

Community Champions

CVD Awareness & Prevention Campaign

May – June 2025



A familiar face + a familiar place
= great results!



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Trusted, Local, Essential: The Role of Community Champions



Community Champions play a vital role in tackling health inequalities across Kirklees by raising awareness of key health and wellbeing messages in the communities that need them most.

They are trusted, local people, great listeners and talkers who connect with others where they live, work, worship, and socialise. Many champions share the same language, culture, and lived experience as the people they support, helping them build trust and truly understand what really matters.



From promoting cancer screening to preventing type 2 diabetes or encouraging routine check-ups, champions help people understand their health and make informed choices in ways that feel relevant and respectful.

Because we've been able to build and grow the community champions network, we now have a team of wonderful health and welfare champions who know a lot about a lot! They're fully trained in each topic they cover, from health to digital to signposting, they bring knowledge into conversations with confidence and care.



Champions focus especially on reaching those with multiple risk factors for poor health, people who may not access mainstream health services due to barriers like trust, culture, language, or awareness.

They're supported and paid through local voluntary and community organisations, working in partnership with us here at TSL. Through conversations, they reach deeper into communities to hear people's concerns, build relationships, and share practical advice that can truly change lives.

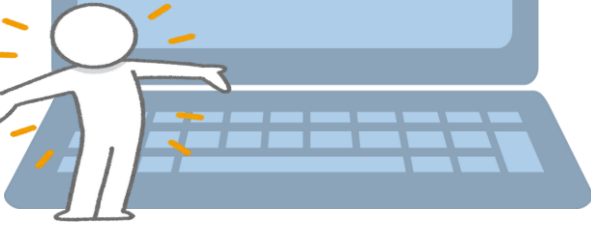


“Making Health Make Sense – One Conversation at a Time”



More About Our Brilliant Community Champions

I'm dead good with digital stuff, I'll help you get online😊



We have 95 brilliant community champions across Kirklees, and each one plays a vital role in supporting local people

They are trusted, empathetic individuals from the communities they serve, speaking over 20 community languages and ranging in age from 18 to 65

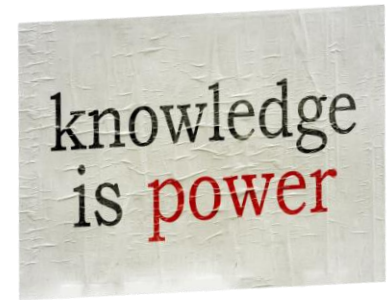
A mix of men and women, they bring real-life experience, including around disability, wellbeing, and the everyday challenges people face

Digitally skilled, approachable, and fully trained in 22 essential health, welfare, and wellness topics, our champions are more than just knowledgeable, they genuinely care.

Their local roots, cultural understanding, and dedication make them relatable, respected, and a powerful force for positive change.

