



# CHAMPIONS BOARD SCHOOL PILOT REVIEW



Scottish Borders  
Champions Board  
#ListenUp



we will  
**#KeepThePromise**





We asked the young people what they thought about coming along to the Champions Board Hubs...



their quotes will be featured throughout the report

RESERVED



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# Introduction

This report highlights the findings from the Champions Board School Pilot Project that was carried out from March 2023 to June 2023. We have compiled responses from evaluation forms that were filled out by young people and staff who were involved in the hubs as well as information on next steps and our own thoughts/takeaways.

## Hub Facilitators

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Promise Project Worker



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For the purpose of this report all feedback from the evaluations has been kept anonymous.



# Purpose

The purpose of the Schools Pilot Project was to set up Champions Board Hubs in two education facilities within the Scottish Borders. With accessibility being one of the underlying principles of the Scottish Borders Champions Board, being able to reach out to young people in different parts of the Borders was key. Setting up these hubs in schools allowed us to meet and get to know young people in their own communities, rather than them having to travel to us.

**“The Champions Board is a place to feel listened to”**

Champions Board Hub Member

**“The Champions Board is great”**

Champions Board Hub Member

We set out to:

- Ensure we are providing a platform for a diverse range of care experienced young people across the region to have a voice and share their experiences;
- Provide a stepping stone into and/or offer an alternative forum to the Gala Champs group whilst also creating links to share information and ideas;
- Work with schools to become the best corporate parents they can be;
- Ensure we are supporting the workforce by providing training and tools to help schools keep the Promise (e.g. drop ins/awareness raising sessions etc.).



# Pilot Schools

Two pilot schools were identified after taking different data into account, such as: the number of care experienced pupils, any pre-existing provision for care experienced pupils, and any interest expressed by the school in the past about a Champions Board approach. Following discussion with the Virtual School Headteacher, we approached **Jedburgh Grammar Campus** and **Berwickshire High School**. After initial discussions took place, the process began to set up hubs at these two schools.

As well as two schools being identified work began to create a Champions Board Hub within a Borders College Campus (Galashiels) and at a Heriot-Watt University Campus (Galashiels).

The idea of the pilot was to trial different approaches that were tailored for the individual needs of each school. This meant we had to be flexible about what we were offering. By working closely with the staff who knew the young people we were able to create something that would fit seamlessly into the unique school environments.

By trialling different approaches at each venue, we have seen the pros and cons of each one and this will help us in the future when setting up new Hubs in other schools.

**“Students have been able to relate to experiences shared by visitors from The Champions Board”**

School Staff Member



# How Did We Do?

We asked young people who attended The Champions Board Hubs a series of questions:

When asked on a scale from 1 to 10 **“How much have you enjoyed coming along to The Champions Board Hub?”**

8 young people said 10/10 they really enjoyed it.

1 young person said 8/10 they enjoyed it.

When asked **“Do you feel like you have gained or learnt something from coming along to the group?”**

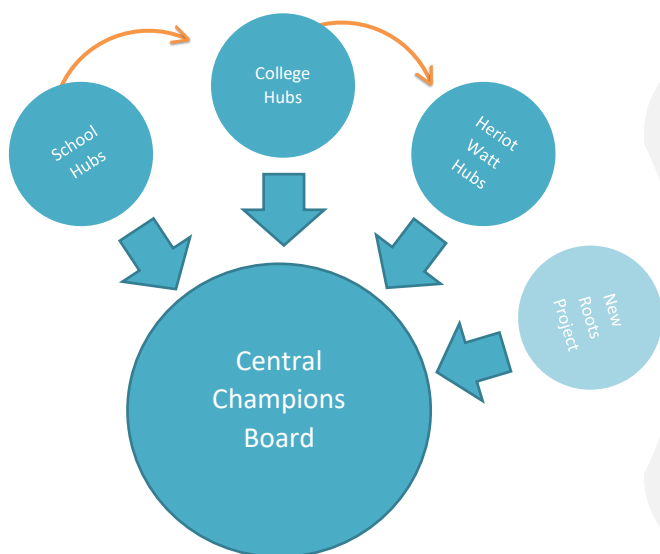
All the young people said YES.

