



SIG Penrose Roots Impact Report

April 2024





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Our Offer

SIG Penrose, Roots Community-Based Recovery Services (Roots CBRS) specialises in supporting socially isolated people who struggle to engage with their local community. Our non-clinical approach and accessible platforms help people build friendships and social networks, engage in community, and take a learning journey towards upskilling.

For many, coming to Roots CBRS is the only time they socialise outside their homes, participate in activities independently, and meet new people.

Roots CBRS operates across three different sites in Luton, providing opportunities for people to get involved.

Support

Access to community-based activities, therapeutic open spaces and workshops.

An extensive range of non-clinical support services, training programmes, and social groups designed to empower and boost health and wellbeing.

Natural Living

Opportunities to grow and cook organic food, enhance healthy eating, and manage food budgets.

Access to healing opportunities in the natural environment and community settings.

Community

Create spaces where people can come together and build a community.

Participate in activities with others, talking and receiving support from an understanding network of people via peer support.

Community events like harvest celebrations and garden open days.

Experienced members become peer mentors, providing guidance and support to newcomers.

Services

Roots to Recovery Garden

Roots to Recovery (R2R) is our garden-based project providing a transformative therapeutic growing space that benefits members, volunteers, and the wider community. Located on a one-acre site off New Bedford Road, our initiative allows members an opportunity to cultivate fresh, nutritious produce actively. The harvested crops are then cooked and served on-site, donated to local community food hubs, or distributed to members to be prepared in their homes, promoting a healthy and affordable diet.

Members gain valuable skills and knowledge in horticulture, cooking, and nutrition through participation in our garden project. The collaborative nature of the work fosters a sense of community, reducing social isolation and promoting positive mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. By engaging with nature and working alongside others, members experience the therapeutic benefits of gardening, which have been well-documented in scientific literature.

Connects

Connects is a service that creates pathways promoting inclusion, recovery, and personal growth for people who are socially isolated or lacking support. Through a weekly social group, members engage in skill-building activities, conversations, and recreational events that boost confidence and self-esteem.

Connects offers a comprehensive timetable of training workshops across Luton and Bedford, covering topics such as independence, health, creative pursuits, and employment skills. These workshops equip members with practical knowledge and enhance their employability.

Additionally, Connects facilitates peer mentoring and volunteering opportunities, fostering a supportive community and empowering people to share their experiences and develop leadership skills. By providing inclusive support and skills development, Connects enables members to build the confidence and networks necessary to lead fulfilling lives and actively contribute to their communities.

Roots to Success

Roots to Success (R2S) is an expansion of the Roots to Recovery Garden, offering a unique social enterprise focused on horticultural training and wellbeing. Operating in a spacious 100 sq2 glasshouse in the award-winning Stockwood Park, Luton, R2S is run by Roots CBRS and overseen by Luton Culture.

Attendees participate in innovative and advanced horticultural projects such as hydroponics and aquaponics.

Through an established arrangement, R2S sells locally grown plants and flowers via the Stockwood Park gift shop, generating income to support the initiative.

Recycle-A-Bike Workshop

Recycle-A-Bike Workshop is a programme that combines upcycling, basic bike maintenance, and customised bike design. Attendees work with donated bikes to refurbish and repair them, making them available for use by Root's members and the public.

Through hands-on sessions, participants learn valuable skills in bike repair, maintenance, and upcycling techniques. This knowledge allows them to maintain their bicycles and promotes self-sufficiency and environmental responsibility.

The programme also supports creating bespoke bike designs using donated parts to accommodate the needs of members with physical disabilities. By providing tailored solutions, the Recycle-A-Bike Workshop helps break down barriers to mobility. It enables people to enjoy the benefits of cycling.

Penrose Wood Workshop

Based next door to the Recycle-A-Bike Workshop, The Wood Workshop is where Root's members can learn basic woodwork skills through various wood-based projects using recycled materials. The hands-on sessions provide an invaluable skillset that they can apply in their personal and professional lives.

The programme delivers weekly and ad hoc sessions, producing items members can use in a natural or garden setting within the Roots CBRS projects and the community.



Methodology

Roots CBRS provides easily accessible platforms for building friendships, social networks, and community engagement for people who feel socially isolated and struggle to connect with their local community. Roots CBRS supports people at their most vulnerable points, helping them reach their potential by making them feel valued and wanted, regardless of their past or current circumstances.

Removing Barriers

There are no referral criteria or limitations on intensity, frequency, or support length.

We accept referrals from healthcare professionals, partner agencies, and self-referrals.

Community members who may not qualify for support elsewhere can access Roots CBRS.

Flexibility

We adopt a flexible approach to empower Root's members with choice and control over their support.

Members can choose which Roots CBRS programmes they attend and how they choose to participate.

Non-attendance does not require re-referral.

Led by Lived Experience

Services are designed and delivered by and for the community.

Members are encouraged to co-produce activities, enabling people with lived experience to tailor and design the service.

Roots CBRS is a continually evolving service that responds to community needs.

Non-Clinical Support

We aid people in their recovery through community-based interventions.

We offer extensive non-clinical therapeutic support services, training programmes and social groups designed to empower and boost health and wellbeing.

"I like the fact that Roots is open for all."

Roots CBRS Member, 2023

Although there are commonalities among the people who attend Roots CBRS, each person has unique experiences and challenges requiring varying levels of support. For this reason, we do not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, each person can tailor Roots CBRS' offerings to suit them. Some people will attend all Roots CBRS projects, while others may only participate in one. Some may remain Roots CBRS members for years, while others may only require Roots CBRS services for a few months.

The below graphic outlines a typical journey for a Roots CBRS member:



Beneficiaries

Regular attendees have lived experience and joined Roots CBRS because they were experiencing or recovering from:



“In 2015, I was going to be made homeless, so I went to Penrose for housing support, and then while they were supporting me, I was asked if I’d like to do some volunteering work down at the garden, and then 2019 I become fully employed as a Project Leader at Penrose Roots to Recovery. Penrose has helped me tremendously.”

