

Core Landscapes

A Year in Whitechapel

"Transforming meanwhile spaces to promote positive mental health for all"



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Mission Statement

Core Landscapes transforms meanwhile spaces to promote positive mental health for all by developing derelict inaccessible sites into thriving green resources through an imaginative use of container growing, design and community engagement.

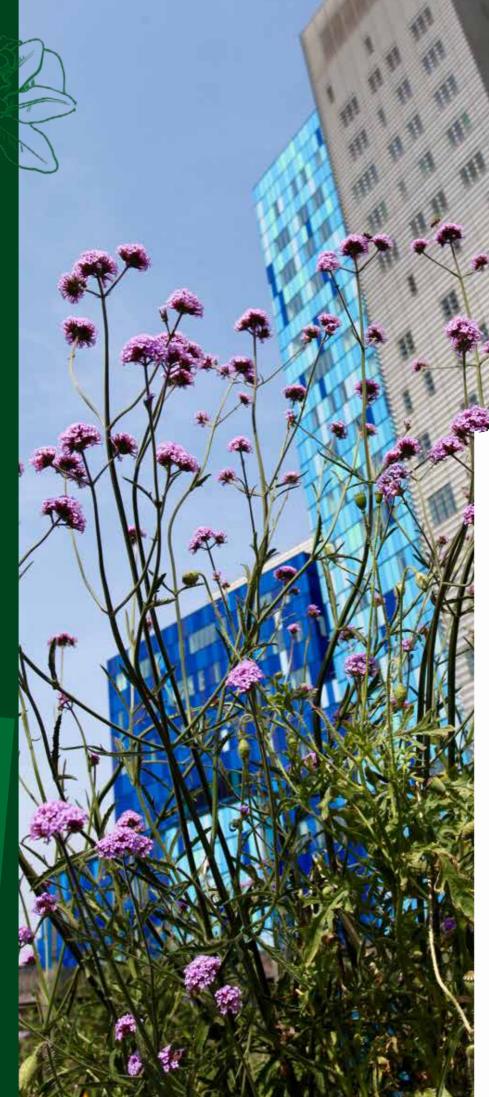
Working with referred beneficiaries, community volunteers, support volunteers and the general public, Core Landscapes aims to promote positive mental health for all, challenging misconceptions around mental ill health and enabling people to thrive. Core Landscapes impacts greatly on the lives of people amongst the most stigmatised and misunderstood in society with mental health ill health, aiding recovery, prevention and ongoing self-care. We create a supportive community environment bringing people together from diverse backgrounds assisting them to overcome barriers, fulfil their potential and make a full contribution to society.

Core Landscapes is a Core Arts project whose mission is to support and promote recovery, social inclusion and mental wellbeing through the arts and enhance service user experience.

"I came here very tentatively not knowing much about gardening and horticulture. Your faith in me has empowered me to take up the challenges - that is very good for me."

"During the year I have been coming here my mental health has fluctuated but working here and becoming part of the team has been a really grounding experience. I'm now returning to work and being part of Core is a key part of it."

"For my injury, I was very depressed. When I came here I started to think 'yes I can be a normal person."





About Us

Core Landscapes showcases what can be done with meanwhile sites in the city to promote positive mental health for all.

It is an outward-facing forward-thinking inspiring green project:

By occupying derelict sites within highly populated and polluted urban environments Core Landscapes highlights the need for, and impact of, active green spaces within the context of urban regeneration and mental health. Its impact can feed into dialogue with local authorities, developers and planners to think creatively about protecting access to green spaces for mental wellbeing within the urban environment.

The project contains an orchard, wildlife pond, flower garden, medicinal garden, food growing area, plant nursery, design and construction space and numerous wildlife-friendly trees and shrubs.

It began in 2009 in Canning Town E16 and has moved 3 times since then. Everything is designed to be movable to make use of temporary sites as they become available during periods of regeneration.

Currently open on Tuesdays and Thursdays for sessions and for the general public, and occasional weekends and other weekdays for events and specialised workshops.