When asked what they have gained or learnt they said:

- Meeting new people/making new friends
- Working on team building skills
- Learning about other peoples' experiences can help



# Structure Plan/Vision



We aim to create stability and consistency for the young people by offering the Hub at Borders College and Heriot Watt University, meaning as young people continue their academic journey the Champions Board can remain a supportive network. This ties into the relationship-based practice approach we incorporate within all our work. We understand that school often plays a big part in a young person's life, and losing all those connections at once when leaving school can have a big impact.

Our plan for 2023/24 is to create one centralised Champions Board that would meet monthly to focus on participation work. This would be targeted at young people who want to be involved with more formal participation work. This would be a structured forum where there would be a chairperson, minute taker etc. in line with the Champions Board approach in other areas.

The diagram above shows how the various Hubs would act as groups that link into the monthly centralised Champions Board. These groups will allow us to focus on other key aspects that are important to running and sustaining a Champions Board such as: building relationships, creating supportive networks and being responsive to individual needs.

Work has already started to create two new Champions Board Hubs in 2 additional schools within the Borders. Initial meetings with both schools are planned for September.

By creating these new Hubs in schools, we have managed to almost triple the number of young people we are reaching. The more young people we work with, the more voices we hear, and the better understanding we can have of what is working well for care experienced young people and what needs to change.

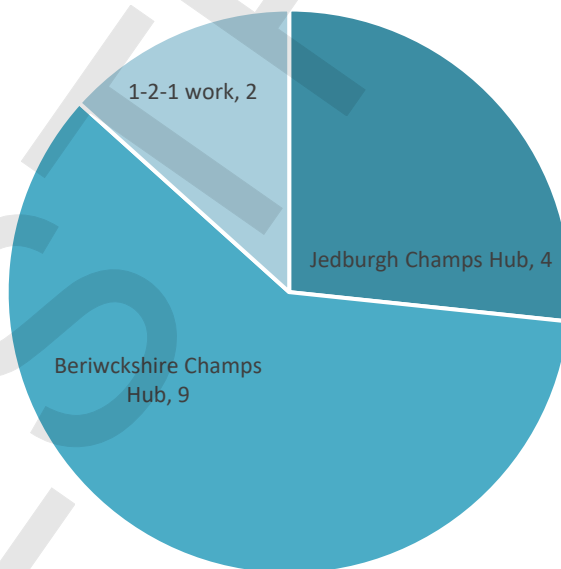
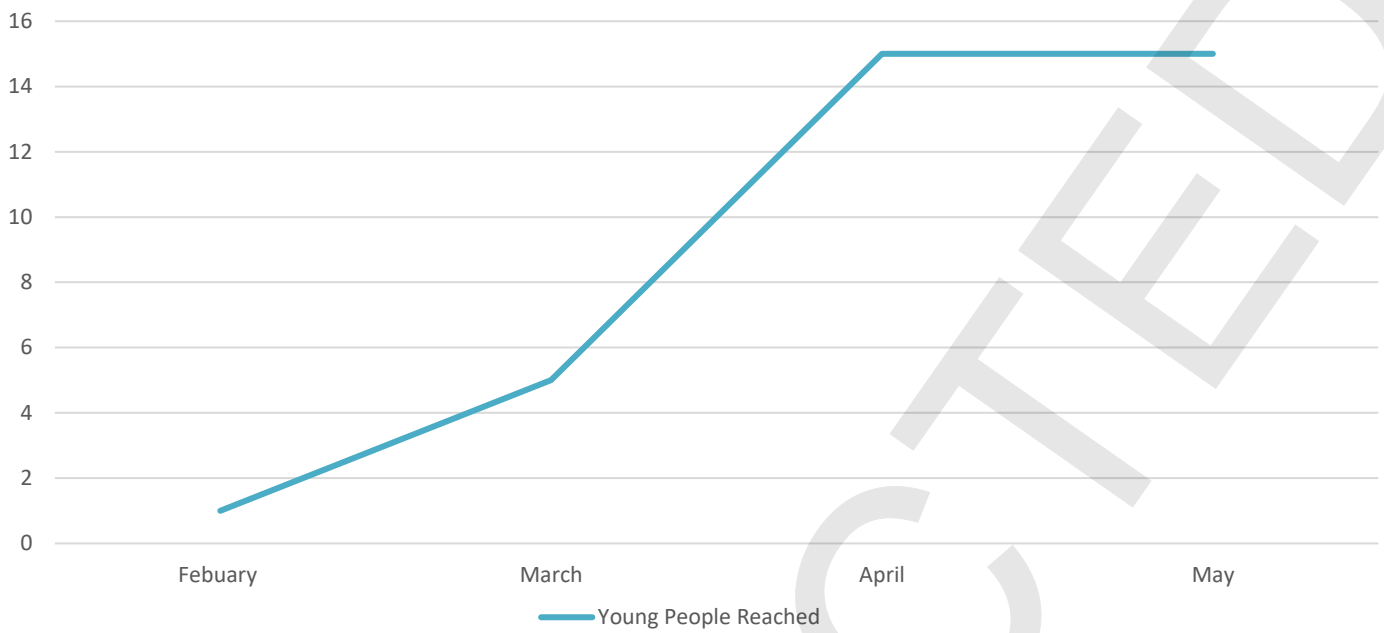
Creating these Hubs also ensures we are fulfilling our corporate parenting responsibilities and delivering on The Promise, which has voice at the heart of its recommendations:

