

Warwickshire's Armed Forces Spouse Development Programme: Report on the Second Cohort



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supporting
those
who serve



From this programme I learnt huge amounts about myself, who I am, where I want to go and have been giving the tools and resources to help me on my way
Rachel, UK Armed Forces Spouse

Summary

This report builds on the original programme report published in 2022. As not all the grant money from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust was spent, a portion of the underspend (£4277) was retained to fund a second cohort going through the programme.

The second cohort received the same programme as the first to test whether the results were replicated and not just a chance outcome.

The outstanding results of the first cohort were replicated and the outcomes for the AF spouses (this term includes long term partners) were positive.

The programme has had an enormous and enduring impact on those taking part as well as their service spouses and other family members. It makes a real difference to their lives.

The Programme

The Armed Forces Spouse Development Programme was originally conceived to support Armed Forces spouses to improve their employment opportunities and/or develop businesses/micro-businesses. The programme was designed with 3 key components, which make it different to other comparable programmes:

- Provision of 1:1 Coaching sessions at the beginning and end of the programme in addition to 6 groupwork sessions
- The programme lasting approximately 3 months, which gives participants the time and space for reflection, discussion with family and friends and exploration of different avenues
- The inclusion of ‘stepping stone’ sessions to enable participants to meet and hear from a variety of organisations who might be able to support them through the next stage of their individual journey

Recruitment

Recruitment of spouses was through amending the original flyer through the good services of the RAF Families Federation and distributing it via:

- Email to a range of organisations and contacts such as the Families Federations, Covenant Leads in Local Authorities and others across the UK
- A social marketing campaign through Twitter and Facebook
- The HIVE network

The Spouses

Fifteen spouses signed up to the programme, although 1 dropped out at the beginning due to receiving a job offer. There were 3 participants from

Warwickshire (prioritised as the host county), 1 from Brunei and 12 from across the UK.

The greatest outcome from attending the programme has been that I now know where I want to go with my career and how to achieve it. I feel less alone as so many of the others were in similar situations which felt so comforting. -

Stephanie

Pre and Post Programme Surveys

To measure the impact of the programme, participants were asked to complete a survey at the beginning and the end of the programme. Questions included indications of confidence levels, degree of support and Individuals' general happiness / contentment levels.

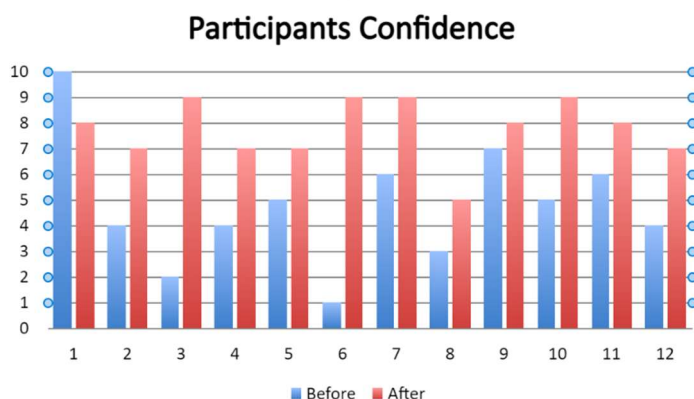
They were then asked to rate their own current lives on a 0 to 10 scale in the following 12 areas; Work/Career, Personal Growth & Learning, Money, Health, Fitness, Physical Environment, Spirituality, Fun-Leisure-Recreation, Children, Significant Other, Extended Family and Friends.

Only 12 participants completed both pre- and post surveys.

Key Findings

Improvement in Personal Confidence

Participants were asked 'How confident do you feel about yourself being able to do whatever you decide you want to?'. Participants reported a large boost in confidence from participating in the programme, with a mean increase of 40% over the 10-week programme (39% in 2021). While this confidence may have been contributed to by other factors, participants attributed it primarily to their experience within the programme.

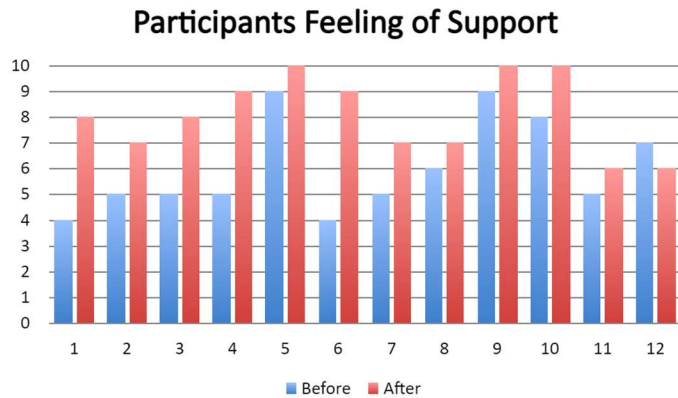


The programme has had a big impact on my life! I feel much more confident in myself and have started to look for a job, now knowing what I am looking for. I have started to apply for jobs that I feel confident would suit me and my life. -

Zoe

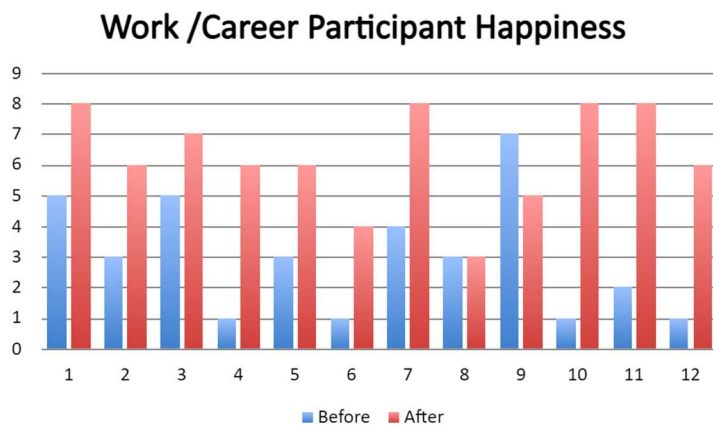
Improvement in Feelings of Support

Participants were asked ‘How much support do you have (for e.g. from family, friends, spouse) to assist you with any new changes, endeavours in your life?’ Participants’ responses showed a 27 percent increase in ‘perceived support’ (24% in 2021). This could be attributed to other factors, but evidence from the end of programme survey suggests that the increase in positivity experienced by participants occurred because of the support they received within the programme (both from the coach and the other participants).



Increase in Work/Career Happiness

One of the dimensions participants were asked to rate was that of ‘Work/Career Happiness’. Participants’ responses showed a 43% increase on this measure (30% in 2021).



The greatest outcome for the programme for me is feeling that it is possible and not as scary as I imagined to move forward with ideas and dare I say realising that I can manifest the dream if I put the effort in to come out from my safe place of fear! I definitely have much more awareness of the possibilities now and have more belief in myself.

Fiona

Programme Outcomes

All participants experienced a positive outcome with regards to work/employment or business because of the programme.

Outcome of Project for Participants



These are comparable outcomes to the 2021 cohort.

It surprised me that most of us are in the same boat and have similar struggles living as a military spouse. It also surprised me that our mental health can be hugely impacted by the lives we live and it's not shameful or embarrassing.
Marie

Conclusions

The format of the programme works and for a relatively small amount of money significant differences can be made in the lives of Armed Forces spouses.

Recommendation

It is recommended that further funding be sourced to enable this distinctive and successful programme to be continued.