

2024 - 2025

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT









# CONTENTS

<b>Welcome .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Impact .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Adult Mental Health .....</b>	
<b>African Caribbean Group .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Art &amp; Craft .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Art Therapy Group .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Clubs .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Garden .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Growing Lives .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Hyde Gardening Project .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>(m.u.d) .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Practical Organic Gardening .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Sow &amp; Grow .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Outdoor Education .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Meanderings .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Community Lunches, Events &amp; Open Days ....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>De Frene Summer Festival .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Special Projects .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Artists Trail .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Open Days for Professionals .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Flower Farm .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Corporate Days &amp; Venue Hire .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Volunteering at Sydenham Garden .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Sydenham Garden AGM .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Partnerships .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Funders and Supporters .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Looking to the Future .....</b>	<b>30</b>

# WELCOME

To everyone who has walked through our gates this year, whether as a co-worker, volunteer, pupil, supporter, or visitor, thank you. You have made this a year of significant growth at Sydenham Garden.

We've reached more people than ever before, with the highest number of referrals to our projects since 2018/19. More importantly, we've deepened our impact: when we measure how co-workers are feeling before and after our activities, they're reporting better wellbeing outcomes than ever, almost double the improvement from the previous year. Every co-worker surveyed this year told us they received the service they wanted. That matters profoundly to us.

Our gardens have continued to be places of transformation and belonging, maintaining the rich diversity that makes our community so vital. Over 300 co-workers have participated in our horticultural, creative, and nature-based activities this year, finding connection to each other, to nature, and to their own resilience.

Like many in the charity sector, we've felt the headwinds of national funding pressures begin to build in recent months. These challenges will require us to be thoughtful and adaptive in the year ahead. But this report is also a reminder of what we've cultivated together: strong roots, a thriving community, and a proven ability to help people flourish.

We hope you'll find inspiration in the pages that follow, and that we'll see you in the garden soon.

**Lowell Black, Interim Director**

**362**

Co-workers  
attending at least  
one session

**72**

Volunteers supported  
over 10,000 hours of  
delivery

**173**

School children  
participated in  
outdoor education

**170**

Volunteer led club  
activities and 4 open  
community events



## Robin's Journey: Rebuilding Confidence, Connectionery & Growth

I wasn't getting out or talking to people, I couldn't bring myself to leave the house. I wanted to be able to talk to people and stop hiding away. I wanted to be out in the open. It was scary to leave the house.

I've enjoyed meeting people, being in the garden, in the open. It feels like I've got more freedom. I've enjoyed helping others when they've been a bit stuck or wanted to know something.

I've been more interested in going out – even if it's just down to the woods near where I live. I went apple and blackberry picking there. I've gained quite a bit of knowledge about plants in the garden and what you can use them for. It's got me interested in learning again.

I've gained a bit more confidence. I've gained friends and I've gained a better outlook.



## Wren's Journey: Supporting Recovery & Growth

I'd just come out of hospital. I'd had three long admissions in a row. I wanted to meet people and just not be at home.

I really like the garden, I find it therapeutic. It's a really nice place, it's an oasis. I find it very calming. I wanted to learn new skills. It makes me feel closer to my grandparents, who have passed away: they were both very keen gardeners.

I've gained a bit more confidence to try something new, something that I wouldn't normally do. It's been good to do something that's both about and not about my mental health.

I enjoyed all the different activities. Making things, having people to chat to, getting to know people. It's nice that it's a whole year. I've seen things growing. I've learnt about seed sowing and repotting.

Sometimes I feel overwhelmed, but I've turned up and had a crack, that's been important for me. Last year when I was unwell, I did some seed sowing. That's something that I wouldn't have done before.

It's been really helpful, it's made a real difference. I still felt I could come here when I was really unwell. It feels calm here, a safe space. My brain is very loud all the time and this place has given me a small break.

# ADULT MENTAL HEALTH African & Caribbean Group

Over the past year, the group explored creative and cultural connections to nature and heritage through food, art and craft. We made clay bowls using foraged leaves and flowers and worked with Communal Clay to shape beehive forms inspired by pre-1852 designs. Cooking sessions celebrated heritage and seasonality, from Jamaican patties and saltfish fritters to wild garlic scones made with foraged garlic, and mango hot sauce. We hosted a community lunch featuring veggie curry with spinner dumplings, welcomed the Horniman Museum for a hands-on Black History Month session, and visited Dulwich Picture Gallery and De Frene to reflect on art, land and belonging in London.

“No one’s going to judge you by how you look. You can come and sit down and talk to someone, then go off on your own. They’ll always listen to you, and once I came out the house, I felt a lot better.”

