

## Surrey Local Outbreak Engagement Board

### 1. Reference Information

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Paper tracking information	
<b>Title:</b>	Surrey Community (COVID-19) Champions Programme
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<b>Sponsors:</b>	Sinead Mooney - LOEB Chairman (SCC)
<b>Paper date:</b>	2 September 2021
<b>Related papers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surrey COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan</li> </ul>

### 2. Executive summary

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The national NHS Test and Trace Service was established in May 2020 in order to control the rate of reproduction of COVID-19 by reducing the spread of the infection. Public Health teams and partners are responsible for the development and delivery of Local Outbreak Management Plan. The aim of Surrey’s COVID-19 [Local Outbreak Management Plan](#) is to protect the health of the population of Surrey by:

- preventing the spread of COVID-19;
- early identification and proactive management of local outbreaks;
- co-ordination of capabilities across agencies and stakeholders and;
- assuring the public and stakeholders that this is being effectively delivered.

Communications and community engagement are key aspects of the Local Outbreak Management Plan. The aim of Community (COVID-19) Champions Programme is to support the reduction in the transmission of COVID-19 in Surrey, by the communication of key public health messages to residents through a network of local Community Champions. In particular, the programme aims to communicate and engage with communities who are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

### 3. Recommendations

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- To note the report.
- To continue to lead the engagement with local communities and be the public face of the local response.

- Members to ensure appropriate information on the programme and on COVID-19 in Surrey is cascaded within their own organisations and areas of influence.

#### 4. Reason for Recommendations

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- The recommendations reflect the functions of the LOEB as set out in the Terms of Reference.

#### 5. Detail

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##### **Context**

Community (COVID-19) Champions is a nationally recognised model pioneered in [Newham](#) and [Birmingham](#), that is now being delivered in many local authorities in England. The aim of the programme is to support the reduction in the transmission of COVID-19 in Surrey by communication of key public health messages to residents through a network of local Community Champions. Community Champions are trusted members of the community based in a range of organisations and frontline services throughout Surrey. The programme has been designed to maximise reach to ensure the most vulnerable residents can receive advice and guidance on issues relating to COVID-19 and how to stay safe during the pandemic. The role of the Community Champions is to share accurate, reliable, current COVID-19 information about with their families, friends and local communities. By receiving regular trustworthy and clear information, residents are able to make more informed choices which reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission during the pandemic. The Government has published [evidence and best practice](#) on the role of Community Champions networks to increase engagement in the context of COVID-19.

##### **Programme Delivery**

Surrey's Community (COVID-19) Champions Programme is co-ordinated by Surrey County Council Public Health team, and delivery is led by boroughs and districts. The core elements of the programme include the distribution of a weekly briefing, interactive webinars and a county-wide steering group, as outlined below:

##### Weekly Briefings

Programme delivery involves Surrey County Council Public Health team producing a weekly briefing which is shared with the local Community Champions Co-ordinator within borough and district. The briefing distils all the most relevant COVID-19 related announcements for that week. The aim is to summarise clear and concise COVID-19 information, which is easy for Champions to share, and for Surrey residents to understand. Content has evolved as the pandemic has continued, however at present, the briefing includes:

- Pandemic-stage information (e.g. details on national strategy and guidance, vaccinations, testing).
- Local data and intelligence from Surrey County Council [data dashboard](#) and website, including case rates.
- National data and intelligence from [gov.uk](#) and [NHS.uk](#) data dashboards and websites, including vaccination rates.
- Information aimed at high risk groups and communities (e.g. pregnant women, younger people).
- Broader health and wellbeing advice, information and support (e.g. domestic abuse, mental health, smoking and alcohol).

Community (COVID-19) Champions Co-ordinators are responsible for leading the delivery of the scheme at a local level. Most co-ordinators are based within borough or district councils; however, some are based within voluntary services. Community Champions Co-ordinators tailor and localise the briefing before circulating it to their network of Community Champions. Community Champions include faith leaders, councillors, teachers, food bank volunteers, sports, and interest group leaders. The Community Champions disseminate the key briefing messages to their communities via existing communications channels, including print (food bank parcel leaflets, bulletin boards), digital (e-newsletters, staff intranet, websites), social media and verbal conversations.

