

Evaluation of the Master Gardener Programme in Medway

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Evaluation of the Master Gardener Programme in Medway

Final Report for Garden Organic
4th November 2014

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the Master Gardener Programme in Medway. The delivery of the programme in Medway is an extension of the pilot Master Gardener Programme funded by the Big Lottery for a period of three years (2010-2013). The pilot programme was operational in Warwickshire, North London, South London, Norfolk and Lincolnshire (with public health funding). The Master Gardener Programme launched in 2013 in Medway with public health funding from Medway Council and followed the same structure as the programme that was delivered during the pilot phase. The team from Coventry University was commissioned to evaluate the pilot programme over four rounds (2011-2014) (see Master Gardener Evaluation Strategy Report 2012; Master Gardener Programme Evaluation 2013; Master Gardener Round 4 Evaluation 2014), and as such used the same tools for an evaluation of the programme in Medway for comparison which focused on households and volunteers who had been involved for around 12 months.

The report focuses on the analysis of the quantitative data generated from the six household questionnaires and six Master Gardener questionnaires. Data from the four interviews with households and the focus group with Master Gardener volunteers are presented throughout the report. Due to the relatively small sample for Medway, comparisons to the national evaluation are made throughout; there appear to be large consistencies with the findings (across the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups) from the national evaluation giving confidence that the programme in Medway has had a similar impact¹. In addition, the Medway evaluation incorporated video diaries with participating households to provide further insight into the impact of the programme.

The report presents results for the households first, followed by the volunteers. In order to clearly address the requirements of objective 5 of the business plan², each section is structured around environmental, health and social impacts, as well as views on the programme.

¹ The national evaluation draws on data from 155 household questionnaires, 144 Master Gardener questionnaires, 12 Master Gardener focus groups and 46 household interviews.

² Objective 5 of the MG programme is “to demonstrate the health, environmental and social impact of the project on the lives of those households involved and on local food systems” (Master Gardener Business Plan, November 2008).

The findings presented in this report have provided some encouraging insights into the impact of the Master Gardener programme on the lives of those involved in Medway. The findings are largely consistent with those from the national evaluation. In terms of the fundamental aim of the programme, to encourage people to grow their own food, this has clearly been achieved with nearly 70% of household respondents having **increased the amount of food they grow** (compared to 80% nationally). Moreover, 80% of respondents have also **increased the range of food** they grow since joining the programme (compared to 76% nationally). The programme has also had an effect on volunteers as for 50% the **amount of food they grow has increased** (compared to 55% nationally), and for 83% the **range of food they grow has increased** (compared to two thirds nationally). Overall, 80% of householders agreed that their **knowledge of food growing has increased** substantially (compared to 88% nationally). Similarly, over 94% of volunteers informed that their **knowledge of food growing has also increased** (the same proportion as nationally). It is clear that the households value the knowledge and support of the volunteers – **78% were overall satisfied** with the advice (the same proportion as national). Again, the results show that **100% of volunteers are overall satisfied** with the advice from their coordinator (compared to 95% nationally).

The findings provide some indications of the **health impacts** of the programme. 75% of household respondents had **increased the number of hours spent growing food** (compared to just over two thirds nationally); this is also the case for 50% of volunteer respondents (44% nationally). For 50% of household respondents said their **satisfaction with their health had increased** since participating in the programme (compared to 24% nationally); this has stated the same for the majority of volunteers (satisfaction with health had increased for 24% of volunteers nationally). However, it is in terms of **life satisfaction and well-being** that some of the most interesting results have occurred. The household results show that the average life satisfaction score before taking part in the programme was 6.8 (out of 10). Around one year in to the programme, **the average life satisfaction score has increased** by 0.8, to 7.6 (compared to an increase of 0.7 from 7.2 to 7.9 nationally). Focusing on the Master Gardener volunteers, the **average life satisfaction score** since participating in the programme for one year has **increased** by 1 point, from 7.3 to 8.3 (which is similar to the national data which showed a 1 point increase from 7.1 to 8.1). When asked to state the extent to which involvement in the programme has influenced life satisfaction, **80% of household respondents** (77% nationally) **and 83% of volunteer respondents stated that it had, to a little or large extent** (compared to 84% nationally).

In terms of **environmental impacts**, one of the key indicators is that 20% of householders (one third nationally) had **increased the amount of food and waste composted** whereas for most volunteers the amount they compost has stayed the same (compared to it increasing for 29% of volunteers nationally).

In terms of the **social impact** of the programme, some intriguing results are emerging in terms of expenditure on food, which has a strong potential impact on family budgets. When asked whether the amount spent on food has changed since participating in the programme, 50% of household respondents stated that it had not changed (65% nationally) and 50% **stated that the amount they spend on food had actually decreased** (29% nationally) since participating in the programme, which seems quite significant given the rising food prices generally over the last few years; most volunteer respondent stated that the amount they spend of food has stayed the same (this had decreased for 24% of volunteer respondents nationally). The decline in expenditure was due to purchasing less food due to **consumption of home grown produce**.

Interestingly, household respondents and volunteer respondents stated that they **had made changes to where they buy their food**, buying locally being the main change and buying less from supermarkets. These findings suggest that the programme may be having an impact on local food systems by encouraging people to 'think local' in terms of food.

The evaluation has highlighted some strong impacts of the programme on the lives of the volunteers and the households. An important point to make is that a **number of impacts** are evident; the project seems to have a wide ranging impact on participants rather than just one particular area. The findings also point towards an interconnectedness of the benefits the programme delivers. Although the sample size for Medway is relatively small, strong comparisons can be made to the national evaluation across areas giving confidence that it is having a similar impact.

1.0 Introduction

This report presents the results from the evaluation of the Master Gardener Programme in Medway. As the programme in Medway is relatively new, this presented a limited sample size. Overall, questionnaires were distributed to 18 Master Gardeners and 28 householders. There was a 33% response rate for Master Gardeners equalling 6 completed questionnaires, and a 21% response rate for householders again resulting in 6 completed questionnaires. The response rate for Medway participants is comparable to the wider programme evaluation, although slightly lower for the Master Gardener responses.

The report firstly presents the findings from the questionnaires and the four semi-structured interviews with households participating in the programme as well as the analysis of the video diaries from six households, followed by the results from the Master Gardener questionnaires and focus group. The report is structured thematically, by the Key Evaluative Impacts (Table 4, page 15) and draws on comparisons to the overall evaluation of the Master Gardener Programme for a more meaningful analysis (due to the small sample size). A more complex analysis of the data would be made possible with a large sample size and more resources for the evaluation; as it stands this evaluation was undertaken with limited resource. The report then concludes and then proposes future recommendations for the programme in Medway.

2.0 Household Results

2.1 Questionnaire response rate

Twenty eight postal questionnaires were distributed by Garden Organic to registered Master Gardener households in Medway; there was a 21% response rate, equalling 6 completed questionnaires³. Although this is a fairly good response rate for a postal questionnaire, the overall sample size is relatively small. Due to this limitation, the findings from the Medway evaluation will be compared to the national Master Gardener programme evaluation⁴, which is based on a sample of 155 completed household questionnaires, and 46 household interviews.

2.2 Sampling

Following the same methodology as the national programme evaluation, households in Medway were chosen for follow up interviews by using a selective purposive sample to explore behavioural change. Behavioural change during round one was assessed against nine indicators of change (Table 2). This has allowed for a more significant sample base, reflecting behavioural change over a higher number of areas, for the follow-up interviews.

³ The following analysis is based on those respondents who provided answers to questions unless stated otherwise, and therefore may not always represent the overall population sample.

⁴ 799 postal questionnaires were distributed by Garden Organic to Master Gardener registered households in Warwickshire, Norfolk, North London, South London and Lincolnshire, with a response rate of 19.4% , equalling 155 completed questionnaires.

Table 2: Indicators of Behavioural Change

Q16. Has the amount of food you grow changed since participating in the programme?

Q18. Has the range of food you grow changed since participating in the programme?

Q20. Has the number of hours you spend growing food changed since participating in the programme?

Q22. Has your knowledge about growing food has changed since participating in the programme?

Q24. Has the amount of food and garden waste you compost changed since joining the programme?

Q31. Has the amount of fruit and vegetables you consume changed since participating in the programme?

Q34. Has the amount you spend on food changed since joining the programme?

Q36. Has your overall life satisfaction changed since joining the programme?

Q39. Has time spent with family and friends changed since joining the programme?

Table 3 shows the number of 'positive', 'negative' and 'no change' responses which were received across the nine questions listed in Table 3. By 'positive' behaviour change we mean behaviour which the Master Gardener Programme hopes to encourage (for example, composting more, eating more fruit and vegetables). Conversely, 'negative' change would be a reduction in composting, time spent gardening or amount of fruit and vegetables consumed. Table 3 shows that a total of 3 respondents had indicated 'positive' behaviour change across five or more questions. These respondents were prioritised for household interviews. The table also shows that 'negative' behaviour was non-existent in the sample. In order to increase the number of potential household interviews, respondents who showed 'no behaviour change' were also included in the sample. Therefore, the 3 respondents showing a positive behavioural change across 5 areas or more were contacted for an interview as well as the one respondent who had shown no behavioural change across 5 areas or more. These four respondents all took part in an interview.

Table 3: Evidence of behavioural change across evaluative areas											
	Number of responses										Total
Across 9 key evaluative areas	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Positive Behavioural Change	0	0	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
No Behavioural Change	0	3	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Negative Behavioural Change	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2.3 Household Interviews

Four household interviews were undertaken reflecting the sample of respondents portraying positive or no behavioural change. Interviews were carried out by the Medway Volunteer Coordinator (Garden Organic) following training from Coventry University. Interviews were conducted using a pre-prepared interview semi-structured schedule (discussed in the Evaluation Strategy Report, 2012) used in the national evaluation. Interviews were recorded, and then sent to the external transcription company, before being received by Coventry University for the analysis.

2.4 Key Evaluative Objectives

Table 4 illustrates the four 'Key Evaluative Impacts' which informs the programme evaluation, in order to meet Objective 5 of the Master Gardener Business Plan. Within each of the 'Key Evaluative Impacts' there are a number of 'headline questions' which structure this report in order to focus upon presenting the main findings. Additional questions from within the questionnaire will be included within this report where they provide useful supplementary information and accordingly, contribute to assessing the impacts of the programme.

Table 4: Key Evaluative Impacts and Headline Questions

Key Evaluative Impact	Headline Questions
Environmental Impacts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Composting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much food or garden waste do you compost and has this changed since joining the programme? • Is there anything which makes it difficult or prevents you from composting? 2. Amount of food grown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the amount of food you grow changed since joining the programme? 3. Space where produce is grown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you grow food?
Social Impacts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Food purchasing behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the amount you spend on food changed since joining the programme? • Have you made any changes to where the buy food since joining the programme? 5. Social activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How satisfied are you with their involvement in leisure activities / hobbies, and has this changed since joining the programme? 6. Social / community relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How satisfied are you with feeling part of a community, and their personal relationships, and has this changed since joining the programme?
Health and Wellbeing Impacts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Life satisfaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your life now, and one year ago? • To what extent do you feel that your participation in the programme has influenced your overall life satisfaction, and why? 8. Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How satisfied are you with your health, and do you feel this has changed since joining the programme? 9. Fruit and vegetable consumption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average per day how many pieces of fruit and vegetables do you eat, and has this changed since you joined the programme?
Views on the Programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Enjoyment in the programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you enjoy being part of the Master Gardener programme, please state why? • Would you change anything about the programme? 11. Advice from Master Gardener <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How satisfied are you with your advice from your Master Gardener? • Do you have any comments you would like to make about your Master Gardner? 12. Benefits from participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main benefit you have gained from taking part in the programme?

2.5 Profile of respondents

2.5.1 Profile of respondents: Age

As illustrated by Figure 1, all respondents are over the age of 40 with 50% of respondents aged 40-49. Equal proportions of respondents are aged 50-59, 60-69, and 70-79.

