



Outcome: Health & Wellbeing

Group case study: Gartnavel Hospital

“I started volunteering after I got physically unwell and mentally not in a good place after leaving a stressful job. I enjoyed the company and the gardening. I get such pleasure from planting a seed and watching it grow.”

Through the work of TCV, people improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing, by being outdoors, active and connected with others.

A wide range of TCV activities provide opportunities to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing through physical activity and social interaction. TCV's work at Gartnavel Hospital is a wonderful example of volunteers doing just that.

The garden at Gartnavel Hospital provides a base for a range of environment-based therapy and community activities for a wide-range of people in the local area.

93% of our volunteers say their wellbeing has improved whilst volunteering with TCV.

Source: TCV impact figures 2020





TCV runs the sessions with garden volunteers who are either referred by a health care professional or find out about the activities on offer for themselves.

Those who come regularly take on a variety of activities around the garden such as planting seeds, weeding the beds, harvesting vegetables and flowers or planning for the seasonal changes ahead.

TCV has a variety of evidence to highlight the impact on mental health through our Green Gyms, including research by University of Westminster showing group members having higher levels of well-being and lower levels of stress.

Recently we completed a four-year long review of the impact of Green Gym with University of Westminster and Essex University, which showed an increase in mental health scores as a result of participation with sustained benefits for over a year.

Volunteers find that time spent in the garden without work or social pressures is beneficial to their mental health, especially when they feel they can make a useful contribution.



*"The problem with depression is losing a sense of purpose and hope.
The garden really helps with that.*

*I enjoy the learning too: finding out how plants grow reinforces my
sense of being able to learn."*

TCV Volunteer





The garden provides the chance to develop a different kind of therapeutic relationship between clinical staff at Gartnavel Hospital and their patients.

Clinicians can take their healing and recovery programmes outside, offering patients a more holistic and person-centred approach.

For psychiatric care, mindfulness techniques are used, with benefits including better attention, improved mood and heightened self-esteem.

Occupational Therapists bring elderly patients to the garden for a relaxing environment to practice their mobility.

"A project like this has to be a supportive place. You have to accept that sometimes people are having a bad day, and make sure they feel they can come to the garden."

It's also important that we don't focus on the problems people have: a volunteer who came here after HIV treatment said he liked how "we don't talk about HIV – we talk about lettuces and radishes."

Bryony – TCV Project Officer

TCV's website highlights the various ways that physical and mental health and wellbeing can be improved through our Green Gym and other volunteering projects.

www.tcv.org.uk

