



**CITY OF DURHAM  
PARISH COUNCIL**

Learning from the past.  
Building for the future.

## **COVID-19 BULLETIN THE COUNTY COUNCIL COVID COMMUNITY CHAMPION PROGRAMME**

Throughout the pandemic Durham County Council has been supporting County Durham communities to stay up to date with the latest information and guidance. It has built on this approach by empowering communities to take action in local areas through the Covid Community Champion programme. The programme enables the County Council to adopt a person-centred approach to supporting and upskilling people across County Durham with access to relevant information and messages to share within their community. A trusted voice in the local community, sharing key information, leads to more people receiving the most up to date information to keep our communities safe.

This programme is to be owned by communities and shaped by their needs, with the intention of achieving lasting change. Taking both a population level and targeted approach, the programme works with people and organisations to empower communities, strengthening and building local assets and resilience.

### **WHAT DO CHAMPIONS DO?**



Dave Shallow is a local champion, based in the Neville's Cross area of the City of Durham. He explains:

*My role at present is to use several email groups contacts to disseminate information I receive from DCC (relevant to the pandemic that is consistent and useful for communities). We hope to utilise social, sporting and neighbourhood networks to spread the word about the Covid pandemic, providing accurate information on a range of subjects.*

*I will be concentrating on the Durham City area. Valuable support is being provided by the Parish Council in forwarding my messages. With its help I can very quickly contact over 4,000 people through our networks, and this will be of great assistance to make sure messages reach as many people as possible as we start supporting vaccination and testing sites.*

*Recently I have forwarded NHS messages regarding warnings of scams whereby people are asked to share their bank account details to obtain bogus vaccine offers and messages assuring people NHS colleagues will contact*

*them as soon as they are eligible for vaccinations. I also hope to get involved with sharing information to help with recruiting volunteers to assist at testing and vaccination centres across the county and new lockdown changes.*

*As restrictions ease, we may also be involved in other ways such as assistance in getting to the vaccination centres, picking up and delivering food and distributing food parcels with the Voluntary and Community Sector across County Durham and to support County Durham Together Community Hub.*

## **HOW CAN ANYONE VOLUNTEER TO BE A CHAMPION AND WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA**

Signing up to the Covid Community Champion Programme is easy. Just click on the link to fill out a simple online form. <http://www.durham.gov.uk/covidcommunitychampion>

The roles and criteria are as follows:

- Share information with people you know in a way that best suits you;
- Talk to people about your Covid Community Champion role and encourage others to be champions;
- Tell us what you think via regular online drop-in sessions or emailing us so that we can understand what's working well, and what's working not so well in our communities;
- Support other champions;
- Attend regular online meetings to keep up to date with the latest information and guidance;
- Take part in promotional activities in the event of an outbreak such as giving out leaflets or having an information stall at an event;
- Help the County Durham Together Community Hub and work with other organisations in your community.

You can find the full breakdown of Covid Community Champion and Champion plus roles here - <http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/24192/Covid-community-champion-roles>

## **WHAT ARE THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE PROGRAMME, AND HOW**

The Covid Community Champion Programme will provide the following:

- A full induction process
- Key messages to share
- Training opportunities
- Additional volunteering opportunities within the community
- Informal catch up meetings
- A monthly newsletter

## **HOW DOES ANYONE BECOME A CHAMPION?**

Durham County Council launched the Covid Community Champion Programme to help keep residents of County Durham up to date with the latest COVID related information and guidance. Volunteers were recruited to support in sharing messages far and wide to friends, neighbours, colleagues and members of the public in as many different ways as possible. There are over 80 volunteers who have already signed up to support this community led programme, which is a fantastic achievement in such a short amount of time. However they still need your help. Please click on the following link: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/covidcommunitychampion> to watch a video from Amanda Healy, our Director of Public Health to find out more about the Covid Community Champion Programme and how you can sign up today

## **WHO ARE THE CHAMPIONS/ CONTACT INFO FOR CHAMPIONS IN THE PARISH COUNCIL AREA?**

If you have any queries please email us on [covidcommunitychampions@durham.gov.uk](mailto:covidcommunitychampions@durham.gov.uk) and we will be happy to help.

## **NEW CITY OF DURHAM PARISH RESIDENTS FORUM AND THE WORK OF COVID CHAMPIONS**

The Parish Council supports the work of Covid Champions. It has recently facilitated the setting up of the City of Durham Community and Residents Associations Forum and will assist the Forum in disseminating information on its programme across the Parish.

The Forum currently includes all the community associations and residents' associations in the City of Durham, including the latest being set up in Mount Oswald.

The Forum will ensure meaningful consultation with and by local stakeholders and an effective, collective voice for expressing residents' views. As a consultation and stakeholder engagement group, the role of this Forum is to represent the interests of local residents of the City of Durham Parish area. It is also expected to comment on and add value to the Council relating to its work throughout the year and to work towards providing a collective voice on matters of shared concern from local residents.



Alan Doig, Vice-Chair of the Parish Council, who chaired the Forum's inaugural meeting said: "This initiative will add to, and support, our work in representing the interests of residents in the Parish. The Forum will elect its own chair and establish its own agendas and, meeting on a regular basis, will be working with the City of Durham Parish Council and other stakeholders to implement proposals to the benefit of all residents, providing information and sign posting assistance to residents. It will provide an excellent vehicle for communicating information from Covid Champions quickly and efficiently across the City".