

Impact Statement for Growing Together 2015 / 2016



Growing Together Devon CIC

'Social & Therapeutic Gardening for Older People in East Devon'.

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The people we supported.

Our client group are what AgeUK refer to as the 'Oldest Old'. That is people aged 85 and above. Our program was conducted in seven care homes in Exmouth, Sidmouth and Honiton. We also worked with four Memory Cafes across the region. Over 80% of clients have dementia.

Our 2015 program activities.

Growing Together piloted a social care program for older people with dementia. The program involved using Social & Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) (post grad training @ Coventry University). We worked in seven care homes and also with four memory cafe's.

We operated a peripatetic outreach program. This followed a pilot project (2014) with Sidmouth Memory Cafe at a local church where we found there was a need for an outreach service for care homes. We provided all the materials and equipment necessary to run 'Gardening Clubs'. Due to the extreme frailty of our clients most of our sessions involved table top gardening.



Program beneficiaries (numbers).

Growing Together worked 107 older people (our target clients) - over 80% of whom had dementia.

We worked with around 20 carers (family and friends in care homes) directly. That is, they took part in sessions.

We worked alongside ~ 20 paid care home staff (Activities managers and support staff).

We offered placements to four volunteers. This has led to the creation of a new full time post with Growing Together in July 2016.

Direct benefits to clients from our program

Improved physical well being.

Stronger bones : Care home residents often stay indoors and lack exposure to sunlight. This commonly leads to vitamin D deficiency. An outcome from this is that of lower bone density compared to the general population. This can exacerbate problems associated with falls.

General health : Further more, studies in the USA reveal that 10/15 minutes of light activity in a garden improves health over a range of key parameters for people with dementia.

Better sleep : Lack of exposure to sunlight and outdoors adversely effects sleep patterns and circadian rhythms. This leads to people sleeping at inappropriate times during the day and then suffering sleeplessness at night.

Improved psychological well being.

Improved mood : Being outdoors and socialising in green space is generally recognised as leading to improved mood and a reduction in agitation for suffers of dementia.

Reduced social isolation : This client group is uniquely vulnerable to social isolation (loss of own home and independence, 62% likelihood of being bereaved [AgeUK 2013], memory loss and separation from family and so forth). 'Gardening Club' provided companionship and kindness.

Acknowledgements & thanks.

East Devon Town Councils

Devon Community Foundation

Damian Newman & Thrive. www.thrive.org.uk

A free presentation and slideshow on our work is available to any community group or society in East Devon. Please call Pete on 07545541719.