

2025 Award Winner: Emerging Coaching Catalyst

Beyond Service:

How Coaching Helps UK Armed Forces Spouses
Rebuild Confidence and Direction



For military spouses, change isn't occasional; it's constant. New locations. New communities. New beginnings. Again and again.

But while service life moves forward, something else can quietly fall behind. Careers are interrupted. Professional networks disappear. Personal ambitions are paused. Over time, repeated disruption can affect confidence, well-being, and the ability to picture a future that feels fully their own.

The UK Armed Forces Spouse Personal Development Programme was created to meet spouses in this reality, helping them reconnect with who they are, what they want, and what comes next.

In 2025, the program received the International Coaching Federation (ICF) Coaching Impact Award for Emerging Coaching Catalyst. This award recognizes individuals or organizations creating meaningful social change through coaching. Aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and ICF's values, it highlights how coaching can drive lasting, positive impact in communities and beyond.



“Before the course I felt stuck ... I now feel confident and in control of my future.”

—Nina, program participant

Reconnecting People to Possibility

Relocation is a constant in military life. For spouses, it can feel more like repeated interruption. Each move means starting again — professionally, socially, and personally.

The real challenge isn't just managing change. It's also holding onto a sense of identity and direction when everything around you keeps moving.

This is where coaching creates space.

Space to reflect.

Space to reconnect.

Space to choose what comes next.

Each participant begins with a one-on-one coaching session to explore priorities and direction. From there, weekly group coaching sessions create a rhythm of reflection, shared learning, and encouragement.

Within that rhythm, something powerful happens. In a life shaped by disruption, coaching becomes a point of stability — a place where participants described feeling “seen, heard, and respected as individuals.”

They move from feeling isolated to feeling connected. From uncertainty to a sense of belonging alongside others who understand military life firsthand. Many relationships continue even after the program ends.

A final individual session helps participants translate insight into action. Participants shift from reacting to change to shaping it.

“I feel more in control now, like I'm doing things on my terms,” explains Laura, a program participant.

For some, progress means returning to work. For others, it means starting a business, continuing education, or making more intentional choices about family life.

There is no single outcome — and that's the point. Coaching doesn't prescribe a path. It helps people create their own.



IMPACT SNAPSHOT

39%

increase in
happiness
with personal
growth.

34%

increase in
happiness
with career
development.

Insight + Action = Lasting Change

The impact of the program is both human and measurable. Participants don't just describe change; they demonstrate it. Confidence grows. Support strengthens. Progress feels tangible again.

Impact Snapshot

From the coaching experience, participants reported:

- 39% increase in happiness with personal growth.
- 34% increase in happiness with career development.
- 34% increase in confidence.
- 16% increase in perceived support.

Results from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale also show statistically significant improvement, confirming that the impact extends beyond career outcomes into overall well-being.

Participants leave with greater clarity, stronger confidence, and a renewed sense of direction — and they take meaningful steps forward. About

one-third of participants secured their desired job within a year of completing the program. Another third gained the clarity and confidence to start a business, and the remaining one-third chose to prioritize family or pursue education.

When insight turns into action, change lasts.

A Network That Grows from Within

The impact of the program doesn't stop with the individual. It expands. When one person gains confidence, families feel it. When direction becomes clearer, relationships strengthen. When individuals feel more grounded, the systems around them become more stable. In military life, where uncertainty is constant, that stability matters.



Coaching does more than support individuals. It strengthens the fabric around them and becomes a catalyst for social impact. Participants don't simply complete the program and move on. They stay. They connect. They give back.

What begins as individual growth becomes something collective: a community built on shared experience, mutual support, and a desire to help others move forward. Change reaches into families, relationships, and the wider support networks around them. With greater confidence and connection, participants are better able to support their partners, strengthen family dynamics, and contribute to their communities.

Some take it one step further by “paying it forward.”

More than one-third of graduates choose to stay involved by mentoring others, moderating chats, hosting events, and championing the program. Follow-up meetups at six and 12 months help sustain those connections over time, giving participants a way to remain engaged with one another long after the formal coaching period ended.

“The ripple effect I've seen ... is that the participants who've gone through the program are really now embodying coaching themselves and are stepping up and really wanting to give back to

the community,” explains coach Tina Smith, PCC. “Some spouses are becoming credentialed ICF coaches and then in turn coaching other armed force spouses.”

And so, the impact of the program continues to grow through the contributions of its people.

Access That Moves with Military Life

For a community defined by movement, access must move, too.

Originally designed for in-person delivery at two Army bases in Warwickshire, the program had to pivot rapidly to online delivery during COVID-19.

What began as a necessity became a breakthrough. It expanded access across the Army, Navy, RAF, and Marines, including spouses living abroad.

Geography no longer determines who can participate, connect, or benefit from consistent coaching support. For military families, that shift changed everything. The program can now meet spouses wherever service life takes them — making support not only available, but sustainable.

A Model for Lasting Social Impact

The UK Armed Forces Spouse Personal Development Programme shows what becomes possible when coaching is used intentionally to create meaningful, measurable, and lasting social change.

It helps individuals rebuild confidence, reconnect with their goals, and move forward with clarity. For many spouses, the change is simple but profound: moving from feeling stuck to feeling capable, connected, and able to shape what came next.

For families and military communities, the program strengthens support systems that sustain military life. It reduces isolation, encourages connection, and creates a cycle in which participants continue supporting each other long after their own coaching journey ends.



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