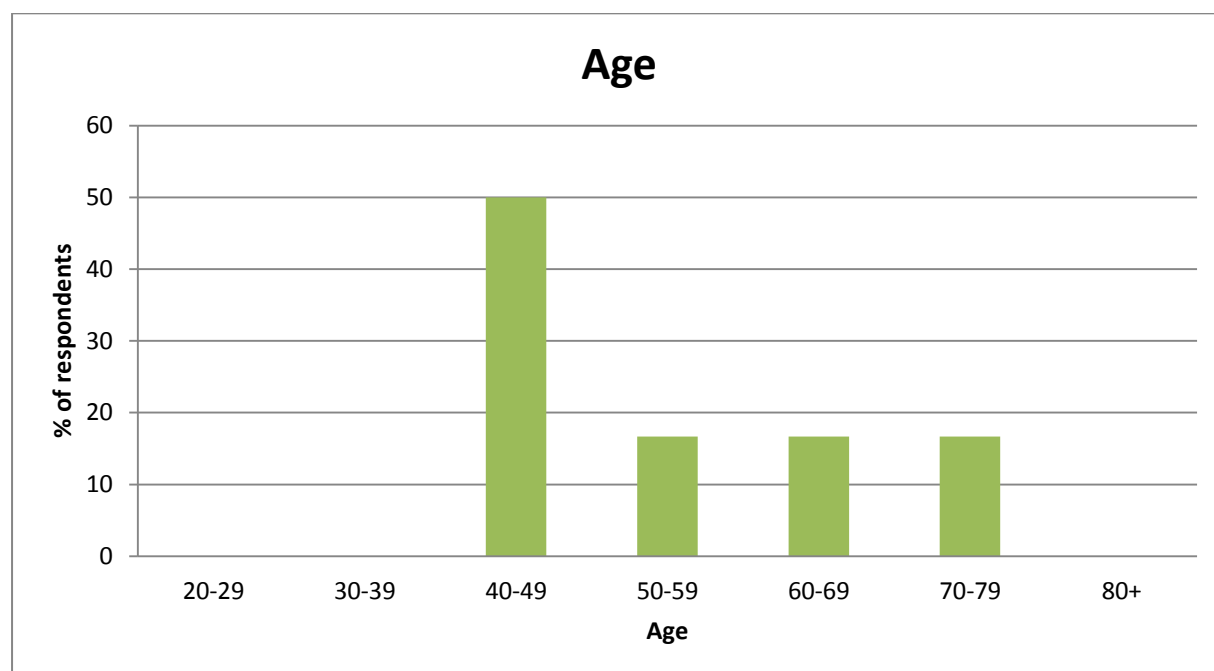


Figure1: Age of household respondents

2.5.2 Profile of respondents: Gender

Similar to the national evaluation there is a larger proportion of female respondents (66%), compared to 33% male respondents. The national evaluation showed 78% female respondents and 22% male respondents.

2.5.3 Profile of respondents: Ethnicity

All respondents are from White ethnic background, with one Irish respondent, four English, and one British respondent. The highest percentage of respondents (74%) from the national evaluation described themselves as English with small numbers belonging to other ethnic backgrounds.

2.5.4 Profile of respondents: Faith

Fifty percent of respondents are of Christian faith and the other 50% follow no faith. When comparing to the national evaluation, 44% of respondents belonged to the Christian faith, and 36% belonged to no faith group.

2.5.5 Profile of respondents: Household composition

As Figure 2 demonstrates, equal proportions of respondents either live on their own (40%) or are married or cohabiting with no (dependent) children (40%). One respondent is married or cohabiting with dependent children (20%). Within the national evaluation there were single parent families and other multi person households, and a slightly higher proportion of families and slight less single occupancy households.

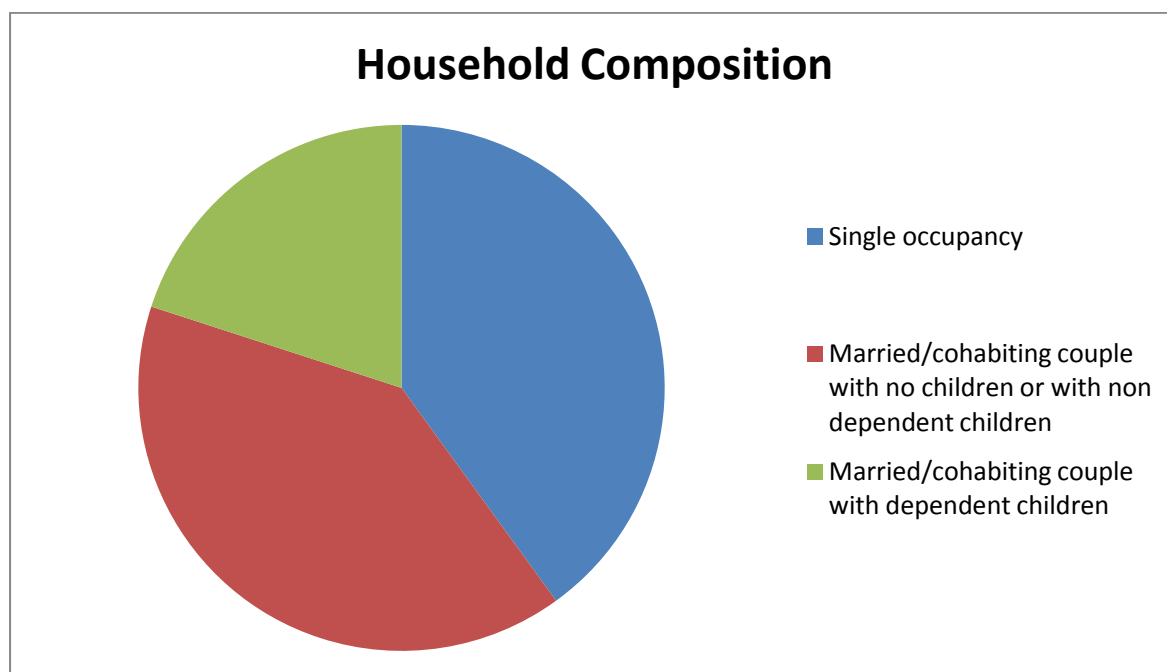


Figure 2: Household composition

2.5.6 Profile of respondents: Main occupation

The results reflect that half of respondents are in full time employment. One respondent is in part time employment, one respondent is long term sick or disabled, and another respondent is doing unpaid or voluntary work, showing a similar comparison to the national evaluation.

2.5.7 Profile of respondents: Highest qualification

When asked of their highest qualification, five out of the six participants responded to this question. Two respondent informed that they hold a degree or a higher degree one respondent have O Levels / GCSEs, and two respondents have A Levels, again showing no dissimilarities to the national data.

2.5.8 Profile of respondents: Housing type and ownership

There is a very even spread of respondents either living in a flat (33%), a terrace (33%), or a semi-detached house (33%). Although no major differences relating to housing type, the national evaluation saw respondents also living in a detached house, and in bungalows.

Regarding housing tenure, the majority (83%) of respondents have a mortgage on their property with one respondent fully owning their property. Within the national evaluation there were respondents also living in social housing and rented accommodation.

2.5.9 Profile of respondents: Household income

As demonstrated by Figure 3, 67% of respondents receive an annual household income of £28,001-£48,000. The same proportion of respondents receive a household annual income of between £14,001-£28,000 (17%) or £14,000 or under (17%). There were no respondents who receive a household income of £48,001 or more per annum. Findings are similar to the national evaluation, however there were households receiving an income of £14,001+ within this sample.

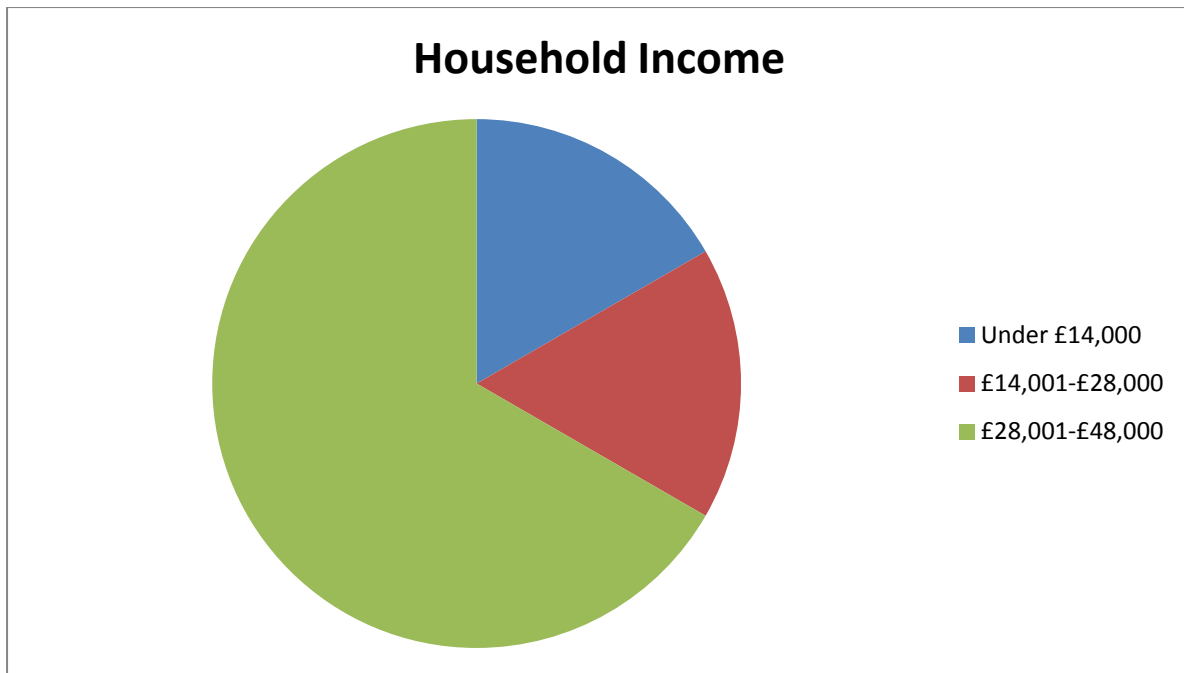


Figure 3: Annual household income

2.5.10 Profile of respondents: Summary

Section 2.5 has given insight into the profile of respondents. To summarise, the typical profile of respondents is middle aged (40-49) or older, female, English, Christian or of no religion), married or cohabiting with no children or non-dependent children or living on their own. Section 2.5 reflects that respondents typically work on a full time basis and have a mortgage on their property. Finally, for annual household income, the majority of respondents earn £28-001-£48,000. As previously stated, due to the small sample general conclusions cannot be made; however in most of the areas above, there are similarities to the national data.

2.6 Environmental Impacts

Key Evaluative Impact	Headline Questions
Environmental Impacts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Composting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much food or garden waste do you compost and has this changed since joining the programme? • Is there anything which makes it difficult or prevents you from composting? 2. Amount of food grown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the amount of food you grow changed since joining the programme? • Has the range of food you grow changes since joining the programme? 3. Space where produce is grown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you grow food?

2.6.1 Environmental Impacts: Composting

Half of respondents highlighted that they do not compost any of their food or garden waste at home. The other half of respondents compost a fair amount if not all of their household and garden waste either 80%, 90% and 100% (with one respondent composting each of these amounts). This shows that people are either engaged in home-composting or they aren't as opposed to being 'slightly' engaged. This is similar to the national data set, which shows a spread regarding the amount respondents compost but with peaks at with end of the scale (0% and 100%).

For 80% of respondents, as show in Figure 4, the amount of food and garden waste they compost has stayed the same since joining the programme, whereas for 20%, the amount they compost has increased. These findings are in-line with the national programme evaluation.

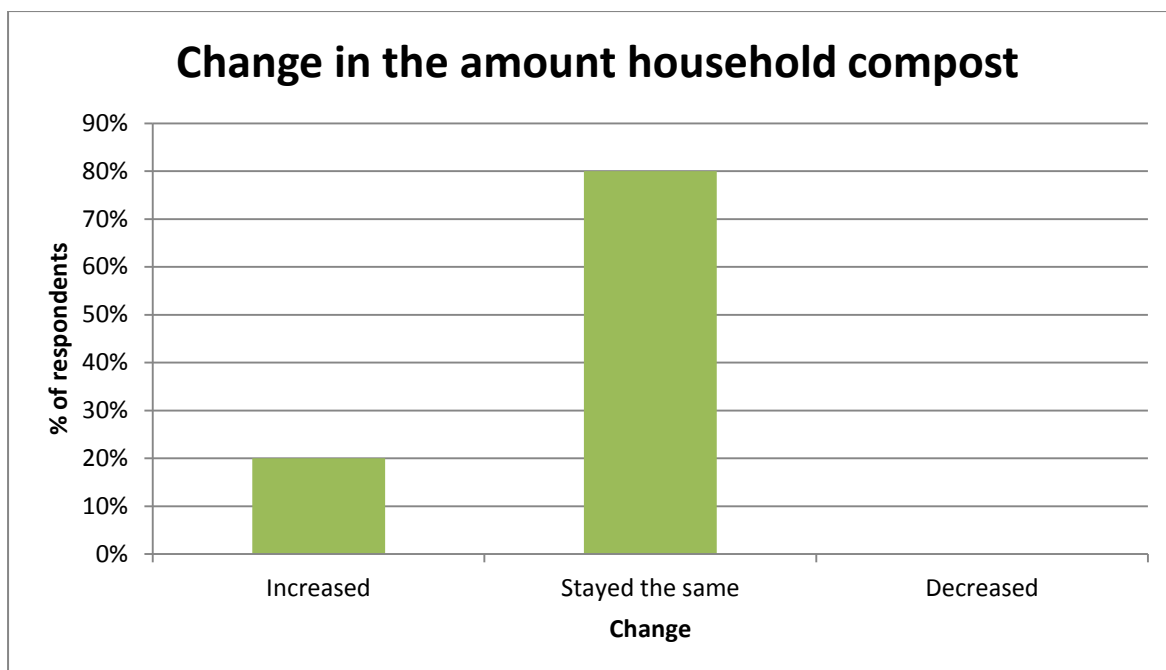


Figure 4: Change in composting

Respondents were asked whether there was anything that makes it difficult or prevents them from composting. Two respondents informed that they need to 'refine their technique' and 'better organise' their compost bin, whereas one responded highlighted that they are thinking to start composting in the near future. The national evaluation showed that a large difficulty for 25% of respondents was 'lack of space'; other barriers for small numbers of respondents included, external barriers (weather), a lack of desire, and pests.

