

S2R

CREATE SPACE

Promoting Positive Mental Health

S2R

THE GREAT OUTDOORS PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT

2016/17

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

HELPING YOU TO THRIVE IN NATURE

The Great Outdoors is one of several projects delivered by the mental health and well-being charity Support to Recovery.

We know, from independent academic research and the testimony of our own participants, that connecting people with nature as part of a group in an outdoor activity or an indoor workshop is a great way to improve emotional and physical well-being, reduce anxiety, create social connections and learn about both themselves and natural world.

We help people to: take their first steps into nature on our Nature In You courses; explore their relationship with the outdoors on mindful walks, and through direct experience of open spaces. To interact and contribute with practical tasks at the allotment, through garden upcycling or community work days, to express themselves creatively using eco crafts, natural art, and photography and to be active and enjoy themselves by walking and running in the biggest gym possible.

This helps people learn to thrive in natural settings so that they can make use of this glorious, free, resource for themselves and go on to other volunteering opportunities in the community.

“Working with S2R is a lovely experience. The staff are all welcoming, friendly , thoughtful, caring and inspiring. They listen and talk without judgement creating an accepting, calm and peaceful environment for everyone. Over the time we have worked together I have noticed that they continually grow and adapt what they offer both in response to user’s feedback, their own research and personal /professional development. I’m looking forward to working with them again soon”

**- Bethany Matthews,
Forest School Teacher, Reinwood School**



Participants on the Nature in You course
Reinwood School

Welcome to our 2016/17 annual report. I hope it will tell you all you need to know about our service this year. I joined the team as Project Leader in December and it has been a pleasure to work with such a talented and committed staff team. They truly walk the path that they encourage others to follow. It is their genuine passion that engages our participants, inspires our volunteers and impresses our partners.

**- Jason Kerry
Project Leader, The Great Outdoors**

I would like to thank the whole team for their fantastic work this year particularly for their creativity in developing interesting ways for people to take part in activities, so they can enjoy all that nature and the outdoors has to offer.

**- Paula Wood
Manager, Support to Recovery**

WHAT A YEAR IT'S BEEN!

This year has seen our existing services like Nature in You and the Cemetery Road Community Allotment develop into first class and award winning professional provisions.

We have made the most of our new building to reach more people at the times they prefer and have improved access by adapting the space as well as training staff and volunteers to help those with mobility needs.

New activities have been co-produced and co-delivered with participants and partners, such as our monthly Work Days and Garden Upcycling courses. We have improved our offer by using the passion of volunteers to add new skills and perspective to our delivery, such as launching a Jogging Group that meet twice per week in Birkby and helping volunteers to facilitate workshops.

We've continued to develop our craft and art classes which link people with the outdoors and enable us to overcome barriers of poor weather.

In order to help publicise Support to Recovery and to ensure our service is personalised, we have introduced weekly Information Sessions.

We have reached into new areas including working with 26 mums at Field Lane Primary School in Batley and through our developing relationship with The Penistone Line Partnership: have been travelling by train more.

“In the last 12 months we have been successful in setting up progression routes for our clients by arranging taster sessions and information sessions, where our clients have been able to get information and sample sessions from the S2R programme, this has worked wonderfully. Clients have really enjoyed the sessions and have signed up for further art, Nature in You courses and Work Days at S2R Create Space.”

- Terri Larkin-Clough
Recovery & Inclusion ETE Lead, CHART Kirklees



We measure peoples personal outcomes to show how being involved with The Great Outdoors project improves individual health and well-being. We use the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' as a framework to do this and included 'Relax' because our participants tell us that finding ways to relax is both desirable in itself and helps them enjoy and gain benefit from the courses. A self-assessment questionnaire is used to collect the data.

CONNECT

I feel connected to people and my community

Connecting people to each other and to their environment has been shown to significantly improve well-being. It is at the core of our small group approach and it underpins all our activities at The Great Outdoors. Longer courses develop this best such as our Nature in You course, Garden Upcycling, and Community Allotment. The connections made here lead to further engagement and progression.



"This was really good for me. It was so nice to chat to the mums that I would normally walk past in the playground and maybe say hello to. We really connected and chatted."

- Participant

"The communion of people is what I will take away from the course. I come here for the sweetness and generosity and that's why I keep coming to things at S2R"

- Participant

On average people's connection to others and their community increased by **2.9pts.**



BE ACTIVE

I look after my physical health and keep active

All our courses encourage people to get out and about independently. As well as keeping us physically healthy, being active, particularly in the outdoors, promotes the production of 'feel good chemicals' in the body that improves our sense of well-being. A recent participant on the Nature in You course now takes 6 other family members and friends on regular walks because they saw how much good it was doing her.

People became more active, looked after their physical health and on average increased by **2.6pts.**



Participants at the Knees Up event at Norman Park

Around 200 people attended our joint Knees up event with Friends of Norman Park in March. Everyone we asked said they enjoyed it and 17 signed up for the 2 new weekly jogging groups that have been set up as a result of the event.

