

Community Champions Scheme- Scrutiny Update 12.01.21

Background

- Since Public Health England released their review of disparities in risks and outcomes in June 2020, the Government has been focused on taking action to improve the support and protection for those communities and groups who have been shown to be most at risk from COVID 19.
- The review highlighted that some communities are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, both in transmission rates and in mortality - most notably Pakistani and other South Asian communities, wider Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and people with disabilities. Death rates from the virus are higher for Black and Asian ethnic groups when compared to White ethnic groups.
- While disproportionate transmission, morbidity and mortality rates will relate to wider social and economic factors - including occupation/employment; multigenerational households; residential overcrowding; deprivation – evidence shows that working through trusted community stakeholders and other local actors can help to identify and overcome barriers which prevent people from following public health guidance.
- On 22 October 2020, the Minister for Equalities announced that the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) would provide up to £25m of funding to support those communities who have been shown to suffer disproportionately from COVID 19, through a new scheme called 'Community Champions. Kirklees was one of the identified areas to apply for this funding as an area that has very diverse communities with a range of complex and individual needs.
- Government has asked Local Authorities to fund practical solutions that will make a real difference. The guidance provided is broad and leaves considerable opportunity to deliver the Community Champions Scheme according to what Local Authorities and their community partners think will work in their area.
- In this context it was proposed that we will need to develop a Community Champions grant scheme that will need to follow a key principle of enabling our partners to be innovative, flexible, and supporting local grassroot activity. This may include ensuring the funds can be used by local partners in the most direct and meaningful ways as decided upon by target groups themselves.

Timescales

- An Expression of Interest (EOI) needed to be submitted on 9 December 2020. We were expected to be notified of any outcome by the 14th December,

delivery to commence immediately and then be expected to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MHCLG.

The Kirklees approach proposed in the expression interest builds on existing outreach, engagement and communication activities with residents disproportionately impacted by Covid-19 in particular those with disabilities and/or from BAME communities.

Priorities

- Build additional capacity to be able to respond to the immediate needs of both mass engagement (testing and vaccinations) and deep engagement (to target cohorts).
- Scaling up and expanding existing approaches working with partners- building on community anchors to develop community hub and spoke, so as to further reach into grassroots communities.
- Respond to the urgency to enable community champions to support those communities most at risk from COVID 19 and overcome the barriers which prevent people from following public health guidance.
- Deliver flexible interventions that can respond to different modes of delivery; informal, formal, online, and direct delivery in communities.
- Contribute to local, regional, and national learning and practice development networks. Pose challenges about how we engage and what works in communities we have traditionally found it hard to engage.

Target Communities

- BAME
- People with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and unpaid carers

Update

We have been asked for a clarification on the Kirklees proposal but are still awaiting to hear the outcome of our submission. We have had information saying the MHCLG are hoping to let us know by 15.1.21. We have continued to plan and prepare for hopefully the event of a successful notification.