



# Annual evaluation of Sydenham Garden

## 2014/15



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# Evaluation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

Sydenham Garden is primarily a **rehabilitation** and **recovery** based organisation using various creative and therapeutic activities to help people with significant illness in London and predominantly the boroughs of Lewisham and Bromley. While there is evidence to suggest that the activities Sydenham Garden run prevent escalating need, the primary reason doctors and health professionals refer patients to Adult Mental Health (AMH) groups is for recovery purposes. The Primary reason doctors and health professionals refer to Dementia groups is to stop dementia symptoms from worsening. The organisation grew and evolved significantly during the period of evaluation and continues to do so.

### EVALUATION AIM

This evaluation considers Sydenham Garden's four main projects, looks at cumulative totals to generate a picture of the organisations effectiveness, and references the other work Sydenham Garden carried out over the period.

This evaluation was conducted over the financial year 2014/15. The aim was to construct a report on the topics and outputs achieved during the period.

### OUTPUTS:

Number referred:	269
Number commencing:	141
Number dropped off*:	15
Number moved on**:	29
Number completed:	99
Number extended***:	6

Number of individuals attending at least one session during the period: 227

### ATTENDANCE:

Collective attendance for the period was 72%

\*Dropped off: People stop coming for a variety of reasons such as ill-health, or we were unable to obtain their reason.

\*\*Moved on: People leave their placement for a variety of positive or neutral reasons.

\*\*\*There are occasional circumstances where ending a placement is assessed as having potential to cause harm. In these cases the placement can be extended for up to three months as an action plan is worked through with the outreach and development project worker.

# Evaluation of Garden (AMH)



## EVALUATION AIM

This evaluation considers Garden, which is one of the core projects run for patients referred to Sydenham Garden.

The evaluation was conducted over the financial year 2014/15. The aim was to construct a report on the topics and outputs achieved during the period.

## TOPICS

Mental wellbeing, ability to undergo physical activity, social inclusion & interaction, developments in life outside of SG project, quality of life, independence and confidence levels.

## METHOD

### QUANTITATIVE STUDY & QUALITATIVE STUDY:

In order to assess improvement in physical health, mental health, social interaction, quality of life, confidence and independence levels of co-workers who completed their placement, Likert scale questionnaire (consisting of six items) was administered to them. The questionnaires were completed by the co-workers when they started on the Garden project and then at quarterly intervals until they completed their placement. 39 co-workers completed the questionnaires more than once.

A random sample group of 7 co-workers also completed WEMWBS (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) on 3 or more occasions to assess their wellbeing in comparison to the population and to monitor improvements during their placement. Because WEMWBS scores show a roughly normal distribution, WEMWBS can be expected to capture the full spectrum of positive mental health without floor or ceiling effects and be suitable both for monitoring trends over time and evaluating the effect of mental health promoting programmes or interventions.

Moreover, co-workers were asked open-ended questions in order to reflect any changes in any of the six topic areas, along with setting their own goals and targets for their placement.

## RESULTS

Diagnoses were available for all co-workers and included: anxiety, bipolar affective disorder, depression, psychosis, schizophrenia, social isolation, post traumatic stress disorder, bereavement, Tourette's, cancer, Korsakoffs syndrome, obesity and cardiomyopathy.

### QUANTITATIVE CO-WORKERS STUDY BASED ON LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONNAIRE:

21 out of 39 co-workers (54%) recorded a positive change in their ability to undergo physical activity.

22 out of 39 co-workers (56%) recorded a positive change to their mental wellbeing.

22 out of 39 co-workers (56 %) recorded a positive change to their social inclusion and interaction.

24 out of 39 (62%) co-workers recorded a positive change to their quality of life.

The following 2 questions were only answered more than once by 15 co-workers who completed their placement during the period. This was due to the questionnaire having the questions added after the other 24 co-workers had already begun their placement.

7 out of 15 co-workers (47%) recorded a positive change to their level of independence.

12 out of 15 co-workers (80%) recorded a positive change to their confidence.

### QUANTITATIVE CO-WORKERS STUDY BASED ON WEMWBS QUESTIONNAIRE::

Group initial average: 38

Group completed average: 46

The overall group score improved by 21% during the garden sessions. The group average initially scored 38 and improved to scoring 46 by the time they finished. While the group didn't achieve an improvement to bring them up to the national average of 50.7, their score significantly improved by 8 points while they were on their garden placement.

## QUALITATIVE Co-WORKERS STUDY

Interview responses were almost entirely positive about participation in Garden sessions.

### ABILITY TO UNDERGO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

Some co-workers reported that taking part in Garden sessions enabled them to do more physical activity and that they enjoy the physical side. There was mention that it leads to greater satisfaction with other activities like eating and drinking.

