



Transforming lives through gardening

Impact Report 2025 / 2026



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Welcome

This was a year of momentum for us, filled with inspiring stories and meaningful progress that highlight how we are transforming lives through gardening.

Top among many highlights for me in 2025 to 2026, was hearing Lisa share the life-changing impact of our programme, a powerful reminder of the importance of our work and benefits of gardening.

Our programmes in London, Reading and Birmingham grew in strength and reach, delivering significant benefits for client gardeners and attracting increasing interest from across health and social care.

We were proud to launch Growth Point, our new Continuing Professional Development subscription service, to support practitioners beyond their initial training and build a thriving peer-to-peer community.

Looking ahead, we are expanding our impact further. We plan to introduce new programmes across our three centres, extend our in-person training to additional locations, and continue our partnership with Trellis as we work towards establishing a professional association for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) in the UK.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors, the commitment of our volunteers, and the dedication of our exceptional staff. Thank you for being part of our journey. I hope you enjoy this report and will join me in celebrating our shared achievements.



Ben Thomas
Chief Executive

This year we...

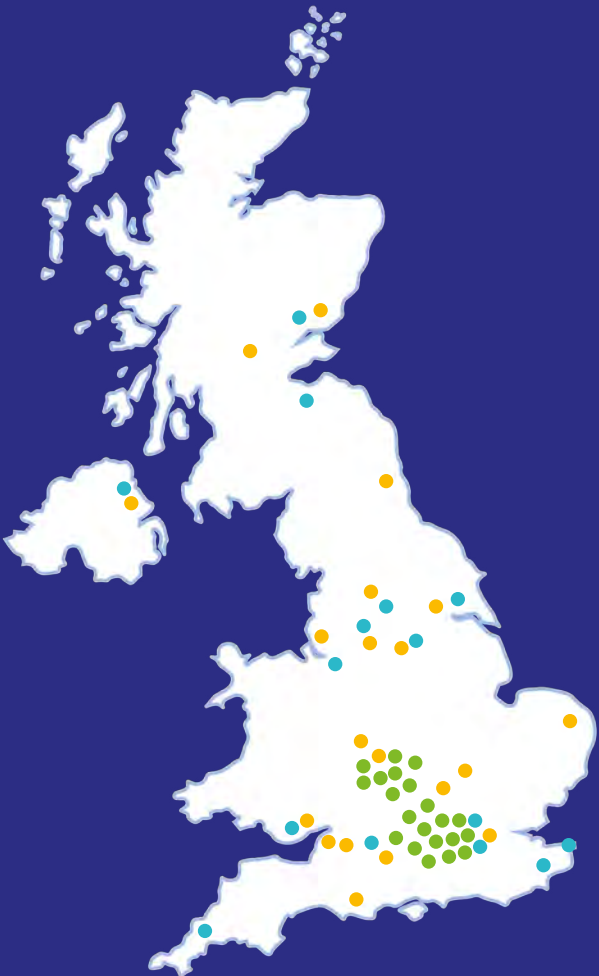
- Supported 10% more people
- Launched two new programmes for isolated adults and schools
- Joined the NHS Social Impact Framework
- Launched Growth Point CPD
- Delivered green social prescribing guidance

Our impact

Gardening benefits people physically, mentally and socially.

Lives were transformed across the UK through our training, programmes and information service.

- Training
- Information service
- Client services



Numbers that changed lives



437

client gardeners benefitted from 13,568 gardening sessions



214

regular volunteers supported us with 26,717 hours



734

corporate volunteers supported us with 3,608 hours



649

learners trained with us to support others

Five life-changing percentages

As a result of attending our programmes, client gardeners were very satisfied with our service.

