



Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 6th July 2022

Title	Health Champions Update
Report of	Director of Public Health and Prevention
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix 1 – Health Champions 2020-2022 Powerpoint
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Summary

The Barnet Health Champions programme was developed by the Barnet Public Health Team from August 2020 and commissioned in November 2020 to support the COVID response locally and to address health inequalities in the context of COVID-19.

We currently have 269 Health Champions across all 24 wards. Around 1 in 5 of our Champions are under 35 years old, with nearly 2 in 5 coming from Black, Asian or other Ethnic Minority backgrounds.

Between November 2020 and April 2022, Public Health has kept Champions up to date about COVID-19 and the vaccination roll out, with support from NHS and other key partners. Champions have been enabled to help their community make sense of the latest government guidelines and health information and help reduce the spread of COVID. The Health Champions have also fed back insight on local residents views and the situation in their areas as well as participated in developing campaign materials.

Public Health recognised an opportunity to think differently about the programme with a future community needs in mind from Summer 2021 and plans were made to transition the champions from solely COVID-focussed to incorporate wider health priorities. These plans were delayed due to COVID transmission spikes in Autumn/Winter 2021, however, easing lockdown restrictions in early 2022 provided this opportunity as the borough recovered from the impacts of the pandemic. In February and March 2022 we began to safely divert our

efforts to prevention opportunities and wider health concerns, whilst still retaining some capacity to work with Champions around COVID.

We have now transitioned working with our Champions on a broader range of health topics including:

- Mental Health
- Cardiovascular Disease Prevention
- Childhood Immunisations
- COVID vaccinations
- Living with COVID

We have retained the majority of our Champions throughout this transition and have held introductory information evenings on each new topic to inform and engage them. Our Health Champions are particularly interested in Mental Health and are currently being trained in Make Every Contact Count (MECC).

The Health Champions programme features within several local strategies including the Barnet Plan 2021-2025 and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2025. The champions are also being incorporated into several Public Health programmes of work including Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, Mental Health and Childhood Immunisations.

One of the objectives of the Barnet Plan is:

“Supporting Barnet residents to be active participants in their communities and to be our partners in making Barnet a better place to live, work and study.”

Officers Recommendations

- 1. That the committee note and discuss the report.**

1. Why this report is needed

- 1.1 This report outlines the work to date for the Health Champions programme, including the more recent transition from focussing solely on COVID response to wider health issues, according to the priorities and needs of the borough.
- 1.2 Development of the COVID-19 Health Champions into a more general approach to Community Health Champions to support community participation in improving health is a priority for Barnet Council. Both Barnet Plan 2021-2025 (Healthy Theme) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2025 include this programme as part of recovery plans.
- 1.3 In addition, deployment of Health Champions is one of the key strategies to support vaccine uptake nationally as suggested by Public Health England (now ‘Office of Health Improvement and Disparities’ and ‘UK Health Security Agency’) and NHS England. As such, the Health Champions are being incorporated into the Community Vaccine Champions programme – a programme funded by the Department of Levelling Up,

Housing and Communities (DLUHC) specifically to increase COVID-vaccine uptake in groups where it is low. This funding is separate to Health Champions.

- 1.4 The main aim of the Health Champions programme is to improve health and wellbeing in the local communities and to address health inequalities through working with residents as Community Health Champions. We are able to achieve this by:
 - a) Maintaining a mutually beneficial communication system in Barnet that enables people to help their family, friends and other community members to make sense of the latest facts about COVID-19, so that they can protect themselves but also let Barnet Council know about issues they face and questions they have about guidance or policy relating to COVID.
 - b) Expanding the remit of the Champions to include broader health and social issues whilst maintaining the approach.
 - c) Reaching individuals that are isolated or underserved groups to communicate important health messages and by ensuring that the characteristics of Champions reflect their local communities and groups.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 To ensure the committee is informed and supportive of our approach to the Health Champions programme including our transition to wider health issues.

3. Alternative options considered and not recommended

- 3.1 None.

4. Post decision implementation

- 4.1 Public Health will continue to run the Health Champions programme and transition the champions to wider health issues.

5. Implications of decision

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Following the May 5th Elections, the council has a new Labour administration. On the 24th May 2022 Annual Council appointed a new Leader of the Council. The Leader and the new administration have set out the priorities including working in partnership with our local communities to help residents to lead healthier lives and tackling these health inequalities highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic and to review Council strategies to ensure a clear link with public health outcomes.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The Health Champions programme has been funded from the COVID Contain funding, with some additional support from the DLUHC Covid Vaccine Champions funding and the public health grant. Future support for the programme will need to come

exclusively from the public health grant.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 Section 244 of the National Health Service Act 2006 and Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013/218; Part 4 Health Scrutiny by Local Authorities - provides for the establishment of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees by local Authorities.
- 5.3.2 The Council's Constitution (Article 7) sets out the terms of reference of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as having the following responsibilities: "To perform the overview and scrutiny role in relation to health issues which impact upon the residents of the London Borough of Barnet and the functions services and activities of the National Health Service (NHS) and NHS bodies located within the London Borough of Barnet and in other areas."

5.4 Insight

- 5.4.1 The wider health issues are priority issues for Barnet taken from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and inequalities priorities within it.
- 5.4.2 Wards and communities are also being targeted for COVID-vaccine uptake where data shows it is low.

5.5 Social Value

- 5.5.1 This service has been commissioned from one of our voluntary sector organisations which also forms one of the key partners of the Barnet Together Alliance.

5.6 Risk Management

- 5.6.1 The success of the transition of the Health Champions programme to wider health topics relies on the engagement of the Health Champions in non-COVID related topics outside of a national crisis. Lack of support from our Champions could lead to missed opportunities to undertake prevention work and address health inequalities.

5.6.2 The following controls and mitigations are in place:

- 5.6.2.1 Co-production of wider health priority areas with Health Champions
- 5.6.2.2 Introduction sessions for each new topic with experts
- 5.6.2.3 Regular check-ins with Health Champions to gauge interest in wider health topics
- 5.6.2.4 Training and upskilling in new topic areas

5.7 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.7.1 The provider of our Health Champions programme (Groundwork) continuously monitors and reviews the demographics of its champions to ensure they align with local demographics. Our champions come from all 24 wards with a minimum of 5 champions per ward.
- 5.7.2 Around 1 in 5 of our champions are under 35 years old, with just under 2 in 5 champions from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds. Our gender split is 70% female

and 30% male, in line with typical gender splits we see in other volunteer groups within the local population. These splits are likely to be different where inequalities exist.

5.8 Corporate Parenting

5.8.1 It is intended that the Health Champions programme improves the health and wellbeing of all Barnet residents including children and young people in care.

5.9 Consultation and Engagement

5.9.1 The Health Champions programme regularly consults with its members to develop the work programme. Focus groups have been undertaken with sub-groups of our champions on a variety of topics including with young people on vaccinations.

5.9.2 There are three levels of engagement within the programme, as described below:

5.9.2.1 Engaged: Not attended an information session but receiving the infographics and emails (127 champions).

5.9.2.2 Highly Engaged: Attended 1-15 information sessions (107 champions).

5.9.2.3 Super Engaged: Attended 15+ information sessions (31 champions).

5.10 Environmental Impact

5.10.1 There are no direct environmental implications from noting the report.

6. Background papers

6.1 Appendix 1 - Health Champions 2020-2022 Update, Health Overview Scrutiny Committee, 6th July 2022 [PPT].