



# TrustLinks

Growing Communities • Transforming Lives

## Trustees with Financial Expertise Recruitment Information Pack October 2024

Registered charity no. 1092324

Company No. 4351216

# How about joining us at **Trust Links** as a Trustee with Financial Expertise?

Trust Links is an innovative and expanding local independent mental health and wellbeing charity, growing communities and transforming lives in Essex. We are seeking a treasurer who is passionate about our cause and want to use their financial and business skills and experience to help us make a difference to people's lives.

We support more than 6,000 beneficiaries per year through: six Growing Together community garden projects providing therapeutic horticulture and positive activities for adults with mental health, mild learning disabilities and school and youth groups; REACH Recovery College and Wellbeing Hub working in partnership with local agencies to provide assessment, psychoeducational and vocational training, and peer support for adults with mental health problems; telephone befriending and counselling; projects supporting vulnerable children and young people. We are working on the further expansion of our successful Growing Together community gardens across mid and south Essex and are working with partner organisations across the UK and internationally to develop therapeutic community gardens, learning from the Growing Together model.

We are an award winning charity and have achieved the Charities Excellence Framework standard. We won the national Best Health Initiative award in The Green Flag Awards for our labyrinth project at Growing Together Shoeburyness and have been nominated for the King's Award for Voluntary Service. Our turnover is projected to exceed £3 million in 2024/25 (£1m is capital funding for our new project on Canvey Island), we have more than 60 staff and nearly 200 volunteers. We have grown significantly since our foundation in 2000 and have ambitious plans for further expansion and development.



Trustees play a crucial role in setting and supporting Trust Links's strategy. We have an excellent and committed board of trustees. We are recruiting trustees with financial expertise, who will contribute to the Finance Sub Committee. One of the new trustees will be our treasurer, chairing the Finance Sub Committee and working closely with our Finance Manager to ensure the financial policies, processes and management are optimal. The other will also attend the Finance Sub Committee, becoming a critical friend to the Finance Sub Committee and board.

Previous board/trustee experience is not necessary and we welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds. We are keen to recruit people from BAME communities, as these are currently underrepresented on our board.

**“Trustees have overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure it's doing what it was set up to do. They may be known by other titles, such as: directors; board members; governors; committee members. Whatever they are called, trustees are the people who lead the charity and decide how it is run.”**

**(The Charity Commission)**



## Message from Chair of Trustees, Jackie Bliss

Thank you for your interest in becoming our treasurer at Trust Links. It is an inspirational and enterprising charity having grown and expanded from the original site in Westcliff. This is a charity that changes people's lives and has been involved with well over 10,000 people since its formation over 20 years ago.

We are looking to bring on board someone with a passion for improving the Health and Wellbeing of local people and communities and enable us to widen our expertise and knowledge within the Trustee Board.

Being a Trustee is a rewarding, interesting and challenging role. As a Trustee you play an important part in the development of the Charity, working with the Chief Executive and management team to deliver high quality and innovative services and projects to people across Essex.

As Treasurer you will chair the Finance Sub Committee and work with the Finance Manager to ensure that financial management is rigorous, well planned and managed.

The Trustee role is important in enabling the Charity to achieve its strategic aims. As the coming year offers a range of opportunities to support and develop existing and new projects, we welcome your interest in sharing this journey with us.



## Message from the Chief Executive, Matt King

"Thank you for your interest in the trustee role at Trust Links. Trust Links was founded by local people in Southend who identified a need for positive and social activities to support the recovery of adults with mental health problems. At the same time the former allotment on the corner of Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase was empty and overgrown. Bringing these two challenges together, our founders created Growing Together, a therapeutic community garden built with and by members and volunteers. The project has supported many people since its formation, transforming lives, helping people get qualifications and work, and supporting mental wellbeing and recovery.



I have had the privilege to be the Chief Executive of Trust Links for more than 12 years. The charity has grown considerably over this time and we now have Growing Together projects in Shoeburyness, Thundersley, Rochford, Basildon and Cressing Temple. Our client group includes adults with mental health problems, learning disabilities, school groups, young people and early years children and their families. REACH Recovery College and Wellbeing Hub are established and successful components of the mental health system, working closely with partners in the NHS and social care. Our children and youth provision has expanded considerably over the last few years, with regular groups for a range of ages each week. Our Eco Days environmental workshops and environmental partnerships are a key component of our work.





