

Summary Report

Notes taken from:

An External Evaluation of the Champions of Change Service

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Key Features

Key features of the Champions of Change service

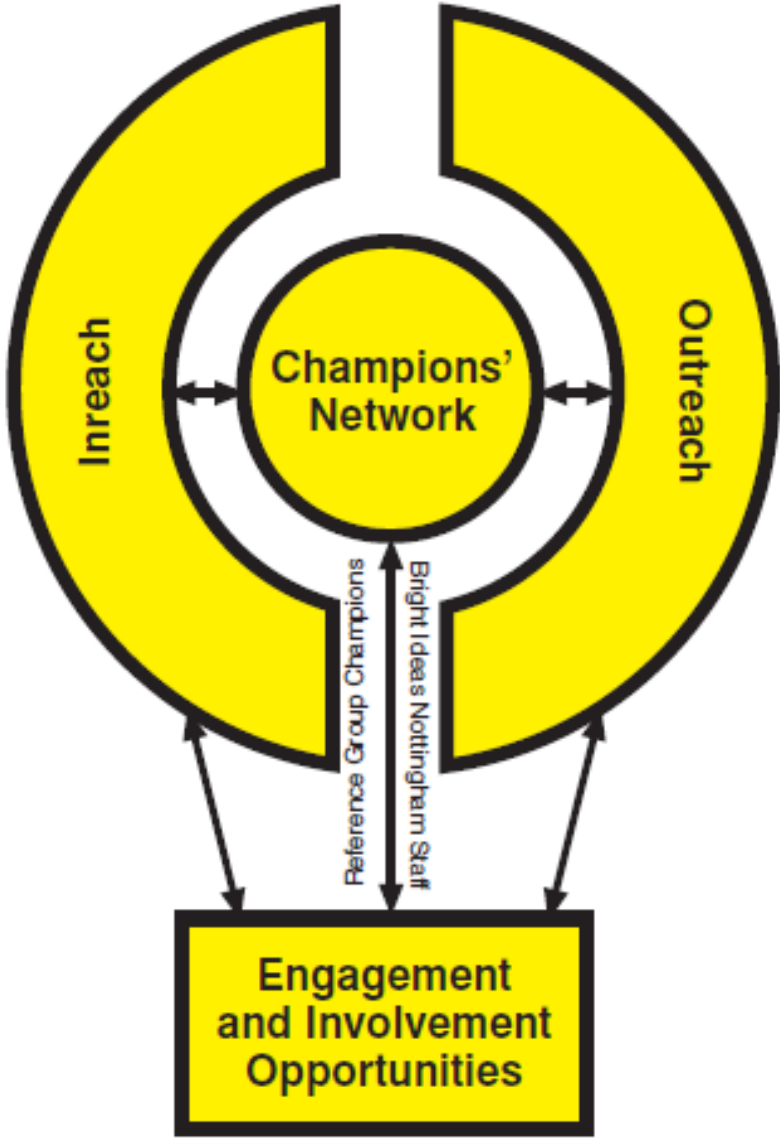
- **Diverse**, attracting people from different sections of the community and good geographical coverage across the city.
- **Flexible**, offering a variety of ways in which people can get involved with the service according to their needs – allowing them to opt in and out as required. Also allows opportunities for engagement and involvement for the wider public / people outside the network.
- **Independent** of mental health services. The service offers confidentiality / anonymity so there is no fear of individuals' mental health service being affected as a result of putting forward views.
- **Validates the individual's experience** and views because it closes the engagement/involvement loop by feeding back the results of consultation, engagement and involvement activities. This leaves people feeling that their voice has been heard.
- **Recognisable** with a simple, but strong brand.
- **Empowering** because individuals feel part of a collective voice and wider picture.
- **Responsive** to network members in relation to the activities and shape of the service.
- **Replicable** - a model of engagement and involvement that can be used in any part of the country in different sectors and around a range of issues.

"A vibrant and independent voice for service improvement is vital. Champions of Change can provide that, and help those with a less powerful voice to be heard."

Dr Chris Packham, Executive Director of Public Health, NHS Nottingham City



Balloon Model of Engagement



Strengths: Outcomes

The intended outcomes for the service were:

- A network which felt they had appropriate opportunities for engagement and involvement and whose members were able to influence decisions about the network.
- A network that was more knowledgeable about how to affect decisions in local mental health services and the NHS.
- Champions who would self select and put themselves forward to serve on the Joint Commissioning Group (JCG) and who would feel that they were supported enough to meaningfully engage with this group.
- A set of findings and recommendations about mental health services in Nottingham which are relevant to the JCG.
- A proposal for how Champions of Change will continue once the current funding period is at an end. This proposal will be fed into and decided by the network.

The outcomes for the service were met through the four areas of service activity and related outputs:

1. Champion's Network
2. Reference Group Champions
3. Consultation and engagement exercises
4. Strengthening engagement and involvement

1. Champions' Network

Grew a network of 70 + individuals and 4 groups.

- Clifton Mental Health Forum
- Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum – women's forum
- Dual Diagnosis Forum
- All Ours, Souper Sundays

Strived for diversity: – e.g. ethnicity, age, gender, faith/belief, sexual orientation, disability, etc. Action was taken to counter any gaps – e.g. visits to Breakout (Gay Men's Group).