“It's been fantastic. The people are so welcoming, and they don't judge you. They just welcome you. The thing with me is, I hear voices. So the time I'm here, like for two hours, I don't really hear anything because there's so much other stuff going on around — talking, music. I've got all those things to focus on instead of just the voices.”



# ADULT MENTAL HEALTH Art & Craft

The Art & Craft (A&C) project celebrated several cohorts completing 12 months of creative exploration this year. Participants experimented with a range of techniques, including batik, watercolour painting, zine-making, and decoupage. Throughout the year, groups produced cards, mosaics, and other handmade pieces to sell at SG events. Activities were chosen collaboratively through group discussions and co-produced with coworkers and volunteers.

Over several sessions, groups co-designed a mural with artist Amy Bairstow from the London School of Muralism, resulting in a vibrant artwork now welcoming visitors at the Wynell Road entrance.

In June, participants completed sewn fabric banners that were proudly carried at Pride in central London. Conceived by mud, this project brought together multiple SG groups and gave A&C coworkers the chance to develop and showcase new sewing skills.

July saw the floral mural installed on the side of Forest Hill Station. After two years on display outside the Resource Centre, we were delighted to see it out in the world, brightening the local community.



"I love Sydenham gardens so relaxing when I'm having a bad day and the staff and people so kind and helpful it really is a beautiful place to go and do my arts n crafts which I get so much pleasure from I love Sydenham gardens"

"I like the structure and that I get to try art that I wouldn't do at home."



# ADULT MENTAL HEALTH Art Therapy Group



“The group was such a needed escape from the pressure of work and life. It became such a safe space for me for a few hours a week just to be with people and to be drawing. I always felt very drained before the group and the more I went I realised how important it had become and I set boundaries to protect that short space in the week. Also, what a lovely group of people to be with and to talk to. So lovely hearing other people's experience of life.”

This year, we ran a pilot Art Psychotherapy Group at the De Frene Hub. Led by trainee art psychotherapist Kiz Ayton-Green from Goldsmiths University and supervised by Jo Vallis (Art Psychotherapist), the group ran weekly from October 2024 to May 2025.

The sessions provided a supportive, therapeutic space for eight referred participants to explore mental health challenges and emotional experiences. Working in a non-directive format, participants engaged in both conversation and independent artmaking.

The group aimed to help individuals find new ways of reflecting on life, deepen self-understanding, use art for relaxation, build community connections, and reduce isolation.



# ADULT MENTAL HEALTH Clubs

From making new bird boxes for the nature reserve and knitting super fluffy animals to sell at fairs to planting herb beds and rambling through local green spaces, our drop-in clubs: Wild Walks , Gardening Club, Wildlife Club and Activities Club, facilitated and led by volunteers, provided over 170 fun, informal, sociable sessions to more than 50 past and current coworkers during 24-25.

“With most mental health services, clinical or non-clinical, you’re booted out at the end of your allotted time and I understand why; there’s an end date; and that feels tough after you’ve got to trust people, got familiar with the service, and have had a particular routine. The existence of Clubs here means there’s not a harsh ending after you’ve graduated, you can still retain a connection, still have a routine.”

“I was really quiet when I first started. Now I get really involved, talking, and having a laugh. I feel a sense of belonging, I like the routine, I find the staff and volunteers helpful, it gets me out of the house. It’s boosted my confidence a lot and I feel I want to be more involved with stuff.”



# ADULT MENTAL HEALTH Garden

Garden groups were kept busy with seasonal activities including garden maintenance, food growing, cooking, and crafts. In Spring we were mad for propagation in the run up to the spring fair. We pricked out and potted on hundreds of plants including lots of chillies, tomatoes and herbs. We took advantage of spring's natural bounty, foraging elderflowers, nettles and wild garlic to use in cooking. Elderflower fritters and mini nettle leaf quiches were two of the highlights! The women's group enjoyed trips to Kew Gardens in July and Beckenham Place Park in October, both of which were excellent opportunities for group bonding and helped to cement friendships within the group. In autumn/winter, we turned our attention from gardening to craft making. We made fairy gardens for the artist trail, natural beauty gifts to sell at the winter fair, and decorative wreaths for coworkers to take home at Christmas. During the cold weather, we took shelter in the greenhouse and made some tasty soups with veg harvested from the garden to keep warm.



"I'm going out a lot more, almost every day. I'm back in the world again after not wanting to be part of it."



"I've gained a lot more confidence to socialise, to go out and meet people more. I've recently become a Trustee Age Concern Macmillan Trust so I'll be making sure they spend their funding correctly."



