



growing mcr

IMPACT REPORT



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

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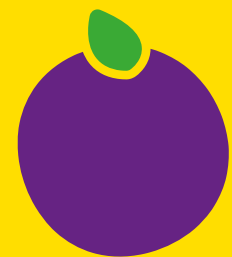
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Introduction

Growing Manchester is the Public Health funded community food growing network for Manchester. It provides an abundance of free and nutritious food for some of the most disadvantaged communities in the city including people experiencing homelessness, mental ill health, and those in food poverty.

Since its inception in 2011 with just 10 gardens, the programme has grown rapidly to include 150+ community garden projects and more than 1500 growers.



Growing Manchester is funded by **Manchester City Council** and is delivered by **Sow the City CIC**.



Growing Manchester aims to...

- Assist projects to be resilient, to realise their long term aims, ambitions and to achieve long term financial sustainability.
- Increase access to sustainable, locally grown food.
- Improve the physical and mental health and well-being of people involved in the projects.
- Increase awareness of the effects of food production on climate change
- Increase the health and well-being of the wider community.

Why is Growing Manchester important?

Urban areas have significant potential for production of sustainable food. Urban agriculture can be an important coping strategy amongst low-income households contributing to food security and generating much needed income.

Growing your own can produce food with zero carbon footprint or even carbon positive in the case of fruit trees. **Food accounts for 1/3 of an average person's carbon footprint** (from transport, fertiliser etc.) and there is evidence that people that grow their own food eat more sustainably.



Programme highlights

987 hours of support were offered to communities across Manchester, particularly those in more disadvantaged areas

82% of course attendees were very satisfied with what they had learned.

Received £10,000 grant from the Wates Family Foundation Trust to support Growing Manchester this year for photography, website development, and impact report creation

70% of course attendees felt they had learned new skills

Enhanced levels of support provided in 2024 for people in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction in 2024 in partnership with **SHINE** and **Phoenix Mill (Change Grow Live)**

£220,330 in match funding was secured for groups

Growing Manchester was featured on the BBC World Service in a episode of the Food Chain covering how to manage the risks of growing food where land is contaminated. [Listen here!](#)

A Growing Manchester group was invited to **represent Greater Manchester at 10 Downing Street** as part of an event celebrating 60 years of the Natural History Museum Wildlife Photography of the Year Competition

Programme highlights



1,144 individuals participated in training, events, and workshops

230 people benefited from introductory fruit and vegetable growing courses

65 groups were supported with advice on funding, horticulture, and community development

8 new community growing groups were launched

18 advanced courses were delivered on topics such as mushroom cultivation, growing in polytunnels, and hydroponics

10 site assessments were completed to develop designs for community food growing projects

159 corporate volunteers provided support for site transformations

Over 5,000 plants provided free of charge to Growing Manchester groups through the RHS Community Plant Share project

What we do



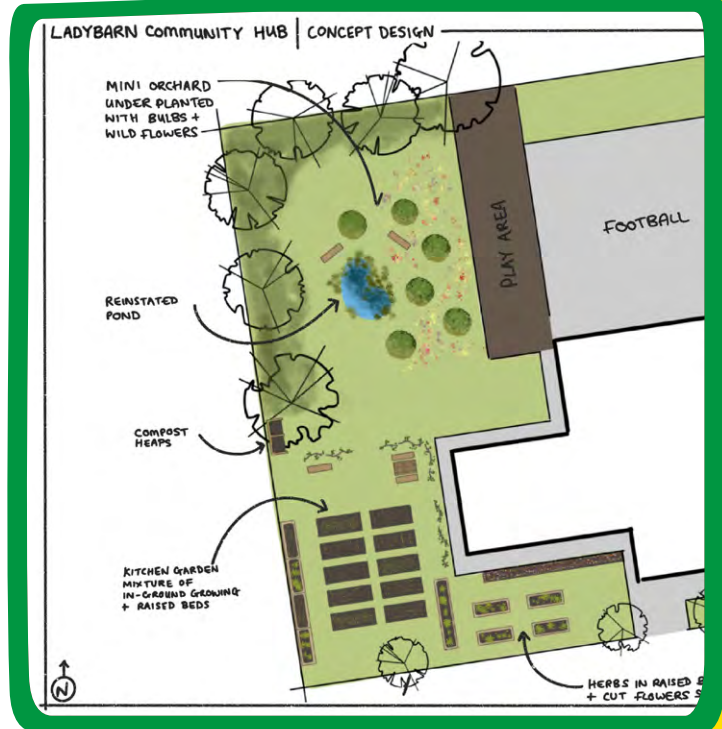
Workshops & Training

To teach practical growing skills and increase wider awareness of how food production relates to climate and ecology. Our practical sessions include ecotherapy, social and therapeutic horticulture, healthy eating, and environmental sustainability.



Networking opportunities

To enable groups to share knowledge, skills, and equipment with other similar groups, and build their expertise and resilience.



Site Assessments

To ensure land is suitable for food growing, soil contamination testing (Where appropriate), creating designs that make the most effective use of the space whilst meeting the needs of the community.



Community development support

To encourage groups to become more resilient, realise their long term aims, and to achieve financial sustainability. Growing Manchester has helped groups engage with the wider community, attract more volunteers, apply for funding, and put appropriate policies and systems in place.

Case studies: Barlow Road

A new community garden was established at a temporary accommodation property in Levenshulme, providing communal living facilities for men affected by homelessness. Following a request from residents eager to grow their own food, staff sought support through Growing Manchester.

Their project aims to offer residents a green space to cultivate their own food, connect with nature, and foster a sense of community. Residents of Barlow Road have been actively involved in creating and maintaining the garden, with regular sessions provided by Growing Manchester. These sessions have given residents and staff the chance to learn new skills, share knowledge, and build friendships, turning the garden into a vibrant hub of activity.



“ So far, we have harvested courgettes, however there are tomatoes on the way, pumpkins, cabbages, beetroot and chard. The best part is it was all free, thanks to help from Growing Manchester and a bit of admin getting the funding for the compost. What an amazing thing to see, residents so proud of their own hard work, and, rewarded with veg to cook in the kitchen.”

- Hannah Statham, Accommodation Support Worker

Key learnings

Enhanced collaboration

- Create opportunities for groups to co-design and co-produce the programme. For example, organise a co-design workshop with beneficiaries/ growers to discuss what they would like to see in Growing Manchester and support them to co-produce elements of the programme e.g. running advanced courses.
- Improve partnership working with wider stakeholders and partners strengthen partnerships with wider stakeholders, e.g. City Council Departments, Housing Associations, NHS, and Social Care. Growing Manchester is providing a wide range of health, environmental and social outcomes and there is the opportunity for, and likely to be the interest in increased cross sector working.

Resource allocation

- Apply for external funding to support the delivery of the programme. Growing Manchester has been very successful at securing funding for groups but not for the delivery of the programme itself.

Community engagement

- Increase public awareness of Growing Manchester and the available support services





If you would like more information
about Growing Manchester,
visit growingmanchester.org or
contact info@sowthecity.org