### MENTAL WELLBEING:

Co-workers and carers found Garden sessions very helpful in improving their mental health giving them "purpose" "strength" "passion" and "hope". It is clear that co-workers perceive Garden sessions to be beneficial for their mental wellbeing.

### SOCIAL INCLUSION AND INTERACTION:

All interviewees mentioned that both their social inclusion and their confidence to interact improved.

### CONFIDENCE:

Co-workers feel that taking part in Garden sessions helps to increase their confidence "to be themselves", to use their skills, to interact with others and to take part in other activities.

### INDEPENDENCE:

Some co-workers mentioned that Garden sessions have helped them to work independently of others.

### DEVELOPMENTS IN LIFE OUTSIDE OF SYDENHAM GARDEN:

Co-workers mentioned various and broad developments in life outside Sydenham Garden, many of which they directly cited the Garden session as the influencing factor. These included: Gardening and starting a business

## OUTPUTS:

- Number referred: 147
- Number commencing: 47
- Number dropped off\*: 8
- Number moved on\*\*: 13
- Number completed: 32
- Number extended\*\*\*: 2

## ATTENDANCE:

Collective attendance for the period was 62%

## REASONS FOR NON-COMPLETION:

Reasons were given for non-completion during exit interviews. Some were positive or neutral and some were negative. The positive or neutral reasons were: attending course (1), Moving location (3), work commitments (1) and transferred to Sydenham Garden Art & Craft (1). The negative reasons were: becoming too ill (1) decided it wasn't for them (1) and child care (1).

## DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED IN THE METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

From evaluating the data we have collected over the year, we will introduce a new method of administrating and recording WEMWBS. In the last year, we have collected WEMWBS during individual reviews and periodically throughout a co-workers time at SG (after their first session, after 4 weeks and then every 3months). However, we have found that many WEMWBS were incomplete with co-workers missing out questions. (The 'I've been feeling loved' question was missed by 3 co-workers in quarter 4 while all other questions were answered.)

To address these issues we will be administering the WEMWBS questionnaire on a monthly basis to increase the amount of data received. We will also be making the process feel more anonymous by using identification numbers rather than names.

\*Dropped off: People stop coming for a variety of reasons such as ill-health, didn't enjoy it, couldn't engage, or we were unable to obtain their reason.

\*\*Moved on: People leave their placement for a variety positive or neutral reasons.

\*\*\*There are occasional circumstances where ending a placement is assessed as having potential to cause harm. In these cases the placement can be extended for up to 3 months as a plan is worked out with the outreach and development project worker.

## **GARDEN PROJECT CONCLUSION**

There is an overall improvement in all areas evaluated for co-workers, varying between 47%-80%. This rate of improvement is high when compared to similar interventions and traditional approaches like talking therapies.

Co-workers identified Garden sessions as very beneficial across all the areas evaluated.

The quantitative data strongly suggests high levels of improvement during their time at Sydenham Garden, especially in terms of quality of life and confidence.

The qualitative data supports this assertion and it's clear that Garden sessions are a benefit to the co-workers health and social wellbeing.

# Evaluation of Art & Craft (AMH)



## EVALUATION AIM

This evaluation considers Art & Craft, which is one of the core projects run for patients referred to Sydenham Garden.

The evaluation was conducted over the financial year 2014/15. The aim was to construct a report to evaluate the monitoring data Sydenham Garden collected during the period and consider the Art & Craft project's effectiveness in delivering health and social related outcomes for co-workers (the name given to its service users).

## TOPICS

Mental wellbeing, ability to undergo physical activity, social inclusion & interaction, developments in life outside of SG project, quality of life and independence.

## METHOD

### QUANTITATIVE STUDY & QUALITATIVE STUDY:

In order to assess improvement in physical health, mental health, social interaction, and quality of life levels of co-workers who completed their placement in Art & Craft, a Likert scale questionnaire (consisting of 4 items) was administered to them. The questionnaires were completed by the co-workers when they first arrived at Sydenham Garden and then repeated at quarterly intervals during their placement. Results were compared and considered.

21 co-workers completed at least 1 questionnaire and interview while 18 completed more than 1.

## RESULTS

Diagnoses of various mental health conditions were available for all co-workers and they included: bipolar affective disorder; anxiety; depression; psychotic disorder; social isolation, and mixed.

### QUANTITATIVE CO-WORKERS STUDY:

- 7 out of 18 co-workers (39%) reported a positive result in their ability to undergo physical activity.
- 12 out of 18 co-workers (67%) reported a positive result in their mental wellbeing.
- 13 out of 18 co-workers (72%) reported a positive change to their social inclusion and interaction.
- 11 out of 18 co-workers (61%) reported a positive change to their quality of life.

### QUALITATIVE CO-WORKERS STUDY:

Interview data was extremely positive about participation in Art & Craft sessions at Sydenham Garden.

