

Growing-4-life: Project Overview

Thrive is a small national charity that uses gardening to change lives. We champion the benefits of gardening, carry out research

and offer training and practical solutions so that anyone with a disability can take part in, benefit from and enjoy gardening.

Thrive are setting up an exciting new project called **Growing 4 Life (G4L)** which is being funded by Ecominds, a £7.5 million funding scheme run by Mind on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund. Ecominds involves people with direct experience of mental distress in environmental projects that improve their mental and physical health, and local communities.

The Growing 4 Life project has an overall aim to create community gardening projects for older people (age 55 and older) with mental health needs, to improve mental and physical health, reducing isolation and bringing people together to improve the green space for the benefit of the local community

To achieve this we are looking to set up supported volunteering groups in garden and green space locations across Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and Hampshire. The groups will carry out gardening and/or conservation activities in their local areas to improve the local environment by creating better local green spaces. This project will be open and free to older people with mental health needs who live within a two mile radius of any given location. Each group will be supported by a Project Officer for the first six months. Once the supported volunteer groups are established (after 6 months) we will work hard to encourage the group to remain active and give additional support through existing services.

Benefits of the Project to the individual

- **Improved gardening skills and knowledge**
- **Social inclusion and interaction**
- **Sense of purpose and achievement**
- **Physical exercise/sense of well-being**
- **Working within a green space**
- **Creating a focus in life**
- **Sense of belonging**

Benefits of the project to the local community

- **Improved community space**
- **Community involvement and social cohesion**

Further information is available from:

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Ecominds