Two respondents informed that they are currently engaged in home composting; another respondent through the programme has been inspired to start, whereas another slightly reluctant respondent was being encouraged by their Master Gardener to start composting! This demonstrates the wider role of the Master Gardener, not only in supporting food growing but encouraging other associated aspects of food growing such as composting, contributing to wider sustainable behaviours.

- One respondent demonstrates that being involved in the programme and having a knowledgeable Master Gardener to encourage them, has **enabled them to start composting**.

“Because we haven’t started it properly. We actually now have a composting bin, so we have progress. [So it’s something that you’d like to do more of then?] Oh yes, definitely.” (CU075).

*Mmm, so we’ve got one [water butt] up here and we’ve had another rain butt given to us which we’ve got now further down where the vegetables are, but we’ve just got to put some guttering to collect the water down there and then we’ll probably have a, and then another one for my shed. **So that’s another part of the little project. You see and those are things we never did before. So that is a direct result of doing this.** The composting we never did before which we will be doing. So that’s another direct result.” [CU075].*

- Another respondent spoke about how **passionate they were about composting food** waste in particular and how food waste recycling was something they were raised doing.

“I’ve had a compost bin in my house almost ever since I moved in [...] I hate food waste with a vengeance, so I’ve always been really keen to make best use of anything that I don’t use so that’s always gone in the compost bin and a lot of my garden waste has always gone in the compost bin. [...] I’ve always been aware of composting [...] we used to take stuff round to the pig swill bins you know, if we had food, the potato peelings in particular. That’s just something I’ve always done, food waste you know, I think is a dreadful thing for our society, I’ve always done my best not to do that.” [CU073].

- The final quote shows how one respondent isn’t particularly engaged with composting but recognises that his **Master Gardener is encouraging** him to do it.

[Why don’t you do any composting?] “Just don’t fancy it in the garden. Although our Master Gardener is going to give me a compost thing and he’s very into doing composting and stuff and he’s going to teach me how to compost apparently [...] he said it’s very good for the garden.” [CU076].

Although somewhat limited, the findings from the Medway evaluation support the themes coming out of the national evaluation; with a combination of composting behaviour increasing and staying the same. Respondents from the rural areas of Norfolk and

Lincolnshire recognised how composting contributes to the wider notion of sustainability in terms of it 'being good for the planet' or 'the right thing to do', reflecting moral attitudes. The economic benefit of composting was also recognised with the little effort it requires. Similar to the Medway findings, Master Gardener advice, in terms of helping respondents with what to compost was apparent in the initial evaluation. Respondents demonstrating no change in the amount they compost was based on three main reasons, 1) lack of space (particular for the London-based respondents), 2) lack of knowledge, and 3) having reached their limit. Further qualitative data from respondents in Medway is needed to further explore the potential barriers to composting, should this be an area of further interest.

2.6.2 Number and types of compost bins

Households were asked to state how many compost bins they have. One respondent informed they have four compost bins, and another respondent has five or more. These compost bins are a combination of wooden, plastic, and home-made. Respondents didn't report having any open heap compost.

The most common type of compost bin in the national evaluation was plastic, and the majority of respondents only had one compost bin.

2.6.3 Environmental Impacts: Amount and range of food grown

For the majority of respondents, the amount and range of food they grow has increased since participating in the programme. As Figure 5 demonstrates, 67% of respondents have increased the amount of food they grow and the range of food grown has increased for 80% of respondents. For some, the amount of food they grow has stayed the same (33%) as has the range of food they grow (20%). These findings are similar to those from the national programme evaluation, however nationally, for a small proportion of respondents the amount (2%) and range (1%) of food they've grown had decreased.

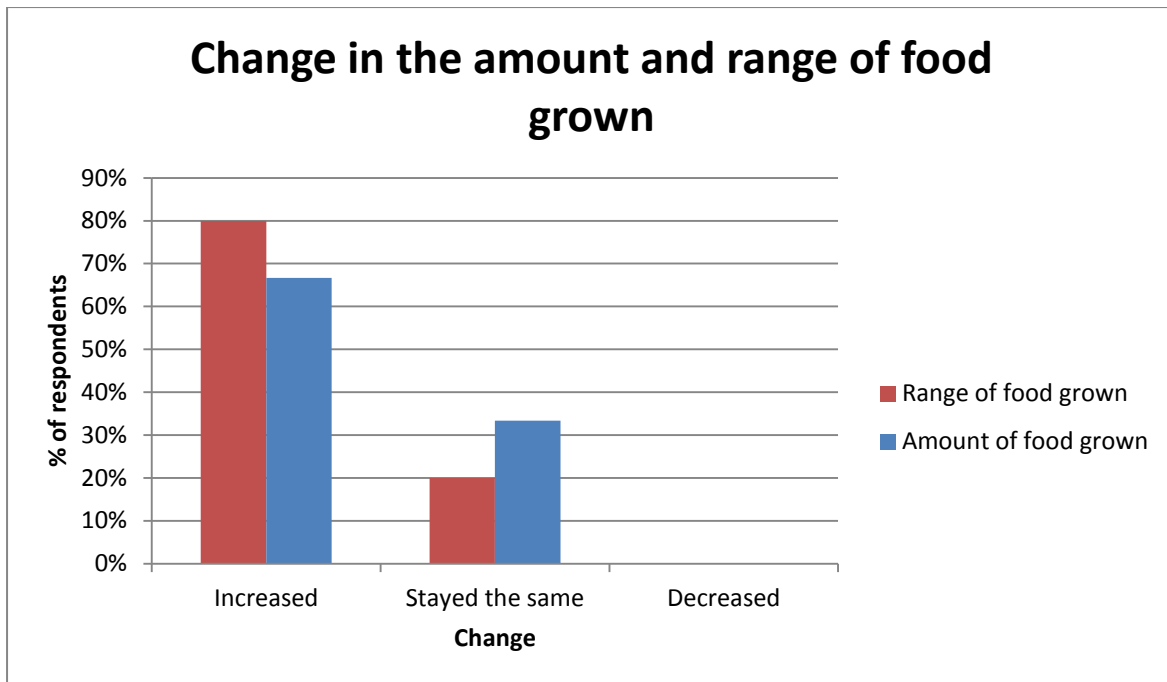


Figure 5: Change in amount and range of food grown

Respondents were asked the following question: “is there anything that makes it difficult or prevents you from growing more food, or from growing what you would like to grow?” One respondent stated that they are ‘just a beginner and needs time to learn the basics’. Another respondent likes ‘growing the foods they like’, so ‘range’ for them isn’t important. Finally, for one respondent a barrier is their ‘soil conditions’, and the amount of time they have available.

2.6.4 Environmental Impacts: Where food is grown

In terms of the space respondents grow their food, 4 (out of 5) respondents grow food in their garden, with one respondent using their greenhouse to grow food. The majority of respondent in the national evaluation also grew food in their garden.

2.7 Social Impacts

Key Evaluative Impact	Headline Questions
Social Impacts	<p>4. Food purchasing behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the amount you spend on food changed since joining the programme, why do you think this is?? Have you made any changes to where the buy food since joining the programme? <p>5. Social activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How satisfied are you with their involvement in leisure activities / hobbies, and has this changed since joining the programme? <p>6. Social / community relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How satisfied are you with feeling part of a community, and their personal relationships, and has this changed since joining the programme?

2.7.1 Social Impacts: Food purchasing behaviour

As illustrated in Figure 6, for 50% of respondents, the amount they spend on food has decreased since taking part in the programme. However, for 50% of respondents, the amount they spend on food has not changed. Results are based on 4 responses. The national data show that for a larger proportion on respondents the amount they spend on food had not changed, and a smaller number informed it had decreased for them, and for 7%, the amount they spent had increased.

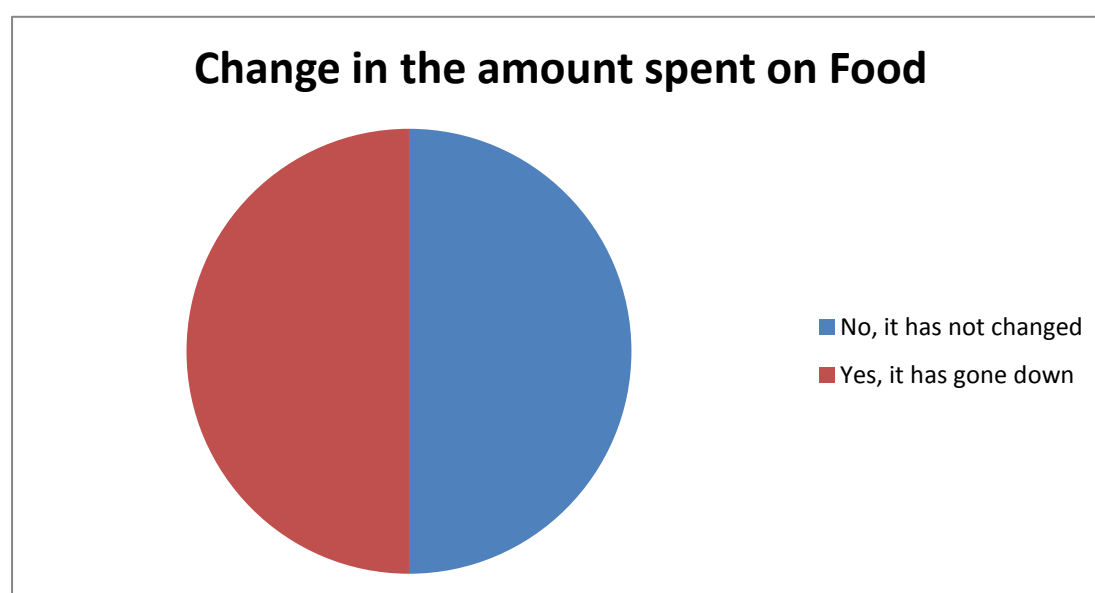


Figure 6: Changes in amount spent on food.

When respondents were asked to state why the amount they spend on food has *not changed*, one respondent felt it was *'too early to say'*. Two respondents gave a reason as to why the amount they spend on food has *decreased* since taking part in the programme:

- *'No longer buying potatoes or broccoli'*
- *'Rarely buy veg during the growing season'*.

Focusing on the national evaluation, the main reasons why people reported no change in the amount they spend on food was mainly because they didn't grow enough food, or the increase in the cost of food outweighed the savings made from growing their own food. For those respondents who reported a decreased in the amount spent on food, this was mainly because they were buying less food as they were eating more home grown food. Other reasons included undertaking more selective shopping, and a change in diet (e.g. eating seasonally).

Still concentrating on food purchasing, respondents were asked whether they had made any changes to where they buy their food over the past year or so. The majority of respondents (67%) had made changes, consequently 33% had not. Compared to the national data, more respondents in Medway have made changes, with these being similar to those included in the national evaluation around buying locally sourced food:

- *'Check the source more vigorously'*
- *'Now go to local butcher'*
- *'We now have a local butcher'*.

During the interviews, household respondents explained how their shopping behaviour had changed since taking part in the programme. Changes were mainly to do with buying less food due to growing more, buying local food and awareness of seasonality which were similar findings in the national evaluation (although 'taste' was another theme coming from the national level interviews). The following section demonstrates these by using quotes from the interviews.

- Spending less on food, or buying less vegetables

One respondent, who shops selectively at supermarkets to get the best deals, has **changed the amount of food they buy** since taking part in the programme. They informed that because “food prices have gone up”, **the amount they spend on food has stayed the same**, even though they are buying fewer vegetables.

“We just go where there’s the best deals really. Mainly you know, all the top supermarkets you know and stuff like that. The amount we buy has probably changed a little bit because obviously we don’t buy so many vegetables because we’re growing some.” [CU076].

*“I don’t actually have to buy too much fresh veg any more. ...] If I’ve brought it from the supermarket [it] would probably go off and I would probably find myself throwing it away which I find really frustrating. But **now I know how to store** my potatoes and my onions properly so with a bit of luck, the potatoes and the onions from the allotment are going to last me all winter, I’m not going to have to buy those now. [...] The beans have actually gone in the freezer. We’ve had lettuce for most of the year [...] it’s changed what I eat because rather than buying exotic stuff in the middle of winter **I’ve tended to use what we’ve grown.**” [CU073].*

Finally, one respondent also highlighted that they grow a lot of their own food.

“Yes we buy our food in Tesco ... but I’ve been growing it in the back garden ... I grow my own veg in my back garden ... beetroot I’ve always done myself ... I’ve got my own greenhouse and I eat the food at home as well as here, we take it home from here [community garden].” [CU077].

- Buying local food

For one respondent the flexibility and personal aspect of a local butcher and the knowledge of where their food comes from means that they’ve stopped buying from supermarkets since taking part in the programme. This particular respondent has also informed that **the amount they spend on food has decreased** due to growing more of their own and their awareness of seasonality and how to store food they’ve grown.

