

Overcoming the Barriers to Engaging with Prostate Cancer **End of programme evaluation report**

May 2024

ORCHID 
FIGHTING MALE CANCER

public
perspectives 

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

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Executive summary

Overview

In March 2021, Orchid was awarded funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to deliver a three-year programme in ten identified areas of England, aimed at overcoming the barriers to engaging with prostate cancer.

The programme was developed in response to the rising number of cases of prostate cancer; low awareness of the risk factors, signs and symptoms; the high number of late diagnoses; and the negative impact this has on treatment options and outcomes.

The aim of the programme was to develop a regional network of volunteer Community Champions who would be able to deliver awareness raising and information sharing, especially among high risk groups

(for example marginalised communities) for whom barriers to engaging with the issue are greatest.

Despite the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, the programme was able to build up significant momentum over the course of the three years, recruiting over 150 Community Champions, hosting over 2,500 outreach events and activities across the country, and reaching almost 35,000 people from diverse backgrounds and communities.

Key impacts

Impact on target audience

Following contact with Community Champions, either one-to-one or at events and meetings, the vast majority of respondents in the evaluation reported:

- **increased awareness prostate cancer**
- **greater knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors associated with prostate cancer**
- **increased confidence to access healthcare services if they have concerns about prostate cancer**
- **more confidence to make a referral if they have concerns about someone else**

Impact on partner organisations

There have also been impacts at the organisational level for programme partners, in terms of enhanced relationships, networks and resources. Many reported that this will have a continuing positive impact on their practice:

“It has left a lasting impact on us as an organisation - we will keep using all the knowledge and resources we’ve acquired to make a difference, embedding it within our other work.”

Partner healthcare organisation

Impact on Community Champions

The programme has left a lasting legacy of a pool of knowledge, training and co-designed culturally appropriate and effective resources enabling Community Champions to continue promoting awareness of prostate cancer, whether that be formally or informally in their everyday lives.

“When [people with lived experience] speak it means something and people listen. They really care and despite their situation are committed and want to make a difference. At the same time the training, resources and support from Orchid armed people with lived experience with the tools to help others. It gave them a sense of purpose and the means to reach out to people in their community on a subject of importance to them.”

Community Champion from a partner healthcare organisation

In addition, many Community Champions with lived experience of prostate cancer reported that being involved in the programme helped improve their self-esteem and confidence.

Impact on Orchid

As a direct result of the relationships with partners forged in the course of the programme, Orchid has been able to bid successfully for funding from the National Lottery Community Fund for a new three-year programme working within prisons, starting in August 2024.

“This current programme has almost snowballed into a new prison programme. This wouldn’t have happened without this project as we didn’t have the relationships or track record of working with the prisons. The new project and funding will help us build on the work over the past three years and develop it further.”

Orchid

The programme by numbers



Outreach
3,252 outreach events and activities were held



Audience
A total of 34,577 people engaged with the programme



Social media
638 social media posts, including 60,000+ pages viewed, 4,158 likes / comments / shares and 10,000 followers



Community Champions
168 Community Champions were recruited, including 37 in prisons

Resources
Produced and distributed over 22,000 prostate cancer factsheets and over 8,000 signposting leaflets



Locations
Community Champions were located in Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Dudley, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Wolverhampton

1: Introduction

Orchid is the UK's leading charity for those affected by male cancer. In March 2021, Orchid was awarded funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to deliver a three-year programme to help overcome the barriers to engaging with prostate cancer.

Working in targeted locations across England, the focus of the programme was to support individuals from identified and at high-risk communities to overcome barriers to engaging with prostate cancer, including those additional barriers resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

The programme was developed in response to:

- **the rising number of cases of prostate cancer in England**
- **low awareness of the risk factors, signs, and symptoms, especially amongst those most at risk**
- **the high number of late diagnoses and**
- **the impact this has on treatment options and poorer prognosis, which has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The programme launched on 4 May 2021 and ran until 3 May 2024.

Objectives and activities

Key programme objectives and activities included:

- **Identifying and recruiting a programme task force** of patients, carers, community leaders and key healthcare professionals, to help direct and steer the programme to achieve the best outcomes.
- Identifying, training and providing support to **a cohort of Orchid volunteer Community Champions** to help cascade vital prostate cancer messages to those at high risk of this cancer in their communities.
- **Delivering two national Prostate Cancer Awareness Conferences**, supported by the Orchid Programme Team, bringing together patients and family members, Community Champions and key healthcare professionals to receive vital information from experts in the field, share best practice and provide opportunities for mutual support.