99% improved their physical health

98% were happier or improved their mental wellbeing

94% socialised more with others

97% learnt new things or gained new skills

93% increased or restored their confidence

We engaged with key community groups

- Ethnically diverse
- Faith
- Disabled people
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Carers

People discovered us from

- Primary care (GPs, social prescribing link workers)
- Secondary care (NHS Trusts, mental health services, rehabilitation services)
- Adult social care
- Community, voluntary and charity organisations
- Self-referral (via our website and communications)

We supported people with diverse needs

- Physical disabilities
- Mental ill health
- Neurodivergent
- Long term illness or injuries
- Learning difficulties
- Learning disabilities



Purpose and priorities

We are creating a future where disabled people and people living with ill health or disadvantage experience the life-changing benefits of gardening and nature.

We are:

- **Delivering** life-changing Social and Therapeutic Horticulture programmes
- **Training** practitioners and advancing professional standards in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture
- **Providing** gardening advice for disabled people or people living with health conditions
- **Advocating** to get Social and Therapeutic Horticulture recognised and more widely utilised

Grow our sector

- Create conditions for widespread STH adoption
- Build and share robust STH evidence
- Establish sector wide best practice standards

Grow our impact

- Deliver measurable outcomes through STH
- Enable self-directed gardening through trusted guidance
- Expand high quality services for professionals

Grow our organisational sustainability

- Align workforce capacity and capability with strategy
- Improve infrastructure to support service delivery
- Generate surplus to sustain services and invest

Advocacy and sector support

Closing the evidence gaps to enable growth

Through collaborations with sector researchers we have identified and responded to key evidence gaps, commissioning two studies due for publication in 2026. The reports will significantly enhance our advocacy by improving understanding of STH provision and providing refreshed social return on investment evidence to demonstrate impact.

Developing the UK Association for STH

Alongside Trellis and a team of volunteers, we have moved toward establishing the professional Association for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture. We completed a substantial programme of consultation and published a competency framework, taking us further toward creating clear, consistent and credible UK wide standards for the profession.

Networking to use our voice and influence

We gained traction with invitations to the House of Lords for an All-Party Parliamentary Gardening and Horticulture Group event and to a parliamentary reception at the House of Commons celebrating the impact of social prescribing in England. These opportunities, alongside our work with the STH Stakeholder Group strengthened our national voice and ensured our Practitioners’ and client gardeners’ experiences inform key conversations.

Joining the NHS Framework

We were accepted onto the NHS Social Impact Framework for the first time, marking a major milestone for us in recognition of the strength and impact of our services. This opens a new significant route for NHS and public sector organisations to commission our much-needed programmes.



Finding calm and confidence in nature

Lisa's story



Planting a seed and seeing it grow has helped Lisa to sow a new lease of life through gardening.

Lisa is autistic and uses nature as a safe space to withdraw to when she feels overloaded. She loves gardening with us, where she can interact with others and be outside among plants and trees and listening to bird song.

"When I go home, I am in a lot better place than when I come in," says Lisa.

Since attending our general gardening programme, we have seen a big change in Lisa's mental health, social skills and confidence.

“

I would say to anyone, being outside in nature even if you can only do five minutes a day, is the best thing for your head you can possibly do.

At first, she was apprehensive and didn't want to talk to people. Now, she takes part in group projects and brings her passions for art into her work, taking photos and sharing her journal entries.

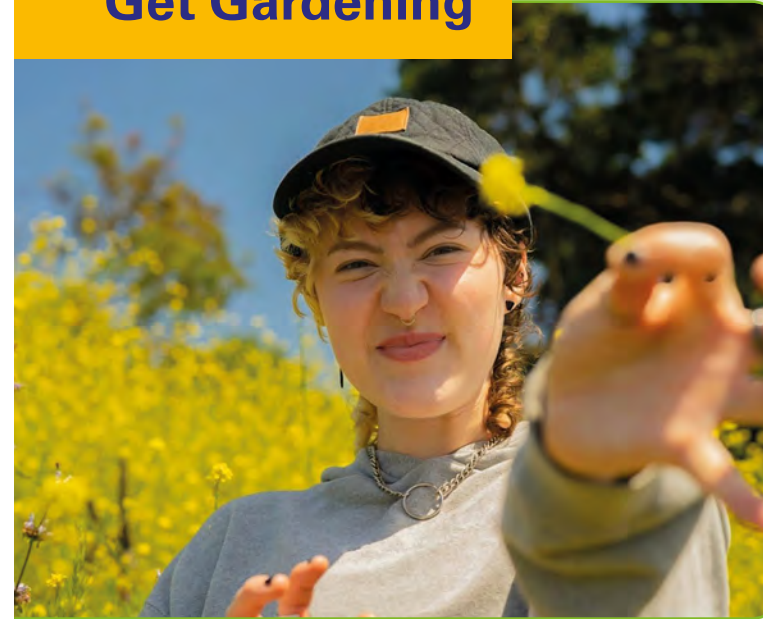
"It can be very hard to talk to people when your interpersonal skills are not very strong. But coming here has given me the confidence to have conversations with other people and ask them how they are."

