



The Green Hub Project for Teens

Helping teens to take care of their own mental health

A summary of impacts on mental wellbeing
from 2025 Green Hub programmes.

March 2026





Overview

The Green Hub Project supports young people aged 10–18 who are experiencing social, emotional and mental health challenges, alongside their families and carers. Through green social prescribing, therapeutic gardening programmes, and parent support initiatives, Green Hub aims to improve teen mental wellbeing, build confidence and resilience, and strengthen family wellbeing overall.

We have a comprehensive **evaluation programme** to help us identify our impacts and also to help us learn what works well, as we seek to continually improve. This **summary** presents the key findings from evaluations conducted in 2025 with:

- Teens completing the 12-week & extension Garden Programme;
- Parents/carers of participating teens;
- Parents/carers attending monthly Parent Hub sessions.

Note: there are comprehensive evaluation compilation reports available for each of the three groups.

Need and Context

Prior to joining Green Hub, many teens were described by parents as being in significant distress. Common challenges identified by them included:

- School avoidance or non-attendance, often linked to bullying, anxiety and exhaustion
- Social isolation and difficulty forming or maintaining friendships
- Severe anxiety, low self-esteem and emotional dysregulation
- Neurodivergent needs (ASD/ADHD), with some teens engaging in self-harm or experiencing suicidal ideation

These difficulties have potential substantial knock-on effects for families, impacting parental mental health, household stress, and long-term educational prospects for young people.

Programme Delivery

In 2025, Green Hub delivered:

- A ‘rolling’ twelve-week Teen Garden Programme at Caroline’s Garden and Hydons. This evaluation is concerned with those who have gone on to complete their 12 weeks. It does not include the various time limited school cohort groups;
- Two sets of six week ‘extension’ courses for teens at Munstead Wood who have previously completed a 12-week garden course and who would like further volunteering experience;
- Ongoing Parent Hub monthly support sessions (9 sessions – 1 of which the feedback is missing);
- On-going Parent Liaison support to encourage engagement and sustained participation.

Evaluation methods were adapted during the year to improve accessibility and response rates, particularly for teens with additional needs, using flexible timing and both paper and digital feedback options.





Findings

Key impacts on mental wellbeing

Early Impact (by 6 weeks)

Some, but not all, parents reported their teens had already:

- ✓ Exhibited reduced anxiety, calmer behaviour, and early confidence gains;
- ✓ Begun leaving the house more regularly and engaging socially.
- ✓ Found the garden environment provided a low-pressure, safe space to re-engage with social connections.



End of Programme Outcomes (12 weeks):

Parent feedback showed consistent, positive outcomes they witnessed with their teens across both sites:

- ✓ Increased confidence and willingness to try new activities;
- ✓ Improved social skills, including forming friendships and group belonging;
- ✓ Reduced anxiety and improved emotional regulation;
- ✓ Greater enthusiasm for life and future possibilities.

Feedback from the teens on the impact on their mental wellbeing was gathered using two 'frameworks'. The first using a format we had trialed and tested in earlier years; and the second half of the year using the SWEMWBS¹ framework. This was in response to some of our funders requesting a nationally accredited toolkit.

15 teens from January to July, 2025, responded of whom:

- ✓ 79% felt less anxious;
- ✓ 75% felt calmer more of the time;
- ✓ 79% felt more confident interacting with others;
- ✓ 73% felt more enthusiastic about life;
- ✓ 67% gave 4 or 5 stars to 'I now feel happier to try new activities and meet new people'
- ✓ 79% gave 4 or 5 stars to 'I feel more confident about talking and being with other teens and adults'
- ✓ 43% gave 4 or 5 stars to 'It is easier to face problems than before I came to the Green Hub'