# ADULT MENTAL HEALTH Growing Lives

This year our projects focused on accessibility, creativity, and community connection. We renovated the welcoming new "Super Loo" with hot water and bright décor, and added two waist-high raised beds which are more accessible for people with mobility issues. Gardening activities were enjoyed alongside a suite of seated craft projects, offering relaxing, social options through the winter months. We also enjoyed visits to inspiring the Horniman and Sydenham Hill Wood, and our annual De Frene Festival was a joyful celebration of our work. Finally, we delivered a powerful project amplifying members' voices and experiences of accessing mental health services.



"I feel really free when I'm here. I don't know what it is but just being outdoors in nature. You're not surrounded by responsibilities or racing thoughts, you're just in the moment. Like if I'm mowing the lawn or cleaning the chickens, that's all I'm thinking about - my brain is actually clear. At home, I'm always thinking about a hundred and one things, but here I can switch off."



# ADULT MENTAL HEALTH Hyde Gardening Project

The Hyde project consisted of 46 weekly community outreach sessions based at one of Hyde Housing group's estates on a Wednesday evening and at De Frene Market Garden on Sundays. Participants took part in a range of gardening and other nature-based activities, such as taking house plant cuttings, growing microgreens, exploring herbs and their uses, creating a raised herb bed on the estate and creating new community vegetable beds at De Frene. The Sunday sessions also included a light meal, which was a perfect opportunity for participants to sit together, chat and form new friendships. The sessions included two community events: Apple day and The Big Feast.

"The sessions have enabled me to keep fit and widen my social sphere by constantly meeting new people and making new contacts. Because of this I am feeling less isolated."



"I feel like I've made friends here with people that I'd usually never have a chance to interact with - older people in the community, young families, people from all backgrounds and with all different life experiences."



Over the past year, m.u.d has been a brimming vessel of care amidst the harsh realities of financial uncertainty.

In May 2024, we published our first cookbook. We worked on music-making and roundtable discussions facilitated by m.u.d members Mira and Sin. These became a radio show that aired in July.

In October, we were interviewed by the Breaks and Joins podcast. m.u.d member Lauren hosted a workshop series around themes of home, migration, belonging, and plant life, presenting textiles and cyanotype art collaborating with local refugee charity, LRMN for an exhibition in November.

Working with m.u.d friend Uli in December, we held a stress-free clothes swap. The Sydenham Garden community came out to share their preloved clothes and encourage each other to take home new looks for free!

“The way we celebrate each other is by allowing everyone to shine in their own way. When everyone comes to m.u.d they are allowed to show up in any way they have capacity.”



Throughout the year, we continued to celebrate the changing of the seasons with our own art and nature rituals – respecting the opportunities that each turn of the wheel provides. We fed each other every week with m.u.d chefs Tilly and Leila sending us home with leftovers. And our membership grew to a solid core of kind-hearted regulars and enthusiastic drop-ins; m.u.d folk reminding us that a youthful local community is possible!

“I have never really felt part of a community before m.u.d, I’ve always felt very lonely and outcasted in my neurodivergence, but m.u.d has made me feel welcomed and accepted right from the start. m.u.d makes me feel peaceful. It is so nice to be able to escape into a world of creativity where everything is at the pace you need it to be”

MUD



# ADULT MENTAL HEALTH Practical Organic Gardening

In May 2024, our third cohort of students completed their Level 2 Certificate in Practical Organic Gardening. We held a graduation ceremony in summer to present the students with their certificates and celebrate their amazing work. All of the students said they would continue to apply their knowledge and skills in their own gardens, allotments or in community projects.

In February 2025, a new cohort of ten students started their Level 2 Award. They are due to complete the course in December 2025.



"I love learning and it is made so interesting. I love having assessment objectives and relating them to what we learn"



Tutors and volunteers "are patient and allow us to learn by discovering and to learn from each other in the group. I love being in this group"

"You've been very patient and supported me with my learning disability"



# SOW & GROW For People Living with Dementia

Welcome and warmth have filled Sow&Grow this year, bringing comfort and joy to a diverse range of people living with dementia and their families. One co-worker announced "it's blissful here" as she walked in the summer garden. Another spoke of feeling very anxious about coming and that this was swept away by the welcome she received, telling us that there have been many times in her life when she has not felt welcomed.

