies
- advocacy
- support services
- advice services
- clinical services
- projects that don't clearly meet at least one of the programme's outcomes.

A strong application would be able to show:

- how many new people your project is likely to help
- how you will target people from harder to reach groups, and how you are confident that they would like to take part in the project you're proposing
- how you will reach the people who you'd like to support through your project
- how you know that your proposed support is additional/complementary to that which others are providing (at the time of your application).

If you become aware of emergency or other pressing needs that people might have while you are delivering your project, we'd expect you to signpost or refer them to appropriate sources of support.

If your project involves online delivery with children or vulnerable people, you will need to ensure that you manage relevant risks, such as relevant safeguarding training to ensure you keep people safe.

To the best of your knowledge, the activity that you plan to offer should not be currently being offered to people from Armed Forces communities by other organisations in your area/community. You can work together with other organisations as part of your project. There is more information on working with others later in this guidance.

Example projects...

A befriending service that links families who are new to the area, or perhaps new to Service life altogether, with families who are more established. This begins with a soft start, linking up digitally, but leads to meet-ups later when those bonds have been established.

A weekly club for older veterans to come and have a bacon butty and cup of tea, then use computers and tablets to learn about the digital world, use social media, learn about WhatsApp, Alexa, emails and making video calls. They can keep in touch with far flung friends and family and overcome mobility issues if they struggle to get out too often. Through the club, the veterans organise their own activities and form new friendships.

Helping you if you are awarded a grant

If we award you a grant, we'll link you with one or more mentor organisations from our Tackling Social Isolation programme, from 1 April 2021 for the duration of your project. These will be experienced organisations that can provide you with support on a range of areas including:

- connecting the work that you do into wider health and care pathways
- sustainability
- planning for the end of your grant
- project management and developing your organisation
- being able to offer supported referrals for veterans or other beneficiaries that come to your project who may have more complex health needs.

We'll publish more information support from our mentor organisations in autumn 2020.

You'll also be able to list your project on our app, which makes it easier for people to find projects we've funded in their local area.

You'll need to measure the impact of your project in a robust way, which gathers appropriate data of the impact that you have had. We generally suggest that projects do this through asking the people who benefit from their project to complete questionnaires before and after the activities that you offer, as this can show how people's wellbeing may have progressed.

To help you, you'll have access to the Impact Hub, which will offer you options on how to measure the impact of your grant, while supporting your beneficiaries and providing a warm and welcoming environment. But you can also use other ways of measuring impact in a way that's appropriate to your beneficiaries, and we'd talk with you about this if you were awarded a grant

What can funds be spent on?

Under this programme, we'll make fixed awards of £70,000 for projects lasting for two years.

We can pay for most of the things you'll need for your project, whether it's people's time, costs of delivering work online or buying/hiring equipment. It's highly unlikely that we'll 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 for this fixed-term project, including time-managing volunteers that may be involved in your project.
- Purchasing items that provide practical support, or that can enable activities to take place.
- Purchasing items that you may need to provide support, such as additional telephones or laptops.
- Reasonable costs for storing and transporting items, including wear and tear on private vehicles.
- Reasonable overheads that reflect the cost to your organisation of delivering this project.

What can't funds be spent on?

There are several things **we can't pay for**, either because they're not in the spirit of the Covenant Fund, or because of relevant legislation or tax rules.

- Where funding is not benefiting veterans or other people from the Armed Forces community.
- General running costs
- Making grants or donations of money to individuals or families.
- Topping up existing grants and aid from a government department.
- Where money only benefits one person. By this we mean where your whole project would only benefit one person.
- Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding.
- Investments.
- Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity.
- Organisational fundraising activities.
- Endowments (to provide a source of income).
- Projects, activities or services that the state has a legal obligation to provide.
- Retrospective funding for projects that have already started or taken place (before the end of February 2021).
- Excessive management or professional fees or contingency costs.

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

How to apply - the application form

You need to apply through the link that we'll provide to our online application form.

If you don't have an account, then you will need to create one.

On our system, you can save a draft application form to complete later or send a draft copy to colleagues. You can also access copies of the application that you've submitted at any time.

When you submit your application, you'll receive an email confirmation. **If you don't receive this, then you have not applied.**

You will need to submit your application by **Midday on Friday 9 October 2020**. No late applications will be accepted.

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. No late applications will be accepted.

You'll receive a decision **before the end of February 2021**.

Making sure we can get in touch with you

It's important that we can contact your organisation, particularly if you are offered a grant. You'll need to provide two contacts from your organisation on the application.

We have provided some guidance below.

- Please consider who should be the main point of contact when you complete the form: we need to know who will be delivering the project if you are successful, rather, for example, details of a person in your fundraising team.
- At least one contact must also hold the relevant authority to agree the grant contract and payment details if you are successful.
- At least one of your points of contact should have an email address that belongs to your organisation: this can be something such as **persons.name@organisationname.org** or a group mailbox such as **info@organisationname.org**
- There must be different email addresses for each of the two contacts. **Without these we will not be able to consider your application.**

You can find out more about the process you will need to follow, should you be offered a grant, in the *Managing your Grant* section of our website.