*“This has mainly been to do with my meat. [...] We’ve now got an **independent butchers** in the village and so now I don’t buy my meat from the supermarket, I always go to the butchers and he also sells eggs so I get my eggs there. So that’s changed. I actually don’t buy that sort of stuff at the supermarkets anymore.” [CU073].*

*“I like his provenance from this meat, **I know where his meat comes from.** [...] If I go in there at the right time I can actually say when you get the next one in can I have the ox heart please [...] I couldn’t do that at Tesco because they’d have no idea [...] because it all comes pre packed from somewhere. [...] Also **his eggs are cheaper** and are free range, I know where the eggs come from.” [CU073].*

- Awareness of seasonality

One respondent spoke about how they have **changed their shopping behaviour** since joining the programme. This is a clear demonstration of how growing your own food can influence awareness around local and seasonal food, as well as supporting local businesses and wanting to make your own food, and in turn **reducing the amount spent on food.**

*“The whole process has made us think different about food and where it comes from. It’s made us much more interested in **locally sourced foods** and reducing miles of food. What it’s also done is make me think differently about **seasonal food** [...] I tend to menu plan and prior to starting this [the programme] was oh we’ll have this, this and this, and it didn’t actually matter to me. I never thought, oh you don’t get strawberries at this time of this year [...] because you go to the supermarket and you can get anything you want. So now I’ve realised that we have to change a little bit of how we’re eating, so that’s been quite interesting.” [CU075].*

The respondent continued...

*“It’s been quite easy really [...] we’re having courgettes all the time and tomatoes all the time. **We go to the butchers** all the time now, every week and buy our meats down there. Bread, we’ve got back into **making our own bread** as well now.” [CU075].*

*“Because we are now at a point where we have got thing in the garden that we can cook ourselves, so we don’t have to buy potatoes any more, we don’t buy carrots, onions, garlic or courgettes, we don’t buy, chilies we **don’t buy anymore**. So things we would buy regularly on a weekly basis we get from the garden, we’ve grown it.” [CU075].*

2.7.2 Social Impacts: Amount spent on food

As Figure 7 illustrates, the highest proportion of respondents (60%) spend £40-£70 per week on food. Lower proportions informed that they spend £40 or less on food per week (20%), between £70-£100 per week on food (20%). The results are based on 5 responses and are similar to those results from the national evaluation although there some respondents reporting a weekly food spend over £100+ nationally.

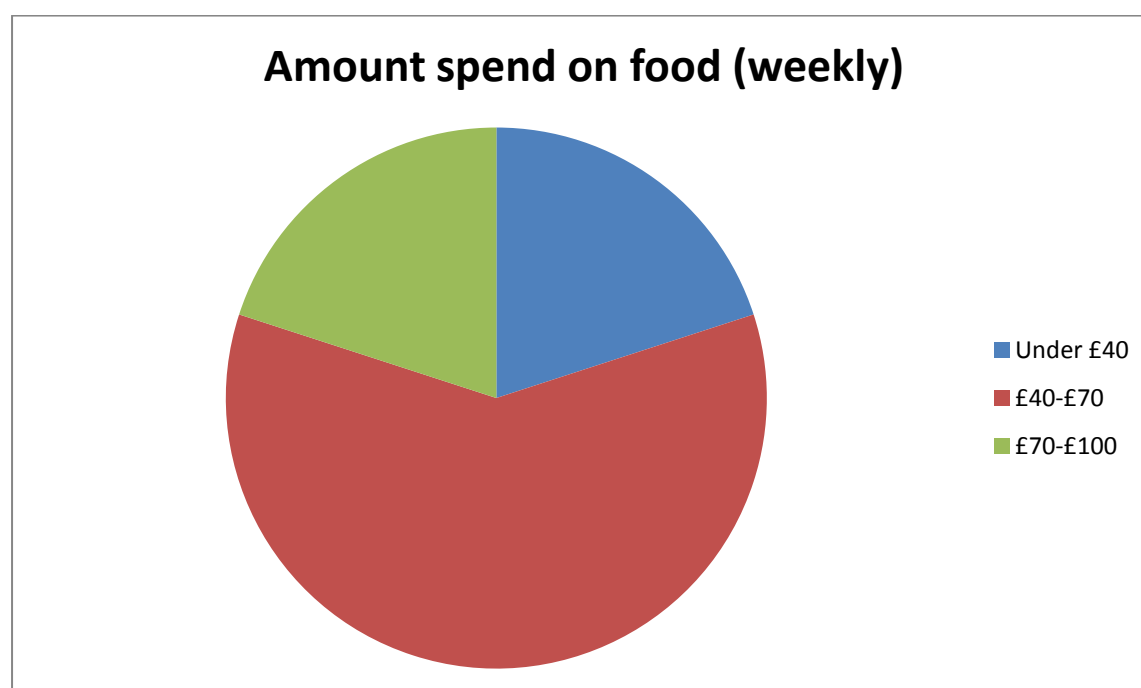


Figure 7: Amount spent on food.

2.7.3 Social Impacts: Social activities

The majority of respondents are either very satisfied (50%) or fairly satisfied (17%) with their involvement in leisure activities / hobbies. One third of respondents informed that they are neither dissatisfied or satisfied. This is similar to the national data apart from the fact that overall 12% of respondents were with fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this area of their life.

When looking at whether participant's satisfaction with involvement in leisure activities and hobbies has changed since taking part in the programme, 83% of respondents indicated that their satisfaction had stayed the same. For 1 of respondent however, it had increased. Again, this is a fair reflection of the national data which shows a slightly higher percentage of respondents reporting an increase, and 5% reporting it had decreased.

2.7.4 Social Impacts: Social and community relationships

The general trend shows that most respondents are generally 'satisfied' with feeling part of a community (60%) and their personal relationships (67%). Breaking this down, Figure 8 demonstrates that 50% of respondents are very satisfied and 17% of respondents are fairly satisfied with their health and one third are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Focusing on feeling part of a community, Figure 8 shows that 40% of respondents are very satisfied and 20% of respondents are fairly satisfied with this area of their life, with 40% of respondents neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Results are based on 5 responses for feeling part of a community.

The national evaluation showed that the highest proportions of respondents were generally 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their personal relationships (83%) and feeling part of a community (70%). Some respondents are 'neither satisfied or dissatisfied' with feeling part of a community (23%) and with their personal relationships (12%). Low numbers of respondents are either 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with feeling part of a community (7%) and with their personal relationships (6%).

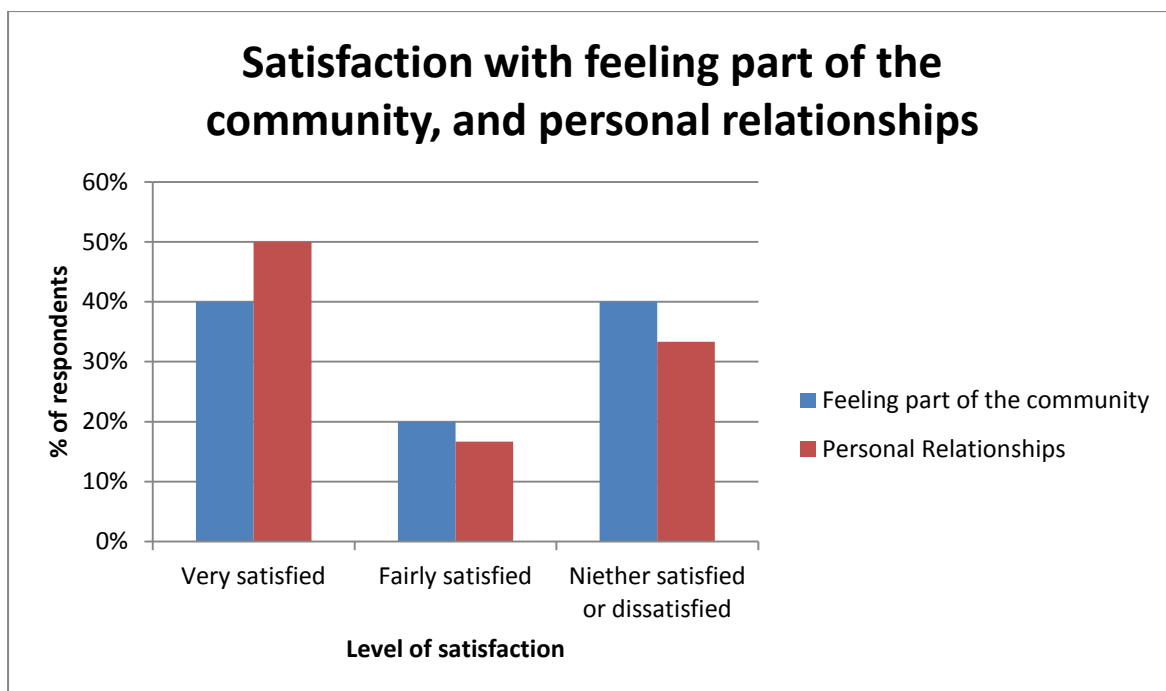


Figure 8: Satisfaction with feeling part of a community and personal relationships

When investigating whether there has been a change in satisfaction with feeling part of a community since taking part in the programme, Figure 9 shows that for 80% of respondents this has stayed the same and for 20% of respondents it has increased. Focusing on whether satisfaction with personal relationships has changed, one third reported it has increased, and two thirds felt it had stayed the same. (Satisfaction with feeling part of a community is based on 5 responses).

The national evaluation showed that for over one third (34%) of respondents feeling part of a community had increased, for 62% it had stayed the same and for 4% it had decreased. Regarding satisfaction with personal relationships for 24% this had increased, for 71% it had stayed the same and for a small number (5%) it had decreased.

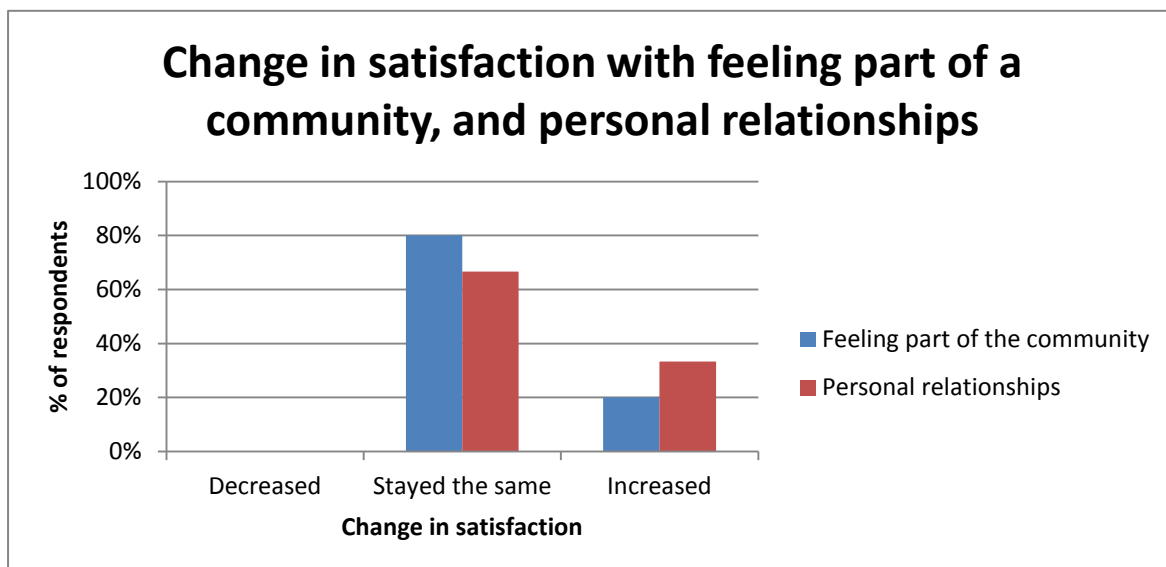


Figure 9: Change in satisfaction with feeling part of a community, and personal relationships

During the interviews, respondents reflected on ‘feeling part of a community’ and whether this had changed since participating in the programme.

- Contact with neighbours

One respondent reflected on the contact and communication they have with their neighbours, with food growing being the main point of conversation.

“I’ve been able to have conversations with neighbours about things, so you know my neighbour...we’ve got quite a cosmopolitan area, my neighbour is Peruvian, and my neighbours next door but one, next door to him are South African. So we have conversations about growing things and who’s grown what. [...] I’m really hoping to get some clues next year from my South African neighbours about stuff they grow and see whether or not we can do something like that just to give something different, that would be quite good fun.” [CU073].

- Sharing with neighbours

Growing their own food for another respondent has enabled them to give surplus produce to their neighbours.

“We hand out a lot of our food that we grow because we either grow to little or too much. [Who do you hand it out to?] Our neighbours [were you doing that before the Master Gardener Programme] No. [...] it’s nice that if you do grow more than what you can eat you can hand it out to people.” [CU076].

- Contact with Master Gardener

The fact that some respondents are actually spending time with their Master Gardener (and sometimes their families) is a contribution towards a ‘sense of community’ due to the increase in social contact around a common topic.

*“I wouldn’t really talk to [my Master Gardener] if I didn’t have him as my Master Gardener you know, and his son and his wife. I’m not a shy person by anything, but I help a lot of people out and you know, it’s just socialising and that. **There’s always something to talk about isn’t there when they come round** or you know, oh I’ve grown these, here’s a bag full you know sort of thing.” [CU076].*

- Part of another community

Being part of the programme opens up opportunities for people to meet other people and have contact with people (as shown above) as well as providing the opportunity to do something different and to be part of the wider Master Gardener community.