Aims to fully open to the public 5 days a week and increase service delivery to beneficiaries with further funding.

"I think coming to Core landscape has greatly improved my Mental Health."

"It's very relaxing and calming to look after plants as well as being surrounded by them."

What we do

"The people make the garden and the garden makes the people."

Core Landscapes' targeted beneficiaries create an inspiring green community resource for local people to facilitate recovery and personal development.

Through weekly gardening sessions and seasonal horticultural workshops, people learn propagation skills and basic horticulture by helping to look after the garden.

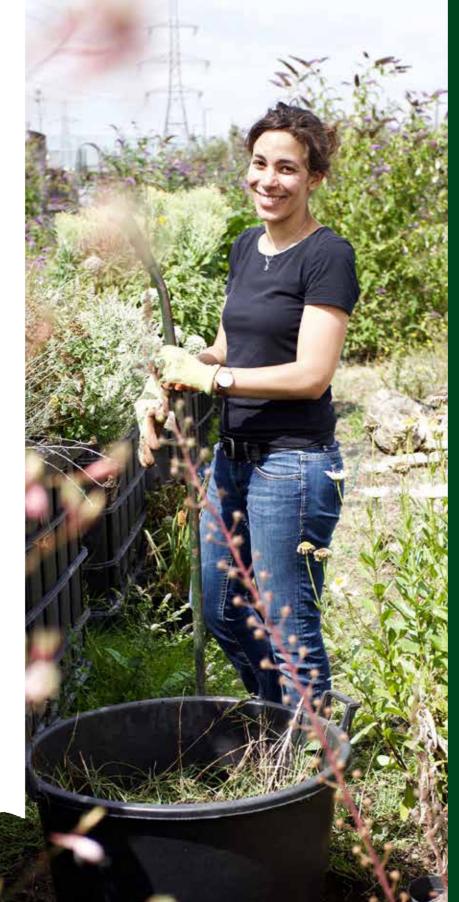
The propagation skills learnt feed the community plant nursery within the garden giving a sense of purpose and value to the tasks undertaken. The plants sold help towards materials and tools and the plant stock generated keeps the garden constantly replenished. We focus on resilient and nectar-rich planting with long seasons of interest - perfect for window boxes or balconies, as many city people have no garden: spreading the impact of the project into the surrounding neighbourhood.

Core Landscapes is next door to The Royal London Hospital and is centred around a wildlife pond in front of a beautiful listed church building. People use the space to relax in from all backgrounds, ages and situations. The hospital Critical Care teams bring patients down for respite from the hospital environment, local visitors bring donated shrubs and cuttings, people sit and eat their lunch, have meetings, take a breath after a hospital appointment or come for advice on plant care.

100% of visitors consulted enjoy the garden and value its presence in the neighbourhood.

Core Landscapes

- Promotes mental and physical health by empowering individuals and communities to improve their environment
- **Develops** activities that maximise social participation, enhance self-esteem and promote exercise and healthy living
- Breaks down stigmas associated with mental ill health
- **Encourages social** inclusion for all focusing on quality and equality
- Involves users in the planning process of the project
- Supports and empowers other community horticultural projects
- Facilitates the increase of horticultural and landscaping skills for life-long learning



People engage with the project from all walks of life and may come to the project having been very isolated with low self-esteem. During their time tending to the garden people develop new-found skills and confidence: They make new friends, have opportunities to develop personally, feel part of something worthwhile, and work collaboratively to create a beautiful space for the local community to enjoy. The skills developed enable people to produce and sell plants to the public and advise on plant choice and care; this can be life changing for people's sense of self-worth and ideas for a more positive future.

- Learning new skills

- Hope for the future



Benefits

100% of project participants and volunteers consulted feel they benefit from engaging with Core Landscapes.

Key Benefits reported include:

- Improving mental health
- Increasing confidence and self-esteem
- Giving to and being part of the community
- Improving physical health
- Working collaboratively
- Being outside
- Work experience opportunities

"Specially this place is very, very, enjoyable because of these two gentle person - 'Nemone Mercer' and 'Mr Jon'. They are very caring, loving, experienced."