**'Active listening and engagement must be fundamental to the way Scotland makes decisions and supports children and families.'** (The Promise, p13)





### Number of young people involved





## Jedburgh Grammar Campus Champs Hub

Jedburgh Champs Hub was the first Hub that was set up, and we saw great enthusiasm and investment from the staff within the school. This helped in all aspects of developing the hub.

Jedburgh Champs Hub met fortnightly, and feedback highlighted how it became a positive support network for the pupils who attended. It was a smaller group of 2-4 young people from one year group, which really gave us the opportunity to get to know them.

**“The Champions Board is a place to feel listened to”**

Champions Board Hub Member

**“The pupils involved gain a lot from coming to the group... they feel like they are part of something which gives them a sense of belonging within the school”**

School Staff Member

Jedburgh Grammar Campus underwent an inspection whilst the pilot was being carried out. The Champions Board Hub was mentioned in their findings.

- “Staff fulfil their statutory duties linked to children and young people well. For example, young carers are considered for a young carer statement and staff work effectively with partners to ensure support for them is accessible. Care-experienced young people benefit from a Champions Board hub, which is being piloted at Jedburgh Grammar Campus. Staff also monitor and track attendance and exclusions appropriately.”

Page 12, summarised Inspection Findings Jedburgh Grammar Campus



## Group Content

During the pilot we explored a range of different topics with the young people such as:

- What is Corporate Parenting
- What is The Promise
- What support they have

It was through activities like this that we really saw the young people's personalities come out and often they would open up about their experiences.

As outlined elsewhere in this report, relationship-based practice is at the centre of our Champions Board Approach in Scottish Borders. We therefore spent time at the outset really getting to know the young people through fun team building activities and group discussions. One of the young people's favourite activities was 'protect the egg,' which saw them work together in teams to create a nest that would protect their egg from a high drop. It was good to see the different approaches the young people took, and how they really listened to one another.

**"Students have gained information and knowledge surrounding key themes"**

School Staff Member

Moving forward we would like to continue to focus on building relationships with young people, and potentially focus on bigger topics such as: language, children's rights, visits from corporate parents, what does care experienced mean, being care experienced in school and stigma and care experience.

We would hope to link in with the Children and Young People's Planning Partnership (CYPPP), to share the thoughts and views of the young people about different topics, and give recommendations based on what the young people want to happen.



