

FOOD4FAMILIES INDEPENDENT EVALUATION REPORT



October 2019

Acknowledgements

We would like to say thanks to all the respondents who participated in our questionnaire survey, especially the tutors, volunteers and users who contributed their support and assisted in arranging and completing our survey tasks.

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Foreword

It is a sad thing to have to write a foreword for our final project evaluation report. We are grateful to The National Lottery and its Reaching Communities fund to have had significant resources over the last five years to support F4F's wide range of community garden locations across Reading. Sad, yes but not dispirited – there are reasons to be positive.

This report details all that has been achieved over the last 12 months for users, through regular sessions at the sites, our veg patches, cookery courses and at numerous, varied events.

And we have learnt a lot – about planning and evaluating our work, connecting more effectively with our local communities, working in partnership with others, developing and supporting new sites such as Lavender Place, supporting and growing the skills and knowledge of our tutor team and more.

We face an uncertain future but not without hope, because we have a strong and committed tutor team, dedicated volunteers, a core of regular garden users and supporters and positive links with many community organisations. From veg patch to school sites to our main centres, the gardens represent a visible statement of the values and benefits of giving people a real connection to food production and nature and not one mediated by supermarkets. Through this channel communities are strengthened. Different sectors from children to the elderly are brought together and it provides a welcoming way into the community for those who are new to the area.

I'd like to offer a personal thanks to all those who have helped to sustain and strengthen F4F over recent years.

This report comes out in autumn and our gardens will once again face the chill of winter but we know that spring will return and between now and then we will continue to work together to ensure that F4F continues to make a telling and relevant contribution to our local communities at a time of deeply serious climate change.



Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Foreword	3
Introduction	5
Food4Families	6
Developments since last evaluation	8
Research work	10
Action/evaluation team	10
Data Collection	11
Evaluation Research.....	12
Achievements against Big Lottery outcomes	12
Respondent profile	13
The Gardens and user involvement	14
Quality and impact of the project	16
Project quality	18
Project impact.....	20
Continuing the garden in the face of funding cuts.....	24
Child responses	26
Conclusions	26
Next Steps.....	28
Appendix 1: Contact Form	29
Appendix 2: Action Plan Questionnaire	31
Appendix 3: Final Evaluation User Questionnaire.....	32
Appendix 4 : Quality and impact responses in further detail	35

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an independent evaluation of a range of community garden sites in Reading from early-2019 through to the end of the summer. It includes an analysis of how the main sites performed against their Action Plans, ongoing monitoring data and the findings from 1568 users and volunteers at 8 community garden locations.

Garden site tutors were asked to produce Action Plans for the first time in 2019. These are designed to provide pre-defined goals for the season, with follow up questionnaires completed by the tutors to review how far the goals were met. This helps to guide the evaluation process.

Specifically, the Action Plans were designed to cover the following three key themes:

- 1) Health – this reflects how the garden helps to boost both mental and physical health, including the prevention of health problems, promoting fitness and improving general well-being.
- 2) Community – this reflects how well the garden site interacts with the local community. It could cover the identification of local community networks and links with local events such as fairs and festivals. The sites should explore ways to greater engage local groups and residents.
- 3) Activities – this reflects the events that take place at the garden site itself, which encourage users to come together at the site.

With the introduction of the Action Plan system in 2019, a new Evaluation Team was set up within RISC. The team meets on a regular basis to review the Action Plans, compare these with the actual achievements at the sites and discuss the ongoing evaluation process.

Alongside the Evaluation Team, the evaluation was also carried out by university staff and Whitley Researchers – a resident based collective of community based researchers who include university staff and student interns in one collaborative team.

In co-operation with Food4Families staff, the Evaluation Team worked to plan, organise and carry out the regular evaluation of Action Plans, as well as the end of season research, through to the report, conclusions and recommendations.

The report starts with a brief introduction to Food4Families – the organisation itself, its aims and the garden site locations. Following this is an account of key events and developments since the previous evaluation, carried out towards the end of 2018. We then outline how the data collection process has worked throughout the year, followed by the analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative research that has been carried out. The report also compares the year's achievements against Big Lottery outcomes. Finally, the report looks to the future, proposing the next steps for the project and making recommendations.

Food4Families

World Education Berkshire, also known as Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC), has been running an urban community gardening and food-growing project (*Food4Families*) at a number of locations in Reading since the year 2009.

The main purpose of Food4Families is to encourage everyone, young and old to sustainably garden and grow organic fruit and vegetables. The main aim of the project is to help communities reconnect food consumption with the process of food production and also to facilitate education and training on sustainable food production methods within urban environments. However, the project organisers and managers have envisioned other social benefits as part of the project outcomes, such as helping to build relationships within the local community and enhancement of community cohesion.

Food4Families works in a variety of settings.

Community Gardens - since 2011 Food4Families has developed several larger sites that are community-based, i.e. open to all residents of neighbouring communities, and have been purposely established in areas inhabited by less affluent and ethnic minority groups.

1. Southcote GrowAllot, off Coronation Square, Southcote RG30 3GQ
2. Whitley GrowAllot, off Meavy Gardens, Whitley RG2 7RD
3. The Weller Centre, Amersham Road, Caversham, RG4 5NA
4. Erleigh Road Community Garden, Erleigh Rd, RG1 5LH
5. Gosbrook Rd Growers, St John's Church, Gosbrook Rd, Caversham RG4 8EB
6. Coley Park Community Centre, Wensley Rd, Coley Park RG1 6DW
7. Katesgrove Community Allotment, Elgar Road South, Katesgrove, RG2 0BW
8. Lavender Place, Queens Walk, Reading RG1 7UA

Users of these gardens are mostly families with young children or older individuals. Some of the adults attending these gardens often lack the basic knowledge and skills of gardening and have limited opportunities to do it in their own homes. Though any resident from neighbouring communities can become a member of the gardens, granting them unrestricted access to the premises and facilities, non-members can use the garden during scheduled weekly opening hours. At all 8 of the gardens all the open sessions are run by experienced tutors who, as paid garden leaders, pass on skills, encourage and generally facilitate activities, and allocate project resources to targeted areas of most need. At the same time, there are some users who are experienced gardeners and who have their own gardens or allotments. They contribute to staff expertise, sharing their knowledge and experience and providing invaluable support to the paid tutors. Moreover, at one garden two sessions a week are now run by volunteers.

The main crops grown in these gardens are generally potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, courgettes, beans, radishes and strawberries, but different types of herbs as well as onions, leeks, spinach and chard are also grown. This provides the basic fruits and vegetables to which participants can most easily relate, and are most likely to prepare and consume at home. The focus of these gardens has been on growing food organically, including methods of creating good quality compost and its value for soil maintenance. Also, consideration of common garden pests and methods of combatting them are discussed regularly to ensure maximum useable yield. Even though the actual quantity of produce harvested from each garden is not measured, the yield appears to be in proportion with garden sizes. All the users share fruits and vegetables harvested from each garden on the days of harvesting.

Schools – during 2019 Food4Families has been working with 7 schools that often serve the communities where the larger gardens are based.

1. Micklands Primary School, Caversham
2. Thameside Primary School, Caversham
3. NewChristChurch Primary School
4. Whitley Park Primary School
5. Alfred Sutton Primary School
6. John Madejski Academy
7. Deenway Montessori School



The majority of Food4Families support at the school gardens is with children during the school day or as an afterschool gardening club providing opportunities for the whole school or just one class to be involved. Where possible these sessions are linked into the curriculum being covered by that year group. At two of the schools the afterschool clubs encourage parents and carers to attend with their children. Crops grown are shared out amongst those children who have grown them or used in school cooking. Two schools have more of a horticultural therapy focus to their sessions where the tutor is working one-to-one or with small groups of children who the school feel will benefit emotionally, socially or behaviourally from the gardening activities.

Veg Patches - since 2015 Food4Families has been constructing veg patches – up to 4 raised beds within gardens of residential flats, sheltered/ residential housing, day/ community centres, or on any spare land near residential areas where groups of residents are interested in growing fruit and veg. These sites are supported by Food4Families tutors for up to two years who provide guidance, advice, equipment and resources. The residents maintain the beds together, deciding what to grow and sharing out any harvest.

In addition to these main activities Food4Families also:

- runs cookery courses with a focus on cooking meals using seasonal fruit and vegetables.
- delivers taster sessions to formal or informal groups, where participants can plant up a container with seasonal vegetables that they can take away to grow on at home.
- runs ‘Get Growing’ – an introduction to food growing course.
- recruits and trains volunteers who help with the general maintenance of the gardens and propagating of plants to go out to the sites.

Food4families collect monitoring data throughout the growing season using the following methods:

- All participants sign in when they attend any session, which is used to track numbers involved.
- When joining an activity participants are asked to complete a baseline questionnaire. This will be followed up at the end of the activity/session/course/year as appropriate to measure any impact.
- Informal feedback is collected during ‘tea & chat’ sections of regular sessions so adjustments can be made based on participants’ feedback as we go along.
- At the end of the growing season an independent evaluation such as this one is carried out covering all areas of the project focusing on the impact the project is having in relation to the main project outcomes.
- All monitoring data is kept securely and with the participant’s permission.

Developments since last evaluation

The main developments from September 2018 to August 2019 include the following:

With Food4Families' present National Lottery Reaching Communities 5 year funding coming to an end in August 2019 we held a strategic review of the project in December 2018. Key stakeholders were invited to help us explore the strategic directions Food4families might head in, in the future. This involved reviewing what Food4families does well, what are the opportunities that F4F could take advantage of within local health, community, sustainability, education sectors and exploring suitable grant providers. The review resulted in 5 strong recommendations to explore:

1. Focus on existing assets - the gardens that we have are well respected valuable assets within their localities and we should focus on how we can build on this.
2. Build out in unique ways according to each individual locality - each garden should be developed according to the needs and strengths of its local populations/users.
3. Develop practical and funding partnerships pertinent to point above - within the surrounding areas of each garden. Who are the other organisations that we could partner with to create a sustainable future?
4. Produce resources to disseminate. How to build and then measure - RISC as an organisation has years of experience in running training and producing resources. How can we use these strengths to develop resources to support the gardens and their users?
5. Review management of community gardens to facilitate above - through supporting the blossoming and autonomy of user groups at each site can we develop gardens that are less reliant on F4F staff and funding?