We have ambitious and exciting plans for the future of Trust Links. We are exploring the establishment of new Growing Together projects in Chelmsford, Canvey Island and Thurrock. We have an exciting learning programme, supporting partner agencies across the UK and internationally to learn from the Growing Together model. We are working closely with the NHS and are increasingly embedded in the local mental health system.

We are diversifying our fundraising and looking to increase individual giving, major donors, legacies, corporate and

community fundraising, helping us to help more people and be resilient as an organisation.

At Trust Links we have an excellent staff team and strong support from volunteers and the local community. Our beneficiaries are fully involved in shaping the projects and services we run through co-production. We also have a fantastic existing group of trustees. We are keen to recruit new trustees and people for sub-committees who can support us as we move the charity forward.

I hope you find this information pack useful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch should you have any questions or would like to discuss the opportunities further."

# Matt King

Trust Links CEO





# Our Current Board

We have a diverse mix of people on the Trust Links board. Here is a brief overview of the board members.

Jackie Bliss (Chair) – Former charity CEO and finance director

Janet Phillips – Senior leader in Education sector

Paul Bridges – Senior executive and board experience, trained accountant

Pauline Stratford (Vice Chair and HR Committee Chair) – Senior HR and NHS experience

Jonathan Hodge – Lawyer

Michael Anderson (Property Committee Chair) – Partner in large Property Development Company

Alex Paterson – Client Development Specialist

Sonya Dallat – Communications and Content Specialist

Jules Grudniewicz Box – Marketing Professional

Lucy Norman – HR Professional

*Patron: Jill Allen-King OBE –*  
Disability rights campaigner





# Trustee Job Description

## **Job purpose**

Be corporately responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of Trust Links developing its aims, objectives and goals.

Contributing to the effective working of the board and to further the organisation's vision and mission.

## **Main tasks**

- To take part in formulating and regularly reviewing the strategic aims of the organisation.
- With other trustees to ensure that the policy and practices of the organisation are in keeping with its aims.
- With other trustees to ensure that the organisation functions within the legal and financial requirements of a charitable organisation and strives to achieve best practice.

## **Main duties**

### **1. Formulating strategic aims**

- Consider the organisation as a whole and its beneficiaries, whether as a member of the trustees or any of its committees, sub-committees, groups etc.
- Reflect the organisation's vision and principles, strategy and major policies
- Contribute specific skills, interests and contacts and support the organisation in fundraising activities.
- Give strategic direction to the Charity

### **2. Financial**

- Agree a budget each year
- Ensure there are proper controls in place to ensure money can be accounted for and not misused.
- Ensure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes.

### **3. Ensuring policies and practices are in keeping with aims**

- Follow the Code of Conduct at all times, particularly when exercising the functions of the trustees, or any of its committees, sub-committees, groups.
- Attend meetings of the trustees.
- Reflect the trustees' policies and concerns on all its committees, sub-committees, groups.
- Monitoring the creation and implementation of internal policies

#### **4. Monitoring and evaluation**

- Defining goals, setting targets and evaluating against performance

#### **5. Ensuring best practice**

- Be an active member of the trustee body in exercising its responsibilities and functions.
- Maintain good relations with senior managerial staff.
- Take part in training sessions provided for the benefit of the trustees.
- Fulfil such other duties and assignments as may be required from time to time by the trustee body.

In addition, the role of the Treasurer is to work with the Finance Manager to:

- Maintain an overview of the organisation's financial affairs
- Monitor and report on the financial health of the organisation
- Oversee the production of necessary financial reports/returns, accounts and audits
- Ensure that proper financial records and procedures are maintained

The additional trustee who will serve on the Finance Sub Committee will:

- Scrutinise our Accounts, Finance Reports, Budgets and other financial papers
- Act as a critical friend to the Treasurer and Finance Manager
- Deputise for the Treasurer when they are unavailable

#### **Person specification**

Commitment to the organisation's aims

Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort

Good, independent judgment

Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship

Ability to work effectively as a member of a team

Commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life:

selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

Good communicator

Tact and diplomacy

**We would expect the Treasurer to be a qualified accountant or have equivalent experience and have experience of working with companies and/or charities of a similar scale and complexity to Trust Links. The other trustee who will serve on the Finance Sub Committee should also have similar experience.**

# What the Role Will Entail

The trustee role is unpaid pro bono, but reasonable expenses can be claimed. Trustees are required to attend board meetings, which are held on a Tuesday every 2 months for 2 hours after office hours. The meetings are located across our sites in South Essex, to enable trustees to visit our projects. Trustees are able to join on Zoom if needed. A full day Awayday is held in September each year.

