

# **SHEFFIELD COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS**

**APRIL – AUGUST  
2022**

**BY ROSE BATTY  
SOAR COMMUNITY**  
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# About

The Sheffield Community Champion programme has been established to empower and support communities across the city to stay up to date with the latest advice about Covid-19. Funded by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government through Sheffield City Council and coordinated by SOAR Community, the programme works with 11 fantastic VCS organisations. Community Champions are made up of active people within their communities who have health chats with family, friends and the wider community. Champions are given training and a chance to ask questions to the experts and share feedback into the realities of local health issues.

# Aims

- Recruit volunteer Community Champions from the communities we're working with
- Equip volunteers/communities with correct information to support them in making positive health choices
- Build strong links between the Government and communities where Covid-19 has most impacted
- Increase understanding by statutory agencies of the local population needs
- Build strong relationships and engagement between communities, groups and local authorities
- Increase access to guidance of vaccination programmes and public health services



“

A Zest Community Champion attended our Women's Group and was able to share diabetes information. One lady said *“thank you for sharing, I learnt so much from attending this event and have now booked in for a GP appointment.”*

”

# How

- Peer engagement
- Share clear and consistent health messages
- Listen to questions and concerns
- Help people access services e.g., vaccine clinics, GPs etc
- Conversations with family and friends
- Attend social cafes and coffee mornings
- Use social media platforms e.g., WhatsApp
- Leafletting
- Stalls
- Door to door conversations
- Healthy Holidays and other group sessions



**Definition of Peer Engagement: *A person with equal standing in a community who share a common lived experience.***<sup>1</sup>



Firvale Community Hub Community Champions

# Champion Training

**Delivered by Sofeena Aslam (SOAR Community):**

- Covid-19 Confidence
- First Aid
- Health chats
- STEPS course
- Vaccine confidence

**In the pipeline:**

- Advanced care planning
- Cost of Living support
- Digital skills
- Menopause

“

*The cancer awareness program was excellent and informative. I feel it is very important for our community to have as many trained Champions to empower them with reliable and correct information about the services the NHS and other organisations provide to the public.*

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”

- Zest Community Champion



# 81

active champions

# 1,729

hours of volunteering

# 362

hours of champion training

# 9

champions have left for employment

“

*As a Champion, the sharing of experiences of accessing healthcare treatment can be very valuable; hearing what has worked and where services are available. Even the negative experiences are useful to share and be heard, hopefully in these spaces we can offer mutual support and begin to find solutions. It is in these gentle conversations that important issues come to light and the Community Champions programme allows a structure to be able to reflect these very real problems back to healthcare officials to be better able to address them.*

”

- Lucy Halstead,

Community Champion, Page 56 Sharrow Community Forum

# Conversations

Conversations on additional health issues include:

- Access to health care - struggles getting a GP/Dentist appointment
- Blood pressure
- Cancer
- Cost of living and fuel poverty
- Covid-19
- Dementia
- Diabetes
- Loneliness
- Maternity case
- Menopause
- Mental health
- Monkey pox
- Substance use



*“ Maria had recently suffered a miscarriage. When chatting to one of our Community Champions, it came to light that she was still in some physical discomfort as well as emotional discomfort. Our Champion was a listening ear and Maria spoke at length about how she was feeling and what kind of support she had.*

*Our Community Champion was able to signpost Maria to a bereavement counselling service as well as Jessop’s miscarriage support services. Page 57*

*”  
- Sharrown Community Forum Case Study*

# 6,643

conversations with the community  
(April - August 2022)

## 5,116 / 77%

from African Caribbean, Pakistani, Romanian, Slovak, Yemeni, Somali and other communities

