



The Green Hub Project for Teens

Volunteering – Connecting – Learning

Parent & Guardian Information



Helping teens to take care of their own mental health





Hello and Welcome

We are so pleased your teenager will be joining us in the garden. We have written this information pack to give you some further background on the Green Hub Project for Teens and to highlight the important things you need to know as a Parent/Guardian

Your teenager has also been sent their own Welcome Pack. We ask you both to read this carefully and send a signed copy of the Teen Volunteer Agreement back to us at admin@greenhub.co.uk **before** their first session.

Being committed to the programme is so important if they are to get the most from the process. Forming a bond with the other teens; becoming engaged with the garden; and giving themselves time and space to just be.

The programme lasts 12 weeks, which we have found is enough time for the teens to establish new strategies and benefit from the calming effect of the garden.

We understand that some days may feel more challenging for them than others. However, it is really important that you encourage them to come to as many of the sessions as possible – the power of continuity is really important.

If you'd like further information, please do contact us and we will be happy to help you.

Tone Tellefsen Hughs DC. BSc, FRCC (paeds) & Vanessa Lanham-Day

Co-Founders of The Green Hub Project for Teens





Teen Well-being

In the UK it is now thought that one in nine children and young people has a mental health problem. This can range from anxiety and depression to rarer problems like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

- These problems often develop between the ages of 5-15 years.
- 50% of all mental health problems are established by the age of 14.
- This rises to 75% by the age of 24.

Good mental health is important in ensuring that young people develop the resilience to cope with life's ups and downs and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults. Research shows that providing supportive environments early on is key to enabling this.

Over the next few years, the NHS plans to focus on children and young people's mental health. While this is welcome news, there are currently shortfalls in access to and provision of community-based mental health services for this age group.

The Green Hub Project For Teens aims to provide just this type of resource by promoting the wellbeing of teenager's mental health in the sanctuary of a secluded walled garden and by offering talks and workshops aimed at empowering teens and supporting parents.

¹ Kessler, R. C., Amminger, G. P., Aguilar-Gaxiola, S., Alonso, J., Lee, S., & Ustün, T. B. (2007). Age of onset of mental disorders: a review of recent literature. *Current opinion in psychiatry*, 20(4), 359-364.

A Pathway to Health

How can gardening promote wellbeing?

Have you ever noticed that when you sit in a garden, or go for a walk in a park, that you feel better? Well, you're not imagining it! Recent research shows that engaging in nature provides a wide range of benefits for our health and wellbeing.

Check out our website for more details of these amazing findings

<https://greenhub.org.uk/about-us/the-science/>

The process of using plants, nature, and gardens to improve physical and mental health, as well as communication, thinking and learning skills, is called Social and Therapeutic Horticulture. The list below highlights the many ways that being in nature can help to improve overall wellbeing.





The benefits of being outdoors in the garden:

- Regular gardening keeps you fit and active.
- Volunteering with others gives you a sense of purpose and community.
- Taking steps to improve your health is empowering.
- Working alongside others reduces loneliness, enhances a sense of connection, acceptance and inclusion.
- Being outside is immune boosting – from the soil, sun (Vit D) and plant phytochemicals.
- Growing your own vegetables and fruit is satisfying and tasty!
- Volunteering can enhance your CV and can be used to work towards other volunteer-based award schemes e.g., Duke of Edinburgh.
- Gardening stimulates creativity and problem solving.
- Learning and developing new skills improves your confidence.
- Being in nature can boost your mood, restore and relax you and help with recovery from poor health.
- Gardening can improve the environment for everyone by creating habitats for wildlife.
- It helps you feel grounded and boosts your appreciation and connectedness to nature.
- Garden plants can also help with many illnesses, improve our environment and protect against pollution, all to the benefit of our health.
- Working with others enhances communication skills, self-confidence and self-esteem.





The Green Hub Project for Teens

A therapy-garden in action

We have two Teen Gardens – one is a quiet, walled garden, hidden away behind Luck's Yard Chiropractic Clinic in Milford, and the other is part of the stunning organic small holding at Hydons Flowers in Hydestyle.

In both we aim to help promote the wellbeing and mental health of local teenagers.

Currently, we're able to accept GP, school and youth agency referrals, as well as direct parent referrals of teenagers with mild to moderate mental health concerns, aged 11–18 years (Years 7-13).

The garden is the therapy

This project is not about offering counselling sessions or medical solutions. It's about giving teenagers a chance to get away from their worries and to enjoy the health benefits of gardening and nature! We hope to be an additional support to their wellbeing and mental health by offering them positivity and support within a peaceful garden setting.

