



The Role of the Health Champion

What are Health Champions?

Within a community pharmacy, Health Champions (HCs) are members of the pharmacy team who are trained and accredited to provide customers with health and wellbeing advice. The key role of a HC is to provide people with information about their health and signpost them to other community services (including commissioned pharmacy services) that will help them to adopt healthier lifestyles and access the support they need to do so. HCs have achieved the Royal Society for Public Health (RPSH) Understanding Health Improvement Level 2 award¹. This role and qualification is also recognised by other health providers and public health commissioners.

Why are Health Champions needed?

It is a key requirement for any pharmacy wishing to become a Healthy Living Pharmacy (HLP) to have at least one HC (full-time equivalent) as part of their pharmacy team. HCs can also effectively support recruitment into pharmacy services, help deliver some of these services and lead local health promotion events. Evidence² shows that this role is beneficial to the individual, the pharmacy and the population it serves.

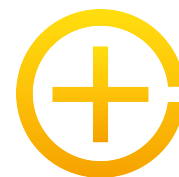
Who can become a Health Champion?

Any member of the pharmacy team can become a HC and there are no specific entry requirements. The HC training course will increase the communication skills of the individual and enable them to enhance and promote health and wellbeing effectively. This can benefit the pharmacy business as well as the individual personally.

When deciding who should become a HC in the pharmacy it is beneficial to engage the whole team in a discussion about the vision for the pharmacy and how the team will be playing a greater role in health and wellbeing issues.

¹ <https://www.rsph.org.uk/en/qualifications/qualifications.cfm?id=level-2-award-in-understanding-health-improvement>

² <http://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/HLP-evaluation.pdf>



The ideal Health Champion has the following attributes:

- lives in the community that they work in
- works on the medicines counter or, if within the dispensary, has plenty of opportunity to interface with customers
- is passionate about helping individuals and wants to make a difference
- is prepared to engage in proactive conversations about an individual's health
- wants to develop their role further and invest time in their development
- has or can develop skills in questioning, listening and establishing rapport
- has or can develop a knowledge of health related issues such as obesity, smoking and alcohol
- works well in a team; prepared to take a lead in activities such as health promotional activities
- may be engaged in service delivery already (although this is not essential, it suggested a synergy between the proactive engagement with individuals and follow-up in service delivery)
- should be able to research and keep an up to date a local directory of health and wellbeing services in the local area.

What training is available for Health Champions?

Pharmacy Complete are an accredited centre for the provision of the Health Champion course (Understanding Health Improvement Level 2 qualification accredited by the RSPH³).

We have an engaging distance learning course which consists of four core modules:

- Inequalities in health
- How effective communication can support health messages
- Importance of promoting improvements in health and wellbeing
- Impact of behaviour change on health and wellbeing

At the end of each module the learner has the opportunity to check their understanding and, once the course is finished, complete a mock assessment consisting of 30 multiple-choice questions. Through us, the learner then requests and completes the formal RSPH assessment invigilated by their pharmacist under exam conditions. This assessment is then marked by the RSPH who issue a certificate and we also provide the successful Health Champion with a badge.

³ <https://www.rsph.org.uk/en/qualifications/qualifications.cfm?id=level-2-award-in-understanding-health-improvement>