Additionally the Treasurer will chair the Finance Sub Committee. This meeting is held every 2 months and is usually for 90 minutes on Zoom. You will also be required to check in with the Finance Manager approximately once per month to support them in their role. The other trustee will also be required to attend and contribute to the Finance Sub Committee.

We expect trustees to read all of the papers for the board, which are circulated the week before meetings. We hope trustees will share their skills and experience appropriately, through communication with staff and other trustees. In return, new trustees will get a full induction, access to training opportunities and the chance to contribute to an exciting, innovative and growing charity. You can read about the role of trustees on the Charity Commission's website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>

Trusteeship is a wonderful way of gaining new skills and experiences, and a powerful sense of giving something back, as you can see from this research by Getting on Board:

## Benefits to Trustees ★



# The Application and Appointment Process

Please send your CV and a short statement about why you are interested in becoming a trustee to [chiefexec@trustlinks.org](mailto:chiefexec@trustlinks.org). You are very welcome to give us a call 01702 213134 or arrange a meeting to find out more about Trust Links and the role.

We will invite shortlisted candidates to an interview with the CEO, chair of trustees and selected members of the trustee board on Wednesday 4th December 2024. Trust Links will take up two references for successful candidates and also undertake a DBS criminal records check. An induction will be arranged.

Appointment is subject to agreement of the existing trustees and subsequent vote at the Annual General Meeting.

We will endeavour to arrange meetings around your existing commitments wherever possible.

**Deadline for applications: Wednesday 27th November 2024.**



# Trust Links Strategy

## Chapter 1: Vision, Mission, Values, Strategic Objectives

### 2021 to 2024

#### Our Vision



**Growing communities and transforming lives** through a person focussed approach to mental health and wellbeing, enabling people to lead fulfilling | lives in sustainable environments in Essex, with a ripple effect globally.



#### Our Mission

**We empower and connect individuals and communities**, helping people to support each other. We transform mental health and wellbeing through inclusive, supportive and collaborative environments.

#### Our Values



##### We Promote:

- Wellbeing
- Co-production
- Justice
- Environmental Sustainability
- Inclusivity
- Trust
- Community
- Empowerment



## Key Strategic Objectives

### Quality

Achieve continuous improvement through strong data and management, ensuring positive impact on members' lives

### People

Recruitment and retention of excellent staff and volunteers through effective wellbeing support, learning and development, and engagement

### Revenue

Diverse and sustainable income

### Growth

Build on what we are doing well

### Innovation

Develop programmes, projects and services to meet need, with co-production at the heart

### Reputation

Maintain high levels of recognition through strong and distinctive communications and relationship management