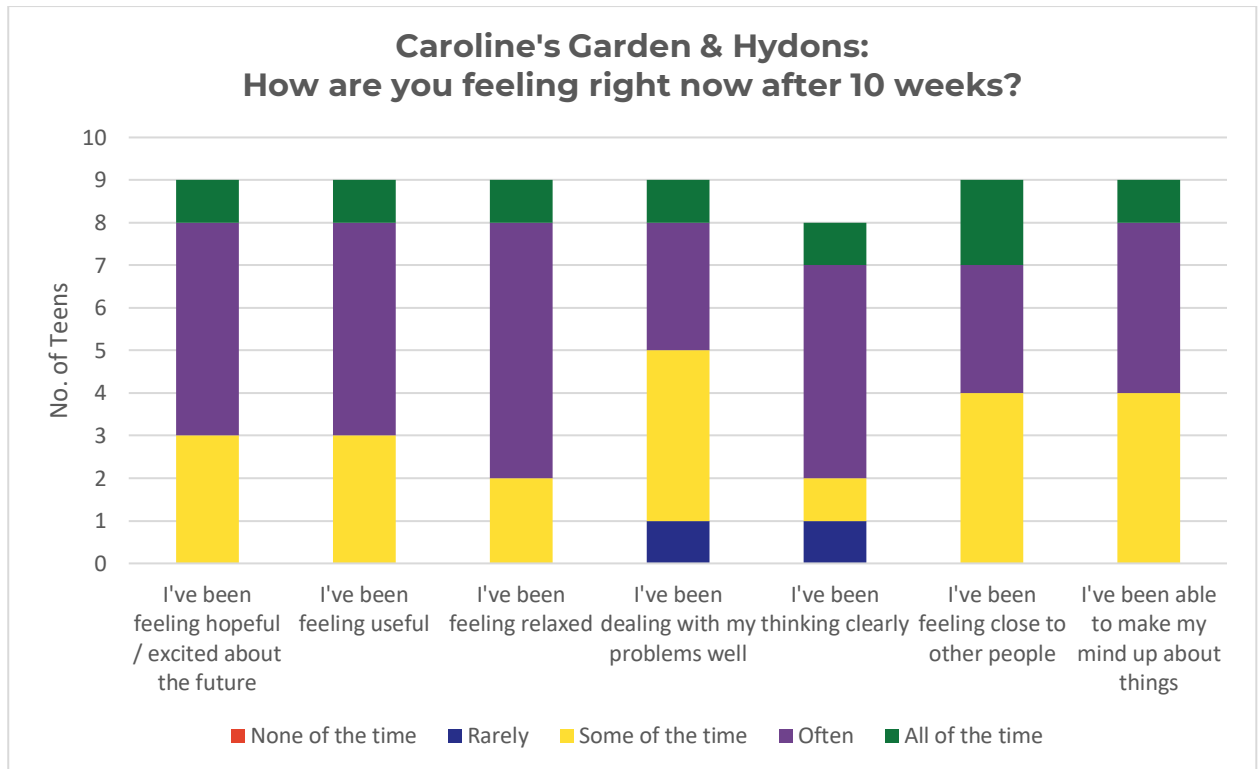
¹ SWEMWBS: Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale





- ✓ 73% gave 4 or 5 stars to 'I am feeling more enthusiastic about life in general'

Nine teens from August to December, 2025, completed the SWEMWBS mental wellbeing assessment questions.



The findings suggest that the majority of teens were giving high scores to almost all of the factors with the possible exception of 'I've been dealing with my problems well.'

- ✓ Feeling hopeful about the future and useful;
- ✓ Feeling more relaxed;
- ✓ Improved cognition such as thinking clearly;
- ✓ Assumption that the score for 'feeling close to other people' is an improvement on their reported isolation and taking into account the positive qualitative feedback from parents.

These findings are consistent / comparable with the data collected in the first part of the year.

Parents reported meaningful longer-term change:

74% rated long-term positive life changes at 6/10 or higher, including:

- ✓ Return to school or transition to college/employment;
- ✓ Improved peer relationships;
- ✓ Greater independence and stability at home.

Only two parents reported uncertainty about impact which they attributed to due to concurrent medication changes.





Wider Family Impact

A notable and unexpected outcome was improved family communication. Many parents reported that previously withdrawn teens began talking positively about the programme at home, reducing family stress and increasing hope and relief for carers.

Parent Hub Impact

Feedback from 45 Parent Hub participants across eight sessions in 2025 shows the Parent Hub is highly valued:

- ✓ Parents attended to reduce isolation, gain support, and learn coping strategies;
- ✓ Sessions significantly improved parental mood, shifting from stress and exhaustion to calm and positivity.



Summary conclusion of impact & outcomes of mental wellbeing

The qualitative feedback from the parents was especially valuable in expanding on the mental wellbeing impacts they were witnessing not only in their teens, but also on the wider family.

The majority of parents (matching feedback the teens) reported a notable improvement in comparison to the parents reported 'baseline' of challenges experienced by their teens:

- ✓ **Reduced levels of anxiety, feeling calmer, increased levels of self-esteem and emotional regulation.** High scores between 73% & 79% to improvements in these areas were given by the teens;
- ✓ For some who had been EBNSA² or patchy school attendance there were **a number beginning to return to school or go onto further education** – particularly at Hydons where there were a higher number of EBNSA teens;
- ✓ **Reduced social isolation and some teens beginning to have confidence in forming friendships.** High scores between 75% & 79% to improvements in these areas were given by the teens;
- ✓ Neurodivergent needs (ASD/ADHD), with some teens engaging in self-harm or experiencing suicidal ideation – these teens were not specifically followed up for their individual evaluation progress but included in the main cohort statistics;
- ✓ **Quality of family life, for some, was significantly better** with less conflict regarding leaving the house or hygiene (e.g., willingness to shower);
- ✓ Indications of **longer-term outcomes** such as returning to school, improved relationships and family life, that for some could lead to increased opportunities to stabilise or return to employment.

