

# Highlight Report: Maternity Champions

The Maternity Champions programme works with new and expectant parents with babies from 0 - 1 in each neighbourhood where our five Community Champions projects are located. Every week in each of our five projects, one or two activities take place hosted or supported by our Maternity Champions. These activities have become an integral part of each Community Champion project's offer in the last year. They build on the networks and partnerships that have been developed in each place to support this work. Partners include Early Help services, the local Family Centres, Midwifery and Health Visiting Services, Creative Futures, Central and West London CCGs, IAPT and Imperial and Chelsea and Westminster Hospital Trusts. Most activities are run in partnership: for example, Maternity Champions work with all three of the council's Family Centres and in North Paddington, where Paddington Development Trust (PDT)'s partnership with Creative Futures runs the BIG Lottery-funded Community Families Project; Maternity Champions support five of the drop-ins.



Hosted by PDT, our Maternity Champions manager, Emma, works across the borough to support the recruitment and training of Maternity Champions and embed relevant services within each Community Champions project. Over the year she has helped the Community Champions managers to establish activities including parent and baby drop-ins - with music, mum and baby yoga, parent and baby socialising; buggy walks; breast feeding, starting solids support and bespoke Bump, Birth, Baby ante-natal courses.

All the groups share information, reduce isolation and help parents make connections which enable parents and babies to thrive. Information is offered on topics such as paediatric and peri-natal mental health, baby immunisations, safe baby sleep, oral health and healthy eating for babies and toddlers. Individual emotional support for parents and signposting to other services takes place as needed. The parents feel less alone by making friends with the other parents they meet – and there are lots of lovely examples of parents meeting up for coffee, lunches or walks outside our activities.

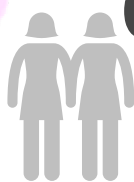
Emma also focuses on building more strategic networks with the relevant health and council services and other voluntary sector providers. All Maternity Champions receive extensive OCN-accredited training from the NCT – Birth and Beyond Community Supporter (BBCS) and, where applicable, Breast Feeding Peer Supporter (BFPS) training; as well as level 3 safeguarding, oral health, paediatric mental health and other training as needed.

## Parents-to-be & new parents reached by a variety of methods / signposting to services



Q1

677



Q2

632



Q3

532



Q4

868

“I look forward to my Wednesday mornings... with the weather not being so good we're going to benefit even more from it now. We live in a flat and we don't have a garden so we're in quite a small space, and obviously he's quite a boisterous little 15 month old now, so he really needs somewhere to release his energy, so it's really nice that there's a safe space and I can have some tea and talk to other parents. It honestly is a bit of a break when you're here. It's a really lovely thing to look forward to on a Wednesday.”



“I enjoy a mixture of people – it's very multicultural, lively and welcoming. There is always someone to ask if you're ok or if you want a cup of tea and it's wonderful for the children to eat fruit together.

You feel included ... I meet new people, the parents are very friendly and it's good to share what's going on. And I like that men come – I always like a mixture of people and learn songs from other cultures and I want her to be like that too.”

“I think the most important thing has been bonding with people in the community and feeling that sense of not being isolated, because when you're a new mum, it's impossible to get out. Your life has changed drastically, it's a huge adjustment, so... that's why this feels important.”

### Supporting parents

Our Church Street manager writes: The midwife at the children's centre referred a pregnant woman, Fatima, who was feeling stressed and anxious. The midwife arranged a meeting for us to see her. Two of our maternity champions, Randa and Taiser went to see her and find out how they could help her. Fatima had had a stillbirth in her previous pregnancy so she felt anxious about her pregnancy now. As she is the mother of three children aged 1 -5 and her husband has a disability, all the responsibility was on her shoulders. She doesn't speak English, and she needed help with housing and form filling so Randa signposted her to the Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation (MEWSO). They were able to help her with counselling, form-filling and housing advice. Then Randa sign-posted Fatima to the emotional wellbeing sessions run by community champions trained in Emotional Wellbeing and Practical Support offered by the BME Health Forum. Fatima was very pleased with the maternity champions support. She said, “I was feeling very lonely and stressed and I didn't know who could help me and support me. Now, I feel better so I can find somebody who can listen to me and support me.”



**26** Maternity Champions  
recruited & maintained



**10** Weekly activities for expectant and new parents & children up to age 1 offering socialisation and peer to peer support

### Spotlight on: 'Bump Birth Baby'

Funded via a successful bid to the My Westminster fund, Bump, Birth, Baby delivers community-based ante-natal classes for mothers and fathers-to-be, designed to complement NHS provision. Based in accessible, familiar and community-based settings, the classes supported expectant parents to self-manage their pregnancy; access local support networks and empower them to take an active role in making their community a better place for their children to grow up. Four courses of eight sessions each ran in different locations in our project areas over the year.

Planned and organised by Emma and West London Doulas the classes were facilitated by seven professionally qualified guest speakers covering topics including: how to have an easier birth – labour, birth and pain relief; mental health during pregnancy; breastfeeding; nutrition; paediatric first aid and what to expect from birth and after birth. Classes were supported by our Maternity Champions including language support in Arabic and Bengali in Church Street.

The classes, run as a pilot, were hugely appreciated and popular with parents-to-be - some feedback from participants included: “I really enjoyed getting to know all the different aspects of pregnancy and birth”, “The children's first aid was really helpful”, “I think all the classes were informative - my favourite was nutrition and breastfeeding”, “I have liked all the sessions they are so informative and the yoga was awesome”, “Thank you for everything”



Church Street Champions: Outreach, buggy walks and new parent & baby drop in started with Portman Family Centre



Churchill Gardens & Tachbrook Champions: Breast feeding and other support to Café Mama weekly sessions at Bessborough Family Centre



Harrow Road Champions: Community Families weekly drop in for expectant and new parents and their babies at Lydford Hall, Lydford estate



Mozart Champions: Community Families weekly 'Baby and Me' drop ins - for pre-crawlers at Queens Park Family Centre and for crawlers and their under four siblings at St Jude's Hall, Queens Park



Westbourne Champions: Community Families weekly drop-ins – for pre-crawlers at Stowe Centre, Harrow Road and for crawlers and their under four siblings at Warwick Community Hall, Harrow Road



City of Westminster