

READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Date of Meeting	11 October 2024
Title	Community Health Champions Programme Update
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report author	Dayna White
Job title	Neighbourhood and Partnerships Manager
Organisation	Reading Borough Council
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the board notes that the Community Health Champions (CHC) programme 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 programme aims to develop health knowledge amongst communities, strengthen community action, self-help and engagement with health promoting activities and interventions.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report is for information only and does not require a decision.
- 1.2. This follows the previous report to the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board from 15th March 2024 and provides an update on the Community Health Champions (CHCs) programme and the progress being made towards the programme goals.
- 1.3. As with the previous report below is a summary of the progress during the past 4 months of the programme, including the community groups who have been engaged and the health and wellbeing priorities that have emerged from the network of Community Health Champions across Reading.
- 1.4. The Community Health Champion project is a partnership project, delivered by the Public Health and Wellbeing team, the Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality (ACRE) and New Directions.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Community Health Champion programme contributes to 3 of the 5 priorities within the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The details of this can be found later in this report.
- 2.2. This programme also aligns with the Thriving Communities aspect of the Corporate Plan and supports the Tackling Inequalities Strategy.

3. Programme Update

- 3.1. To date the Community Health Champions programme has recruited 89 champions and a further 21 are waiting to be trained.
- 3.2. The current champions are recruited from a wide range of partners organisations and communities. Some of these groups include:
 - Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality (ACRE)

- Utulivu Women's Group
- Palmer Park Bowles Club
- Reading Quakers
- Caversham Muslim Association
- Healthwatch Reading
- Weller Centre
- Reading Sudanese Community
- Reading Elderly Befriending Scheme
- Food for Reading
- Draughtbusters Reading
- The Jamaica Society and Friends (Reading)
- Berkshire Women's Aid
- Green Health Thames Valley
- Nature Nurture
- Reading Islamic Cultural Centre/Cumberland Road Mosque
- Reading Golders Luncheon Club
- Royal Berkshire Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership
- Reading Angaza Church
- The Temne Association
- Macmillan
- Autism Berkshire
- Launchpad
- Epilepsy Action
- Kendrick Parenting Group
- University of Reading

- 3.3. The project team continue to use the co-produced recruitment video to promote the project. This video now has been viewed online over 740 times. [Community Health Champions, Reading \(youtube.com\)](#). The team are currently working on developing further video content and the intention to have this ready to publish by the end of October.
- 3.4. Since Autumn 2024, the programme has delivered over 20 events including monthly webinars and face to face networking events. These have covered topics and themes which the champions have requested, including speakers on mental health, dementia, healthy eating, diabetes and more. These events and webinars have been delivered in partnership with local services and experts and have been well received.
- 3.5. The programme has been shaped by the champions and the project team have been able to adapt and react based on their suggestions and feedback. This has led to a number of preventative health related training opportunities for the champions, including Dementia Friends training, Very Brief Advice+ training and Naloxone training
- 3.6. Some of the CHCs also took part in a workshop with members of the Public Health and Wellbeing Team to share their insights around smoking and alcohol. These insights have

helped to shape the commissioning intentions for the Smoke Free Generation grant in Reading. In addition, the knowledge gained by the champions themselves has provided them with the knowledge to inform the conversations in their networks around attitudes towards smoking

- 3.7. Recently the Community Health Champions project team worked in partnership to deliver a community event from the Hexham Road Community Centre. This event was jointly planned by the Community Health Champions project team, the Sustainable Communities Team, Reading Angaza Church and The Temne Association. The event was a success with over 200 people attending. The event involved Community Health Champions talking to their communities about health and wellbeing topics and invited local services to engage with local communities.
- 3.8. Since the last update to the Health and Wellbeing Board the Community Health Champions project has awarded 10 small project grants to a range of voluntary and community sector partners in Reading to deliver health and wellbeing community projects.
- 3.9. The groups who have received project grants include:
 1. Greater Reading Nepalese Community Association
 2. Reading Islamic Cultural Centre
 3. Indian Community Association
 4. Caversham Muslim Association
 5. Green Ways
 6. New Testament Church of God Reading
 7. The Jamaican Society and Friends Reading
 8. Utulivu Women's Group
 9. Whitley Community Development Association
 10. Thames Valley Positive Support
- 3.10. The grants will fund a 12-month period of activity. This includes recruiting at least one Community Health Champion per group and encourages the organisations to host the Community Wellness Outreach project, where possible.

4. The Proposal

- 4.1. It is proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Board notes that the Community Health Champions programme continues to make steady progress towards building a supported network of champions in communities across Reading.
- 4.2. That the board notes that the network of champions have worked with the project team to identify health improvement and protection priorities that are important to local communities and continue to tackle system wide public health risks such as the uptake of the MMR vaccine, wider vaccinations, and screening programmes.

5. Contribution to Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategic Aims

- 5.1. This update aims to provide assurance about the Community Health Champions 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 experience barriers and exclusion, have low confidence in vaccination programmes or experience poor access to public services.

- 5.2. The Community Health Champions programme also contributes to Priority 2 'Support individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives' and Priority 5 'Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all adults.' This was through the wider health topics raised by champions and their requests for training and information about mental health support, dementia awareness and drugs and alcohol use.

6. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 6.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers)
- 6.2. 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.

7. Community Engagement

- 7.1. The Community Health Champions programme is founded upon the principles of Asset Based Community Development and is an example of good practice in this way of working. The project team conducts regular outreach sessions at community events across the Borough and engages with a broad range of community groups. The Community Health Champions themselves listen to their own local community networks and feedback to the project team about conversations they have had and the themes which are being raised as areas of interest.
- 7.2. This type of engagement is a guiding principle and will continue throughout the lifetime of the project and will remain a core part of the programme

8. Equality Implications

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

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1. Not applicable

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. Not applicable.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. Not applicable.

12. Timetable for Implementation

- 12.1. Not applicable.

13. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.