Over this year, in the weekly Sow&Grow groups we have sown, grown, harvested and cooked a glorious range of vegetables, herbs and flowers resulting in delicious pumpkin soups, colourful potato salads and more! We have created mosaics, cyanotypes, leaf prints and together with m.u.d, an amazing tablecloth under the creative direction of visiting artist, Chloe Rochefort. Communal Clay enabled us to create ceramic tiles and pinch pot vases with absorption and a sense of peaceful flow. Our artworks were on display as part of the Sydenham Art Trail in September. As ever our activities have been informed by the ideas and interests suggested by our co-workers, eg one co-worker teaching us to build leaf boats to sail on the pond.

Butterfly spotting, pond dips, creating feeders for the birds, wassailing, marking Black History Month with a vibrant visit from the Horniman Museum and lots of song and poetry have been there too, with poems created by each group in celebration of pumpkins and nests.

"It is amazing how much a difference such a small thing can make— 2 hours a week! It means so much to her to be surrounded by trees and flowers when she can't get into her own garden and doesn't really get out very much."



"Your joy and calmness were so infectious, we felt safe and valued by you."



# SOW & GROW Growing Together



For those who complete their year in Sow & Grow, the journey doesn't have to end. This monthly group invites graduates to return with a family member or supporter, and it has quickly filled to become a vibrant community in its own right, offering the same therapeutic activities that made Sow & Grow meaningful.

One co-worker movingly described his experience: "It brings tears to your eyes – happy tears. It's happening all around me – look at that bird, it's bringing something to you." When his partner asked how he felt, he simply said: "Not lost." For family members, the group offers something equally precious, the chance to be present in a space where their loved one thrives.

"Thank you for making Sydenham Garden such a unique and wonderful place."  
- Carer



# OUTDOOR EDUCATION For Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability

**Brent Knoll School:** We delivered 127 sessions for 141 pupils from Reception to KS4. Pupils cared for chickens, made bug houses, dug in the school bed, explored nature, and got gloriously muddy in the mud kitchen.

**Greenvale School:** We ran 31 sessions for 32 pupils, supporting their ASDAN qualifications through activities like exploring colour in different media, creating natural sculptures, and sensory projects including scented playdough and herbal "killer cough tea."