Managed expectation and ensured commitment by devising a thorough induction to the network.

Well informed – the network was kept well informed – texts, calls, emails, newsletters to their homes, one to one meetings, chat rooms, Champions' blog, Bright Ideas website.

Identifiable branding – that provided a collective identity for network members and volunteers.

Unintended outcomes/outputs:

Better mental health: Network Champions have said that being involved in a service that provides meaningful engagement and involvement has aided their mental health recovery.

Reduced isolation: There is evidence of reduced isolation resulting from keeping people informed about the activity of the network and offering a series of activities that connect people.

Provided social activities to strengthen the network, e.g. Hats off for Mental Health walk for mental health awareness weeks.

Champions participated and presented at large events – e.g. Launch event, ‘Be Inspired’ event to celebrate volunteering, ‘Hearts and Minds’ community conference, and ‘We are the Champions’, film screening and celebration.

2. Reference Group

A team of 7 self-selected Champions who ‘represent’ the collective voice of the network.

By working alongside the Support Champions and other Champions the Reference Group Champions were:

Well prepared for strategic meetings through briefing and debriefing sessions.

Empowered, developing the confidence to speak up and represent views. By the end of the pilot, Champions were able to do this in a range of forums, independently of the staff team.

Supported to improve communication skills, particularly demonstrated by those who were initially less confident in articulating views and concerns. Champions also displayed improvements in active listening skills.

Unintended outcomes/outputs:

Better mental health: Reference Group Champions have said that being involved in a service that provides meaningful engagement and involvement has aided their mental health recovery.

New Support Group: One Reference Group member is setting up a support group in relation to a specific mental health condition. He says this would not have happened if it were not for Champions of Change.

Improved confidence: A positive experience of being involved in the network led to the confidence to get involved in or to at least try out other new activities outside the Champions of Change service.

3. Consultation and engagement

There was strong evidence to show that Champions:

Shaped and continually improved the Champions' service. Network members were able to influence service developments, including: the model of engagement; the activities of the service (e.g. the introduction of Chat Rooms); the design of survey tools; agreeing the information provided about the service (e.g. service leaflets); naming of the 'Reference Group' and the use of terminology about mental health and well-being.

Influenced the JSCG (Joint Strategic Commissioning Group) – including: the meeting agenda; the format of the meetings; the provision of information; the use of language; the location of meetings; the terms of reference, etc.

The service ...

Prompted over 100 conversations held in the first year to ascertain headliners – the areas of concern for Champions and members of the wider public in relation to mental health. The information from this then fed into other service consultation activities.

Designed responsive consultations as a result of the 1000+ conversations. E.g. designed a questionnaire and focus group questions in year 2 called 'What does your doctor do for you' or 'How does your family doctor care for you?' This detailed exercise was carried out with over 100 people.

The Champions were also involved in NHS consultation and engagement activities, including:

- Third Sector Review
- Respite care for carers
- Crisis resolution service specification
- Service specifications for the new service blocks
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Review of advocacy services
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Unintended outcomes/outputs:

Champions of Change fed into other consultations, e.g. BME Toolkit – engagement and involvement – Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust.

A Champion was supported to undertake a consultation – 'Rough N Smooth' – to identify the needs, including the mental health needs of people working for Nottingham City Council.

Representation at City Council Health and Wellbeing Inclusion Group – this was attended by nominated Reference Group members.

4. Strengthening engagement and involvement

A **Community Troupe** of volunteers was supported to go out into community settings and spaces to signpost people to services and tell them about how they can put forward their views and/or influence decision making.

Responsive workshops were designed for the service in response to needs identified by Champions. These workshops included:

- How to talk to your doctor and other health professionals
- I don't do computers – skills for reluctant IT users
- Champions challenge – pick and mix workshops combining physical activity with the opportunity to put forward views and have their say.

Unintended outcomes / outputs

This is not applicable. However, the interest in the Community Troupe was very encouraging. In year one of the service, a lot of people wanted to join the Network who did not fit the criteria. This part of the service was designed in response to people who could not join the Network but were passionate about mental health and well-being. Some Champions also wanted to join the Troupe.

Areas for improvement and Recommendations

Manage expectations

Improvement: Although this did not happen very often, there is evidence that, on occasion, some Champions wanted to use the network to forward their own individual agendas/cases rather than be part of a collective voice. These Champions could get very agitated when the Service signposted them to an appropriate service.

Recommendation: Produce a leaflet to spell out what the service can and cannot do – and get new network members to sign this off at induction.

Network Champions helping to promote the service

Improvement: The potential was identified for Champions to conduct in-reach into hospital wards.

Recommendation: Provide training and support for Champions to visit wards to promote Champions of Change.

Separate out some consultation discussions

Improvement: On occasion there was conflict of opinion (relating to investment in mental health services etc.) between those who use secondary mental health services and those who do not.

Recommendation: Where appropriate, look at providing separate conversations where a conflict of views may arise to ensure that all can get their views across.

Capturing views and comments for evaluation

Improvement: The project blog was not used to its full potential.

Recommendation: More use of the project Blog – e.g. Blog from all Chat Room activities, consultation meetings and events.

Outreach to mental health groups

Improvement: If capacity allowed, more outreach could be conducted to groups who meet around mental health.

Recommendation: Repeat visits to groups who do not necessarily want to become network members but who want the option to be consulted and engaged.