

# Community Champions

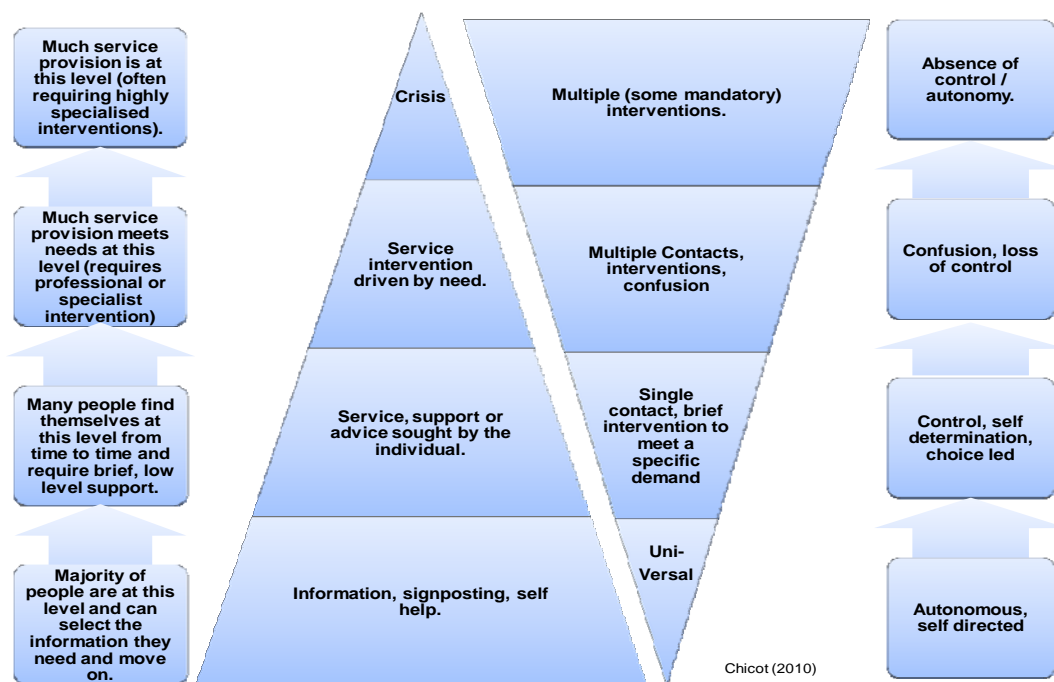
## Happy to Help: Community Champions.

Rochdale Borough's Community Champions are residents who have excellent "people" skills; they care about their local area and have a high level of expertise that is based on their life experience. They use their skills and attributes to help others in their community.

Community Champions:

- help people at a time when they need some support
- work with people to identify and clarify their goals; the person can work on any goals, but the emphasis chosen is most often on wellbeing, skills, employment or family matters
- are trained and expert in using methods which help people to progress towards and achieve their goals

From the point of view of the recipient, champions report that services can often feel like this:



Although they are able to offer support at any stage, Community Champions aim to offer most of their support at the "single contact" stage, supporting the person to build their capacity and resilience; if possible preventing a progression towards a need for further services.

# Community Champions

## Principles

The champions work in partnership with services as equal contributors using the principles of co-production<sup>1</sup> along with some local principles which reflect what they do. As a group they have developed, researched and agreed on a way of working. All the training, support and methods used by and with Community Champions are founded on the following core principles:

1. Helping people in a way which builds on what they already do well
2. Working together so that everyone both contributes and gain from the process (give and take)
3. Using coaching methods to support people to make the changes they want and need
4. Understanding what motivates people, how people feel well and how behaviour can be affected by self-esteem and confidence.
5. Working within a "peer support" network which means that champions support each other to do the best job they can do.
6. Working with people and professionals in a way which makes sure everyone contributes to the outcome.
7. Facilitating rather than delivering outcomes (doing **with** not to)
8. Recognising people as assets, which means that people are seen as partners rather than recipients of services
9. Protecting themselves and others by understanding risks and working within agreed protocols.

## How it works.

Champions work in all sorts of different ways – mostly with individuals but sometimes with groups. They usually provide one to one support over a brief period of time to help someone to deal with a difficulty, or to achieve a particular goal. This usually happens in a time and place which is convenient to the person and the champion, and takes place in partnership with a local organisation such as a local doctor's surgery, library, community organisation, children's centre or school.

The help they provide is always based on the person's own hopes and goals which are agreed confidentially with the champion. The champion will work with the person to agree what to do and then meet regularly to help the person to recognise their progress and plan the next steps. After a few weeks the person usually feels that they have more control over their issue and are able to move on, with a clear plan of action. If the person feels that they need more help after a few weeks, this is planned and agreed.

Our evidence shows that this approach can make a real difference for some people – sometimes a listening ear and a bit of support at the right time can be all they need to move on.

## Support available:

All champions are trained in solution focused approaches, and are able to provide support with literacy or communication, families and wellbeing.