Peter, Roots to Recovery, Project Leader

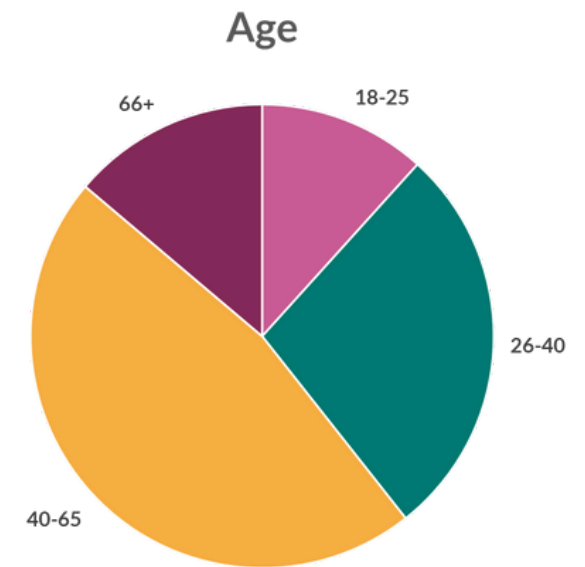
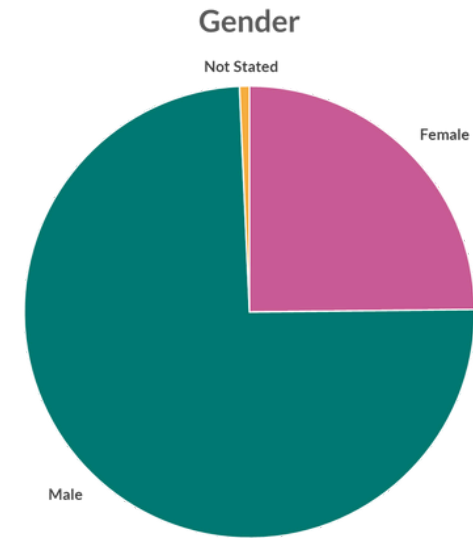
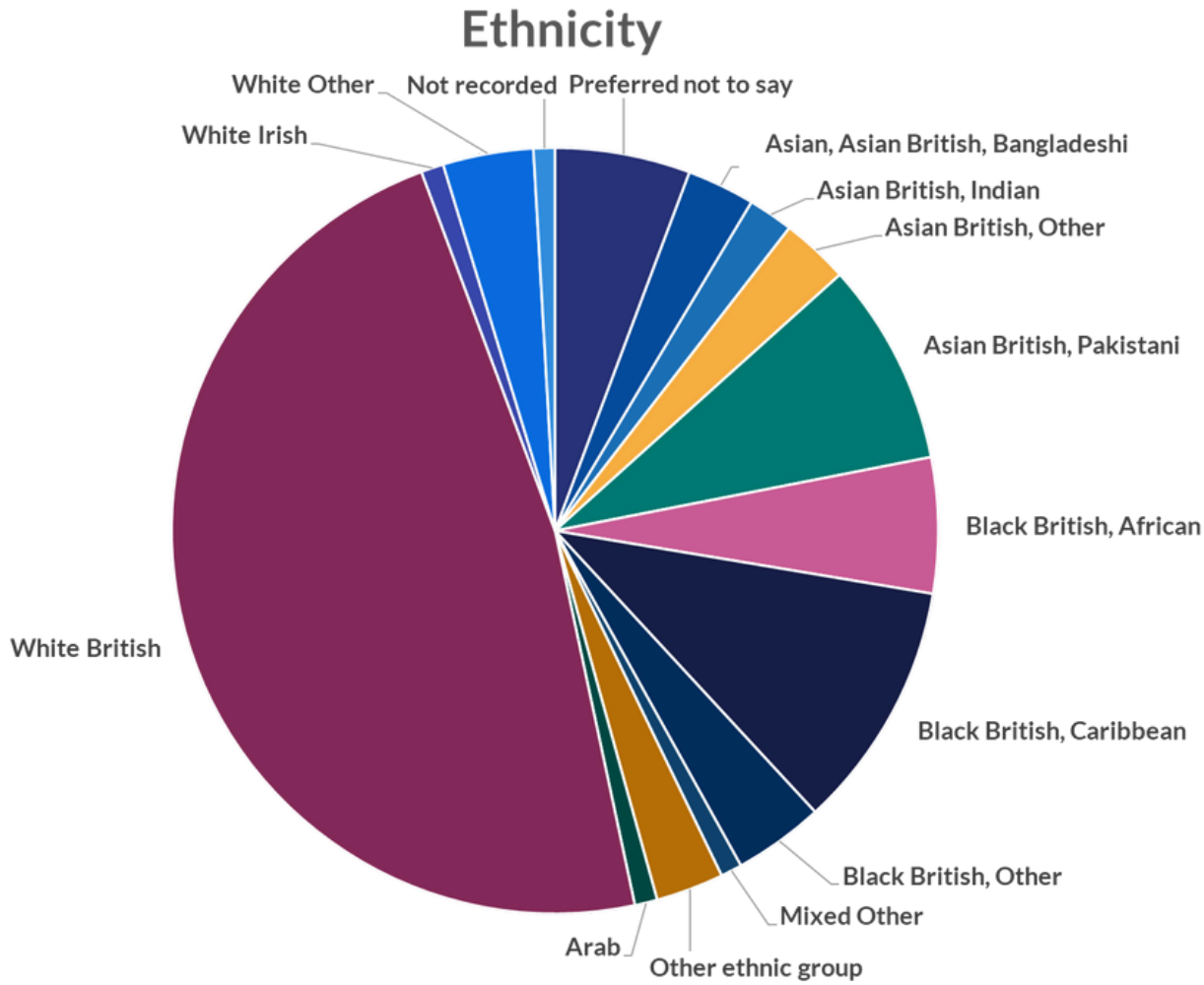


“I was addicted to drugs for many years and have been clean now for nine years. Roots was part of my journey at the time, and it made me feel like I wanted to get involved. I have a diagnosis of schizophrenia, and it really helps me when I come down to the garden. It’s just made me a better person for who I am.”

