

READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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| Date of Meeting | 15 March 2024 |
| Title | Community Health Champions Programme Update |
| Purpose of the report | To note the report for information |
| Report author | Martin White |
| Job title | Consultant in Public Health |
| Organisation | Reading Borough Council |
| Recommendations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the board notes that the Community Health Champions Programme (CHC) is building a supported network of champions through the delivery of a growing programme of training and promotional events 2. That the board notes that the CHC aims to develop health knowledge amongst communities, strengthen community action, self-help and engagement with health promoting activities and interventions in addition to driving the uptake of vaccine and immunisation programmes. |

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report follows the previous report to the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board from 6th October 2023 and provides an update on the Community Health Champions Programme (CHC) and the progress being made towards the programme goals.
- 1.2. The previous report included the origin and background of the programme with details of the start of the training programme in October 2023.

2. Programme Update

- 2.1. The first CHC network meeting took place on 19th December 2023. Over 20 people joined this meeting to learn more about the project, take part in conversations about health inequality and sign up to become Community Health Champions.
- 2.2. At the time of drafting this report there are now 13 trained and active Community Health Champions with a further 39 waiting to be trained. By the time this report reaches the Health and Wellbeing Board half of these will have received their training during February. When this cohort has been completed the first milestone of 50 champions will have been achieved and exceeded.
- 2.3. The current Champions are recruited from a wide range of partner organisations and communities. These include:
 - Reading Quakers
 - Palmer Park Bowles Club
 - Caversham Muslim Association
 - Draught Busters Reading

- Launchpad Reading
- Reading Abbey Rotary Club
- University of Reading
- Association for Cultural and Racial Equality
- Kendrick Parenting Group

- 2.4. The project team have co-produced a recruitment video with the Community Health Champions <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BBANB3A0F>
- 2.5. At the beginning of February 2024, the video had already received over 400 views. Further work is taking place to develop social media campaigns and platforms for the project. This will include a new website which will host information about the project, news about upcoming health and wellbeing events including those delivered as part of the Community Wellness Outreach project. It will also host public health content and messages which champions can share and promote through their networks.
- 2.6. As the network builds Community Health Champions have started to set the agenda based on priorities identified by their communities. A number have expressed an interest in doing more around women's health including raising awareness and signposting support for those experiencing menopause. They are working in partnership with the project team and with GLL to plan a celebration event for International Women's Day in March.
- 2.7. Other priorities that have been identified at this stage include physical activity and nutrition.
- 2.8. In addition, the project team have been developing awareness and skills amongst the champions to empower them to promote awareness of how to prevent disease starting with the risks of measles and myth busting around the MMR vaccination. This work is further supported by a communications assets and plan in partnership with Blue Lozenge the new public health communications contractor.

3. Proposal

- 3.1. It is proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Board notes that the CHC programme continues to make steady progress towards building a supported network of champions.
- 3.2. That the board notes that the network of champions has started to identify its priorities alongside working with the project team to tackle system wide public health risks such as the uptake of the MMR and childhood vaccination programme.

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.