Sydenham Garden
A growing community

Guidelines for Referrers

About Sydenham Garden

Sydenham Garden aims to transform lives through therapeutic activities, enabling people to move forward in a supportive community environment. We deliver a range of activities and opportunities for the local community, but our service focuses on those experiencing mental ill health or other significant illness.

We currently provide therapeutic sessions in horticulture and art and craft to referred co-workers (clients) living in Bromley or Lewisham with the aim of improving their quality of life, social interaction, physical and mental health. We generate positive outcomes through encouragement, reassurance and the structure that a placement in our project offers.

The help and support co-workers receive is guided by the co-worker themselves, with a typical placement lasting between 12 and 18 months. This enables co-workers to fully benefit from their personal development programme (a self-guided process) and our overall aim is for some improvement to take place within this period.

Instrumental on this journey of recovery are the regular signposting events at the garden and quarterly goal setting and review sessions that go beyond the immediate gardening practice and creative activities we provide.

Who we can help

Clients who benefit most from a placement at Sydenham Garden are those living with anxiety, moderate depression or those living in isolation. The structure of sessions and the social environment allows them to move forward on their path of recovery within a programme of supported and meaningful activity. The major benefits of a placement at Sydenham garden are increased opportunities for social interaction, improvements in mental and/or physical health and an improved quality of life.

In order for co-workers (clients) to gain the most from their time at the project, we have found from experience that there are some key success factors:

- Co-workers need to have a level of independence that enables them to engage in meaningful occupation and to carry out a task independently or with minimal 1-2-1 support

- Motivation and commitment to participating in our project should be at a level that will allow for regular (weekly) attendance

- Attendance and participation in sessions should help to move co-workers forward on their path of recovery through developing confidence, encouraging self help and providing opportunities to gain new or rediscover existing skills. An active interest in and commitment to setting and working towards goals is **essential** in achieving this.

- Where manageable recovery is considered difficult or impossible, attending sessions should be expected to improve at least one of the following to a noticeable degree for the duration of their placement; quality of life, level of social interaction, physical health, mental health.

Making a Referral

If you would like to refer a client/patient living in Lewisham and Bromley **please check through the list above** to ensure this is the right service for your client. If you feel Sydenham Garden can support your client, please complete and return our referral form, seeking the client's permission beforehand.

Once we have received your referral form, we may contact you for further information. If we feel that our project can support your client, we will contact them directly to arrange an introductory visit to the project, normally within 6-8 weeks. Clients are welcome to attend this introductory visit with a friend, family member, carer or support worker. If we do not feel we can support your client effectively, we will contact you to let you know.

We receive more referral requests than we can currently support and so we operate a waiting list. If client repeatedly cancels or fails to attend the introductory visit, we will then offer the opportunity to others on our waiting list.

Once a client has been offered and accepted a place there is a settling in period of 4-6 weeks. At this point an assessment takes place and staff work with clients to set goals to work towards through the duration of the placement. Again, failure to attend sessions regularly may result in the placement being withdrawn. In these instances, clients are welcome to be re-referred when they are more able to make the commitment required to benefit fully from a placement at Sydenham Garden.

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