Berwickshire High School



## Berwickshire High School Champs Hub

At Berwickshire High School, we linked in with a pre-existing nurture group which had been set up for care experienced young people and young carers from s1 – s6. This meant the structure of the sessions was slightly different as the young people already knew one another and there were more young people attending the session.

During our second session we engaged with the young people to establish how frequently they wanted us to attend. The majority of the young people wanted us to attend on a three weekly basis and this seemed to work well for this Hub.

**“The Champions Board Hub has helped me find more people with similar experiences/life to me”**

Champions Board Hub Member

**“The Champions Board Hub was interesting and taught me life skills”**

Champions Board Hub Member

We have really enjoyed running the Hubs in both the schools and have learned a lot from the experience. We feel it has been important to engage with the staff and young people so we can tailor the structure of the Hubs for the individual schools. We will continue to be flexible when forming new Hubs to ensure we are meeting the needs of the young people within their own schools.



# BORDERS COLLEGE

At Borders College we ran one session in Spring 2023. We met with the Student Services Team Lead to establish which campus we should run the session at and which day would be the best in terms of attendance at college. This event was very well supported by College Staff, but was not well attended on the day. On reflection with our colleague and one of the young people that did attend, we need to consider different approaches to advertising events going forwards.

For example, the event was advertised by the college sending out emails to all care experienced students, and engagement with young people highlights the importance of using social media to promote events. This links in with our learning from other aspects of our work which highlights the importance of cross-platform diversity when working with young people.

We have met with college staff over the Summer and are looking to attend the college monthly from their Introductory Week to establish a consistent presence. As with our other Hubs, we will adapt our approach as needed following engagement with more young people.

We also worked closely with Heriot Watt staff to run a session for care experienced young people at the College in March. This session was advertised and promoted by the College Staff using a range of different approaches (posters, emails, direct discussions with young people) yet unfortunately no one attended on the day.

We are going to explore the option of combining the two College Hubs, alternating the venue each month. We are booked to attend both Freshers Week Fairs at the start of the new semester.





## Feedback from Education Staff

**We asked education staff involved in the pilot if they would recommend starting a Champions Board Hub to other schools?**

**100% Responded 10 out of 10 – Yes, they are extremely likely to recommend.**

### Training

As part of the pilot, one of our aims was to offer training opportunities and regular drop ins for staff to learn more about The Promise, UNCRC, Corporate Parenting etc. Due to time constraints this wasn't possible, however we still think a link between ourselves and the staff within the schools the Hubs are running in would be beneficial. The feedback from the pilot highlights the staff involved agree with this. Going forwards we would like to tailor training based on what the young people in that school tell us. We hope to develop this in the academic year 2023-24.

**“I think I would benefit as well as other staff members in improving my knowledge on these subjects... having up to date knowledge on these subjects as we are working daily with the young people .”**

School Staff Member

**“This would be hugely beneficial”**

School Staff Member



# Primary Schools

After the success of the Champions Board Hubs in secondary schools, we also hope to explore options for Hubs within primary schools. This comes after a suggestion from a staff member at Jedburgh Grammar Campus which has Nursery, Primary and Secondary provision for children and young people all within the same building.

One way of involving primary and secondary pupils would be through a peer mentoring programme between the senior and junior pupils within the school.

Due to the current staffing capacity of the Champions Board, our current focus is on secondary school provision; however, if staffing were to increase we would be keen to explore options with primary schools in the longer term.

**“I mainly work in primary... I think it would be great to involve some of them as I think they would really benefit from it.”**

School Staff Member



# Skills Learnt

Staff at both schools identified a range of skills they felt the young people had developed new skills as a result of coming along to the Champions Board sessions:

**Confidence**

**Working as a team**

**Meeting new people**

**Wellbeing**

**Asking for help**

**Leadership**

**Listening Skills**

**Problem solving**

**Communication**

**Responsibility**

**Decision making**



RESTRICTED

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