For Lisa, coming to our garden and experiencing the benefits of gardening was a turning point that improved her wellbeing.

Today, Lisa is excited to be completing an RHS qualification, something she never thought she would do.

Our programmes provide safe, supportive spaces where people can transform their lives through gardening, just like Lisa did.

Get Gardening



Activities, advice and inspiration helping people use gardening and nature for health and wellbeing.

120,881 people visited Get Gardening in 2025-26

94% of Get Gardening visitors feel they have a better understanding of how gardening can improve their health

74% of Get Gardening visitors with a disability or long-term health condition indicate it helped remove barriers to gardening

“

Gardening club makes me feel part of a community.

Gardening Club member

New gardening guide for the autistic community

We discovered how gardening and autism connect and how time in nature can be beneficial for autistic people, through our health condition guide [Gardening and autism](#) published in October 2025.

The guide provides practical information for the autistic community exploring physical health, connecting with others, learning and routine, sensory elements and tips from autistic gardeners.

Collaborating with Hozelock on new Wellbeing Hub

We collaborated with Hozelock, the UK's leading watering brand, on their new [Wellbeing Hub](#) designed to highlight the positive impact gardening can have on mental and physical wellbeing. The positive online space offers expert advice, practical guides, and inspiration on mindful gardening, relaxation and creating a personal outdoor sanctuary.

Training

649

learners trained with us across: STH, Land-based industries, Health and social care, Education

94%

of learners said their roles were positively impacted

100%

of learners said they broadened skills in STH

National guidance for Green Social Prescribing

The National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) commissioned us to co-develop the first universal provider standards for Green Social Prescribing (GSP). We delivered foundational principles for GSP programmes ensuring they operate with safe and effective practice, steering the sector towards professional standards and improved outcomes. With over 8,500 people referred via GSP at the test and learn stage between 2021 and 2023, we anticipate the guidance will benefit thousands of people through better quality services.



Zoe Bullivant receiving the John Weightman Prize for excellence in learning

Keeping professionals ahead in practice

Growth Point, our new Continuing Professional Development subscription service launched in July 2025 with six engaging online events per year, adding to an existing catalogue. The live sessions see leaders in STH and experts in health, education and environmental sectors deliver on best practice, emerging trends and real-life experiences and challenges.

From qualification to sector wide impact

With over 30 students graduating with a higher education STH certificate in 2025, our alumni contribute to the growth of the sector across key settings. We see them improving the services they work in and breaking new ground in STH, working with new groups and researchers to build the evidence base.

Growing impact through occupational therapy and STH training



Liam's story

When Liam discovered STH while working as an Occupational Therapist (OT) vocational instructor, he saw the benefits gardening brings to people.

Working alongside an STH Practitioner in the Jersey Health and Care Service pain team, he supported clients in developing pain management strategies and day-to-day wellbeing through purposeful gardening and nature-based activities.

"I could see the positive impact on clients' health and wellbeing through working with plants and being in nature," reflects Liam.

Inspired, Liam enrolled on our Diploma in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture to gain the knowledge and structure to deliver STH. Soon after starting, departmental changes led to Liam taking over the STH programme where he turned a neglected outdoor space into a therapeutic garden for which the course was a great support.