It seems there is often some initial anxiety about joining the project, but that this dissipates quickly once a co-worker has started attending.

Well-being: Co-workers talked about feeling safe, included, being able to express themselves, feeling more confident and independent.

Ability to undergo physical activity: Some co-workers reported that Art & Craft sessions gave them the confidence to take part in physical activity. Gentle movements and feeling safe contributed to this feeling.

Social inclusion and interaction: Almost all co-workers noticed that Sydenham Garden gives them opportunities for social interaction. The majority of co-workers believe the sessions improve their social inclusion and interaction, and believe this is because of increased confidence, a non-judgemental environment and feeling generally safe.

Quality of life: It was clear from the reviews that Sydenham Garden almost always causes a perceived positive change in co-workers quality of life.

### DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED

The 2 main difficulties experienced were the initiation of a co-worker into the group and their completion of a placement. They often experienced levels of anxiety during these times. While the completion anxiety is not easily offset, the initial anxiety is managed through one on one introductions before they start and a high level of volunteer support during the sessions. There are plans to offer time-specific counselling for those experiencing high levels of anxiety on approaching completion of their placement.

## OUTPUTS:

• Number referred: AMH in general.	47 direct to Art & Craft, plus 19 to Sydenham Garden
• Number commencing:	32
• Number Dropped off*:	7
• Number Moved on**:	7
• Number Completed***:	14

## ATTENDANCE:

Collective attendance for the period was 69%.

## ART & CRAFT PROJECT CONCLUSION

Improvement levels based on the Likert scale questions are high when compared with other similar interventions and traditional interventions like counselling.

Co-workers receive a rich and varied experience while taking part in Art & Craft. When there is initial anxiety, it is offset quickly and the co-worker experiences a supportive and therapeutic programme, team and environment that almost certainly improves their health.

The quantitative data strongly suggests high levels of improvement during their time at Sydenham Garden, especially in terms of general mental health and social inclusion and interaction. As with other complex interventions, it can be difficult to ascertain just how much of these improvements are due to Sydenham Gardens particular intervention, but the qualitative data supports the assertion that this particular intervention is causing the improvements and it's clear that co-workers health and quality of life improves during their time at Sydenham Garden, and that they perceive it to be due to their Art & Craft sessions.

\*Dropped off: People become too ill, or stop coming with reasons that were unobtainable.

\*\* Moved on: People leave their placement with good reason before their 12 months are completed after spending more than 1 month in their placement. Common reasons are that they went back to, or started employment, moved out of the area or began full time education.

\*\*\* 4 co-workers had their placement extended due extenuating circumstances. This is usually when an assessment deemed completing their placement would cause them harm. In these circumstances a 3 month plan of action is put into place where a co-worker receives extra support from our development worker and every effort is made to refer them to another organisation.

# Evaluation of Sow & Grow (Dementia)



## EVALUATION AIM

Referrals for Sow & Grow focus on preventing needs from escalating and Dementia worsening, although there are cases where Sow & Grow have facilitated recovery of specific functions.

This evaluation was conducted over the financial year 2014/15. The aim was to construct a report on the topics and outputs achieved during the period.

## TOPICS

Mental wellbeing, ability to undergo physical activity, social inclusion & interaction, developments in life outside of SG project, quality of life, and independence.

## METHOD

### QUANTITATIVE STUDY & QUALITATIVE STUDY:

In order to assess improvement in physical health, mental health, social interaction, quality of life and independence levels of co-workers who completed their group, a Likert-scale questionnaire (consisting of six items) was administered to them. The questionnaires were completed by the co-workers twice: during the first weeks of the group and during the last sessions. 44 co-workers completed the questionnaires. The evaluation of improvement was also monitored by questionnaires administered to carers. In total 20 carers agreed to complete the questionnaire, which was assessing improvement in the same areas as above. The questionnaire was administered twice to carers: once when the group started and also when it finished.

Moreover, co-workers and carers were both asked open-ended questions in order to reflect any changes in any of the five topic areas. Consent forms were given to all participants and they kept one copy after signing.

## RESULTS

Diagnoses of dementia were available for all co-workers and they included: Alzheimer's disease; Vascular dementia; Mixed dementia and Unspecified dementia.

### QUANTITATIVE CO-WORKERS STUDY

36 out of 44 co-workers (82%) reported a positive result in their ability to undergo physical activity.

39 out of 44 co-workers (89%) reported a positive result in their mental wellbeing.

42 out 44 co-workers (96%) recorded a positive change to their social inclusion and interaction.

41 out of 44 co-workers (93%) recorded a positive change to their quality of life.

37 out of 44 co-workers (84% ) recorded a positive change in their independence levels.