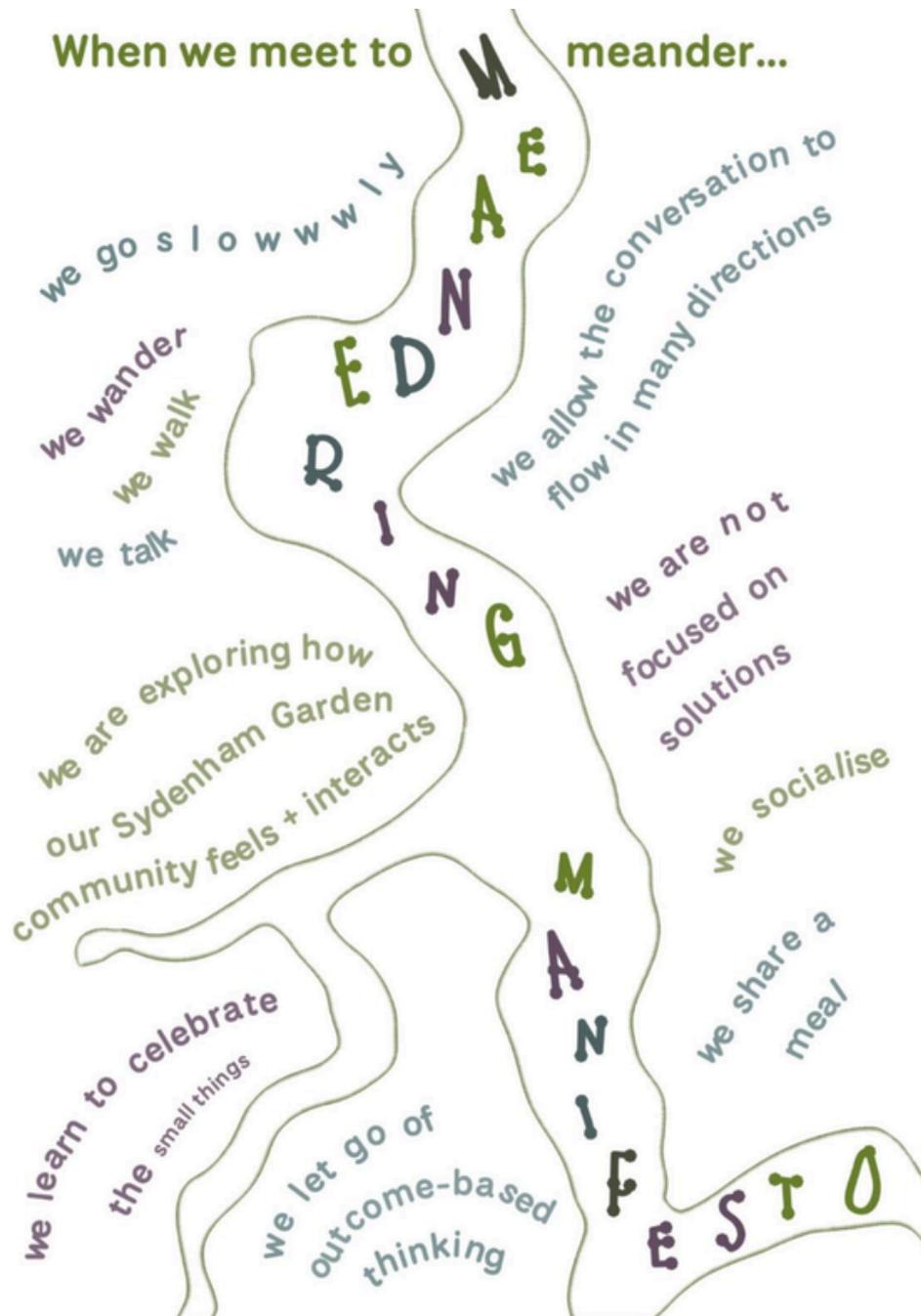


The impact went beyond the activities themselves. A non-verbal student who had always used picture decision boards to communicate found their voice in this new environment. Their interest in food and cooking, combined with the engaging setting, meant they were able to verbalise their choice of filling for the herbal tea bags they were making. Another student who had previously struggled with engagement reflected with visible pride: "I learnt a skill" after completing a tataki-zomé (flower bashing) activity.

Perhaps the truest measure of success came from the pupils themselves.

"This has been the best day ever" - said by multiple pupils as they stand by the gate to depart





In July 2024, we launched Meanderings, a monthly group where co-workers, volunteers, and staff gather over a home-cooked meal made with ingredients from our gardens to discuss what matters most to them.

The group explores how lived experience can shape our work, from day-to-day operations to how we speak up on issues affecting our community. Rather than traditional consultation, Meanderings puts co-workers in the lead. Up to fifteen core members set the direction, facilitated by staff who support rather than direct.

The group has identified barriers to feeling safe in mental health spaces and created solutions, including designing welcome zines for everyone starting a garden placement and finding ways to stay connected when physical attendance isn't possible. It's about more than feedback; it's about sharing power and building genuine collective care in our gardens.





Our gardens became true gathering places this year; for co-workers who shared monthly lunches, for the hundreds of local residents who explored our spaces at our Spring Fair, Sydenham Artists' Trail, and Winter Fair, and for curious visitors who met our chickens at open days throughout the year.

In August, music from Heart of Steel and Pengenista Drummers filled De Frene at our Summer Festival. In May, September and December, the Wynell Road garden buzzed with plant shopping, creative activities, and tables laden with homemade cakes. These weren't just events; they were invitations into our work. Visitors who came to learn about volunteering or referring to our projects left having experienced the garden first-hand, with many forging new connections that grew into lasting partnerships.

Our six Community Lunches created something quieter but equally important: regular moments for co-workers across Sydenham Garden to come together, share food, and simply be in community with one another.



# DE FRENE SUMMER FESTIVAL

The De Frene Festival brought together everything we do in one joyful afternoon. Over 300 people came through the gates, experiencing local bands, creative activities for all ages, dog therapy, wildlife gardening talks, and the now-legendary array of homemade cakes and food. Local tradespeople set up stalls, and every project across the organisation contributed, a true team effort that raised over £3,000 toward our service delivery.



This year, our co-workers took centre stage in shaping Lewisham's mental health services. Through group discussions and in-depth interviews, they shared their lived experiences of accessing care; the barriers, the gaps, the moments that mattered. Then they did something powerful, they hosted an event where they presented these findings directly to professionals from statutory and voluntary mental health services, prepared a delicious meal, and led tours of our therapeutic Market Garden.

The message was clear, people with lived experience aren't just recipients of services; they're experts whose insights can transform how care is delivered. The event created genuine dialogue between service users and providers, demonstrating what becomes possible when those most affected by mental health systems have a real voice in designing them.



“More like this please – so valuable to bring health system and users of services together to directly see the value”



“I appreciate the honesty and courage it can take to talk about one's own mental health. All the suggestions were very valuable especially for professionals to take the lead when offering services and care.”



# ARTISTS TRAIL

On a sunny Saturday in September, we opened the Wynell Road site as part of the Sydenham Artists' Trail. The space came alive with creativity as we showcased a vibrant collection of community-made artworks - from mosaics, batik, and cyanotypes to many other imaginative pieces.