"The diploma helped me to understand different therapeutic gardens and how these are developed for access by clients who have a range of health conditions and needs, and supported me in developing the site so that it is accessible to all," says Liam.

"It also helped me to understand the processes to support the client journey, and enabled me to feel confident in delivering STH both for pain sufferers and for a generic client group."

Today, Liam is the STH practitioner within the pain service OT team. He runs the programme for pain service clients, whilst also delivering additional sessions for members of Pain Support Jersey, the service's associated charity.

Our training transforms gardening and nature into a skilled, evidence-based way of supporting others, just as it did for Liam.

Client services

New Sanctuary Garden

Our new Sanctuary Garden opened in June 2025 to support people across London. As part of our GardenThyme programme the garden provides a safe accessible space for people living with a range of health conditions or disabilities, especially those with dementia and their carers.

On the GardenThyme programme, ten client gardeners living with dementia or memory loss engaged in gardening and nature-based activities to enhance their wellbeing and quality of life.

Each session is designed to stimulate the senses, evoke memories and maintain or improve physical abilities through connection with nature and plants while providing social interaction with others.

“ I can sit in the garden if I want to be alone or enjoy a chat with others, and I start to relax.

James

Client gardeners across several programmes spend quality time in the garden. With short term memory issues and mild cognitive difficulty, James experiences sensory overload and for him the Sanctuary Garden is calming.

Highlighting how the Sanctuary Garden supports the local community, BBC London broadcast the opening event across its channels.



Finding joy in the garden

Dinah's story

With a passion for gardening and plants, Dinah (91) joined us to bring joy, connection and purpose into her week.

Dinah has deteriorating age-related memory loss, and mobility issues due to painful knee problems. Since becoming a widow, she has lost confidence and needed more support to keep doing the things she loves.

Becoming increasingly isolated, her family wanted her to have more opportunities to get outdoors and spend time with others. With only a tiny garden space at home, our GardenThyme programme gave Dinah access to a welcoming environment and supported activities. As a trained botanist and keen gardener, it was a natural way for Dinah to continue her passions.

Dinah felt happy in the garden; she enjoyed being gently active and took real interest in the planting and seasonal tasks.

“ It gives me pleasure.

Dinah

Just as importantly, the sessions helped her to spend time with people sharing conversation and a feeling of belonging.

“She felt like she had a job and loved the sense of purpose,” her grandson observes.



Dinah journalling with a volunteer during GardenThyme

Attending GardenThyme became the highlight of Dinah's week, something she looked forward to and could talk about with pride. She grew excited about coming, and we became her happy place.

“On GardenThyme mornings, she would rise bright and early and get herself ready,” recalls Dinah's oldest daughter Hilary.

Dinah's family saw the positive effects carry through at home, too. As well as supporting Dinah's happiness and confidence, the impact was felt by her entire family. Knowing Dinah was safe, cared for and happy gave them all valuable respite and reassurance.

Visit our gardens to experience the joy that Dinah found.

Client services

Revitalised gardens grow wellbeing, inclusion and heritage

The completion of the [National Lottery Heritage Fund project](#) was celebrated in September 2025, welcoming community through gardening.

2,000 visitors and over 30 community groups visited our garden in Birmingham during the project, reflecting the strong appeal within the neighbourhood for wellbeing, inclusion and heritage.

Client gardeners, volunteers and visitors made their way for programmes, open days, garden tours and community events providing meaningful activities, social support and safe spaces. The gardens strengthened people's connection with nature while benefitting their mental health and helping to enjoyably build healthier daily lives.



Sowing positive change

We launched Sow and Grow a new outreach programme in partnership with Go Woman! Alliance in Birmingham to create healthier lives in communities. Engaging predominantly with the Muslim community, the sessions encourage gardening and nature connection to boost wellbeing.

They have been extremely well attended by 18 client gardeners who have learned new skills, grown in confidence, developed a stronger sense of belonging and built genuine, lasting friendships.



Sow and Grow has had a meaningful and lasting impact on attendees creating a safe and supportive space where individuals feel comfortable to connect, reflect, and prioritise their wellbeing.