32 out of 36 co-workers (89%) recorded a positive change in their developments in life outside of Sydenham Garden. Data was not collected from the first group of the year (8 co-workers) to monitor their developments in life outside of Sydenham Garden .

### QUANTITATIVE CARERS STUDY:

18 out of 20 carers (90%) reported a positive result in their co-worker's ability to undergo physical activity.

17 out of 20 carers (85%) reported a positive result in their co-worker's mental wellbeing.

19 out of 20 carers (95%) recorded a positive change to their co-worker's social inclusion and interaction.

18 out of 20 of carers (90%) recorded a positive change to their co-worker's quality of life.

18 out of 20 carers (90% ) recorded a positive change to their co-worker's independence levels

9 out of 9 carers (100%) recorded a positive change to their co-worker's developments in life outside of Sydenham Garden. Only 9 carers provided data for the question regarding developments in life outside of Sydenham Garden.

## QUALITATIVE CO-WORKERS STUDY

Interview responses were almost entirely positive about participation in Sow & Grow sessions, or witnessing positive changes in the individual cared for.

### ABILITY TO UNDERGO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

Some co-workers and carers reported that taking part in Sow & Grow enabled them to do more physical activity. In one case, this was reported as starting swimming after the end of a Sow and Grow group.

### WELL-BEING:

Co-workers and carers found Sow and Grow very helpful in terms of controlling dementia symptoms. Many reported experiencing more positive emotions, better short-term memory and higher levels of confidence and self-esteem.

### SOCIAL INCLUSION AND INTERACTION:

All co-workers found Sow and Grow provided a great opportunity to socialise with others and feel less lonely. Many of the co-workers who were interviewed identified Sow and Grow as the only place where they could start talking again to people and also reported they became very motivated to engage in other community groups.

### QUALITY OF LIFE:

The majority of co-workers reported that Sow and Grow has helped them to improve or maintain a good level of quality of life.

### INDEPENDENCE:

Some co-workers mentioned that Sow and Grow helped them to become more independent in terms of deciding about starting new activities and talking to new people and socialising with them outside of Sydenham Garden.

### DEVELOPMENTS IN LIFE OUTSIDE OF SYDENHAM GARDEN:

Some co-workers reported that by the end of Sow and Grow they had already started seeking new community groups to join (arts, gardening), attending centres for physical activities (sports), or that they were commencing new hobbies at home (e.g. gardening, farming, baking, making photo albums etc).

## DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED

The main difficulty experienced was the small number of referrals during the first quarter. To address this, outreach to referees was enhanced, which resulted in higher levels of referrals during the following months till the end of the year.

## OUTPUTS:

- Number referred: 64
- Number commencing: 54
- Number Moved on\*: 7
- Number Completed: 47

## ATTENDANCE:

Collective attendance for the period was 79.2%

## REASONS FOR NON-COMPLETION:

Reasons were given for non-completion during exit interviews. All were neutral or negative. These reasons were: Ill physical health (5), Moving location (1), Ill mental health (1)

## CARERS DROP-IN

Number attending drop in: 3

### Reasons for low drop-in attendance:

The drop-in training course had been promoted to caregivers throughout the year. However the low numbers of attendance indicate either that carers could not attend either because of their workload on the weekdays, or because they cannot leave alone at home the person they care for. Many carers expressed their interest in having a hands-on experience of how Sow and Grow benefits the co-workers and also being inspired by our activities. For this reason, Sydenham Garden might consider arranging special days on Saturdays where carers can receive training and also try the Sow and Grow activities together with the co-workers.

*\*Moved on: People leave their placement for a variety of reasons. During the period reasons given were: Moved out of the area, became too ill, wasn't enjoying it, didn't want to come any more.*

## **Sow & GROW PROJECT CONCLUSION**

There is an overall improvement in all areas evaluated for co-workers, varying between 82-96%.

Co-workers identified Sow and Grow as a very beneficial course because it helped them to increase their opportunities for social inclusion and develop their overall quality of life.

When carers were asked about the persons they cared for, the majority reported an increased ability to undergo physical activity and become more socially included. There was reported improvements in all other areas, varying from 85-100%.

Co-workers benefit from the variety of activities offered in Sow and Grow and by the end of each group they request to continue attending similar sessions at Sydenham Garden. The experience and skills that both staff and volunteers gained during the first year of Sow and Grow were used to easily address any issues of anxiety, panic attacks, mood swings and loss of motivation that might have occurred to co-workers during sessions of this year.

The quantitative data strongly suggests high levels of improvement during their time at Sydenham Garden, especially in terms of social inclusion and interaction.

The qualitative data supports this assertion and it is clear that carers find Sow & Grow sessions just as valuable as the co-workers.