- **Offering a training programme for professionals** involved in providing care, such as sheltered housing, homeless health provision etc, enabling them to better engage and support men.

Evaluation

Orchid commissioned independent social research and evaluation organisation, Public Perspectives, to conduct an evaluation of the programme to both capture learning and impact and feed into its reporting to the funder.

The evaluation was embedded within the programme, with a theory of change evaluation framework co-designed at the outset to guide the evaluation activity. This involved:

- **ongoing data collection** throughout the three years, including experience and impact questionnaires with Community Champions and the programme's target audience
- **in-depth qualitative interviews** with Community Champions and other stakeholders

2: Key outputs and activities



Community Champions

Recruitment

At the heart of the programme was the recruitment of volunteer Community Champions whose role would be to share information and participate in awareness raising activities amongst their networks and within their local communities.

Once recruited, Community Champions were trained (both initially and with refresher training) and supported throughout the programme's three year span.

Community Champions were recruited from a range of backgrounds, and included people with lived experience of prostate cancer, people from diverse backgrounds, and healthcare professionals.

There were some challenges around recruiting and retaining Community Champions with lived experience (especially through TACKLE groups), although over time the programme was able to meet its targets.

The programme's ability to recruit and retain Community Champions was varied across the regions. The greatest success was found in areas where Orchid or its local partner organisation had an existing relationship with networks and communities, or where there was an established group or organisation

in place, such as with the established healthcare organisations in Nottingham and Newcastle, or in prisons where there was already-established health promotion activity.

Support for Community Champions

The Community Champions were supported through regular online drop-in sessions and a monthly newsletter to share success stories, key dates and activities.

In addition, at the end of year 2 there was a series of five regional mini-conferences to engage and support volunteers.

At the end of the final year a celebratory conference was held, at which discussions included programme sustainability and encouragement for the volunteers to stay involved in the activity. This was also an opportunity to provide training for the Community Champions on testicular and penile cancer.

"I felt fulfilled, to be part of such a success. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this. I have thought of the three years journey as a period of massive involvement and the beginning of a continuous engagement that must not be stopped."

Community Champion feedback from end of programme conference

Programme task force

A task force was recruited to meet quarterly to help shape the programme's strategic direction. This included senior and strategic level representation from organisations across England:

- **Age UK Wirral**
- **Can Survive UK**
- **Faiths Promoting Health & Wellbeing**
- **Birmingham Council of Faiths**
- **A Counselling Psychologist**
- **The Patient Experience Lead at HMP Dovegate**
- **The Regional Health Promotion Lead, Health in Justice**
- **Tackle Prostate Cancer**
- **A Director of Public Health in a local authority**
- **Patient and practitioner representation**

The Taskforce was invaluable in shaping the programme and providing access to networks and groups to support volunteer recruitment and to cascade information.

It also helped to co-design some of the materials and resources which were disseminated by Community Champions.

Over time the Taskforce became less engaged and could potentially have been used more actively throughout the life of the programme.

Social media

Social media increased the reach of the programme, with many posts tagging the National Lottery Community Fund. One way in which social media was used successfully was by taking quotes gathered by Community Champions and sharing them, linking the comments to information about risk factors, signs and symptoms and the support Orchid is able to offer.

Tools and resources

The programme developed a range of interactive tools for Community Champions to use in their engagement work.

Prostate cancer toolkit

A comprehensive toolkit was co-created to be used by the Community Champions when facilitating group sessions. It took the form of a table-top flip presentation which covered all the main prostate cancer awareness messaging in a simple, clear and high impact format. The toolkit was accompanied by a set of facilitator notes to support the volunteer facilitators.

Prostate cancer leaflets

A prostate cancer information leaflet was developed that covered:

- **cancer facts**
- **risk factors**
- **signs and symptoms, and**
- **actions to take if concerned**

It also included Orchid's Helpline, website details, and a QR code directing users to further information.

The leaflet was co-designed with the Programme Taskforce and Community Champions to ensure it was accessible and engaging for its target audience.



Local signposting resources

The programme compiled an up-to-date directory of local cancer support and information services covering many of the areas where it was most active. This was then used to create regionalised signposting leaflets which were distributed by the Community Champions as part of their engagement activity.

As well as detailing local sources of cancer information and support, each signposting leaflet also carried details of the main national services including TACKLE, Maggie's, MacMillan Cancer Support and Orchid's National Male Cancer Helpline.

