



**Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil:** CRK-C155-DEV21-358

**Údar:** Andrew Smith

**Stádas:** Submitted

**Aighneacht:** Sustainable future Cork: it's time to move

**Comhairliúchán:**

Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

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## Cork city needs therapeutic gardens

**Caibidil:** Volume 1 - Written Statement» 6. Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Space and

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**Ábhair:** Active recreation and open  
space

The addition of therapeutic gardens is a key intervention that supports many health and green objectives for Cork City and its people. Allocating and funding therapy gardens around deprived suburbs of Cork would be a step forward to improving the well-being of those in the city who most have need of it. We strongly recommend that a place be found for therapeutic gardens, in the Development Plan and in the city.

Research has shown that gardening addresses many symptoms of mental ill-health and the broader associated difficulties. Benefits come from physical activity, practical skills development, inter-relational and personal integration, and the innate effects of being in contact with nature.

Gardening promotes a faster recovery from mental fatigue [1], improves sleep [2], improves concentration and memory [3], decreases anger [4] and stress levels [5], increases the ability to cope with stress [6], increases positive mood [7], decreases the reliance on anti-depressants [8] and the severity of depression and anxiety [9], and refocuses away from pain [10].

Working as a gardening community extends the gardeners' social network [11] which increases the capacity to recover from disease [12], improves a sense of personal control in social settings [13], increases motivation [14], de-stigmatises by providing a new aspect to self-identity [15], increases a sense of belonging [16] and correlates to an increased positive relationships with others [17].

Growing plants and produce provides enjoyment for the tangible benefits of gardening [18], creates a sense of accomplishment and improves self-esteem [19], increases self-confidence [20], improves personal productivity [21], widens learning of a range of transferable life skills and correspondingly increases gardeners' employability [22].

Caring for plants encourages creativity and self-expression [23], taking responsibility for oneself [24], reinforces a sense of personal agency [25], and powerfully reverses the dependency role sustained during illness [26].

Gardening offers many metaphors that can assist processing painful thoughts with positive framing [27], bring about hope from nature's life cycles [28] and a sense of transition and change [29], create coherence in personal life-stories [30] and promote goal-oriented behaviour where needed [31]. Being in contact with nature grounds the gardener to be able to take manageable risks for change [32].

For all references above, see <https://naturestudio.ie/mental-health/the-benefits>

**Eochairfhocail:** therapeutic gardens, mental well-being, health

***Main opinion:***

The addition of therapeutic gardens is a key intervention that supports many health and green objectives for Cork City and its people.

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***Main requests:***

A place should be found for therapeutic gardens, in the Development Plan and in the city. The council's support should include the provision of land and ongoing financial support for the scheme.

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***Main reasons:***

A growing body of research shows that therapeutic gardening improves well-being, and addresses many symptoms of mental ill-health and the broader associated difficulties.

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**Documents Attached:** Níl