



CHAMPION CHATTER

Welcome to Champion Chatter

In the last few months Parent Champions for health has really developed fast, which is very much reflected in this edition of Champion Chatter. As well as a number of schemes naturally evolving to also include health information, we have been recently awarded national validation with Public Health England.

Internally we are expanding our programmes team with a new Head of Programmes, and Programme Officer starting soon, more details to follow later. This is both to support the wider use of the Parent Champions model in other sectors such as health and primary schools, but also to explore any business development potential to help make our Parent Champions National Network sustainable over the long term.

So exciting times ahead, and thank you to all of you for continuing to share your experiences to benefit the whole Network.

Deborah Brodie

Programme Manager, Family and Childcare Trust

Public Health England validation for Parent Champions model



Benefitting from information in a Parent Champions scheme

Awarded full validation

We are extremely pleased that in June 2015 Public Health England and C4EO (The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services) awarded Parent Champions full validation as an evidenced model of practice.

This was following a request to Department for Education grantees for examples of evidenced practice in the early years that could be of potential use to the health sector.



Parent Champions evolving into health

This development reflects both emerging health elements in existing Parent Champions schemes and increasing national interest by the health sector. The model will now be promoted within the Public Health England and C4EO networks and has already been put on the C4EO website:

www.c4eo.org.uk/local-practice.aspx



Public Health
England

C4EO for the sector
from the sector

Do take a look at our website to see project case studies of various schemes:

www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/hear-parent-champion-schemes-across-country

Contact A Family pilot begins in Greenwich

The project

This financial year we have a formal partnership with Contact A Family to pilot a Parent Champions model with parents of children with special educational needs and disability (SEND).

The pilot will take place in Greenwich, and will involve four parents of children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) recruited and trained to begin six months of outreach October 2014 to March 2015.

Next steps

Funded through our Department for Education grant a new part-time Contact A Family Volunteer Coordinator, Toni Rushton, has been appointed. She is already busy adapting the various resources and recruiting volunteers.

From the pilot we will develop adapted resources and top tips for anyone wishing to set up a scheme to support parents with children with special educational needs and disability (SEND).

Contact A Family

Contact A Family is a national charity for families with disabled children. It provides information, advice and support. The charity brings families together so they can support each other. It campaigns to improve their circumstances, and for their right to be included and equal in society. As well as this pilot, Family and Childcare Trust also works closely with Contact A Family on a number of joint policy and campaign initiatives, including parliamentary inquiries.

www.cafamily.org.uk

Brent scheme working for health

Parent Champions case study - Brent

Brent has had a recent rise in birth rates, particularly within non-English speaking families, and has the highest rate of tooth decay in the country. This makes it of increasing importance to both the childcare and children's services, but also healthcare services.



Sharing information about local dentists

The general lack of awareness around local dental services and overall confusion about what services were locally available to families meant the borough saw Parent Champions as an essential tool to get health messages out to parents, as well as providing support and information about other related services available to them.

The project

Training was provided by Family and Childcare Trust to five Parent Champions who also did a course on oral and nutritional health by the project manager, Andrea. The volunteers then attended the new births appointments at the Centre for Health in Wembley, enabling them to learn about local child services and centres, and talk to other parents. The appointments offered key tips on health and wellbeing.

The volunteers

Several Parent Champions took the role as a route to improving their employment chances, with the project providing experience of being active within their community, which they were able to include on their CVs. The Parent Champions volunteers were able to both feel more confident and increase their knowledge.

The five parent volunteers spoke four additional languages between them - Somali, Tamo, Arabic and Portuguese - which are representative of the languages spoken in the borough. The project is also looking to recruit a Polish speaker.



Project impact

The success of the scheme was reflected in the success of the volunteers. Since the project started three out of the five Parent Champions have gone on to find work as a result of participating in the scheme.

Through parents becoming aware of the Parent Champions scheme, over 200 parents have engaged with them as a trusted source of support, also then resulting in new volunteers as Parent Champions.



Involving fathers and babies too!

“The scheme has benefited the local authority in many ways. It has been hugely beneficial to have been able to tailor the programme to meet the local needs. We have been able to develop the Parent Champions model so that volunteers can be trained to give messages about health services. Parents speak to other parents about health issues, and often need advice about what to do and where to go. One of the priorities for the council is to work with the local community and volunteers to build resilience and knowledge and help them to make informed choices that will improve the health and wellbeing of their families.” Project Coordinator



Andrea Lagos, Project Coordinator, with a local children's centre colleague and Parent Champion volunteer

The next phase of the project is looking at reducing unnecessary use of accident and emergency departments by families with children under five years old.

The full case study of the Brent scheme has been written up and is now available on our website:

www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/hear-parent-champion-schemes-across-country



Schools mini pilots

Developing Parent Champions in schools

With a lot of interest from both the Department for Education and the sector in developing the Parent Champions model for schools, we have offered some support to a few small pilots this year. With the pilots we plan to develop some very simple adapted resources with which any school nationally could use to set up a scheme.

There is massive potential both to help outcomes for children and support parents. This could be through helping with general information within schools, but also potentially evolving the Parent Champion role to include other support such as buddying of new parents.

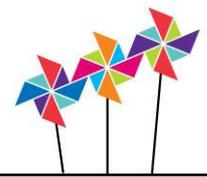
Monitoring resources

Monitoring system

We have now introduced a new Excel spreadsheet that you can use to collate and analyse the information your volunteers gather in the parent and group outreach monitoring forms. It is for you to use locally, and feel free to adapt as much as you want, depending on your target groups. You do not need to send it to us.

Snapsurveys

The Snapsurveys online monitoring tool was initially set up by Coram to evaluate the 2013-15 Action for Children pilots, but was also made available to other schemes. It is unfortunately no longer feasible for us to maintain, nor is it providing the flexibility needed for the increasing diversity of schemes.



Quarterly online SurveyMonkey surveys

So at a central level we will also begin to do quarterly SurveyMonkey surveys asking for top level data and other general information on your scheme.

This is to enable us to both report quarterly to the Department for Education, but also feed data back to you and the wider Network.



Training of Liverpool volunteers

Parent journey monitoring, and monitoring guide

We will also shortly develop a new spreadsheet for you to enter locally your parent journey pre- and post-volunteering forms, and a simple 'Guide to monitoring your Parent Champions scheme' bringing together easily in one place all the monitoring templates.

Please do continue to give us any feedback on monitoring, since we want to make sure we develop important tools for you locally, as well as enable us to collate centrally.

All current monitoring forms and the Excel template can be found here:

www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/templates-and-resources

Events

NAFIS annual conference - 14 October 2015

The annual conference of NAFIS (National Association of Family Information Services), which is part of Family and Childcare Trust, is holding its annual conference on 14 October 2015.

Family and Childcare Trust annual conference – 15 October 2015

The Family and Childcare Trust annual conference 'Childcare & Early Education Conference - Implementing Government Policy' will take place on Thursday 15 October.

You can book on the Westminster Briefings website: www.westminster-briefing.com

Family and Childcare Trust news

New Chief Executive

Family Trust has just appointed a new Chief Executive - Julia Margo. Julia started in July 2015.



Julia was previously Director of Consumer Insight at Which?, Deputy Director and subsequently Acting Director at Demos, and Head of Strategic Research at the Institute for Public Policy Research.

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The Parent Champions project is supported by the Department for Education.