



Mental Health Champions and Young Health Ambassadors

Liam Spencer



Mental Health Champions

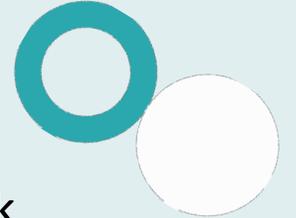


The aim of a Mental Health Champion is to be the 'go to' member of staff around mental health in all settings that young people access, including schools, sports teams, youth clubs, mental health services and third sector organisations. The Champions wear yellow lanyards to improve visibility, and they promote themselves wherever possible. They have four main roles:

- To keep up to date with the topic
- To share any resources or information with colleagues
- To be the key point of contact for mental health service information to ensure young people and their families have the most up to date information about the services they access
- To offer advocacy for young people



Mental Health Champions



- A co-produced job description was created, a training needs assessment, and a work action plan which is updated every 12 months
- The network meets every eight weeks
- The Champions meet to share practice, and engage with a programme of events, training, and campaigns alongside the core business meetings
- Events and campaigns are run every year for Mental Health Awareness Week, World Mental Health Day, and Children's Mental Health Week

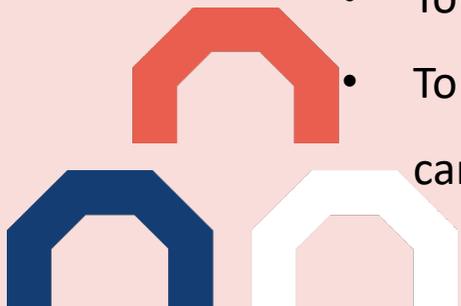
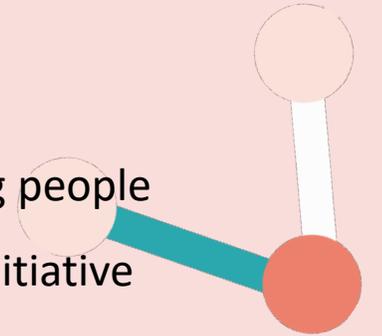


Young Health Ambassadors

Following the development of the Mental Health Champions, a parallel network led by young people was developed. They decided they would like to be called *Young Health Ambassadors*. This initiative was an entirely co-produced project where the young people designed their own programme and told the council how they wanted to be involved. The young people chose their name, designed their job descriptions, and identified their own priorities.

The Ambassadors have four main roles:

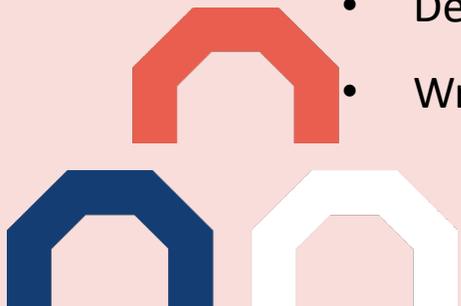
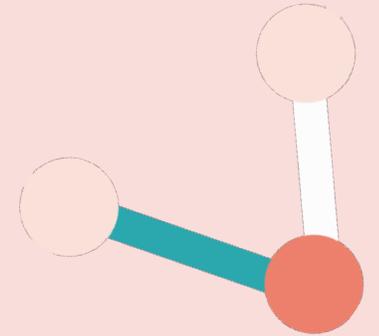
- To offer formal and informal peer support to their peers about low level mental health
- To run their own health campaigns amongst their peers
- To support mental health services to become more service user friendly
- To find out how children and young people would like to be involved and engaged in specific campaigns and service improvement



Young Health Ambassadors

Examples of work they have undertaken include:

- Delivering an anti-stigma event delivered to 100 young people and professionals;
- Designing a mental health anti-stigma campaign
- Delivering presentations to the Chief Executive of the Council
- Interviewing the Lead Member for Children & Young People
- Visiting the Sexual Health and Lifecycle Mental Health service
- Being interviewed by BBC Radio Newcastle
- Interviewing adult staff for health jobs
- Designing a Council Social Media Take Over
- Writing their own blog



Qualitative Data Collection

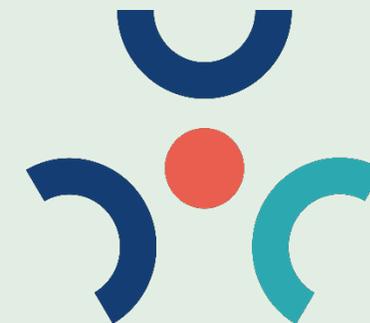
Mental Health Champions

- n=13 participants
- n=9 female, n=4 male
- Teaching assistants, SENCOs, primary/secondary class teachers, SLT members

Young Health Ambassadors

- n=6 participants
- n=5 female, n=1 male
- Aged 18 to 21 years (median = 20)

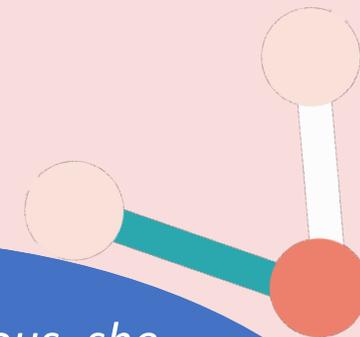
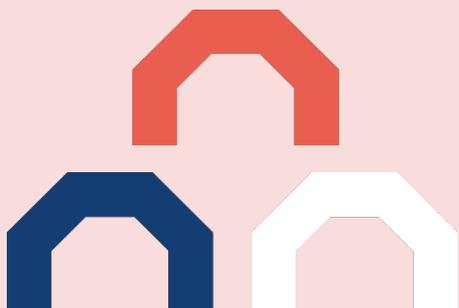
Emerging Themes Overview



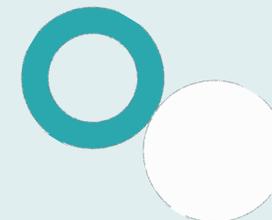
MHC Quotations

“It is the impact that the role then has on my wellbeing and my mental health. Because I think if I was a stand-alone mental health champion, on my own, even at school...it is lovely that we have got the support in the local authority”

“Oh, absolutely fabulous, she really is, yes. Even in between the network meetings she’s continually emailing out sending resources, asking for ideas. She’s very active and she just supports you with anything”



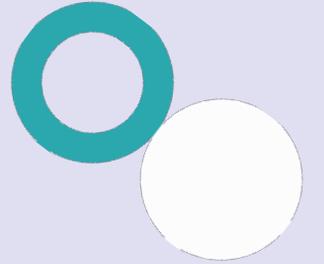
YHA Quotations



"I've always wanted to do more that I can add to my experience. It just sounded so interesting. I love knowing that there's a way to go out and help people and make a change"

"I think by introducing it in schools and across the borough, it's helped a lot more to make more awareness of stuff that people wouldn't talk about before, stuff that was very taboo"





Chrissy Hardy

Public Health Practitioner
(Children & Young People)