Please Note:

If any contact details change, even before we have contacted you with a decision, do let us know as soon as you can. ***Remember: by not providing the right contact information, it will delay your payment if you are successful.***

If you have any questions relating to contact details, please contact us at **info@covenantfund.org.uk**

Completing the online form

We strongly recommend that you save an offline version of your application form.

You may also find it helpful to complete your application in a Word document and then cut and paste the answers into the online form. Please don't use any formatting, such as tables or numbered lists, in your Word document, as the online form may not accept this formatting and you might have trouble submitting the form.

We suggest you save your form every 10-15 minutes whilst you are completing it, to avoid the risk of it 'timing out'.

Do check that you have fully answered all the questions because, if not, we might not be able to consider your application.

You do not need to send any additional information. Any additional information received will not be considered.

Do not send your application by email or post to the Covenant Fund Trust – only applications submitted via the online form can be considered.

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 will make	
What are we looking for?	Projects that will reduce isolation for those within the Armed Forces community who traditionally don't engage with available provision.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What your project will do. • How this will help. • How you know that people would like to do this. • How many people this is likely to help.

Delivery of your project	
What are we looking for?	That you have the skills and experience to run your project
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That you have experience of supporting and working with the Armed Forces community. • That you have, or will have, the right management structure, partner organisations, staff and volunteers in place to run the project. • That you have fully costed your project and that it is good value for money. • What will happen to the beneficiaries after the project ends?
Note also:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will want to see that you have thought about the implications of the Covid pandemic and taken this into account when designing and planning your project.

Checks we may carry out on your organisation and accounts

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

These may include checks:

- on whether financial information on your application form matches that held by your regulatory body (Companies House, Charity Commission etc.)
- that your governing documents (such as constitutions and memorandum and articles of association) are up to date, correct and properly signed
- on your accounts that are accessible through regulatory bodies
- on any identified concerns about a person named as a contact or who has a position within your organisation
- that your organisational name and address on your bank statement are consistent with the details you've provided in any completed form or the information that's held elsewhere in the public domain
- that your bank statement shows that your account is being managed in line with your own financial procedures and our programme requirements, and
- that the signatories are valid and well informed about the project
- on your published accounts and on your website/social media activity that your organisation is undertaking the activities as described in your application.

We may ask you to send us additional information or answer specific questions about your organisation. If we ask you to do this, you'll need to send us this information within five working days.

Working with Local Covenant Partnerships

Local Covenant Partnerships (LCPs) are formed of the public, charitable, voluntary and business sectors and representatives from the Armed Forces for each area of England, Scotland and Wales, and are administered by local authorities.

Your local authority may have an 'Armed Forces Champion' or someone in a similar role who should be your first point of contact.

We work with LCPs to ensure the projects we fund are well-connected and needed locally, and do not duplicate other provision.

If we award you a grant that you will deliver within one local authority area, we would expect you to contact your LCP and also any other relevant local forums, and to take every reasonable step to work with these bodies as part of a co-ordinated local response.

Arrangements are different in Northern Ireland and this contact will not be expected.

Working with others

You can work with other organisations as part of your project. If any of the organisations that you will be working with will receive part of your grant, then you need to read our guidance below on delivery partners.

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.

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 approved by us and finalised prior to any funding being released. 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.

After you submit your application

You will get an automated email to confirm that your application has been submitted.

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

We will check your application to ensure that you've provided all the information we have requested. We may contact you during our assessment if there are things we are unclear about – but do not assume any contact or lack of contact as an indication of your likelihood of being successful or declined.

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 will look at your organisation's website and social media activity.

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

Final decisions will be made by the Trustees of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, 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, our Trustees 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: they may also take the decision to part-fund proposals (this may involve awarding less money than was applied for).

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've been awarded a grant.

Our [terms and conditions of grant](#) can be accessed on our website. If we offer you a grant, you will need to confirm that you will follow these terms and conditions of grant before we can release any of your grant to you. You must also make sure that the Trustees and senior staff within your organisation know that you are submitting this grant application.

If we plan to fund your project, you'll need to accept our grant offer and the terms & conditions of the grant **within three weeks of receiving the offer letter** or risk the offer lapsing.

We will email you in the first instance to advise you that you have been successful. This email will give you full instructions of what you need to do next in order to receive your official offer letter, how to accept the grant and what documents you need to provide.

Once we have all the necessary documents back, we will pay you the first instalment of your grant. If there are any discrepancies/queries within these documents, this will delay your payment, so please read the accompanying information we provide, thoroughly.

If you receive a grant, you will need to keep good records of how the funds were spent and how many people you helped and how. We will ask you to report on this in interim reports and then on completion. Payments of the grant will not be made until satisfactory reports are received.

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

If you have any questions relating to this programme, please look at the programme information that we have on our website.

Following this, if you still have queries and cannot find the answer in these guidance notes, please email **info@covenantfund.org.uk**

About us

The Armed Forces Covenant Trust manages the grant programmes funded by the Covenant Fund.

We also run wider funding programmes that support the Armed Forces community.

You can find out more about our work at www.covenantfund.org.uk



 **THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST**

Contact us:
info@covenantfund.org.uk
www.covenantfund.org.uk

Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

Chairman: Helen Helliwell; Chief Executive: Melloney Poole

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust Limited (CRN 11185188) acting as the trustee of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund (CC 1177627)

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