

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR of ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

TO:	ACE Committee		
DATE:	19 October 2022		
TITLE:	COMMUNITY VACCINE CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR McEWAN	PORTFOLIO:	Education & Public Health
SERVICE:	Public Health & Wellbeing	WARDS:	ALL
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is a progress update report on the Community Vaccine Champions (CVC) programme. The Community Vaccine Champions (CVC) programme is a Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funded programme. 60 Local Authorities are in the national programme. The programme focuses on public health improvement and the collective recovery from Covid-19. Reading Borough Council (RBC) received £485,000 in January 2022 to implement this programme. Its overarching objective is to promote vaccine uptake amongst seldom heard communities in Local Authorities showing the lowest rates of COVID-19 vaccine uptake.

The CVC programme went live in Reading at the start of January 2022, with an initial end date for 31st July 2022. A memorandum of understanding was signed between DLUHC and RBC in February. However, an extension of the programme, from August to the end of October 2022, has now been approved by DLUHC. The extension is to utilise the underspend of £223,092 from the total funding received. This will further build on and sustain the momentum achieved to date within the community in addressing health inequalities and increasing the uptake of vaccination. As a result of the extension, the programme has now established a Phase 1 and 2 in its delivery plan see Appendix A.

PHASE 1

Phase 1 of the CVC programme ended on 31 July 2022. Some of the key highlights and achievements from Phase 1 are as follows -

- The effective use of data analysis has been a major driver in enabling improved programme outcomes. Vaccination and population group data is fed into our weekly local partners' engagement meetings with the Voluntary Community Services (VCS) organisations and health partners, thereby ensuring a structured approach in how we work with our local partners and communities in delivering our community engagement and community vaccination pop-up activities.

- The practical bottom-up micro-level behavioural insight approach in identifying and engaging with our local key influencers within our local priority areas - this has enabled a targeted co-production and consultative approach in understanding how to effectively engage with our priority area communities and determining suitable content production for our audiences.
- Successful award of small local community grants to the VCS to develop localised and tailored interventions to increase vaccine uptake.
- Excellent engagement and partnership working across the borough; use of process mapping and KPIs in how we are working with our key partners like Reading Voluntary Action (RVA), Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), Oxford Health and Clinical Commissioning Group/Integrated Care Partnership to deliver programme outputs and outcomes.
- The CVC programme has been an enabler in achieving a wider and more longer-term public health objective to reduce health inequalities by strengthening our local community engagements and building our community and voluntary sector infrastructure, with expected sustainability that will outlive the CVC programme's lifespan.
- Part of the quantitative and qualitative data outcomes reflected in the end of Phase 1 monitoring data shows a marked increase in vaccination uptake within the targeted hard-to-reach community groups, inclusive of the recruitment and training of target group focused Community Champions (to date 32 recruited and 27 trained).

Overall, the extent and level of community engagement and activities implemented and achieved in Phase 1 serves as a major conduit in deploying the community infrastructure achieved to date towards other health and wellbeing activities, inclusive of the planning and delivery of the COVID-19 Autumn vaccination booster programme starting in September.

PHASE 2

Phase 2 of the CVC programme has been established, with work undertaken to complete Reading Borough Council's formal approval process. A summary of activities to date to implement Phase 2 are as follows -

- Formal email approval from DLUHC to extend programme end date
- Decision book report completed to obtain the Council's formal approval for the programme extension.
- Officer Decision Form completed for the contract extension of the existing Voluntary, Community Services (VCS) organisations delivering CVC programme's activities.
- Submission of Phase 2 activities proposals by VCS organisations.
- Phase 2 delivery plan and costings produced, in co-production with our VCS organisations and health partners.