"I'm amongst people so my minds on other things - distracts me from my physical pains (arthritis, legs etc). I spend a lot of time on my own so I like the companionship. I'm with like-minded people and can talk to people about the plants – I don't feel like I'm going on and on."



Five ways to wellbeing



Connect

Empowerment through collaboration: At a time when inner-city green spaces are under threat to an increasing demand for housing, and more and more people are experiencing social isolation, community gardens can be the link to the natural world and to each other. Core Landscapes

encourages peer-to-peer learning and support, is a safe space to make friends and learn from each other, sharing skills and knowledge across a wide range of cultures, ages and backgrounds.



Be Active

Core Landscapes is a supportive and friendly

environment, for many - creating a structure in the week and offering a reason to get out of the house and be physically active, actively increasing skills and knowledge. Facilitating healthy eating through growing fresh food further promoting healthy lifestyles. Tasks are devised inclusively to suit all levels of physical and emotional needs.



Take Notice

Where better to learn how to look than from nature

itself? The success of the garden relies upon people observing its needs along with enjoying the space created collaboratively. With garden sessions running throughout the year people can experience the changing seasons and all that they entail. Gardening, particularly container growing, relies on resilience - this skill can feed back into life helping people to cope with the everyday challenges they may face.



Keep Learning However experienced a gardener may be there is always more to learn. It can be very liberating and encouraging for new gardeners to realise that no one knows everything and we are all constantly learning together. Core Landscapes enables people to try things out and grow things they have a particular interest in. It encompasses individuals' ideas and suggestions so the project is constantly developing and growing in

Give

parallel to everyone engaged with it.

Nature is a generous teacher. For a little input, a gardener reaps the rewards tenfold. For the time energy and commitment people give to the project the garden gives back endlessly, with an abundantly beautiful community resource enjoyed by thousands of people annually. The personal satisfaction derived from new skills learnt is further increased by seeing the pleasure others derive from experiencing the garden they have helped to create.

> "I looked at this garden for days from the 10th floor of hospital longingly - finally visited on the day of discharge and saw how beautiful it is, a credit to staff and volunteers and a sanctuary. Thank you."

"I always feel like I have achieved something by coming here."



Core Landscapes:

- Helps people look after their mental and physical wellbeing
- Supports people who may be at risk of developing a mental health issue
- Helps with the recovery of people with existing mental health problems

Core Landscapes structured horticultural workshops and informal 'Green Care' sessions are for people with lived experience of mental health issues and/or physical conditions that affect mental health.

Workshops aim to:

- Develop confidence in gardening techniques and knowhow
- Promote positive mental health and self-esteem
- Aid progression paths into further volunteering opportunities, vocational training and employment skills
- Help to promote ongoing self-care

Outcomes are monitored according to the individual with a range of: feedback forms and surveys, case studies, Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Health Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), skill set monitoring and interviews with individuals. Service users input directs Core Landscapes' development and influences the programmes on offer creating relevant and effective opportunities for people to get the most from their time in the garden.

Core Landscapes Services

A resource for:

Social	Client referrals	Groups
	and self-referrals	Groups

'Green Care' gardening sessions & Structured Horticultural Workshops

Core Landscapes delivers facilitated 'Green Care' (informal) gardening sessions and (structured) workshops for referred and self-referred people with lived experience of mental ill health who benefit from more support then the community volunteer programme can offer.

These promote:

Prevention	Recovery	Progression
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'Green Care' is formally recognised as targeted therapeutic or treatment interventions that are specifically designed for people with a defined need and are delivered by trained/qualified practitioners. When people are ready and wish to they can join the community volunteer sessions or become support volunteers themselves to help others. This offers a clear and stress-less progression path for individuals to aim for.

"It was here that I really started to learn about horticulture."