Signposting leaflets were developed for:

- **Birmingham**
- **Bradford**
- **Bristol**
- **Dudley**
- **Leeds**
- **Liverpool**
- **Manchester**
- **Newcastle**
- **Nottingham**
- **Wolverhampton**

Activities

The first year of the programme focussed on design, development and initial implementation.

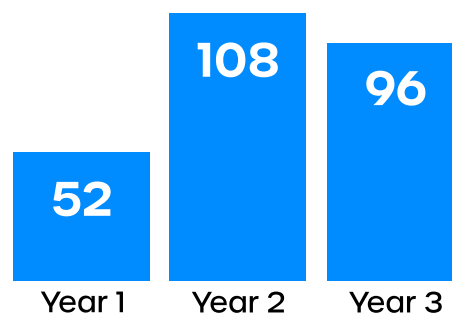
Key activities included:

- Establishing a taskforce of patients, carers, community leaders and healthcare professionals.
- Developing a toolkit, and other resources such as a prostate cancer factsheet and signposting document.
- Identifying, training and supporting a cohort of 52 Orchid Volunteer Community Champions (Community Champions), made up of community members, healthcare professionals, including some G.Ps and prison health champions, exceeding the target of 50.
- Undertaking a programme of digital engagement, including across the main social media channels especially Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.
- Initial implementation in prisons, community events, community centres, libraries, gyms, medical centres, and high footfall locations such as shopping centres, buses and trains.

Building on the foundations laid in the first year, delivery scaled-up over the subsequent two years.

During years 2 and 3 the programme:

- Recruited, trained and supported 168 Community Champions, including 37 in prisons, of whom 96 were active in year 3 (52 in Year 1 and 108 in Year 2). These Community Champions were based across England, and included community members, healthcare professionals and a few GPs.

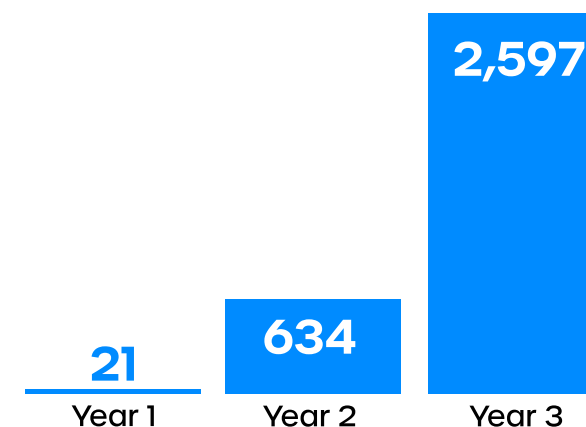


Numbers of active Community Champions

- Undertook a programme of digital engagement, including across the main social media channels especially Twitter, Facebook and Instagram with 638 posts (91 in Year 1 and 246 in Year 2), over 60,000 pages viewed, 4,158 likes/comments/shares (1,055 in Year 1 and 3,237 in Year 2) and some 10,000 followers across the three social

media platforms (in addition to Community Champions who posted on their own platforms). The programme also generated multimedia content to support promotion via its website, socials and other channels.

- Delivered 2,597 outreach events and activities (21 in Year 1 and 634 in Year 2). This was more than double the programme's target of 1,240.



Numbers of outreach activities and events

- Reached at least 34,577 people from different backgrounds (1,011 in Year 1 and 15,370 in Year 2), again exceeding the programme's target which had been 24,800. Based on available monitoring data, 80% were men, at least half are aged 45+ and at least a third from non-white Irish or British backgrounds. This included 9,491 face-to-face interactions.
- Produced and distributed 22,151 prostate cancer factsheets and 8,271 signposting leaflets.

Examples of activities

Over the course of the programme over 3,000 events and activities took place. The following examples are just a few of the many and varied interventions, and give a flavour of some of the activities conducted by Community Champions over the three years of the programme.

