



Mind Burton and District

Report on Grow Eco Therapy

June 2021

Doing
Our
Bit

 Staffordshire
County Council

**Keri Lawrence, Development and Sustainability Officer
Burton and District Mind**

Foreword

The funding provided by Staffordshire County Council's Doing Our Bit fund has provided Burton and District Mind with the opportunity to host a successful and extremely needed Eco-therapy project for people with mental health problems during the Covid-19 restrictions.

As well as provided a much needed reason to start the week with a positive mental approach, the funding allowed Burton and District Mind to consolidate a professional high quality team, which has led to 3 further eco-therapy projects being commissioned locally.

This project supported 10 people to build their social networks, consider mental health in new ways, get out into the fresh air and get some sunlight, whilst learning more about gardening, nutrition and being engaged in physical activity.

Intended Outcomes

Key intended outcomes included:

- support for vulnerable people, that helps them to maintain their independence at home and in their community. This includes reducing loneliness and increasing emotional wellbeing.
- support to continue with an existing successful project at a particularly difficult time of the year.

- We will accept referrals for the project from a range of services including Community Help Points, Social Prescribers, mental health providers and housing associations.
- we will focus our project on the disadvantaged, either through vulnerability and/or low income.

We foresee at least 10 vulnerable people or people on low income with experience of mental illness reporting that the project has reduced loneliness and increased mental wellbeing

Results

Key Performance Indicator	Aim	Result
Number of Participants	12	10
Number of Participants with reduced loneliness and increased mental wellbeing	10	8
Positive impact on their mental wellbeing	90%	75%
Positive impact on their physical wellbeing	90%	90%
Reduction in loneliness and isolation	90%	63%
More knowledge of healthy lifestyle	90%	100%
Continue to grow plants after the programme concludes	50%	100%
Move towards volunteering or further community gardening	50%	100%
Net Promoter Score (Friend and Family Question)	50	86

Burton and District Mind implemented the Common Evaluation Framework as prescribed by the Mind Quality Mark part way through the project. We previously used a different benchmarking process to set our targets, hence a slight deviation from the targets.

Scores on Project and Facilitation

Average rating out of 10 for the Project as whole: 9.6 out of 10.

Average rating for the Facilitation of the Project: 9.75 out of 10.

Comments

- It is a group of likeminded people. It is very confidential and it is a safe space.
- The facilitators are easy to talk to and they listen and do not judge.
- I have been able to do things that I would never have thought of doing and have learnt new skills. I have also been able to meet people my own age and it's nice to meet different people and improve my social life.
- It gives me something else to focus on, something that I am interested in. I am outside with a group of people who have a shared interest. It is friendly.

- It has improved my mood and I have had something to look forward to.
- I have enjoyed mixing and meeting with other people, I would have stayed at home without this.
- The staff are really friendly.
- It has a big help and I have learnt a new skill. It is nice to be in the garden; it gets me out.
- It is somewhere to come, it makes you get up and meet people. The people in the group will miss the companionship. It is somewhere I feel safe as I am by myself.
- If you like being outside it is brilliant! To see something that you have grown is so rewarding!
- 12 weeks is not long enough. We could do with doing a whole season to see the progress.

Added Value

The facilitation was provided by Forest Harvest CIO, a local nature charity. Although this was 'charged for' within our budget, the funding is now supporting a Staffordshire nature charity to provide eco-learning to families.

The project also meant a person with lived experience of mental health problems could join as a Community Help volunteer, building confidence and vocational skills.

Case Study

"I was on my own after losing my wife last year. Despite taking my pills, I was not coping. My daughter helped me but I kept taking overdoses. My CPN referred me to the project.

I came to the project and made some friends. I used to wake up thinking "How can I harm myself today?" but now I have a more positive attitude towards life,

I know now what I missed out on, I know I don't have to hide my negative feelings in a corner somewhere but I can do something about them. I found out more about growing plants, I have seen plants growing and I feel I have grown myself.

The team have been fantastic, helpful and have given time to listen to me. When I first came, I felt welcome straight away.

I am going to enjoy my life. I'll continue to use the skills in my back garden." - CW