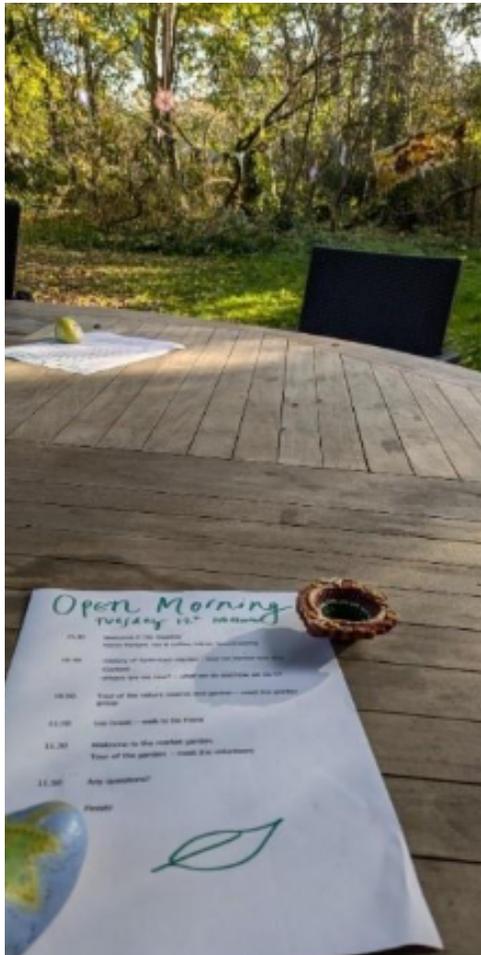
A particular highlight was the stunning display of ceramics, created with Communal Clay by participants from several SG projects. Visitors also enjoyed homemade cakes, tea, and a range of handcrafted goods made by our groups. Across the meadow, colourful pride banners and intricate God's Eye weavings added a joyful touch to the trees.



The day was made possible by a small but dedicated team of volunteers — many of them our own coworkers. They shared how proud they felt to represent the SG community and celebrate our collective artistry!

# OPEN DAYS FOR PROFESSIONALS

Throughout the year we held Open Mornings for referrers and local organisations interested in learning more about Sydenham Garden. These sessions offered a chance to see firsthand how our creative groups support wellbeing, discover who we can best help, and understand how to access placements with us. Our open days help us to build stronger relationships and ensure referrals to Sydenham Garden are as positive and well-matched as possible.



We welcomed Trainee GPs, Occupational Therapists, Peer Support Coordinators, Care Coordinators, Wellbeing Advisors, Social Prescribers, Student Social Workers and Disability Employment Advisors visiting from Job Centres, Community Mental health Teams, Supported Housing, SUN Project, Primary Care Networks, Early Intervention Services, Richmond Fellowship, SEL Mind, Community Connections, CASCAID and many others.



“Thank you so much for hosting us. It was great to see the space and learn more about all the wonderful projects. It was particularly useful to gain an understanding of how the projects run so we can tell patients what to expect and I really loved hearing from one of your volunteers about how the gardens have changed his life. I will definitely share what I learnt with the other trainees.”

# FLOWER FARM



This year's exceptionally wet spring resulted in significant crop losses, marking the second consecutive season of challenging weather conditions. In response, we have been researching more resilient flower varieties to better adapt to changing climate patterns. Despite these setbacks, we maintained our commitment to one of our most loyal customers, providing regular supplies throughout the year. The flower farm continues to be a valuable component of our therapeutic work, offering participants renewed purpose, increased confidence, and opportunities to develop new skills while experiencing the validation that comes from meaningful contribution.



# CORPORATE DAYS & VENUE HIRE

This year, corporate groups from Deutsche Bank; Computacentre; Go Contaminated Land Solutions & Contentful took part in team building days both at the Resource Centre and at our De Frene market garden. Over sixty-five people got involved in a variety of projects including constructing new raised timber beds, making a new work surface for our outdoor kitchen, rebuilding composting bays, creating a new enclosure for our chickens and general garden maintenance. Such team building days are a huge benefit to Sydenham Garden, given their extent we wouldn't be able to tackle such tasks during our project sessions. They also raised over £2300 to support our work.



We also continued to hire out the Resource Centre to local residents, businesses and groups who ran workshops; held meetings; facilitated forest school sessions etc. Overall we had 97 bookings which raised just under £9000.

