



using gardening to change lives

Impact Report 2017


“ Hello and I hope you enjoy reading this report which shows the breadth of work at Thrive.

My name is Leslie and I am 86. I've been told I'm the oldest client gardener at Thrive! I've had several strokes and I'm unfortunately losing my eyesight but that doesn't stop me gardening and I love being surrounded by all the folk at Thrive.

Coming here is the highlight of my week. Everyone is so kind and supportive. The therapists make sure the jobs in the garden are suitable for me and offer help if I need it. It's such a wonderful place.”

Leslie Leng





Thrive is the leading charity in the UK using gardening to bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with disabilities or ill health, or who are isolated, disadvantaged or vulnerable.

This approach is called **social and therapeutic horticulture (STH)**, where therapists work with plants and people to improve an individual's physical and psychological health, communication and thinking skills. Horticultural therapists use the garden as a safe and secure environment in which to develop a person's ability to socialise, make friends and gain practical skills that make them more independent.

The horticultural therapist will focus on each individual that comes to Thrive, building a set of activities aimed at improving their particular health needs in order to achieve goals identified by the client gardener, their family, carer or support worker.

For example, life can be challenging for Stuart, who lives with mental health problems, learning difficulties and epilepsy. A social and caring environment where therapists make sure Stuart is found the right tool for the job has helped reduce his anxiety and stress levels. Learning new things has improved his self-esteem and being outside in nature has a calming effect. With Thrive's new kitchen about to open in Beech Hill, Stuart is looking forward to learning how to cook.

It's this tailored approach that makes Thrive the leader in the field of STH.

We directly help 1,100 people each year at our regional centres and through outreach projects in care homes, hospitals, schools and hostels.

We indirectly help hundreds more people thanks to our world-class training and education programme. We estimate that for each practitioner trained by Thrive in social and therapeutic horticulture, they go on to help six individuals.

And that number increases to thousands when you take into account our information service which answers hundreds of email enquiries each year about disability and gardening and our telephone helpline staffed by a trained horticultural therapist. Our two websites www.thrive.org.uk and www.carryongardening.org.uk offer a wealth of information about how to carry on gardening when you have a disability, including information on garden design, easy-care planting, tasks

to do when sitting down, advice on tools and tips on getting started in the garden.

Whilst improving good health and wellbeing are at the core of therapeutic horticulture, there are other benefits for people who take up gardening.

These are the five key benefits of a sustained and active interest in gardening.

- **Better physical health from the exercise you get gardening, building muscle strength and improving mobility**
- **Improved mental health, from gaining a sense of purpose and achievement**
- **Reducing isolation or feelings of exclusion. Gardeners are friendly people and love involving everyone**
- **Building confidence and self-esteem. Learning new things and knowing how to do them can lead to volunteering, qualifications in horticulture and even employment**
- **Simply feeling better for being outdoors, in touch with nature and seeing things grow is good for the soul.**



So much more than gardening...

We work with such a wide range of people from aged eight to eighty and above, who come from all walks of life, living with various challenges.

People living with mental ill health can benefit from therapeutic gardening which can help get your life back on track when you are going through difficult times.

For those who have had a stroke, gardening with Thrive can improve mobility and lead to better sleep patterns. We also help people with age-related conditions such as heart problems, diabetes or dementia.

Case study – Imogen

Imogen lives with cerebral palsy as a result of brain damage after surgery at the age of two, and has a visual impairment. She often feels lonely.

With the therapists' help Imogen has tested different tools and techniques to help her to adapt tasks in the garden. Gardening calms and relaxes Imogen and her moods and confidence have improved. As well as good physical exercise, it has helped her co-ordination and she is getting better at working with both hands.

"Thrive makes a great difference to people like me providing an opportunity to meet and work with people – lots of us with disabilities can face loneliness – to learn interesting things and improve physically."