## Webinars

In addition to the briefing, regular webinars are currently held in six boroughs and districts (Spelthorne, Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Reigate & Banstead, Surrey Heath, Mole Valley). The webinars are chaired by the Community Champions Co-ordinator and provide a forum for Community Champions to hear about and discuss the latest updates, ask questions, and feedback any intelligence or insights they have from their local communities. Representatives from Surrey County Council Public Health team, Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Frimley Health and Care Integrated Care System (ICS) regularly attend the webinars. This has been a successful way of enriching engagement and gathering insight and local intelligence directly from the community.

## Steering Group

A county-wide steering group is responsible for the strategic oversight of the programme. The steering group is chaired by Surrey County Council Public Health team and attended by local Co-ordinators. The purpose of the steering group is to agree priorities and strategic direction of the programme; identify opportunities for programme expansion and diversification; establish consistent approaches where appropriate and reduce duplication; facilitate collaborative working between key stakeholders; share best practice, intelligence and resources; address risks, issues and remove barriers to programme delivery.

## Summary of Roles & Responsibilities

Role of Surrey County Council includes:

- Programme management
- Producing and circulating weekly briefing to Co-ordinators
- Attending webinars
- Establishing pathways for community feedback and system intelligence

Role of Boroughs and Districts includes:

- Recruiting Champions
- Managing relationship with Champions
- Tailoring and circulating weekly briefing to Champions
- Hosting webinars
- Supporting the gathering of community feedback and system intelligence

### **Phase One (November 2020 – March 2021)**

Surrey’s Community (COVID-19) Champions Programme launched in November 2020. Phase one involved initially piloting the scheme in Spelthorne. Surrey County Council Public Health team then worked with other boroughs and districts to establish Community Champions schemes within their local areas, expanding across the rest of the county.

To date, nine of Surrey’s eleven districts and boroughs have fully or partially launched their programmes, with a total of over 250 Community Champions across the county. Delivery varies depending on how local areas decided to initially set up the scheme based on their available resources and capacity. Surrey’s Public Health team recently undertook a mapping exercise of the programme to gather key information and feedback from Community Champions Co-ordinators. A summary of programme delivery by borough/district is outlined below:

	<b>Approx. number of Community Champions</b>	<b>Cascading of weekly briefing</b>	<b>Hosting of regular webinars</b>	<b>Approx. number of attendees at webinars</b>
Elmbridge	15	Yes	Yes	3-4
Epsom & Ewell	22	Yes	Yes	3-4
Guildford	60	Yes	No	n/a
Mole Valley	17	Yes	Yes	5-10
Reigate & Banstead	33	Yes	Yes	4-6
Runnymede	27	Yes	No	n/a
Spelthorne	39	Yes	Yes	10-15

Surrey Heath	42	Yes	Yes	12-15
Tandridge	0	Yes	No	n/a
Waverley	TBC <sup>1</sup>	Yes	No	n/a
Woking	0	No	No	n/a
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>255</b>			

Qualitative feedback from Community Champions Co-ordinators was also gathered. The key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are summarised below:

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong organisational support and senior level buy-in and commitment</li> <li>• Dedicated, proactive and engaged Community Champions Co-ordinator</li> <li>• Representation of Surrey Public Health team and guest speakers from CCG/ICS and other relevant partners at webinars</li> <li>• Strong, diverse representation of passionate Community Champions</li> <li>• Robust processes in place for distribution of weekly briefings, hosting of webinars and oversight of programme via core steering group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited reach and engagement in some areas</li> <li>• Limited feedback and insight gathering from existing Community Champions</li> <li>• Gaps in Community Champions representation from some demographics</li> <li>• Lack of monitoring and evaluation processes</li> <li>• Informality of arrangements in some areas</li> <li>• Variation and disparity in programme delivery across boroughs and district</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion and diversification of programme and Champion networks</li> <li>• Streamlining of programme across the county via a countywide, Public Health-hosted webinar</li> <li>• Re-defining and re-launching programme including recruitment drive for new champions</li> <li>• Adoption of a more targeted approach to ensure the most vulnerable residents, communities and high risk settings are reached</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited staff capacity and time to drive the programme and create sustainability</li> <li>• Diminishing interest, enthusiasm and engagement from existing Champions</li> <li>• Reduced attendance of Community Champions at webinars</li> <li>• Messaging fatigue and desensitisation to COVID-19 information among local communities</li> <li>• Time-limited funding for the programme through COVID-19</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Waverley have a Community Champions Scheme in place however the number of Champions has not been confirmed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure all geographical areas and demographics are represented through the programme</li> <li>• Sharing of broader health and well-being information and relevant council updates</li> <li>• Development of a communications plan for the programme</li> <li>• Improving feedback and system intelligence from Community Champions to Public Health on issues/concerns within local communities</li> </ul>	<p>Contain Outbreak Management Funds (COMF)</p>
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## Phase Two (April 2021 – To date)