# Evaluation of Growing Lives (AMH)



## EVALUATION AIM

The Growing Lives project is a follow on project for people who have experienced some recent recovery from mental ill health. This evaluation focuses on a trial period of six months with eight co-workers that took place before the full project started in February 2015. The project is based at De Frene and uses a market garden to deliver horticultural and business training and accreditation. This evaluation was conducted over the period of May 2014 to October 2014. The aim was to construct a report on the agreed topics and outputs.

## TOPICS:

Mental wellbeing, Physical Health, Mental Health, Social inclusion & interaction, Quality of life, Independence, Confidence and Attendance.

## METHOD

### QUANTITATIVE STUDY & QUALITATIVE STUDY:

In order to assess improvement in physical health, mental health, social interaction, quality of life and independence levels of co-workers who completed their placement, a Likert scale questionnaire (consisting of six items) was administered to them. The questionnaires were completed by the co-workers when they started on the Garden project, and when they completed their placement. Five co-workers completed the questionnaires more than once.

Six co-workers also completed WEMWBS (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) on four or more occasions to assess their wellbeing in comparison to the population and to monitor improvements during their placement. Because WEMWBS scores show a roughly normal distribution, WEMWBS can be expected to capture the full spectrum of positive mental health without floor or ceiling effects and be suitable both for monitoring trends over time and evaluating the effect of mental health promoting programmes or interventions.

Moreover, co-workers were asked open-ended questions in order to reflect any changes in any of the six topic areas, along with setting their own goals and targets for their placement.

## RESULTS

Diagnoses were available for all co-workers and included: anxiety; depression; psychotic disorder; social isolation and mixed.

### QUANTITATIVE Co-WORKERS STUDY BASED ON LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONNAIRE:

2 out of 5 (40%) co-workers recorded a positive change in their ability to undergo physical activity.

2 out of 5 (40%) co-workers recorded a positive change to their mental wellbeing.

3 out of 5 (60%) of co-workers recorded a positive change to their social inclusion and interaction.

3 out of 5 (60%) co-workers recorded a positive change to their quality of life.

4 out of 5 (80%) co-workers recorded a positive chance to the independence levels

2 out of 5 (40%) co-workers recorded a positive change to their confidence levels.

### QUANTITATIVE Co-WORKERS STUDY BASED ON WEMWBS QUESTIONNAIRE::

Group initial average: 42

Group completed average: 46.8

The overall group score improved by 11.4% during the Growing Lives sessions. The group average initially scored 42 and improved to scoring 46.8 by the time they finished. While the group didn't achieve an improvement to bring them up to the national average of 50.7, their score significantly improved by 4.8 points while they were on their Growing Lives placement.

### OUTPUTS

Number of referrals: 11

Number commencing: 8

Number completing: 6

Number not completing: 2

Number achieving OCN level 2: 5

### Reasons for non-completion

Reasons given for non-completion during exit interviews: a worsening of present health condition (1) and not obtained (1).

## **GROWING LIVES EVALUATION CONCLUSION**

The quantitative data shows that people did improve during the time on the scheme, and there is evidence for a general improvement in their health and quality of life, and strong evidence that their independence levels improve.

In common with other evaluations of complex interventions attribution of improvements to participation in the scheme sessions is difficult. However, interview and review data support the quantitative changes observed.

Growing Lives sessions at Sydenham Garden have improved the lives of its participants. They successfully engaged people with serious health issues and enduring problems while contributing to positive changes in their physical and mental health. <sup>19</sup>

Open College Network (OCN) accreditation, along with improved health, confidence and independence, has contributed to each individual's prospects of further education, involvement in the local community and employment.

# Sydenham Garden Evaluation Conclusion



## CONCLUSION

Sydenham Garden successfully engages people with a broad range of mental health problems.

The quantitative data shows that people do improve during their time in one of Sydenham Garden's four core projects. There is evidence of a general improvement in their health and quality of life, and strong evidence that their independence levels improve. As would be expected with projects using group work, there is also strong evidence that social inclusion and interaction improves during their placement. These are common themes across all Sydenham Garden projects.

In common with other evaluations of complex interventions, attribution of improvements to participation in Sydenham Garden projects is difficult. However, interview and review data support the quantitative changes observed.

For the first time WEMWBS (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) was used by Sydenham Garden on a relatively small population of participants during 2014/15 to monitor co-workers. During 2015/16 Sydenham Garden will use it across both their Garden and Growing Lives project enabling them to further analyse the benefits co-workers achieve during their placement. Already WEMWBS is showing that people arrive at Sydenham Garden with a low wellbeing score in comparison to the population and leave with a higher score, if not quite achieving the average.