Yasmin Akhtar,
Go-Woman! Alliance CEO

In the headlines



Client gardeners Carly and Bradley using their skills to build wildlife teepees with host Errol

Healthcare journal digs deep

Our article '[Dig Deep: The Benefits of Gardening](#),' featured in the Healthcare Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal in October 2025 published by the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP).

Read by counsellors and psychotherapists who work in healthcare settings, often in the NHS, the article educated practitioners on the evidence and benefits for STH as a non-clinical pathway to improved mental and physical wellbeing.

BBC health series on gardening

Millions of viewers tuned in for a gardening episode on BBC One's health series '[Just One Thing](#)' in March 2026 featuring our expertise. Produced by the BBC Science Unit, we shared practical, evidence-based tips and activities that people can do to improve their lives from our gardens at Thrive, London.

ITV broadcasts positivity and purpose

We starred in [Alan Titchmarsh's Gardening Club](#) on ITV 1. The episode, partially filmed at Thrive, Reading in May 2025, reminded millions of viewers that gardens aren't just places to grow plants, they're spaces that bring benefits to our wellbeing. During the inspiring day, client gardeners shared how we helped them to understand the benefits of gardening and build a social community.



... a garden designed to bring positivity, purpose and joy to all who spend time in it

Alan Titchmarsh

Fundraising

Big cheer for the Christmas challenge

The Big Give Christmas Challenge came to town in December 2025 to double the magic of donations. £35,871 was raised by 261 supporters through the Big Give and direct donations, helping us to transform more lives through gardening.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and match funders, we increased our number of gardening and community outreach programmes, developed our information service through Get Gardening, and our training, education and consultancy work grew.

You play, people grow



The Thrive Gardening for Health Lottery launched in September 2025 helping to change more lives through gardening.

With three winners to date, the weekly lottery offers the chance to win cash prizes, while supporting our fundraising efforts. For just £1 per week players are in with a chance of winning up to £25,000, and while they play, people grow.



Community appeals to secure our centres

As core funding changes, community support has become essential to sustain our programmes, so we began appealing to neighbouring residents and businesses to help us keep growing their health and wellbeing. Income from local appeals helps us keep our programmes running and our gardens accessible, ensuring that people who rely on us as a safe therapeutic space can continue to attend.

In February 2026, we launched Grow it Forward, Birmingham to enable us to continue our valued services following the success of the heritage lottery.

By donating, supporters are directly investing in life-changing gardening programmes for their communities.

Growing wellbeing through shared purpose

“This partnership is about more than gardening. It is about helping people grow, recover and thrive.”

Anja Gooding, Vitax CEO

We partnered with Vitax, a leading gardening company, through a shared belief in the power of gardening to transform lives. Its support enables our Life Changers programme in Birmingham, providing a vital lifeline for people living with illness, injury or health conditions.

Client gardeners have reported improved concentration, wellbeing and a sense of companionship.

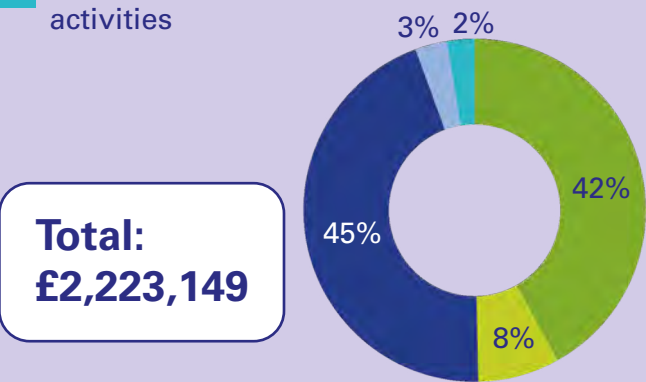
Vitax hopes its involvement will encourage other organisations to get involved and help grow the reach of therapeutic gardening, so more people can experience its life-changing benefits.