*“**It’s actually quite sociable** in as much as it gives you something to think about, you go to the garden centre, you go to different places, I’ve been on day things with the Medway Master Gardener, [my Master Gardener] has been round. So it’s one thing in isolation, but it does actually grow little arms and legs.” [CU075].*

As the programme also increases individual skill sets, this enables such skills to be shared within the community.

*“Monday is my day off so I do gardening when I, every Monday and then I can go out and do my own garden. And I do a lady’s garden as well when she rings me up, it’s an old lady I do so **I help her out**. She’s got a big pond so I help her out with her pond as well.” [CU077].*

These themes were also apparent within the national evaluation, particularly increased contact with neighbours and meeting new people. The national evaluation also drew on experiences of ‘meaningful’ or ‘quality’ conversations.

2.7.5 Satisfaction with time spent with friends and family

Respondents were asked whether they feel that their time spent with friends and family had changed since joining the programme. For two thirds of respondents it has stayed the same and for one third of respondents this had increased.

Although there is a higher number of respondents experiencing an increase in satisfaction with time spent with friends and family, the findings are not too dissimilar to the national evaluation where for 87% of respondents it had stayed the same and for 11% it had increased, and for 2% it had decreased.

Whether satisfaction had changed regarding time spent with friends and family since participating in the programme was something that was discussed in the interviews. The following quotes demonstrate why respondents were more satisfied with the time spend with friends or family. The notion of ‘fitting’ food growing in as an additional activity, and ‘finding the balance’ was something apparent throughout the interviews. Also the element of it being a ‘fun’ activity came out of the interviews.

- Time with friends

*“In some ways you see actually doing the allotment means that I actually have less time to spend with friends you see. But I’ve got quite a busy life and you have to sort of fit things in. So the allotment fitted in [...] it hasn’t taken time out of spending time with other friends, I mean I’ve **made new friends** because I’ve got people on the allotment [...] it’s not really changed, **it’s a question of finding balance.**” [CU073].*

- Time with family

*“It’s growing, **it’s fun with the kids and a bit of bonding**” [CU076].*

*“I’ve just made time to work in the garden and do **something for us, the whole family**, Toby, Kate, Pippa, my daughter and son, my partner.”⁵ [...] Gardening is definitely the second [activity] I do really, other than work. **It just involves the whole family** instead of just me and my son.” [CU076].*

*“I had to borrow my mother’s preserving pans much to her amusement to actually make stuff! It was also really rather nice because I took a whole load of stuff [produce] **down to my mums and we made some stuff together** which we haven’t done for a long time. I mean mum is in her 80s now and to be able to manhandle a preserving pan and things isn’t something she can do. I can’t remember if it was chutney or jam but we did it quite well, and that was **really quite fun** and something that she got out of it because she wouldn’t have been able to do it for a while. [...] I probably would have gone to see mum anyway, but we just did some better stuff.” [CU073].*

For those respondents stating that their satisfaction with time spent with friends and family had not changed since taking part in the programme this was because they felt as though they already spent a lot of time doing things with friends or family. There is one quote below to illustrate this:

“We sort of do things together anyway, we spend a lot more time in the garden, we do spend a lot more time in the garden together, but we would have been doing other stuff together.” [CU075].

2.7.6 Social Impacts: Household participation

Regarding household participation, 67% of respondents undertake activities to do with the programme primarily on their own; 17 % undertake activities with their spouse or partner, or as a family (17%).

Respondents were asked whether anyone else was connected to their involvement in the Master Gardener Programme – results from the question are also displayed in Table 5. The results show that one respondent indicated that a friend (or friends) are involved in the programme with them and another respondent in involved with a community group.

⁵ Names have been changed.

These findings are in line with the national evaluation, although due to the large sample, there was a wider variety of responses, but with low numbers (e.g. participation with grandchildren or another family member, or carer, or neighbour).

Table 5: Household participation and involvement in the programme	
	Percentage of respondents
Who specifically in your household takes part in the programme?	
Myself	67%
Spouse / partner	17%
Spouse / partner and child(ren)	17%
Is there anyone else connected to your involvement in the programme?	
Friends(s)	50%
Community / voluntary group / organisation	50%

2.7.7 Social Impacts: Communication with Master Gardener

Although household communication with their Master Gardener varies, 60% of respondents communicate with their Master Gardener on an 'as and when' basis', with 20% on a weekly basis, and 20% every two months. Results are based on 5 responses. Household and Master Gardener communication in the national evaluation was also varied, but only 30% of respondents reported an 'as and when' communication, with more highlighting a more structured communication (e.g. 21% communicating weekly, 19% every fortnight and 13% on a monthly basis).

During the interviews, household respondents were asked to comment on the support they receive from their Master Gardener. The following comments demonstrate that the support given by Master Gardeners are in the area of guiding and mentoring, taking a genuine interest, being a knowledgeable contact and providing practical support. The personal and flexible aspect to the support given by Master Gardeners is apparent and clearly appreciated – this is something that was also found in the national evaluation.

"[So how do you work with] your Master Gardener up there [at community garden]? How does [your Master Gardener] sort of help you?] Well she don't help me, because I, she helps all the others there. Then I'll go to her to see what

needs doing, but I'll go to my patch because I'll know that I need weeding in my patch so I'll weed my rhubarb area because that's my area." [CU077].

"The overall form of the programme is very good because I've not been left alone. If I want help I just phone him you know and help is at the end of a telephone or I'll pop round in a minute. My Master Gardener lives round the corner you know, he walks round, has a look, tells me what I should be doing, what I've done wrong. You know how to get rid of stuff. Yes, it's very, it's very good." [CU076].

"I enjoy having the support, I've enjoyed having you know, somebody who is interested in what you're doing and that's knowledgeable, and that's able to come and say well, you know, give advice, do this, do that, and support from that point of view. I've enjoyed the whole thing." [CU075].

For one respondent the practical aspect, the practical learning of the Master Gardener Programme which is supported and encouraged by the Master Gardeners, was for them, one of the biggest impacts:

"I've learnt, I've learnt a whole shed load of stuff that I never knew that I'd needed to know, which is always good. I like knowing things. I mean I had no idea that I needed to know about tomato blight and trees and cherry [...] and [my Master Gardener] had always been, he's much keener for us to actually go away and find something out. [...] Something that somebody tells you all the time isn't something that you're likely to remember. You really need to go away and look it up yourself so that you've learnt it in your way, so that tends to be the right... You know, the difference between shallots and onions and the different potatoes, you know, what potatoes are going to go where and you know, shall we move this here to here. And that, it's been a real enjoyment actually finding these things out." [CU073].

2.7.8 Social Impacts: Motivation for participating in the programme:

For half of respondents, to gain more knowledge or improve their knowledge was a key motivational factor for their participation in the programme. Other reasons for participation include a desire to start a hobby, an interest in gardening, and a desire to grow food and to do something outdoors.

To improve or to gain knowledge was a key motivational factor for households in the national evaluation (48%). Other main reasons for participation centred around wanting help and advice (19%), wanting to improve their garden space (10%) and having the programme recommended to them (10%). Therefore, we can see a difference in terms of the Medway participants having more of a desire to have a hobby or to grow food / be outdoors (although this was a key motivation for 6% of households in the national evaluation).

2.7.9 Social Impacts: Personal goal

Only two respondents stated that they had a goal at the beginning of the programme. The goals these two households had are 1) to growing more vegetables, and 2) to learn how to grow vegetables, and to show their family how to do so. Both respondents indicated that these goals had been met.

Findings from the national evaluation show that 69% of respondents reported having a goal at the beginning of the programme. Out of those respondents who did have a goal, 79% indicated that they had achieved it (but the remaining 21% of respondents did not indicate that they have not achieved their goal). Personal goals were mainly around 'growing own food' (50%), to 'improve productivity of garden' (11%) and to 'gain a better understanding of growing food' (10%).

2.7.10 Social Impacts: Knowledge of food growing

Respondents were asked whether they felt that their knowledge of food growing has changed since participating in the programme. Figure 10 shows that 80% of respondents felt their knowledge had increased and 20% felt it had stayed the same. Results are based on 5 responses. These findings are very similar to those from the national evaluation (88% of households reported their knowledge of food growing had increased with 12% reporting it had stayed the same).

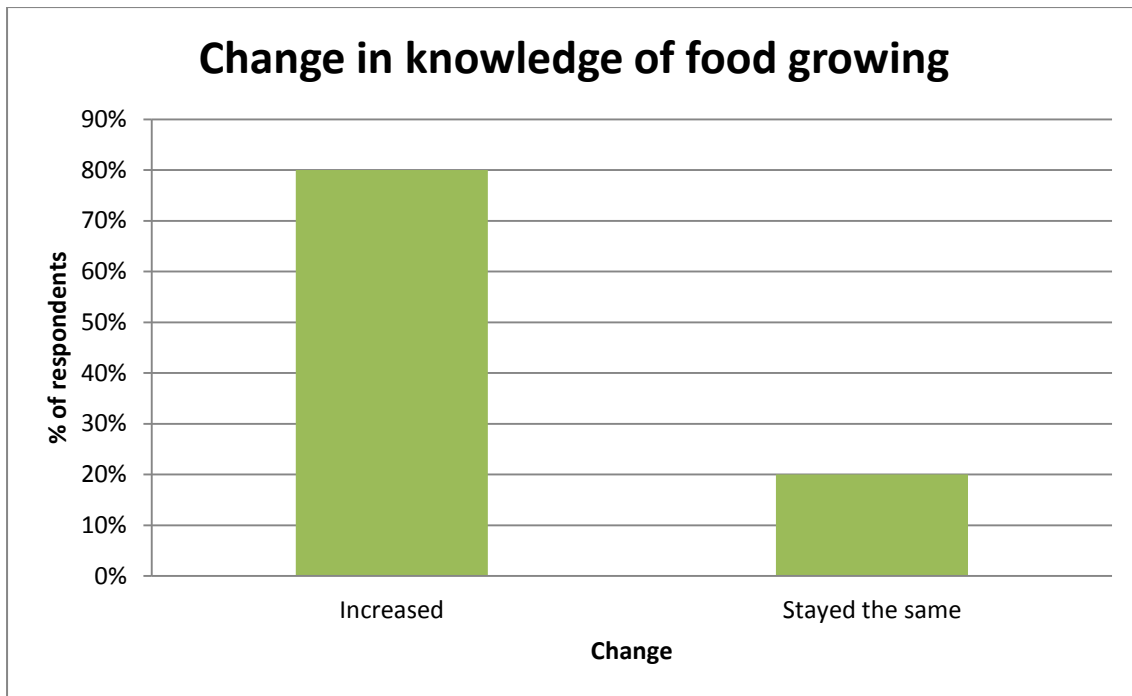


Figure 10: Change in knowledge of growing

2.8 Health and Wellbeing Impacts

Key Evaluative Impact	Headline Questions
Health and Wellbeing Impacts	<p>7. Life satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your life now, and one year ago? • To what extent do you feel that your participation in the programme has influenced your overall life satisfaction, and why? <p>8. Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How satisfied are you with your health, and do you feel this has changed since joining the programme? <p>9. Fruit and vegetable consumption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average per day how many pieces of fruit and vegetables do you eat, and has this changed since you joined the programme?

2.8.1 Health and Wellbeing Impacts: Life satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their overall life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10 at the time of questionnaire completion (1 year into the project) and one year ago. Respondents were asked to indicate whether their life satisfaction had changed since participating in the programme for one year. The results show that on average, since being involved in the programme for one year, the average life satisfaction score of participants has increased by 0.8; this is comparable to the national evaluation which shows an increase in life satisfaction by 0.7. When making comparisons to the national data on life satisfaction, the average life satisfaction for Medway (after participation in the programme) is higher than the UK average for 2012/2013, by 0.3 (before participation in the programme it was higher by 0.1). Table 6 demonstrates the average life satisfaction rating for each round of the evaluation, and the national average life satisfaction rating when available. Results are based on 136 responses for the national evaluation and 5 responses for the Medway sample. Further questions were asked to explore whether there is a relationship between involvement in the programme and life satisfaction (expanded on below).

Table 6: Household average life satisfaction score			
Life satisfaction (households)	1 year before completing the questionnaire	Time of questionnaire completion (1 year in to the programme)	Change (-/+)
National evaluation average (2010-2012)	7.2	7.9	0.7+
Medway average (2013-2014)	6.8	7.6	0.8+
National average life satisfaction			
	2010*	2011/12	2012/13
Defra* / ONS ⁶	7.5	7.4	7.5

When respondents were asked whether their life satisfaction had changed since taking part in the programme, 50% reported it had increased, and 50% reported it had stayed the same. This is similar to the nation evaluation whereby 45% of respondents reported and increased and 54% of respondents felt no change in their life satisfaction.

A total of 80% of respondents informed that their involvement in the Programme has increased their life satisfaction to some extent; 60% of respondents reported it has influenced their life satisfaction by a little extent, and 20% reported it had to a large extent. The remaining 20% of respondents felt that their involvement in the programme has had no influence on their life satisfaction. Results are based on 5 responses.