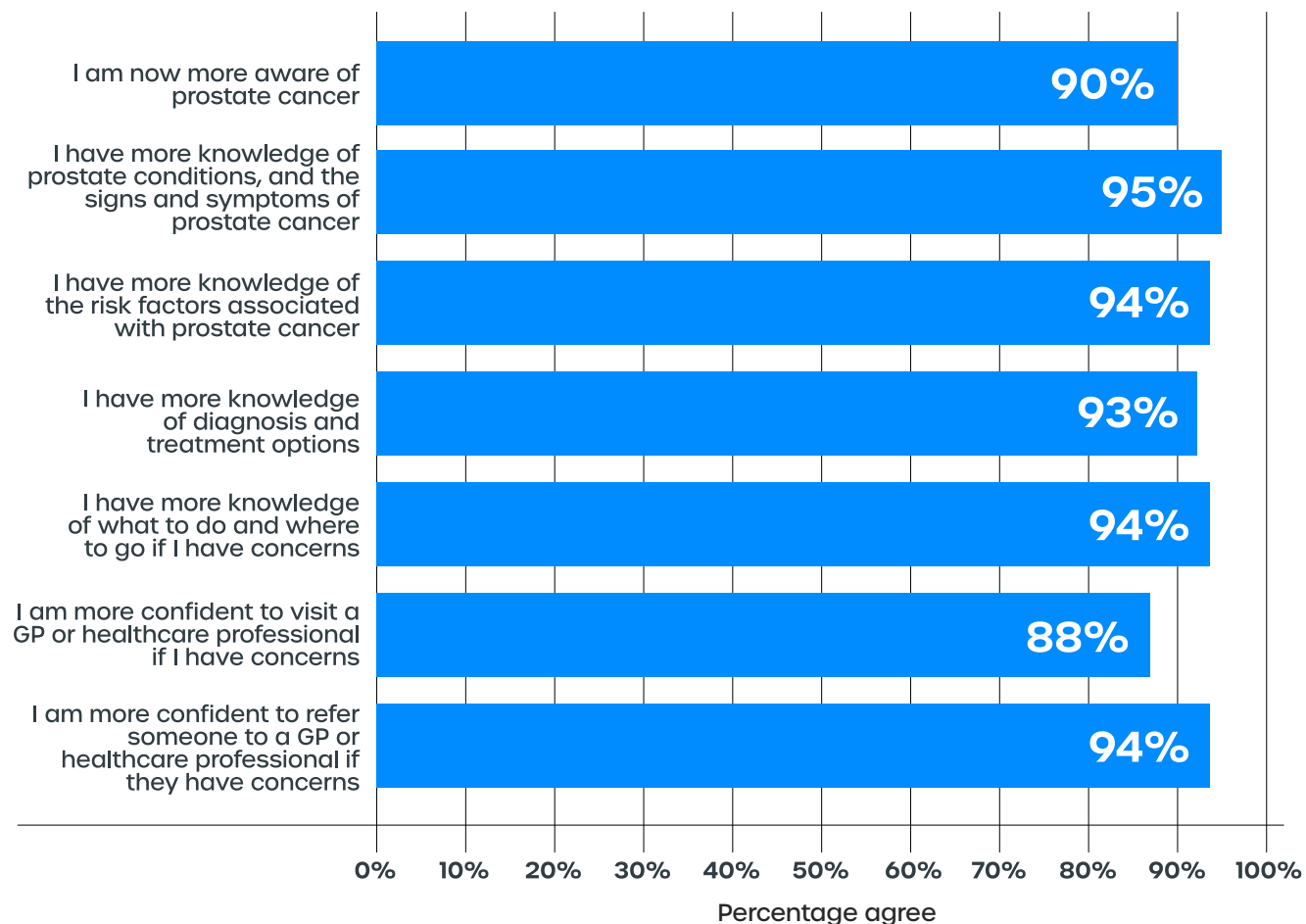
- The Community Champions in HMP Oakwood, supported by the Programme Director, ran a Health Day on 26 October 2022 as a Black History Month activity. There were two sessions attended by 400 people who all took away prostate cancer information. Orchid's film 'Letter to my Unpresented Self' was shown at one session. The film was subsequently broadcast on the prison television channel the following day, along with another Orchid film, 'Uncle Mike.'
- A Community Champion in Birmingham gave a talk 20 members of staff at the Andrology department of the University Hospital.
- A Community Champion disseminated prostate cancer information to about 100 people at Arrowse Park ASDA in Birkenhead, and at ASDA in Wallasey she reached over 80 people.
- A Community Champion set up and attended information stands across 14 libraries in Bradford and Leeds, resulting in 133 one-to-one conversations.
- Several Community Champions participated in a Windrush event in Manchester resulting in 64 prostate cancer conversations.
- A Community Champion at the Armed Forces Day in Wolverhampton reached 131 people, with 15 one-to-one conversations.
- A Community Champion attended the Huddersfield Reggae Festival and a Windrush event reaching a total of 50 people across the two events.
- Community Champions at a Black History Month event in Nottingham, engaged with over 40 people.
- A Community Champion initiative led to 300 prostate cancer leaflets being distributed via Bradford Central Food Bank.
- At a GP surgery in Liverpool during 2024, a Community Champion reached eight people one-to-one, with prostate cancer messages being disseminated to many more.
- 175 people were reached via a talk at a Caribbean Association in the West Midlands.
- At Men Allowed, a Nottingham music event, Community Champions reached over 520 people. Prostate cancer information was included in the event programme, further increasing reach. The radio presenter for the event also gave a short welcome to Orchid and introduced the programme to the audience.