Phase 2 will continue to build on the positive outcomes achieved in Phase 1. It has been formally agreed with DLUHC that any underspend remaining shall be spent by the end of the fiscal year, 31st March 2023.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1. That the good progress and outcomes achieved to date on the Community Vaccine Champions programme be recognised and acknowledged

2.2 That the Phase 2 delivery of the CVC programme be supported

2.3 That the infrastructure, capacity and capabilities established to date be deployed for the planning and delivery of other public health and vaccination programmes (e.g. Seasonal Influenza and Autumn COVID-19 Booster Programmes)

3. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

3.1 This report on the CVC programme's progress to date also contributes to the Thriving Communities key priority set out in the RBC Corporate Plan (2022-23):

- Committed to tackling inequality in our society, to ensure everyone has an equal chance to thrive whatever their economic, social, cultural, ethnic, or religious background.
- Investing in voluntary and community organisations, building relationships, and strengthening the capacity and resilience of the sector.
- Prioritising the needs of the most marginalised groups and the most vulnerable adults and children in our communities.
- Tackling the effects of the pandemic, such as increased unemployment, long term health problems, mental health issues and social isolation.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no known implications.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

5.1 Community engagement and information is an overarching key objective of this programme. Scoping and delivery of the Phase and Phase 2 of the programme have been co-produced and implemented in conjunction with our key VCS organisations, health partners and a host of other strategic voluntary and community sector organisations across Reading. In addition, the programme's workstream leads work with our VCS and health partners on a weekly basis to feed through data analytics and behavioural insights as part of informing the scoping and pre-planning stages of the various community events, engagement activities and pop-up sites that are delivered within targeted community localities. The VCS community engagement delivery plan is updated on a weekly basis to reflect key outcomes and insights from past events, which then feeds into further shaping the effectiveness of the various community engagement activities. Monthly outcomes and outputs from the various engagement activities are captured as part of the monitoring and reporting of quantitative and qualitative data that are reported back to DLUHC, the funding body.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Attached as Appendix B

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None to note.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This funding is provided by the DLUHC. Reading Borough Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix C) with the DLUHC which covers what is required of the council in order to meet the grant conditions. It provides regular monthly monitoring on the programme's expenditure to DLUHC. The funding is provided under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 ('section 31 grant'), in the expectation that funding is used to deliver the agreed objectives of the Community Vaccine Champions programme.

The ring-fenced grant of £485,000 is the amount received from DLUHC to deliver the CVC programme. The below table provides a summary of the grant received, expenditure incurred in Phase 1 and the underspend left, which will be allocated to Phase 2 of the programme, see below:

ITEM	2022/23
Grant funding income from DLUHC:	485,000
Expenditure (at the end of Phase 1)	261,908
Underspend remaining (allocated to Phase 2)	223,092

10. PROCUREMENT GOVERNANCE

To ensure a seamless transition and minimum impact on service delivery continuity by the VCS organisations, we have also implemented an officer's decision process to authorise and approve the extension of the VCS organisations that are currently contracted to deliver services for the CVC programme. This process enables continuity in service delivery, without having to go through another procurement process. As the total value of the contracts are below £100,000, this is in line with the Constitution of Reading Borough Council - 23 May 2018 - Contract Procedure Rules (page 226 - 248) as a non-key decision.

- Section 18 - Tender Acceptance
- (4) Acceptance of quotes or tenders with a value less than £100,000 may be authorised by the relevant Head of Service or Director

The CVC Programme consulted with RBC's procurement and commissioning department to obtain the right level of information required to implement the process of extending the contracts of the VCS organisations currently contracted to deliver services for the CVC programme.

The currently contracted VCS organisations had their original contracts approved via the required RBC's procurement governance process and all contracts were evaluated against the required procurement measures and criteria. As such, the extension of the contracts will be building on the initial procurement process that has already been established with these VCS organisations.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Included as an appendix is the CVC Programme's governance structure document (Appendix D), which provides a detailed outline of how the governance of the CVC Programme has been structured. Also included is the initial delivery plan that was submitted in January 2022 by RBC to secure the CVC programme's funding from DLUHC, the funding body (Appendix A). Phase 2 deliverables are an extension of the initial deliverables outlined in this document, which continues to be a relevant reference document that is applicable and required as part of the programme's management document for the extension period.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Phase 1 & 2 Programme Deliverables and Costings

Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix C - DLUHC Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix D: CVC Programme Overview, Governance & Structure