Vitax CEO Anja Gooding with our Community Engagement Officer, Kyra Trewby

Income

Fundraising and retail	£932,179
Services for professionals	£171,608
Client services	£994,878
Investments	£67,328
Information service and other activities	£57,156



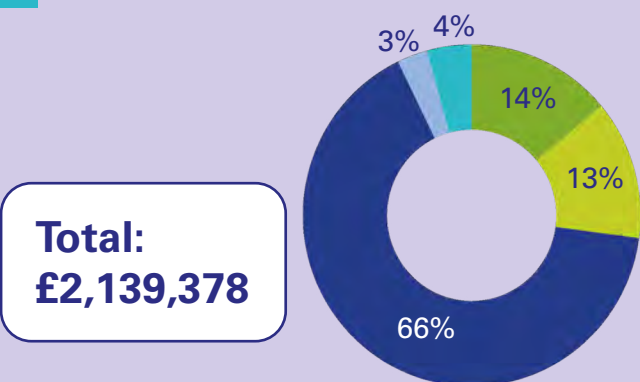
Total:
£2,223,149

We are pleased to report a second year of positive financial performance, reflecting a healthier position following several years of deficits. This has been achieved with huge thanks to our donors, in what remains a challenging environment for many charities.

Continued income growth has enabled us to increase our front line capacity, supporting 10% more people directly. In addition, significant grants have helped strengthen our work through investment in IT, business development, and substantial improvements to our Birmingham garden.

Expenditure

Raising funds	£297,562
Services for professionals	£282,183
Client services	£1,406,203
Information service	£62,607
Governance	£90,823



Total:
£2,139,378

Over the past two years, we have benefitted from generous legacy donations, providing valuable support. We are working to grow local donations, expand our corporate partnerships, and diversify our fundraising income.

We continue to manage our resources carefully to ensure that our activities deliver long-term impact while maintaining our organisational sustainability.

A big thank you!

Thank you to everyone who has donated towards our work over the last financial year and in particular to the following for their generous and valued significant contributions.

- A W Gale Charitable Trust
 - Aitchison-Tait Trust
 - Balcombe Charitable Trust
 - Berkshire Community Foundation
 - Birmingham Fairer Futures Fund
 - Bupa Foundation
 - Cavendish Nuclear
 - Champniss Charitable Trust
 - Childwick Trust
 - Chimo Trust
 - City Bridge Foundation
 - Co-op Local Community Fund
 - David Family Foundation
 - Dedicci Limited
 - Drapers' Charitable Fund
 - E Green
 - E Holloway
 - Eddleston Settlement
 - Edmund Godson Charity
 - Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust
 - Edward Cadbury Trust
 - Eveson Trust
 - Forest Garden
 - Forward Carers
- Friends of Battersea Park
 - G Wells
 - Garden Media Guild
 - Garfield Weston Foundation
 - Grimmitt Trust
 - H Properties Ltd
 - Henry Sale Foundation
 - Julia Rausing Trust
 - Kittle Group
 - Leisure and Outdoor Furniture Association (LOFA)
 - Liebenrood Charitable Trust
 - London Marathon Foundation
 - Louis and Valerie Freedman Charitable Settlement
 - M Hickson
 - M Lanyado Rodin
 - N Warhurst
 - Nancy Bateman Charitable Trust
 - Nineveh Charitable Trust
 - Osbourne Clarke
 - P F Charitable Trust
 - P Howard
 - Polar Capital
 - R Broadley
 - R Cameron-Mowat
- R H Amar
 - R Hargraves
 - Robert Dyas
 - S Rutter
 - Sandra Charitable Trust
 - Shanly Foundation
 - Society of Landscape & Garden Designers
 - South Birmingham Friends Institute Fund
 - Squarepoint Foundation
 - Stevenson Family's Charitable Trust
 - Syder Foundation
 - The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
 - The National Lottery Heritage Fund
 - United Way
 - V Roberts
 - Vitax
 - W E D Charitable Trust
 - Wandsworth Borough Council
 - William A Cadbury Charitable Trust



**Get involved and
help transform lives
through gardening**



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 **Thrive**
using gardening to change lives