The first information session delivered by a Community Champion was a session by John at an event in Bristol organised by Caafi Health at the Easton Community Centre. John used the programme toolkit and Orchid's interactive prostate models to help get his messages across. Through the event he reached 179 people (58 men and 121 women) and had in-depth conversations about prostate cancer and prostate conditions with 12 of them. John also met a healthcare professional at the event who has had prostate cancer and has a family history of prostate cancer and who was interested in becoming a Community Champion.

3: Outcomes and impact

People who engaged with the programme consistently identified positive impacts of their engagement, including increased awareness and knowledge relating to prostate cancer and increased confidence to access healthcare services.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements, after taking part in today's event or activity?



Number of respondents: 368

Source: Feedback forms completed by individuals following engagement with Community Champions and/or at events.

There are also many qualitative examples and stories of positive impact.

Increased awareness of prostate cancer:

“I delivered my first awareness talk to raise awareness amongst social prescribing link workers on the Wirral last week. The response was very positive and the presentation folder and leaflets were extremely well received. I distributed all of the leaflets that you gave me on the training day for them to use in their GP practices, so please can you send me a 100 more awareness and signposting leaflets. If possible, please could I have another two presentation folders? We are keeping the one you gave me centrally in the office for people to borrow when they make presentations, but we are a team of 20 people and it would be helpful to have another couple of folders in case we have two presentations on the same day. Thank you again for the excellent training and resources. I think you have done everything possible to make raising awareness of prostate cancer as simple as possible.”

Community Champion and Social Prescribing Link Worker, Liverpool

Increased knowledge of prostate cancer, its signs and symptoms:

“This is one of our most recent community health clinics. They are predominately accessed by men, particularly those of black African and Caribbean background. It has been excellent using the DRE simulator to show what rectal examination would entail and what is being looked for. We reiterated the importance of having a regular PSA done with the GP if you have a high risk of prostate cancer. On the whole, many of the people that attended these community clinics left feeling very informed and in a better position of understanding what prostate cancer may be.”

Community Champion, Bristol

More knowledge of the risk factors associated with prostate cancer:

“This event showed me that there is a lack of knowledge in our communities about prostate cancer and that the risks are greater for us. It’s important we share it with people so they can stop dying unnecessarily and seek help before it is too late.”

Participant

More knowledge of the diagnosis and treatment options:

“The prostate model proved to be very useful. One man, over 50, African Caribbean, mentioned that he had recently had a scan on his prostate and was told there was a shadow. He was very nervous about going back. He was attracted to the display table because of the prostate model which features 4 examples of scans. He said his father had had prostate cancer so that is why he decided to get checked. He said he was feeling apprehensive and reluctant about his next hospital visit. He said it is good to have information open to the community as it makes it less difficult to deal with. He said he felt better talking to us and took the leaflets.”

Community Champion, Birmingham

Increased knowledge about what to do or where to go if they are concerned about prostate cancer:

“A husband and wife couple visited the stand. There was clearly something worrying the husband and the wife was a little stressed. After a lot of prompting

from the wife, the husband disclosed that he had had penile cancer in the past but the concern now was symptoms indicative of a prostate problem. Evidently he had consulted a doctor about these concerns a while ago but the matter had not been followed up. Now the wife was very anxious because the husband would not take the step to go and see a doctor again because he said it's so difficult to get an appointment, etc. He was very reticent and the reasons he was giving were really excuses not to follow it up with his GP. We talked through the facts about prostate cancer and the PSA test. We talked about the fact that if he was not satisfied after seeing his doctor that he could always consult with a different doctor and he seemed to be reassured by this and said he realised he really should get an appointment. He took information with him and promised his wife that he would carry it through. She was obviously very relieved.”

Community Champion, Newcastle

Greater confidence to visit a GP or healthcare professional:

“A 52-year-old man of African Caribbean and British heritage decided to undergo a PSA blood test after attending a

community health seminar. He did not have notable health issues before, but was made aware of the risk factors and decided to have a test. The seminar gave him the awareness and information to go to his doctor with confidence and request a test with an understanding about the process and relevance of the test results. The test identified that further investigations are required.”

Community Champion, Nottingham

More confidence referring someone to visit their GP or healthcare professional if they have concerns:

“I now have all the information I need to encourage my husband to go to the doctor and get tested. They keep on putting it off, but we now know what to do and what to expect.”