I used to live in another country, so, I know what you are experiencing

experience

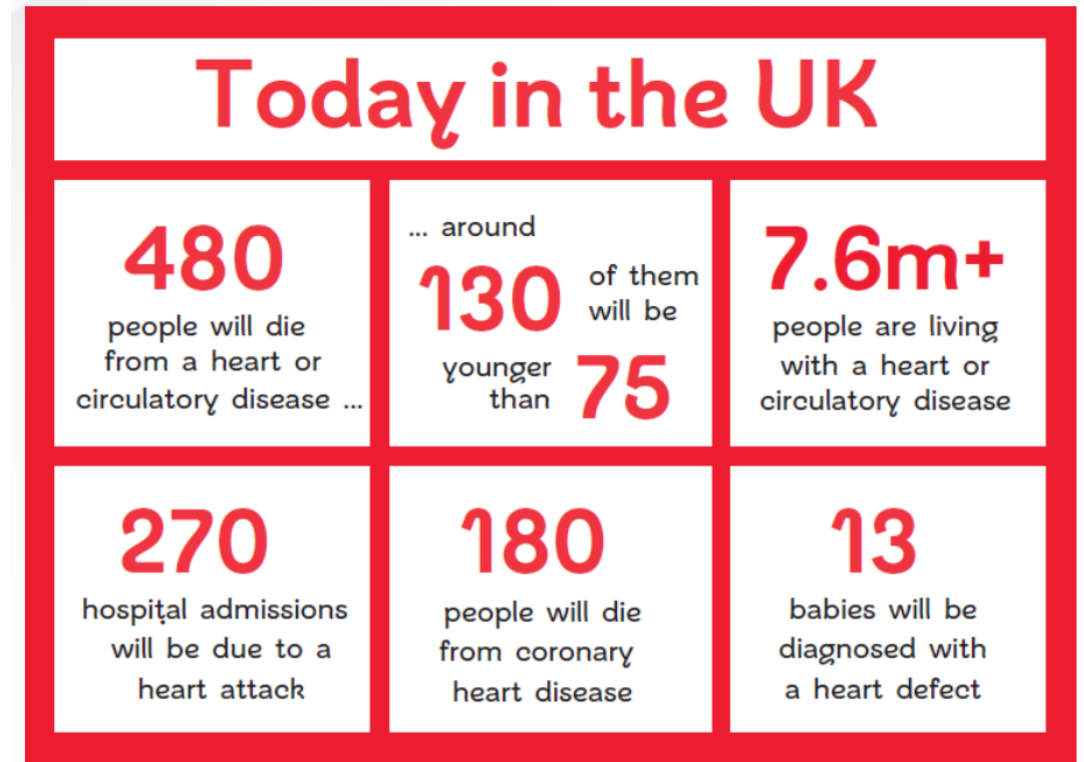


“Prevention Starts with People: Awareness, Action & Listening – The Aims of Our Community Champions CVD Campaign”

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a leading cause of poor health in Kirklees, with higher rates in deprived areas and among South Asian and African-Caribbean communities. Key issues include higher rates of high blood pressure, diabetes, and stroke.



‘Every 3 mins someone dies from a heart or circulatory disease in the UK’



‘Every 5 minutes someone is admitted to hospital with a stroke in the UK’

Community Champions - How We Raised CVD Awareness Locally

Champions Making Every Contact Count From cafés to clinics to coffee mornings – reaching people wherever they are

“No Venue Too Small, No Conversation Too Casual”

To raise awareness of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and promote blood pressure checks, Community Champions have been active across Kirklees—meeting people in the places they already go, creating friendly, accessible opportunities for conversations about heart health.

Champions connected with people in:

- **Busy community hubs** like the Mission Café, Chestnut Centre, and Jubilee Centre
- **Health-focused spaces** including GP surgeries, health centres, and community health check events with nursing students and partner organisations
- **Faith centres** and **schools**, including at school-run drop-offs and coffee mornings with parents
- **Libraries, supermarkets, and cafés**
- **Online spaces** via WhatsApp and Facebook, helping reach people beyond face-to-face contact
- **Workshops and wellbeing activities** such as creative mindfulness sessions, ESOL classes, dementia groups, moving more activity
- **On-the-go settings** on the street, at food shares/cupboards, business parks, and during everyday errands
- **One-off events and festivals**, including the WOVEN in Kirklees festival and craft sessions
- Champions also used engaging tools like **heart models**, **information boards**, and **take-home resources** to support conversations

Voices from Every Community: Who We Spoke To Across Kirklees

Champion spoke to a wonderfully diverse group of people, **men and women** and a broad mix of ages, especially **those between 25 and 64**. A few younger and older voices were heard too, making for a wide range of experiences.

The majority of respondents identified as **Asian or Asian British**, particularly Pakistani and Indian communities, with others from **White British, Black, Arab, Irish, and other ethnic backgrounds**. Everyone's voice mattered, and it was great to hear from such a rich mix of communities.

Some people told us they live with a **disability or long-term health condition**, while others shared that they didn't, and a number chose not to say, which we completely respect.

We also heard from people who belong to or identify with inclusion groups that often face additional barriers. This included individuals with **learning disabilities, mental health challenges, physical or sensory impairments, long-term health conditions**, and those affected by **substance use or homelessness**. Others shared experiences like being part of the **LGBT+ community, low literacy, life as a veteran, sex work**, or contact with the **justice system**.

Importantly, we also heard from people with **migrant or refugee backgrounds**, and from **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities**.



