

North East Lincolnshire

Community Learning Champions Programme

What Are Community Learning Champions?

Community Learning Champions – or CLCs - are volunteers or workers who become active in their community promoting the value of informal learning to others – friends, relatives, neighbours, workmates or pure strangers they buttonhole in the street.

Very often their effectiveness owes a lot to two commonly shared personal qualities:

- they speak from personal experience about the difference learning can make to quality of life or job prospects,
- CLCs are recognisably like the people they try to involve in learning, often living in the same community or working in the same place.

This doesn't rule out professionals from playing the CLC role; it's just that, as outsiders, they often lack the credibility and local know-how of most CLCs. Ideally you would be someone who wants to undertake the role as a volunteer within your community or be someone who can undertake this role as part of your work role within local communities.

What Do Community Champions Do?

CLCs can play a variety of roles.

- Signpost people to the learning opportunities that suit their needs.
- Introduce them to learning providers, maybe sometimes accompanying them to a college.
- Support and mentor people through a course.
- Help to set up new learning opportunities, filling gaps in provision.
- Feedback to learning providers suggestions for any improvements made by learners.

Why Should I Become A Community Learning Champion?

- Professional and personal development for the CLCs themselves.
- Free nationally accredited training and development framework for CLCs is being developed building on established good practice. This will include core skills plus specialist modules.
- Enhance CLCs role within their communities and support them to develop the communities that they work within.
- Enhance future career opportunities of CLCs.
- Receive CLC badge and be recognised for their role through a simple national registration scheme.
- Be part of a team of CLCs supported by Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire.

What Would I Need To Do To Be A Community Champion?

- Promote, support, signpost and help people to access informal learning opportunities.
- Be well informed about local learning opportunities – you will have access to a database of informal and formal learning opportunities and providers.
- Commit to keep records of those you support and provide data to VANEL at regular intervals.
- Commit to access free training to develop your role where relevant – travel expenses paid.
- There is no set time commitment – this is a voluntary role whether done as a volunteer or within your work role and as much time as you can give is appreciated.

Are You Interested In Becoming A Community Learning Champion?

This is only an outline if you want to find out more there is a briefing meeting on:

Monday 12th April 2010 4.30pm

Melbourne House, 16 Town Hall Street, Grimsby DN31 1HN

For further information or if you can't make the briefing contact:
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North East Lincolnshire Community Champions Support Programme

The North East Lincolnshire Community Champions Support Programme will be operating in the Grimsby, Cleethorpes, Immingham and surrounding areas, where there are significant areas of low educational achievement. The programme aims to raise awareness of the value of learning towards the *personal development* of individuals, by encouraging people who experience disadvantage to access informal learning opportunities.

A team of Community Learning Champions will be created, who will be ambassadors and advocates for learning and will promote the value of learning to community members, colleagues, friends, family and work mates, in fact anyone *within their communities*. Whilst all communities of North East Lincolnshire will benefit specific wards of highest deprivation and rural areas will be targeted. Again whilst all residents of North East Lincolnshire will benefit the specific disadvantaged groups targeted will be those with a disability, those within social housing or currently homeless and the elderly.

The programme is managed by Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire who will ensure the widest possible impact through its well *established* community and strategic networks. Importantly the Learning Champions will be *based in* and become *embedded* within public, private and voluntary and community sectors rather than be seen as external advisors. Therefore many of the Learning Champions will be volunteers recruited from within groups such as neighbourhood forums, the local forum for the over 50s, and the main local charities delivering to the blind, partially sighted, disabled and homeless. Other champions will be people currently working with or within the targeted groups and communities such as area development workers and regeneration officers.

Therefore Learning Champions may be volunteers, workers or community members who see value of learning, or someone for whom learning has made a positive impact. A team of over 30 champions will be developed, trained and supported to be able to encourage over 900 new individuals in their communities to undertake some informal learning within the first year of the programme.

What is Informal Adult Learning?

Informal learning:

- is learning for its own intrinsic value, whether it's for pleasure or for personal, family or community development.
- spans a huge variety of activities, such as a dance class, a car maintenance class, basic ICT courses, money management, a guided walk or researching a subject on-line.
- can take place at work, at home or in places like schools, libraries and community centres as well as on-line.
- is a proven way to build peoples' confidence and skills in and outside work.
- brings people together and keeps them active mentally and physically.
- reaches out to people who feel that learning isn't for them, particularly people from disadvantaged groups, building vital bridges into formal learning training and sustainable employment.