

## READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	06 October 2023
<b>Title</b>	Community Health Champions Programme Update
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note the report for information
<b>Report author</b>	Martin White
<b>Job title</b>	Consultant in Public Health
<b>Organisation</b>	Reading Borough Council
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the board notes that the Community Health Champions Programme (CHC) has now begun and is progressing towards delivery of a supported network of champions.</li> <li>2. That the board notes that the CHC is a development of the CVC, in addition to driving the uptake of vaccine and immunisation programmes it aims to develop health knowledge of communities, strengthen community action, self-help and engagement with health promoting activities and interventions.</li> </ol>

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the Community Health Champions Programme (CHC), the next phase of the Reading Community Vaccines Champion programme (CVC) which ended in October 2022. The CHC is a development of the previous CVC campaign which was focussed on promoting the uptake of the COVID vaccination amongst disadvantaged communities. CHC will have a programme plan that includes a wider range of health priorities in addition to the uptake of vaccines.
- 1.2. Since the end of CVC, additional grant funding has been secured for the programme. Planning for the next phase has progressed well with increasing activity taking place in the second quarter of 2023-24 to develop the training for the network of champions, programme branding and the recruitment to the CHC support team. The detail about current progress is reported below.

### 2. Programme Update

- 2.1. The programme has been funded by a combination of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and the Access and Inequalities Fund (AIF) which has been granted through the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB). The COMF was allocated in April 2023 and will be used until March 2024, the AIF is until June 2024. The funding has allowed the CVC network and the residual activity to be ramped up towards a fully functioning supported network of around 50 champions by the beginning of November 2023.

#### Recruitment

- 2.2. There are currently 15 people on the waiting list to join the network of champions. The recruitment process for three programme posts has begun and interviews will be completed within two weeks from 18<sup>th</sup> September. The programme roles will drive the work and include:
- Community Health Champion Coordinator
  - Community Health Champion Lead
  - Community Health Inequalities Officer.

Once recruitment has been completed a follow-on recruitment campaign will begin for the Community Health Champions themselves. To help with this a recruitment video has been produced by the media officer at ACRE (Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality) and will be out in September. The video includes interviews with existing health champions about their role which can then be shared across communities, in the different languages that the health champions speak.

- 2.3. It should be noted that the role of the Community Health Inequalities Officer will include identification of new funding sources to ensure the sustainability of the programme beyond the current year.

### **Branding**

- 2.4. The CHC branding is being co-designed with the existing community health champions. It will include a logo and tagline and will be used on a range of marketing materials. The aim is to enhance the visibility of the champions in the community; support their confidence in the role and strengthen their identification as a community health champion.

### **Training**

- 2.5. Colleagues at the New Directions College are working in partnership with Reading Public Health and Wellbeing Team and with ACRE to recruit a tutor who will deliver a co-designed training programme for the new community health champions. The training will begin on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and will include a number of relevant topics to develop knowledge and understanding including opportunities for Level 2 accredited training from the Royal Society of Public Health.

### **Communications**

- 2.6. Communications continue to be shared with the existing network of community champions. This includes the latest Integrated Care Board communications bulletin and details of recent developments such as the September launch of the seasonal vaccination campaign for Covid-19 and Influenza.

## **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1. It is proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Board notes that the CHC programme has begun and is progressing towards delivery of a supported network of champions.
- 3.2. That the board notes that the CHC is a development of the CVC, in addition to driving the uptake of vaccine and immunisation programmes it aims to develop health knowledge of communities, strengthen community action, self-help and engagement with health promoting activities and interventions.

## **4. Contribution to Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. The proposal provides an update and assurance about the CHC programme and its contribution towards achieving the goals of Priority 1 Reduce the differences in health between different groups of people. The purpose of the CHC programme is to empower communities by improving access to health information and healthcare services. The intervention aims to reduce the effects of health inequality amongst communities and

population groups that are excluded, have low confidence in vaccination programmes or experience poor access.

- 4.2. CHC programme also has the potential to contribute to the other four priorities areas dependent upon the inclusion of wider health topics in the training offer and the extent of engagement with the network by members of priority communities and vulnerable population groups.

## **5. Environmental and Climate Implications**

- 5.1. This proposal in itself does not have an environmental or climate implication. However, it is possible that the health consequences of climate impact and mitigation may form a part of the training programme for the network of champions.

## **6. Community Engagement**

- 6.1. Community engagement is a central principle of the CHC programme which continues the methods that built the Community Vaccine Champions network during the early stages of the COVID 19 pandemic. Its work is founded upon the views of local stakeholder communities and no further consultation has been conducted.

## **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1. Not applicable. EIA is not relevant to the proposal.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

- 8.1. Not applicable.

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1. Not applicable.

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1. Not applicable.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

- 11.1. Not applicable.

## **12. Background Papers**

- 12.1. There are none.