# ETHNICITY AND DIVERSITY:

Grouped data for 2014/15 period\*

Age	No.	Gender	No.	Disability	No.	Sexual Orientation	No.	Religion	No.
18-24	8	Male	71	Yes	53	Heterosexual	126	Christian	91
25-34	6	Female	86	No	97	Gay	6	Buddhist	4
35-44	9	Transgender	1			Lesbian	1	Hindu	3
45-54	20					Bisexual	0	Muslim	8
55-64	17							Jewish	0
65-74	14							Sikh	3
75+	34							No religion	27
Prefer not to say	12		0		14		30		27
Other							1		1
Not Indicated	45		7		1		1		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>		<b>165</b>		<b>165</b>		<b>165</b>		<b>165</b>

Marital Status **	No.
Married	10
Single	60
Divorced/separated	13
Widowed	4
Civil Partnership	1
Prefer not to say	19
Other	1
Not Indicated	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>

\*This data includes both co-workers who had already begun their placement on the Garden project when the year started and co-workers who commenced a placement during the year. There was also no data recorded for the Growing Lives Project. This means amount of co-workers who returned an ethnicity and diversity monitoring form during the period is higher than the amount of co-workers commencing during the period. \*\*Not collected for Sow & Grow

<b>Ethnic Background</b>		<b>No.</b>
White	English	84
	Welsh	0
	Scottish	0
	Northern Irish	0
	Irish	3
	Gypsy or Irish traveller	0
	Other white	7
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	White & Black Caribbean	3
	White & Black African	1
	White & Asian	0
	Other	1
Asian/Asian British	Indian	5
	Pakistani	0
	Bangladeshi	0
	Chinese	0
	Other	4
Black/Black British/African/ Caribbean	African	3
	Caribbean	35
	Other	0
Other Ethnic Group	Arab	0
	Any other ethnic group	2
Prefer not to say		15
Not indicated		2
<b>Total</b>		<b>165</b>

## GROUPED PERCENTAGES OF ATTENDEES

ETHNICITY OF ATTENDEES		RELIGION OF ATTENDEES	
White:	57%	Christian:	55%
Mixed:	3%	Buddhist:	2.5%
Asian:	5.5%	Hindu:	1.5%
Black or Black British:	23%	Muslim:	5%
Other:	1.5%	Jewish:	0%
Preferred not to say/Not indicated:	10%	Sikh:	2%
		No Religion:	16%
		Prefer not to say:	16%
		Other:	1%
		Not indicated:	1%
GENDER OF ATTENDEES		MARITAL STATUS	
Male:	43%	Married:	9%
Female:	52%	Single:	54%
Transgender:	0.5%	Divorced/separated:	12%
Other:	0.5%	Widowed:	4%
Preferred not to say/Not indicated:	4%	Civil Partnership:	0.5%
AGE OF ATTENDEES		Preferred not to say:	
18-24:	5%	Other:	0.5%
25-34:	4%	Not indicated:	3%
35-44	5.5%		
45-54:	12%		
55-64:	10%		
65-74:	8.5%		
75+:	21%		
Preferred not to say:	7%		
Not indicated:	27%		
SEXUAL ORIENTATION OF ATTENDEES			
Heterosexual:	76%		
Gay:	4%		
Lesbian:	0.5%		
Bisexual:	0%		
Other:	0.5%		
Preferred not to say:	18%		
Not indicated:	0.5%		
DISABILITY OF ATTENDEES			
Yes:	32%		
No:	59%		
Preferred not to say:	8.5%		
Not indicated:	0.5%		

# Other activities and achievements



## VOLUNTEERING

Sydenham Garden relies on regular volunteers to help deliver its various programmes. The roles vary from supporting co-workers to take part, to administration tasks, to leading sessions. Sydenham Garden classes any person who volunteers for more than three hours a week as regular volunteers.

### VOLUNTEERING OUTPUTS:

Regular Volunteers:	75
Volunteer forums & training:	6
Community Volunteer days:	5
Corporate Volunteer days:	3
Fairs and events:	5
Total Volunteer Hours:	15,680

## SHORT COURSES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Regular supplementary activities are run alongside Sydenham Gardens four core projects. During the period these included:

- 12 Community Lunches.
- 44 Tai Chi/Mindfulness sessions.
- 40 Independent Committee led Community Choir Sessions.
- 30 gardening sessions for Tamil Asylum Seekers.

2 co-worker celebration events.  
 2 Conservation workshops.  
 2 cooking workshops.  
 24 Singing sessions for people with dementia.  
 5 Craft Workshops.  
 4 Art or Craft courses.  
 Weekly Counselling sessions.  
 2 Co-workers' trips to other projects.  
 3 Educational courses

## MAINTAINING AND DEVELOPING NATURAL HABITATS AND BIODIVERSITY

Sydenham Garden manages and maintains a registered nature reserve, along with restored Victorian Gardens, Greenhouse, and its own designated natural habitat areas across its sites. During the period, Sydenham Garden re-introduced a wild flower meadow, a new wet land and pond area and many flora and fauna. They were awarded the Green Flag in recognition of efforts made.

