

Thriving Lives Innovation Fund (Pilot) 2023-24

Invitation and Application Guidance

1. Invitation

We would like to invite you to apply for a grant for your school from the SCiP Alliance Thriving Lives Innovation (Pilot) Fund. The funding can be spent on a new, evidence-based approach or intervention identified as a result of your Thriving Lives Toolkit self-assessment, to impact on the education of children from Armed Forces families. This opportunity is only open to those we can contact who have engaged with the toolkit on the Thriving Lives portal, but it is a competitive grant fund and so there is no guarantee of success. The selection process will prioritise those working in collaboration across different school contexts.

2. Aims of the Programme

The aim of the pilot programme is to:

- Provide funding to help schools develop and test new approaches/interventions to improve the scale and/or quality of support for Service children;
- Capture case studies of effective practice to be shared with schools throughout the SCiP Alliance Community.
- Enhance collaboration between schools, e.g.:
 - Experienced settings to support neighbouring schools with little or no experience;
 - Settings with higher numbers of Service children to support those with fewer;
 - Groups of schools with few Service children to develop practice by working together or pooling resources.

3. Background

The children of serving and ex-Armed Forces personnel often benefit from their unique lives. However, research demonstrates that the highly individual interplay of mobility, separation and transition out of the military can create disadvantage through the discontinuity in learning, relationships and opportunities that result.

The Service Children's Progression Alliance works to mitigate these risks by leading robust research and its translation into practical tools, resources and training to help education professionals improve the scale and quality of support. The [Thriving Lives Toolkit](#) was developed following extensive UK-wide research and testing in diverse schools settings to provide an evidence-based framework for assessing and improving support for Service children.

Wellington College is supporting the SCiP Alliance by making funds available to enable schools to put into practice some of the improvements that they have identified through their use of the Toolkit.

4. Eligibility

To be eligible, lead and partner schools must:

- Be a non fee-paying, UK school (standalone nurseries, pre-schools and sixth-forms are not eligible);
- Have at least one Service child of compulsory school age on roll and expect to have at least one Service child on roll for the entirety of the funding period.

5. Project Requirements

Funding applications must be made by a single school acting as project lead and grant recipient for a collaboration of schools (must include at least two schools).

Lead schools must:

- Include a Thriving Lives Toolkit self-assessment with their application. The lead school must complete all 7 principles, download a pdf and press 'submit' on the online portal so that a pdf of your completed submission can be emailed with your application.
- Provide a Thriving Lives Toolkit self-assessment (for each school included in the project) as part of the end-of-project evaluation.
- Include the submission of at least one project case study (one per project, not one per project school - although more than one would be welcome).
- You must submit a final report evidencing progress against the success criteria in your application.
- Manage the grant, finances and reporting.

Partner schools must:

- Complete a full online Toolkit submission at the end of the project, including all 7 principles, download a pdf and press 'submit' on the online portal. The pdf must be sent with the lead school's final project report.

Your project must be completed during the 2023-24 academic year. Project reporting and evaluation will be required by July 2024 so that we can showcase the findings.

6. Value of awards

The maximum value of the award to a lead school will be £20,000. We would anticipate that most awards will be £10,000 - £20,000.

7. Eligible expenditure

Funds can be used for equipment, purchased services and staff time (including all direct salary and on-costs). Capital costs will not be funded.

8. Selection process

We ask that you set out how your school would spend the requested grant amount in the application form.

Your application will be assessed and compared against other entries using the criteria as below:

1. Understanding and evidence of need. (25%)
2. Evidence behind the change your approach/intervention is intended to realise. (25%)
3. Quality of impact measurement and evaluation (25%)
4. Sustainability – see FAQ for more details (15%)
5. Timelines and budget. (10%)

The assessment will be completed by an independent panel. The decisions of the panel are final and no appeals will be possible.

9. Timings

We plan to transfer the awards before the end of the summer term.

Stage	
Deadline for applications document to be returned to SCiP Alliance	5 June
Confirmation of awards	26 June
Grant contract shared with schools receiving an award	30 June
Grant contract signed by schools and returned	7 July
Transfer to recipient school bank accounts instructed	8 July
Projects start	August 2023
Mid-project update	January 2024
Projects finish	July 2024
Project dissemination	July-Dec 2024

10. Completing the application

The application form is here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=fa3wnqvqpUigevu4IDP6A8jvsdAZX01Cr4m71vODxgdURjExODZYN0Q3Q1FFMEtDNkZPMjRLVIBQSy4u>

Please complete this fully as incomplete forms will not be assessed. You should aim for between 250 and 400 words for each question and you are encouraged to help the assessment panel by being concise.