# VOLUNTEERING AT SYDENHAM GARDEN

This year we were delighted to receive £277,927 of funding over the next 3 years through The National Lottery Reaching Communities fund to recruit a dedicated Community Activities and Volunteering Lead, bringing much-needed focus and support to growing our wonderful volunteer community. This has meant recruiting more volunteers from our co-worker community, bringing people together for volunteer forums, and providing training in Mental Health Awareness and Facilitation skills.

**72**

Volunteers providing over 10,000 hours of support

**91%**

Of volunteers reported having met more people

**82%**

Of volunteers reported improved skills as a result of their volunteering

When we asked our volunteers what motivates them, the overwhelming themes were feeling part of a community and genuine enjoyment. Many valued learning new skills or giving back, while others appreciated the chance to use skills they'd developed over decades in new, meaningful ways.

“I have developed a side of me that I didn't know existed, plus I now feel much closer to the local community and have met a lot of warm and interesting people.”

“Sydenham Garden is the highlight of my week. I have been so supported and nurtured. I love that volunteers are so able to get involved in how the organisation runs if they want to. I also love that staff from other projects are so friendly and welcoming to volunteers from outside of their projects, it really helps in feeling part of the team.”





In November, our AGM brought together trustees, staff, volunteers, co-workers, and community members for an evening that captured what Sydenham Garden is all about. Attendees got hands-on with a presentation and practical exercise from our Organic Gardening course, learning by doing, just as we practice in the gardens.

Our AGM is also the time to share our governance with our members; reviewing our finances, and electing trustees to the Board. But perhaps most valuable was the chance to gather together as trustees, co-workers, volunteers, staff and local supporters, who make it all happen, the community who creates and sustains Sydenham Garden.

# PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships flourished this year through collaborations with **Goldsmiths University, Sydenham Arts, Communal Clay, the Horniman Museum**, and numerous local artists. Trainee art psychotherapist **Kiz** led Art Therapy sessions, while artist **Amy Bairstow** co-created a mural design unveiled at Forest Hill Station, coordinated by Andrea Woolrych from **Perry Vale Community Police**.

Visiting artists **Chloé Rochefort, Ulijona Odišarija, Lou Astbury**, and **Oliwia Gzuy** delivered intergenerational workshops including botanical tablecloth-making, clothes swaps, kite-making, and candle-making. We collaborated with **Give Us A Song** for community musical performances, **RHS** and **Alice Bunhope** on a natural dyeing exhibition, and **Matt Hawkins** with **Oxford Piano School** to create an original song from co-worker poetry.



m.u.d members led public workshops at **Una Marson Library**, designed cross-project banners for **London Pride 2024**, and facilitated a cyanotype workshop for **LRMN's This is Home** project funded by **Grow Wild at Kew**.

Outreach partnerships included weekly coordination with **Lewisham Wellbeing Hub**, drop-in sessions with **Community Connections**

**Lewisham**, and hosting **Adult Learning Lewisham's Gardening Group**. Cultural engagement expanded through **Dulwich Picture Gallery** visits and featured spots on **Breaks and Joins** podcast and **No Bounds** radio.



# FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

We would like to say a huge THANK YOU to all our funders and our many individual supporters. Our work would not be possible without your support.



I hope you've enjoyed reading about all our activities over the last year. This was the first year of our new 3-year strategic plan, and I'm delighted to report significant progress across all four of our strategic aims.

We reached 362 co-workers this year - more than ever before - and measured our greatest impact yet, with an average 1-point increase in wellbeing across all our activities. Remarkably, 100% of co-workers reported receiving the service they wanted, and 97% reported increased confidence to advocate for themselves.

We've introduced exciting new therapeutic opportunities this year. Our Art Psychotherapy pilot at De Frene provided a safe space for participants to explore mental health challenges through creativity. The Hyde Community Growing Project delivered 46 weekly outreach sessions, welcoming 53 new participants to nature-based activities at Hyde Housing estates and our Market Garden, culminating in wonderful community events including Apple Day and The Big Feast.