### Partnerships

Build and consolidate internal and external partnerships

### Environmental sustainability

Become an exemplary 'green' organisation



# Performance Measures



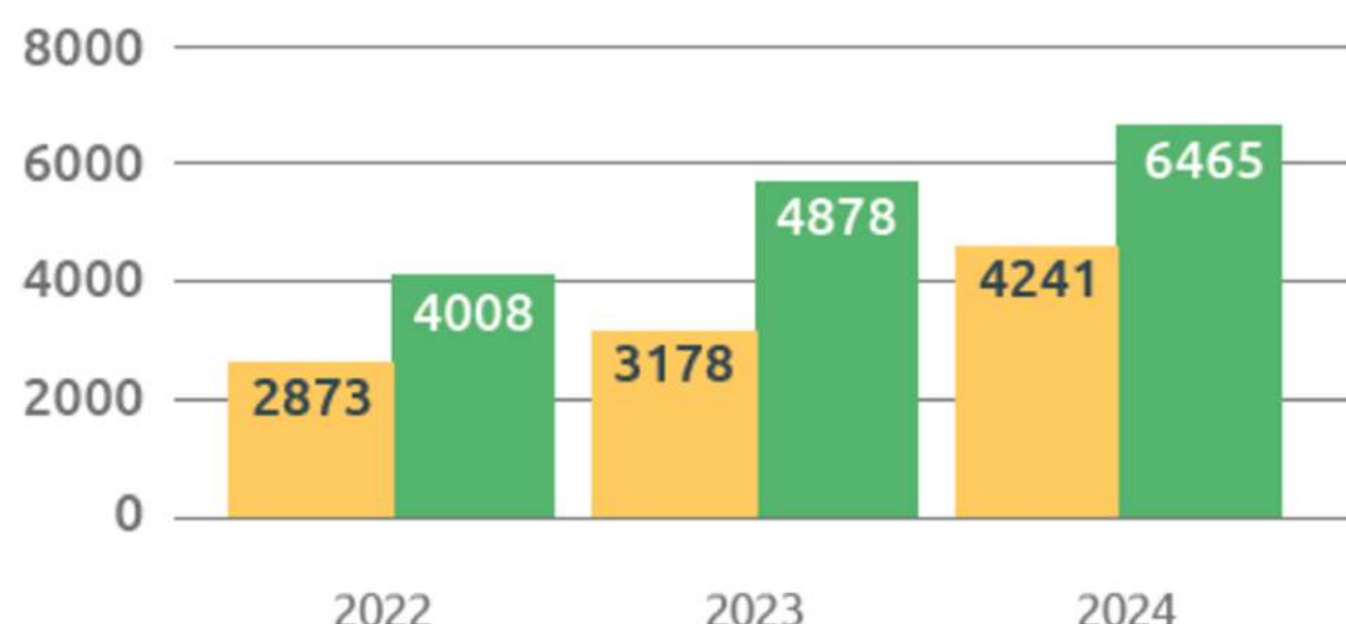
|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Services</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dashboard of performance statistics across projects (headline)</li> <li>• Monitoring diversity of beneficiaries</li> <li>• Monitoring project/contracted services evaluation reports with lessons learned</li> <li>• Regular monitoring impact, <a href="#">outcomes</a> and randomised service user feedback</li> <li>• Case studies and testimonials to demonstrate impact qualitatively</li> </ul> |
| <b>Finance</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three-year forecasting budgets plans</li> <li>• Diverse income streams</li> <li>• Reserves are built and maintained to the agreed level – annual review</li> <li>• Financial Regulations set out in Manual, with annual review</li> <li>• Fundraising from a range of funding streams</li> </ul>                                                                                                      |
| <b>HR</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly monitoring of HR performance – sickness, turnover, recruitment</li> <li>• Outcomes of the annual staff satisfaction survey</li> <li>• Percentage of annual staff appraisals completed</li> <li>• Annual staff training plan to ensure staff are trained and developed in line with their needs and the Charity's objectives and values</li> </ul>                                           |
| <b>Infrastructure</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health &amp; Safety compliance</li> <li>• Production of an annual maintenance/development plan for managed capital spend</li> <li>• Lease in place for each site</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Risk</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual review</li> <li>• Quarterly monitoring of risks</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Environment</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of an energy efficiency plan with annual monitoring of progress to achieve Carbon Neutrality</li> <li>• Increase percentage in the reduction of waste, paper and increase in recycling</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Communications</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of audience engagement on social media (<a href="#">e.g.</a> total likes, comments and shares)</li> <li>• Engagement with events (community and fundraising)</li> <li>• SharePoint being used across organisation for effective communication</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                        |

2023/24

# TrustLinks

Number of people supported and actively engaged (2022-2024)

Supported Actively engaged



6465  
SUPPORTED PEOPLE

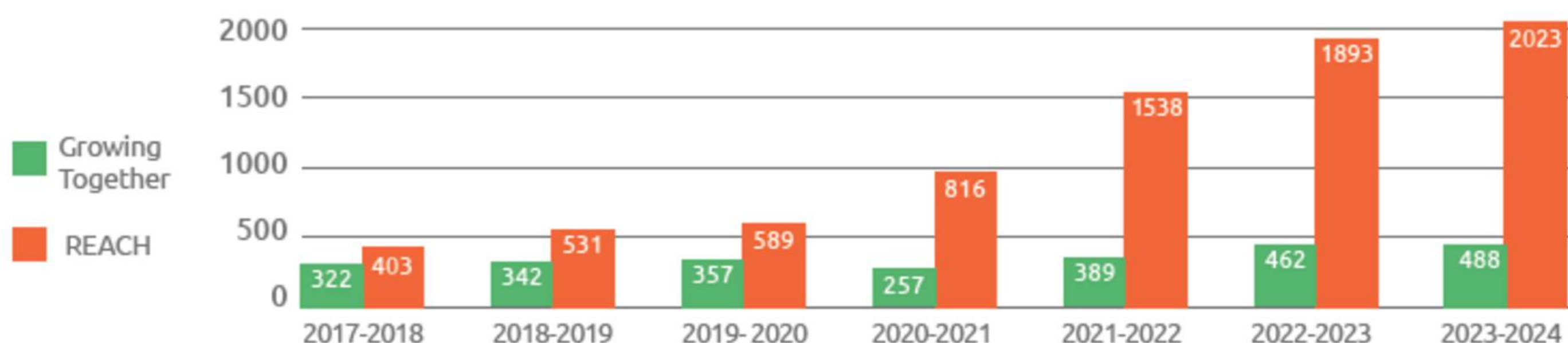
With **4241** people 'actively engaging' across all projects  
**3082** wellbeing groups and activity sessions provided across all services

## STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Staff **62** Bank Staff **11** Volunteers **167**

Full Time Equivalent: 52.4

Number of members engaging with Growing Together and REACH (2017-2024)



## REACH Recovery College & Wellbeing Hub



1478

Referrals into the service



1651

Courses, workshops or positive activity sessions delivered



1683

People receiving 1-1 support sessions



568

People engaging with Depression and Suicide Pathway

Outcome Measure:

23

Progress to education

26

Gained employment

31

Progress to volunteering

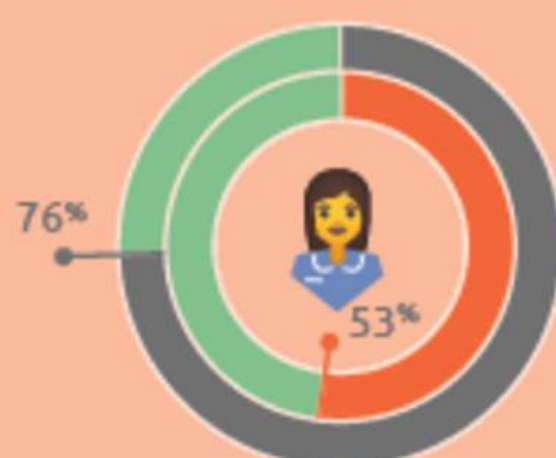
31

Maintaining employment

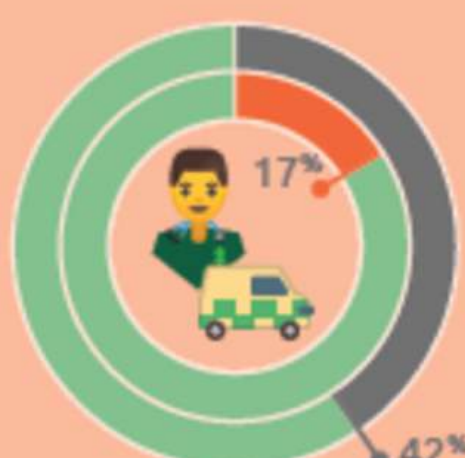
CSRI Data: Service Usage (Client Service Receipt Inventory)

Baseline

Review



Primary Care Services



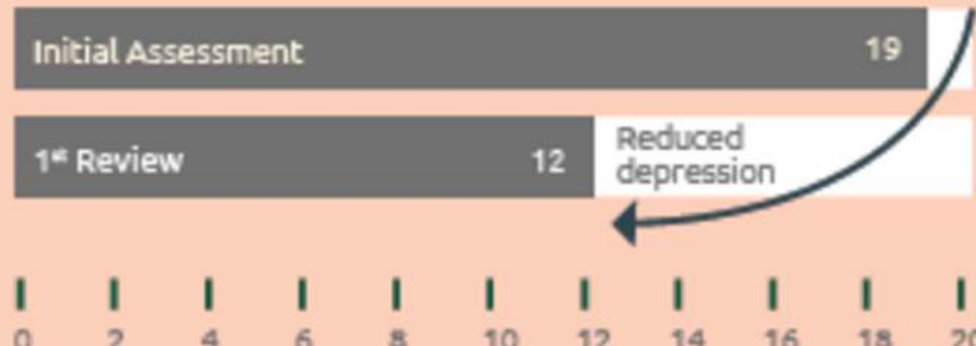
Secondary Care Services



A&E Attendances

PHQ-9 Average Scores:

Initial Assessment vs 1st Review (6 weeks)