Please email your Thriving Lives Toolkit pdf download from the online tool to scipalliance@winchester.ac.uk, including your school name and 'TOOLKIT' in the file name, before the deadline specified.

11. Questions

Below are some anticipated questions and answers. If you have any further questions on the process or how the money can be used, or would like support with the Toolkit, please contact Victoria Fisher, SCiP Alliance Engagement Manager, Victoria.Fisher@winchester.ac.uk.

Why is my school invited to apply?

In order to manage application numbers for this small pilot year, and to prioritise those who can base their application on the evidence-based Thriving Lives Toolkit, we are inviting schools who have already engaged with the Toolkit and registered on <https://thrivinglives.scipalliance.org/> to apply.

My school is part of a MAT. Can we share this money across the trust?

The application must come from a lead school and be dedicated to the intervention specified in the application. Other schools in the MAT may be part of the collaboration detailed in the bid but the MAT itself cannot lead the bid.

Can I submit a joint application with other eligible schools?

We would encourage you to reach out to other local schools and bids featuring strong collaboration will be prioritised in the selection process, particularly those where a school with experience in supporting Service children is partnering with one that is just starting out. However, the application cannot be joint; it requires one 'lead school'. The school that submits the application will have legal responsibility for the funding and will be financially accountable for any funds it may distribute to delivery partners.

What can we spend the money on?

Funds can be used for equipment, purchased services and staff time (including all direct salary and on-costs). Capital works will not be funded.

Can we apply for temporary staffing or bought-in services?

Yes, but this is a one-off contribution to new approaches and can only cover the 2023-24 academic year. All responsibility for any staff will rest with the school receiving the funding.

What period does the money need to be spent over?

We require that the funding has been spent by the end of the 2023-24 academic year.

Do we need to provide match-funding?

No match-funding is required.

How much work is required to submit an application? Will this be wasted effort?

The application process is light but we may need to come back to you with questions on your application, as we make selection decisions. You will know by the end of June 2023 whether you have been successful.

My local authority will lead our bid. Is that OK?

The lead applicant to receive the funds must be one school. Other schools, local authorities, charities and other support organisations (for example, multi-academy trusts) are welcome to be involved but must be named and their role described and justified on the bid.

If we don't participate this year, can we apply next year?

This is a pilot year so there is no guarantee of further funding.

What counts as evidence of need?

Data from your Thriving Lives Toolkit self-assessment can be used as evidence to demonstrate the need for your proposed approach/intervention. This may include school management data, pupil performance data (e.g. attainment, attendance) or survey data from Service children and/or families, or external research evidence. The stronger the evidence of the specific need in your context, the stronger the application.

What counts as evidence of change?

Your application will include the measures you intend to use to demonstrate progress towards your aims/outcomes. Strong measures will address two questions: do the proposed measures assess the change appropriately? (e.g. changes in children's wellbeing are not best assessed using attendance data, even though attendance may be affected) and 2) how robust are the measures? (e.g. validated wellbeing measurement tools are better than untested tools). We would also expect to see this data included in an updated Thriving Lives Toolkit self-assessment at the end of the project.

What will the SCiP Alliance expect to see as evidence at the end of the project?

We will expect you to complete a project report demonstrating progress against the aims of your project using the measures identified in your application, using a template that we will provide. This will help us demonstrate the impact of your work and identify learning for other schools. We will support you to develop a case study of effective practice using our standard case study template.

How can Service children be involved?

Service children must benefit from the project and the involvement of pupils in identifying and/or designing the project will be advantageous.

What is the role of Wellington College in this initiative?

Wellington College, an independent school in Berkshire originally founded to educate the children of those serving in the armed forces, is funding this initiative.

What does sustainability mean?

How will you ensure long term learning and impact? You might want to explain, for example, how you will share the learning, embed new approaches into future core provision, create new resources that will continue being used, or support upskilled staff to continue to deploy enhanced skills.

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