We trained up 2 new jog leaders with Kirklees Sports and Physical Activities Team and our experienced volunteer Andy Jarvis offers his valuable advice at the Friday sessions.

“I seriously believe that running saved my life and I wanted to give back by leading a jogging group with a focus on mental health.”

- Jogging Group Volunteer



Participants on the Nature in You Water Walk Huddersfield Broad Canal, Aspley

Over the past year we have run art, water and mindful walks across Kirklees, in Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Mirfield, along Bradley Greenway, by Huddersfield Broad Canal, at Beaumont Park and at TP Woods.

“I did enjoy it but only because we were in a group. If I had been doing it on my own I would have felt very self-conscious”

- Participants

KEEP LEARNING

I learn new things and do things that interest me

All our provision at The Great Outdoors gives people the opportunity to keep learning, through names of plants, natural well-being products making, habitat creation, gardening and mindfulness. Learning boosts self-confidence and self-esteem. It helps build a sense of purpose and enables you to connect with others.



The first step into the unknown is often the hardest and our Nature in You course was designed to fill that gap.

Our team weave strands of mindfulness, creativity, practical and physical activity together to help people understand what nature means to them, so that they can find their own way to use nature to improve their well-being.

On average people increased their **learning by 1.7pts** and felt they were doing things that interest them.

“Doing a course like this would have been unheard of for me before but this is a fabulous space to start to feel better in.”

- Participant



Nature in You continues to develop alongside the needs of the participants by drawing upon their feedback and our observations. This approach has created a model of working that is equally at home; at S2R Create Space, on the train or at a school.

This year our success has been recognised and rewarded with the 'Innovative Group of the Year' Award at the Kirklees Community Learning Awards 2017.



“Being in a group can change your perspective, a change of perspective can transform challenging experiences in life.”

- Participant

GIVE

I do things for others

Our participants often go on to give time as volunteers, adding great value to our work. Also, our well-wishers have donated everything from: a greenhouse for the allotment; to a hanging basket; to a set of weighing scales.

After their positive experiences on our workshops and courses: Tina and Daz felt that they would like to give us some of their time so that other people can benefit from their skills and passions.

Daz is always on hand at the allotment and in our upcycling sessions, giving the benefit of his experience and Tina ran her own Natural Decorations and Flower Arranging workshop for us.

Daz with participants
Garden Upcycling
course

"Tina was a great teacher with breath taking talent"

- Participant



Participants on Tina's Flower Arranging Workshop

"I really enjoyed teaching such a lovely group of people, so grateful to Rachel and Byron for all your help, support and encouragement. I couldn't have done it without you. S2R is a wonderful project and is helping so many people it is certainly helping me. Thank you."

- Tina

"It's great to be outside doing a job and just chit-chat with others about whatever comes up"

- Participant

We have recently started monthly Work Days, giving easy opportunities for those who want to get stuck into a practical task and help their community.

We have tidied the memorial Gardens at Tolson Museum, cleared a footpath in Almondbury, removed brambles at Norman Park in Birkby and planted up a border by Huddersfield Broad Canal in Aspley.



Volunteer at a Work Day
Aspley Marina

On average
people felt they
did more things
for others and
increased by
1.6pts.

TAKE NOTICE

I notice and appreciate things around me

Taking time to notice what is happening around us helps us to develop a sense of perspective and to recognise what is really important in our lives. By taking notice we are better able to appreciate and benefit from our environment.

We notice things around us whilst out walking, we notice the changes in seasons and we notice how these things make us feel. It is a central part of our approach to well-being through eco-therapy.

Sometimes it is enough just to notice what is around you.

Our Artistic Anatomy of Trees workshop aimed to get people to slow down, see the nature around them and connect with it through art, mindful walking and tree identification.

“I really connected with those trees, we only live up the road so we’re going to come and have brunch here to see the trees in all seasons”

- Participant



Participants on the Artistic Anatomy of Trees workshop at Beaumont Park



Participants on Wild Food Foraging workshop at Highfeilds

People are taking more notice, appreciating things around them and on average increased by **2.1pts.**

“Nearly everything I’ve tried today has been new for me, I’ve learnt a lot.”

- Participant

RELAX

I feel relaxed

Being more at home and relaxed in the natural world enables us to benefit more from our interaction with it. Breathing space and 'me time' are important components of the experience on our courses; mindful reflection in Nature in You; therapeutic immersion in gardening at the Community Allotment; and creative satisfaction from art and craft activities.

"This is the most I've been relaxed in days"

- Participant

Our natural products workshops have proved a great success with their combination of a relaxing time for yourself, a satisfying process and a product to take away and relax with at home.

On average
people felt
more relaxed and
increased by
2.9 pts.