The results of the event have laid out a future direction for Food4Families and driven our funding applications during 2019.

The recommendations from the 2018 evaluation report have also been addressed in the short term through action plans at each of the sites which are being monitored by a small team of volunteers and focus on increased engagement of the local communities and putting on events encouraging healthy lifestyles.

All the sites also participated in the National Children's gardening week and Wild About Reading.

In June 2019 Food4Families celebrated its 10 year anniversary with a big celebration at our newest community garden Lavender Place. The event was opened by the deputy mayor of Reading who cut a vegetable-based cake before joining in a communal meal. Everyone who attended was presented with a Lavender plant to take home in a pot they decorated themselves. There were lots of other activities to participate in including a treasure hunt and Reading Food Growing Network's seed swap.

Throughout the year a total of 1835 people have got involved in at least one activity that we have run. Close to 500 growing sessions have been organised at 9 sites with 1246 participants including potato days, wildlife trails, neighbourhood sunflower competitions, seed saving, community blackberry picking, discussions around what to do with what you grow, outdoor cooking, becoming a nature detective and the great British butterfly count to name just a few.

As well as the above, the programme has also run taster sessions at a variety of events where 900+ participants have been sowing mixed salad seeds in recycled fruit punnets to take home to grow on their window sill. Locations have varied from a drop-in at over 50's coffee clubs to a multi-faith women's group and a homeless drop-in café.

In 2019, 6 new vegetable patches have been set up, with the programme supporting 60 residents in growing in them once a month. This year they have been in a wider variety of locations such as a community cafe, communal garden of local authority flats and a primary school playground. Meanwhile, 28 participants have attended 3 cookery courses, cooking with seasonal vegetables from scratch.

Lavender Place garden has really expanded and become established in the heart of the town centre. Many different community groups, including gardeners from The Forgotten British Gurkha, are now using the area and it has also been used as a venue for Open for Art, Wild About Reading, Heritage Open Days and Reading Fringe Activities, as well as workshops and regular drop-in gardening sessions.

There have been opportunities for participants and staff to attend a variety of workshops from scything to mental health first aid.

The programme has worked with approximately 150 volunteers from The Conservation Volunteers and 11 corporate volunteer teams who restored the edges of raised beds, created tool tidies, dug in trees and bushes to form forest gardens, constructed new rain water harvesting shelters, turned compost and moved tons of top soil.

16 students from Reading College were taken on for at least 4 weeks of work experience, completing a variety of horticultural tasks such as raised bed construction, mulching, using petrol mowers/trimmers and plant propagation.

Food4Families worked with partners from Get Berkshire Active, Age UK, Reading Voluntary Action, Reading Borough Council, 4 local Community Associations, Catalyst & Radion Housing Association, Connect Reading, University of Reading and Nature Nurture.

6 Gardens were nominated for awards in the 2019 Reading in Bloom competition and were awarded a gold (Southcote GrowAllot - Best maintained allotment), three silvers - (Erleigh Road Community Garden - Small Community Garden), (Lavender Place Community Garden - Large Community Garden), (Katesgrove Community Allotment - Best Maintained Allotment) and a bronze (St John's Gosbrook Growers - Small Community Garden).

Furthermore Erleigh Road Community Garden and Southcote GrowAllot were awarded an Outstanding Level 5 in Britain in Bloom's "It's your neighbourhood Award".



Erleigh Road Community Garden was filmed by the RHS for a feature on the reasons for and benefits of a community garden.

Research work

Following completion of the 2017/18 'Independent Evaluation Report' two outline plans were prepared in response to the report's recommendations, reinforced by the suggestions for sustainability in two further reports from 2018 commissioned by Food4Families: 'Way to Health: a survey of what people do to get well or keep well in South Reading' and 'A children's view of the Food4Families gardening programme'. Comments from users, volunteers, tutors and staff and management team meetings in November and December 2018 contributed to how best to implement recommendations for improvement.

Action/evaluation team

One of the two outline plans focused on tackling the actions recommended in the evaluation report and the other concentrated on continual evaluation. The plans were confirmed at a Food4Families staff meeting in February this year and initially two teams were considered – one an Action Plan team and the other an Evaluation Team – both dependent on volunteer involvement. However, on further reflection, action and evaluation tasks were combined in one team. Before the growing season got underway in Spring three volunteers joined with F4F management and engagement support to form a team of 5 to lead on action and evaluation across the main community garden sites.

Tutors, users and volunteers at the main garden centres were to be asked to prepare action plans based on quarterly completions and to submit these to the evaluation and action team for their impartial consideration. Feedback from the team would assist in implementing improvements in the following quarter. Key aims and objectives included:

- Collecting data and opinions to help determine the quality, value and direction of the F4F project to help to understand the impact of the project
- Building the skills of reflection and making informed judgements about how the project works and how to improve it
- Agreeing a format for the evaluation and action planning – for the year ahead in 2019 to rehearse and test what works best; in other words a process of trialling that could lead to an effective system in future years.

The evaluation and action team met on six occasions from February to September and considered action plan returns from garden centre tutors and how best to evaluate and return views on the action plans submitted. The team will meet in early October with tutors and volunteers to consider the progress of the evaluation and action planning initiative and how best to continue with the programme in the following year. Some considerations are likely to address:

- Review the use of separate evaluation and action forms and consider one form for both processes – not forgetting the need to collect quantitative data.

- Meet with tutors to consider how best to design and complete action/evaluation forms to minimise any form filling and consider building in evaluation and action planning to staff supervision sessions
- Consider reducing the number of occasions when evaluation and action planning is undertaken – e.g. not quarterly but once per growing season.
- In-depth or case study interviews might be useful additional sources of information and recommendation

Planning activities and reviewing them for further improvement is a common approach to most projects and schemes. Food4Families understands this and will be seeking a collaborative approach in future that blends independent review with on the ground action and evaluation.

Data Collection

For 2019, the data collection comprised three main formats; contact forms (see Appendix 1: Contact Form), action plan questionnaires (Appendix 2: Action Plan Questionnaire) and final evaluation user questionnaires (Appendix 3: Final Evaluation User Questionnaire).

Firstly, contact forms were completed by users throughout the year on a regular basis at the various garden sites. These provided Food4Families with contact and personal information for the users at the sites, enabling the evaluation team to get an idea of how many people are using the sites and the demographics of these users. 95 contact forms were received over the course of the year.

The evaluation of the action plans was carried out twice during the year, by the tutors at each site. The tutors were provided with a questionnaire to complete in order to provide an analysis of how the site had performed against the pre-prepared action plans and to enable any wider information to be provided. This helped the evaluation team to get a feel for how the tutors perceived the sites to be developing. At the end of the first period which was at the end of May, 4 questionnaires were received, with 10 received for the second period which was in mid-September.

Thirdly, the final evaluation was carried out at the end of August and in early September. This comprised members of the evaluation team, Whitley Researchers and in some cases the site tutors themselves, asking users a series of questions about their use of the sites and what impact involvement in the Food4Families programme has had on them. Where relevant, the questionnaire also attempted to judge whether different elements of the programme had improved or deteriorated since last year. 59 adult forms were completed.



As well as these three sources of data collection, members of the evaluation team paid occasional visits to various garden sites in order to gain a familiarity with how the sites are run and how the programme works.

Evaluation Research

Achievements against Big Lottery outcomes

The Food4Families project has been funded by the National Lottery for 5 years, and this report comprises an end of term evaluation. Moreover, it builds on an impact report which was completed one year previously in 2018, noting how things have changed as the project managers have attempted to act on previous recommendations. This is an independent evaluation carried out by the Whitley Researchers – a collective of community residents who work in collaboration with University of Reading staff.

The research for this evaluation involved a total of 64 interviews with community members who were involved with the programme. 59 adults followed a set questionnaire and 5 child respondents selected how they felt about the project from a variety of emoji. The 59 responses represent just over half of the regularly involved adult participants. Moreover, the respondents were drawn from 19 different garden locations, which allows for wide representation of views.

The questionnaire, which may be found in the appendix of this report, draws on the questionnaire used in 2018, allowing a comparison in impact from one year to the next. However, the new questionnaire also homes in on certain areas of quality that last year's research threw up as being of importance, whilst skipping other issues that have already been adequately explored. Areas explored in 2018 which are not duplicated here include open questions about what attributes the respondents value in their local community, how they found out about the gardening project, what inspired them to join, what they get from it, what they want more of and what they think keeps other people in. The social connections/relationship building aspects of the project emerged as being key here, followed by appreciation for/making the most of green spaces and thirdly the opportunities to have fun, learn and gain experience. These issues have informed the new questionnaire when it came to asking questions about project quality. Another question asked in this survey that was not mentioned last year includes the issue of how to continue with a reduced funding stream. Using the questionnaires, interviews were carried out with the garden users on site between mid-July and mid-September 2019.