Providing non-judgemental, compassionate listening

In the garden, our skilled adult volunteers and teens work alongside and interact with each other, enjoying nature, while sharing and learning new skills. While we will never offer counselling, our volunteers are always on hand – if needed – to provide non-judgmental, compassionate listening.

Working together in the garden

The gardening activities available are varied and will depend upon the weather and time of year. Examples of past activities include: clearing and tidying the garden, establishing vegetable and fruit beds, creating and planting new flower borders, setting up a seating area, bird feeders, bug hotel and hanging baskets. The garden is still very much in its infancy so there is always plenty to do and we are integrating more creative projects as we grow.

Wellbeing-focused talks and workshops

In addition, The Green Hub Project also runs wellbeing-focused talks and workshops to empower teens and to support their parents/guardians. This way, we can reach more people, not just those attending the garden sessions.

The talks and workshops were created as a result of the many issues we know teens are facing. In today's ever-changing world, mental health problems, anxiety and emotional issues amongst teens are on the rise. We would love to be able to help!





Our talks and workshops aim to provide you and your parents or guardians, strategies and techniques that can help to manage these challenges. Past workshops include: How to support your anxious teenager, Techniques to manage an overthinking, Overwhelmed teenage brain, How to be the best in your exam.

Parent Hub

Our Parent Hub is a support group for parents of stressed and anxious teens. Sessions are free – we meet once a month in Godalming and you would be most welcome to attend. Sign up is on our website.

The Green Hub Garden into the future

Teen volunteers (aged 15+) who attend at least 9 out of 12 sessions will have the opportunity to stay on as Senior Teens beyond the initial 12 weeks supporting the next set of Teen Volunteers.

Alongside the physical and mental benefits of working in the garden, those volunteering can also add this experience to their CV and of course, to their own individual growth and development.

Ultimately, our aim is to help those on the course to develop life skills and to find a way to ease stress, both within their bodies and their minds, through being active in nature, while being connected to, and working with, others in a team.





Things you need to know

1. Who are we?

The Green Hub Project for Teens is a Registered Charity in England & Wales, (No. 1203272) and is run entirely by volunteers.

The Board Members who help run the Project and the adult volunteers who work alongside teen volunteers in the garden, have all successfully undertaken a Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS). In addition, there will be at least one trained First Aider in the garden at any one time.

2. Where are we?

There are two Green Hub Teen Gardens: one at Luck's Yard Clinic in Milford, and the other at Hydon's Flowers in Hydestyle.

3. Does my teenager need to bring anything?

We ask that your teenager brings their own pair of gardening gloves with them to each session and wears appropriate footwear and clothing.

If they have any medications they may need, we also ask they bring these with them.

A lanyard will be created at Induction to include their contact information and emergency contact details. This will be stored securely in the at the Green Hub and they will be required to wear this at every session.

IMPORTANT: COVID

- We ask that you and your teenager **do not come to the garden** if you feel unwell and especially if you have possible symptoms of COVID.

FAQs

What to do if your teenager is not happy with their volunteering?

There may be adjustments that we can make, which will improve the situation. We ask teenagers to please speak to the lead adult volunteer on the day. Alternatively, connect with Vanessa or Tone at admin@greenhub.org.uk

What do I do if I have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of my teenager?

Please speak promptly with the Chair (see 'Safeguarding' in the Contact Details section below).





What should I do if my teenager is unwell or running late to a garden session?

We ask the teenagers to take responsibility for letting the Garden Manager know as soon as possible. If they are unable to do this themselves, please send an SMS text to the Teen & Parent Hotline number.

**07860
027831**

Can I claim any expenses?

For families on income support or claiming benefits, travel expenses can be claimed. This must be agreed with the Chair or Garden Manager before your teenager starts volunteering with us. Proof of travel i.e., bus or train ticket or agreed mileage must be given.

Further Resources

For more information about The Green Hub Project, or Social and Therapeutic Horticulture visit the following websites:

The Green Hub Project for Teens

<https://greenhub.org.uk>

Thrive

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

<https://www.thrive.org.uk>

Contact Details

Please note that the Green Hub Project is run entirely by volunteers. We aim to respond to emails as soon as possible, usually within 3 working days.

General email: admin@greenhub.org.uk

Teen & Parent Hotline: **07860 027831**

Safeguarding: tone@greenhub.org.uk Contact the Chair using 'Safeguarding' as the subject.

Website: <https://greenhub.org.uk>