² EBNSA – Emotionally Based Non School Attendance

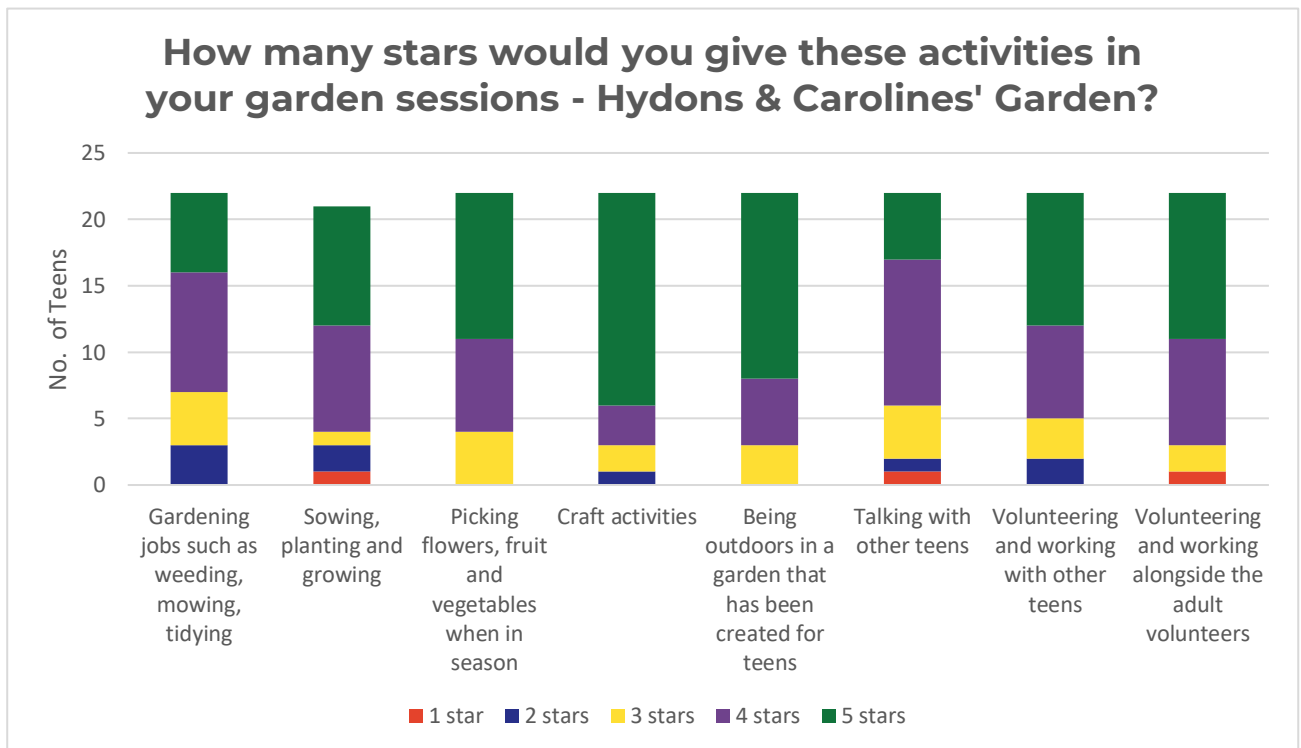




Key impacts on ‘5 ways to wellbeing’

The Green Hub garden sessions and Parent Hub aim to impact on the **5 Ways to Wellbeing**. Throughout the year we asked the same question at 3 & 10/12 weeks. This has enabled us to begin to build a deeper understanding of how the activities we offer are impacting on the 5 Ways to wellbeing for our teens.

We asked the teens to score out of 5 stars *‘What do you like and enjoy about coming to the Green Hub Garden?’*



Comparing 3 weeks vs 10/12 weeks

In general, the mean score for each activity is slightly greater at 10/12 weeks than at 3 weeks.