# Interviews

## Co-WORKER 1:

I've been coming to Sydenham Garden for the last 5 months and have attended the Tuesday Garden session at De Frene and have also joined the Growing Lives project.

I enjoy the physical aspect of the work at De Frene. Over the last few weeks I have helped clear the area for the new shed, prepared the footings for the greenhouse and harvested willow. Being outside at De Frene and interacting with nature brings back nostalgic memories of being a child and playing outside. I'm looking forward to seeing the site develop and enjoying Growing Lives over the next year. From being involved with Sydenham I would like to pursue a career in horticulture.

I'm really glad to be involved in Sydenham Garden, it has helped create a structure and purpose in the week. Especially now doing two sessions a week, the Garden session builds up to the longer day for the Growing Lives session. I enjoy both the physical and the social aspect – 'Tuesday tea break is best cup of tea of the week'. I enjoy the company and the socialising with fellow co-workers and I feel relaxed in the sessions without feeling the need to put on a front.

## Co-WORKER 2:

He found out about Sydenham Garden through a friend at a picture framing group at Network Arts. He looked up the website, watched the Inside Out video featuring Suggs from a few years ago, liked what he saw and suggested Sydenham Garden to his doctor to get referred.

He started out as part of the De Frene Thursday session and particularly liked the physical aspect of the work over there. He moved over to a garden session at the beginning of this year which he has really enjoyed, especially learning all about soil structure!

He feels that being part of his garden session helps him to mix with people as he tends to spend a lot of time by himself. He enjoys the banter within the group and it has enabled him to feel less self-conscious and sensitive as the weeks have passed. He also feels it has helped his self-esteem as he likes to be active and have something to talk about when he meets new people.

His background is in the building trade and his main goal is to get back to work. He feels that Sydenham Garden is helping him to prepare for this through adding some structure to his week, learning new skills and getting used to being around people again. He would be very happy to get a job in any area at the moment, but would eventually like to work in horticulture as he has found a passion in gardening!

## Co-WORKER 3:

1) How did you come to Sydenham Garden (SG)?

I was referred by South London and Maudsley NHS trust (SLaM)

2) Why did you come to SG?

I Had breakdown, suffered panic attacks, anxiety and depression for 8 months. I couldn't leave the house. This was caused by my mum becoming disabled and a PTSD sufferer due to a severe accident and me becoming her carer.

Then I moved to Latvia to work and had terrible experiences with being treated very badly by employer and fellow colleagues, I was assaulted and bullied.

3) What did SG do for you?

It provided a grounded non-judgmental, safe space. It facilitated and allowed re-socialisation as I had become very shut off from friends; finding it very hard to trust and have normal levels of patience. It helped rebuild confidence and helped me to heal and feel comfortable around people again.

4) How do you feel about this?

- It put my faith back in humanity
- I had already been planning to get into organic gardening/ horticulture/ permaculture
- It has provided useful skills and experiences
- I'm very thankful to Sydenham Garden for this

**Co-WORKER:**

*Story collected from John who completed the Sow and Grow group during 2014/15:*

I was first recommended to start the Sow and Grow group by MindCare. I found it a good idea to join the company of other people. This is why I first came to this course in 2012. This was only a trial and then I joined the Sow and Grow course for 6 months. It was a challenge for me because in general I am a shy person and I cannot easily talk to others, and at the beginning it was a challenge to talk to others. But the people who work at MindCare prompted me to join the group and it finally worked well. They said that the group would be good for me also because I have dementia. After completing the Sow and Grow group, I found myself being more confident and social. I have met a lot of new people like me (with dementia) and I was very encouraged and supported by the staff in Sydenham Garden. They helped me to become more patient with myself and learn how to have more self-esteem. Because of my Alzheimer's I think very slowly. But the staff and volunteers could understand me and they were giving me time to think, which was very important. I was in an environment where people could understand my dementia problems.

Another thing that changed is that when I first came I was not able to remember a lot of stuff but now I see that I can remember names of people that I don't know for too long. For example I start learning and I am able to remember the names of the volunteers in my group. I also believe that I can think clearly now. While I was joining the Sow and Grow course I was enjoying the social time we had there. I could spend some time talking to other group members who have the same disease as me. I also loved doing gardening activities there.

Some activities, like drawing or cooking, are not things that I knew how to do and they were not part of my hobbies. However, this didn't stop me from enjoying the group, because the most important thing was that I could be around other people instead of staying home alone doing nothing.

Although the group now is over, I can still see the benefit. Sow and Grow motivated me to be outdoors where I can avoid depression. It also helped me to become very active again: I started swimming and also working in my allotment. Gardening is something I really love. I am an active person in general. And Sow and Grow helped to rediscover this again.

