

MILITARY WIVES CHOIRS PARTNERS WITH ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH INTO OUR NETWORK



The Military Wives Choirs is pleased to announce the start of a year-long research project with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) which sees a unique partnership between the Veterans & Families Institute for Military Social Research (VFI) and the Cambridge Institute for Music Therapy Research (CIMTR), both based at the university. Thanks to a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's Tackling Loneliness & Isolation programme, the research will uncover barriers to joining a choir faced by women in the military community and aims to produce a monitoring tool to enable the charity to evaluate the impact choir has for its members.

Choir member, Leanne, says: *'Joining the choir was the first time I did something as 'me' since having my first child four years earlier. I began to make friends, making my posting feel more like home. Was it scary walking through the doors four years ago? Yes! But within the first few weeks, it became the place where I knew I'd find a smile, a hug, a brew and a chat too. It has always been so much more than the singing!'*

Alex Creamer, Welfare & Organisational Development Officer at the Military Wives Choirs, reports: "We consistently hear stories from choir members like Leanne for whom taking the first step to joining a choir was a daunting experience. This research will enable us to gain a deeper understanding into the reasons women in the military community don't join a choir, or why they might not know choir is a place for them. The outcomes of the research will help us to build a recruitment campaign to access these women, and to break down the perceptions they might have of the Military Wives Choirs."

The Veterans & Families Institute for Military Social Research carries out research, policy development and consultation on the impact of military service on veterans and their families. Their world-leading research and evaluation informs and improves the wellbeing of veterans, service personnel and their families. The Cambridge Institute for Music Therapy Research is a world-class, interdisciplinary research centre dedicated to advancing the understanding of music therapy and its ability to affect positive change on health and human wellbeing. The unique partnership between VFI and CIMTR is a first for ARU and will provide the Military Wives Choirs with a rich, intersectional understanding of its network.

Professor Helen Odell-Miller OBE, Director of the Cambridge Institute for Music Therapy Research at ARU, said: “We are honoured to be part of this essential collaboration furthering the understanding of how music contributes to the well-being and quality of life of those who support the military workforce. At CIMTR we are thrilled about the mutual collaboration and enrichment which will happen through working with Military Wives Choirs and ARU's Veterans and Families Institute for Military Social Research.”

Matt Fossey, Director of the Veterans and Families Institute for Military Social Research at ARU, said: “This is an important collaboration that will give us meaningful insights into the positive contributions that music makes to the families of Military personnel. This research will also help with the understanding of any barriers that exist to participating in these groups. This is key to making the Military Wives Choirs as accessible as possible.”

As both an independent charity and subsidiary of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, we work collaboratively with SSAFA in their mission to provide support to our Forces and their families; as such, we are delighted to be working with Anglia Ruskin University to expand our understanding of the barriers women face in accessing the service we offer.

If you would like to find out more about the work of the [Veterans & Families Institute](#) or the [Cambridge Institute for Music Therapy Research](#), you can follow the hyperlinks in this document. To find out more about the Military Wives Choirs, visit our website: www.militarywiveschoirs.org.

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Notes to editors

www.militarywiveschoirs.org

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