"I feel anxious when I'm not here - it affects my everyday living. When I'm here it really goes and I don't feel it at all." "I know it sounds cheesy but coming here has really changed my life."

"Always generally feel better after having been. Also helps with confidence and social skills as I can be quite shy."





Volunteering at Core Landscapes

Empowerment through collaboration.

Core Landscapes' volunteer programmes actively promote community cohesion, reduce social isolation, facilitate peer-to-peer support, increase community involvement and support community champions to develop.

The reciprocal relationship between garden and volunteer is essential to the project's success. Valuing volunteers' time, skills and ideas are an inherent part of Core Landscapes ethos: The people make the project.

We aim to listen to our volunteers' reasons for joining us and wherever possible, cater the activity to the volunteers' particular areas of interest, be it food growing, propagation, planting design etc. Volunteers can also have responsibility for particular areas within Core Landscapes for vocational and personal development. The garden is designed with inclusivity in mind and caters for a wide range of physical and emotional needs.

"It's very nurturing to be outdoors with plants and nature. Even if I 'm physically unable to do very much it's nice to be here and having supportive teaching. After operations, you're a bit out of it but you're very supportive of peoples conditions and states."

Community volunteering:

For people who would like to help look after the garden and plant nursery and by doing do increase gardening knowledge and boost mental wellbeing in a friendly and social environment. The programme also works for those who would like to gain community project experience for vocational purposes. These may be people progressing from the "Green Care" or workshop programmes.

Support Volunteering:

For people with some (or lots of) gardening knowledge and/or training who would like to assist others in their learning. These may be people progressing from the "Green Care" or workshop programmes. Also for people who would like to gain community project experience for vocational purposes. Support volunteers are fully DBS checked and receive safeguarding training from Core Arts. "I am more aware of the natural world by being here. I like that it brings out a different side of me that I haven't had the experience of before."

"It's been amazing, I didn't know I could do gardening. I met some really nice people, smiled and had good fun."

"I love coming here it's the highlight of my week."

"When you are working in a clinical therapeutic environment the talk is about the problem, here it is more natural - it takes the label away." "Before I came here I probably had some stigma around people using a service like this, being here has been an amazing bash down of this,"

"I like being part of a project that benefits a lot of people including me."

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"I am a local please keep this place for a long time or forever. We need a community garden for the locals and the sick people of the hospital to visit and feel the tranquillity and nature near us. So please again keep this place for all of us forever."

> "I am a local resident, I like this project, it looks amazing. Please keep it up. Thanks a lot."

"All the people that work here are so kind and helpful.Ilove coming to this place after having appointments in the hospital. It helps me to feel so much better. Thank you very much."

Statistics -1st year at Whitechapel

Engaged 3,500+

different individuals from diverse backgrounds across London and the world

159

Community volunteers

30 Referred

beneficiaries

5 Support volunteers

350

Corporate volunteers

3 Events

Male 5

60%

Volunteers' trips to gardens

> 41 Workshops

188

Gardening sessions

52,795

Volunteer hours

70%

of individuals are BAME

100% Positive feedback from visitors

Outcomes

3,500+

People have engaged with the project since it opened two days a week a year ago at the current Whitechapel site. A combination of referred beneficiaries with mental ill health, community volunteers, support volunteers, corporate volunteers, local residents, hospital clinicians, patients and visitors, visitors from other community projects, walking groups, school groups, community network groups, Public Health representatives, bloggers and TV presenter - new Patron Mark Lane.

100%

Of beneficiaries and visitors consulted have reported health benefits from learning in, and using the garden as a space for mental respite and relaxation.

95%

Beneficiaries consulted reported an increase on the Warwick and Edinburgh scale of mental wellbeing

100%

mental wellbeing

85%

Of beneficiaries will use the skills learnt at Core Landscapes at home or at another venue

4



Of beneficiaries and visitors consulted acknowledge the need for pro-active green spaces in the urban environment to benefit

Awards received

"I feel a lot calmer after I have been. I have recently had some stress and mental health issues and have found going to Core Landscapes and doing gardening really puts it into perspective. "

"It took my breath away when I discovered this wonderful place hidden away. I love plants and flowers they are so central to our wellbeing. I am so happy to be here I could spend hours in this place I'm feeling so much more healthier than I have been from coming here."