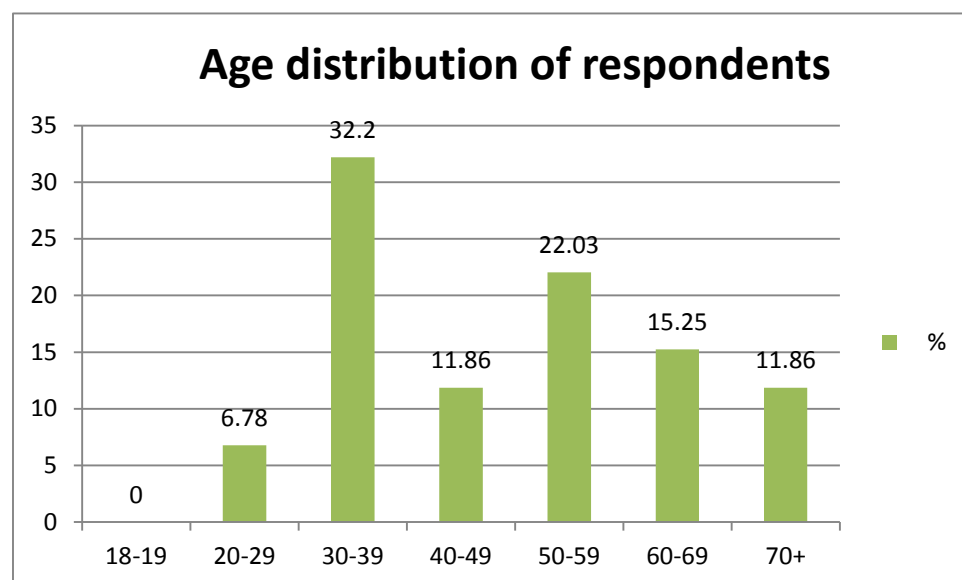
The following section presents the findings from the completed adult questionnaires. Firstly, a profile of the adult respondents interviewed, along with details about their usage of the gardens. Then it looks at the way participants view the quality and the impact of the project. By noting how certain variables in the survey interact, extra information can be drawn out about factors of influence on those responses. It is also possible in some cases to note how the project is progressing by comparing responses given in 2019 to those given a year ago. A summary of lessons learned and recommendations for future progress that can be drawn from the data conclude the report.

Respondent profile

Gender

Out of the 59 adult respondents, 40 were female and 19 were male. All the school garden attendees were female, but in the community gardens and the veg plots, 37% of the respondents were male.

Age



Garden users ranged from people in their 20s to people over the age of 70. The most common age reported was from clients in their thirties, although the mean age is in the 40-49 bracket, with a good proportion of over-50s.

Qualifications

52% of respondents held a degree, suggesting that people who attend the gardens are more highly educated than average (according to the 2017 data released by the ONS, around 40% of the UK population aged between 21 and 64 had a degree¹). Having said that, 17% of attendees (and often the older generation) had no qualifications at all.

Poor health

9% of respondents said yes to the question, 'Does poor health limit your activities?'

Care roles

39% of respondents said yes to the question, 'Are you caring for children or other dependent family members?'

Financial difficulties

29% of respondents said yes to the question, 'Do you struggle financially?'. Financial difficulties had a huge impact on personal wellbeing and were associated with struggles in other areas also (such as

1

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/graduatesintheuklabourmarket2017>

health and diet). It is commendable that the gardens are a place in which better off and worse off people appear to mix.

Involvement with other groups in the neighbourhood

41% of respondents said they were involved with other groups, implying that for 59% of the garden users interviewed, the gardens represented their only point of group connection with others in the community.

Compared to those responding to a similar survey last year, more men were interviewed and more older respondents with no qualifications and who were not caring for children. The level of ill health was much the same. Slightly more persons were struggling financially. Fewer of the respondents were involved with other groups. Part of these differences have to do with who was interviewed (more interviews were held at community gardens and fewer in school plots). However, it might also be that the organisation has succeeded to diversify its clientele a little in order to reach the people who are less advantaged.

The Gardens and user involvement

Interviews were carried out at the following gardens:

Alfred Sutton Primary School Veg Patch
Coley Park Community Garden
Erleigh Road Community Garden
Gosbrook House Veg Patch
Lavender Place Community Garden
Locks Place Veg Patch
Whitley GrowAllot
Micklands Primary School Allotment
New Beginnings Veg Patch
Southcote GrowAllot
Gosbrook Growers at St John's Community Garden
Strathy Close Veg Patch
Sun Street Veg Patch
Sure Start Whitley Veg Patch
Thameside Primary School Garden
The Dingles Veg Patch
Katesgrove Community Allotment



This produced 8 responses from school garden attenders, 10 from (small) veg plots and 41 from (larger) community gardens.

School garden attendees tended to be women, and their average age was rather lower than for the veg plots and community gardens (they tended to be women with young children involved in the gardening programme). All of the school garden attendees had some form of qualification and, of course, they all had care responsibilities. As in last year's survey, they tended to be better off financially than those attending the community gardens and, even more so, the veg plots. As before, the veg plots continue to reach a particularly vulnerable sector of the community, being especially good at connecting with those who are not part of any other group.

Length of time participants were involved in the gardens

The length of time our interviewees had been involved in the garden ranged from less than a month to 10 years. 51% had attended for one year or less. This was similar to last year. 25% had attended between 1 and 2 years, and 25% for more than 2 years.

Frequency of attendance

- 85% of all respondents attended the gardening project once a week or more, with many of the respondents from Lavender Place saying they attended every day 'watering and caring', and one even going twice a day.
- 12% said they did not attend every week but at least once a month.
- 3% attended less frequently.

Overall, the frequency of attendance is even higher than last year, even controlling for the types of garden the interviews were held at. This suggests increasing levels of commitment to the gardens.

Attending courses

Food4Families run a series of courses throughout the year that are open to everyone. This year a session of 'Get Growing' was offered every month.

- 19% of respondents said that they had taken part in a course or training event related to the gardens. This is a big jump from last year, and again shows increasing levels of involvement.
- The courses taken included: First Aid; a workshop at Hackney Herbal; a horticulture course at Forest school; a course on pests and diseases; mowing (mentioned twice) and scything (mentioned three times); composting; tool sharpening; using tools; pest identification; permaculture and 'General'.

Other participants mentioned their desire or intention to take part in courses soon (e.g. courses on propagation, storing and harvesting) or how they had the information at their fingertips via Facebook, or spoke of how much they had learned from their tutor even outside of the more formal courses.

Involvement in the garden's user group

Each garden's 'user group' meets to decide what happens on the site. Every garden has one, but some are more formal and more established than others.

- 33% of respondents in the community gardens were part of their user group.

- 20% of respondents in the veg plots were part of the user group.
- No respondents from the school gardens were part of the user group.

The longer people had been involved in the garden, the more likely it was that they were part of the user group.

The user groups are not a new initiative, but they have been more heavily promoted this year and have become more formalised. People in the community gardens and veg plots who were part of the user groups were more likely to feel they had an influence on what goes on in the garden than others, and since the feeling of influence and ownership is important to people (a finding of the 2018 evaluation) this is an important step forwards. It is notable that just being in the garden for a long time bore no relation to people feeling that they had more influence. It was involvement in the user group that rather made the difference, and so promoting user groups (at least in the community gardens and veg plots) appears to have value. Work needs to be done here as it appeared from four of the comments (e.g. 'don't really have one' and 'probably isn't one' in Meavy and Lavender Place) that not everyone knew about their garden's user group, and further enquiries revealed that the Nepalese users of Lavender place were yet to be included because of language issues.

Quality and impact of the project

In the 2018 survey, it was revealed that indicators of project quality included:

- A person's ability to influence what goes on in the garden
- The contribution the garden makes to beauty and green space in the community
- The contribution the garden makes to learning (about the natural environment)
- How well the garden brings the community together and includes different people
- How fun the programme is

How well informed each participant is about the programme

- How well organised / led the project is

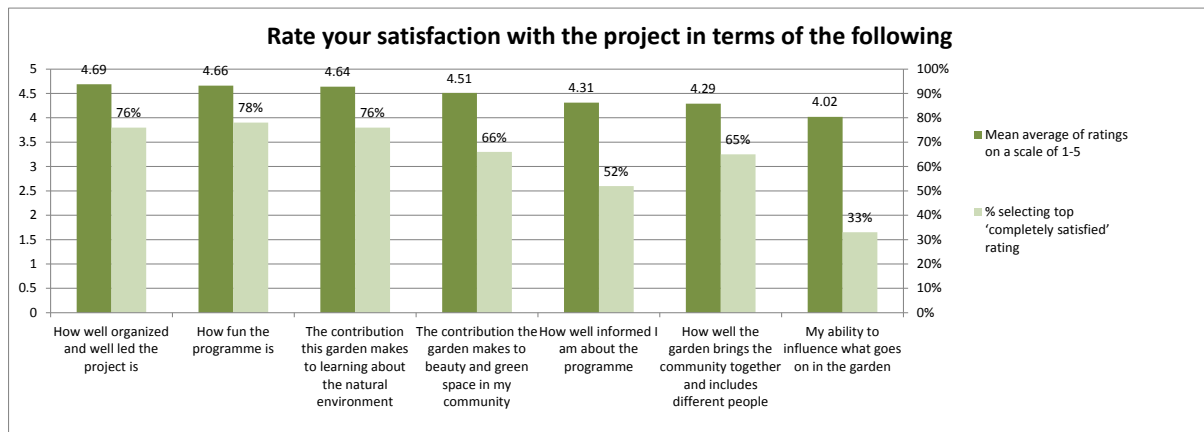
A good quality project then has a positive impact in several domains:

- It provides individuals with knowledge and new skills
- It adds to highly valued green spaces in the community and raises awareness of green issues
- It brings the community together which promotes social cohesion and helps individuals to build friendships
- It gets people out of the house and engaged in physical activity
- It encourages healthy eating.