One respondent felt that their participation in the programme had influenced their life satisfaction to a large extent stating '*it has definitely contributed to how I feel*'. The three respondents reporting that their involvement in the Programme has influenced their life satisfaction to a little extent gave the following explanations:

⁶ http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_328486.pdf page 9

- *'The gardener programme allows an escape to the outside, but the benefit is being destroyed by external pressures'.*
- *'Made new friends and like being outdoors'.*
- *'I am exercising in the morning but gardening helps in the afternoon'.*

A similar number of respondents (77%) in the national evaluation felt as though their involvement in the programme had influenced their life satisfaction to *some extent* (with 62% stating to a 'little extent' and 15% to a large extent). Respondents shared similar experiences when expanding on how their involvement in the programme had influenced their life satisfaction. As such, a similar number of respondents (23%) felt that their involvement in the programme had not influenced their overall life satisfaction.

Throughout the interviews, respondents were asked to expand how they felt their involvement in the programme had influenced their life satisfaction. Although one respondent had recorded in the questionnaire that his involvement in the programme *hadn't* influenced their life to any extent, when asked about this in the interview, his response was positive:

*"I don't know really. It's just that, I think that **gardening isn't a chore. Doing gardening is the enjoyment.** It's nice to grow something that's not been polluted or you know, all these other chemicals that have been thrown over it, a bit organic. **I'm still as happy as I was then you know.**" [CU076].*

Those respondents who reported that their participation in the programme has influenced their life satisfaction to a *large extent* also explained why. The following quotes show that the practical aspect of doing something largely contributes towards how people feel. Respondents have reflected on the fact that the programme is 'real' and you can't just think about it you have to 'do it'. The fact that the programme has a whole range of (health, social, personal, environmental) benefits, as well as proving people with the ability to learn something, to grow something, and to have support and encouragement doing so, is probably it's overall strength.

*I think it's a case that I can actually feel quite **self-satisfied and smug about the fact that we grow our own stuff** and I've been able to bring bits in now and again for people and say we grew this on the allotment or chutney that I've made*

*or jam that I've made [...] So I made loads of stuff and I actually, I actually got, I got **personal satisfaction**.*" [CU073].

*"I think it gives you a **positive tilt on things**. I myself haven't been well this last year so actually having a positive thing to focus on for me has been good. [...] I think **it's the whole process of being involved in things and having the support**, all of those aspects. It gives you a **focus on the healthier options** rather than the negative stuff, it gives you something to think about, it's something that's happened, you have to go and do it to make it happen, so you literally can't just think about it, if you want it to work **you've got to do it**."* [CU075].

*"[So do you enjoy being part of the Master Gardener Programme?] Yes I enjoy it a lot. I enjoy it. [...] **It's real, Master Gardener is real**."* [CU077]

The national evaluation also found similar themes respondents identified as contributing towards their life satisfaction such as 'personal interaction and encouragement from the Master Gardener', 'meeting new people', 'a sense of achievement' and 'participating in a positive, enjoyable and meaningful activity'. The above section demonstrates how the programme has affected how satisfied respondents feel with their lives, which encompasses an array of reasons. It is clear that involvement in the programme does have an impact on people's lives (as demonstrated above) and the fact that it benefits its participants in different ways is certainly a visible strength of the programme.

2.8.2 Health and Wellbeing Impacts: Number of hours spent growing food

Respondents generally spend 3-4 hours per week growing food, (two thirds of respondents), one respondent spend 5 hours or more growing food, and another respondents spends 0 hours.

For 75% of respondents the amount of time they spend growing food has increased, and for 25% it has stayed the same. Results for this question are based on 4 responses.

This is similar to the national evaluation with lower proportions of respondents spending the least number of hours (0 hours), and the most number of hours (8+) growing food per

week. Therefore, in both samples, most respondents spend 3-4 hours per week growing food, with more respondents in the national evaluation spending 1-2 hours per week growing food.

The national evaluation show that a slightly lower number of respondents (67%) spend more time on average per week growing food since participating in the programme and a slightly higher number (32%) of respondents spend the same time each week growing food. For a very low proportion (1%) it had decreased.

Within the interviews, all respondents reported an increase in the amount of time they spend growing food. With an increase in the amount of food grown, comes an increase in the amount of time needed to account for this through a range of activities.

*“We were only going to the allotment once a week because that’s all we really needed to do [...] but **as we’ve been growing more things, we actually find that we need to come more.** It’s either going to be to weed it, to pick it, or to water it, one or the other, we actually need to go. [...] I would say that I probably go up there twice a week, so it’s probably about three hours a week that I go. I mean it depends how long I want to stay out.” [CU073].*

*It’s increased purely because of that fact that **we’ve got so much more going on in the garden that it just takes up more time,** that we have to go and just do the planting, the watering, being out there, going looking for instance, its really good fun. [...] so it’s become an additional thing. **It’s replaces the settee!** There you go. The potatoes are no long a couch potato, yes, we’re cooking them now.” [CU075].*

*[The number of hours you’ve spent growing food each week has increased] Yes because I wasn’t really [Can you tell me why that is?] **I didn’t have a garden for vegetable growing** [you didn’t physically have a garden or you just weren’t growing vegetables?] **I just wasn’t growing vegetables.** [...] it’s just something extra [to do] [we spent a lot of time out there] when we first started to plant.” [CU076].*

*“Weekdays from 10am right through to 1pm we do a lot of stuff up there, **growing vegetables** [...] We plant all the seeds and all of that. We do all the*

seeds and things. [...] we plant them in and we grow them all and whatever, compost what we make as well for the beds and all of that and then we wait for the beans to finish and then we'll wait for winter stock to go for next year for this year for the winter we haven't done any winter vegetables yet. We have put them all in, just waiting for them to all grow up there so we're waiting for that. So the beans all come down then it will be digging that all over putting compost and new one in that bed and that'll be getting ready for the winter veg what we're going to do." [CU077].

2.8.2 Health and Wellbeing Impacts: Health

A high proportion of respondents informed that they are fairly satisfied with their health (83%). The other 17% however indicated that they are fairly dissatisfied.

The national evaluation showed that 85% of respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with their health at the time of questionnaire completion. A small number felt 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' (9%), 'fairly dissatisfied' (5%) or 'very dissatisfied' (2%) with their health.

For half of respondents, satisfaction with their life has increased, and for the other half it had stayed the same. For the highest proportion of respondents in the national evaluation, satisfaction with their health had stayed the same since joining the programme; for 24% it had increased and for 6% it had decreased.

Respondents were asked to expand on why their satisfaction with their health and increased or stayed the same since participating in the programme. The report will now focus on the results from interviews with respondents which are based around two main themes – healthy eating and physical health.

Physical Activity

As the following quotes demonstrate, one of the main reasons why respondents feel more satisfied with their health is because of the physical activity associated with growing food. One respondent mentioned how gardening is a physical activity which they enjoy:

"Yes, well I've been doing physical [activity] for a long time [through] gardening and I enjoy it." [CU077].

The following respondent stated how they are now more active due to growing their own food, an activity which has replaced something 'inactive'.

*"It's [food growing / gardening] **replaced the settee!** There you go. The potatoes are no longer a couch potato, yes, we're cooking them now." [CU075].*

This respondent also mentioned that their involvement in the programme has been a move towards a healthier lifestyle in general for them:

*"A whole part of this has been you know, talking about **being more healthy** in general, we do cycling as well [Active Medway], so we actually have developed a different little branch from the cycling.." [CU075].*

Another respondent explained how having an allotment is their main physical activity during the summer which allows for around three straight hours of physical activity, rather than being inactive such as sitting in the garden.

*"The allotment in the summer takes the place of going to the gym. [...] So I've just sort of swapped one for the other. [...] probably during the summer I would say **my main physical activity is going to be the allotment.** During the winter it's the gym. So it would give me **three hours of concentrate physical activity** of doing some sort or another. Even if it's just bending, **I often find that bits of me ache after the allotment which is really quite good.** You know, I don't actually mind.*

[So would you say that it's [physical activity] increased or decreased or stayed the same since the Programme?]

*So **during the summer it's probably increased** because I wouldn't have been doing the physical activity. I would have been going home and sitting in the garden.*

[Right]

So I now have the allotment to go and do and I would go out and do that on a Sunday morning you know, whereas Sunday mornings during the winter are

sacrosanct for politics. So that sort of changes. It's changed. But, during the winter it doesn't really make difference because during the winter I go back to the gym. Go back to swimming. Things like that. I don't want to be doing that in the summer. Really can't be bothered." [CU073].

Another respondent expanded on how they now do more physical activity, as well as how many hours they spend growing food. The growing space they are extending suggests that this will require more physical activity needed to extend the space and to maintain it:

"[So you think you do more physical activity]

Yes yes yes

[Very good and any idea how many hours a week?]

*I don't know, **two to three, maybe slightly more sometimes**, maybe slightly less sometimes. We're changing our garden appearance as I said to you before, I mean our... there's a lot of change since you last come. But, there is going to be change again and probably getting a bit larger actually as it goes."* [CU076].

Finally, respondents described the types of physical activities they undertake whilst gardening:

"[Okay, so how many hours do you spend growing stuff with [your Master Gardener]?"]

Weekday from 10.00am right through to 1.00pm so we do a lot of stuff up there growing vegetables like beans whatever, peas, whatever, all different veg we grow up there." (CU077).

One respondent described the activities growing food requires:

*"Well, we've, we now know if there's **digging**, if we're going to dig something then the one thing we've got to do is make sure we **get the weeds out**. Rather than just digging the weeds in we have to try and get all the weeds and the roots and everything else."* (CU073).

Themes identified through the interviews conducted as part of the national evaluation include physical health in terms of being active, having a more healthier life style, as well as the therapeutic benefits of food growing contributing towards respondents 'feeling better'. This last quote demonstrates that there is a general sense of better health from gardening.

"Because of doing the gardening. [...] I think it's a positive influence on my health." [CU075].

Healthy Eating

As the following quotes demonstrate, when asked about their health, this for some relates to healthy eating; the reason why one particular respondents feels more satisfied with their health is because of eating more vegetables (having a better diet).

*"[Why do you feel your health has increased since you got involved in the programme?] **I'm eating more vegetables. It's got to be better for you.** [...] I mean I'm diabetic and you fill your plate up with stuff that's good for you rather than other bits and pieces out of a tin or out of a bag, it's got to be good for you." [CU076].*

One respondent reported that their satisfaction with their health had stayed the same as they reported being conscious about their health before their involved in the programme:

*"I tend to be fairly healthy and **I've always been very conscious about the way that food and eating the right food can actually affect your health.** So, you know, even though it wasn't stuff that I was buying I would also have eaten lots of veg that I could eat. You know, I wouldn't fry stuff, I wouldn't microwave pies or... so I've always been very conscious of my health. I don't think that any of that has changed, I just feel more smug about the way I'm doing it." [CU073].*

2.8.3 Health and Wellbeing Impacts: Fruit and vegetable consumption

One third of respondents indicated that they consume around 2 pieces of fruit and veg a day, whereas two thirds eat around 5 pieces or more. In comparison, the national

evaluation showed that a higher number of respondents (56%) consumed less fruit and veg (0 – 4 pieces a day) and fewer respondents consumed more (22% consumed 5 pieces per day; equally 22% consume 6 pieces or more per day).

Therefore, the average portions of fruit and vegetables consumed per day comes out at 4. The national evaluation showed that the average portions of fruit and vegetables consumed per day equalled 4.5. When comparing to the national average of 4.1⁷ (for adults aged 19-64), the national evaluation was higher by 0.4 portions whereas the Medway evaluation is lower by -0.1. However, a larger sample is needed to draw firmer conclusions as well as more up to date data on this nationally.

Regarding whether the amount of fruit and vegetables respondents consume on average per day has changed, Figure 11 shows that for two thirds of respondents it has stayed the same. However, for one third of respondents this has increased which is slightly higher than the national evaluation which showed an increase for 19% of respondents (and only a decrease for 1 respondent).