Case study – Mark

Mark was living a busy, active life and enjoying work as a flower seller – the nicest job he'd ever had. Then life changed suddenly when his Dad died and shortly thereafter Mark had a stroke.

After the stroke it was hard to move around. A social worker told Mark about Thrive and gardening has helped keep him active and improved his strength.

"I still wish I could be as active as I was before the stroke, but coming to Thrive and being able to do things makes me feel better."

For young people with behavioural or attention difficulties, gardening offers an alternative to the classroom where the outside environment is relaxing and calming.

Along with directly helping such a wide range of people, we offer a unique training, education and consultancy programme which has recently gone global!

Our team offer a range of training from an introduction to Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) to accredited courses, an Award in STH and a Diploma run in conjunction with our higher education partners.

In autumn we launched our online training which can be accessed from anywhere in the world. It was created due to increased demand as over the last few years we've seen a growing interest in our courses from overseas and from people for whom travelling can be difficult.

The online courses are practical and informative and draw on decades of experience of setting up, delivering, monitoring and quality assuring countless therapeutic gardening programmes in the UK and internationally.

And while technology can't yet replicate the experience of soil under the fingernails, Thrive uses films, virtual reality presentations and interactive technologies to immerse learners in an educational experience.

Facts and figures

- **10 million** disabled in the UK¹
- **1.1 million** stroke survivors²
- **1 million** older people go for a month or more without seeing or speaking to anyone³
- Approximately **1 in 4** people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year⁴

These are the people who could benefit from Thrive's services

¹ Government figures; ² Stroke Association; ³ Age UK; ⁴ Mind.



“The therapists have made me realise that the stroke is over, but life isn't.”
Stu, Birmingham

11,000 gardening sessions	1,100 people directly benefitted from our sessions	22 client gardeners gained an accredited qualification
3,000 were helped over the phone and email	17,000 unique visits (per month) to our websites	21 organisations in the UK used Thrive's Consultancy service
500 students attended Thrive training programmes	300 volunteers donated their time & expertise to Thrive	70 corporate days held
43 students gained the accredited Award in STH	25,300 hours of voluntary help	
15 students gained the Diploma in STH awarded by Coventry University	452 articles in the press featured Thrive	
9,300 people receive our monthly newsletter	5,250 Twitter followers	
230 members of Thrive receive our quarterly publication <i>Growth Point</i>	3,245 Facebook likes	

“Gardening has given me drive and ambition, I feel like I now have a sense of purpose.”
Martell, Battersea

Making our voice heard and collaborative work

We've been busy building relationships with organisations, exploring ways of working together whilst making sure our voice is heard promoting the work of Thrive and STH in the wider context of 'green care'.

Chief Executive Kathryn Rossiter chairs the Green Care Coalition set up to promote the commissioning and use of green care services as an effective option in the health and social care sector.

We're delighted with the growth and commitment within our existing partnerships with Forest Garden and Notcutts Ltd, and sales of Sweet Pea 'Eleanore Udall' and the new Zinnia 'Lilliput Purple' by Chiltern Seeds will continue well into 2018.

Our garden ambassador David Domoney continues to be brilliant in his support for us and this year he's been joined by TV presenter and garden designer Mark Lane. Mark is a wheelchair user and specialises in accessible garden design. Both are tremendous ambassadors for the charity.

There have been 70 corporate days at Thrive which strengthen our ties with organisations close to our three regional centres. These businesses enjoy a fantastic team building day whilst helping our charity, which enables them to fulfil their own Corporate Social Responsibility aims. The work these visiting groups carry out makes a huge difference to Thrive and brings in a steady and welcome income.

Thrive regularly appears in the press, featuring in national and regional magazines and newspapers as well as in the garden media and disability publications.

We embrace social media and recently joined Instagram which helps spread the word and get people excited about new fundraising initiatives, like Wear Your Wellies to Work Day!





Our gardening programmes

Here we share two programmes which show how gardening is helping homeless women in London who live with mental ill health, and young people with special educational needs (SEN).

