

Draft Evidence Champion: Role Summary

When decisions are made based on the best available research evidence and implemented effectively it increases the likelihood of their success. For schools this can be a significant workload-win; helping to avoid excessive trial and error, or time spent re-planning or revising activities which later prove to be ineffective.

The Effective Kent Project (EKP) was established with the aim of embedding evidence-based approaches and interventions in Kent to further drive improvement. The third strand of the project focusses on sustainability. The Evidence Champion role is key to this work with its focus on supporting and embedding a culture of evidence-based practice in schools across the county.

The role has been developed and refined in partnership with the KAH Research Hub Reference Group and is one of the five priorities of the Hub. The recruitment and development of a network of research-literate, school-based Evidence Champions is integral to all elements of the Hub work.

What is an Evidence Champion?

An Evidence Champion works closely with school leaders to ensure that planned improvement activity is shaped by research evidence. They support, encourage and engage colleagues with how to source, access and understand high-quality research evidence as well as how to apply this to teaching and learning, CPD or school improvement planning.

Evidence Champions provide both classroom teachers and members of the senior leadership team with a link between their school and the world of educational research, seeking to summarise or contextualise the evidence according to staff or student needs. An Evidence Champion plays a crucial role in instilling a culture of using evidence to inform strategic planning and will model or exemplify this process in their own day-to-day practice.

What is it not?

- The role of the Evidence Champion is not necessarily about steering the pedagogy of the school or being a key decision maker - it is to support and influence others to consider the best available evidence when making those decisions.
- It is not about the Evidence Champion having all the answers, but it is about being research-literate enough to lay hands on relevant and reliable material or to lead further enquiry.
- It is also not about providing wraparound support for other schools or leading the implementation of new initiatives; it is about working within the school, networking - particularly through the Research Hub - or signposting other forms of support such as an Evidence Lead in Education (ELE).

What does the role involve?

For Evidence Champions:

Although the role of Evidence Champion may vary depending on school context, anyone taking on the responsibility should be prepared to:

- Work closely with senior and middle leaders to support their alignment of school improvement priorities or departmental planning with the latest evidence base.
- Find, summarise and share evidence related to school priorities - being discerning about quality - and helping others to make use of it.
- Proactively encourage others in school to engage with evidence, providing guidance and support to staff who may feel less confident. This could involve giving input to whole-school or developmental PD planning or delivering training sessions.
- Work with individual teachers or small groups to help explore pupil learning issues, explore solutions grounded in evidence and signpost to tools or resources that can evaluate if changes are leading to intended outcomes.
- Understand and help others to understand the potential limitations with research and how implementation can fail.
- Signpost to other forms of support provided through the EKP and the Research Hub including ELEs, EEF training programmes or [Promising Projects](#), as well as resources such as the [EEF's Guide to Implementation](#) and the audit tool.
- Draw on existing expertise, networks or peer-to-peer initiatives to support collaboration between Evidence Champions across the county and actively engage with the Kent Research Hub e.g. through contributing to online forums, taking part in networking activities or participating in research events

Considerations for Headteachers and Senior Leaders:

Senior leadership teams seeking to appoint and develop an Evidence Champion should be prepared to:

- Understand and fully support the role of Evidence Champion, including attending a virtual launch session for SLT hosted by EKP.
- Guide and support the work of the Evidence Champion, ensuring they have the capacity, insights and mechanisms to act as a champion for the use of evidence in your school (this might involve ensuring they are part of relevant groups, are invited to meetings or can access documents necessary to inform CPD or policies).
- Provide release time for an Evidence Champion to engage with the initial training and commit to ensuring the individual has sufficient capacity to fulfil the role effectively without creating a workload burden.
- Champion and promote the credibility of the Evidence Champion to other staff, strategically supporting their work to develop a school-wide culture of engaging with research.
- Regularly meet or liaise with the Evidence Champion to monitor and track progress in school.

Who can become an Evidence Champion?

An Evidence Champion is a school-level role. Those meeting some or all of the following criteria are mostly likely to be suited to becoming Evidence Champions.

Teachers or leaders with:

- a demonstrable and strong interest in evidence and research
- experience of and/or the capacity to work across the school
- responsibility for leading CPD and developing others in a team
- an interest in wider strategic school improvement

What are the benefits?

- Participating schools will have a member of staff who is highly research-literate and able to support SLT with the implementation of CPD and policies.
- It's a workload win for schools – making evidence-based decisions means your plans are more likely to work.
- It offers a strong professional development opportunity for Evidence Champions, who will access ongoing opportunities such as fully-funded EEF training.
- Being an Evidence Champion can be a useful stepping stone to becoming an Evidence Lead in Education (ELE), and to supporting colleagues beyond one's own school.
- Evidence Champions gain access to a network of like-minded colleagues across Kent through links with the Kent Research Hub activity and Kent Associate Research School (KARS).
- As well as the fully funded Evidence Champion training, additional funding to support in-school set up costs can be applied for. The support available will range from funding towards staff release time to bespoke implementation support from an Evidence Leader in Education.

Access for small schools

Small schools are welcome to work collaboratively and establish joint Evidence Champion arrangements within current or new networks and federations. Consideration of development, deployment and management will be needed. Durrington Research School or KARS can guide and support making these arrangements to ensure the best use of the role.

How to become an Evidence Champion

Find out more and [register](#) for the Evidence Champion training launch event on Thursday, 10 February 2022 (08:00am – 09:00am). The session is aimed at Headteachers, senior leaders and aspiring Evidence Champions are welcome to attend alongside members of SLT.

Following the launch event on Thursday, 10 February 2022 registration will open for the Evidence Champion training on Durrington Research School's website. The virtual training will begin in the Spring term and take place over three sessions:

- **Monday, 7 March 2022 (3.30-5.30pm):** What is an Evidence Champion? Why do schools need an Evidence Champion?
- **Tuesday, 22 March 2022 (3.30-5.30pm):** What sources of evidence are available and how can we evaluate their usefulness?
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- **Monday, 25 April 2022 (3.30-5.30pm):** How can schools effectively mobilise the research evidence and evaluate its impact?

This will be followed with a face-to-face networking workshop in the summer term.

The EEfective Kent Project recognises the time and capacity required to successfully embed and implement an Evidence Champion within school, and therefore will be offering additional funding to eligible. The support available will range from funding towards staff release time to bespoke implementation support from an [Evidence Leader in Education](#).