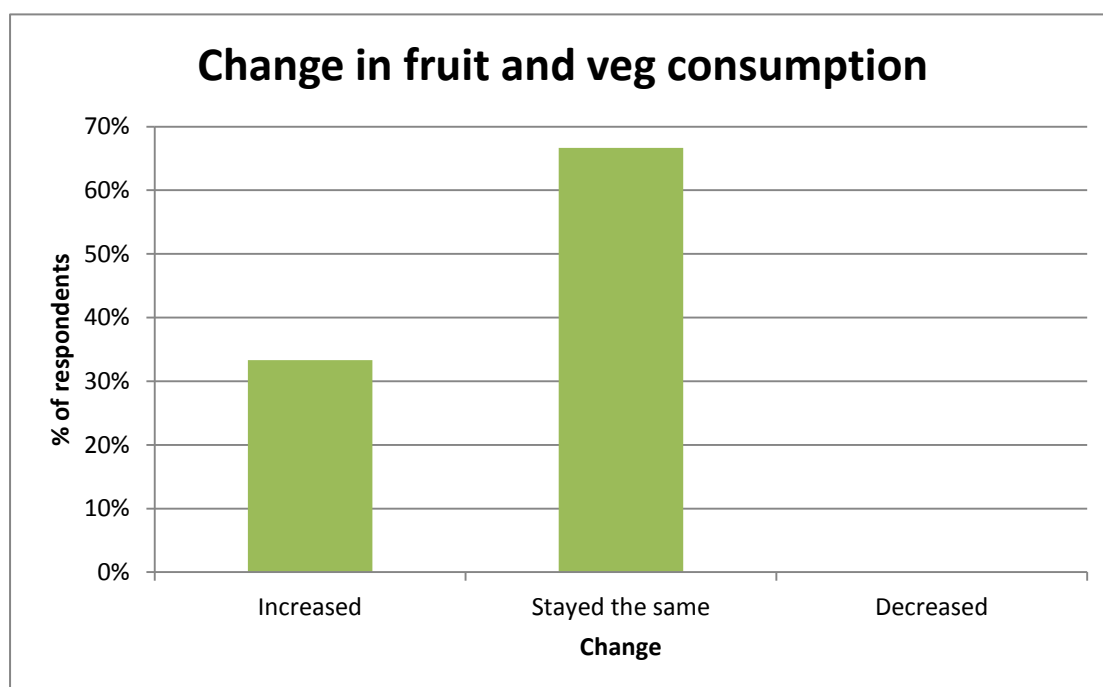


Figure 11: Change in fruit and vegetable consumption

Throughout the interviews, respondents expanded on why their fruit and vegetable consumption had stayed the same or increased since taking part in the programme. For

⁷ As measured by the DoH 2008/9-2010/11 (2012): <http://mediacentre.dh.gov.uk/2012/07/25/statistical-press-notice-national-diet-and-nutrition-survey-headline-results-from-years-1-2-and-3-combined-200809-201011/>

those who reported it had stayed the same, this was to do with eating a lot of fruit and vegetables before taking part in the programme, although now they are growing more of it themselves. For those who reported it had increased, this is because they are growing more, and therefore have more vegetables to eat.

- Stayed the same

"I actually felt that I ate fairly healthily and fruit and veg before, so the type of food that's not necessarily fruit, but the type of veg that I've eaten has probably changed, but not the amount of it." [CU073].

"I think because before we always used to eat quite a lot of fruit and vegetables anyway, so certainly we haven't actually grown any fruit ourselves. Next year we may have a go at doing some fruit. So our fruit intake has stayed the same. Our vegetables, you would expect that it would increase, but it hasn't really has it? It's stayed the same because we eat what we used to eat, it's just that we grow it now. Right, okay. Although it may sound negative that it hasn't improved, we ate them anyway, but we just grow them now." [CU075].

- Increased

"I eat tomatoes and all of that because I grow my own tomatoes at home [...] I eat lots of them because I've, I grow my own." [CU077]

"[Can you tell me why the amount of fruit and vegetables you eat on average each day has increased] Because we grow it. If you're growing it then there's 1100 beetroot to get rid of!. [...] so if you're growing it you might as well get rid of it." [CU076].

2.8.4 Health and Wellbeing Impacts: Components of wellbeing

Table 7 illustrates various 'components' of Defra's wellbeing measurement which have been used within the questionnaire⁸. The average scores for household satisfaction with various components are displayed in the table, along with the findings from the national evaluation, and the national average of satisfaction. At present, Defra's results are unavailable for later than 2010, but they have been included to provide a basic indication of average scores. As the results show, some findings are close to the average, however

⁸ The evaluation strategy designed in 2011 used Defra's wellbeing measurement, and was therefore the basis for the rest of the evaluations that subsequently took place, for consistency.

'feeling part of a community' is much higher for the Master Gardener households included in the national evaluation. For Medway, satisfaction with personal relationships fares lower in comparison to the national evaluation, and the national average but the remaining components are however is comparable or higher than the national evaluation, particularly for future financial security.

Table 7: Satisfaction with components of wellbeing

	Medway Average household satisfaction ⁹	National Average household satisfaction (2011-2012 ¹⁰)	Defra's average (2010)
Standard of living	84%	84%	86%
Accommodation	80%	78%	87%
Personal relationships	67%	83%	86%
Feeling part of a community	60%	70%	63%
Future financial security	75%	48%	66%

⁹ 'Accommodation' and 'personal relationships' based on 5 responses, and 'future financial security' based on 4 responses.

¹⁰ Rounds 1, 2 and 3.

2.9 Views on the Programme

Key Evaluative Impact	Headline Questions
Views on the Programme	<p>10. Enjoyment in the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you enjoy being part of the Master Gardener programme, please state why? Would you change anything about the programme? <p>11. Advice from Master Gardener</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How satisfied are you with your advice from your Master Gardener? Do you have any comments you would like to make about your Master Gardener? <p>12. Benefits from participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the main benefit you have gained from taking part in the programme?

2.9.1 Views on the Programme: Programme enjoyment

When asked whether they enjoy being part of the Master Gardener programme, 100% of respondents stated that they do enjoy being part of the programme and gave the following reasons:

- 'I enjoy the support network'*
- 'I'm interested in gardening'*
- 'I enjoy it a lot'.*

Findings from the national evaluation showed that 93% of respondents enjoyed being part of the programme; only 7% of respondents did not. Reasons for this enjoyment in the programme were mainly to do with learning new skills, receiving expert advice and guidance, and taking part in a motivating and rewarding activity.

Only one respondent stated they would change something about the programme (but did not state what), the other 5 respondents would not, compared to 47% of respondents from the national evaluation who stated they would change something about the programme.

2.9.2 View on the Programme: Advice from Master Gardener

All respondents are satisfied with their Master Gardener; with 4 respondents 'very satisfied' and one respondent 'satisfied'. Results are based on 5 responses. These findings are more encouraging than those from the national evaluation where 78% of household respondents were generally satisfied with the advice from their Master Gardener (5% were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', 12% were 'fairly dissatisfied' and 5% 'very dissatisfied').

2.9.3 Views on the Programme: Benefits from participation

Respondents were asked to state what they felt were the main benefits so far from participating in the programme; these are listed below and are to do with taking part in a positive activity, access to advice and support and increased knowledge.

- *Access to more information and practical help when required to share knowledge'*
- *'Advice and support'*
- *'At last I found something to do in my spare time which is not only good for my health but keeps me away from TV and wife (only joking)'*
- *'Learned about growing, seasons, rotation'*
- *'Something the whole family can do'.*

2.9.4 Views on the Programme: Support

Respondents were asked whether there was anything else they needed in terms of support – there were no responses to this question which shows that respondents feel generally supported. Just under half of respondents in the national evaluation felt similar (47%) with the rest of participants suggesting support over a longer period of time and support with specific things such as managing pests and diseases, growing specific produce and soil improvement.

2.10 Household video diaries

This section of the report focuses on the main findings from the analysis of the video diaries. A number of mentored households taking part in the evaluation were invited to keep a video diary to reflect on their growing space and involvement with the programme. Households were first asked to take part in a pilot stage which tested how well the video diaries worked. After the pilot video diaries were analysed, the instruction sheet was revised and further households were invited to take part. In total six participants kept video diaries; these ranged from 1 – 3 entries, and involved individuals filming their growing space or another person filming the participant talking about their growing space on their own, or with their families,. A school was one of the participants keeping a video diary and their two entries comprised only audio data. Participants included two families, an individual from a church, a school, two friends from an allotment, and an individual. As with all the data collection, participants were given an information sheet and were asked to complete a consent form, they were also given a set of instructions to guide them when filming their video diaries. The final instructions asked participants in their first video diary entry to talk about 'how it all started' where participants we asked to talk about why they decided to become involved in the programme, how long they've been involved, what they've achieved so far, how their Master Gardener has helped them and what experience of growing they'd had before as well as the best and worst moments of growing. The rest of the video diaries entries (5 maximum) were asked to focus on what participants have been growing, what jobs are involved, how they feel and what impact growing their own food has had on them and / or their family.

As expected, not all participants fully followed the guidelines and therefore not all the questions were answered by all the participants however, the video diaries have generated some valuable data regarding the experience and impact of the Master Gardener programme. Due to the recognised social impacts of the programme, the videos showing participants and their families enabled the viewer an insight into the meaningful interaction than can take place when preparing and transforming an area, and the joy and excitement (from both adults and children) when produce is harvested after patiently waiting for it to be ready. In addition, the still images provided by some participants, particularly images of a space and how it has developed and changed over time were a welcomed addition.

The research team saw the evaluation in Medway a good opportunity to use the video diary method as an additional contribution to the evaluation of the Master Gardener

programme generally. Video diaries were thought to be an effective way of capturing the lived experiences of households taking part in the programme by demonstrating the visible results of being involved with the programme enriching the existing data captured from the evaluations. The following points demonstrate the main themes from the video analysis along with screen shots from a number of video diary entries to demonstrate these points.

- **Motivation and support from Master Gardener**

For many, involvement in the Programme gave them a ‘kick start’ to growing their own food, something which many of them had wanted to do but had lacked the motivation to initiate. One participant explained that the small area in front of the church needed a makeover and they wanted advice to help determine what plants were suitable for the space; something their Master Gardener has been able to support them with.



Growing space, Participant 1

“Our Master Gardener helped us a great deal, with a great deal of practical help and advice particularly what to do with plants at various times of the year, what will grow where, whether we should hoick it out of or leave it in, cut it back or whatever so that advice has been very helpful to one who doesn’t have a garden at home and has not had much experience of this sort of thing at all.” (Participant 1).

The video diaries show that participants are relatively new to gardening, which demonstrates that the programme is encouraging people to start and to continue growing their own food (as opposed to mentoring people who are already gardening). This

therefore shows that the way the programme operates and entices people is inclusive and is accessible to households who although may have a desire to start growing may not have a lot of confidence.

“We joined the programme because we thought it would make us get on a do the things we actually have always wanted to do but didn’t get round to do it – it gave us an incentive.” (Participant 4).

“My son [who has special needs] has really enjoyed doing it and I have too. My son is doing, we try and guide him, our Master Gardener has been fantastic been with us every step of the way I’m no gardener, have never grown anything in my entire life.” (Participant 2).

“We heard about the programme through the Master Gardener who is also a patron and our school. We wanted to become involved as we are all novices at gardening and need help. We have met with our Master Gardener, sowed seeds (bubble berries and white strawberries) and digging over the allotment.” (Participant 3).

As shown throughout the evaluations, Master Gardeners are excellent at tailoring and adapting support to the needs and situations of individual households and the success of their approach is centred on being supportive and friendly. This is shown by the following quotes which also highlight specific activities their Master Gardener has been supporting with.

“Our Master Gardener has helped us by advising what to plant, how to prepare the soil, ideas about crop rotations as well as giving us seedlings and seeds.” (Participant 3).

“Our Master Gardener has shown us how to prune things, and she helped us with the composting because we wanted to get properly started with home composting and she gave us some advice with that. She also gave us advice with sun light and growing areas and also gave us some seeds – blackberries, cucumbers.” (Participant 4).

- Evidence of transformation

For many participants, preparing their growing space has been aspect of their initial involvement in the programme. The transformation that spaces have gone through to start growing food has not only required hard work, but has also provided participants with a visible outcome, and sense of achievement. Although for some participants it has been necessary to prepare the ground it has delayed the actual growing process.

“Since being involved in the programme we’ve prepared a lot of space, most of it was grass and bushes, we’ve tilled the land, got a lot of stones out, worked really hard, built a strawberry planter which now has been canes in it to stop cats and foxes digging it.” (Participant 2).



Changing growing space, Participant 2

“We would like to do more growing but because of condition of allotment we have to spend more time preparing the ground.” (Participant 3).

- Inclusive, satisfying and enjoyable activity

The videos illustrated the sense that gardening is a largely inclusive activity. For example, having a growing space has allowed members of the church) to become involved with all aspects of the growing stages, with the aim of including children from the church as well as from the Beavers and Cubs in the future. Members of the church have donated plants from their own gardens or have prepared cuttings to establish them for planting in the space.

“We do encourage members of the congregation to make use of the herbs, to maybe take a sprig of rosemary with them at the end of the Sunday service if they are cooking lamb and other herbs that can be used in cooking.” (Participant 1).



Rosemary plant, Participant 1

For families, involvement has impacted on their family life as it has provided an opportunity for the whole family to do a meaningful activity together, contributing towards relationships. Gardening provides a shared or common interest or activity and allows for interaction to take place between people where skills can be shared, as the second quote demonstrates.

“Has much changed in our behaviour? Yes it has, it’s helped us come together a bit more, we’ve been working as a team. [My son] has enjoyed digging up the weeds and planting And my daughter has been getting in on the act too bless her.” (Participant 2).

“The cherry tree needs a serious prune through work I’ve managed to find someone who is prepared to come down and mark out the bits we can do – lot the cherry’s at the top to the birds.” (Participant 6)

- Connection with nature (produce and awareness of growing and exercising their knowledge subconsciously)

Not only is gardening seen as a meaningful activity, harvesting, eating and sharing the produce grown is also rewarding and satisfying, a feeling that can be experienced within a group.

We grow seasonal produced and it is used in our school café for student lunches at times for governors meetings. (Participant 3).

After picking lettuce leaves and cutting chives (page 65) to have with dinner, participant 4 harvested an onion, captured below.