# Growing Together

524 Members



Members engaging  
With the service

488

Newly enrolled  
members

176

Sessions run:



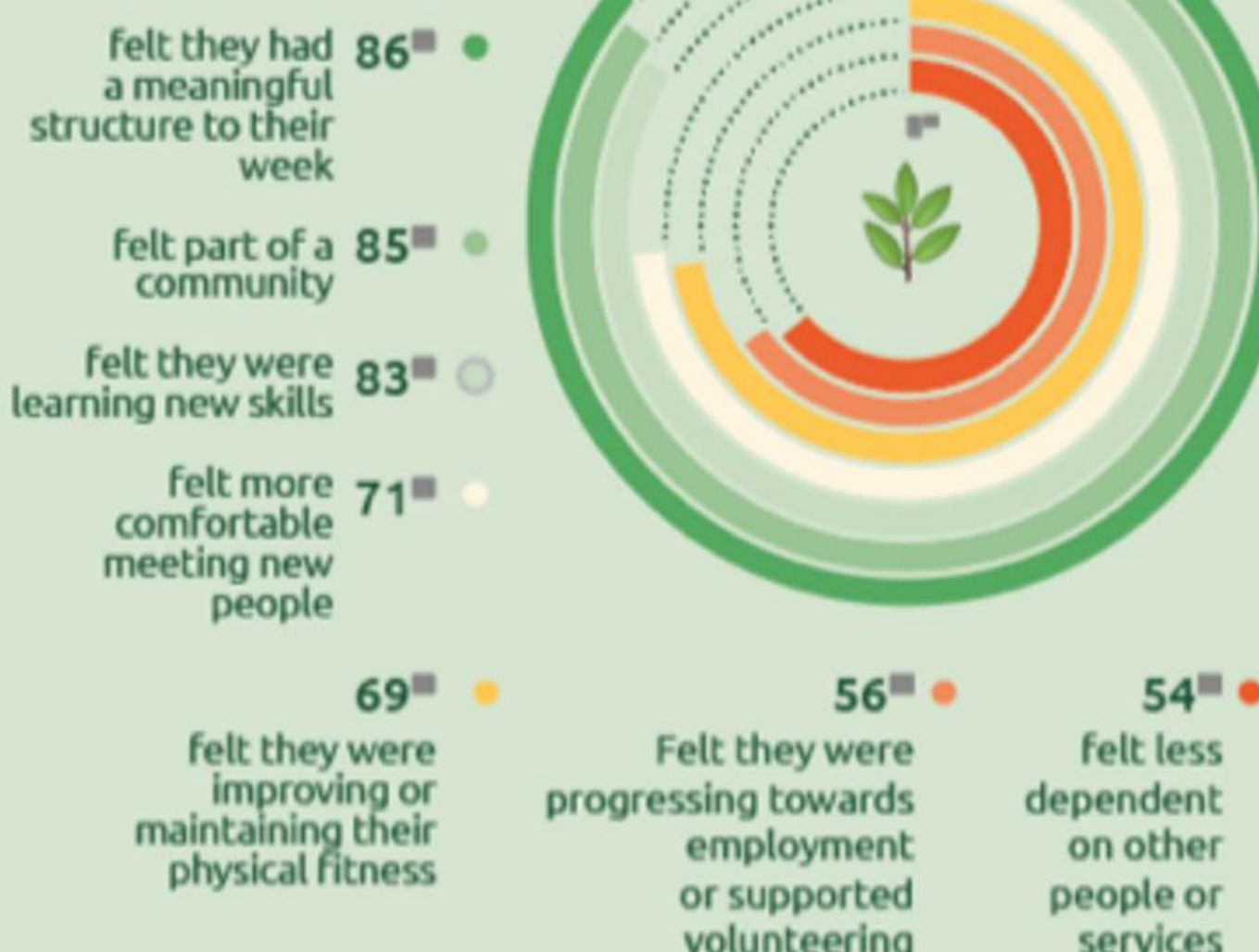
841 Total individual sessions provided

19 Completed Level 1 Diploma in Practical Horticulture

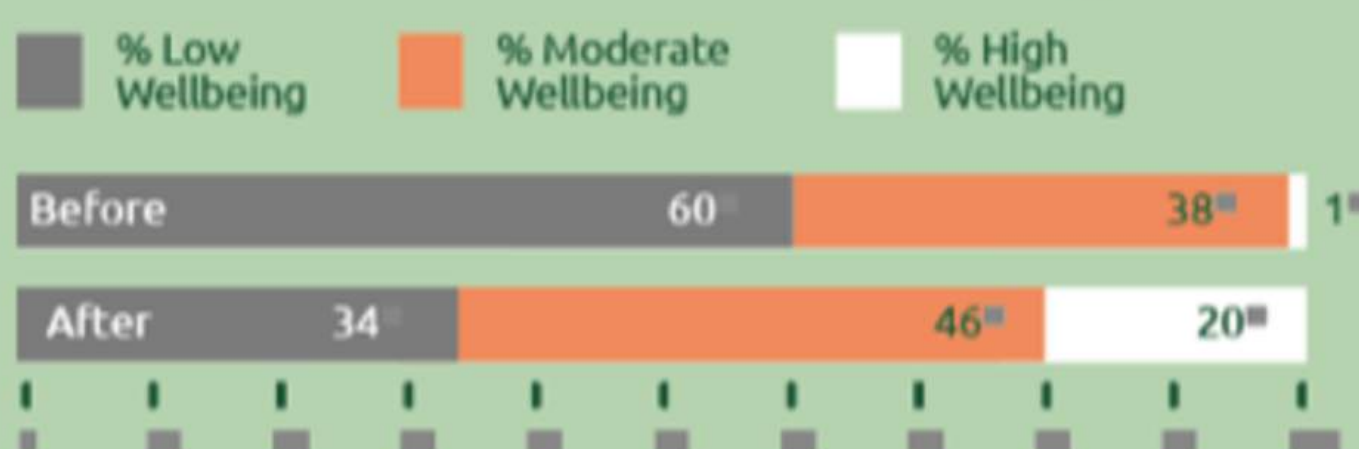
Mean SWEMWBS\* score:



Outcome Measure:



Proportions of wellbeing before & after intervention:



## Greening Basildon and Greening Southend

106 People engaged  
275 Attendances

