

# Report to Cabinet

**23 March 2022**

<b>Subject:</b>	Community Vaccination Champions Programme
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care and Health Councillor Suzanne Hartwell
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Public Health Lisa McNally
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
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## 1 Recommendations



- 1.1 That approval be given to the Community Vaccination Champions Programme.
- 1.2 That a further grant of £112,000 to Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) be approved for the following:
  - £100,000 vaccination support grants fund for distribution to voluntary and community organisations
  - £12,000 for programme co-ordination.
- 1.3 That the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the chief finance officer, be authorised to award a grant of £112,000 to Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations for the vaccination support programme.




## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Community Vaccination Champions Programme started in January 2021 and has proved to be highly effective in increasing the number of residents who have been vaccinated. Our approach has been to work closely with health colleagues and trusted faith and community leaders to provide reassurance and information to residents. Over 200 Vaccine Champions are involved in the programme and SCVO have awarded grants to voluntary sector organisations delivering 33 vaccination uptake projects. Examples of projects and organisations awarded funding can be found [on SCVO's website](#)
- 2.2 SCVO have a proven track record of delivering this programme by proactively engaging with local community groups across Sandwell and particularly those groups who represent and work with people more likely to be vaccine hesitant.
- 2.3 The Community Vaccination Champions Programme has received national recognition, winning the [LGC public health award](#). Due to the success of the programme, the council has been awarded a further £185,000 funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to continue this work into 2022/23; with the expectation that funded activities will have had a reasonable level of implementation by 30 July 2022.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people</p> <p>This vaccine take-up grants programme has and does engage with families across Sandwell by providing information, practical support and guidance to accessing COVID-19 vaccination.</p>
	<p>People live well and age well</p> <p>The COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to protect us from coronavirus and will save thousands of lives.</p> <p>The vaccination outreach programme is part of a collective effort between Sandwell Council, the NHS and community partners to protect residents against COVID-19.</p>



	<p><b>Strong resilient communities</b></p> <p>The COVID-19 vaccination outreach programme helps to make communities more resilient to the health impacts caused by COVID-19. It encourages residents to protect each other by helping to keep infection rates down, enabling people to participate in local community activities safely.</p>
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## 4 Context and Key Issues

### 4.1 Background:

#### Sandwell's Community Response to COVID-19

When the vaccination campaign launched in January 2021, we started work with CCG colleagues to gather data and intelligence on vaccination uptake rates broken down into geographical areas, age ranges and ethnicities. This enabled us to plan outreach programmes and engagement activities targeting more hesitant groups. The council was successful in applying for and receiving community champions funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (£318,000) which meant we could scale up our efforts to engage with communities about vaccination, provide practical support and deliver the vaccination outreach programme.

The programme has four elements:

#### I. Vision 2030 Vaccination Support grants strand:

SCVO have taken proactive steps to enable voluntary and community groups to contact their service users and members and provide information, reassurance and encouragement to get vaccinated. To date 33 grants have been awarded to voluntary sector partners, funding various projects including; providing transport, culturally appropriate messaging, translating information, practical support and focus groups.



## II. Vaccination champion training and recruitment:

We've provided over 30 live, interactive training sessions which covered basic immunology, how vaccines work, myth-busting and behaviour change to train over 200 Sandwell vaccine champions. Sessions have been delivered to a range of partners including schools, businesses, elected members and community and faith groups. The vaccine champions have been invaluable in supporting their local communities to make an informed choice about being vaccinated and accessing appointments.

## III. Two-way briefings with community, voluntary and faith sector partners:

The two-way briefing sessions have enabled us to communicate key updates and information to partners who can disseminate to their local communities. British Sign Language interpreters have been used to support people from the deaf community and resources provided in over 13 locally spoken languages. One partner commented that "This has been a platform to share my experiences with other community and organisational leaders and continues to be a place to go to for ongoing support and real dialogue".

## IV. Vaccination phone calls and practical support:

We have supported local primary care networks to engage with patients to increase uptake. To date, of the 196-people contacted, 168 had not yet been vaccinated and 70 out of these (42%) had a vaccine arranged as a direct result of the contact.

Due to the success of the programme, the council has been awarded a further £185,000 funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to continue this work into 2022/23.

**4.2 Sustainability:** The Community Vaccination Leaders Programme is part of an asset-based community development approach to delivering public health programmes and improving the health of our residents. The approach is beginning to expand to other areas of public health, for example, climate change champions and community health champions.



- 4.3. **Timescales:** On the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021, the council were informed that additional funding was being awarded. According to the terms of the grant awarded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the funding should be committed by the end of the 2021/22 financial year. Delivery of activities can extend beyond 31 March and need to be implemented by 30 July 2022.
- 4.4. **Approach:** In 2022 our approach will focus on: a more geographically targeted communications campaign, continued support to the growing network of health/ vaccination champions and continuation of SCVO's Vision 2030 Vaccine Support grants programme, with the flexibility to focus on COVID safe behaviours in community settings when infection levels permit.
- 4.5. **Consultation:** Consultation with the chief finance officer was conducted and a financial appraisal for the original tranche of community champions funding was approved on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (appendix a)

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 That we distribute the funding direct to voluntary and community sector groups via an expression of interest process, inviting applications from groups. This would cost more in terms of public health officer time, compared to SCVO. SCVO's management of the programme has already demonstrated that it is very effective, delivers value for money and has momentum. A different approach would not only cost more but would take time, leading to delay and loss of momentum.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The recommendations within the report will be fully funded from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) Grant. The programme will continue to be managed by public health and communities staff. Programme costs include: public health staffing, communication campaign and the vaccine support grants programme co-ordinated by SCVO
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<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The statutory power to provide grant funding is contained in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (general power of competence). Grant funding is not subject to the requirements for competition under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
<b>Risk:</b>	<p>Risks to health of residents: The highest risk relates to doing nothing – which is likely to lead to adverse impact on the long-term health of residents.</p> <p>Financial risks to the council: No match funding is required, and all activities are designed to be short term / one off interventions.</p> <p>Success of the programme:</p> <p>There is a possibility that community engagement will start to taper off – we will explore different ways of communicating and engaging. In addition, the vaccine uptake steering group will continue to monitor the local conditions and pool ideas about getting our message out.</p> <p>The recommendations if approved will contribute to the continued mitigation of strategic risk 060 in respect of health and safety which is currently assessed as green</p>
<b>Equality:</b>	The approach taken by Community Vaccination Champions Programme enables us to specifically work with those groups that have shown vaccine hesitancy for a wide variety of reasons and tailor our approach – for example work with African Caribbean communities, supporting vaccine pop ups in community settings, enlisting the support of trusted community and faith leaders.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	The Community Vaccination Champions Programme has a direct and positive impact on the health of our residents. Vaccine take up rates have been much higher than predicted and we have been able to work proactively with some of our more vulnerable residents, such as adults with learning difficulties.



<b>Social Value</b>	The small grant element of the Programme ensures that funding is going into local voluntary and community groups.
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## 7. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Financial Appraisal Report - External Funding Application to Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, for funding from the Community Champions Local Authority Fund



Appraisal Report  
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### Appendix 2 - Risk Register



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### Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment



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## 8 Background Papers

None