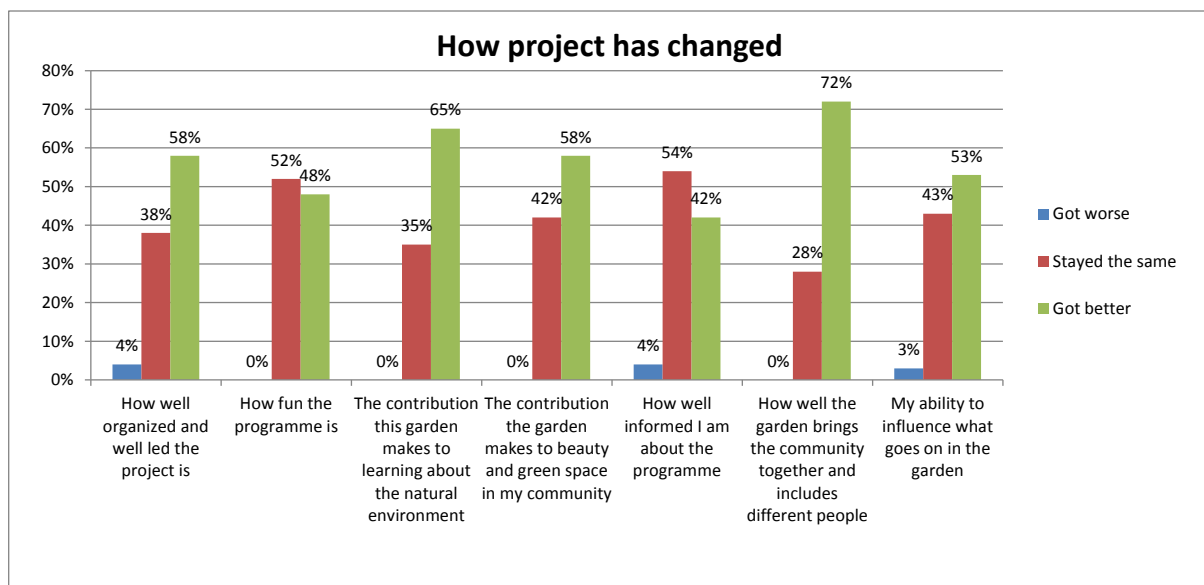
These things contribute to the quality of the community and to a positive sense of wellbeing. Good mental health also gives people the confidence to get involved in further collective activity... and so the positive cycle continues.

Two banks of questions were set up to evaluate the quality and impact of the project. In each case, people had to rate on a scale of 1-5 how well the project was doing.

The findings are presented in the following four graphs. In the first graph, the statements are arranged to show average levels of satisfaction with various aspects of project quality from best perceived qualities to worst.

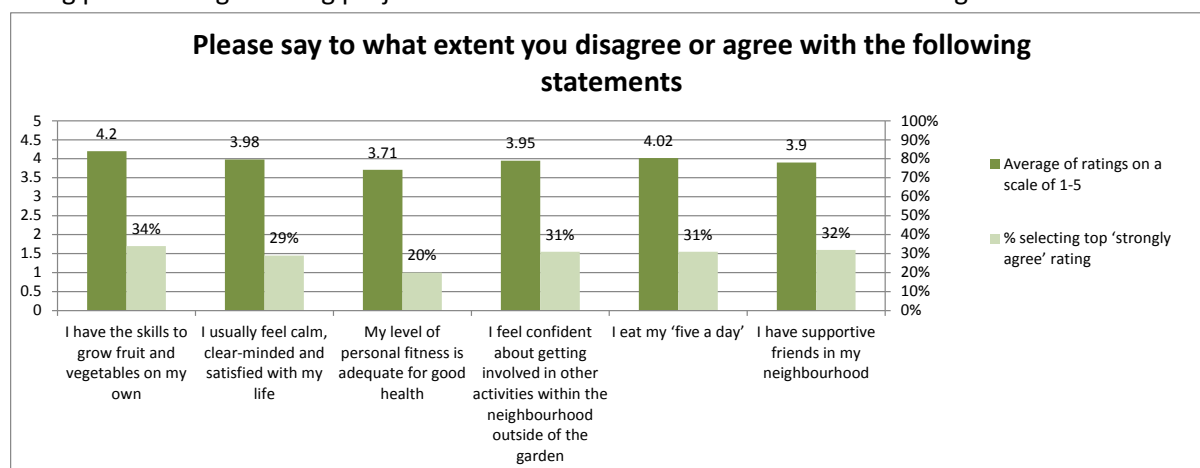


In terms of quality, people who had been involved for more than one year were asked whether each aspect of quality was getting worse, staying the same, or getting better.

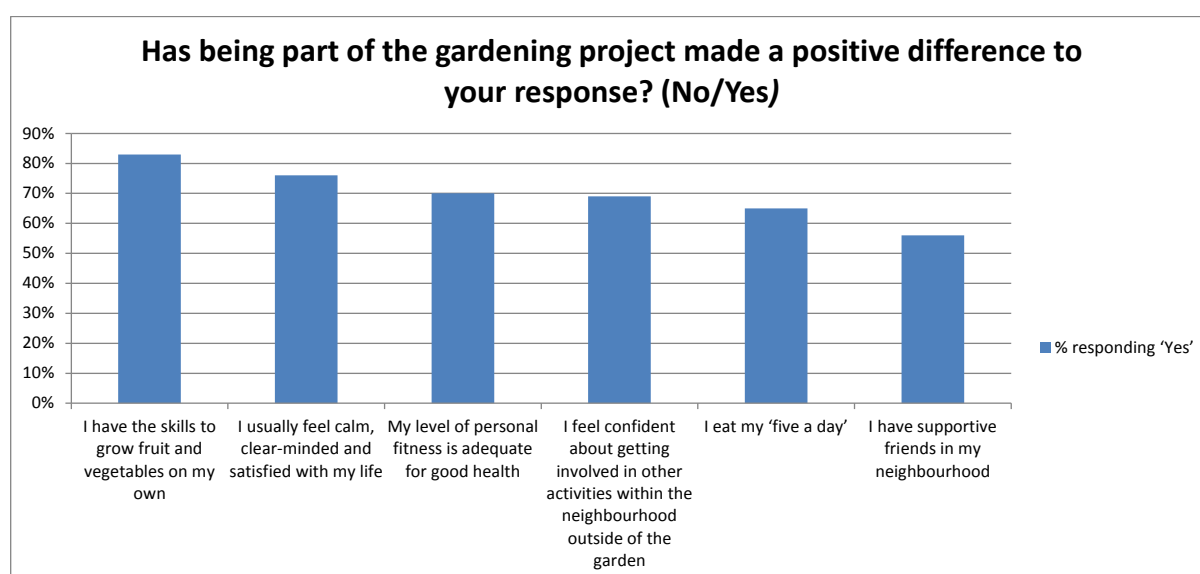


The second bank of questions asked people about various aspects of their own health and wellbeing (e.g. whether they usually felt calm, clear-minded and satisfied with life, or whether they ate their five-a-day, or whether they had supportive friends in their neighbourhood) and then asked whether

being part of the gardening project had made a difference to each of these things.



The second graph is organised in terms of the personally perceived impact that the project had on one's ratings, from highest project impact to lowest.



Project quality

Average ratings of the project quality on a scale of 1-5 across all aspects of quality mentioned in the first table were 4.45 out of 5. In other words, very high levels of satisfaction with the project were expressed, with no aspect of the project getting an average rating of less than 4 out of 5.

Fewer respondents (between 25 and 30 out of 59) responded to the questions on 'how has the project changed', since this section was only open to people who had been involved for more than one year. 57% of these, averaging over all aspects of the project, felt that the



project had got better over time, and only 2% felt that it got worse.

The project got highest average ratings of all for how well organised and led it was, and a majority felt that it kept on getting better (58%). As one person pointed out, the “organiser is crucial to the functioning of the gardens”. In the free comments section, five people expressed praise for the garden leadership and many more (see the section on ‘fun’) expressed appreciation for the activity generally. For example:

- The tutor is excellent with parents/children.
- Very grateful to help from Food4Families. Keep up the good work.
- The generosity and knowledge that RISC and Food4Families bring to the project has been invaluable. They bring fun and openness to the garden and we hope to keep working together.
- Good tutor - has widened the range of things we grow - we look forward to her coming.
- Michelle has been marvellous.

Only two comments were somewhat less positive, both arising from veg patch users:

- F4F don't seem to be interested, we are left to our own devices.
- It was to be a weekly service but we have not seen anyone from F4F in months ... Better communication from Food4Families as to when they were going to come back, otherwise children very disappointed.

Comparing the way that respondents scored one aspect of quality to another, it may be seen that they were somewhat less satisfied regarding how well informed they felt and regarding how much ability they had to influence what goes on in the garden. 53% felt that things were getting better in terms of the influence they could exert, and the promotion of the user groups may help in this since membership of the user groups was associated with people feeling they had more influence. Having influence is an important part of gaining local ownership of the project, and is an issue to keep constantly in mind in organisational structures. Less than half (42%) felt that improvements were being made with information sharing, even though this is an issue that has been brought up before. Although the 42% show that some improvement has been experienced, the fact that this is the lowest rated aspect of quality improvement suggests that information sharing is an area to concentrate ongoing attention on. Free comments made on this issue were rather on the negative side:

- Food4Families improved the garden but without full consultation. I'm concerned about the quality of beds put in and done in too rushed a manner ... We have yet to see any benefits from it ... The so called 'improvement' was a waste of time.
- A new tutor on site means I defer to - this/affects my autonomy and own decision making. Uncertainty about future of community centre garden effects my motivation.
- Please get more plants in to grow over winter, keep it going.
- Don't know how to influence what is grown.

The project gets high ratings for 'fun,' which keeps individuals coming back. The school gardens and community gardens scored better than the veg plots for fun. Ratings were also good (over all garden types) for the project's contribution to learning. Its contribution to learning is also seen as an important area in which improvements have been made – 65% said that the contribution the garden makes to learning about the natural environment has got better over time. Unlike the issues of influence, free comments about this issue were all positive:

- Enjoy gardening.