Dave, Roots CBRS Member

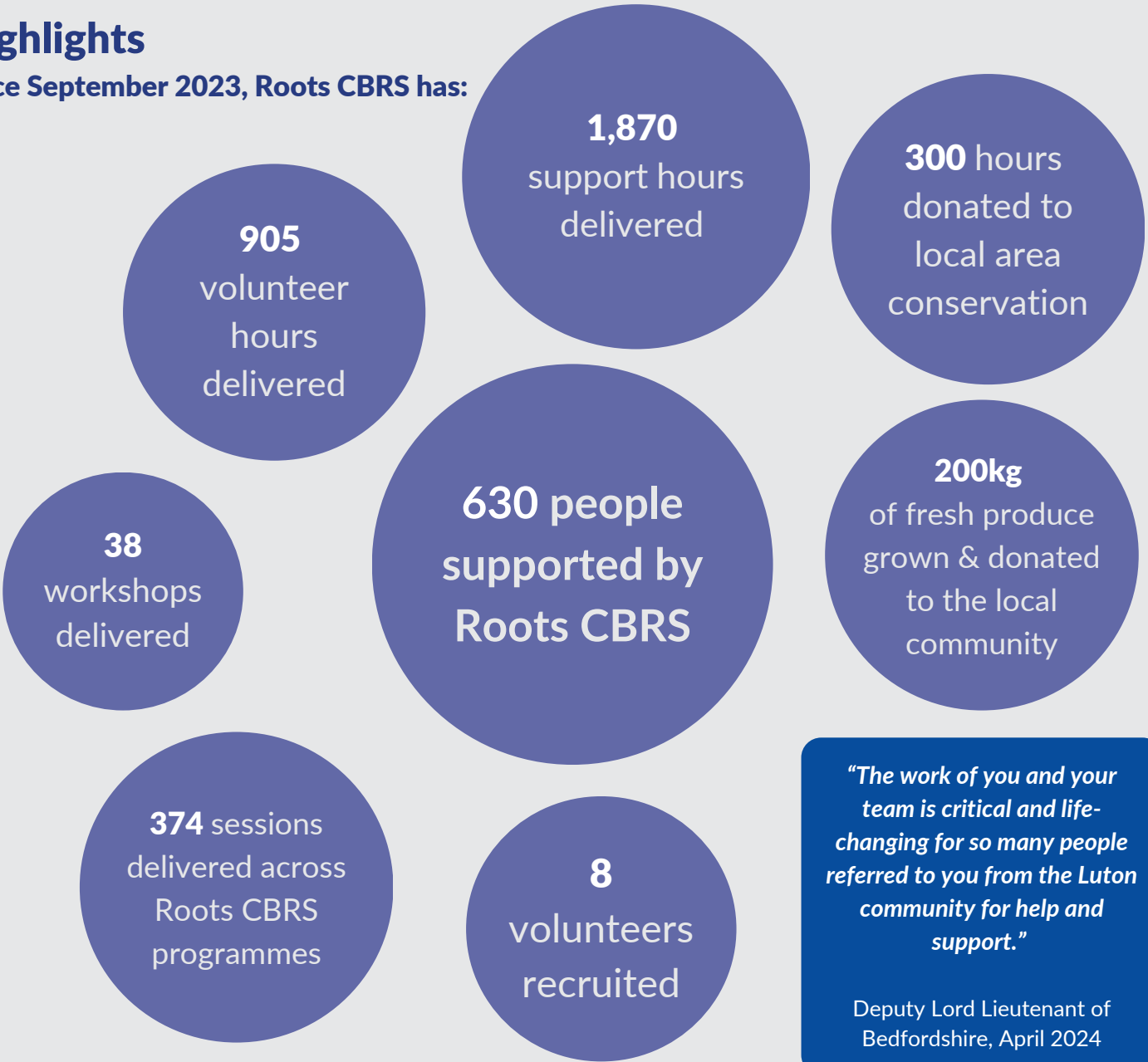
Beneficiaries

The charts below outline the demographics of Roots CBRS Members:



Highlights

Since September 2023, Roots CBRS has:



“The work of you and your team is critical and life-changing for so many people referred to you from the Luton community for help and support.”

Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, April 2024

Achievements over the last 18 months:

On 20th September 2023, Roots CBRS marked its 10-year anniversary.

Roots CBRS secured multi-year funding (3 years) from Luton Airport Community Investment Fund.

Roots CBRS staff and members volunteered at Luton’s Half Marathon in October 2023.

Roots CBRS hosted a Green Social Prescribing Event at the Roots to Recovery Garden on 9th April 2024, alongside partner agencies The Wildlife Trust, Natural England and local NHS teams.

Roots CBRS staff and members participated in an apple amnesty with Edible Hightown, turning 135kg of apples into juice, which we donated to the local community.

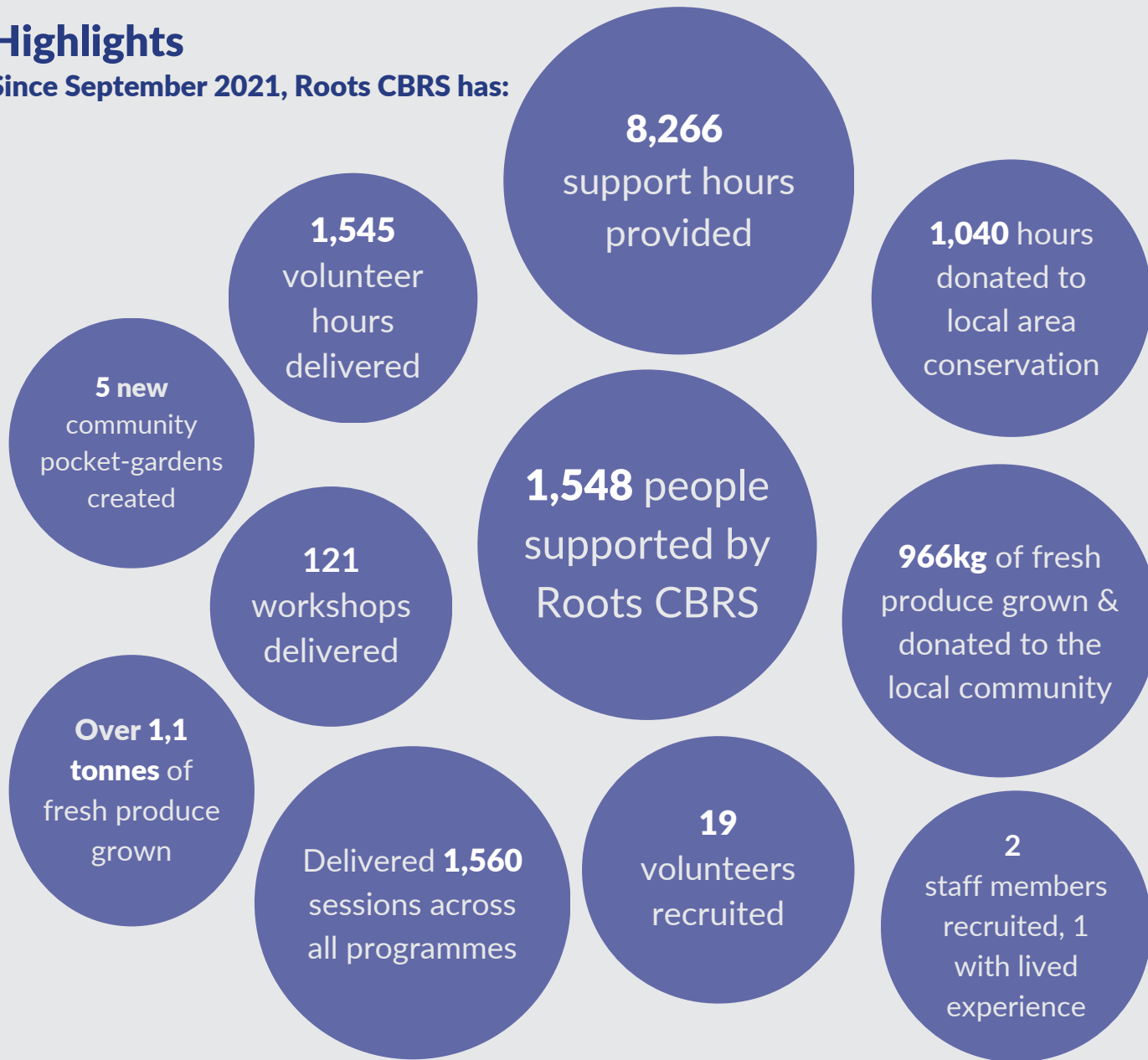
We hosted a Christmas dinner for over 60 Roots CBRS members, volunteers and staff.

4 people attended certified Woodchipper training in preparation for a new woodchipper at the Roots to Recovery Garden.

We planted new oak saplings in the community, which Roots CBRS’ staff and members nurtured on behalf of Luton Council and The Wildlife Trust.

Highlights

Since September 2021, Roots CBRS has:



Achievements over last three years

We remain the only all-year-round green support service in Luton, with growing numbers of people supported through the programme.

We grew our expertise and community partner network, extending our support across suicide prevention, self-harm, green prescribing, Youth Offender and Probation Services, hospital discharge and food insecurity to promote health and wellbeing and reduce reoffending.