Many champions also have training or skills in particular areas, and can provide specialist support with:

- English and maths, including English as a second language
- Mental health
- Life coaching
- Helping your child with reading / homework
- Advice and Guidance / Decision making
- Dealing with conflict
- Responding to domestic abuse
- Financial issues
- Health (including healthy lifestyles)
- Getting the most out of life

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<sup>1</sup> New Economics Foundation, 2010

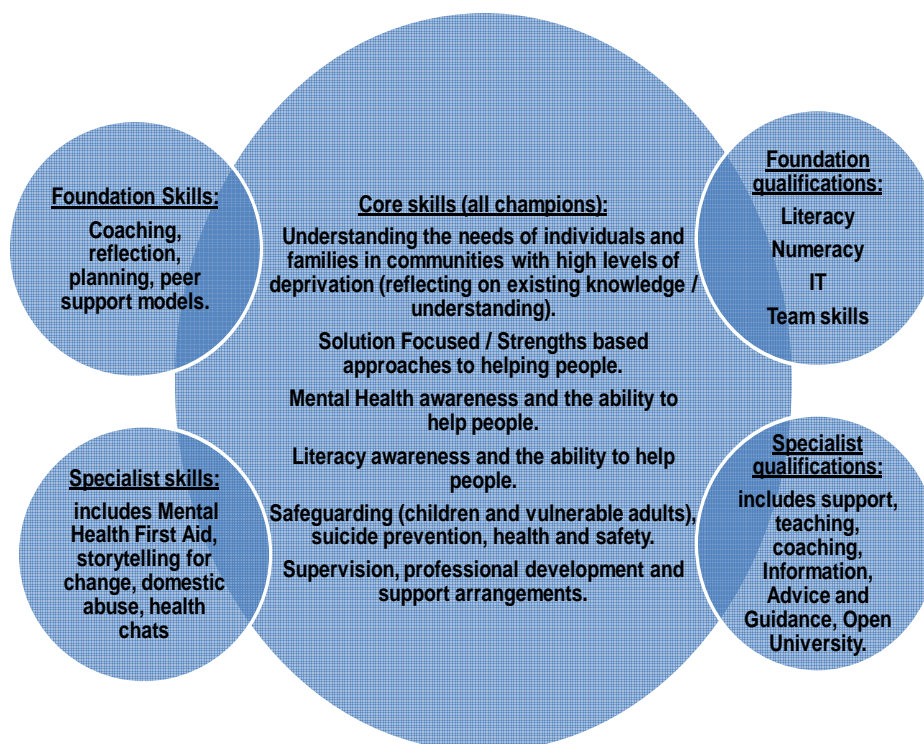
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- Learning disabilities (including Autism and ASD)
- Caring responsibilities

Most people are referred for support from a champion through a local organisation, but individuals can get in touch if they think a champion could help them.

## Training, Development and Support.

The training, development and support model reflects our expectation that anyone providing a service to people in our borough possesses the excellent interpersonal skills needed to transform lives. Champions already possess the personal traits and values which are vital in this model. In addition to these traits a programme of skills development and support is provided, which includes the following competencies:



The competencies are being delivered through a programme of training and support, commencing with a 3.5 day induction programme including the core skills, enhanced by an ongoing development programme which is tailored to the training and skills needs of the champion. It's all supported through a lively reflective practice and networking forum which keeps champions in touch with skills development, practice sharing and information.

## Links

Community Champions have close links with many other local organisations. They have been influenced by and work alongside many local community, voluntary, statutory and health services and projects such as health trainer volunteers, Digital Champions and the Recovery Republic.

# Community Champions

## **To have the support of champions within your local organisation:**

We can work with you to plan how to incorporate an individual or team of champions into your organisation. We can help you to promote champions in your organisation, provide the training and support to the champions and to you and provide ongoing support and training as the project continues. If you think a champion could help people in your organisation, but you don't have the capacity to organise this, we can broker individual champions to work with the individuals who need their help. Contact us by phone (01706 925925) or email [helen.chicot@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:helen.chicot@rochdale.gov.uk)

## **To become a champion:**

There is no entry requirement – if you care about people in your area and have a bit of free time to help them we will provide you with all the training and support you need. We can help you to plan how your voluntary work will fit with a career plan or route back to work, help you to make sure that your volunteering fits with your life and commitments, and provide you with all the training and support you need to get the most from this opportunity.

To register your interest, you can either contact the Volunteer Centre at CVS Rochdale (01706 631291) or you can contact us direct by telephone (01706 925925) or email [kate.spencer@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:kate.spencer@rochdale.gov.uk)

## **To refer someone for one to one support with their skills, employment, family or wellbeing:**

We don't need lots of information about the person – just their name and contact details and their permission to pass on the information to us. We'll contact them, find out what sort of support they need and do our best to match them with a champion who can help. Telephone (01706 925925) or email [kate.spencer@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:kate.spencer@rochdale.gov.uk)