- I'm very happy here. Love this place.
- It's a very good activity. We hope it continues.
- Yes good working together, very happy.
- Happy to be with this group.
- It's very important for the children.
- I have enjoyed my time here.

The garden is also appreciated in terms of its contribution to green spaces in the community, and although satisfaction ratings are midway between highest and lowest reported levels of satisfaction more than half (58%) felt that this contribution was getting better over time. More on green spaces (with more positive comments about being involved with the garden) can be found under 'project impact' (below).

Finally, the garden is seen to bring the community together and include different people. Although satisfaction ratings in this regard are rather on the lower end of those reported, it is notable that 72% of respondents think that improvements have been made over time, which is the highest rating for improvement given to any aspect of quality improvement. Good work has clearly been started in this area, and is discussed further under 'project impact'.

On the whole, positive comments about the garden outweighed negative comments (with 18 out of 59 not opting to add comments at all), and the quality ratings for the project were high overall. Although appreciation is expressed for the project leaders and people seem to enjoy the programme, areas to particularly work on continue to be making sure people know what is going on and including garden users in the decision making.

Project impact

In terms of project impact, there was no area in which a majority of persons did not think the project made a difference, although some forms of impact were weightier than others.

As previously mentioned, the 2018 evaluation showed that respondents valued the contribution of the garden to the community in three key ways. Firstly, the garden contributes to social cohesion (bringing people together), secondly it contributes to the provision of valued green spaces; and thirdly contributes to individual wellbeing (a place of fun, healthy activity, learning and upskilling).

Impact on social cohesion

One of the project's key strengths, remarked on in the 2018 report, was how it brings local residents together, helping people to connect with their neighbours and make new friends. However, it was clear that people felt there was still more to be done in this area.

This year, 65% of the respondents ticked a box to say that they were completely satisfied with how well the garden brings the community together and includes different people, and an outstanding 72% felt that this quality had improved over time. On a more personal note, 32% of persons strongly agreed that they had supportive friends in their neighbourhood (up from 21% in 2018) and 56% felt that the gardens had made a positive difference to this situation (up from 40% in 2018). The sense of project impact on friendship building is comparatively on the low side – people were more positive about the project impact in other areas than in the area of friendship building. However, several respondents actually remarked that they had not been involved for long enough for the project to make a difference yet. It could be noted from the data that those who had been involved in the

gardens for more than a year were statistically significantly more likely to feel they had supportive friends in the neighbourhood than those who have been involved for less time. Either the friendly people stay on, or the project helps with friendship building.

Credit can be given for clear progress in drawing the community together. No one felt that the project had got worse, but even so, it must be noted that a good 20% of respondents were somewhat less than satisfied and felt that there was more to be done. Of all comments suggesting improvement, the ones about increasing local engagement and diversity were the most common. These are all the negative comments about the garden's relation to its neighbours:

- Not well accessed by the community around the garden.
- More people from community to attend.
- Local people are not using.
- I would like to see the gardens more used by school groups.
- Would like to see more people attending.
- Overall the garden is hopefully positive but why don't other people see this?
- Diversity has decreased over time. People are more middle classed and able. The local community need to be more engaged.

And for solutions,

- Advertise more on Facebook.
- Encourage people from the neighbourhood.
- Facebook has had a big impact – e.g. *Wild about Reading* has encouraged new attendees.
- The garden is great – need more people and the people who do come to pass on how great it is.

Having listed up the negative comments, it should be noted that there were more positive comments than negative ones regarding social aspects:

- Good working together, not feeling isolated. Very happy. Good getting to know each other.
- All ages, varying nationalities bring together. Working together.
- It is good working together with various communities.
- Good for working with many communities old and young and various nationalities. Integration with each other... Enjoying working together... Avoid isolation.
- Enjoying gardening and working together.
- Brings generations together and children do something without being tested.
- Bringing community together, educating community users. Good being part of the community. Good to share knowledge.
- Great to meet other people.
- Great support from people at the garden so can feel relaxed and safe.

The effort to bring more people in is important to maintain, including the inclusion of people who are less well-off and less well integrated. It has already been mentioned under 'respondent profile' that, compared to those interviewed one year ago, there were more people struggling financially and more people without qualifications in the sample. This is positive in terms of making the gardens more inclusive, but work remains to be done.

Impact on the provision of green spaces and awareness of the natural environment

The 2018 report discussed at length the high value people place on green spaces in their community. It is understood that a project concerned with the growing of fruit and veg is not primarily concerned with beautifying the community, and yet attention to this aspect adds extra value, since green spaces have been found to mean so much to people. Besides aesthetic appeal, raising

awareness of how the natural environment is affected by human life and how to better care for it is important and topical.

76% of respondents were completely satisfied with the contribution that the garden makes to learning about the natural environment, and somewhat less (66%) were completely satisfied with the contribution it makes to beauty and green space in the community. Whilst in both cases a majority of persons felt that the project had got better over time (65% said this about the learning and 58% said it about beauty and greening), there is still work to be done. Around 10% of respondents were less than satisfied with the present state of affairs in each domain although, unlike in 2018, no one volunteered comments this year about ugly and weedy beds. Rather, the comments on being outdoors, growing in a sustainable manner and learning were all positive:

- Being outdoors doing something you enjoy keeps your mind busy. Its important.
- Its very relaxing.
- Good fun enjoying in open air/working together.
- Good to be outdoors.
- Good for health. Organic.
- Good for health. Organic veg.
- All vegetables are organic. Food for health.
- Good exercise ... very happy when getting organic veg of various types.
- No smoking and no pesticides, its organic.
- Enjoying the open air.
- During summer months have a harvest to take home.
- Has helped my child to be more talkative. Also helped me (parent) with my gardening.
- It's made a difference to the children's understanding to grow your own food, take pride in how it looks, understanding how to grow things.
- The garden has helped with diet and skills.
- Great learning about fruit and veg. Renting, so no opportunity to grow. Not inclined either, so this gives children opportunity.
- Enjoy learning about gardening.

Impact on individual welfare

Positive interaction with other people and access to green spaces already have an impact on individual wellbeing, but so might other aspects of the project, such as (1) the opportunity to learn new things and gain new skills; (2) getting out of the house and engaging in an enjoyable physical activity; and (3) healthy eating (as promoted by the project). We could ask questions about project impact in each of these domains, and we could also ask people directly about the impact of the project on their personal welfare/mental health. Finally, we asked them about the impact of the project on their confidence to get involved with other activities in the neighbourhood outside of the garden, an impact which multiplies all the positive effects of community engagement all round.

The respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the impact of the project on their ability to grown fruit and vegetables on their own. "My garden skills have helped me to grow my own plants on my allotment. I have the skills." 83% said the project had made a positive difference to their skills, and indeed, further analysis of the data showed that 41% of those who had been involved in the project for more than a year 'strongly agreed' that they had the skills, compared to only 26% of those strongly agreeing they had the skills when they had been involved for a year or less – a statistically significant difference. Comments made on upskilling are included in the preceding section on environmental awareness.

In terms of getting out of the house and engaging in an enjoyable physical activity, people were



asked firstly how fun the programme was, and also about their personal fitness levels. 78% were completely satisfied with how fun the programme was, and those who had been involved for a longer time felt that the programme was at least as fun if not better over time. 70% of respondents felt that the project had a positive effect on their fitness; although from a low starting point (34% were not positive

about their fitness levels being adequate for good health).²

As for healthy eating, 65% of respondents felt the project had made a difference to their diet but from a low start – 27% of respondents did not agree that they ate their five-a-day. There was no evidence to suggest that people who had been involved in the project for a longer time were more likely to be eating their five-a-day, but the comments (listed under the previous section) rather suggested that people were positive about the access the garden gave them to *organic* vegetables.

76% of all respondents felt that the project made a difference to their life satisfaction (how calm, clear-minded and satisfied with life they usually felt). This is very positive feedback and also important, because of mental health having such a large on all other aspects of life. 25% of respondents were not positive about their current levels of wellbeing.³

Confidence is something that can grow over time. 69% of respondents felt that the project made a difference their confidence to get involved with other activities within the neighbourhood outside of the garden (and 32% were not positive about their confidence levels). There was a statistically significant difference between the confidence levels reported by those who had been involved in the project for more than a year compared to those who had been involved for less time (either its mostly the confident people who stay on, or the project boosts confidence).

² Despite people feeling that the project had made a difference to their fitness, the self-reported levels of fitness amongst those who had been involved for less time was not significantly different from those who had been involved for longer. This could be simply because the positive feeling of fitness is not something that keeps growing more and more over time.

³ Length of time in the project was not associated with significant differences in life satisfaction, but life satisfaction is something that is not usually stored and accumulated. Positive influences like having friends and doing an activity you enjoy, or negative ones like struggling financially make a big difference to one's frame of mind in the moment.

Confidence building and a positive mind-set are important in enabling people to make a positive contribution to their community, through which the wellbeing of the community and of the individuals in it is consolidated.

Although the project is seen to have a positive impact on people, it must be borne in mind that not all positive outcomes depend on this one project, and likewise, that the project may be good even though the incremental impact is small. As one person put it, "I am confident and healthy anyway!"

Continuing the garden in the face of funding cuts

A further question the adult respondents were asked was, 'if our funding sources get cut back, how might we ensure the garden continues into the future?'

These are the responses the respondents gave, now grouped by broad category.

Get more people involved (4 mentions)

Some felt that the gardens may be more viable with more help.

- Make more people come/more people more help
- Try and get more people to attend (I know this is hard)
- More people and more involved
- Neighbours and people who come involve others
- More works!