With grant support, we bought a new Roots CBRS van to extend our volunteer gardening support to vulnerable residents with health and mobility issues to help maintain their gardens.

We employed two former Roots Members as programme staff and trained three Roots members to run and lead the development of our other community garden spaces.

We expanded our environmental maintenance and creation of new community green spaces, working with the local authority to help reduce fly-tipping and antisocial behaviour.



Impact Report

Overview

The following pages detail Roots CBRS' work to demonstrate the project's impact, categorised across seven thematic areas:

- Community
- Mental & Physical Health
- Neurodiversity
- Education, Training & Employment
- Criminal Justice
- Sustainability & Environment
- Food Insecurity

We focus on how Roots CBRS responds to priority areas of need, including:

- Supporting people with the rising cost of living
- Reducing loneliness and isolation
- People caring and looking out for each other
- Community activities that bring people together
- Having access to natural, green spaces

We collected the information presented via the following methodologies:

- Data is collected and recorded on our bespoke Case Management System as part of our monitoring processes and activities undertaken by Roots Members, staff and volunteers.
- Quarterly feedback questionnaires where members, volunteers and staff share their thoughts and opinions on the services provided.
- Focus Groups/Away Days: members, volunteers, and staff are invited to sessions to have open discussions on our service, allowing them to examine what is working well and what needs improvement.
- Member interviews to document case studies.
- Photography and videography.

Community

Our Work

Providing a welcoming, non-judgmental space where people from diverse backgrounds can come together and form meaningful connections

Offering regular social activities and groups that bring people together each week to engage in skills-building, socialisation, and recreational events

Fostering a strong sense of belonging, acceptance and community among members, volunteers and staff

Enabling members to be active participants in the community through opportunities to contribute skills, share experiences, and support one another

Partnering with local organisations and groups to expand community partner networks and create more opportunities for Roots' members to get involved

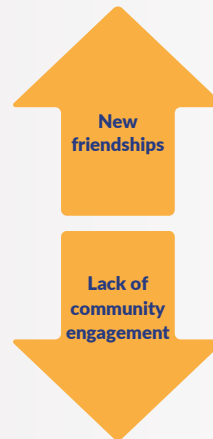
Aims & Context



Social Isolation

Social isolation is estimated to cost around **£9,900 per person per year** due to its combined impact on wellbeing, health, and work productivity. (1)

The **majority of people** first attend Roots CBRS at a time when they are **socially isolated**.



Loneliness

60% of chronically lonely people experience **mental distress**, compared to 15% of those who are not chronically lonely.(2)

62% of lonely young people report themselves **losing self-confidence due to loneliness**. (3)

Roots CBRS Outcomes

New Friendships



100%

In our latest members' survey, **100% of members reported to have made new friendships** since attending Roots CBRS, with 55% of members continuing to meet their new friends outside of Roots CBRS.

Growing Community



44%

44% more members have been supported in the last six months, an increase of 193 people supported, demonstrating the growing reach and impact of the Roots CBRS in the local community.

References: (1) Loneliness Monetisation Report, Analysis for Dept for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), 2020; (2) Investigating factors associated with loneliness in adults in England, DCMS, 2022; (3) A Friend in Need Report, Co op Foundation, 2022



Case Study

Joe, Roots CBRS Member since 2016

Joe has several mental health diagnoses and has experienced mental ill-health for most of his life. Joe spent many years in inpatient mental health wards and was struggling with substance use. When he wasn't in hospital, he struggled to leave his home, leading him to be socially isolated and worsening his mental health. In 2016, Joe's Mental Health Support Worker invited him to Roots CBRS. Joe was apprehensive, but he agreed. The decision to attend was a huge step for him.

Accompanied by his Support Worker, Joe first visited Roots 2 Success. When he arrived, he was welcomed by the Roots CBRS team and members, but after five minutes, Joe found the new environment overwhelming and wanted to leave. The Roots CBRS team and Joe's Support Worker encouraged him to stay, which he did, and he spent the rest of the afternoon talking to the staff and members. From this moment, Joe has returned to visit Roots CBRS weekly, attending projects and activities on different days. He has not had a mental health relapse or taken substances since he has been attending.

Joe's main reason for coming back is for the people. He said that the projects get him out of the house and give him something to do, but he has also built many new friendships with staff and members who have been there for him when he needed it. Joe explained that Roots CBRS have improved his life immeasurably. It has not only meant he leaves his house daily but also goes on holidays, attends appointments alone, and has since passed his driving test. All of these have been truly transformational and have given him a better quality of life.

Joe has also learnt many new skills, including mental health first aid, gardening, and DIY. Joe is now a long-serving member of Roots CBRS and is heavily involved in all the projects and activities, enabling him to be an active community member and manage his mental health. Joe gets a tremendous amount of enjoyment from helping new attendees. He is among the first to say hello and welcome people into the project, knowing how apprehensive the first day can be. Joe explained that making people feel welcome is essential, and he loves watching others improve throughout their time with Roots CBRS.

“Roots is a wonderful place, and I feel blessed to be able to come here. People don't judge, which I am grateful for. I love the people at Roots.”

Case Study

Colin, Roots CBRS Member since 2023

Colin moved to the UK in the 1960s and has lived, worked and raised his family here ever since. However, four years ago, a few years after his retirement, Colin experienced a relationship breakdown with his family still residing in his country of birth, which resulted in a severe decline in his mental health. Colin became suicidal and was admitted to an inpatient psychiatric unit at Luton Hospital.

Once discharged, Colin returned home to live with his family. His home life was difficult, and he had many challenges in the relationships between his family members, leaving him feeling socially isolated.

In 2023, Colin was introduced to Roots CBRS during a hospital appointment, and he first visited the Roots 2 Recovery Garden. During his first visit, he was welcomed by the team and members. He did some gardening, had some lunch, and then walked around the woods, which he enjoyed.

Colin now attends Connects weekly and the Roots 2 Recovery Garden during the warmer months. He explained that the weekly activities get him out of the house and away from life stresses. He now feels happier as it gives him something to look forward to each week.

Colin said he has lived in the UK for a long time but has never really spoken to anyone. Attending Roots CBRS was the first time he had made friends.

“I have enjoyed meeting people and being part of a community. I find I am finally living here.”

At Christmas, Colin contacted his past employer to tell them about Roots CBRS and how he was supported. As a result, they made a £200 donation to the service. Colin said he has always tried to help people, and it felt good to give back to a service that has supported him.

Since attending Roots CBRS, Colin has become less socially isolated and has significantly improved his mental health and wellbeing.



Mental & Physical Health

Our Work

Offering a therapeutic growing space and range of non-clinical support services designed to boost mental wellbeing and physical health

Providing opportunities for physical activity through gardening, walking, and other outdoor pursuits in a natural environment

Enabling members to establish a positive weekly routine and structure, which is beneficial for mental health

Delivering a variety of workshops and activities that support mental wellbeing, such as arts and crafts, discussions, and mindfulness

Preventing mental health relapses and hospital admissions by offering consistent, long-term support and a place to turn in times of need

Aims & Background



Out of hospital care



Clinical reliance



Green space access



Risk factors

NHS Costs

Mental and physical ill-health place a significant burden on the NHS, with the cost of mental ill-health alone estimated at **£300 billion annually** in England. (1)

The majority of people first attend Roots CBRS while struggling with **mental ill-health or chronic physical conditions**.