"I think gardening is a great social activity that can help with confidence and also promote knowledge of plants which is worthwhile for the future."



What can you lear at Core Landscape

Opportunities in:

- Soil management all different soil types and properties
- Propagation skills from root cuttings to divisi
- Seed sowing different indoor and outdoor teo
- Food Growing all year round
- Homemade fertilisers wormery, liquid feeds, compost, leaf-mould
- Plant identification including 'weeds' and tree everything in between
- Pruning when, why and how to do it
- Plant Design what looks effective together an
- Organic Gardening why there is no need for chemicals
- Pest and Disease control learning from natur
- Wildflowers and their benefits
- Medicinal plants traditional uses from across world
- Carpentry skills useful for all and for the gard
- Sales skill advising and selling plants to the p

Comments from global visitors and Erasmus interns:

"Delightful green patch right next to the hospital. Very impressed with how you have made the most of the available land with lots of activities and seating areas. I love the fishpond and the historical backdrop. Lovely to chat with Nemone and some of the volunteers." (*R.H. Australia*) "A special place in the middle of so much concrete, really need to keep these places going as green areas are essential to humans and their wellbeing." (M.M. France)

"Amazing place to volunteer and work in, truly beautiful. Everyone is so welcoming and kind. It's amazing what a variety of things can be grown in a space like this. The joy it brings people is very apparent when they walk in and been my favourite part of working here." (F.B. Florida)

'n	41 Structured Workshops
es?	Delivered to
	81
	people
I	including
	30
sion	referred beneficiaries:
chniques	
	36x (4 x 9 week) structured
,	horticultural workshops for mental health based referrals
ees and	1 x " Propagation " workshop for Royal London Hospital Dementia patients
nd why	2 x "Emotional Resilience on the Ground " for Social Farms and Gardens
re	1 x "Healing Herbs " workshop / Herbal Hackney for local
s the	community + volunteers
	1 x "Medicinal Plants"
den	workshops / Hedge Herbs for local community +
public	volunteers

Showcasing Sustainability

Opportunities in:

Core Landscapes aims to keep its carbon footprint neutral. We reuse and recycle wherever possible, demonstrate sustainable growing techniques, create our own compost and fertilisers and utilise solar power. Core Landscapes can collect and store 14,000litres of harvested rainwater using it to irrigate the garden with a solar powered pump. The office too is run from solar energy. People donate plant pots and plastic bags keeping them out of the landfill. Construction companies donate recycled timber and work-wear. Residents bring unwanted plants or ones to nurture back to life. Core Landscapes self-generates income to feed back into the project from corporate engagement and plant sales, venue hire and workshop services.

Upcycling and recycling

- Solar power
- Water harvesting
- Composting
- Self-generating income
- Donations-in-kind

Core Landscapes showcases what plants to grow where and why with the changing climate in mind.

The plants grown and sold are resilient and support a thriving biodiversity. Local residents are encouraged to think about the suitability of the plants they chose and how to keep them thriving. A range of perennials and shrubs are on offer to attract bees, birds and butterflies. Advice is given on how to avoid the need for chemical control. Core Landscapes supports other green community

projects with advice and information.

There are a range of perennials and shrubs within the garden and trees with blossom, fruit and berries evergreen and deciduous, acid and alkaline loving, creating a wide range of food supplies and habitats for a thriving bio-diversity on site. "The Core Landscapes team are ingenious with their sustainable approaches to solve challenges and employ their reuse and recycling philosophy. Nothing gets wasted here. The transformation of what was bare derelict land is truly amazing."

(London in Bloom judges comments 2018.)





Thanks to:



Promoting positive mental health at work

Our Corporate Partners

Core Landscapes collaborates with the East London Business Alliance (ELBA) to connect with the corporate sector and corporate social responsibility for CSR days.

