

VAWG Champions

Questions and Answers

1. Why are you recruiting champions?

Research has shown that many people do not disclose they are being abused because they fear that they will not be believed. At the same time people do not ask about abuse, even when they have suspicions, because they are afraid of 'opening a can of worms' and not being able to deal with the situation. We are recruiting champions to help both professionals and members of the community to feel supported to be able to signpost victims to specialist support services.

2. Why do you have VAWG champions and not DV champions?

We are recruiting VAWG Champions as our definition of VAWG includes domestic abuse and we are working to prevent all forms of VAWG in Tower Hamlets. The cross-Government definition of Domestic Abuse includes wider forms of violence including: sexual violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), so-called 'honour' based violence and stalking and harassment but it does not include wider forms of violence including prostitution and sexual exploitation which are covered by our VAWG Plan.

3. I live and work in Tower Hamlets – which champions' programme should I apply for?

If you both live and work in Tower Hamlets you are welcome to apply for both programmes. The programmes differ slightly as professionals will be expected to work within their organisations to support victims of VAWG to disclose and to get help through signposting victims to specialist support services; community champions are expected to work with their communities to raise awareness and know how to signpost victims to support services.

4. Why are you asking for managers' signatures on the form?

We are asking for managers' signatures on the professionals' application form as we recognise that there is a real time commitment on the part of the champion and the manager to be released from normal duties for 2 days training and for the quarterly champions' meetings. We are ensuring that managers are aware of the time commitment from the outset.

5. What are the benefits to me of being a champion?

We feel that there are lots of benefits to being a champion:

- Champions will receive dedicated training and practical information on all forms of VAWG
- Champions will have a greater understanding of VAWG and the impact on victims and their families.
- Clear guidance on how to deal with a domestic abuse disclosure.
- Enhanced networking with other agencies to update skills and learn from best practice.
- Champions will feel more confident about making appropriate referrals to support services for victims of VAWG
- Champions feel better equipped to respond to disclosures of abuse

6. What are the benefits to victims?

Again, we think that there are lots of benefits of the champions' programme to victims of all forms of VAWG.

Victims will receive:

- Clear information about dedicated support services
- Coordinated support and advice
- Better support from all agencies

This will lead to:

- An increase in service user satisfaction.
- Increased confidence in reporting all forms of VAWG.

7. What is the difference between the professionals' programme and the community programme?

Both programmes aim to support victims of VAWG to feel more supported but are slightly different. The professionals' programme aims to support victims through their organisations by being the expert for their organisation on VAWG and helping victims to be referred to appropriate specialist support services. Professionals are also expected to be able to cascade the training to their organisation to help other staff members to understand how to find specialist support. The community champions are expected to raise awareness in their communities and support victims by helping them to access specialist support services. Both champions are expected to come to the networking events and will be supported in their role.

8. What training will I receive?

All professional champions will receive 2 non-consecutive days of training. The training will cover:

Day 1:

- Introduction to VAWG
- Session 1: Domestic Violence
- Session 2: Sexual Violence
- Session 3: Trafficking and Prostitution
- Session 4: Harmful Practices
- Session 5: Young people

Day 2:

- Role of the VAWG Champion
- Champions' Network
- Risk Assessment and Safety Planning
- Referral pathways and support
- Models for cascading information and training

The community champions' training will be over 3 evenings.

9. What will I be expected to do as a champion?

Please see Question 7 above and also

Professional Champions

- ✓ You will need to be fully aware of the role of a Champion and its responsibilities in addition to your job. This is about ensuring you are comfortable with being a point of referral for your colleagues.
- ✓ You will commit yourself to attending 2 days of training as well as quarterly meetings which will be about 2 hours long
- ✓ You will be required to be fully up to date with the local referral processes across the borough, as well as other information about specialist support services across VAWG.
- ✓ You will take responsibility for informing your colleagues of your role is and how to contact you if they require your assistance.
- ✓ You will be asked to regularly cascade information to your agency on what is happening in Tower Hamlets with regards to VAWG.
- ✓ You will need to ensure that leaflets, booklet and posters are displayed in your work place and are accessible to the whole community.
- ✓ Before you become a Champion you will need to complete an application form and provide an Agreement signed by your manager.

As a Professionals' VAWG champion you would be able to proactively help draw your agency and other agencies together to enhance Tower Hamlets' approach to tackling VAWG. Multi agency working in this way is the key to providing an effective, consistent and comprehensive service for those suffering from all forms of violence. It increases identification of abuse and reduces both the proportion of repeat incidents and the impact on those experiencing abuse.

Community Champions

- ✓ You will need to be fully aware of the role of a Champion and its responsibilities in addition to your job and/or family. This is about ensuring you are comfortable with being a point of referral for your community.
- ✓ You will commit yourself to attending 2 training sessions as well as quarterly meetings which will be about 2 hours long
- ✓ You will be required to be fully up to date with the local referral processes across the borough, as well as other information about specialist support services across VAWG.
- ✓ You will help to raise awareness of VAWG in your community by disseminating information – this could be an event, a campaign, a residents' association meeting, a children's centre meeting etc. or it could be providing information on VAWG to display in local community organisations or in your building.
- ✓ You will take responsibility for informing your community of your role is and how to contact you if they require your assistance.
- ✓ You will be asked to regularly cascade information to your community on what is happening in Tower Hamlets with regards to VAWG.

As a Community VAWG champion you would be able to proactively help draw your community to work with each other and will statutory and voluntary organisations together to enhance Tower Hamlets' approach to tackling VAWG.

10. What is the expected time commitment?

We are not prescribing the time commitment – we hope that people will feel confident about raising awareness and supporting their communities. We only ask you to commit to the training sessions and the quarterly networking sessions.

11. Is the training accredited?

No, we have steered away from accredited training as it would involve further time commitments and also written assignments after the training. We can provide certificates for people if they would like them and we are proposing to have a champions' awards programme.

12. Will I be expected to know exactly how to support someone afterwards?

The training and support we are going to provide should hopefully help you to be able to appropriately signpost people to dedicated specialist support. Depending on your role, either in your organisation or within the community, we would expect you to be the VAWG lead and make referrals to our multi-agency meetings or you may also be the person to whom other champions are referring if you work in a specialist support agency.

The minimum expectation is that everyone who becomes a champion knows how to direct people for support and we will make sure that this information is provided to you during the training and during the networking sessions.

Other questions?

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to ask us! Please email Amy-Kate Garwood amy-kate.garwood@towerhamlets.gov.uk or call on 0207 364 6636/07956217838