Please note: More detailed breakdowns, including data tables and percentages, can be provided on request. In addition, the ICB will be supplying an insight report to accompany and support this summary, offering deeper context and analysis where needed.

Sharing the Highlights:

Engagement and Impact Summary

During May and June 2025;

IMPACT



1,291 individual conversations took place

91 group sessions were attended or held which reached a further 939 people.

1,080 blood pressure checks were carried out by Community Champions

880 Increased awareness of CVD/prevention

740 People signposted to activity/services to support better health Inc. stop smoking, digital inclusion support, wellness service and community provision

One Atrial Fibrillation (AF) detection pen was piloted with a community group, completing around 200 checks. Three people were referred to their GP, and one has since been referred to hospital, all individuals who likely wouldn't have known there was a potential issue without this simple community-based pilot



Overall, 2,230 conversations took place across Kirklees about CVD!

What did we learn?



Blood Pressure Checks Spark Action

- ☐ High readings were identified early
- ☐ Prompted GP visits and lifestyle changes
- ☐ Prevention happened in real time

Health Knowledge is Low

- ☐ Many people were unfamiliar with the term “CVD”
- ☐ Poor understanding led to low medication adherence
- ☐ Few knew what a ‘normal’ blood pressure reading was

Clear, Simple Language is Key

- ☐ Medical terms like “cholesterol & CVD” were confusing
- ☐ Champions helped explain things in relatable, practical ways
- ☐ Avoiding jargon improved understanding

Trust & Culture Matter

- ☐ People opened up in familiar spaces
- ☐ Lack of inclusive options (e.g. women-only settings) limited access
- ☐ Food habits and generational beliefs influenced health behaviours



“I’ve loved our chat today. You helped me, made me laugh, and gave me things to think about. I didn’t feel judged — it just felt like two people talking, somewhere I already feel safe

What did we learn?



Barriers to Access Remain

- ☐ Long waits and complicated systems discouraged follow-up
- ☐ Booking issues led to missed appointments
- ☐ Some people didn't feel listened to or cared for
- ☐ Language barriers

Health Checks Work Better Locally

- ☐ Community spaces like cafés, schools, and libraries worked well
- ☐ There's strong demand for simple, drop-in checks
- ☐ Champions and partners made an effective delivery team.

Repetition Builds Confidence

- ☐ Regular weekly groups introduced topics in varied ways
- ☐ Repetition helped information stick
- ☐ Informal conversations kept health top of mind

Next Steps: Build on What Works

- ☐ Use everyday community spaces
- ☐ Keep language clear and simple
- ☐ Trust and support the Champions
- ☐ Continue to listen and adapt



“I had no idea about blood pressure. I don't read or write English, but thanks to the Champion, I got the help I needed. I'm so grateful.”

What PEOPLE HAVE TO SAY



Real Voices, Real Impact: What People Are Saying

- **On Health Awareness & Taking Action**

-  “I didn’t realise that my blood pressure put me at higher risk of a heart attack or stroke — I’m so glad the Community Champion was there to explain it.”
-  “My blood pressure was high even though I’m on medication. The Champion encouraged me to see my GP — to discuss my treatment and concerns.
-  “I had no idea about blood pressure. I don’t read or write English, but thanks to the Champion, I got the help I needed. I’m so grateful.”

- **On Connection, Trust & Non-Judgement**

-  “I’ve loved our chat today. You helped me, made me laugh, and gave me things to think about. I didn’t feel judged — it just felt like two people talking
-  “You’re an amazing human being... I feel lighter just talking to you. Thank you for the support.

- **On Community Tools & Accessibility**

-  “The WhatsApp group is brilliant — it helps with reminders, and anyone can use it in their own language. Nobody misses out.”
-  “ Thank you for putting the NHS App on my phone, it is so easy to use with a little help from you!”

- **On Education & Influence**

-  “Seeing that model of blocked arteries made me think — I need to help my parents take care of their health.”
-  “Knowing there are leaflets online in my language is really helpful”

Case Study: Empowering Community Champions to Monitor Blood Pressure in Local Settings



In an innovative approach to improving cardiovascular health, community champions were trained to take blood pressure (BP) measurements directly within community settings. This training included accurate measurement techniques, guidance on interpreting readings and signposting individuals to appropriate health services when needed.