In order to galvanise further engagement, enhance the implementation of the programme and address the issues and barriers highlighted above, Surrey Public Health team are in the process of planning phase two of the programme. Phase two will include, but is not limited to:

- Increasing capacity within the Public Health team to support and drive the programme forward. A dedicated Project Support Officer has been recruited and is due to start at the beginning of September.
- Streamlining of programme delivery across Surrey via a new county-wide Public Health-hosted webinar for all Co-ordinators and Champions.
- Developing a 12-month communications plan for the programme.
- Extending and diversifying delivery of Community (COVID) Champions into new settings and communities.
- Targeting the approach at specific cohorts and settings (i.e. young people, areas with low vaccine uptake), aligning with high risk communities and settings identified in the Local Outbreak Management Plan.
- Initiating a recruitment drive to increase the size and reach of Surrey's Community Champions network.
- Increasing engagement with voluntary sector organisations.
- Increasing the focus on broader health and wellbeing advice, information and support.
- Allocation of Contain Outbreak Management Funds (COMF) funds to further increase the diversity of Community Champions across ethnicity, culture, faith, and age to strengthen the programme's ability to address health inequalities.

## 6. Challenges

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The key challenges (described above) are as follows:

- Limited reach and engagement in some areas.
- Limited feedback and insight gathering from existing champions.
- Gaps in champion representation from some demographics.
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Informality of arrangements in some areas.
- Variation and disparity in programme delivery across boroughs and district; in particular a lack of scheme in two areas of the county.
- Limited staff capacity and time to drive the programme and create sustainability.
- Diminishing interest, enthusiasm and engagement from existing champions.
- Reduced attendance of champions at webinars.

## 7. Timescale and delivery plan

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- Delivery of the Community Champions Programme is ongoing and a medium and long-term Delivery Plan for phase two of the programme is currently being developed.

## 8. How is this being communicated?

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- The communications strategy to support the Local Outbreak Management Plan is led by Surrey County Council Communications and Engagement Department in conjunction with system partners in the MIG (Local Resilience Forum Multi Information Group).
- Communications relating specifically to the Community Champions are currently cascaded to partners via the Programme Manager within Surrey Public Health team. A Communications Plan will be developed to ensure consistency of messaging and cascading of information both:
  - to Community Champions Co-ordinators and their network of Champions;
  - from Community Champions to Public Health about issues and concerns within their local communities.

## 9. Next steps

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The Community (COVID-19) Champions programme is playing a vital role in addressing the health inequalities exacerbated COVID-19 and like many local authorities, Surrey County Council plans to continue supporting it to help reduce the impact of COVID-19 and address broader public health initiatives as England moves out of the pandemic.

Next steps include:

- Developing a medium and long-term delivery plan for phase two of the programme.
- Establishing a county-wide Public Health-hosted webinar for co-ordinators and champions.
- Extending and diversifying into new settings and communities.
- Targeting at specific cohorts and settings (i.e. young people, areas with low vaccine uptake), aligned to high risk communities and settings identified in the Local Outbreak Management Plan.
- Initiating a recruitment drive to increase number of Community Champions, expanding diversity and encourage retention of existing champions.
- Increasing engagement with voluntary sector organisations.
- Increasing the focus on general health and wellbeing messaging and support (i.e. mental health).