Community Based Sessions:

139 Basildon  
48 Southend

## Talking Together

1120 Contacts



40 Befriendees  
36 Befriender Volunteers

## Children, Youth & Families

Learning  
Together

69

young  
people  
supported

Families  
Growing  
Together

181

Parent/  
Guardian/  
Care-givers



Youth Links

105

young  
people  
registered

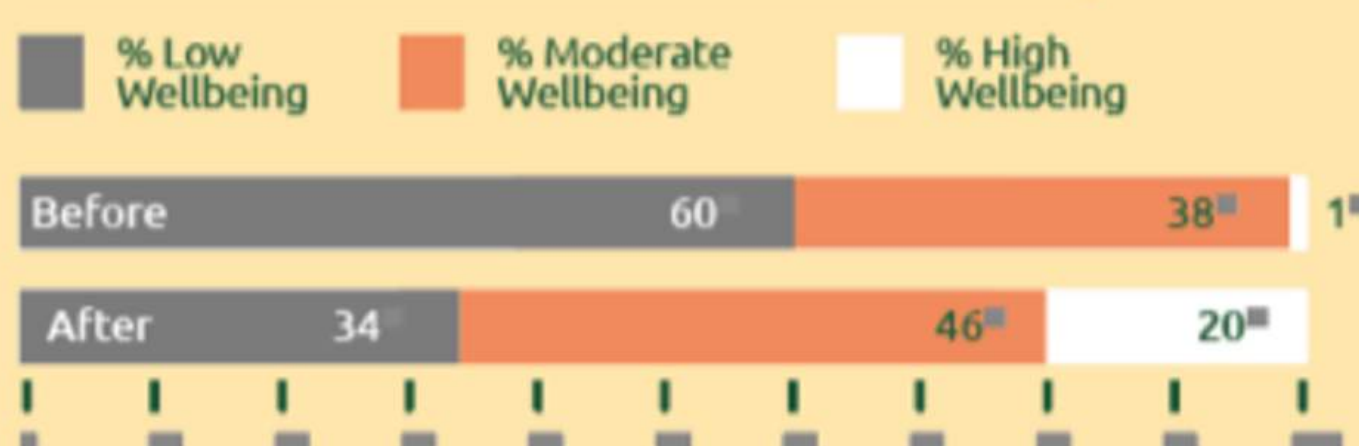
88

regularly  
engaging

46

New  
referrals  
in year

Proportions of wellbeing before & after intervention:



