

FRS Applications – A Suggested Approach

This document is intended to support veterans in applying for the Financial Recognition Scheme.

We recognise that this is a challenging task for many. Any step in the process can sometimes leave individuals feeling distressed and overwhelmed due to revisiting very difficult memories.

Below is a suggested approach for those needing to progress at a slow and steady pace while still completing the application in time for December 2026. This is one way you can do it – there are different approaches. It is not exhaustive or prescriptive, and there is official FWP guidance available on our website, which we encourage you to read: [LGBT Financial Recognition Scheme \(FRS\)](#). You may also find GOV.UK guides on ‘How to Apply’, Scheme Rules and FAQs on our website.

Veteran Community Workers remain available throughout your process to support you, as does the Royal British Legion. Application steps can be done with or without a VCW, and assistance will be delivered either by email, telephone, Zoom/Teams or in person depending on your location and VCW availability.

A VCW may not be able to be present for all steps, but assistance will be provided to the best of our availability. The application must be written in your own words – we can’t do it for you, but we can help you understand what’s needed.

Please consider joining an FWP Community Café if you would like guidance, friendship or input from fellow veterans who have gone through the process. Other opportunities for social connection and support are available across your region, please contact your respective VCW for details.

Please be aware that the scheme closes on 12th December 2026 at 2359. While it’s important that you take this process at your own pace, there is a hard deadline for submissions.

Continue to the next page for a table containing suggested steps. At the end of the table, you can also find some strategy adjustments to make the process easier.

Steps	The Focus	What you do	Why it matters
Step 1	Access to Defence Gateway Portal OR Getting a hard copy form & Safety Planning	<p>Set up your Defence Gateway login or request a hard copy form from Veterans UK. We don't look at memories or experiences just yet, just the administrative processes.</p> <p>Confirm your service details and whether you have access to your service records. Guidance for Subject Access Request if needed.</p> <p>We confirm if you are applying for DD & IP payments, or just the IP.</p> <p>We also discuss a Safety Plan so we know how to stop if it gets "too much" and who/what can support you outside of FWP.</p>	<p>Getting the frustrating "admin stuff" out of the way early prevents stress later.</p> <p>We proactively centre your wellbeing and decide together how to keep you safe and well as you go along.</p>
Step 2	Just the Facts	<p>List 'the basics', years of service, ships/bases, and ranks. No stories or difficult experiences/memories yet, just the "where and when." This is the map of your time in service.</p> <p>We check in to see how you are feeling emotionally so far.</p> <p>We consider a referral for pro-bono legal support.</p>	<p>This builds a frame for your story without you having to "dive in" to the trauma yet.</p> <p>We continue checking in and adjusting approach/adding support if needed.</p> <p>A second pair of eyes, especially a legal eye, may be helpful if you require extra support.</p>

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Step 3	Small Bites	<p>If applying for DD, write a basic timeline of dismissal events</p> <p>For the Impact Payment: Look at the Impact categories (like bullying or investigations). You pick one or two that feel "easiest" to talk about and take down some bullet points.</p>	Rather than explore everything in one go, we take it slowly into small digestible chunks and avoid flooding/overwhelm.
Step 4	Finding the Narrative	<p>Start putting those bullet points into a word document (or two documents if DD&IP). You can voice record and compile into a document later if that feels easier. Focus on how the events impacted you at the time and during service.</p> <p>Note: You'll need to do two separate word documents if you are applying for both DD and IP.</p> <p>If applying via hard copy, written statements will need to be written in a secure notebook.</p>	You start to find the narrative/tell the story of what happened and how it impacted you with specifics.
Step 5	Refining the Application	<p>By now, you should have a detailed document with an emerging narrative. Be sure to order your points into a chronological timeline.</p> <p>Now would be a good time to review and add any evidence you have to your draft application if you have not done so already.</p>	Now that your experiences have been captured, you can focus on strengthening your case.

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Step 6	Review	Review your application and check that it is as strong as it can be.	Double check together you've incorporated everything you can and are satisfied with your application.
Step 7: The Finish Line	Submission	You 'drag and drop' your application into the app/Defence Gateway. Press send/post your application, close the computer and do something you love for the rest of the day.	You've done it! Now comes the waiting – please check your Defence Gateway for updates on how you are progressing through the scheme. Info on application 'checkpoints'/status can be found here: https://tinyurl.com/3zh25nce
Step 8	Awaiting decisions	You continue to check the portal for any updates on your application. We remain in contact during this time, and if it comes to appeals, we have routes for legal support.	FWP continues to offer guidance throughout all stages of the application experience.

Strategy Adjustments

Here are some ways to make the process easier.

- 1) **The Post-It Note Method.** Write one single memory if/when it comes up at any point on a Post-it note whenever it comes to mind, then put it in a shoebox. This physically "contains" the memory so it isn't swirling in your head.
- 2) **Voice Notes instead of writing.** Sometimes speaking is less "final" and visceral than seeing the words on paper. You could record voice memos on your phone while sitting in a place where you feels safe/untrapped, i.e in nature, sitting in your car, a place that feels comfortable to you (a park/quiet place).
- 3) **Utilise a 'Traffic Light' System.** Check in with yourself before/during your application writing.
Green: Feeling okay? Work for 20 minutes.
Orange: Feeling edgy? Stop immediately and do a grounding exercise, go for a walk, hug a pet, have a cup of tea.
Red: Feeling a flashback, shut down, panicky or activated? No work for at least 48 hours.
- 4) **The 'Movie' technique.** Instead of writing 'I felt terrified', which may be too intense, start off describing the events as if you are watching a film. Write 'the sailor was taken to a room and questioned for three hours'. Once the story is down and you are feeling better, you can change 'he' back to 'I', for example. This is a distancing technique. (Write in third person).
- 5) **Find a place to write your application.** Find a specific place in your home or elsewhere where you can write your application. You might want to avoid working on your application in your bedroom for example, and work at a specific table so when you 'leave' that spot, you leave the application behind.
- 6) **Digestible 'layers'.** Instead of trying to get the whole impact of an experience down in one, start with:
Layer 1: Just list the date and experience/event (e.g Dismissal, 1985).
Layer 2 (a day/week later): Add one sentence/paragraph about the physical experience

Layer 3 (a day/week later): Add one sentence/paragraph about the emotional impact at the time.