Why It Works

Conducting BP checks in community environments has proven highly effective because it reaches individuals who might not regularly access traditional healthcare settings. Many participants reported that it had been years since their last blood pressure check, yet they felt comfortable and motivated to engage when approached in familiar, accessible spaces such as local centres, places of worship, and community events.

Highlights

- Over a 1000 community blood pressure checks were carried out throughout May and June
- Each community champion group is equipped with at least two blood pressure machines, generously provided by West Yorkshire ICB.
- All community champions undergo comprehensive training to ensure accurate readings and confident interpretation
- Champions not only measure BP but also play a vital role in guiding community members on next steps, whether that's lifestyle advice or referral to healthcare professionals.
- This grassroots initiative empowers communities, increases early detection of hypertension, and fosters a proactive approach to cardiovascular health.

A screenshot of a presentation slide titled "What Numbers Do You Need To Know?". The slide has an orange background. At the top, there is a video conference overlay with several participants' names and icons: SN, NR, F, FH, FA, and two unnamed participants. The slide content includes the following text: "We believe every adult in the UK should know their blood pressure numbers in the same way they know their height and weight. Knowing your numbers means that you can take steps to lead a longer and healthier life." Below this, it says "120/80" and "An ideal blood pressure is 120/80mmHg. Do you Know Your Numbers?". Then, it says "6 million" and "6 million people in the UK have high blood pressure and don't know it." Below that, it says "350" and "Every day in the UK, 350 people have a stroke or heart attack that could have been prevented." At the bottom, it says "Know Your Numbers!". On the right side of the slide, there is a graphic of a heart with numbers inside: 150, 110, 120, 140, 90, 70. Below the heart, it says "Blood Pressure UK".

Community Champion-Led Atrial Fibrillation Screening

Spotting early risks: 3 referred to GPs thanks to trusted, local screening support — with at least one now undergoing further hospital treatment



Case Study - Community-Led Atrial Fibrillation Screening

Partner: Kirklees & West Yorkshire ICB

Focus: Preventative Health Screening in Community Settings

Background - In partnership with West Yorkshire & Kirklees Integrated Care Boards, we piloted the use of an atrial fibrillation (AF) screening pen in local communities to bring preventative health closer to people.

Approach - We trained a community group, active at regular health events, to confidently use the AF pen with attendees, making heart health checks more accessible outside clinical settings.

Activity - Champions conducted approx. 200 AF readings informally at community events, providing a comfortable, appointment-free environment.

Outcomes - Three people were identified as having potential health issues. At least one of them has since visited their GP and has been referred to hospital for treatment,. This shows the real value of community champions in spotting early warning signs and encouraging people to take action

Impact & Learning - This pilot highlights the power of community-led prevention and trusted environments in early health detection and reassurance. The model can be expanded to other health checks, emphasizing that prevention starts where people live, work, and gather.



+

Denise's Story: How Community Champion Support Made Heart Health Feel Possible for someone with sight loss

Denise, is in her late 40s, she recently attended an outlookers CVD drop-in session. She explained that she was recently diagnosed with cardiovascular disease following a stay in intensive care. The stress of her condition led her to start smoking again, despite previously quitting. Thanks to a conversation with a Community Champion, she felt heard and supported. With their encouragement and practical help, Denise has now contacted the smoking cessation service and is taking steps toward quitting again.

Living with visual impairment, Denise also struggled with cooking and weight management. Preparing meals and cleaning up felt overwhelming. With the Champion's help, she explored simple, low-prep meal ideas like: Poached eggs on toast One-pan curries with pre-chopped ingredients, these changes felt realistic and made her feel empowered. Denise left the session feeling motivated and less overwhelmed, with a clearer path to better heart health — made possible through community-level, person centered support.

"Talking things through with made everything feel more doable. I'm not alone in this."