# 1942 Trees

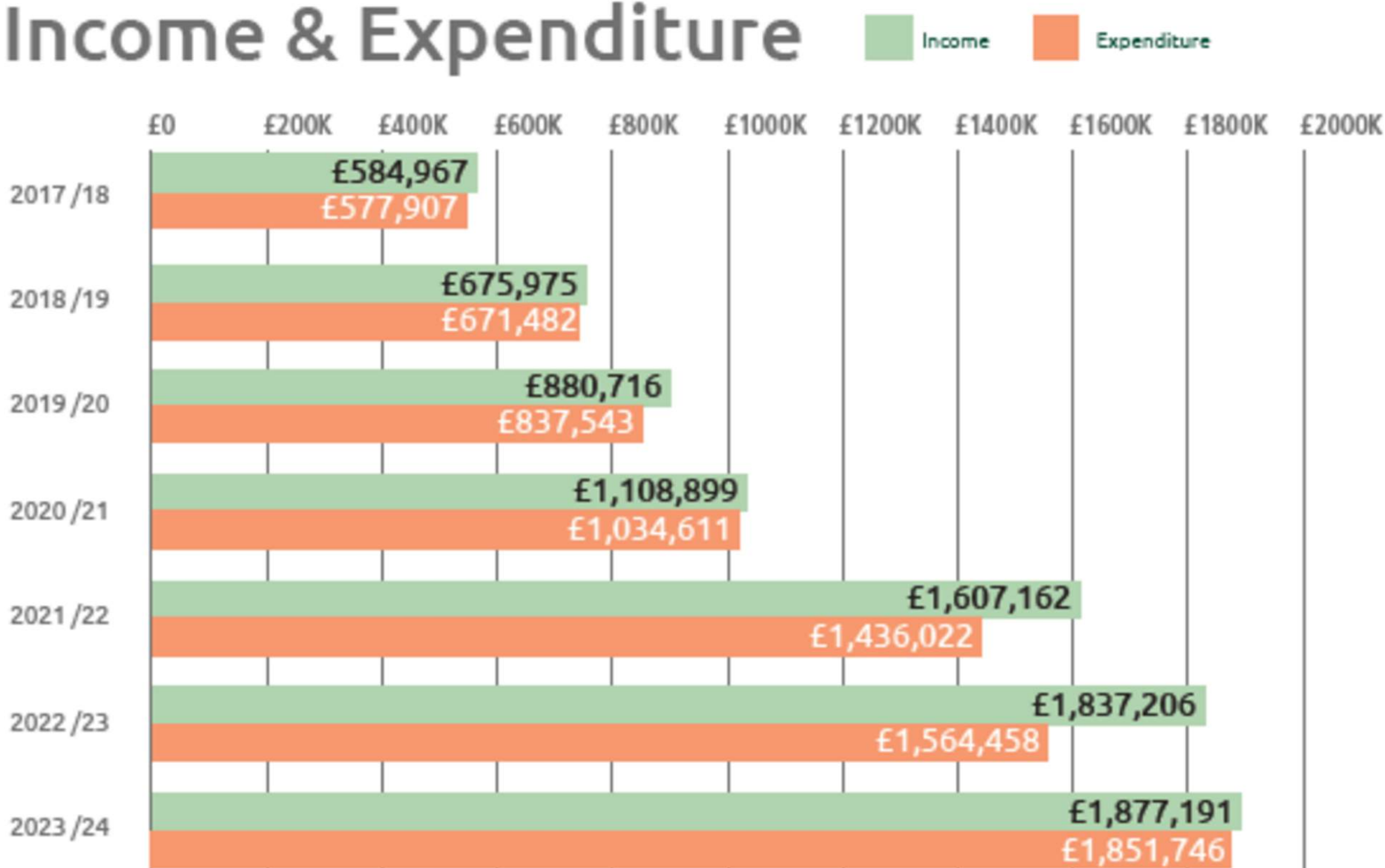
planted during the year

1000 The Gunny  
700 Southchurch Park East  
200 Darlington Primary School

15 Apple Trees planted at Basildon  
10 Thundersley Espalier trees  
8 Bournes Green Park  
3 Greening Basildon projects

3 Growing Together Basildon launch  
1 Jubilee Tree planted at Shoeburyness  
1 at St Laurence Orchard at Wassailing  
1 at St Laurence Orchard at Apple Day

## Income & Expenditure



## Funding mix (2023 - 2024)

