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# COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS WOMENS HEALTH EVALUATION



This project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund



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## Aims of the campaign

- Raise awareness around menopause including signs & symptoms, treatments and things you can do to support good health in preparation and throughout
- Raise awareness of PrEP (medication to reduce risk of HIV)
- Improve awareness of support available
- Signposting to resources and support



## Training

- Specialist training was provided to all champions by NHS consultants with support from public health



## How did we do?

752 1-1 conversations took place and recorded digitally

54 group visits

446 additional individuals reached as part of the group visits

5 smaller community groups awarded funding to be a part of “community conversations” an opportunity for them to use their existing activity and relationships to have meaningful conversations – further 272 people reached



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**WHY  
WHAT?  
WHO!  
WHEN!**



**empower**

# COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

The main aim of the community champion project is to raise awareness of important health and welfare messages in particular local communities (either geographical or communities of interest) where there are health inequalities. The Champions encourage and empower people to make informed choices with a key focus on reaching those with multiple risk factors for poor health.

Our champions are trusted people living and working locally who are great at talking! They talk to people about things such as the importance of taking part in routine bowel and breast screening, understanding how to prevent conditions like type 2 diabetes, or the risks associated with missing essential check-ups for things like cervical screening.

The Champions are paid for their important work via the 15 voluntary/community organisations who are our main delivery partners. We also work with lots of smaller grass roots type groups for that extra reach! We all work together to support the champions and the project so that we can continue to reach those people most in need.



**F R I E N D L Y**

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Great mix of male & female champions with a huge age range ...18 right up to 65!



**Multiple ethnicities**



I have a disability- you can talk to me.. I get it!

I used to live in another country, so I know what you are experiencing

I have lived experience, so, I am empathetic!

I'm dead good with digital stuff. I'll help you get online 😊

**What an amazing range of skills and qualities!**

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## 19 Languages spoken

German, Urdu, Punjabi, Hungarian, Arabic, Gujrati, Portugese, Hindi, Pashto, Farsi, Dari, Yoruba, Patwari, Afrikaans, Mirpuri, Russian, Ukrainian, Tamil & English



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# As a result of having conversations about womens health

## The impact – champion conversations

- ✓ **555** people said they had an improved understanding of menopause including signs, symptoms and treatment and support available
- ✓ **268** had an improved awareness of HRT Inc. pros, cons and how to access it
- ✓ **320** left with a new awareness of PrEP Inc. advantages and where to access it
- ✓ **240** were signposted to more resources/info
- ✓ **128** were signposted to their GP or sexual health clinic

Every person taking part in a conversations received take home resources

**AWESOME!**

**Great  
results**



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UNDERSTANDING



# How do they do it?.....

## Champions approach to reaching people & having meaningful conversations



Champions work closely with other services/activities run by VCS organisations, e.g., champions attend & help at support groups, coffee mornings and anywhere that they can have meaningful conversations with people.

They have been able to gain some impressive reach by using their local knowledge to link in with activity leaders, and local services, and groups holding sessions and events, the below table provides a selection of venues, services and activities they have visited.

The champion groups can work quickly to meet needs identified, during our diabetes campaign they created 8 peer support groups and during our winter immunisation campaign they held 16 community vaccine pop up clinics.



Museums	Community centres	DWP ( Job centre's)	Town halls	Supermarkets
Coffee meets	Stay and play	Schools/school runs	Food shares	Local parks
Libraries	ESOL classes	Salons & spas	Craft groups	Gyms
Health surgeries/GP's	Wellbeing days/events	Chemists	Community plus, wellness service	Deighton Carnival
Walking groups	Welcome club – Asylum/Refugees	Slimming clubs	Cooking classes	Aunty Pam's drop in
Yoga sessions	Gudwara/mosques	“ HAF” Half term activities	Story times	Places of worship

**It is never a one size fits all approach when it comes to getting those important messages out there!**



# “Community conversations”

VCS groups accessing smaller funding amounts for bigger reach

To ensure health messages reach specific inclusion groups, several smaller funding amounts have been awarded to VCS organisations for the womens health campaign.

