



**How we use gardening
to change lives**

Thrive is the leading charity in the UK that uses gardening to bring about positive changes in the lives of people who are living with disabilities or ill health, or are isolated, disadvantaged or vulnerable. This is known as **social and therapeutic horticulture (STH)**.

What is social and therapeutic horticulture?

It is the process of using plants and gardens to improve physical and mental health, as well as communication and thinking skills. It also uses the garden as a safe and secure place to develop someone's ability to mix socially, make friends, and learn practical skills that will help them to be more independent.

Facts and figures:

In **12 months**
we receive almost
3,000 enquiries
by phone and email
asking for advice and
information

Using gardening tasks and the garden itself, Thrive horticultural therapists build a set of activities for each gardener to improve their particular health needs, and to work on certain goals they want to achieve.





What's so special about gardening?

Gardens are peaceful and restorative. They provide a special place for rehabilitation and recovery. And, being given the opportunity to develop an interest in gardening will give a person benefits that can last a lifetime.

The benefits of an active interest in gardening are:

- **better physical health from exercise and learning how to use or strengthen muscles to increase mobility**
- **improved mental health from gaining a sense of purpose and achievement**
- **the opportunity to connect with other people – reducing feelings of being alone or left out**
- **feeling better for being outdoors, in touch with nature and seeing plants grow – all things that are known to be important to us as human beings**
- **the opportunity to learn new things.**

Facts and figures:

Last year Thrive worked with over **1,440** client gardeners



Facts and figures:

541 students
trained in STH via
our **national
short course
programme**
last year



Facts and figures:

11 million
people in the UK
live with a limiting
long term illness,
impairment or
disability



More than good health

Improving good health and well-being are at the heart of therapeutic horticulture and there are also other benefits for people who take up gardening. These benefits are: developing new skills, learning about food growing and what is good to eat, becoming fitter, boosting confidence with new-found knowledge and using this knowledge, and possibly a qualification in horticulture, to get a job.

About Thrive's work

We work with a wide range of people... people who have injuries from accidents; people with learning impairment; people with mental illness; people with physical impairment such as sight or hearing loss; people with age-related conditions such as dementia, heart problems, diabetes or stroke; young people who have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties; and people who have ill health after leaving the armed forces.

We work in variety of ways. We run therapeutic programmes at our garden sites in London, Reading, Birmingham and Gateshead. We also go out to care homes, village halls, and community projects to encourage gardening activities. And we have a special website that gives lots of information about how anyone can continue gardening at home **www.carryongardening.org.uk**

Thrive inspires and encourages the people who come to us. We focus on what they can do – not on what they can't do. Our gardeners are on a journey. We help them move on and make improvements in their lives.

and...

Thrive carries out research. We have brought together a lot of evidence and experience to show exactly how gardening brings about great changes. To spread this knowledge, we run training courses for anyone interested in using horticulture for health and well-being.

Tom's story

Thrive works with people like Tom (pictured right), a top-level wakeboarder, who suffered a brain injury in a car accident when he was 18. Tom's mum Lynne said:

"Thrive took a frail and damaged young man, nurtured and green-housed him to enable him to grow and blossom into a quite remarkable, kind, funny and sensitive young man who is much respected by those around him.

"You certainly disproved the psychologist at the neuro rehab unit who said that he would never work, plan, problem solve or be independent.

"I would urge anyone to support Thrive; they really do care and gave my son a life."

While at Thrive, Tom gained his level 2 City and Guilds qualification in horticulture and after working as a gardener for more than a year, he moved to Denmark to be with his girlfriend. Now, Tom is the manager of a wakeboarding centre in Hvide Sande. So, he has returned to his original passion. What a great journey!

Facts and figures:

Disabled people are **three times** as likely not to hold any qualifications compared to non-disabled people



How you can help and support us

-  **DONATE** today. Text **Thri02** and the amount you want to give to **70070**; phone us on **0118 988 5688** or donate online at **www.thrive.org.uk**
-  **VOLUNTEER** with us in London, Reading, Birmingham or Gateshead
-  **FOLLOW US** on Twitter (@thrivecharity) or **LIKE** our Facebook page
-  **SIGN UP** for our newsletters and mailings

For more information contact **info@thrive.org.uk**
or telephone **0118 988 5688**.



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Founded in 1978.

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