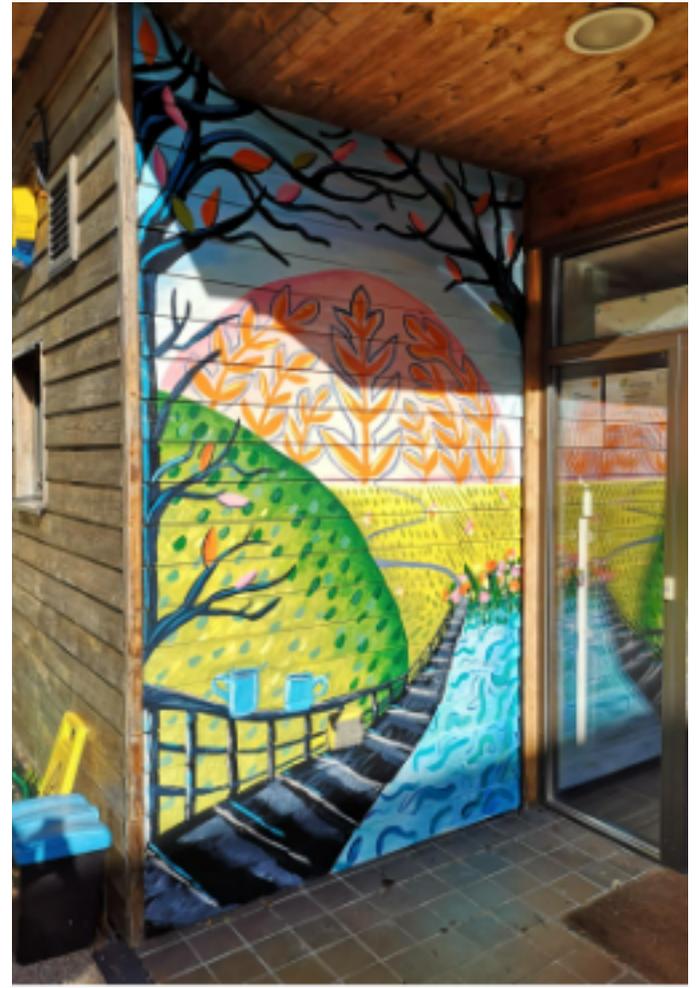
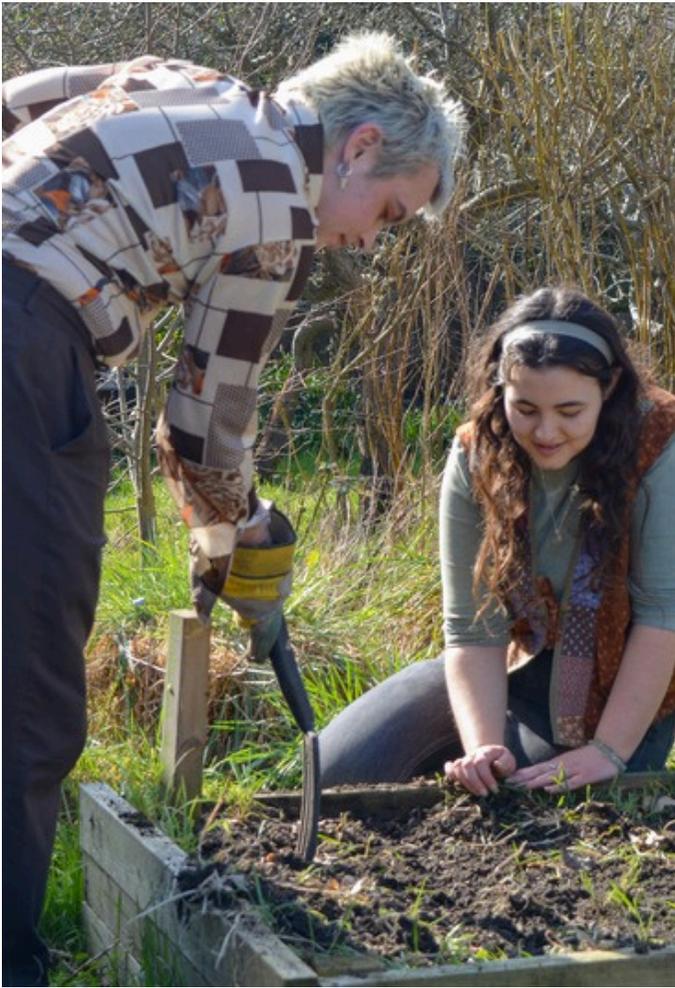
A particular highlight was our Service User Event in spring, where Growing Lives co-workers designed and hosted an afternoon for nearly 30 mental health professionals from statutory and voluntary services. Their courage and honesty in sharing experiences of accessing mental health care sparked meaningful dialogue about creating more compassionate, responsive services - exactly the kind of co-worker voice and leadership our strategic plan prioritizes.

Our 72 dedicated volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours this year - an extraordinary commitment that makes everything we do possible. Thank you to every volunteer, staff member, funder, and supporter who has made this remarkable year happen.

I hope to see you at the gardens this year.

**Julia Brandreth**







# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2024 - 2025



Sydenham Garden  
*A growing community*

Sydenham Garden Resource Centre  
28a Wynell Rd, London SE23 2LW

[www.sydenhamgarden.org.uk](http://www.sydenhamgarden.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 1108100