

A Growing Success

Joanne Clough, Co-ordinator, Positive Pathways

Salford Foundation's Women's Services have been involved with the RHS Bridgewater gardens development since 2019. The RHS wanted to ensure that all the residents of Salford would be able to enjoy the new gardens. As part of this plan our women's centre was allocated an RHS outreach worker, who helped our women to develop a garden at our centre in Eccles. This was an educational venture, which also included trips to the RHS gardens whilst they were still being developed.

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Earlier this year, Salford Foundation made an application to the RHS for our Women's Services to be allocated a plot in the community garden of the new RHS Bridgewater gardens. This was successful, and the allocation of the plot coincided with our women's services receiving a grant from the Bupa Foundation via the Greater Manchester Community Committee. for a new well-being project, called Positive Pathways.

Starting from May 2021, the women have been meeting to work on the garden every Friday morning. It is a great space for them to form friendships and to learn and connect with nature. There are a group of regulars, who work on the garden week in and week out and are now reaping the benefits and picking some great produce.

"Our aim is to empower women: to improve their confidence and enable them to develop personal skills to live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives."



The RHS have been supportive of women with children, and during school holidays, children have been allowed to come along to some of the sessions. In fact, it works on so many levels, with some ladies just visiting once or twice, and being able to have a coffee, walk round the gardens and catch up with their key worker, in beautiful surroundings.

‘The women from the Positive Pathways project have been an absolute delight to work with. The group aren’t afraid to get stuck in, always ask lots of interesting questions and bring an amazing energy and enthusiasm into the garden.’
Claire Drury, Regional Development Manager, RHS Bridgewater

One lady, who had just joined Positive Pathways, said that she had been worried about coming out following lockdown, as she was not used to social situations. But she gradually relaxed and really enjoyed the experience of the gardens. While walking round, she commented that, it’s amazing how much better it makes you feel to be out in nature.’

Positive Pathways has demonstrated the following outcomes:

1. Improved confidence & self-esteem
2. Improved emotional and mental health
3. Improved health & wellbeing
4. Healthier relationships
5. Increased social & community networks
6. Increased digital skills & access to online services & support
7. Progression to community learning and volunteering

In addition to the funding secured from Bupa for Positive Pathways an application was successful to the Bupa, My Community funding, for £1,000. This has come just at the right time. This donation will ensure that many more women will benefit from the community garden by helping with costs of transport, coffee, and waterproofs when needed.

In the long term, the RHS are planning to develop the community section of the gardens to include an outdoor cooking area. In the meantime, the women are busy creating and sharing their own ideas on how to cook the produce, with ratatouille, pasta and curry dishes being the most popular.



**"Thank you RHS Bridgewater and Bupa Foundation for your support.
With your help many more women will have this amazing experience".**

To find out more about the Positive Pathways project, if you would like to volunteer, donate or take part please contact:

JoanneClough@salfordfoundation.org.uk or
janie.barclay@salfordfoundation.org.uk

Or visit <https://www.salfordfoundation.org.uk/services/adults/positive-pathways/>

