

Community Champions

Happy to Help: Wellbeing Coaches

Rochdale borough's Community Champions are residents who have excellent "people" skills; they care about their local area and have a high level of expertise based on their life experience. They use their skills and attributes to help others in their community.

Community Champions:

- help people at a time when they need some support
- work with people to identify and clarify their goals; the person can work on any goals, but the emphasis is most usually on wellbeing, skills, employment or family matters
- are trained and expert in using methods which help people to progress towards and achieve their goals

Principles

The champions work in partnership with services as equal contributors using the principles of co-production¹ along with some local principles which reflect what they do. As a group they have developed, researched and agreed on a way of working. All the training, support and methods used by and with Community Champions are founded on the following core principles:

1. Helping people in a way which builds on what they already do well
2. Working together so that everyone both contributes and gain from the process (give and take)
3. Using coaching methods to support people to make the changes they want and need
4. Understanding what motivates people, how people feel well and how behaviour can be affected by self-esteem and confidence.
5. Working within a "peer support" network which means that champions support each other to do the best job they can do.
6. Working with people and professionals in a way which makes sure everyone contributes to the outcome.
7. Facilitating rather than delivering outcomes (doing with not to)
8. Recognising people as assets, which means that people are seen as partners rather than recipients of services
9. Protecting themselves and others by understanding risks and working within agreed protocols.

How it works.

Some of the community champions have been trained as **Wellbeing Coaches** and are able to work with individuals. The help they provide is always based on the person's own hopes and goals which are agreed confidentially with the coach. The coach will work with the person to agree what to do and then meet regularly to help the person to recognise their progress and plan the next steps. After a few weeks the person usually feels that they have more control over their issue and are able to move on, with a clear plan of action. If the person feels that they need more help after a few weeks, this is planned and agreed.

Our evidence shows that this approach can make a real difference for some people – sometimes a listening ear and a bit of support at the right time can be all they need to move on.

¹ New Economics Foundation, 2010