

Thrive Diploma (non-OFQUAL registered) in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture

The Thrive Diploma in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (DipSTH) is in line with a level 5 120 credit point learning programme, like a standard higher education diploma.

The aim of the DipSTH is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop all the knowledge and skills needed to provide Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) in any practice setting. On completion you will be amongst the most educated proponents in nature-based interventions in the UK with expertise to practice excellence.

By providing learning in relation to the key considerations to maximise the inherent benefits of the STH medium this course will support practitioners to develop and deliver programmes of STH effectively. You will be able to rationalise how to use STH effectively in any practice situation to provide those who access a person-centred experience relevant to their health, social care, or educational needs.

STH is a multi-model medium which has core values for human health and wellbeing and the potential to be utilised in directed and holistic approaches across the spectrum of intervention models. With a range of additional values coming from its fusion with other agendas each STH programme has to be created in line with the delivery context. The units that make up the DipSTH provide an opportunity to engage and critically evaluate how to apply a reasoning process to develop and deliver STH as a successful and sustainable intervention that will achieve the identified outcomes for those who access.

Approach to Learning

The DipSTH comprises the following modules:

1. The Fundamentals of STH
2. Activity Centred on Horticulture (double module)
3. Occupation and activity as therapy
4. Practitioner relationships
5. The social environment
6. Rationale for practice
7. Practice development

The DipSTH will be scheduled over 2 years with 60 credits (600hours of learning) each year. With modules 1-3 in year 1 and modules 4-7 in year 2. Maximum of 20 days attendance each year.

The content will be a mix of directed and self-directed learning accessed; online, in classrooms and gardens, through reading, project visits, personal reflection and the production of assignments to meet learning outcomes. The learning content has been designed to be specifically relevant to the subject areas, be stimulating and with enough variety to support learner engagement.

Working with and within a supportive cohort, a range of teachers and special guest speakers will share 100s of years of STH knowledge, experience, and expertise with all learners.

The assessment activities have been designed to be valid and reliable opportunities for learners to demonstrate their skills, understanding, critical thinking and evaluation skills in ways relevant to their own learning journey and practice aspirations. With clear expectations and guidance students will be able to relate the learning and assignments to their own experience and preferences in practice.

What will you study

In Year 1 you will study the Fundamentals of STH and create a clear understanding of the STH and Green care sectors, identifying differences in practice approach across multiple settings and different approaches to utilising horticulture and nature as therapy. Across the whole of the first year, you will complete a unit that provides an understanding of the principles of horticulture (and wider approaches to plant growth such as permaculture) and how they are applied in STH, learning about therapeutic garden design, creating therapy programmes, and explore wider activity provision that supports the achievement of outcomes for the client gardener group. Additionally, in year 1 you will explore the world of Occupational Therapy and how this allied profession provides key considerations and learning that can be applied in gardens to create meaningful activity and occupation that will support client gardener's personal growth.

In year 2 you will study the different relationships within the STH environment, learn how to develop therapeutic rapport, connect people to their nature affinity and understand the practitioner role in supporting people towards their goals and towards improved quality of life. In line with this learning, you will also specifically explore how to develop the social environment within STH creating social connectedness and supporting the groups to become self-supportive and to grow into independence and autonomy. The DipSTH will end with units that focus on putting all the learning into place and creating an STH intervention of your own design, and how to develop your own professional approach and support the development of STH towards full recognition for the resilience and recovery it provides.

The student journey

Students will be supported across the DipSTH by experienced tutors who have provided support to many previous graduates across the Thrive Award and Professional development Diploma in STH that we delivered in partnership with Coventry University until 2 years ago. We are always committed to supporting students to learn and explore the world of nature-based interventions in relation to their own aspirations. With 20 days of attendance each year and additional learning from online interaction and content the diploma offers students a chance to be immersed in study that will support you to make sense of and utilise new skills and knowledge in how to support people using nature and gardens.

You will be individually supported with tutorial opportunities through the course to ensure that you are able to study in a way that suits you, overcome any barriers and progress through assignments to the level of attainment that you strive to achieve.

The Dip STH has been designed to provide a hidden curriculum full of skills that lend themselves to many roles within STH and the wider nature for health field.

With abundant opportunities to learn within a supportive cohort and with guest speakers and project visits offering development beyond traditional study. By the end of the DipSTH these new relationships will leave you feeling a fully-fledged member of the nature for health fraternity.

Upon graduation you will be one of the most qualified and knowledgeable professionals in STH and nature-based approaches to health.

Course fees and access

The Course fees for the full 2 years of learning are £3800 paid in 4 instalments of £950 in September and January of each year.

There are 3 full bursaries available to those who have less than £23,000 personal income per year demonstrating high levels of commitment to learning and practice.

We try hard to ensure that those who genuinely need support in financing their studies can be accommodated onto our courses and so please do consider if the bursary is right for you and do please get in touch to discuss finances further if needed.

With 20 attendance days and study materials there are additional costs beyond the course fees that will differ depending on each student's situation. It would be sensible to explore these costs at the beginning of your application. Some reading materials will be available from our library but is likely that you will need to purchase some reading for future use as well and this may be anywhere between £100-£300 depending on preference.

With some learning delivered on our online learning platform and some video conferencing access to good internet connection and other IT would be supportive.

We always work hard to support all learners and accommodate learning preference and needs. We ensure our compliance with the Equalities Act 2010 and so if you would like to discuss how we can support you to access the DipSTH do please get in touch.

We are proud of the curriculum we have created and believe it to provide a rich and rewarding learning opportunity and be an important step toward increased recognition of the value of nature-based interventions in the UK. We welcome applications from all who want to be part of that journey.