Mental ill health is rife in the workplace and is on the rise.

100% of corporate volunteers consulted report

that spending a day at Core Landscapes

benefitted their mental wellbeing.

We have developed a creative programme of opportunities for our corporate friends combining collaborative team building with up-skilling and mental respite from the workplace.

Volunteers learn new skills in the areas of carpentry, horticulture, plant maintenance and painting whilst helping to develop areas of Core Landscapes that many of our community volunteers are physically unable to do.

The income generated from CSR days brings in valuable revenue to the project whilst workers have a mental break from the office environment in a beautiful community setting:

A win-win result for all.



"Hidden Gem! We were in the middle of London but it seemed so far away...."

"I revelled in the chance to work with colleagues I don't usually and also felt the day was relaxed and de-stressing."

> "Therapeutic and FUN. Thank you Core for a great morning."

"It was a great afternoon with a nice project to work on. Lovely to be surrounded by so many flowers and plants. Inspiring and refreshing."

Hot off the Press

Experienced at moving Core Landscapes hit the ground running after its relocation to the new Whitechapel site in August 2017 having spent 8 years in Canning Town Newham. We wasted no time in maximising engagement at the new site to promote mental health in the community.





Empowering people to improve their physical and mental health through horticulture

BBC TV Presenter and garden designer Mark Lane is Core Landscapes new patron.

Awards won

Core Landscapes has won 4 major awards in the past year alone. A huge achievement for the 400+ people directly involved in making it happen and reflects the support the project has.



OVERALL WINNER "Our Community Award" London in Bloom Award 2018



OUTSTANDING "It's Your Neighbourhood Award" 2018





GOLD "London in Bloom" 2018



BEST CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING Groundwork Award finalist 2017



A big thank you to all our Funders

- Tower Hamlets Public Health
- East End Foundation Trust
- Mayors Greener City Fund
- **Mercers Trust**
- Tower Hill Trust

Support and Partnerships

An invitation to move from Newham to Tower Hamlets from Tower Hamlets Public Health, Barts and the Whitechapel Vision Delivery Team was offered to Core Landscapes after the lease to the current site in Canning Town drew to close in Spring 2017.

The current Whitechapel site is next to the Royal London hospital right in the heart of the bustling East End is an ideal new site to work from with a high footfall, densely populated area with a thriving and connected community sector.

During the past year, Core Landscapes has worked with or been promoted by numerous other organisations and charities including:

Women's

Network

THRIVE

Environment

E1 Networking

Sydenham

Gardens

Sustain

Merchant

Taylors

- **Tower Hamlets Public Health**
- **BARTS Trust**
- Whitechapel Vision **Delivery Team**
- Queen Mary University of London
- Social Farms and Gardens
- Kew Gardens

Showcase Site visits attended by:

- Chief Exec Public Health England -Duncan Selbie
- Chair of NHS Improvement Dame Dido Harding
- Chief Executive, London Borough of **Tower Hamlets - Will Tuckley**
- **Director of Public Health Somen** Banerjee
- Centre for London think tank

Core Landscapes has supported with advice, signposting or site visits:

- John Smith Children's Centre (Whitechapel)
- Madani Girls School (Whitechapel)
- Organic Lea (Enfield)
- Cordwainers Garden (Hackney)
- Jackson's Lane (Haringey)
- Wolves Lane (Haringey)
- Grow Tottenham (Tottenham)
- Octopus (Islington)

Advocates of Core Landscapes

- Alwen Williams Chief executive CBE
- Jackie Sullivan Managing Director Royal London Hospital + Mile End Hospitals
- Ian Basnett Public Health Director Barts Health Trust and Associate Medical Director
- Ian Peters Chair Non-executive directors Barts Health NHS Trust

- Healthy Communities Programme Lead - Abigail Gilbert
- Health Protection Agency Deborah Turbitt
- Consultant in Public Health Abigail Knight
- Young Foundation Head of Health **Programmes - Tony May**
- Consultant in Public Health Katie Cole