The groups use their regular activities and/or develop new ones to have “community conversations”

- ★ 5 groups have been awarded funding for this campaign
- ★ 272 additional people reached through this activity
- ★ 16 volunteers utilised for this activity across the groups



## Which groups did we work with?

### Umbrella Yoga

Providing yoga sessions to people with additional mental and physical needs in Kirklees

### YWBS

Integrated mental health and wellbeing services & activities for anyone in need of support

### One world craft

Wellbeing activity for asylum seekers and refugees

### Happy Moments

Supporting newer mums with health, wellbeing and practical tips

### Healthy Hearts

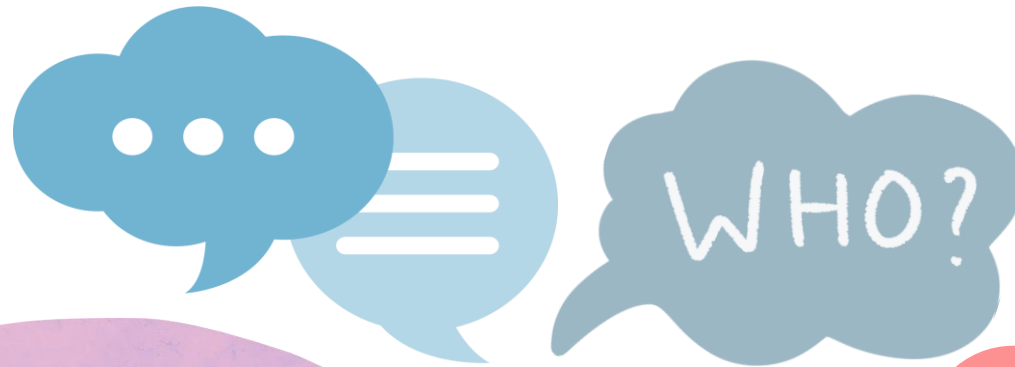
Community café providing support sessions and activities to people living in deprivation



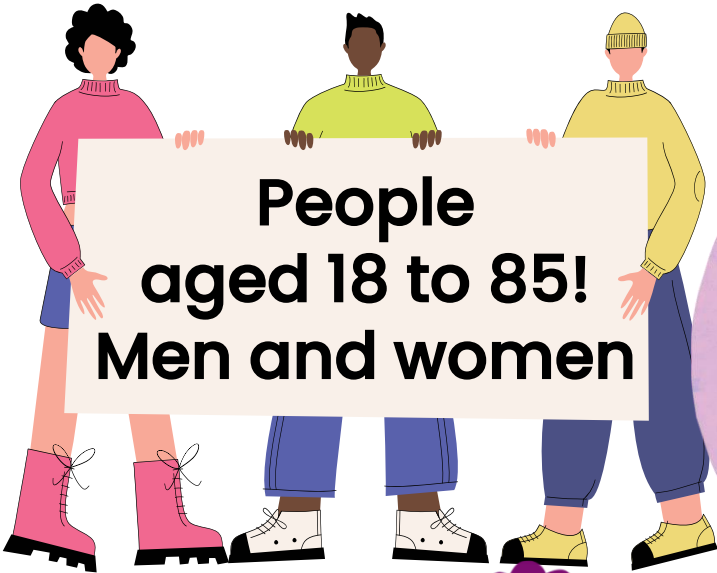
## Who have we reached as part of community conversations?

- ✓ BAME community
- ✓ Physical disabilities
- ✓ Mental health
- ✓ Learning disabilities
- ✓ Veterans
- ✓ Elderly ( Over 65)
- ✓ Low income & unemployed
- ✓ LGBT+
- ✓ Dementia
- ✓ Low literacy
- ✓ Living with trauma
- ✓ Asylum Seekers
- ✓ Refugees
- ✓ Victims of modern slavery
- ✓ Unpaid carers





# Who did we speak to?



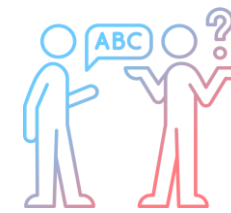
People with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning difficulties, mental health, chronic pain and long-term conditions



- 11 health inclusion groups
- Drug dependency
- Alcohol dependency
- Homeless
- Justice system
- Sex workers
- Vulnerable migrants
- Asylum seekers
- Refugees
- Low literacy
- Mental Health
- Physical health







## Barriers to engaging and accessing support

- Lack of knowledge around menopause, HRT and PrEP including risk factors, health implications and support available
- Taboo topic – lots of people saying it just isn't talked about in their community
- Fearful of appointments and diagnosis
- Don't want to go to an unfamiliar place for an appointment or support
- Stigma
- Language/religious & cultural barriers
- Digital barriers
- Newer arrivals to the country – champions found that this topic was something never discussed in their home countries
- Social barriers – no one to talk to or go with them to appointments
- Mental Health
- Financial
- Other priorities that people feel are more important for e.g. Asylum seekers focussing on their status claims came up a lot



Information below gathered from 1-1 & group conversations as well as from our champion learning and support sessions



# One world craft group raise awareness of menopause and HRT to Asylum Seekers and Refugees



*We are the One World Craft Group!*

We meet once a week to share ideas and to learn from each other as we explore our creativity. Our meetings give us peaceful, healing time together and reflect the many cultural backgrounds in our group. This allows us to clearly see exactly what we all have in common as human beings.

