

## InfoLink Champions:

**Sharing innovation developed for pharmacies with our local community organisations to increase capacity to promote an improvement in community health and well being**

Improving the health and well being of those in our local community is increasingly being recognised as an important priority for many organisations within Central and Eastern Cheshire, with many of them contacting the Public Health Commissioning Team in order to find out how they can best support the people which they have regular contact with. While Local government and health services are facing cuts in funding, demographic and social changes, such as an ageing population and rising unemployment due to the current turbulent economic climate, mean that more people are going to be in need of help and support.

With a reduced workforce capacity and increasing demands for support and leadership, the Public Health Team are committed to creating and using new, innovative ways of working to support organisations in promoting health and well being.

An innovative solution to this issue has been the development of the **InfoLink Champions** training and resources. Initially carried out with pharmacy staff 'health advocate' colleagues as part of enhancing their knowledge of health and wellbeing matters so as to help assist them in the delivery of public health campaigns, this training was adapted so as to be offered out to other groups of staff within agencies or volunteers that come into close, albeit brief, contact with members of the public.

The training promotes the use of social marketing techniques to help convey health information to members of the public and is backed up by a strong recognisable brand - '**InfoLink Champions**'. In order to support the training a Champions toolkit has also been developed which provides the Champions with health and signposting information to services. To enable ongoing support a website containing frequently updated information – [www.infolinkcheshire.nhs.uk](http://www.infolinkcheshire.nhs.uk) – was created and all Champions who attended the training receive monthly updates on attest news, health campaigns and available services.



Key benefits of this project include:

- the opportunity to bring together some basic principles around health promotion, brief intervention training and signposting to empower other organisations to support the clients which they work with or come into contact with on a regular basis
- personal development and increased knowledge/skill base for staff and volunteers within these organisation to deliver health promotion initiatives and advice
- healthier communities who are less reliant on primary care and more active in self-care

To date (October 2010) we have 25 host organisations signed up to have colleagues trained to become InfoLink Champions, and have enough resources to support a further 75 organisations.

There is already a significant amount of interest in the innovation we have shared, from organisations such as the Probation Service who would like a bespoke training session for Probation Officers; the Prison Service at HMP & YOI Styal who would like InfoLink Champions training and Toolkit to be adapted so that prisoners can support other prisoners.

We are also working with our local authority (Cheshire East) to ensure that community groups can also access the InfoLink training.

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