**Co-WORKER:**

*Story collected from Mary who completed the Sow and Grow group during 2014/15:*

I joined the Sow and Grow group because I needed an outlet to meet others in the community dealing with dementia. At the beginning I was apprehensive about socialising with others. I wasn't the sort of person who would easily join a group. The Sow and Grow experience made me feel more confident. For the first time I realised I can have time for myself and feel great about it. I have a busy life and I constantly have to do things for others. In the group I made new friends and also started a new hobby: gardening, which became my passion. I love watering the plants, potting flowers and growing vegetables. Now I feel confident I can do new things and engage with other people. Also, the group kept my mind alerted and also it offered me the space from family matters to organise my thoughts. I enjoyed it a lot and especially the time in the garden, as well as the playing music and creating crafts. Since I finished the group, I asked my dementia advisor to refer me to more groups like this one and to try more arts and music sessions in the community.

**CARER:**

*Story collected from the carer of Laura who completed the Sow and Grow group during 2014/15*

My mother came to the group only a few weeks after she moved to London with me. In London she knows only me and my family and had no friends or acquaintances. She also struggled with speech as that is her main dementia symptom. When she joined Sow and Grow she immediately made a very firm friend with another co-worker and they like to go out together to have some tea and do shopping. She was always looking forward to seeing all group members every week.

After she started the Sow and Grow she asked us to help her establish a veg plot in our garden as she now loves gardening thanks to your project. She also started looking after some chickens. I believe the group has been an important lifeline for her time in London and we are both very grateful to Sydenham Garden for providing her with this opportunity.

**Co-WORKER:**

*Story collected from Anne who completed a Sow and Grow group:*

My memory is not good and I cannot remember who prompted me to join the Sow and Grow. But I am sure I was there for about 5 months. I liked being in the group because we were doing different things each day and we were talking about different topics. My memory improved a little bit because I could remember later in the day things we did during the session. I also enjoyed mixing with other people in the group and discussing their topics of interest. When I finished the group I decided to start the singing sessions in order to keep being active and out. When I am at home I like word-search and reading my books.

**CARER:**

*Story collected from Anne's carer:*

Mindcare suggested Sow and Grow at Sydenham Garden as a good way to keep my grandmother mentally active in a social environment. She spent 5 months attending a morning group. This was slightly difficult at the beginning because she was not used to waking up early and having her breakfast on time. However, she continued without any difficulties and I believe it did her good. Getting out of the house was always difficult but now she is willing to come out. She always talks about her session after being picked up and explains what she did that day. She was really enjoying the gardening. When she finished the group she asked to join Sydenham Garden again, and now she is attending the singing sessions.

**Co-WORKER :**

She is currently a member of the Art and Craft group at Sydenham Garden after being referred by her GP. She had been going through a particularly difficult time which had impacted negatively on her mental health. She felt that she couldn't keep things together and was finding it hard to concentrate on anything.

Through coming to the Art & Craft sessions she has found she can focus on the set activity and enjoys the process of creating something from nothing, right through to the finish. When feeling more upbeat, she also enjoys helping other co-workers, talking with them and sharing experiences. She likes that everyone is non-judgemental as it enables her to be completely open.

She now feels she has the confidence and ability to do art & craft outside of Sydenham Garden and has recently been making rag-rugs at home. She has also been part of setting up a support group for women suffering from post-natal depression and is keen to eventually work for mental health services.

**Co-WORKER:**

Has been attending the Art & Craft group at Sydenham Garden since August last year after being referred by his support worker. In the months prior to joining he had experienced a very difficult time in relation to his mental health. He feels that taking part in the Art and Craft group has helped him to occupy himself, to concentrate, to feel inspired and to take his mind off all other issues.

He enjoys all that is art & craft! He loves learning new mediums and skills and is currently working on a sphere structure woven with willow. He has also produced some fantastic pieces using printing techniques learnt in the group. He finds all the people here really helpful and kind.

He believes that being part of the group has really improved the quality of his life in terms of allowing his passion for art to flourish, but also by building his confidence to socialise and to feel more relaxed with people.

He has recently started giving his time to the volunteer centre in Lewisham, helping out with data entry each week which he is enjoying. He is also doing courses in pottery, drawing and painting and is keen to learn more about IT and further his English skills.

**Co-WORKER:**

She attends the Art and Craft group at Sydenham Garden after being referred here by her GP. She had experienced severe depression following the loss of her parents and two brothers and a relationship that had resulted in domestic violence. She didn't find counselling was for her and wanted something more active to help her back on her feet. Initially, she was drawn to the gardening sessions but her hay fever put a stop to that and she decided to try the Art and Craft group!



# Sydenham Garden

*A growing community*

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