Social Determinants

Examining health inequalities in Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes, highlights the impact of social determinants like **limited green space access** on health outcomes. (2)

It is estimated that in Luton, **5.8% of deaths in adults over 30** are due to poor air quality. (3)

Roots CBRS Outcomes

Mental Health



91%

In our latest member survey, **91% reported improved mental health and wellbeing** since attending Roots CBRS.

Physical Health



70%

In our latest member survey, **70% reported improved physical health and fitness** since attending Roots CBRS.

References: (1) The Economic and Social Cost of Mental Ill-health, Centre for Mental Health, 2022; (2 and 3) The Denny Review, A Review of Health Inequalities in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes, 2023



Case Study

TJ, Roots CBRS Member since 2022

"For as long as I can remember, I've felt like an outsider in my own life, searching for a place where I could truly belong. Our society is structured in a way that puts immense pressure on all of us to achieve, succeed, and reach high targets, leaving little room for simply existing.

I grew up in Portsmouth and then moved away from friends to university at Bournemouth, and then moved away again to Luton for my research degree. I've never had a place which has felt like home. I often found myself buried under anxiety and struggling with self-worth as I desperately tried to attain a good degree and a high-paying job. This quest for success consumed me, leaving no room for personal connections or self-exploration. A monotonous office job further distanced me from people and nature, which I longed for and wanted to experience more of.

But then, by almost complete accident, I was directed towards Penrose Roots, a sanctuary among the soil.

From my first cup of tea here, everyone treated me as a friend. It's a place where everyone genuinely wants to be, and the warmth and compassion radiating within the group are palpable. I was encouraged to participate in activities we don't get encouraged to try daily: gardening, arts and crafts, baking, etc. These activities allowed me to explore different facets of myself. I quickly discovered that there was so much more to me than just my job and academic achievements.

At Penrose Roots, I found a place where every achievement is celebrated and appreciated. I no longer need to measure my worth solely through professional or academic successes. Instead, I've discovered that my contributions, however small they may be, are valued by my friends and staff here (though they are the same). I have truly found a sense of belonging and acceptance. The love and support I've received here have allowed me to grow into a more grounded, confident, and authentic version of myself.

As I continue to nurture these passions and connections, I am grateful for having discovered this oasis in a world that can often feel cold and unforgiving. Had it not been for Penrose Roots, I might have never overcome my mental health crisis last year, gathered the strength to regain control of my life, and successfully completed my university degree to embark on this new chapter of my life.

In the end, finding Penrose Roots has helped me find serenity and myself. And for that, I am forever grateful."

ITV Anglia visited the Roots to Recovery Garden on Tuesday, April 9th, 2024, for the Green Social Prescribing Event.

Their full report, which includes an interview with Roots CBRS member TJ.



“An excellent report demonstrating your invaluable work broadcast on Anglia News this evening - a special way to pass on the wonderful message of your essential contribution to so many people, and particularly young people, when they are at a really low and difficult time in their lives.”

- Robert Oakley, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire

Case Study

Holly, Roots CBRS Member since 2021

Back in 2021, Holly was spending a lot of time at home and struggling with her mental health. Her diagnoses include anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and bipolar, which have unfortunately led to her being sectioned four times in the last ten years.

After being discharged from the hospital for the fourth time, Holly occasionally attended local arts and crafts activity groups run by mental health providers. However, Holly stopped attending because she found the sessions too formal and was often criticised for being late. After she stopped attending these sessions, Holly became even more socially isolated. At this point, a friend suggested that Holly attend Roots Connects, our social group held on a Friday in a church hall.

Accompanied by her friend, Holly attended one of the meetings. Holly recounted her first day and said she felt welcomed by the Roots CBRS staff and members. There was a relaxed atmosphere that was different from some of the groups she had previously attended. Since that day, she has attended Roots Connects almost weekly for the last three years.

Holly said attending the group has hugely improved her physical and mental wellbeing. She has grown in confidence and self-esteem through the activities and interactions with others. She explained that she often has good and bad days but always leaves Roots Connects feeling positive and happy if she feels low. It is something she looks forward to each week.

Holly needed housing support, so the Roots CBRS team referred her to Synergy, another of Penrose's services that provides 1:1 support, including tenancy and accommodation advice. Synergy was able to secure Holly temporary accommodation in the first instance. More recently, they have been able to help Holly get permanent accommodation, which she moved into in October 2023. Secure accommodation has massively boosted Holly's self-esteem, and she recalled how much she has enjoyed transforming the property into her own home.

In addition to being supported into permanent accommodation, Roots CBRS also referred Holly to the Therapy Project, which is a project funded by East London NHS Foundation Trust, where Penrose partnered with The Counselling Foundation to provide trauma and psychologically informed therapists and counselling specialists for free to people with the highest needs in our care and supported accommodation. Holly was provided with 12 sessions, and the positive impact on her mental health was so significant that she turned down the last two sessions, as she felt that she no longer needed them.

Holly has felt judged in her life because of her mental health but is grateful to have the community at Roots CBRS where she feels accepted. Holly's mental health has remained stable since becoming a member of Roots CBRS, and her attendance is now a crucial part of how she manages her mental health. Holly now lives a happy and healthy life with her new support network and home.

“Roots is a really friendly, fun and welcoming place. It is somewhere to make friends and boost your confidence. I always leave feeling positive.”

Neurodiversity

Our Work

Offering flexibility in attendance and participation, allowing neurodiverse members to engage in activities and social interactions at their own pace

Adopting a person-centred approach, recognising that each individual has different experiences, challenges and support needs, rather than a one-size-fits-all model

Enabling neurodiverse members to pursue their interests and develop skills in areas such as horticulture, crafts, and cooking

Supporting sensory needs by providing a calming, natural environment and accommodating individual preferences (e.g., avoiding loud noises for a member sensitive to them)

Fostering social connections and friendships among neurodiverse members and with neurotypical peers in a safe, welcoming space

Aims & Background



Access to care



Inequality



Green space access



Risk factors

Health Inequalities

Evidence shows that neurodiverse individuals are **more likely to have chronic mental and physical health conditions**.

They are also **more likely to face barriers accessing support** and report lower quality of healthcare.

Support Gap

In the UK, **15-20% of the population is neurodivergent**, with 700,000 having autism spectrum conditions and two million having dyslexia.

Despite this, about **70% are without appropriate accommodations** in their school or workplace. (1)

Roots CBRS Outcomes

Openness and Inclusion



100%

Every Roots CBRS member is **informed they can request accommodations** for their specific neurodiversity needs.

Meeting Diverse Needs



100%

Every **neurodiverse Roots CBRS member has had their needs met** without any reported difficulties in requesting accommodations.

References: (1) ICAEW Insights: Neurodiversity: the power of thinking differently, 2023



Case Study

In recognition of Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Lynne (Project Officer at Roots CBRS) shared her experience working with two neurodiverse Roots CBRS members and supporting them on their journey.

