

Priority area: Supporting improvement that increases collaboration

Challenge 3: How can we encourage sustainable cross-sector collaboration to provide better support for the Armed Forces community?

Overview

This challenge focuses on shifting from inconsistent, informal and relationship-based collaboration to collaboration that is embedded, routine and sustainable across systems supporting the Armed Forces community.

We are particularly interested in applications that use existing evidence to improve how organisations collaborate in practice, particularly where this strengthens integration with mainstream services such as health, housing, education and local services.

In the short term this includes strengthening collaboration across sectors through the development of practical, evidence-based approaches. In the longer term, this supports more consistent, joined-up systems where collaboration is embedded into routine practice, commissioning and service design, rather than dependent on individual relationships and isolated initiatives.

The Challenge

Many of the challenges faced by the Armed Forces community arise between organisations rather than within a single service. Individuals and families often need support from multiple organisations, particularly during transition or periods of complex need. When services are not well coordinated, people can experience delays, gaps in support and difficulties navigating the help available.

Support for the Armed Forces community is provided by a wide range of Armed Forces charities, mainstream services and statutory providers. However, these organisations do not always work together effectively. Collaboration can be limited by organisational boundaries, different processes and challenges in sharing information. Too often, effective collaboration depends on individual relationships rather than established ways of working.

The challenge is to move beyond one-off and relationship-based collaboration, to embed sustainable, practical and scalable approaches that strengthen coordination and continuity of support across systems, particularly with mainstream services.



What we are looking for

We are seeking proposals that use existing evidence to strengthen collaboration and coordination in practice. This may include applications that:

- Develop and embed shared pathways, processes, or operational models that improve coordination across organisations.
- Test practical mechanisms that support sustainable collaboration such as shared roles, integrated navigation, data sharing approaches and joint-decision making structures.
- Strengthen collaboration between Armed Forces charities and mainstream services, with clear potential for integration into wider systems.
- Improve continuity and coordination of support across sectors, particularly at key points such as transition from service.
- Embed collaboration into routine practice, commissioning or organisational systems rather than relying on informal relationships.
- Improve how organisations share information, responsibility and accountability around complex and overlapping need.
- Generate actionable learning that can inform wider system design, commissioning and partnership approaches.

We welcome applications that bring together Armed Forces and mainstream organisations to develop, test or deliver solutions collaboratively.

What we are not looking for

We are not looking for projects where the main purpose is research, evidence generation or increasing understanding of the issue. Projects must demonstrate a clear route to implementation and practical change. In addition, we are not looking for projects that:

- Focus solely on describing barriers or facilitators to collaboration without testing or embedding practical change.
- Primarily fund networking activity, meetings or forums without operational implementation.
- Rely solely on informal relationships or short-term coordination arrangements.
- Duplicate existing partnerships without demonstrating additional value or wider systems influence or seek continuation funding for existing partnership activity.
- Focus primarily on direct service delivery without improving wider coordination.
- Produce recommendations without testing sustainable operational approaches.

What success looks like

We are looking for proposal that can demonstrate practical and measurable systems-level change. This may include:

- Stronger, more consistent and sustained cross-sector collaboration, particularly with mainstream services.
- Clear evidence of collaboration being embedded into routine practice, pathways or processes.
- Improved coordination, continuation and navigation of support for the Armed Forces community, especially during transition.
- Reduced fragmentation, duplication or gaps between services.
- Improved integration between Armed Forces charities and mainstream services.

- Practical, scalable approaches that can be adopted across systems and inform wider policy, commissioning and service design.

We recognise that not all projects will scale nationally within the lifetime of the grant. However, applications should demonstrate credible potential for wider transferability.

Grant award

Applications for up to £250,000 are invited to apply

How to apply

Please provide an outline of the project for which you are seeking funding, this should not exceed two sides of A4. The application will be assessed by our team, and if we believe that it meets the objectives of the challenge, we may invite you to submit a full application.