We can manage ourselves (13 mentions)

Some felt that the capacity to keep the gardens going could be found within the existing group, or by working together across plots. Members of some of the school gardens were particularly keen to draw on their own capacity.

- Encourage a group of volunteers to take it on
- The parents or school could create own group
- We will volunteer to keep it going - mostly residents.
- I would do it myself because I've got the basic equipment
- Our [school] staff would help out with garden
- The school is keen to help ... there may be money from PTA or Head and Naomi German very helpful and knowledgeable
- Our [school] staff here would help to keep it going
- Sharing skills with users
- Having a user group would help with that. Could do quite a lot without funding
- Encouraging self skills
- Grow seeds brought by people
- Try and get as much as you can with limited resources
- Groups getting together

Having said that, 6 respondents volunteered the information that the job could not be done without the current (paid) leadership, and that funds were necessary.

- Not only solely on volunteers
- By not cutting services/parents could help but we need tutor guidance
- Needs leadership and organisation
- Someone to be left in charge
- No Ricky; we don't have confidence
- Difficult without Ricky

Charge members and sell produce (14 mentions)

One method of raising money would be by charging members or beneficiaries a membership fee (or raising fees) and/or asking them to donate for the produce they take home. Some even felt that produce could be sold to outsiders.

- Membership costs very low. Possibly this could be increased?
- Small charge for produce
- Increase membership a little [membership charges?]
- Small charge or request for donation that is optional
- Small entrance contribution on a voluntary basis
- Donations
- It could be made part of our institutions responsibility
- Ask parents to help [help finance the school garden]
- Get more parents involved in fundraising/have veg/flower events to raise money
- By donations
- Try to make the garden self-sufficient, making herbal teas and other products available for sale
- You could ask for a small donation for produce.

It was pointed out that people need to be made aware of what the real costs are and where the money goes in order to encourage them to donate:

- People need to be presented with realistic spending costs. Detail including shed maintenance, tools etc.
- Information as to what actually happens and how funds are spent

“Better use of technology - being in touch electronically” was mentioned as helpful in keeping people informed.

However, as another person pointed out, “Charging would not make the garden accessible for all,” which means that funding from outside of the group also needs to be found.

Fundraise (12 mentions)

12 people felt that fundraising would be necessary, with very local appeals being mentioned as well as applications to bigger funding bodies:

- Seek funding from other organisations.
- Seek funding from local authority
- By applying for community grants e.g. supermarkets for funding or grants from companies
- Seek private funding or go to a charity
- Approach organisations for donations (seeds etc)
- With more help from the church
- Activities to collect money
- Encourage any available funding. Through the council, local MP's, councillors, creating fund raising events
- Possibly encourage more sponsors, fund raising or request for any charitable organisation or funding
- Crowdfunding, more publicity about the gardens, support from charity grants
- Do some fundraising
- Fundraising

No ideas given (11)

Five persons left this question blank, and seven more wrote ‘don’t know’ or ‘no ideas’

It is pertinent that very few if any people suggested a smaller version of the same project. They rather felt the project would be viable by, “not cutting services” and many looked to *expand* the scale of the project for viability. According to those responding to the questionnaires, drawing more on the community’s own resources and fundraising from further afield are both avenues to explore.

Child responses

Five children filled out emoji cards to express how they felt about the project. At the time, 3 were feeling great, one ‘chill’ and one did not express how they felt. Personal state of mind did not appear to thereafter polarise the way the children responded to the ongoing questions.

- Rating the support they get from their tutor, two children picked the thumbs up sign and three were neutral.
- Rating their time at the garden, all picked the thumbs up sign.
- Responding to ‘what do you think of the garden’, three gave the thumbs up sign and two were neutral.
- When asked, ‘What are we getting right?’ the children responded: ‘Good place to come’; ‘Love it here’; ‘Good food and plants’; ‘Growing vegetables’; and ‘Garden to play in and have fun’.
- When asked, ‘How can we improve?’ only two children responded. They suggested ‘more vegetables’ and ‘more children’.

Conclusions

This report comprises an end of term evaluation of the Food4Families gardening project. It outlines key achievements, lessons learned, and what to focus on in the future. The data is based on 59 interviews with garden users – just over half of the current regular attenders.

A summary of the main findings:

- In terms of quality, the project is very well received by the users of the garden who were interviewed. Just over half the respondents who had been in the project for more than a year also felt that the project was getting better over time. The rest thought it was the same – very few thought it had got worse.
- The project’s particular strengths were its good leaders and its enjoyable programme.
- In terms of improvements, more work can be done to keep users informed and to enable them to influence what happens in the garden. Some progress has been made to this end by the promotion of user groups, and, outside of the school gardens, people in these decision-making groups were more positive about information sharing and to their ability to influence what is going on than people outside of these groups. Less than a third of the garden users interviewed took part in these groups, and this may be something to continue to work on. A couple of mentions were made of keeping people informed electronically.
- The *impact* of the project was also seen to be high – there was no area of impact in which a majority of persons did not think the project made a difference.
- The impact of the gardens on social cohesion (how well the gardens bring the community together and include different people) was seen to be a key area of improvement (more people said that this area had improved than any other). Indeed, the number and diversity of regular attenders appears to have increased, with a slightly greater proportion of disadvantaged people being involved compared to the 2018 data. People who had been in the gardens for more than a year were more likely to feel they had supportive friends in

their neighbourhood than those who had been in the gardens for less time (so either friendly people are the ones who stay, or the groups have helped people to build genuine friendships). In spite of these positives, getting more local people to come to the gardens remains the most frequent free suggestion made, and more needs to be done.

- The gardens were seen to make a positive contribution to learning about the natural environment and, to a somewhat lesser extent, a positive contribution to beauty and green space in the community. Beautifying and greening the community is not a key goal, but could be a valuable side-effect if attention is paid to this.
- Individuals were very positive about the impact of the gardens on their growing skills and on their mental health. It also had an impact on their confidence in getting involved with other neighbourhood groups.
- Respondents were positive about the impact of the gardens on their personal fitness, and on the access they gained to organic fruit and vegetables.

Main achievements:

The project continues to make a positive impact on food growing skills, on learning about the natural environment and on mental health. It has succeeded to create a fun outdoor activity for all types of people to engage with. Progress has been made in bringing more people in and retaining them, but more is to be done.

Main recommendations:

Increasing community participation is a key recommendation. Although progress has been made in the last year, there is capacity for more people to come on board, and garden users are especially keen to see more people coming who are geographically close to the project. It is important to ensure that people from all walks of life are welcome, since the project is still skewed to favour well educated people, although to a lesser extent than was the case in 2018.

Amongst people already in the project, work on information sharing and giving people influence in the garden needs to be done. The development of user groups is just one part of this. Potential gains are to be had with increasing a sense of local ownership also when it comes to raising funds. There appears to be a willingness amongst many garden users to do and give more, and there is evidence of increasing levels of commitment to the project in terms of turning up and attending courses, but care will need to be taken not to exclude others by asking too much or in an insensitive way. Within some of the school gardens (school gardens are a special case) there appears to be real capacity to take on a larger part in the running of the project. Other gardens are very appreciative of and dependent on the paid tutors however, and external funds are still necessary to help cover the costs and to avoid losing the hard-gained momentum that the project has already built up. There is a danger that this will be lost if the project services contract once funding streams are depleted.

Next Steps

1. Need to return to our sites, users, staff and friends and partners a summary version of our final evaluation report - with thanks.
2. Organise a dissemination event bringing together F4F and its partners to reflect upon, celebrate and plan for future developments.
3. Take the recommendations of this report and prepare a feasible programme of actions for future implementation.
4. Continue to undertake action planning and evaluation scaled to fit available resources and people's time.
5. Prepare a plan for accessing further support and funds via charitable bodies and consider how best to build garden sites as natural assets, particularly in our most disadvantaged communities.
6. Continue to work as a team calling on external advice and support as necessary to ensure that F4F has a leadership and management group helping to steer it through a time of change and challenge.
7. Consider how best to encourage in a systematic but realistic way how to contact, engage and involve local residents and their organisations in the F4F programme and its gardens – especially via links with those who participate less in garden activities.
8. Review comprehensively across Reading current and planned developments, whether community or business based, that could offer potential partnership arrangements in which F4F can offer a valuable role.

Appendix 1: Contact Form

Date

Location

Food4families Contact Form

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name:

Address:

Best phone number to contact you:

.....

Email (if you have one):

.....

Have you attended Food4families gardening session before? No/ Yes

If yes, since when (month/ year)

How did you hear about the garden session?.....

Please tick age of yourself and any children involved

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 0 – 4 | <input type="radio"/> 15 – 19 | <input type="radio"/> 35 – 44 | <input type="radio"/> 65 – 74 |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 – 9 | <input type="radio"/> 20 – 24 | <input type="radio"/> 45 – 54 | <input type="radio"/> 75 – 84 |
| <input type="radio"/> 10 – 14 | <input type="radio"/> 25 – 34 | <input type="radio"/> 55 – 64 | <input type="radio"/> 85 + |

Main reasons for getting involved:

learn how to grow food

spend time with children

have fun

get outdoors

do something different

be part of community

be healthier

other:

Would you be interested in attending training relate to the garden? YesNo

If yes is there any thing in particular?.....

Would you be interested in joining the user group that looks after garden? YesNo

We would love to be able to send you further feedback forms complete or just keep in touch with you about our activities and events. However we will only do so with your permission. Please circle appropriate statement below

I'm happy to take part

Keep me informed of

I don't want to take part in further questionnaires

activities/events to be contacted

Food4families takes your privacy seriously and will only use your personal information to update you about this event. Your contact details will be stored securely only for 1 year.

You can change your mind any time by emailing Sharon@risc.org.uk or call 0118 958 6692

One last thing! How would you like to be contacted?