Josh, Penrose CRBS Member since 2018

“Josh was the first member I ever worked with when I started volunteering for Roots CBRS in 2021. We both remember that we planted radish seeds together! Josh started at Roots CRBS in 2018 and was introduced through his support worker. At the time, Josh was living with his parents but a place in supported living became available for him in 2021 – it took just over a year of day visits and weekend stays before Josh moved in permanently where he now lives happily. This was a huge achievement for him and I mention this because I have learned that with Josh he likes to take his time to feel comfortable in a situation. He hates loud noises and spiders – two things I help him avoid at the garden! He is friendly with everyone but isn’t great at remembering names, he copes by calling everyone ‘Buddy’. He loves finding the funny and quirky in a situation, especially naming everything he makes or harvests! Josh attends the Roots 2 Recovery Garden once a week and we are part of his weekly routine of activities.”

Ryan, Penrose CRBS Member since 2023

“Ryan joined Roots CBRS in November 2023. At just 19, he is one of our younger members. From the start we knew that Ryan was already studying horticulture at a local college and he wanted to enhance his experience by joining the Roots 2 Recovery Garden. He attends the garden weekly and also comes whenever college is closed. Ryan is always keen to join in any activity, he is just as enthusiastic about gardening tasks as he is crafts. I have learned that he is very particular about things, likes direct instructions and is willing to try anything new. He has a great sense of humour and can hold his own on pretty much any topic! Ryan is now using his time at Roots to Recovery as work experience for his college course. We are proud to support him on his horticultural journey.”

Education, Training & Employment

Our Work

Providing a range of skill-building workshops and training opportunities in areas such as horticulture, bike maintenance, crafts, cooking, IT basics, careers skills, and practical DIY

Offering hands-on work experience through participation in Roots CBRS' various projects and social enterprises, such as the plant nursery and bike shop

Partnering with training providers, such as Bedfordshire and Luton Recovery College, to offer member's pathways into structured educational courses and vocational qualifications

Offering tailored support and encouragement to help members identify and work towards their individual learning and employment goals

Celebrating members' achievements in learning and employment, and sharing success stories to inspire others and challenge stigma around mental health and disability in the workplace

Aims & Background

Employable skills

Inequality

Individual job support

Hiring inequality

Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Luton for people aged 16 and over **increased to 5.2% in 2023**.

This is **higher than the average** of 3.7% for the UK. (1)

Employment Barriers

Disadvantaged groups, such as those with physical or learning disabilities, or experiences of homelessness, and the criminal justice system, **encounter significant barriers to employment**.

Addressing this issue is a key focus of the **Luton Council Employment & Skills Strategy 2022-2027**.

Roots CBRS Outcomes

Growth from Within



90%

Of the current Roots CBRS staff, 90% were employed from **previously being service members and volunteers**.

Continuing Pathways

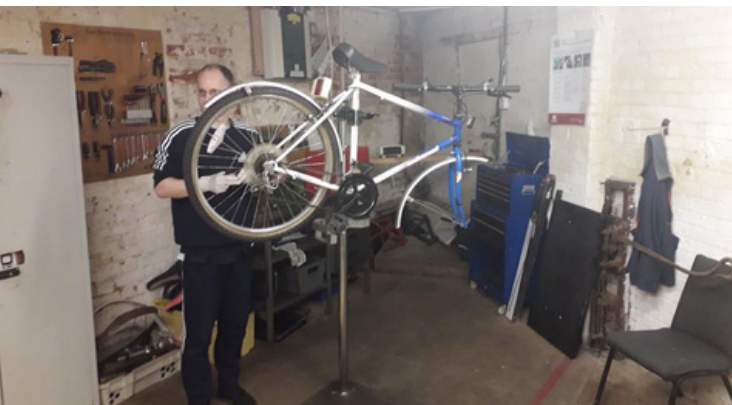


79%

Based on a 2024 sample in which a quarter of members were interviewed, it was reported Roots CBRS supported an estimated **33% into volunteering, 26% into work or job seeking, and 20% into training**. This is an ongoing piece of work.

References: (1) Based on Office of National Statistics Data, 2023

Here are some of the Roots CBRS workshops and training courses:



Criminal Justice

Our Work

Offering targeted programs, such as the Recycle-A-Bike workshop, that engage young people and adults who have been involved with the criminal justice system

Partnering with Probation Services and Youth Offending teams to offer community-based support and interventions that promote rehabilitation and reduce reoffending

Addressing underlying factors that may contribute to offending behaviour, such as mental ill-health, substance use, and lack of employment, through a holistic approach that combines practical support with wellbeing interventions

Supporting individuals to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into the community following release from prison or completion of a sentence, through ongoing support and aftercare

Aims & Background



Reoffending

Luton's **reoffending rates are higher than the regional average**, with youth reoffending at 32.6%. (1)

The Justice and Home Affairs Committee finds that reoffending reduces when **Probation and local support agencies like Penrose partner on community sentences**.

Social Value

In 2021/22, the average **annual cost per prisoner was £48,774**, while a medium-level secure NHS service annually costs £250,755 per unit. (2)

The project's ROI is based on estimated social value, including **reducing UK criminal justice and healthcare costs**.

Roots CBRS Outcomes

Recycle-A-Bike



12

Through the **Recycle-A-Bike program in collaboration with the Youth Offending Service**, 12 bikes have been repaired and donated to the community since 2023.

Probation Support



144

Probation Services funded **144 hours of daytime support for 6 probationers** to prevent reoffending and recidivism.

References: (1) Based on Office of National Statistics Data, 2023 (2) Ministry of Justice Annual Report 21/22

Case Study

Luke, Roots CBRS Member since 2014

Luke started his journey as a resident at one of Penrose's Bedfordshire-based accommodation services before being referred to Roots CBRS. He had spent most of his adult life in and out of prison and had 39 convictions before he first attended Roots CBRS.

During his time with us, he got involved in a situation that landed him in court on charges. We supported him through court and offered a character reference stating how he had been coming to the garden and was slowly making steps to turn his life around and change his peer group to have a more positive future. The court issued a fine, but luckily, not time in prison.

Two years later, he found himself back in court, this time on quite a serious charge that could see him spend the next five years in prison. Once again, Roots CBRS provided a character reference to vouch for his character and his progress since attending the projects. He was given a second chance, although this time, it came with a curfew, lengthy probation and rehabilitation.

Luke, for the first time, complied with his order, completed his probation, and stopped using substances after 35 years of self-medicating. His substance use was often a factor in his past behaviours. Luke has not re-offended for the last three years or relapsed with his substance use. He is working for the first time in his late 40s, all because Roots CBRS was a constant in his life and supported him through difficult times.





Letter from Youth Offending Service

Dear Penrose Roots Team,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to express our deepest gratitude for the incredible support and partnership that Penrose Roots has extended to our organization. The recent training workshops facilitated by your team in Stockwood Park, under the guidance of William, have left an indelible mark on our young people and our community as a whole.

The workshops, focused on fixing and reconditioning bikes, have been nothing short of transformative for the young individuals involved. William's expertise, patience, and genuine passion for his craft shone through in every session. His ability to engage and empower the young offenders, guiding them through the intricacies of bike repair, was truly remarkable to witness. Not only did he impart valuable technical skills, but he also served as a mentor and role model, instilling confidence and a sense of purpose in each participant.