Grow and Learn helps young people with special educational needs and operates in Kings Heath Park, Birmingham. It has been praised by one of its funders The Rowan Trust.

Young people aged 14–19 gain practical training in gardening helping them develop personal and life skills, improve work skills, and leads to a City & Guilds qualification in horticulture.

The students develop confidence and self-esteem and the charity’s approach is tailored to enable students to progress at their own speed.

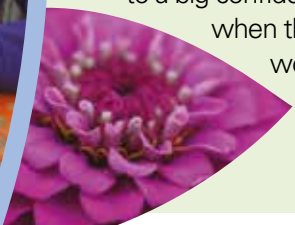
Several teachers have reported an increase in their student’s participation in other activities as their confidence grows and they share successes with their classmates.

Amanda Fields, Thrive regional manager in Birmingham, said: “In the transition to adult life, children with a learning disability and complex needs are disadvantaged; they are often socially excluded and can live with a sense of failure and under-achievement.

“Alienation from their peers results in higher truancy rates, which exacerbate poor academic achievement. *Grow and Learn* is designed to fill a gap to help these young people by offering informal learning in a natural environment.

“In an outdoors environment, nature-based learning helps young people explore their creativity, enhances cognitive abilities, improves their physical activity and reduce feelings of stress.

“Designing a garden for the *BBC Gardeners’ World* show demonstrated these skills and led to a big confidence boost when the garden won a Silver Gilt Medal!”



In London, horticultural therapist Lu is working one day a week at a hostel for homeless women who live with mental ill health.

Lu encourages them to get out in the garden, think about how they’d like to use the outdoor space and work to revamp the garden of Queen Mary’s hostel.

Involving the women in all decision making, discussing what to plant and how to look after them, the colour to paint the fence and where to create a seating area has encouraged team working and improves social skills as everyone listens to each others’ opinions.

Lu said: “We’re well on the way to creating a welcoming and therapeutic private garden space. Many of these ladies are now so motivated; it’s giving them something to get out of bed for.

“Over the summer we have been eating the vegetables we have grown and enjoy making lunch together.”

The positive changes to these womens’ lives so far is clear to see. Deborah has embraced the gardening programme and joined just nine days after she’d had an operation.

But Deborah understands that being outdoors and moving more is helping her recovery. She said:

“I look forward to the gardening group each week and love learning new things about gardening; being outside in this space with other people is just wonderful.”

It showcases our mantra that more grows in the garden than just plants.

Michelle, one of the women at the hostel who attends every week.



A message from our Chair, Faith Ramsay

Having already been a Trustee of Thrive for over two years, I was delighted to become Chair in 2017 as it's a charity very close to my heart. I know first hand how gardening can help people, particularly with mental ill health. Some of you may have read the press articles about me in May during Mental Health Awareness Week where I shared how gardening had helped me personally following long-term depression and living with Hypermobility and Fibromyalgia.

For me, and I know many others too, the work Thrive does in helping people achieve what they want, feel healthier, happier and confident, is truly inspirational.

2016/17 has been a busy and challenging year for the charity and it was with great sadness that we had to take the difficult decision to close our Gateshead centre in July 2017 when the current *Grow and Learn* project ended.

The staff and volunteers who have worked there over four years have done a tremendous job and I wish to thank them for their efforts over this time.

We have identified that we need to improve our awareness-raising work as well as our income generating capabilities to ensure the longevity of this inspiring charity and the work it does. With this in mind we are creating a new senior management position to help us drive this forward.

A full review of our forward strategy will be undertaken during the coming year including a review of our strategic priorities and our financial projections.

Working with professionals and other organisations who provide services to disabled people remains an important element of our activities and we look forward to working with other participants in the Green Care sector.

There is a growing understanding of the benefits of gardening and we believe that Thrive is the only organisation in the UK that can meet the need for high quality training and consultancy and with the expertise to deliver these services.