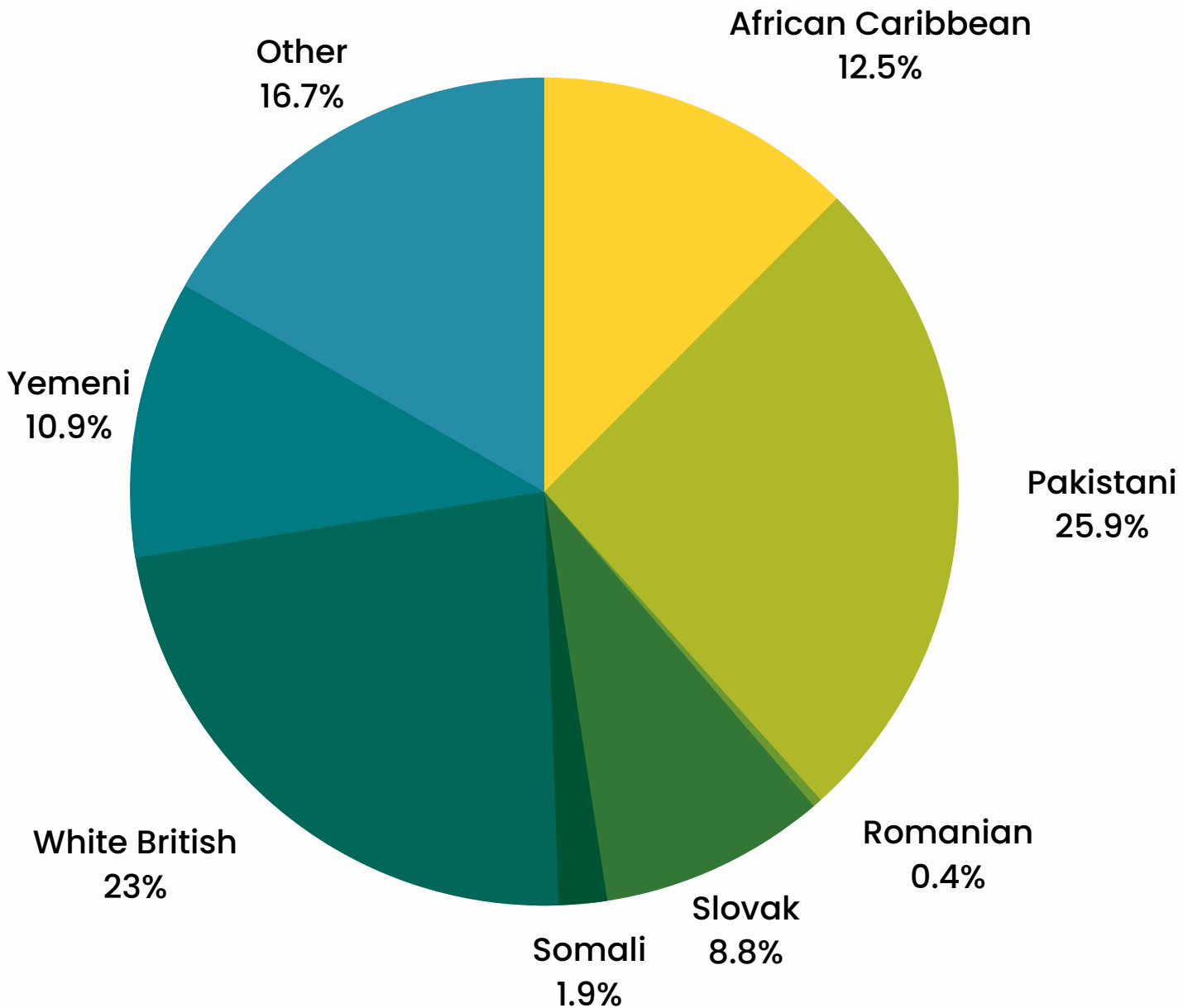


Figure 1 - a breakdown of ethnicities

Other includes Albanian, Arabic, Bangladeshi, Bulgarian, Canadian, Indian, Kurdish, Libyan, Turkish



# 510

conversations under  
18-year olds

# 5,095

conversations 18-65-  
year-olds

# 1,038

conversations  
65+year olds



**“** Aaliyah chatted to one of our Community Champions last year about Covid-19 and was reluctant to take the vaccine. However, in November she caught it and was very ill. The experience left her traumatised. She waited 3 months and got her first dose of the vaccine. Since recovering from Covid she has developed anxiety and stopped leaving her house.

Connecting with a Firvale Community Hub Champion, Aaliyah is building her confidence back up. She is now a part of the Live Lighter 12-week weight management programme and has been regularly attending a Social Café. A highlight for Aaliyah so far has been joining a group of women to go on a walk around Dam Flask. She’s also booked on to receive her second Covid vaccine. She said “being around other people has helped overcome my (vaccine) hesitancy. I feel less stressed and anxious about leaving my house and on the whole, feel so much better for going on regular walks with the group.”

# Primary Care Networks

Number of conversations had per PCN

571

City Centre

3,648

Foundry

1,695

Heeley Plus

93

Peak Edge

434

SAPA5

202

Seven Hills

# Learning

- Recruiting Champions that are relatable and already embedded within their local community has been effective
- Champion approaches are highly relevant to reducing health inequalities
- There is a noticeable fatigue in people wanting to discuss Covid-19 in general
- Conversations are changing & the programme must adapt
- Funding partners must be sustainable
- Communities are listening to the Covid-19 messages but want support in other health matters – Champions are supporting and signposting where they can

**“**  
*Improving access to health and social services within the African Caribbean community improves outcomes therefore the work that we have the privilege of doing is invaluable.* **”**

- SACMHA Community Champion



# Phase 3 Suggestions

- Continue to feedback to services, such as public health, to help better understand the community needs and to activate change
- Be led by the needs of the community to influence champion training
- Develop the coproduction of the programme
- Encourage quality over quantity in monitoring/showcasing outcomes
- Develop the champion learning circle to encourage citywide volunteer networking
- Continue to engage champions in training opportunities



“

*The work we have championed during the pandemic has helped so many people in the community. I am proud to be a community champion in Sheffield!* ”

*- Sudki Eidaaros,  
Aspiring Communities Together Community Champion*

**Many thanks to:**

Aspiring Communities Together

Darnall Wellbeing

Firvale Community Hub

Flower Estate Family Action

Heeley Trust

Longley 4 Greens

SACMHA

Sharrow Community Forum

The Terminus

SOAR

Zest

Sheffield City Council



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