○



outlookers
The local sight
loss charity

*MAKE
Change*

“Without a Champion, I Don’t Know Where I’d Be”
Champions delivering vital, local health support , missed due to addiction, isolation, and feeling cut off from services

A regular at Huddersfield Mission café, David had complex health issues linked to past addiction. He had lost contact with his GP. Despite serious heart health risks, he wasn’t accessing support. Thanks to our community-based support, we were able to

- ❖ Provide regular blood pressure checks on site
- ❖ Identify and register him with a new GP
- ❖ Connect him with student nurses for monthly health checks
- ❖ Offer consistent support on heart health, wellbeing, and healthy habits

Having a trusted, regular presence gave him the confidence to take control of his health. This story shows the power of accessible, compassionate care in everyday community settings ,especially for those facing big challenges.

*David said “ You are life savers;
without a champion I dont know
where I would be”*



**SUPPORT
SUPPORT
SUPPORT**



“I reached out to TSL Community Champions after a webinar where their passion and impact really stood out. The TSL Champion lead has been incredibly supportive in helping us develop a similar model in Wakefield, focusing on CVD and Blood Pressure wellness. They shared resources, ideas, and best practice, which helped us train several VCSE organisations to. Thanks to their input, the model has worked really well – they have been invaluable! We’re now piloting general wellbeing champions through external funding”

Laura Dixon - Health Care Manager - Wakefield Council

‘As part of the CVD prevention team working across Humber & North Yorkshire ICB, we were looking to develop a community outreach model. I saw a presentation from Steffi regarding the Kirklees model and felt that the community champions approach there was exactly what we needed. Steffi kindly agreed to come and present the model, results, and her own experiences to a group of VCSE leads who wanted to learn. We now have several organisations on board and are just launching! Many thanks to Steffi whose presentation was both informative and inspirational and certainly created enthusiasm for the community champions project in our area.’

**Hazel De Wit - CVD Prevention Transformation Lead
NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board**

They Loved It, So They Built It Too: Sharing a Champion Model That Works

From Kirklees to Communities Across the UK

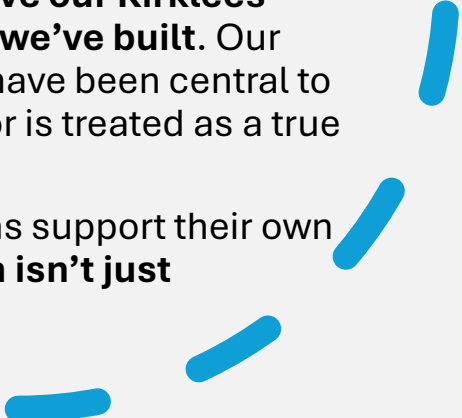
One of the things we take great pride in is how our **Community Champions model in Kirklees** has caught the attention of local authorities and ICBs across the country. What started as a local initiative, rooted in trusted relationships and community insight, has now grown into a **recognised and respected approach** that’s being adopted by other regions.

We’ve had the privilege of **supporting areas such as Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humber, Blackpool, Wigan, Wakefield, and beyond** as they begin to shape their own versions of the model. These places have reached out to learn from what we’ve done — and it’s been incredibly rewarding to share our experience.

I’ve provided **information sessions, shared practical resources and toolkits, highlighted what works (and what doesn’t), and run Q&A sessions** for teams building localised champion networks. The focus has often been on **CVD prevention**, but the reach has extended into **wider health and wellbeing topics**, showing the flexibility and strength of this community-led approach.

This growing national interest is a real testament to **how effective our Kirklees model has been** — not just in delivery, but in the **partnerships we’ve built**. Our strong relationships with both the **local authority** and the **ICB** have been central to our success, showing what’s possible when the voluntary sector is treated as a true partner.

It’s genuinely inspiring to see how our work is helping other areas support their own communities — and it’s a reminder that **community-led health isn’t just powerful, it’s scalable**.



Know Your Numbers, Protect Your Heart

LS2Y Champions Taking Action on Blood Pressure and CVD



LS2Y's Community Champions have been at the heart of a focused campaign to tackle cardiovascular disease (CVD) and high blood pressure in local communities. Through targeted outreach, trained champions have raised awareness, delivered vital health messages, and carried out over 100 blood pressure checks in trusted, everyday settings.

