

# FACT SHEET

## Promoting Yourself as a Community Champion.

**There are now over 1000 trained Every Action Counts Community Champions around the country.** If you're reading this you're probably one of them! The aim of this programme has been to train people so that they can introduce community groups, clubs and organisations to easy environmental actions they can take, help the group decide on an action plan, and help them get it underway.

Some Champions started out just wanting to work with one group, have done that and are now looking for new opportunities. Others became Champions because they want to go out and work with new people and new organisations. Either way this advice is for you.

If you've worked with a group you've got skills and experience. It makes good sense to put those skills to use – there are still a lot of people and groups out there who are unsure about what they can do to protect and improve their environment. Your first step is to make contact with one of those groups and see how you can work with them.

### Where to now?

Wherever you are in Britain, there are local organisations – community groups, sports groups, faith organisations, groups of young people and old people and so on. You may be involved in more than one group – many people are.

One way forward is therefore to contact a **Group you're in** (but is not active on the environment). If you're in a few make a list – it could be linked to a local school, or a church (or mosque or synagogue...), or people you play a sport with. If they meet regularly then maybe there's an opportunity to ask for a chance to speak at a meeting.

If you get the chance, then don't be shy! Prepare a two minute talk: say that you've been interested in environmental issues for a while, that you've been working with another group where members have found there's plenty that they can do to help the environment (and maybe save money), and that if there's anyone in this group that would like to do the same then perhaps you can talk about it.

Use this initial talk to set a time at a future meeting (the next or one after?) where you can introduce the EAC ideas properly (using the game and other materials). If there's only a few people interested then you could set up a separate meeting. Try and get people's names and contact details so that you can remind them about the next meeting.

Another way forward is to make contact with a **Group you know** (but are not part of). Maybe it's the local community association or some group that a friend of yours is involved in. They can help you get an introduction. If not then it's time to contact a **Group you don't know**. This may need a little more work.

### Approaching groups

If you're looking to promote yourself like this, choose one or two as your first targets. Find out who coordinates or chairs the group and approach them directly. There are several ways to do this:

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- **A letter or email.** This is perhaps the most formal, but it's good because it gives you the chance to set out what you can offer in a little more detail. You can describe what you've done already and how it might work for this group. You can also refer or link to the EAC website. There is a sample letter on the EAC website which you could adapt.
- **A phone call.** This is quick but can be difficult if you're ringing someone you don't know. 'Cold callers' aren't always popular! Plan your call carefully and look to get one or two key points across quickly and simply (see below). Obviously this may be easier if you have a mutual contact whose name you can use by way of introduction.
- **Face-to-face.** This is best if you can meet the person. They can see who you are as well as hear about you, you can offer them samples of materials and you can avoid misunderstandings. Again, an introduction through a mutual friend can be helpful.

With all these contacts there are a few key points to get across:

- You live locally
- You're trained and active on environmental issues
- You'd be happy to come and talk to the group for a few minutes
- If people are interested you can help the group develop an action plan

### Looking for new audiences

If you've worked with two or three groups and would like to go wider then there's other ways to promote yourself.

- **Look around for local networks and newsletters.** These could be small scale – a parish newsletter or larger – the mailings from your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or Rural Community Council (RCC). For these you may want to write a few lines announcing that you're a trained environmental Community Champion and you'd be happy to talk with any local organisation about how they can get involved in this work.
- **Talk to key people.** Find out if there's anyone interested at your CVS or RCC. There should be – their national organisations are part of Every Action Counts too! They may be active or may think they should be and if they know you are keen they may be able to help promote your offer of help. Other useful people may be environmental groups: they may have contacts and newsletters, and may be very glad to hear from someone who has got our skills and energy. There may also be a local environmental network linking many such groups which may have a newsletter or website where you could 'advertise'.
- **Talk to your local council.** There'll be someone in your local council with the job of getting people involved in environmental action such as recycling (see the Community Champions Handbook for more details). They may be keen to help and promote your work and they may have a network of their own environmental or recycling champions. They may also be able to offer you leaflets, posters, give-away recycled pencils etc.
- **Advertise!** If you're really keen you could make a simple poster explaining what you do and put it up in a library or community centre offering talks to groups (be sure to be clear on who you are going to visit – remember the personal safety advice!)

Whatever you do, keep the EAC office informed, and pass on any good ideas and useful contacts.