Email	Telephone	Text Message
-------	-----------	--------------

We need the following information to report back to our funders about who has been accessing the project. Please complete as many of the sections as you feel comfortable doing.

Are you currently.....

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Employed full time | <input type="radio"/> Unemployed and not in education |
|--|---|

- Employed part time
- Self-employed
- In full or part-time education
- Other (please specify)
- or training
- Unable to work for health reasons
- Retired
- Full-time parent/ care giver
- Prefer not to say

How would you describe your religion or belief?

- Christianity
- Judaism
- Buddhism
- Any other religion (please specify) -----
- Hinduism
- Sikhism
- Islam
- No religion
- Prefer not to say

How would you describe yourself?

- | White | Asian/ Asian UK | Black | Other |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ○ English/
Scottish/ Welsh/
Northern Irish/
UK | ○ Indian | ○ African | ○ Mixed
ethnic
background |
| ○ Irish | ○ Bangladeshi | ○ Caribbean | ○ Arab |
| ○ Gypsy/ Irish
traveler | ○ Pakistani | ○ Other Black
background | ○ Other |
| ○ Any other
White
background | ○ Chinese | | |
| | ○ Other Asian | | |

What is your gender?

- Male Female Other O

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

- Lesbian / Gay (attracted to same sex)
- Bisexual (attracted to both opposite and same sex)
- Prefer not to say
- Heterosexual / Straight (attracted to opposite sex)
- Other

Would you describe yourself as any one of the following?

- On low income
- Asylum seeker/ refugee
- Unemployed
- Carer
- Single parent
- Disabled

Appendix 2: Action Plan Questionnaire

FOOD4FAMILIES Evaluation and Action Plan 2019

Location:

Tutor:

Date:

Following completion of the 2017/18 Independent Evaluation Report two outline plans were prepared – one for actions recommended by the report and one for a continual evaluation - both for the 2019 growing season. We now have a small team of volunteers prepared to help us to manage the collection of information. This will involve your co-operation to help us get the information together across F4Fs main garden centres. For the coming year we will ask you to complete this form no more than three times – April, July and November. It may be completed on-line or in a face-to-face meeting with one of our team members.

The aim is to record any activity, event or programme that clearly shows that F4F is making a difference to individuals, families and the wider community. Many thanks for your assistance and support

1. DATA COLLECTION

Please indicate the following:

- 1). Numbers of **unique users** from 1st February to 30th April 2). Total numbers of **user visits** from 1st February to 30th April
- 3). Numbers of **contact form** completions 4). Numbers of **questionnaire** completions

2. ACTION PLANNING

1. Looking at your action plan what have you achieved?

2. What difference have you made in this last period?

3. What are you doing to reach out to and engage the wider community?

3. EVALUATION

1. Has anything happened so far that has surprised you?

2. The best thing that's happened so far this year is..?

3. Main thing I have learnt and/or my users have learnt is..?

4. Have you come across any challenges in carrying out your action plan?

If so, how did you respond?

This can be completed on-line – send to Sharon Fitton on Sharon@risc.org.uk For further queries or assistance contact John Ord on john_ord1@hotmail.co.uk or ring 07533254711. **Please note:** the deadline for returning this form to Sharon is **Tuesday 7th May**

Appendix 3: Final Evaluation User Questionnaire



Date:

Interviewed by:

Food4Families has asked an independent research body to find out what people think about the gardening project. This will help them to improve their services. You do not have to take part in this survey, and even if you do, you can skip any questions you do not want to answer. Your anonymity is protected. Would you be willing to answer some questions for us please? Yes / No

1a. Which garden are you involved with? (Name of garden) ...

(Please circle) Veg plot / school garden / community garden

1b. How long have you been involved in the garden? years, months

1c. How frequently do you attend the gardening project?

- ☐ Once a week or more
- ☐ Not every week but at least once a month
- ☐ Less than once a month

2. Have you taken part in any courses/training events related to the gardens?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes. Which one(s)? ...

3. Are you involved in your garden's 'user group'?

- ☐ No

4a. Rate your satisfaction with the project in terms of the following
(use a scale of 1-5 with 1=not at all satisfied; and 5=completely satisfied)

If you have been involved in the project for more than 1 year, how would you say this aspect of the project has changed?

My ability to influence what goes on in the garden

1=⊕ 2 3=⊖ 4 5=⊖

got worse stayed the same got better

☐ ☐ ☐

The contribution the garden makes to beauty and green space in my community

1=⊕ 2 3=⊖ 4 5=⊖

☐ ☐ ☐

The contribution the garden makes to learning about the natural environment

1=⊕ 2 3=⊖ 4 5=⊖

☐ ☐ ☐

How well the garden brings the community together and includes

1=⊕ 2 3=⊖ 4 5=⊖

☐ ☐ ☐

different people								
How fun the programme is	1=☹	2	3=☹	4	5=☹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How well informed I am about the programme	1=☹	2	3=☹	4	5=☹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How well organized and well led the project is	1=☹	2	3=☹	4	5=☹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ Yes

4b. Are there any explanations for your ratings that you feel are important to add?

5a. Please say to what extent you disagree or agree with the following statements, and indicate whether being part of the gardening project has made a difference to your response	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neither disagree or agree	agree	Strongly agree	Has being part of the gardening project made a positive difference to your response?	
						No	Yes
I have the skills to grow fruit and vegetables on my own	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I eat my 'five a day'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My level of personal fitness is adequate for good health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I usually feel calm, clear-minded and satisfied with my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have supportive friends in my neighbourhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel confident about getting involved in other activities within the neighbourhood (outside of the garden)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5b. Are there any explanations for your ratings that you feel are important to add?

6. If our funding sources get cut back, how might we ensure the garden continues into the future?

7. Personal details:

	No	Yes
Are you part of any other group/ groups in your neighbourhood?		
Does poor health limit your activities?		
Are you caring for children or other dependent family members?		
Do you struggle financially?		

Any other comments?

Age bracket: Under 20; 20-29; 30-39; 40-49;
50-59; 60-69; 70+

Gender: M F Prefer to self-identify

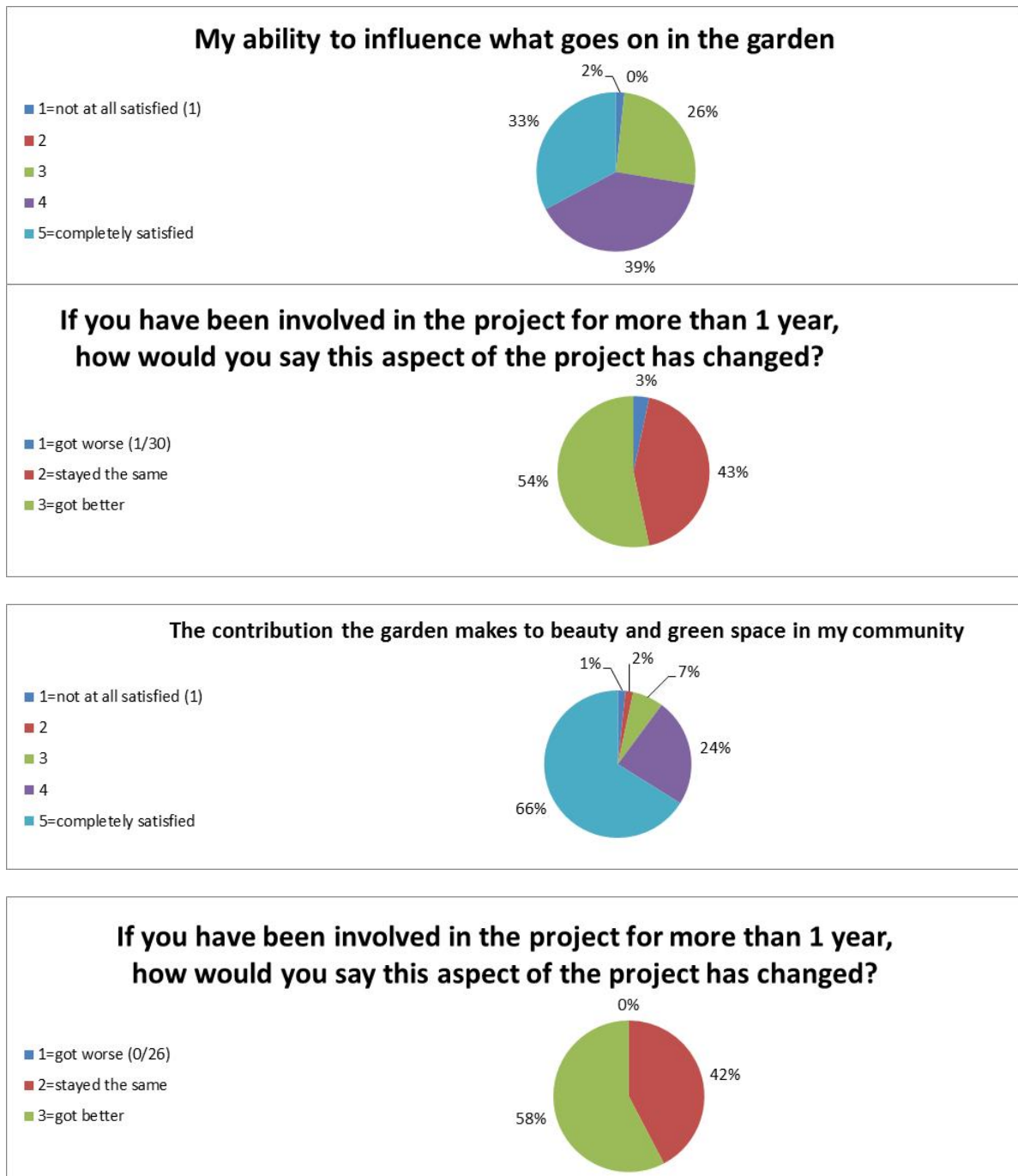
Highest qualification:

- ☐ none
- ☐ secondary school or college
- ☐ degree or above

Appendix 4 : Quality and impact responses in further detail

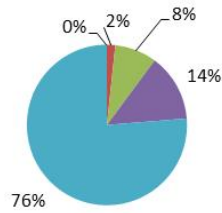
59 respondents in total

Rate your satisfaction with the project in terms of the following:



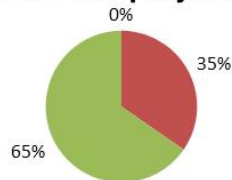
The contribution this garden makes to learning about the natural environment

- 1=not at all satisfied
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5=completely satisfied



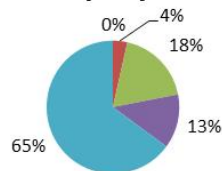
If you have been involved in the project for more than 1 year, how would you say this aspect of the project has changed?