This year saw the completion of the extension and refurbishment of the building at our head office in Berkshire providing improved facilities for the client gardeners. Funding for this was provided by a generous legacy from a local supporter and several generous grants and donations.

I would personally like to thank Thrive's dedicated staff for their continued commitment and professionalism and pay tribute to the hundreds of volunteers who are the backbone of the charity. Many go beyond what is expected of them, supporting events and activities in the evening and at weekends or going that extra mile in supporting disabled people and of course baking cakes!

I would also like to thank all of our generous donors – individuals, organisations and Trusts and Foundations. Without your financial support we would not be able to help as many disabled, vulnerable or isolated people as we do.

I look forward to doing whatever I can to help Thrive and bring it to the attention of more and more people.

It is the leading horticultural therapy charity in the UK and has a worldwide reputation, offering training and education that's second to none and we should be proud of that. As Chair of Trustees, I certainly am!

I look forward to meeting with you over the coming year and hearing more stories about how we have impacted our clients lives.

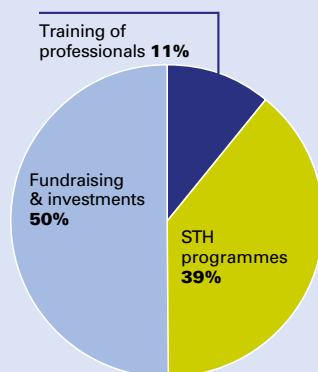


Income and Expenditure 2016/17

INCOME

STH programmes	659,746
Fundraising & investments	844,288
Training of professionals	195,232

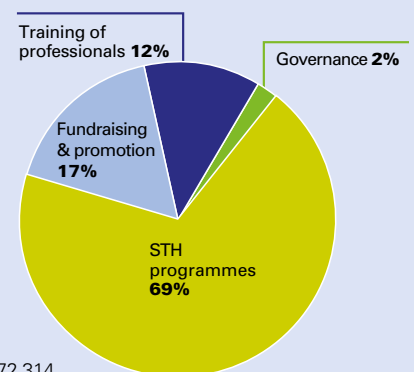
1,699,266



EXPENDITURE

STH programmes	1,172,314
Fundraising & promotion	296,080
Training of professionals	194,722
Governance	37,177

1,700,293



We are very grateful to everyone who has made a financial contribution towards our work and in particular to the following for their very generous contributions (financial year 2016/17).

A W Gale Charitable Trust
Bayfield Charitable Trust
Berkeley Foundation
Berkeley Homes Limited
Boursin Bel UK Ltd
Calleva Foundation
Cardy Beaver Foundation
Clothworkers Foundation
CSA Environmental
David Solomons Charitable Trust
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Mr D A-T, London
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Mr R H, Hampshire
Mr R H, Herefordshire

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Mr T O, Hertfordshire
Mrs C H-P, Gloucestershire
Mrs E G, West Midlands
Mrs G W, Berkshire
Mrs N.A, Berkshire
Ms A & Ms P McL, Shropshire
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The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation

The Eddleston Settlement
The Englefield Charitable Trust
The Geoff & Fiona Squire Foundation
The Laing Family Foundations
The Monday Charitable Trust
The Nina and Roger Stewart Charitable Trust
The Northwick Trust
The Ormsby Charitable Trust
The Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust
The Rowan Trust
The Sir Robert Horton Charitable Trust Fund
The Syder Foundation
The Sylvia Waddilove Foundation UK
The W O Street Charitable Foundation
The Wolfson Foundation
The Worshipful Company of Gardeners
Theodore Roussel Memorial Trust
Tuixen Foundation
Turley
Wimbledon Foundation
Wokingham Tangent Club



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Ways to get involved

- Make a donation
- Open your garden for Thrive
- Become a 'friend' by making a regular donation by Direct Debit
- Sign up for e-news
- Volunteer for us
- Become a corporate supporter
- Do a charity challenge
- Come on a training course
- Join in with us on Social Media

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