

Merstham's Health and Wellbeing Community Champions Report 2024



Merstham's Health and Wellbeing Champions consist of 20 inspirational community members who live, work or live in Merstham area. They continue to strive to deliver positive health and wellbeing messages throughout their community and create opportunities for residents to get active and focus on their health and wellbeing.

This report seeks to highlight both the achievements and the impact of the Health and Wellbeing Champions in Merstham from June 2023 - December 2024.

The Health and Wellbeing Champion Coordinator is based at Merstham Community Hub and employed by Merstham Community Facility Trust via funding from The Mental Health Investment Fund. The role itself is managed by Merstham's Community Development Worker under Reigate and Banstead Council -Alice Oswell. During the past eighteen months the coordinator has worked closely with the champions, training and empowering them with the skills to connect with individual fellow residents of Merstham. As well as signpost them towards wellbeing support, local opportunities, further information, advice and guidance providers as required. With a target to develop 20 Champions over the course of two years, this was achieved within one year, the second year is focused on developing and supporting the 20 champions to bring their ideas into fruition.

Growing Champion Numbers for Merstham

In June 2023 there were 6 trained champions in Merstham (the project was supported then by Surrey County Councils Prevention Team with 51 trained champions across the county) 1 more was supported to complete their training bringing numbers up to 7.

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Merstham Community Facility Trust (MCFT)***

July - October 2023 coordinated the next round of training, advertising and subsequently interviewing 8 x prospective champions to commence training in the Autumn 2023. (6 able to attend, see below)

Between November and December 2023, 6 new attendees completed training in MECC, Peer Support (including Safeguarding) and Wheel of Wellbeing Training. This brought the total number up to **12** fully trained Champions.

Early 2024 was spent developing the team of champions and bringing them together regularly. Also coordinating the next round of training, advertising and interviewing a further 8 candidates (all able to attend, see below)

In May 2024 there were **8 new** attendees completed MECC, Peer Support including safeguarding and Wheel of Wellbeing Training, bringing the total up to **20 champions for Merstham**.



Championing Healthier Lifestyles at The Merstham Hub

One of our Health and Wellbeing Champions attended The YMCA Healthy Measures course in Earlswood and suggested that we organise it for the community of Merstham. The champions had talks with the YMCA and they agreed to start running ten-week course based at The Merstham Hub. The co-ordinator negotiated a cheaper price for the pilot course as there was no YMCA gym membership included. However, MCFT gained external funding to cover the cost of an exercise tutor and room hire. The Merstham pilot course was open to everyone who would like to learn to make healthier choices in their daily lives. This is what one of our champions had to say; “I suggested that we invite the YMCA healthy measures to Merstham Hub as I felt the community would really benefit, I have attended the class in Earlswood and it was absolutely brilliant. Since then, the champions have met with the facilitator and it was coordinated to commence January 2024, even better it will only be a fraction of the cost so far more affordable!”. Since the successful pilot, further funding has been gained to enable a further three courses to run up until Summer 2025 to support up to 36 residents. The champions have supported individuals to attend and helped to promote the opportunity within the area. MCFT set up a payment scheme to make it more affordable.

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Healthy Measures Pilot 2023 Post Questionnaire Results:

Since completing Healthy Measures how connected do you currently feel to the people in your community or to those around you? 1 = Socially isolated, 10= Very Sociable (8 responses in brackets)

1 2 3 4 5(2) 6 7(1) 8(1) 9(2) 10(2)

How would you rate your confidence to exercise on your own?

Confident (6) Somewhat confident Slightly unsure (2) Unsure

Since completing Healthy Measures, how much does your weight affect your quality of life? 1= not at all, 10 = severely affected (8 responses in brackets)

1 2 3(4) 4(1) 5 6(1) 7 8(2) 9 10

Progress after week 9 in picture below;



Supporting the community to quit smoking

One You Surrey were invited to deliver an information session at The Hub to our champions where they learned about the stop smoking service and how to support others in their quit attempt. One of our champions completed the programme and now supports others in the community to do the same. One You Surrey also came along to our Wellbeing Event and talked to community members about quitting.

“One of the other champions encouraged me to give up smoking, One You programme at Hub during food club. I had a think about it, got diagnosed with COPD then did the programme and now I have been smoke-free for 9 months. I have supported my partner to give up smoking and he has been smoke-free for 4 months after completing the One-You programme. My auntie has been inspired by my success and is looking into it as well”

“My next-door neighbour had said they would like to quit smoking, I passed on the website and have offered support to call One You if needed. I hear that other champions have succeeded with One You and I would like to learn more”

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Wellbeing Workshops – Learning to Signpost

The Wellbeing Prescription Team delivered a range of half day courses to the champions on The Menopause, Sleep Hygiene, Mental Wellbeing and Food & Mood. This training has increased the champions awareness of these health matters and able to signpost community members towards self-help or further professional support they may need.

Some of our champions have extended their communication skills, support and signposting knowledge through attending other courses such as CAB's Advice First Aid, 2 day Mental health First Aid and Specific MECC courses including approaches on Alcohol, Fuel Poverty, Smoking Cessation and Mental Health.

Working Across the community

Two of our Champions sit at The Chatty Table in The Hub café area which gives residents the opportunity to have both company and conversation when needed.

Many of our Merstham champions use their skills in their voluntary roles, employment and everyday lives.

“I use my wellbeing skills mostly within the hub. Recently, I helped someone whose partner had died and was struggling for money, by suggesting they apply for Attendance Allowance. I got them an appointment with the CAB who helped them to fill in the forms. They have since told me that they are now receiving Attendance Allowance and their income is now enough to cover their outgoings which has changed their life.”