Participant

There has also been added value in the form of sharing information and raising awareness about other male cancers. Some of this has been explicit, whereby Community Champions have actively discussed other forms of male cancer, and some implicit. This includes training and information given to Community Champions about other cancers throughout the programme and also at the end of programme celebratory conference:

“One lady said she took home some information about prostate cancer and her son picked up the leaflet. He said he’d been worried about something and it spurred him to go to his doctor and he was eventually diagnosed with testicular cancer. He’s fine now, but she said that without the leaflet he may not have felt confident to discuss his concerns with her and go to the doctor. It just shows how engaging with people and sharing information can open up new doors and lead to the unexpected.”

Community Champion

In addition, being a Community Champion provided meaningful opportunities for people with lived experience to pursue a subject of importance to them and develop their own awareness, knowledge and skills. Similarly, being involved in the programme and as a Community

Champion has helped improve their self-esteem and confidence:

“Many of the people in our group have been on a journey ourselves. They’ve bonded as a group, developed self-esteem, confidence and new skills, they feel part of something bigger. For some in our group being involved has supported them on their own cancer journey. And one or two found it useful in their own lives and with friends and family, which has helped them follow-up on their own concerns and symptoms.”

Community Champion

There have also been impacts at the organisational level for Orchid and some of its partners, in terms of enhanced relationships, networks and resources, as well as raising its profile, that will provide benefit in the future.

Examples of this include talk requests, attending networking meetings such as Bristol Prostate Cancer Network meetings, as well as the West Midlands Cancer Network. Similarly, through the programme, Orchid has been working closely with Prostate Cancer Research and in the last year helped recruit and interview Black African and Black Caribbean men for their Lottery funded Infopool and shared information about this programme with Community Champions.

Likewise, Orchid has worked with TACKLE, which were represented on the Programme Taskforce, while all the signposting leaflets disseminated by the Community Champions include details of TACKLE groups where relevant. There are also ongoing relationships with prisons and healthcare organisations that emerged through this programme and continue to cascade prostate cancer information and work with Orchid on other programmes and male cancers:

“Orchid is stronger for this project. We’ve got new relationships and partnerships such as Healthworks Newcastle, and I feel that our profile has increased, we’ve put ourselves out there a lot more. More people know about us and we’ve reached more people. This has opened up new opportunities that didn’t exist before.”

Stakeholder

Similarly, the programme opened up other opportunities, such as working with one of its healthcare partners in the programme to conduct a Lottery funded focus group with trans women and their risk of prostate cancer. This research sought to generate understanding and ideas about how best to get messages across to trans women. This resulted in new copy for Orchid's website, a social media campaign put out through trusted organisations to avoid any hate messaging other methods might attract, and creating a short film:

"It's been a really positive experience working with Orchid. We've got a lot out of the project, such as training and resources and all the knowledge that comes with that. It's increased our capacity so we can better help more people. We will keep on using all this and hope to continue working with Orchid in the future."

Community Champion and partner healthcare organisation

Relatedly, Community Champions and partner organisations said they found the training, resources and support provided by Orchid to be valuable and equipped them effectively:

"I just think they're fantastic and it's a fantastic programme. I can't speak highly enough of it. The training was

excellent, really good and useful free resources and they've always been there to provide help and support when needed."

Community Champion and partner healthcare organisation

The success of the programme is reflected in Orchid being one of 10 charities that won a 2024 GSK IMPACT Award for their outstanding contributions to improving the UK's health and wellbeing (Orchid has previously been short-listed but never won). Orchid believes that this programme played an important role in helping win the award:

"The work we've been doing under this project undoubtedly strengthened our application and the judges from the King's Fund explicitly noted the importance of this work and the effectiveness of the project. We can't say that we wouldn't have won the award without it, but it certainly helped, it feels like it played a huge and important part as it is a flagship project for us."

Stakeholder

4: Learning and the future

The success of the programme has been based on laying solid foundations, highlighting the importance of good programme development in its early stages. The relatively long-term nature of the programme (funded for three years) allowed time for development and implementation prior to scaling-up. This also meant the programme had the time to overcome the unexpected issue of the pandemic:

“Considering we started slowly and were hindered by Covid, we’ve made excellent progress. The first year we were behind because of Covid, but it allowed us to develop the project and from there it’s just snowballed with new connections . . . We’ve had the time to really make this project work, develop it and iterate to make it a success . . . We had to be flexible, creative and adapt to different groups and circumstances – no one size fits all. We had the time, space and resource to do this.”