By performing a one-tailed t-test³ to compare the means of each activity at 3 weeks vs at 10/12 weeks, we find that there was a **statistically significant increase in value placed on ‘Craft activities’, ‘Being outdoors in a garden that has been created for teens’ and ‘Volunteering and working with other teens’**. This suggests that, on average, **teens enjoy these three activities more the longer they have been attending their garden sessions.**

³ A one-tailed test in statistics is used to determine if a sample mean is significantly higher or lower than a population mean. This test focuses on the possibility of a relationship in only one direction, either greater than or less than, but not both.



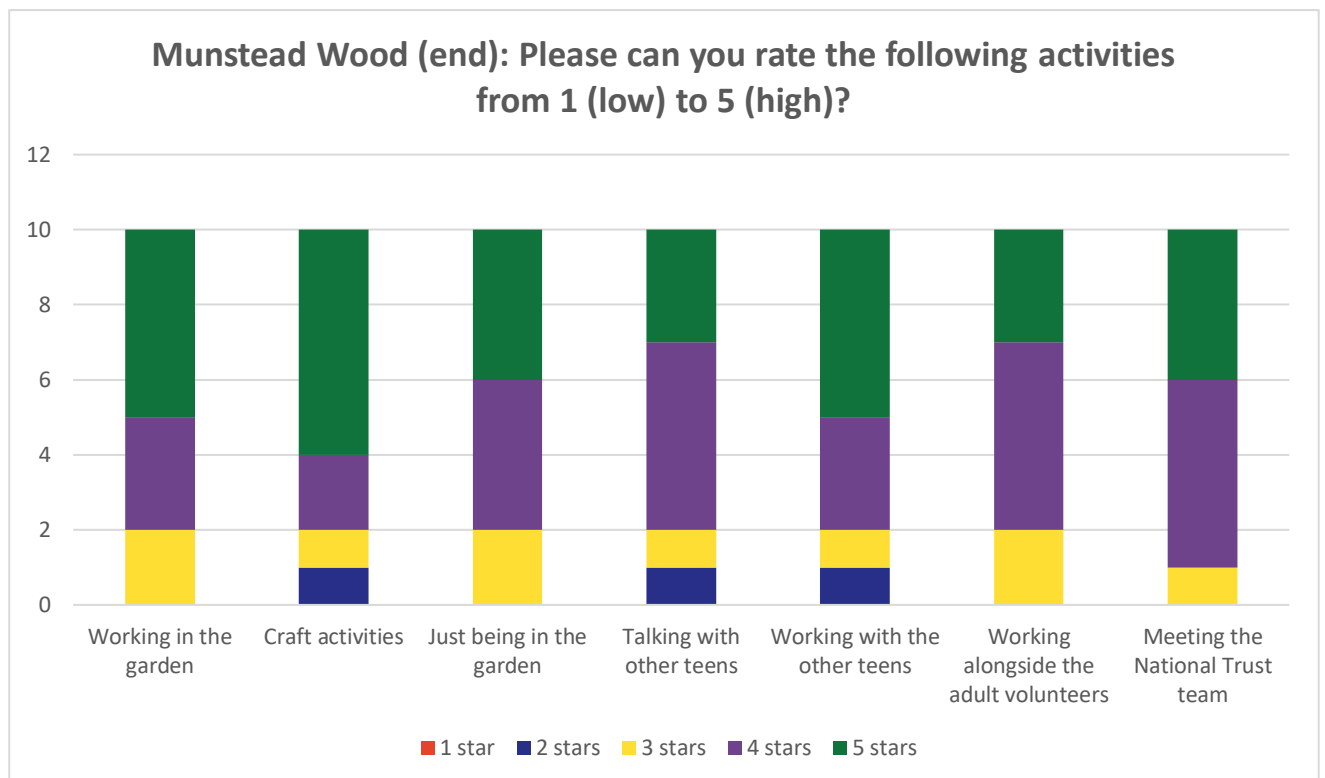


6 week extension opportunities for teens

MUNSTEAD WOOD We were able to offer a six-week extension course at the National Trust garden at Munstead Wood to a group of teens who had previously completed a 12-week Green Hub garden course. Teens were selected on the basis that they had benefited from the initial course and had expressed an interest in continuing their involvement.

During the final session of the extension course, teens attending were asked to score and provide feedback on the different gardening activities they had experienced. In total, ten teenagers across two extension course groups provided feedback.

At present, we have not yet had the resources to match and compare the feedback from participants on the extension programme with their earlier findings from the 10–12 week course.



The activities with the **highest** mean score were **'Working in the garden' (4.30)**, **'Craft activities' (4.30)** and **'Meeting the National Trust team' (4.30)**. The activity with the lowest mean score was **'Talking with other teens' (4.00)**.





Impact on the 5 ways to wellbeing.

