

Priority area: Improved Awareness of Armed Forces in Mainstream Services

Challenge 4: How can Armed Forces awareness become more embedded in mainstream public and charitable services to improve access, responses and outcomes?

Overview

This challenge focuses on shifting away from inconsistent awareness and understanding of the Armed Forces community across mainstream public and charitable services. It aims to move to a system where Armed Forces awareness is part of everyday practice, helping services to identify an Armed Forces connection earlier, make better decisions and provide appropriate support.

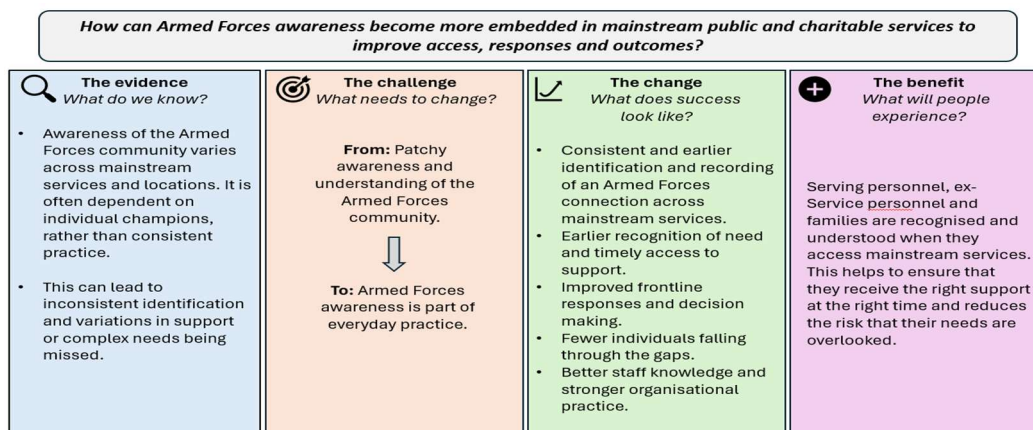
We are particularly interested in proposals that use existing evidence and learning to improve how mainstream public and charitable services identify, record and respond to Armed Forces related need in practice. This includes approaches that move beyond raising awareness and embed Armed Forces competence into routine systems, pathways and frontline practice.

In the short term, this includes improving recognition, understanding and identification of the Armed Forces community within public services, charitable services and the wider public. In the longer term, it supports systems where the needs of the Armed Forces community are routinely recognised and addressed in policy and practice resulting in more equitable access, experience and outcomes.

The challenge

Many members of the Armed Forces community rely on mainstream public services rather than Armed Forces specific support. However, awareness and understanding of the Armed Forces community by mainstream services is often dependent on self-disclosure or the presence of individual Armed Forces champions which can result in uneven local practice. This can lead to inconsistent identification and varied responses between settings, and at-risk groups or those with complex needs being missed. Better outcomes are often dependent on services being able to identify an Armed Forces connection early, record it consistently, and respond in ways that improve access, referral, continuity and support.

The challenge is to embed practical and sustainable approaches that improve Armed Forces understanding and awareness across mainstream systems. Armed Forces awareness should become part of everyday practice rather than relying on individuals. This should help services to identify Armed Forces-related needs earlier and respond more effectively.



What we are looking for

We are interested in proposals that use existing evidence and learning to improve mainstream systems, pathways or practice. This may include applications that:

- Improve early and more consistent identification and recording of Armed Forces connection, including families and under-represented groups, within mainstream services.
- Embed practical approaches that ensure identification is routine and early within operational process and service interactions.
- Strengthen frontline capability through approaches that improve operational decision making, referral pathways and continuity of support once an Armed Forces connection is identified.
- Generate implementation-focused learning with potential for wider adoption across systems, sectors or locations.

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 applications that:

- Focus solely on awareness campaigns or standalone training without wider operational or systems change.
- Deliver direct support services without improving mainstream capability or practice.
- Duplicate or seek continuation funding for existing activity without demonstrating what is new, scalable or transferable.

What success looks like

We invite proposals that can demonstrate practical and measurable system-level change. This may include:

- More consistent and earlier identification and recording of Armed Forces connections across mainstream services.
- Earlier recognition of need and more timely access to appropriate support.
- Evidence that identification is being used in practice to improve decisions, referrals and support.
- Improved frontline operational responses and decision making, and referrals once an Armed Forces connection is identified.
- Fewer individuals falling through gaps because services are better able to recognise and respond to the unique needs of the Armed Forces community.
- Stronger organisational capability that is embedded into routine practice rather than dependent on individuals.
- Measurable evidence of improved access, timeliness, experience and outcomes.
- Better use of data to understand who is being reached, supported or missed.

We recognise that not all projects will scale nationally within the lifetime of the grant. However, proposals 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 for, 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.