

Gardening4Health: Mission, Vision & Impact

Overview:

Gardening4Health was founded in 2019 by Dr Richard Claxton, a long-standing advocate of the health benefits of gardening, with the aim of increasing the provision, quality, and uptake of Social & Therapeutic Horticulture in the UK.

The charity builds on the innate value of Gardening and Greener Lifestyles for our wellbeing, but its main goal is to work towards the universal availability of Horticultural Therapies in general, and Social and Therapeutic Horticulture in particular, as an integral part of a preventative healthcare model, and as a valuable treatment for a wide range of physical and mental health conditions.

The Needs & Issues Gardening4Health Addresses:

Whilst there are multiple excellent provider sites and horticultural therapists, there is a lack of connectivity amongst them, often resulting in the duplication of services, some gaps in provision, and/or 'reinventing the wheel' for new start-up therapy gardens, who may be unaware of the fantastic and growing suite of resources that others have developed.

Clinicians and healthcare commissioners may lack insight and information about the many benefits of Social & Therapeutic Horticulture for their patients or communities, and often have no idea where their nearest site might be. The 'Gardening4Health' Directory and the compendium of resources in our Toolkit and Newsletters have been developed to tackle these issues head-on.

Social and Therapeutic Horticulture providers are often small, localised community gardens who do not have access to key policy makers, including government and funding bodies. The role of Gardening4Health in advocating for the sector as a whole and lobbying for both recognition and funding is critical in addressing this need.

Vision & Mission:

- ***Gardening4Health is ambitious for the sector. Its vision is that every neighbourhood in the UK has access to therapeutic horticulture by 2030, and that many more people are aware of how gardening can positively impact their health and wellbeing.***
- ***The charity's mission is to continue expanding the Gardening4Health Directory of Social & Therapeutic Horticulture, growing a community of excellent providers with access to a wealth of resources, advice and support, towards the universal provision of horticultural therapies, which results in improved health outcomes for people of all ages and backgrounds across the country.***

Priorities: Gardening4Health focuses its work in three areas

❖ Creating Networking & Learning Opportunities

The charity operates as a networking hub for individuals and organisations who provide therapeutic horticulture projects, bringing the green care community together through the Gardening4Health website; symposia ; newsletters; and publications, highlighting new developments and research, sharing good practice across the sector, and enabling providers to learn from each other and have access to mutual support and encouragement.

❖ Providing Inspiration, Information, Practical Tools & Resources

Gardening4Health is compiling an extensive Resource Library and Evidence Base, containing tools, templates, and case studies which have been developed by established horticultural therapy providers, with the aim of:

- Inspiring new sites and therapists, making it easier for them to get going, with useful templates, ideas for start-up funding and other practical support;
- Giving existing providers access to new evidence and updated resources to improve and maintain their sites. This includes fundraising ideas; accessible design solutions; effective monitoring and impact evaluation techniques; and inspirational case studies;
- Making information available to commissioners, clinicians and funders regarding the effectiveness of horticultural therapies;
- Sharing the most effective approaches across the sector and helping to continue to build the quality of horticultural therapies nationally.

This Resource Library includes the highly regarded **Directory of Therapeutic Horticulture**, a searchable map showing the locations of charities, other non-statutory bodies, NHS gardens, private providers, and individuals offering horticultural therapy, along with their contact details and information about the services they provide.

❖ Advocacy and Promotion

Gardening4Health plays an important advocacy role, acting as a voice for the horticultural therapy sector, and helping to communicate the human health and environmental benefits, along with the potential public cost-savings that could be achieved, through the roll-out and sustainable support of therapeutic horticulture nationally.

The charity lobbies local/national government, funders, and influential individuals, to increase the funding and support available for this important work.

As well as support for the sector, there is a strong focus on providing inspiration and practical advice which encourages anyone that might benefit from Therapeutic Horticulture, either to treat an existing health condition or to prevent ill-health later in life, to investigate this option further.

Gardening4Health's Principles and Values:

- ❖ **Generous** - in sharing experiences and resources contributed by therapy gardens, practitioners and communities – so that new sites and projects can be established easily, and existing providers can continue to refresh their knowledge, skills and best practice.
- ❖ **Inclusive** - in recognising that a 'one size fits all' approach is inappropriate, and that services should be tailored to the needs, interests and capabilities of clients and communities, reflecting the lived experience of beneficiaries, and co-designed wherever possible.
- ❖ **Accessible** – providing advice and inspiration from the Gardening4Health community regarding the accessible design; of programmes and sites, ensuring therapeutic horticulture is freely available to all people; and aiming for provision in every neighbourhood.
- ❖ **Safe** – providing access to resources such as risk assessments, health and safety information, and guidance on how best to support a range of physical, mental and cognitive health conditions with horticultural therapy, from experts in their field.

Our key Values

- ❖ Kind, caring and compassionate, sensitivity and respect for all others, integrity and honesty.

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