

Community Health Champions



Providing a vital bridge between local people and services in their community.

Living better and feeling better
starts with a simple step – connecting
www.healthconnectionsmandip.org

What are Health Champions?

Community Health Champions signpost friends, family, colleagues and neighbours to support in their own communities. They enable a large number of individuals to access health support and advice and are aware of the wider determinants of health e.g. support such as housing, education and debt advice. Health Champions can be very effective at integrating with local communities and providing a bridge between local people and other services. The Health Champions receive locally tailored training and are part of the Health Connections Mendip Service.

Who are Community Health Champions?

Anyone who is interested in finding out about what is available in their community and would be keen to pass this information on can be a Community Health Champion.

How do I become a Community Health Champion?

You can become a Community Health Champion by attending a free half-day training course.

Why do we need Community Health Champions?

The more people there are that know about the support that is available in the community, the more we can all support each other. There are great services in our community but sometimes people don't know about them.

What impact has the project had?

Over the last six months our Health Champion Coordinator has trained 31 Community Health Champions who have so far signposted 270 people to support in their community.

What are the plans for 2016?

As Health Connections Mendip is always patient-led we train the people who are interested in becoming Community Health Champions. During 2016 we have training sessions planned for patients, staff from a large supermarket, care agencies, housing associations, local community cafés, community police, town council staff and students and teachers from a local secondary school.

We have had requests from community members to roll the project out across Mendip. The project is currently supported financially by Frome Town Council and we are now seeking the support of other Mendip town and parish councils.

Contact us!

If you are interested in supporting this project and would like to find out how to become involved, please contact Community Health Champion Co-ordinator Julie Carey-Downes E: julie.carey-downes@nhs.net
Tel: 07538 546 134

Feedback from Community Health Champions

It is not only the members of the community who have been signposted who benefit but the Health Champions themselves as is seen from the quotes below.

"I have been surprised at the number of places I have been where I have had conversations with people and have ended up signposting them to services and organisations, chatting to people at bus stops, engaging with individuals at the various groups I attend, on one occasion even talking to a young man in the street. Being a Community Health Champion has meant I talk more to people of all ages, not only have I signposted people but have gathered more information regarding other groups or services from people to add to our Directory." Community Health Champion

"I love the fact not only do I give out information to people at the centre where I work but when I needed to sort out a problem of my own, I was able to refer to my directory to find the exact service I needed to help me out. I also love the feedback I get from people when having signposted them to a group or service, they update me on how helpful it has been, usually with a big smile on their face." Community Health Champion

"It has given me the confidence to engage with people more, as I now have specific information I can pass on to the person, which I know will help them." Community Health Champion

"I enjoy my role as a Community Health Champion, as I have always been involved with groups and organisations, but even I was impressed with how much support is out there for people of all ages, it is great to be able to pass on the information. I also am able to feedback to Health Connections if I have come across areas where there is a lack of support and ideas for future groups" Community Health Champion

"I have found being involved with this service invaluable both as a person with a health condition who is able to support those attending in the group and most importantly to listen, but I have also found friendship, support and camaraderie with those who attend and find that attending this group has been very important for my wellbeing too." Community Health Champion

Supporting Information from Frome Town Council

Frome Town Council has been involved with Health Connections Mendip since April 2015 and jointly funds the role of the Health Champion Coordinator whose role is to train and support Community Health Champions.

Frome Town Council acknowledges it is important that our community is aware of what services are available to support their health and well-being; this is where the role of Community Health Champions is paramount.

We know that the Community Health Champions pass on vital information about a wide range of service providers to members of the community. This enables those who need the information to be more in control of their health and wellbeing; in turn, this supports the development of a more resilient community.

We are so impressed with the Health Champions initiative that we encourage other areas of Mendip to join us in supporting this wonderful and increasingly essential project.

Paul Wynne

Frome Town Council Clerk