The impact of these workshops extends far beyond the confines of the training room. Through their dedicated efforts, the young people not only fulfilled their reparation hours but also made meaningful contributions to society. The bikes they fixed and reconditioned were not merely objects; they represented second chances, opportunities for positive change, and acts of generosity toward the community. It is a testament to the power of collaboration and the potential for individuals to thrive when given the right support and guidance.

This partnership between our organizations has been nothing short of amazing. The synergy between our missions and values has resulted in tangible benefits for all involved, from the young offenders finding purpose and direction to the broader community benefiting from their contributions. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to work alongside Penrose Roots and hoping to continue this journey of empowerment and positive impact together.

Once again, thank you for your unwavering commitment to making a difference in the lives of young people and communities. Your support has been invaluable, and we are truly privileged to be a part of such a meaningful partnership.

Kind regards,

Maria Cojocar
Youth Justice Assistant
Luton Partnership Service

Sustainability & Environment

Our Work

Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity by creating and preserving habitats for wildlife within the Roots gardens and surrounding green spaces

Promoting waste reduction and the circular economy through projects such as Recycle-A-Bike, which refurbishes old bikes for reuse, and by using recycled/donated materials in craft activities

Offering hands-on education about environmental issues and sustainable practices through workshops, activities, and involvement in eco-friendly projects

Reducing the carbon footprint of Roots CBRS' own operations by implementing energy-saving measures, minimising waste, and promoting sustainable transport options for staff and members

Partnering with local authorities, environmental organisations, and community groups to support wider sustainability initiatives and engage members in local conservation efforts

Aims & Background



Green space access



Nature scarcity

Urban Green Spaces

The **benefits of green spaces** on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of urban residents is well documented.

Green spaces support mental health by providing a sense of **self, escape, and connection with the world.**



Sustainable practices



Local pollution

Climate Action

Luton's Climate Policy and Action Plan aims to increase biodiversity, green space, sustainability education, and community engagement.

Roots CBRS contributes by maintaining public green space, offering experiential learning, and engaging residents in sustainable practices.

Roots CBRS Outcomes

Conservation



1,040

Roots CBRS volunteers have contributed **1,040 hours of conservation work** on-site and in the local area since 2023.

Community Gardens



8

Since 2021, Roots CBRS have supported Edible Hightown and Luton Borough Council in their mission to transform spare green spaces by **building 8 pocket gardens and raised beds in the community.**

Here are some of the Roots CBRs environmental activities:



Food Insecurity

Our Work

Growing fresh, organic produce on-site which is distributed to members to take home, cook, and eat, improving access to healthy food

Providing opportunities for members to learn about healthy eating, cooking skills, and food budgeting through workshops and practical activities

Distributing surplus produce grown at Roots to Recovery Garden to local community organisations and food banks, helping to address food poverty in the wider community

Involving members in decisions about what to grow and how to distribute produce, giving them a sense of ownership and control over their food supply

Partnering with local food poverty alliances and networks to advocate for food justice and support coordinated responses to food insecurity

Aims & Background



Food Poverty

Luton, one of the UK's top 10 most destitute areas, has 8.9% of households living in destitution, **with 60% lacking sufficient food.** (1)



With **food insecurity increased by 201%** since 2021, this need is only likely to increase further.



Diet and Nutrition

Luton adults consume an average of 2.4 portions of fruit and vegetables daily, with **only 46.5% eating the recommended 5-a-day**, lower than the national average.



Poor diet contributes to 50% of coronary heart disease and 30% of cancer deaths, **the leading causes of death in Luton.** (2)

Roots CBRS Outcomes

Food Production



1,164kg

Since 2021, there has been 1,164kg of fresh produce grown at the Roots to Recovery Garden by members, equivalent to about **14,000 portions of fruits and vegetables.**

Community Donations

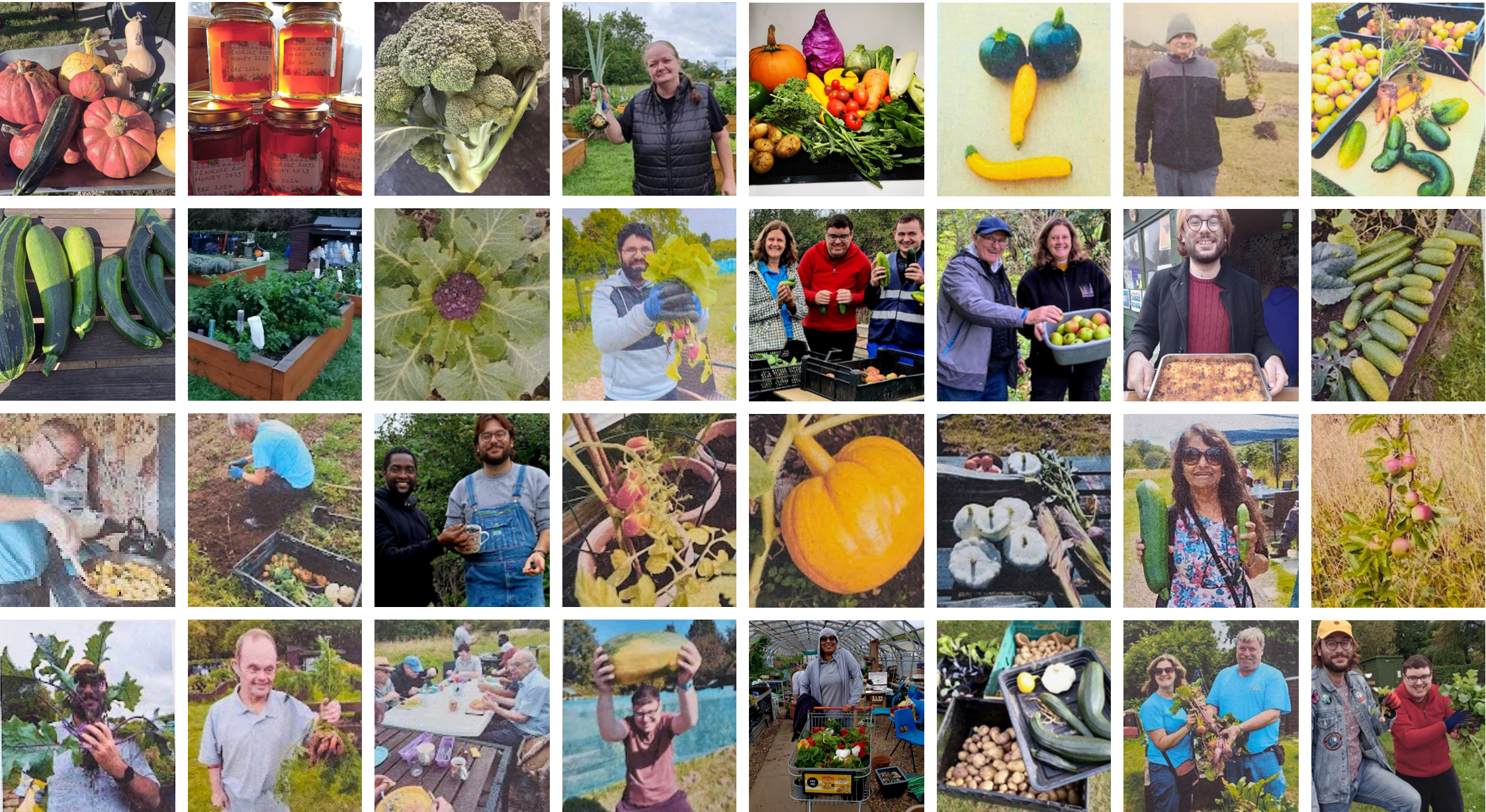


83%

After being used in meals at Roots CBRS and taken home by members, the remaining 83% of unused produce is then **donated to local community food hubs.**

References: (1) Based on Office of National Statistics Data, (2) Luton Food Plan 2018-22

Here are some of the food grown and cooked at Roots CBRS or donated:



Feedback: What does Roots CBRS do well?