Stakeholder

The Taskforce was an important part of the programme, helping support its development and implementation, although there may have been scope to use it more and in different ways:

“I think we did add value to the project and gave them some ideas and contacts, but it often felt like they were seeking external validation rather than it being about us guiding and supporting the project, which is where the real value

of something like this comes into its own. I just felt they were a bit light touch in terms of demands on our time and could have sweated us more - been more demanding and got more out of us.”

Taskforce member

Co-creation and collaboration were important parts of the programme, helping ensure the approach and resources were effective and providing access to different organisations and communities, as well as developing culturally appropriate and effective resources and materials and ensuring they were cascaded effectively:

“One of the things that stands out for me about the project is the working together to achieve positive outcomes. For example, we’ve helped develop the materials to make sure they are relevant to the communities we’re working with and we’ve also provided access to lots of different groups through our networks.”

Community Champion from partner healthcare organisation

A peer-to-peer approach was at the heart of the programme and proved to be an effective way to engage with diverse communities, especially on sensitive subjects:

“It’s reinforced what we already know, which is that peer-to-peer is an equation that works. People from similar backgrounds reach and get through to people better and are listened to more by other people from similar backgrounds. They also help ensure our approach and resources are relevant and appropriate.”

Stakeholder

Similarly, working with people with lived experience of prostate cancer was seen as a valuable element of the programme: the credibility, relatability, commitment and passion they brought made the programme's messages more powerful.

At the same time, participation in the programme gave the lived-experience volunteers a meaningful way to make positive use of their experience and a sense of purpose:

“Working with people with lived experience is important. When they speak it means something and people listen. They also really care and despite their situation are really committed and want to make a difference. At the same time the project, its training, resources and support from Orchid armed people with lived experience with the tools to help others. It gave them a sense of purpose and the means to reach out to people in their community on a subject of importance to them.”

Community Champion from a partner healthcare organisation

The programme highlighted the importance of engaging both with men at risk, as well as women and other family members, to get the information and messages across effectively:

“We know people are going home and having conversations with family and

friends, encouraging them to get themselves checked out and that's leading to action, it's empowering people. This shows the importance of a holistic approach. You can directly try to engage with men, but sometimes you may have to go at it from a different direction and reach the women and other people in their lives. We've got various examples of that, for example one woman came to us and was worried about her husband who she noticed was going to the toilet more during the night. She spoke with us and we gave her a leaflet. This gave her the tools to speak with her husband and I know that she encouraged him to go to the doctors. She got back in touch to say that they had detected it early and he is OK now.

Community Champion from a partner healthcare organisation

The programme worked both with individual Community Champions and partner healthcare organisations, which helped increase reach and also build the capacity of these organisations, providing a lasting legacy:

“It was a win-win situation, we got some high-quality free training and resources and they got access to a large-pool of Community Champions. We embedded their messages and resources into our work and it fed into conversations we had

with people and groups across the city.

Community Champion from partner healthcare organisation

“Being involved in the project enriched our delivery. It empowered us to have meaningful conversations, give people resources and signpost them appropriately. Prior to this, we felt we had a bit of a knowledge gap and the offer of training, resources and support was something we couldn't resist. It felt like a mutually beneficial relationship – we provide on the ground champions and link in with wider cancer awareness activity and we got skilled and resourced-up. This is something that continues beyond the life of the project in that the knowledge and resources are still there and we will keep using them.”

Community Champion from partner healthcare organisation

The programme has left a lasting legacy of a pool of knowledge, training and resources with which Community Champions can continue promoting awareness of prostate cancer, whether that be formally or informally in their everyday lives:

“The programme has stopped, but Orchid is still here, so are the resources, so people can stay involved and keep on doing it, and we'll support them,

although it will be less hands-on and intensive. And we know that people are still using the resources, for example in prisons and amongst many of our healthcare partners. I feel like the Champions will have a continued sense of responsibility to share their knowledge and information, even if it is just informally to friends and family, as and when the situation arises.”

Partner organisation

“It’s such a shame funding is coming to an end – they did such a sterling job and achieved so much. Moving forward we will continue to use resources and we’ll continue to work with Orchid. We’ll continue to fly the flag as we have the knowledge, resources and relationships.”

Partner healthcare organisation

“That knowledge is there, in the back of your mind. It doesn’t leave you and is there to feed into your work and life. Even if formally you are not working as a champion, you still are in principle and practice. I will not forget what I’ve learnt and will look for opportunities to share it with those around me. I will also look for opportunities to continue working with Orchid on future projects.”