*We have a lot of fun too!*



Throughout April and May 2024, we will be building important conversations about women's health into our usual activities.

Contact us at: [oneworldtds@gmail.com](mailto:oneworldtds@gmail.com)

**One World is run by volunteers**

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We delivered a presentation about the menopause to our group members and handed out leaflets explaining symptoms and advice on how to deal with them. We circulated on-line group/advice-centre links so that people can follow up on problems, questions or concerns in privacy. We were able to have very open discussions which everyone found extremely helpful.

Many people expressed their gratitude for being able to discuss this important stage in their lives with openness and positivity; in many cultures it remains a silent, often confusing, suffering for women who feel unable to raise their experiences even with close family members. Hopefully, our presentation and discussions will help them to deal with any difficulties they encounter in the best, most informed way. They can be confident that they will always have someone to contact for support. We all, including the volunteers who undertook the training, feel much better informed about this important, often difficult, phase in the lives of all women and we feel lucky to be able to discuss this with openness, mutual respect and trust.



Awareness Campaign

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## Healthy hearts community group use their established activity to talk to their service users about menopause... with great results!

Nadia was experiencing perimenopause, she felt emotionally exhausted and struggled with low mood. She didn't feel like she could talk to her doctor, during our usual activities we were able to talk to Nadia about self-care and we provided her with information regarding menopause treatment options, we explained she could book an appt with a female GP and that it wasn't anything to be afraid of – we explained how common it was to be experiencing what she was going through. Nadia felt reassured by the conversation and booked an appointment with her GP, she expressed her desire to try HRT, she felt confident asking for it as we had discussed it in length, so she felt well informed.

She came back to see us, she had started to take it and said there was significant improvement in her wellbeing.

**“I feel amazing, like a missing part has been found.”**

**“Community groups often already have trusting relationships with service users; this makes them far more likely to take on board the information given, people find it much easier to chat whilst taking part in a lovely activity – just like Nadia did!”**



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## Huddersfield Mission champions supporting some of the most vulnerable service users

I spoke to Mia, who is a service user at the Mission, she is a sex worker, and she came to speak to me about our women's health campaign.

She told me how risky the work she does and how worried she is about her sexual health. We talked about HIV PrEP, and she had a HIV test at the Mission which we arranged with the Brunswick Centre, she was reassured with a clear result and said that her chat with me had prompted her to get the PrEP medication which she is now taking.

We also discussed the menopause and its symptoms as she said she had been experiencing some hot flushes lately and wasn't sleeping well. We talked about the benefits and side effects of HRT, she thanked me for our conversation and said she felt reassured after talking to me. She said that given the work she does, she often feels judged and looked down on by others and said that she is just the same as anyone else, deserving of respect and understanding and she felt she got that from me!



Our champions pride themselves on being non-judgemental, it is essential for the work that they do and resulted in a great outcome for Mia, who is now more protected for learning about PrEP medication - she also has lots of useful information to support her as she starts menopause - amazing work from the champions!



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# Tackling the taboo around menopause

Our champions from Yorkshire Wellbeing skills found that many women in south Asian communities really struggled to talk about menopause, people from the community told them that they were suffering in silence, missing work and not getting the support that they needed. Our champions were able to use their specialist knowledge to educate, inform and reassure people. This led to many people saying that they would now access support, they also said that they felt more comfortable bringing it up with family, friends and employers.

I really enjoyed the menopause talk - I thought it was something I was going through alone!

“Wonderful to see community champions spreading awareness as it can be a taboo subject especially in our south Asian community”



I am grateful that this is something that we can take up with our GP and that we can get something that may help us with our symptoms”



## Participant feedback

“I knew nothing about HRT because it was never spoken about by any of the women I know. I’m so grateful to you for explaining the benefits of supplements and HRT because I am struggling to cope with my symptoms”

The work champions are doing is so beneficial for women who had never heard of menopause especially those who had come from the villages in Pakistan where this kind of thing is not discussed!

“Speaking about menopause was taboo in My family, so, I never got to speak about it. Thankfully coming to today’s group, I felt comfortable to share my symptoms with you and the other ladies. Thank you for sharing the online information with me and for encouraging me to visit my GP”.

“I never even heard of perimenopause before our chat. I’ve only just realised that I have been suffering for years and I never would have guessed it was the early stage of menopause”

I always look out for the champions to have a chat about the most recent health messages, I find them reassuring and I feel comfortable visiting you for my info!

**The impact of a champion conversation  
can never be underestimated!**



# Champions work in action!





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*A familiar face plus a familiar place = great results!*

Thank you for reading!

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