In January 2024, we hosted a Roots CBRS Away Day, where Roots CBRS members, volunteers, and staff were invited to participate in a roundtable deep-dive into the service so we could better understand what Roots CBRS does well and what we could improve on.

We received the following feedback on what people thought Roots CBRS did well:

"Penrose believes in us."

Roots CBRS provides structure and a reason to get up, eat regularly and function normally.

Members trust Penrose, where they do not other support agencies and groups.

The staff team are more patient than others. Penrose work differently from other agencies, which often have an "us" and "them" mentality.

Members like learning about and enjoying gardening, nature, and the environment.

Reduces anxiety and isolation. Often the only times they get to speak to other people socially.

Members find value in the courses and programmes to help them to get work and training.

Flexible attendance is a positive, there is no mandatory requirement to attend every session.

Resourceful – recycling items, selling produce, and providing food parcels to those in need.

Encouraging people and building confidence.

Gain social friendships from Roots CBRS, which provides members further support outside Penrose.

There is no divide between the members and Penrose staff – members trust and believe in the service and each other.

Opportunities are created to listen to people who may not be doing well.

Celebrates achievements even when small. It makes them feel valued and worth something, building belief in themselves, often for the first time in their life or following trauma.

"Penrose brings back hope."

Mental health support.

Building relationships and allowing friendships to blossom in a safe space. Staff initiating and supporting this process.

Community-based and non-clinical support.



The Roots CBRS team offers subtle encouragement and support, which helps develop confidence and individual potential.

It has a good reputation and is well thought of locally.

Each week, there is a different theme and a variety of activities.

Trust that Roots CBRS will respond to a crisis sensitively.

Respecting people's issues whilst creating a space for people to have time away from their problems.

Acceptance, diversity, and inclusivity.



This word cloud was formed using the feedback collected from members, volunteers and staff during the Roots CBRS Away Day in January 2024.

Feedback: What improvements could Roots CBRS make?

We received the following feedback on what people thought Roots CBRS could improve on:

More walking and talking therapies.

More support could be given to help members travel to Roots CBRS activities

Roots CBRS could offer more training opportunities for volunteers.

Members would like more activities on Wednesdays, as weekends can be challenging for some people to attend.

Members would like support to learn how to be resilient and say no to people who do not have their interests at heart.

There is capacity for more members, but members were concerned that it would get too busy, or it wouldn't be the same place.

Develop more food support services.

More opportunities to upskill people in trades – practical skills like woodwork, etc. Invite ex-trades people to run internal training courses.

Launch member peer-support skill sharing sessions.

Training sessions on basic household skills, changing plugs, changing lights and energy efficiency.

Support people with childcare responsibilities that may prevent them from attending.

A repair café.

Using crafts and woodwork to raise money.

Set up a Roots CBRS fundraising focus group to develop fundraising ideas each year, including community fundraisers and collections.

Provide planners for people to support with routine.

Members tea and talks, where members can share their stories or discuss a particular topic, and others can come and listen or do a 'show and tell'.

Invite more speakers to talk to members.

More exercise and formal cooking classes.

More craft sessions – patchwork, textiles, cushion making.

Finance workshops, covering topics like careers, savings/investments, credit scores and budgeting.

Name badges so people can remember names – helps people to remember names, and it can be an icebreaker.

Setting up a Roots CBRS radio club.

Members would like more involvement in running sessions.

Members want to be able to make more things that can be taken home.

More educational or horticultural trips.

To have a monthly member meeting to share ideas.

More collaboration with other charities.

Recent Awards and Accolades



"It's great to see how the community garden project has developed!"
Rachel Hopkins MP, Luton North



The High Sheriff of Bedfordshire's award *"in recognition of great and valuable services to the community"*, 2023



Roots CBRS Service Manager Samantha Smith was invited to the **Buckingham Palace Garden Party in Spring 2023**, recognised by King Charles for her positive community impact.



Charity of the Year
Luton and Bedfordshire Community Awards 2023



"It was such an honour to meet many of the volunteers & to see the wonderful vegetables they grow"
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Susan Lousada



...and we celebrate our own!
Social Interest Group Awards 2023



Future Plans

Plans for the next 12 months:

In response to the feedback received during the Away Day, we are planning to implement the following changes across Roots CBRS over the next 12 months:

- A volunteer will begin providing basic IT workshops for members from the Penrose Synergy offices.
- Introduce more walking and talking therapies.
- Offer more certified training courses to members and volunteers.
- Develop a Resilience Workshop.
- Provide practical skill-sharing workshops.
- Develop a partnership with the local Repair Café.
- Launch Roots CBRS Member's Fundraising Focus Group.
- Introduce a regular Member's Show & Tell.
- Introduce more exercise classes.
- Secure partnerships with organisations/businesses to provide Financial Advice Workshops.
- Provide name badges for all members, volunteers and staff.

Long-Term Plans:

- Formalise a Member's Project Board to help develop and improve Roots CBRS' service provision, ensuring it responds to local needs and is guided by lived experience.
- Diversify Roots CBRS' income to secure additional funds so that the service can open for an extra day each week.
- Launch a Roots Green Social Prescribing Step-down Service for Luton residents to prevent failed placements and mental health relapses.
- We want to make Roots CBRS more inclusive and respond to unmet needs in the community. To achieve this, we aim to provide the following support provisions:
 - We aim to develop a 'Special Member's Fund' to support people in overcoming any barriers they face when accessing the Roots CBRS programmes, including travel, childcare, and clothing.
 - We are applying for funding to install 13 new raised beds at the Roots to Recovery Garden. These beds will increase accessibility for people with disabilities and increase food production for local food hubs. A selection of the new beds will be dedicated to different countries and cultures, where they will grow culturally specific fruits, vegetables, and herbs to encourage people with different cultural backgrounds to attend the garden.
 - We hope to develop a Floating Support Roots CBRS service and buddy system to provide some of Roots CBRS' projects for people unable to leave their homes.

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Penrose is part of Social Interest Group. We believe good care and support improve lives. Our mission is to empower people by building powerful partnerships and creative solutions that bridge gaps in provision and aid recovery, reablement and resettlement.



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