Community Partnerships

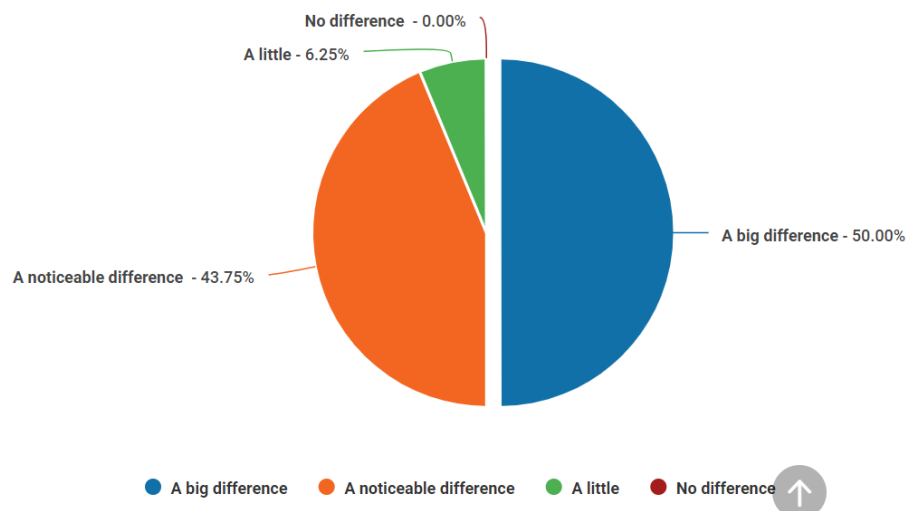
Some of our Champions attend regular Merstham Partnership Group meetings made up of partners who work and support in the Merstham community. One of our champions said, “The sessions are really helpful in highlighting that there are established groups in other local areas that we need to reach out to and learn from” Another of our Champions attended a G.P run event in June this year “I was fortunate enough to go along to a Cervical Screening Information Evening at The Moat House Surgery. It was a highly informative evening including a talk on why testing is so important. Unfortunately, there is a very low uptake of tests in Merstham, especially within

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Minority Ethnic groups, and with the advances in testing enabling the early detection, monitoring and treatment of any abnormalities, it is so important and beneficial for us women to spread the word and be tested”

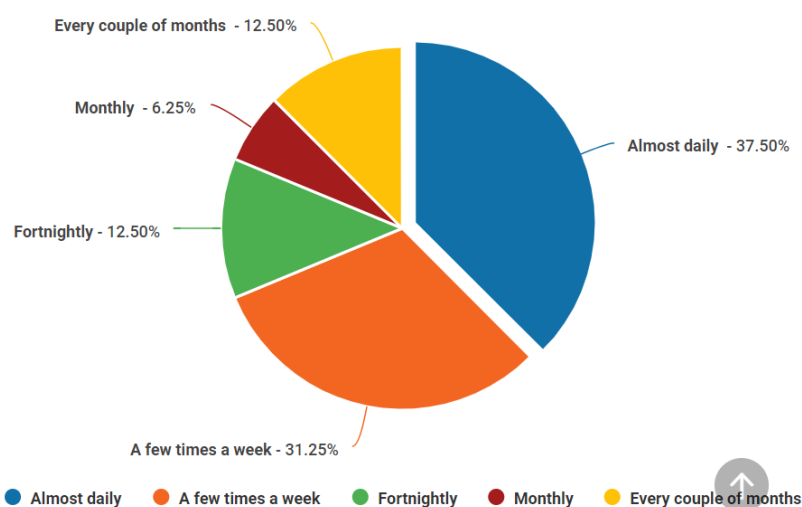
See below findings from Merstham Champion Survey 2024 - 18 / 20 Champions responded.

What difference do you feel the champions are making within the Merstham Community through their day-to-day work, volunteering, conversations with friends and neighbours and other activities which support the community?



See below findings from Merstham Champion Survey 2024 - 18 / 20 Champions responded.

How often approx. do you use your champion skills during your everyday conversations during work or with neighbours, community members, family or friends. This includes skills like active listening or signposting people when needed?



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Team Building at High Ashurst

On 17th and 19th July the champions and volunteers at the Hub had a two day team building experience at High Ashurst where they got to try new things including; team games, rock climbing, woodland skills and camp fire building.

“ The team building day was a great event to bring all champions together and be able to get to know each other outside of a working environment and be able to communicate and work together on all the activities. I have learnt more about each champion and have gotten to know them a lot better”



Merstham Hub's First Wellbeing Fair

To celebrate World Mental Health Day, the champions suggested a Wellbeing Fair and in partnership with Merstham Library they put together a huge full day event in the Community Hub building. 25 organisations attended to represent the range of support, healthy activity and wellbeing services available to Merstham residents.

Approx.150 + residents attended and benefited from connecting to services, attending talks and referrals to services where appropriate. Aim – to **highlight services available to support the community**

Footfall – 292 entries (Kwik Count Global) for 10/11 compared to a mean of 79.6 entries (mean of 3 previous Thursdays)



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Please see below feedback from on the day, residents were asked...

Did you take away information you needed?

Yes, absolutely, helpful, lots of information, amazing, fabulous, informative, great idea – so helpful to provide all this information, good to see mental health talked about so openly and not stigmatised, meeting lots of lovely people, Yes great to get a feel for what is available in the community I am new too, great free tea and coffee, helpful to talk face to face with someone – said more than I would perhaps online or the phone, great to see the HUB being used as it was intended.



Stall Holder Feedback

How many people came to your stalls, the interactions you had and how many?

Took information from your stall	100.00% 12	12
Singed up for more information	100.00% 12	12
Referred into the service or arranged follow up support/session?	100.00% 11	11
	answered	12
	skipped	1

With huge thanks to our funders, partners and supporters:



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