- Brady Arts Centre (Tower Hamlets)
- Daubeney Field Forever (Hackney)
- Bethnal Green Walkers (Tower Hamlets)
- Met Film School
- Eco Grandad
- Make Good
- Eden City Outreach
- Grounded Eco Therapy
- Product of a Postcode

• Tower Hamlets Public Heath - Chris Lovett

- Whitechapel Vision Delivery Team -Mahbub Anam
- Dr Graham Foster Consultant Hepatologist QMUL
- Kenny Hanlon- Associate Director of **Estates and Facilities**



Core Landscapes - What next?

"In total, an estimated 30,000 adults in Tower Hamlets have symptoms of a common mental health problem - with around 15,900 people known to their GP to have depression, around 3,300 people known to have a serious mental illness, and around 1,150 people living with dementia." (www.towerhamletsccg.nhs.uk/our-work/mental-health)

Tower Hamlets has a high prevalence of mental health problems:

- The fourth highest proportion of people with depression in London
- Highest rates of psychosis in east London (GP registers)
- Highest prescribing rate for anti-psychotic medication in primary care
- Third highest prescription rate of anti-depressants in London

(www.towerhamletsccg.nhs.uk/our-work/mental-health)

At Core Landscapes:

- People respond positively to the natural environment
- Nature is used to help people recover and manage mental ill health
- Collaboration brings people together creatively to benefit the wider community
- People are able to support each other in their recovery ٠
- \rightarrow Tower Hamlets is under pressure for more and more housing.
- \rightarrow There is a need to make the most of green spaces wherever they may be to promote positive mental health for everyone.

Biophilia "an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life"

- Academic verification has proven the benefits of gardening on mental health
- (All gardeners know this)
- The NHS is buckling
- People do not just need clinical care to aid recovery or manage symptoms
- People want opportunities to manage their own mental wellbeing
- Core Landscapes offers excellent Social Return on Investment
- Core Landscapes greatly benefits both individuals and the wider community

Core Landscapes has dynamic potential to deliver more services and opportunities for many more people in Tower Hamlets. We have just scratched the surface of responding to need and delivering results for individuals.

The local community has told us they want active green spaces like Core Landscapes in their neighbourhood to use the project in the ways that suit them. With continued support and funding, we can increase staff capacity and greatly increase service delivery and opening times offering more opportunities to more people to use horticulture and nature to help manage mental health and wellbeing and aid personal progressions and individual fulfilment.

We can continue to offer a place of respite for workers, residents, patients and visitors and be a place of inspiration for other meanwhile spaces across London and beyond.

"I am so happy in this Whitechapel area with all the dead building there is a beautiful secret garden which blows your mind away. I'm appreciative and so grateful that there is a small garden full of life that helps us appreciate how simple things in life make us happy. Thank you for letting us experience a little piece of heaven. It helps us taste life and appreciate the moment."



Core Landscapes Overall Winner 'Our Community Award" RHS London in Bloom 2018

corelandscapes

Core Landscapes Community plant nursery and garden

Stepney Way off Turner Street Whitechapel E1 2JL

Open Tuesdays & Thursdays 10am - 4pm

For more information, please contact:

Nemone Mercer Core Landscapes Manager email: nmercer@corearts.co.uk tel: 07585 770 868

www.core-landscapes.co.uk

Geommunitymeanwhilegarden

How to get there:

- Buses nearby on Whitechapel Road: 25, 106, 205 and 254
- Buses nearby on Commercial Road: 15, 115 and D3
- Tube station: Whitechapel Hammersmith and City line / District line / London Overground

(core landscapes is a 5 minute walk from Whitechapel tube)



Core Landscapes is a branch of the award-winning mental health charity Core Arts in Hackney. www.corearts.co.uk www.facebook.com/coreartshackney www.twitter.com/coreartshackney charity no: 1043588 | company no: 2985939

core arts promoting positive mental health.