Community Champion

Indeed, whilst some of the Community Champions will continue to work with Orchid to deliver prostate cancer awareness activities (and some will provide information about all three male cancers and stocks of leaflets have been allocated for this purpose), Orchid was keen to ensure that all the remaining signposting leaflets were distributed in a timely manner to colleagues in the local communities. Remaining stocks of materials were disseminated via Orchid contacts, many of which were developed as part of the programme.

There may also be opportunities to build on and harness the pool of Community Champions and not lose the relationships and networks that have been established:

“It’s a shame the funding is over, but that is the nature of these things. I do wonder though if there is more they could do to utilise the excellent resource they now have in the form of the Champions. Many of these do not want to stop and for them the project hasn’t ended. Is there a way of keeping them involved in Orchid in a lighter touch way and almost transitioning them from champions for this project to champions for Orchid more broadly, so they become Orchid Community Champions?”

Community Champion from a partner healthcare organisation

Nonetheless, and positively for the future, Orchid has secured funding from the National Lottery Community Fund for a new three-year programme working with prisons, starting in August 2024 (Active Participation in Male Cancer Awareness in Prisons). This programme builds-on the relationships and approach established during the ‘Overcoming the barriers’ programme, without which it may not have been possible to develop or deliver such a programme or secure funding:

“This current project has almost snowballed into a new prison project. This wouldn’t have happened without this project as we didn’t have the relationships or track record of working with the prisons. The new project and funding will help us build on the work over the past three-years and develop it further.”

Stakeholder

“The future project is really positive and exciting. It builds on the work of the past couple of years and takes it a step further by broadening out to more prisons and all male cancers.”

Community Champion from a partner healthcare organisation

5: Conclusion

The programme gathered momentum over time, building on strong foundations laid in Year 1 and overcoming initial challenges around Covid-19. It continually increased its reach and exceeded its targets with over 150 volunteer Community Champions, over 3,000 outreach events and activities, and almost 35,000 people reached from different backgrounds amongst high-risk communities.

There is quantitative and qualitative evidence of widespread positive experiences and impacts of the programme as indicated by Community Champions and participants, with increased awareness and knowledge of prostate cancer and greater confidence to access healthcare services being cited by the vast majority of respondents.

In addition, being a Community Champion provided meaningful opportunities for people with lived experience to pursue a subject of importance to them and develop their own awareness, knowledge and skills. Being involved in the programme and as a Community Champion helped improve their self-esteem and confidence.

There have also been impacts at the organisational level for Orchid and its partners, in terms of enhanced relationships, networks and resources, as well as profile-raising, that will benefit them in the future.

In terms of learning, the programme has highlighted the importance of co-creation and collaboration with stakeholders from target

communities and those with lived experience, to ensure that resources were culturally appropriate and effective, and that they are cascaded effectively.

The programme demonstrated the value of a peer-to-peer approach when engaging with diverse communities, especially on sensitive subjects. Similarly, working with people with lived experience was shown to be important because they are credible, relatable, committed and passionate, and in return participating in the programme gave them a meaningful way to get involved and a sense of purpose.

Likewise, the programme highlighted the importance of engaging both with men at risk, as well as women and other family members to get the information and messages across effectively.

The programme has left a lasting legacy of a pool of knowledge, training and resources with which Community Champions can continue promoting awareness of prostate cancer, whether that be formally or informally in their everyday lives. There may also be

opportunities to build-on and harness the pool of Community Champions and not lose the relationships and networks that have been established.

Positively for the future, Orchid has secured funding from the National Lottery Community Fund for a new three-year programme working with prisons, starting in August 2024. This programme builds on the relationships and approach established during the 'Overcoming the barriers' programme, without which it may not have been possible to develop or deliver such a programme or secure funding.

Overcoming the Barriers programme team

Ali Orhan – Director

Julia De Petrillo – Project Manager

Rehana Virani – Social Media and Engagement Manager



Attendees at the end of programme conference

Orchid is the UK's leading charity for those affected by male cancer.

For over 25 years we have been working to save men's lives from testicular, penile and prostate cancer through a range of support services, education and awareness campaigns and world-class research.

Orchid was founded in 1996 by testicular cancer patient Colin Osborne MBE and Professor Tim Oliver, the oncologist who saved his life. Today, we carry forward this grassroots approach to supporting men with male cancer, educating communities and working with research professionals.

This evaluation was carried out by Public Perspectives, a social research and evaluation organisation.

Public Perspectives are specialists in research and community engagement in the public and third sectors. They use a wide range of techniques to effectively and robustly research and engage with diverse audiences on a range of issues.



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