Participants on the Natural Well-being Products course

"I learnt that I need to be more relaxed and at one with nature. I need a bit of time to myself. When I'm relaxed I'm more positive"

- Participant



Spring Baskets Workshop

"...a bit of time for creativity, headspace and relaxing activity was exactly what I needed today, as I am in a bad patch with anxiety and depression at the moment. Came home with my own handmade moisturiser, bathbomb and lipsalve made from beeswax and essential oils. Next week soap and natural deodorant can't wait"

- Participant

Personal accounts of individual's experiences are always very powerful as they are a true reflection of the impact mental health and associated difficulties have on life quality.

We have given 3 brief examples of people's reasons for being apart of The Great Outdoors project. These short stories convey positive outcomes and testimonies about their personal journey of gaining better well-being.

Eric

'Eric' left work on Christmas Eve to enjoy a well-earned break but on Boxing Day he awoke with fearful palpitations from what he later discovered was a panic attack. Whilst signed off work Eric found the Nature in You course online.

"Nature in You has been everything I expected it to be and more... I was in a very bad place but now I'm in a very good one thanks to the warmth of this group."

Through his engagement with The Great Outdoors, Eric has learned to understand what happened to him and control the thoughts and feelings he experienced. He is now back at work, off medication and enjoying a happy life with family.

Rose

'Rose' re-located to Huddersfield early in 2016 with her partner following the death of both her parents for whom she was a carer for many years. Unsurprisingly she found this period very upsetting. She was diagnosed with severe depression, prescribed medication and had a couple of spells in hospital.

Rose was keen to find new friends in Huddersfield and to learn new skills and so she joined our 4 week horticultural course. She found confidence and companionship and went on to engage with many other S2R activities. Eventually she decided to become a volunteer. Rose now uses her experience and naturally compassionate nature to help on our information sessions and to enable vulnerable individuals during sessions. She even led the singing session in the courtyard at Christmas.

Rose is now involved in other community activities including a community choir and intends to go back to work.

"I tried to find courses like this where I used to live but there was nothing like this there."



Participants on the Hibernacular Workshop



Participants on the Bee Happy course at Lowerhouses

Linda

'Linda' is a former teacher and a parent with a bipolar diagnosis and registered on the Enhanced Care Programme. She was attracted to Support to Recovery as she has a deep love of people, arts and the outdoors. By continuing to attend and contribute to many of our sessions she has felt more able to manage her condition in a way that suits her and with much less input from other mental health services.

As a result she has been able to help her partner overcome his problems which allows him to continue to live at home and remain more independent.

"S2R notices the artist in us. Ecology and connecting with nature is where we belong, I've come here to reconnect with this energy."

Full details of these case studies will be available on the Kirklees Council website

In the coming year, we will continue to evolve the delivery of our service and look forward towards sustaining this project in the future.

Some of our courses are proving so popular that other professionals would like to learn how to deliver them themselves. By training these people we can spread our message further and in years to come this could generate income for Support to Recovery.

Schools have approached us to help them improve the well-being of their families through meaningful interactions with the outdoors and we hope to build on this.

We want to continue to build our relationships with partners, particularly the Kirklees Volunteer Co-ordinators and Natural Kirklees, to develop a range of progressional volunteering routes.

We have had some great course suggestions too, such as: introduction to camping, fishing, wild foraging and team building for external companies.

We hope to make better use of some of the fantastic volunteers who have come up through our courses and give them the opportunity to bring their unique perspective to the delivery of our activities.



Volunteer helping with our display stand Kirklees Summer Show, Greenhead Park

FINANCE

Year to 31 March 2017

Income		£
Funding Received.....	94,450.00	
Funding carried over.....	12,016.00	
Income from sales.....	1,112.00	
Total Income.....	107,578.00	
Cost		
Staff Costs.....	76,753.12	
Staff Sundry	115.87	
Training.....	770.49	
Utilities, Central Costs and Marketing.....	18,606.67	
Workshop Costs.....	1,204.98	
Travelling Costs.....	363.82	
Refreshments and Sundries.....	246.32	
Total Costs.....	98,061.27	



CUMMINS TURBO TECHNOLOGIES
Cummins volunteers have supported the charity in many ways over the year.



UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD
We would like to thank the staff and students for their partnership work.



KIRKLEES COUNCIL
For their continual partnership work and support.



TESCO HUDDERSFIELD SUPERSTORE
We have had support from Tesco and Groundwork with their Bags of Help scheme.



Creative Minds
For their continuous support and contributions over the year.



THE LITTLE KITCHEN
Little Kitchen who have offered their support and collected donations on behalf of The Great Outdoors project.

And a special thank you to all our working partners, attendees and volunteers. Without their support and contributions The Great Outdoors project would have not thrived, blossomed or developed into the special project it has become.



01484 539 531



contact@s2r.org.uk



www.s2r.org.uk



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S2R Create Space 5-7 Brook Street, Huddersfield HD1 1EB