Highlights include:

- A Nutrition Talk at Tolson Museum (June 2025) with attendees, exploring diet and lifestyle choices linked to hypertension.
- Partnership with Get Set Goal, delivering 50 full health checks (including blood pressure screening) across two events.
- Champions proactively engaged with the public in community spaces and GP surgeries, encouraging people to understand their blood pressure and take early action.
- By being visible, trusted, and informed, LS2Y's Champions are making real inroads into raising awareness and supporting prevention—one conversation, one check, one person at a time.



Nutrition Workshop (Free)

Shocking Facts

Every 3 mins someone dies from cardiovascular disease (CVD) & every 5 mins someone has a stroke! CVD is women's No.1 killer & 10 times more women die of CVD than breast cancer!



Good News

It's never too late to make small changes to your lifestyle!

If you're in your 40's or 50's, you can lower CVD risk by 60-70% and gain 10 years of quality life. Making changes in your 70's reduces risk of CVD and can add 6 quality years. Relying solely on medication will not save you!

Join Rosie, your local Nutritionist, for our FREE Nutrition Workshop.

Drawing on 30yrs national experience and using an 8-meter digestive system Rosie illustrates how maintaining good gut health and exercise can lower CVD risk and regain quality years. Sharing simple tips and tricks in a relaxed session, you'll also have time to ask your questions.

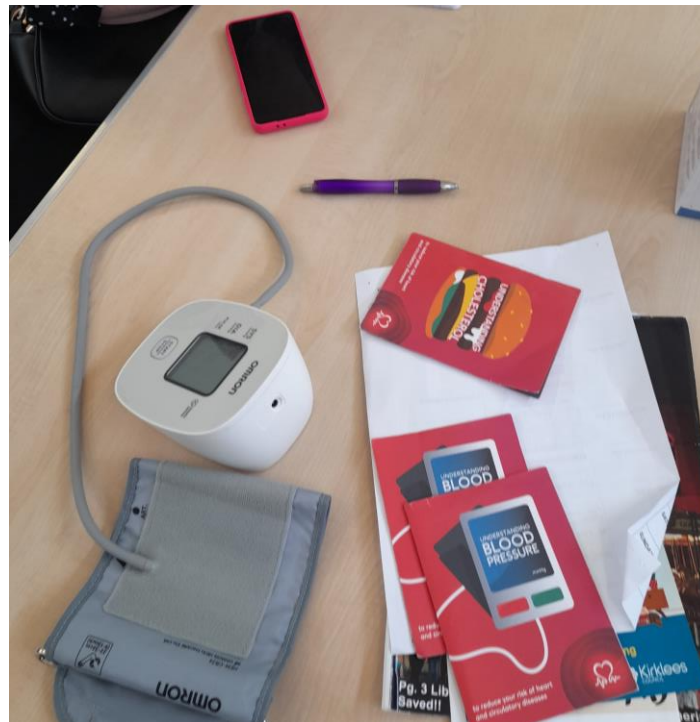
When: Monday 9th June 2025

Time: 2.00 to 3.00pm

Where: Tolson Memorial Museum
Wakefield Road HD5 8DJ



ROSIE MOLINARI
MSc, BSc, Hons RegNatr. (Public Health)
Saluhs Nutrition Consultancy



Fresh Futures invited people to have a blood pressure reading done in a relaxed and familiar community setting 😊

“This is the first time in years that I have had my BP checked”