If we take the findings from the teens alongside the differences that the parents noticed in their teens participating in the garden activities, we conclude that the **5 Ways to Wellbeing** are being positively impacted as follows:

- ✓ **CONNECT** Clearly the opportunity to join a group of other **teens** in some similar situations and work with adult volunteers in a garden for teens has enabled many to increase their social confidence, reduce levels of anxiety and make new friendships. The **Parent Hub** provides an opportunity for peer support and shared understanding. Participants reported feeling 'less alone' as they heard about other parents' situations living with and supporting their teens with mental health concerns.
- ✓ **BE ACTIVE** For some just getting out of the house is an increase in their being active. For all being and working in the garden and in nature is an opportunity to be physically active.
- ✓ **TAKING NOTICE** For many being outdoors or indoors doing crafts is an opportunity to take notice of their surroundings, of the changing seasons and impacts on growing flowers and vegetables, of other teens or adults' conversations or teachings. For some this takes the teens 'out of their' mindsets / anxieties and enables them to become more mindful of other thoughts. The **Parent Hub** provides an opportunity for reflection and emotional awareness.
- ✓ **KEEP LEARNING** Through their activities with the adult volunteers the teens are learning about the cycles and methods of gardening from preparation and seed selection through to harvesting the end products. They are also learning and practicing more social skills.
The **Parent Hub** provides an opportunity for learning about parenting strategies, neurodiversity, and navigating 'systems.'
- ✓ **GIVE** Not only are the adult volunteers giving of their time and skills, so also are the teens. They 'give back' in their own ways such as group activities and in growing and producing flowers and vegetables which, where possible, they can take home for their families to share.





Potential socio-economic benefits

Green Hub has not yet been specifically measuring the ‘socio-economic’ benefits of our programmes. We are now considering working with support from one of our major valued funders, the CHIMO Trust, to collect an ONS measure of ‘Life satisfaction’ that can then be translated in to a fiscal value (a ‘WELLBY’) of our impacts and outcomes.

However, through aligning the impacts and longer-term outcomes identified across 2025 with the ‘published researched evidence-based interventions’ of nature based interventions, we suggest that there are potentially significant socio-economic benefits as follows:

- ✓ **Improved school education attendance and confidence, and continuation into further education and /or employment;**
- ✓ **Significantly improved family life – reduced stress, improved relationships and potential for parents’ ability to work or return to work if relevant;**
- ✓ **Opportunity for local people to contribute by volunteering and feeling valued, increased as sense of purpose and contribution to community life and increase social connections – mental wellbeing.**
- ✓ **Potential for reduction of demands on local services such as CAHMS, NHS and Local Authority.**





Lessons learned

One outcome from evaluation is to identify not only impacts and outcomes but also ‘lessons that can be learned’ to consolidate or improve delivery.

- ✓ **Feedback from parents is an effective evaluation method** A significant finding is that seeking feedback from parents is an effective way of understanding the impact they see from the Green Hub sessions both on their teen and the wider families’ mental wellbeing. They are also more likely to give qualitative feedback. Many of the teens do not all have enough self-awareness yet to understand the impacts of their participation – rather they give more feedback on what they enjoy as activities and less on their own mental wellbeing.
- ✓ There was a **high level of feedback form completion from the parent of the feedback forms**. This is attributable to:
 - the Parent Liaison team (mostly adult volunteers) contacting, encouraging and following up the parents to gather the feedback
 - it may be that many parents were appreciative of the opportunity for their teen and family to benefit from the activities/support offered by the Green Hub at a time when their teens were in need.
- ✓ There were no comments regarding how the Green Hub sessions / offering could be improved. However, there were a **number of parents commenting that they would like to see their teen being able to continue with their sessions** once they had completed the 12 weeks. This was both because they saw the improvements for their teen and family mental wellbeing but also because it was providing a positive activity and social opportunities for their teens.

Conclusion

The 2025 evaluation demonstrates that Green Hub delivers effective, evidence-based programmes based on green social prescribing, therapeutic gardening, parent support initiatives, and support for vulnerable teenagers experiencing social, emotional, and mental health challenges, as well as for their families and carers.

These programmes contribute to improved mental wellbeing, increased confidence, enhanced cognitive functioning, re-engagement with education and social activities, and greater stability within families.

The Parent Hub provides a safe, inclusive, non-judgmental space and reduces isolation for families supporting teens with complex needs.

Green Hub is not only supporting recovery in the present, but helping to prevent long-term negative outcomes for teens and their families.

Anthea Cooke, Green Hub Project Evaluation Co-ordinator, March 2026