- 1=got worse (0/26)
- 2=stayed the same
- 3=got better



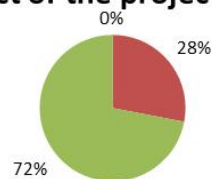
How well the garden brings the community together and includes different people

- 1=not at all satisfied
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5=completely satisfied



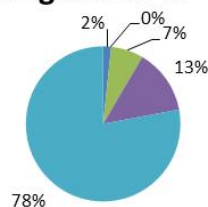
If you have been involved in the project for more than 1 year, how would you say this aspect of the project has changed?

- 1=got worse (0/25)
- 2=stayed the same
- 3=got better



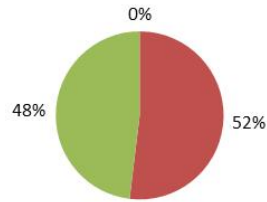
How fun the programme is

- 1=not at all satisfied
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5=completely satisfied



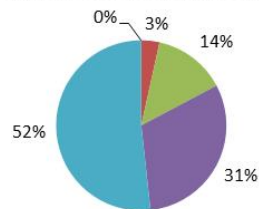
If you have been involved in the project for more than 1 year, how would you say this aspect of the project has changed?

- 1=got worse (0/26)
- 2=stayed the same
- 3=got better



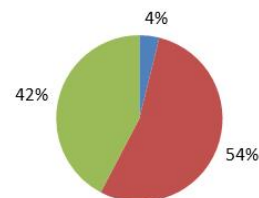
How well informed I am about the programme

- 1=not at all satisfied
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5=completely satisfied



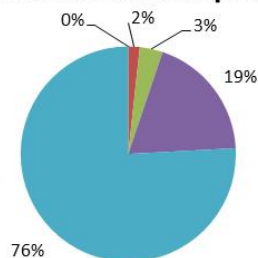
If you have been involved in the project for more than 1 year, how would you say this aspect of the project has changed?

- 1=got worse (1/26)
- 2=stayed the same
- 3=got better



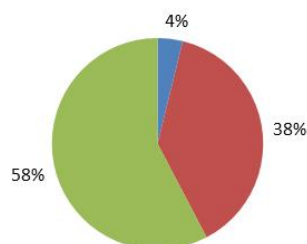
How well organized and well led the project is

- 1=not at all satisfied
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5=completely satisfied

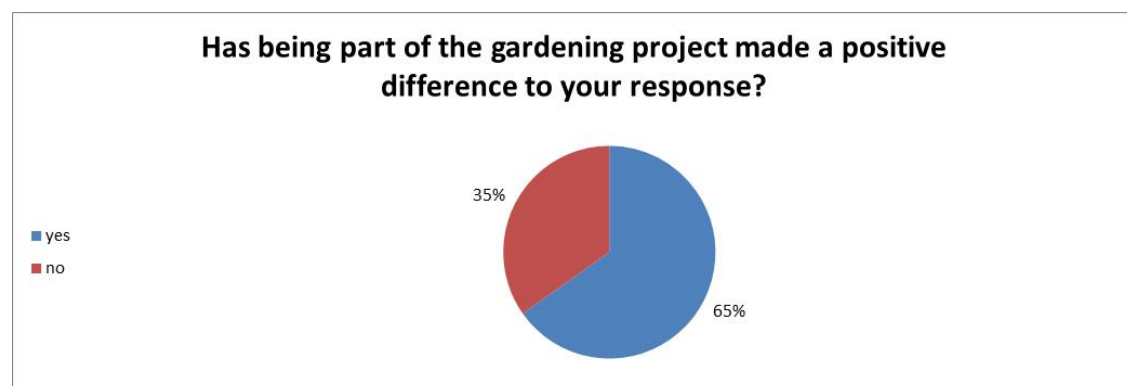
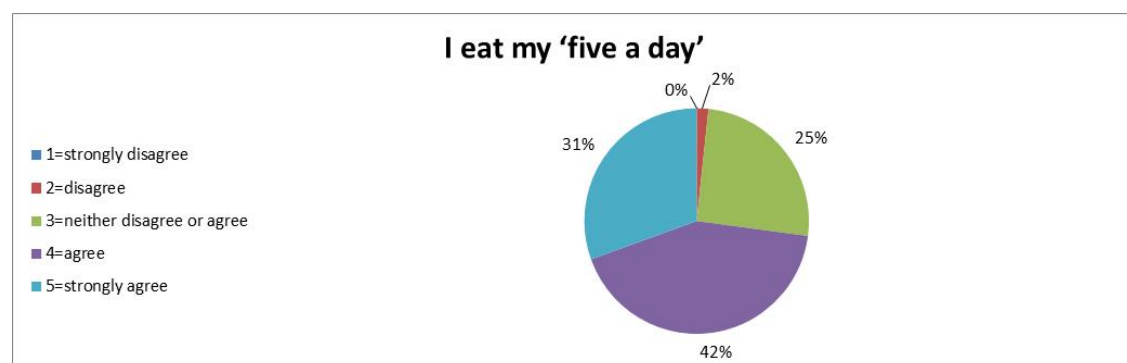
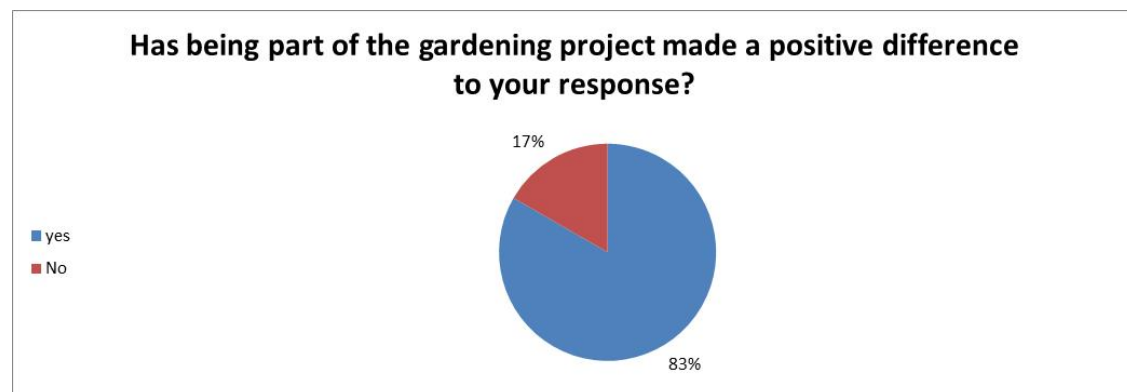
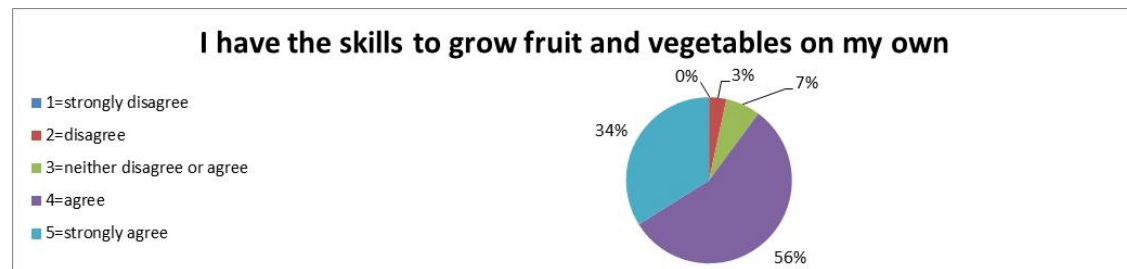


If you have been involved in the project for more than 1 year, how would you say this aspect of the project has changed?

- 1=got worse (1/26)
- 2=stayed the same
- 3=got better



Please say to what extent you disagree or agree with the following statements, and indicate whether being part of the gardening project has made a difference to your response:



My level of personal fitness is adequate for good health



Has being part of the gardening project made a positive difference to your response?



I usually feel calm, clear-minded and satisfied with my life



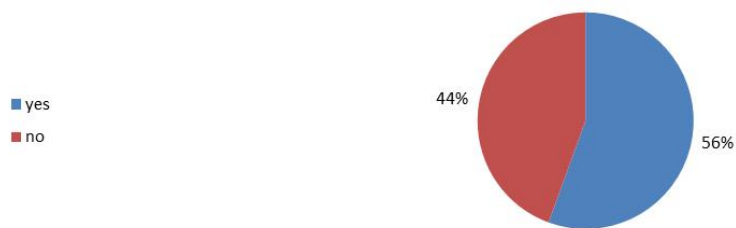
Has being part of the gardening project made a positive difference to your response?



I have supportive friends in my neighbourhood



Has being part of the gardening project made a positive difference to your response?



I feel confident about getting involved in other activities within the neighbourhood outside of the garden



Has being part of the gardening project made a positive difference to your response?

