

# Health Champions' top tips for delivering Healthy Living Pharmacy

Community pharmacy Health Champions help people live healthier lives. They promote health & wellbeing, offer information and advice, and let patients/customers know about other services and support that may help them. This briefing aims to help you in your role as a Health Champion by sharing top tips from other pharmacies on topics including health promotion displays, fitting HLP into your workload, and starting conversations about sensitive health issues.

## Did you know?

**More than 95% of pharmacies in the GMLPC area that claimed Quality Payments in 2017 said they had achieved Healthy Living Pharmacy Level 1.**

## 1. Chat to people – and really listen to what they say

People often tell you a lot if you're willing to listen carefully. You can offer them a chance to open up about their health worries by chatting informally while you're serving them. For example, if someone asks for products to help them sleep, you could gently ask if anything in particular is keeping them awake. It could be that they're struggling to cope (e.g. with caring responsibilities) and you can let them know about local support. One short conversation could make a massive difference to their lives.

## 2. Be approachable & non-judgemental

Pharmacies are a great place to chat to people about their health in an informal, non-judgmental way because people often feel less intimidated than in other healthcare settings. You'll have built up lots of knowledge in your job that will help you tailor information to individual patients/customers. For example, knowing that 'Mrs W' always likes a joke and 'Mr B' is more formal will help you gauge how best to ask them if they've heard about bowel cancer screening.

## 3. Get creative & involve the team

Feel free to get creative, especially if you have a team member who enjoys arts and crafts. Don't be afraid to take risks! One pharmacy decorated pink bras with feathers and sequins for their eye-catching window display to promote Breast Cancer Awareness Month. That might not be appropriate everywhere – think about what's suitable for your own patient/customer base – but it proved very effective at getting patients/customers to ask for more information.

## 4. Little and often, bit by bit

Pharmacies are so busy that it can seem hard to find time for HLP work. The answer is to do it bit by bit – breaking Health Champion work up into small tasks that you do regularly makes it much more manageable. Make sure everyone in the pharmacy team knows HLP is important – there is £1,280 of Quality Payments funding associated with delivering HLP, so it makes sense for the team to recognise you need time to do this work.

## 5. Ask for freebies

Lots of organisations will be willing to offer you freebies to help promote health campaigns – if you ask them. Spending 10 minutes contacting health charities, pharmaceutical companies or others linked to a particular health condition could reap huge dividends for you. You might get free leaflets, stress balls, samples (e.g. NRT or sunscreen), and other resources. For 2018, we've ensured there are free resources for all six mandatory health campaigns. You can also get free training to help you promote many of them. We send these details out via our newsletter and you can [sign up for it here](#).

## 6. Signposting information

If your pharmacy doesn't have one already, build up a 'folder' of signposting information that every member of the pharmacy team can access. It could be paper or electronic – whatever works best for your pharmacy.

## 7. Link things up: 'cross-promotion'

One great tip is to link different health topics together. For example, one pharmacy ran a healthy-eating campaign alongside April 2018's mandatory bowel cancer screening campaign. The pharmacy's Health Champions spotted an opportunity to help people see how they could reduce their risk of bowel cancer, as well as encouraging those eligible for screening to take it up. Another example they offer is running twin campaigns on heart disease and alcohol to raise awareness that heavy drinking can increase the risk of heart disease.

## 8. Softly, softly on sensitive topics

Tread softly when having health conversations about sensitive topics such as weight and alcohol consumption. A gentle question – e.g. "how are you otherwise" – will offer people the chance to open up if they want and is usually better than being too direct. They may mention they've been having a few glasses of wine every night to help them sleep, or they would like to lose a bit of weight. Give people the chance to offer information to you and open up at their own pace, rather than asking for it too directly.

## 9. Keep evidence of your work

Make sure that all your hard work as a Health Champion is recognised by keeping up-to-date records e.g. in a file. Take pictures of your health promotion displays. Keep a tally sheet of conversations and information you've provided and then use PharmOutcomes to record it formally. (Ask your pharmacy manager/contractor to do this if you don't have direct access to PharmOutcomes.)

**We hope you've found these top tips helpful. Contact us if you have any other tips or suggestions and we'll add them into this guide. You may also be interested in our Health Champions [webpage](#) and [this article](#) on two local Health Champions.**