

## Health and Wellbeing Board

18 March 2021

COVID-19 Community Champion  
Programme update December 2020 –  
February 2021



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### Report of Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health, Durham County Council

#### Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

#### Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the COVID-19 Community Champions programme since the programme launch at the its meeting on 24 November 2020

#### Executive summary

- 2 Establishing trusted relationships, information and feedback flows with local communities is key to supporting delivery of County Durham COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP) objectives. Without this trust, our communities will not believe, or act on information and will be less inclined to work with us to develop locally appropriate response measures.
- 3 Underpinned by our Wellbeing Principles, the COVID-19 Community Champion programme is **one element** within our wider engagement and communication strategies. The programme reports into LRF Community and Compliance Cells and via the Community Cell Report to Health Protection Assurance Board.

#### Recommendation(s)

- 4 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are requested to receive the report and presentation at the meeting on 18 March 2021.

## **Background**

### **COVID-19 Community Champion Programme**

- 5 People share information in different ways and with different people  
COVID-19 Community Champions are trusted voices in local communities. As well as us sharing relevant and timely information with communities, Champions share feedback from communities - what's working well, what questions people have, what people think can be done better enabling responses to be shaped by local intelligence.
- 6 The programme was launched November 2020. There are 2 roles people can pledge to take on:
  - (a) Champions are supported to share information in ways that best suit their own availability, circumstances, networks and community needs.
  - (b) The Champions Plus role enables those already active in communities or those who would like to do more - to become more actively involved, again in whatever ways best suit each individual/community circumstances.
- 7 To date 95 people have expressed an interest in the programme; 84 of whom are actively engaged - 38 Champions Plus and 46 Champions. There are 3 geographically defined locality-based teams, North, South and East.
- 8 The programme hosts Champion and Champion plus volunteers with a mixture of experience, skills, personal and professional backgrounds. Some examples of people currently engaged in the programme are housing association officers, elected members, parish councillors, Neighbourhood Watch members, AAP public representatives, East Durham College student representative, people who work in the voluntary and community sector, COVID Awareness Coordinators, Social Prescribing Link Workers, Mutual Aid volunteers, Domestic Violence support, Wellbeing for Life Officers, NHS Family Support Officers, Bus Drivers, home schooling parents as well as those who are retired.
- 9 The COVID-19 Community Champions Programme Lead is responsible for programme development, supporting Champions/Plus to establish links in their localities with e.g. COVID Awareness Officers, Community Protection COVID-19 Outbreak and Compliance, Neighbourhood Wardens, Police, AAPs, VCS, faith groups and statutory partners.

## **COVID-19 Community Champions Webpage**

- 10 The programme is hosted on a dedicated webpage within the DCC Coronavirus suite of pages ([Sign up to be a covid community champion - Durham County Council](#)).

### **Induction, training and ongoing support**

- 11 Champions Plus undertake the fully supported DCC Volunteer induction provided by Volunteer Durham. Champions take part in [one of] fortnightly rolling programme of online group induction sessions covering role expectations and responsibilities, handbook, communications charter.
- 12 There is a fortnightly rolling programme of online *Making Every Contact Count – COVID-19 Outbreak Control* training (mandatory Champions Plus/optional Champions) delivered by the Programme Lead. Training consists of 6 micro-modules, currently covering:
- (a) What is Coronavirus / COVID-19
  - (b) Prevention and contain - Everybody play their part
  - (c) Face coverings
  - (d) Wider wellbeing and COVID-19
  - (e) Making Every Contact Count
  - (f) Champion / Champion Plus roles
- 13 Sessions also provide trainees with skills to have conversations about COVID-19 and outlines the links between the impact of the pandemic, wider health, wellbeing and health inequalities. COVID Awareness Officers, Community Protection COVID-19 Outbreak & Compliance team and Neighbourhood Wardens have attended COVID-19 Champion training sessions with Champions.
- 14 Testing, contact tracing and vaccinations have been introduced into training discussions and the Programme Lead is working with colleagues across County Durham and other Community Champions Programmes (Gateshead) to develop bespoke micro-modules to cover these issues. The programme has good links with Durham Community Action and Champions/Plus can keep up to date with wider volunteering opportunities, training and development if interested.
- 15 Following induction and training Champions/Plus self-select to join a locality team – North, South, East. Each team has a rolling programme of fortnightly ‘coffee evening’ meetings with guest speakers and guests from wider locality organisations. Discussion focus is relevant to specific locality need/issues. Some localities have developed their own informal communication networks in addition to programme meetings.

- 16 The Programme lead provides updates between meetings and maintains contact with Champions/Plus via a specific programme email. Two newsletters have also been shared.

### **Champion programme - Activities to date**

- 17 The Champions programme launched during higher levels of pandemic restrictions and to date activities have been primarily online/networks information sharing and feedback.
- 18 To date 29 different messages have been shared by Champions – some e.g. Hands Face Space / stay home messages have been shared multiple times. Champions report that some of their messages are being reshared across social media over 1000 times per message.
- 19 Champions have sought clarification on 39 enquiries they have received from their communities /networks including queries around vaccination opportunities, PPE and care home visiting.
- 20 The Champions programme is represented at the Community Spike Outbreak Management Group and Champions have carried out reactive information sharing to/from communities where areas of exceedance have been identified. This local insight has helped to shape targeted responses and communication messages and Champions have supported collaborative community engagement in these areas.

### **Next Steps**

- 21 As the pandemic progresses the Champions programme continues to evolve and respond to issues identified within communities. Key next steps for the programme include:
- (a) Review and refresh of the current training programme and development of new modules around vaccination and testing
  - (b) Continued Champion recruitment across the county with targeted recruitment in areas where uptake is currently lower
  - (c) Continued collaboration within communities and engagement with DCC COVID specific teams and wider locality partners
  - (d) Review and refresh of the Champions programme website to include Champions stories and examples of good practice
  - (e) Development of proactive Champions locality action plans as measures set out within the Spring 2021 Road Map ease and communities and activities within communities resume e.g. schools, workplaces. community venues and leisure activities.
  - (f) Continued promotion of key generic and targeted messages and promotion of vaccination and asymptomatic testing programmes with a focus on reducing inequalities.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

No implication

### **Finance**

No implications as costings are within service delivery

### **Consultation**

Not applicable

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Champion programme is an inclusive programme and we will support all people to develop in ways that best suit their person and/or professional circumstances

### **Climate Change**

No implications

### **Human Rights**

No implications

### **Crime and Disorder**

Community Champions will flag Covid compliance issues to Environmental Health and Consumer Protection / Outbreak Control teams

### **Staffing**

Covid Champions are volunteers and are managed by a Coordinator who works within the Public health Team

### **Accommodation**

No implications

### **Risk**

Without trust, our communities and businesses will not believe, or act on information and will be less inclined to work with us to develop locally appropriate prevention, control and response measures. Risks include lack of co-operation, loss of trust with local and national government and, as more

time passes, pandemic fatigue and a reduction in compliance with measures in place to limit virus transmission.

## **Procurement**

No implications