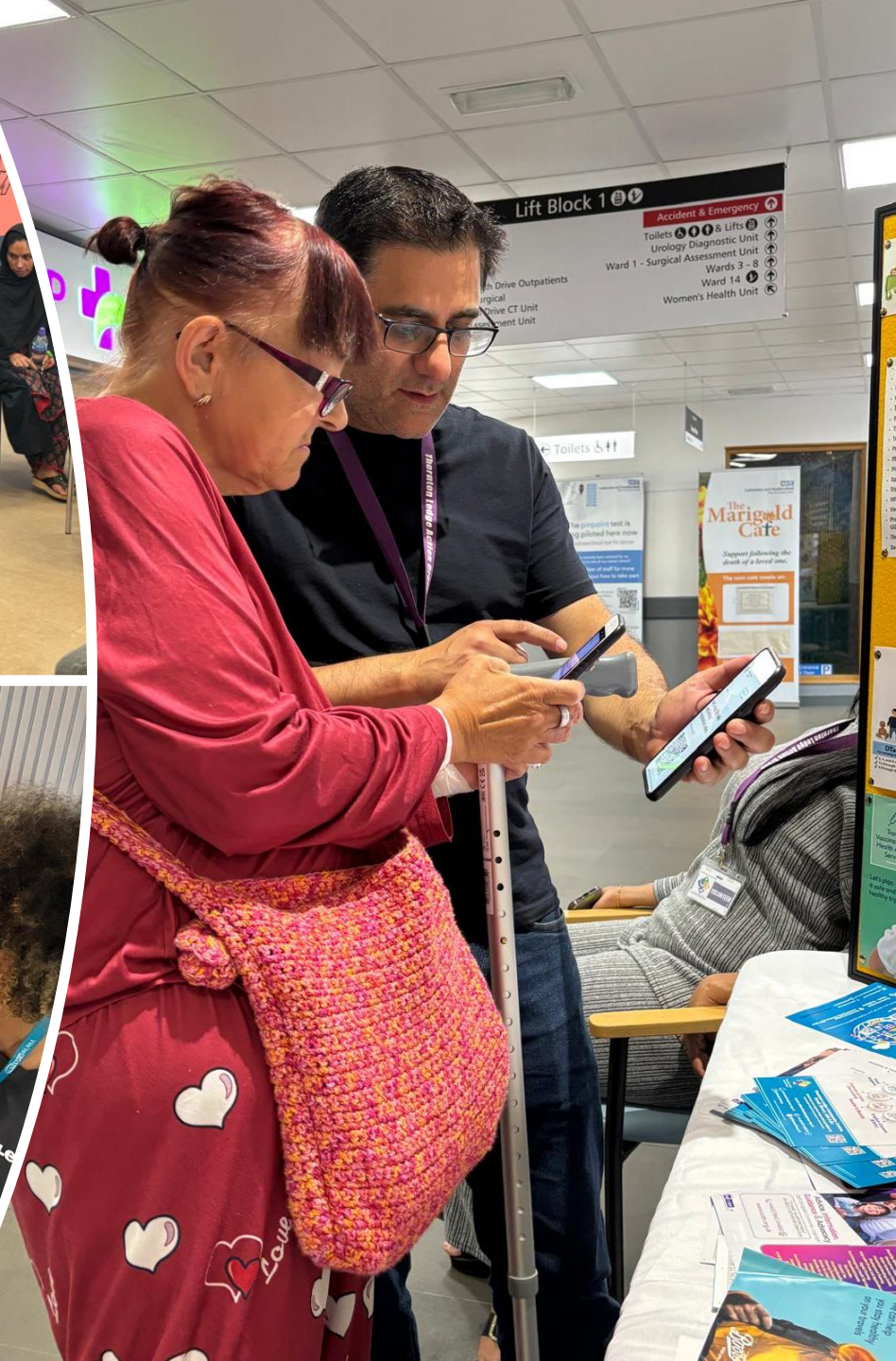
“ I wouldn’t have bothered if I had to use up an appointment at my GP’s”

Communities
**MAKE
CHANGE**



Thornton Lodge Action Group

Community Champions on the Move: From Cafés to Clinics, Bringing CVD Awareness and Blood Pressure Checks to the Heart of Communities



Thank you for reading 😊

And a huge thank you to our partners at Kirklees ICB, Kirklees Council , and West Yorkshire ICB, and to all our community partners — working together with shared goals for better community health and outcomes.

More Info



Get in touch/learn more

Steffi@tslkirklees.org.uk Champion Project Manager

[Evaluating the tsl kirklees community champions work - Third Sector Leaders Kirklees](#) – Read More Evaluations Here

[Community Champions - Third Sector Leaders Kirklees \(tslkirklees.org.uk\)](#) Community Champions Web Page

<https://healthwatchkirklees.co.uk/reports/> Healthwatch Community Champion Data & Insight Reports

[Register - Third Sector Leaders Kirklees \(tslkirklees.org.uk\)](#)
Sign Up To Our TSL Web Page To Receive Our Regular Newsletter And Exciting Updates



A familiar face plus a familiar place = great results!