Harvesting produce, Participant 4

- Space to experiment and for continuous learning

Participants very much viewed their growing efforts as 'experimental'. Through the videos, respondents were able to recognise what mistakes they had made and what is achievable which allows them to plan for the future. The support they receive from their Master Gardener is 'light touch' enough to allow participants to learn through making their own mistakes (within a 'safe' boundary) and to not feel defeated when faced with challenges. Knowing how to deal with the challenges they have faced appears to increase confidence and resilience, as they positively respond with practical solutions for the next season. Therefore, the experimental element of the programme is key - providing the space to make small mistakes, with volunteers assisting households with discovering the solutions (something highlighted throughout the household interviews). Learning from practical experience and not starting off too ambitiously gives participants the opportunity to plan for the future.

"We have had some ups and downs – with the cauliflowers we left them in a bit too long and they got sun scorched went a bit brown but that's part of learning hey we've enjoyed it haven't we!" (Participant 2).

"We're a bit worried that some of these might have blight, but they've done really well, we've got some big tomatoes growing that are only yellow ones they aren't going to be red so we're hoping that with a bit of luck the blight won't have stuck as it did last year otherwise there will be a lot of green tomato chutney coming yet again!" (Participant 6).



Tomatoes, Participant 6

“[Our worst moments] – we’ve had none yet, everything seems to have survived so far. Frankly it’s been a bit more experimental. We may well need more space, more pots and tubs but that’s a project for next spring.” (Participant 1).

“next year we’re going to be doing the other half of the garden ready for him which we intend to grow more, what do you want to do next year? Beetroot cauliflower, we’ve started with the stuff we actually like to eat ourselves and not experiment with the exotic things, were hoping to get another apple tree and a pear tree as well.” (Participant 2).

“And this space is going to be where the greenhouse goes, another project. We planted tomatoes a bit too densely they covered up salad leaves [...] We’ve worked out that we need to leave a lot more space in spring.” (Participant 4)

Below is a family are picking the plums off the tree ‘before any more wasps get to them’, something which they’ve experienced.



Picking plums, Participant 4

“The strawberry bed – a lot transplanted from last year. Don’t like it that when strawberries grow we can’t get the weeds out. We’ve come to the realisation that if we’re going to have strawberries were going to have to take all of the strawberries up put a mat down cut holes in it put the strawberries back in to stop the weeds.” (Participant 6).



Strawberries and cucumbers, Participant 6



That's something we've learned for next year – only probably need 3 -4 cucumber plants that take. There's only so much you can do with a cucumber! Found a Delia recipe for soup! (Participant 6).

- Challenges

Although some of the challenges participants have faced have been highlighted above, this section demonstrates what participants find least enjoyable and the most challenging or frustrating about growing their own food. This is mainly to do with disappointment when crops die or are eaten after waiting in anticipation for them to grow. What the above section has focused on in how participants are able to resiliently respond to the challenges they encounter.



"I don't like weeding so we put down bark chippings which have managed to keep the weeds away and makes life a bit easier." (Participant 1)

"The worst moments have been when our cauliflowers died after planting them or when the plants get eaten by little critters." (Participant 3).

"Worst moments were slugs eating all our tomato plants and ants eating all of our strawberries." (Participant 4).

The pear tree, we had lots of pears, and we went away for a week, the rest disappeared, not sure if it was wasps, seagulls etc. (Participant 4).

I suppose we'd like to do some more growing but the lack time or space , the congregation a lot of them work or have young families, we are a busy parish and there are other things we have to be doing." (Participant 1)

- Highlights

Finally, the best things participants associate with growing their own food are demonstrated below and mostly relates to the benefits of eating and cooking home grown produce (not purchased from a supermarket), as well produce being healthy, fresh and organic.



Harvested produce, Participant 4

“The best thing about growing our own food is that we get it for free, it’s organic, it tastes good, we know where it comes from, we don’t have to travel miles to some out of town supermarket to find it because it’s literally here!” (Participant 1).

“The best thing about growing our own food is that it is healthy and fresh as well as growing bubble berry and white strawberries.” (Participant 3).

“Growing our own food makes us feel successful and gives us a sense of achievement.” (Participant 3).

“The best moment was the winter crop, beef stew with turnips, potatoes, carrots.” (Participant 4).

“Won’t need to buy any apples from the supermarket hopefully the children will be keener to eat the ones we’ve grown in the garden, although they do like apples so that shouldn’t be a problem.” (Participant 4).



Chives and apples, Participant 4

The children were particularly excited when looking for ripe strawberries to pick and wanted to be able to spot some and pick some themselves.



Summary

This section has shown the depth and additional insight the video diaries have contributed towards understanding the experiences of households, and families involved in the programme. The evaluation of the programme in Medway has highlighted the valuable contribution video diaries can make.

3.0 Volunteer Results

3.1 Response rate

A total of 18 questionnaires were distributed to Master Gardener volunteers with a total of 6 questionnaires returned equalling a 33% response rate. The response rate is relatively high for a postal survey. It can be noted that there was also a high response rate in the national evaluation (44%) and in both evaluations, the Master Gardener response rate is higher than the response rate for households¹¹.

Number of Master Gardener questionnaires distributed		Number of completed questionnaires returned	Response Rate (%)
Round 1	118	58	49%
Round 2	97	43	44%
Round 3	115	43	37%
Total	327	144	44%

3.2 Sampling

It was agreed that the focus group(s) would be open for all Master Gardener volunteers to attend as long as they had been in the programme for around one year. This was due to the fact that the focus groups remit was not on behavioural change, which is the case for the household interviews. The focus groups are based around discussing the impacts of the programme; therefore all volunteer opinions are welcomed. As this sampling method is non-restrictive, it allows large number of volunteers to take part therefore generating more data.

¹¹ A total of 327 questionnaires were distributed to Master Gardener volunteers in the areas of Warwickshire, Norfolk, North London, South London and Lincolnshire; a total of 144 questionnaires were returned equalling a response rate of 44%.

3.3 Volunteer Focus Groups

One focus group was conducted by the Volunteer Coordinator, following training from the Coventry University team. The focus group was based on the 12 focus groups conducted as part of the national evaluation for comparability.

3.4 Profile of respondents

3.4.1 Profile of respondents: Age

Half of respondents are aged 40-49 with the other respondents being of an older age. One respondent is 50-59, another is 60-69 and the final is 70-79.

The national evaluation shows a similar picture with regard to age; however, due to the larger sample there is more variation between age groups but with the majority of respondents aged 40-69 (78%).

3.4.2 Profile of respondents: Gender

Two thirds of respondents are female and one third male, again a very similar reflection of the national evaluation.

3.4.3 Profile of respondents: Ethnicity

Four respondents classified themselves as English, one as Irish and one as British. The majority of respondents from the national evaluation (71%) regarded themselves as English; 12% from another white background, and very small proportions from other ethnicities.

3.4.4 Profile of respondents: Faith

Equal proportions of respondents are Christian (50%) or belong to no faith group (50%), which is again similar to the national evaluation. Due to the large sample at the national scale, this accounted for smaller number of other faiths.

3.4.5 Profile of respondents: Household composition

As shown in Figure 12, half of respondents are married or cohabiting with no children, or no dependent children. One third of respondents are married or cohabiting with dependent children, and 17% of respondents live in single occupancy households. Similarly, this is also comparable to the national evaluation, however there was small numbers of single parent families and other multi personal households in this sample.

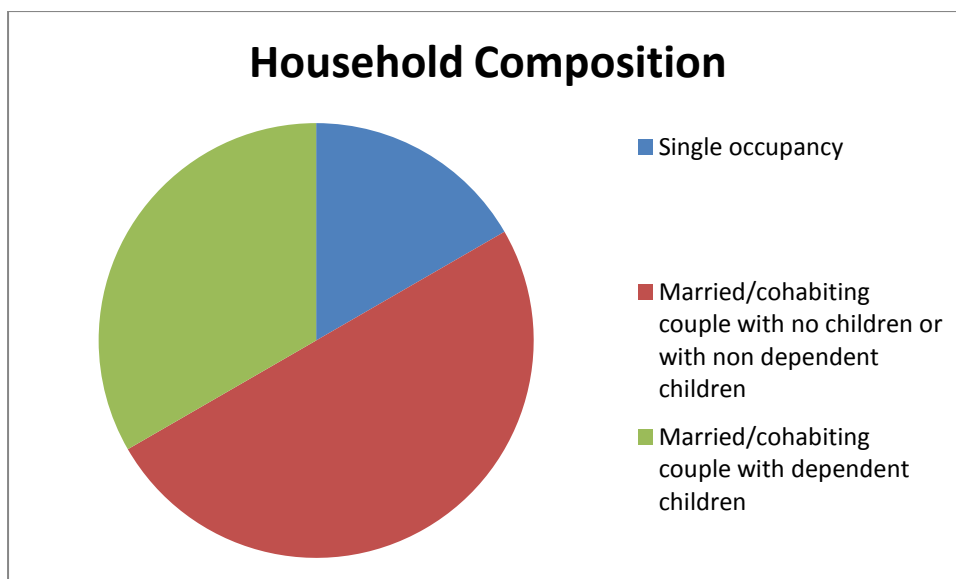


Figure 12: Household composition

3.4.6 Profile of respondents: Main Occupation

Regarding occupation, the highest proportion of respondents (67%) is in full time occupation. The remaining respondents are either retired (17%) or undertaking unpaid or voluntary work (17%). Although fairly similar, the national evaluation included less people in full time employment (although this made up the highest number of respondents), and more people in part time employment (25%) and more retired people (25%). There were also small numbers of respondents who were undertaking unpaid or voluntary work (6%), were unemployed (4%), or in education or training (3%) for example.

3.4.7 Highest Qualification

The results show that all respondents have A Level qualifications. One third of respondents have A Levels as their highest degree, one third have a degree, and one third possess a higher degree. Similarities can be made here with the national evaluation, with slightly more respondents in the national sample having a degree (40%) and less having A Levels as their highest qualification (7%); this meant that there was a greater variation regarding highest qualification with smaller numbers of respondents having GCSEs/O Levels, apprentices for example.

3.4.8 Profile of respondents: Housing type and ownership

Half of respondents fully own their property and half have a mortgage on their property. This is fairly similar to the findings from the national evaluation (48% of respondents either

fully own their property and 35% had a mortgage) however, there were respondents who lived in rented accommodation (13%) or in social housing (5%) in the sample.

Half of respondents live in a detached house and the other half live in a terrace house. The housing type of those respondents taking part in the nation evaluation was more balanced (25% lived in a 'terrace', 24% in a 'semi-detached', 24% in a detached, and 22% in a flat - fewer respondents live in a bungalow (7%) or 'other' type of property (1%)).

3.4.9 Profile of respondents: Household income

The higher proportion of respondents (66%) receive an annual household income of £28,001 - £48,000. The remaining respondents have an annual household income of £14,001 - £28,000 (17%) and £14,000 or less (17%). In Medway there is a higher proportion of respondents in the middle income range compared to the national findings.

The national evaluation showed that the highest number of respondents receiving an annual household income of £14,000 or less (32%) with slightly lower fractions have an annual household income of £14,001-28,000 (26%), or £28,001-48,000 (26%) per annum. The lowest percentage of respondents (16%) belong to the highest income bracket and receive an annual household income of £48,001 or more.

3.4.10 Profile of respondents: Summary

To summarise the typical profile of Master Gardener volunteers arising from the analysis, a typical volunteer is a middle aged, female, English in ethnicity and Christian in faith, or belonging to no faith group. A typical volunteer respondent is married or cohabiting with no child(ren) or no dependent child(ren) and are employed. The results show that the majority of volunteer respondents either fully own their property or have a mortgage and live in a terrace or detached house. Finally, respondents typically receive an annual household income of £28,001 - £48,000. These findings reflect a similar description of Master Gardeners shown in the national evaluation, however in this sample there were more volunteers who were retired, and who received a lower household income generally.

3.5 Environmental Impacts

Key Evaluative Impact	Headline Questions
Environmental Impacts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Composting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much food or garden waste do you compost and has this changed since joining the programme? • Is there anything which makes it difficult or prevents you from composting? • What types of compost bins do you use and how many compost bins do you have? 2. Amount of food grown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the amount and range of food you grow changed since joining the programme? 3. Space where produce is grown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you grow food?

3.5.1 Environmental Impacts: Composting

In total, 67% of respondents compost 100% of their food and garden waste and 17% compost 90%. Only one respondent composts less, 20% of their food and garden waste (17%). Overall, 84% of volunteers compost 90-100% of their food and garden waste compared to 60% of respondents composting the same amount in the national evaluation.

For the majority of respondents the amount the compost has stayed the same since joining the programme (83%), however for one respondent it has increased (17%). This is similar to the findings from the national evaluation which did however show slightly less people stating it had stayed the same (70%), and more people showing it had increased (29%).

Respondents informed that there was nothing that made it difficult for them regarding composting, something which was apparent in the national evaluation for 45% of respondents and included issues such as space, and pests.

3.5.2 Number and types of compost bins

Volunteer respondents typically have 2 or 3 compost bins, with one third of respondents having 2 and another third having 3 compost bins. However, 17% of respondents have

four compost bins, and 17% have 5 or more compost bins. Within the national evaluation there was less of a significance in relation to the number of compost bins.

Figure 13 demonstrates the types of compost bins people have. As Figure 26 shows, the most common type of compost bins are plastic, and then wooden, with home-made and open heap proving less popular. Plastic compost bins were most common in the national evaluation.

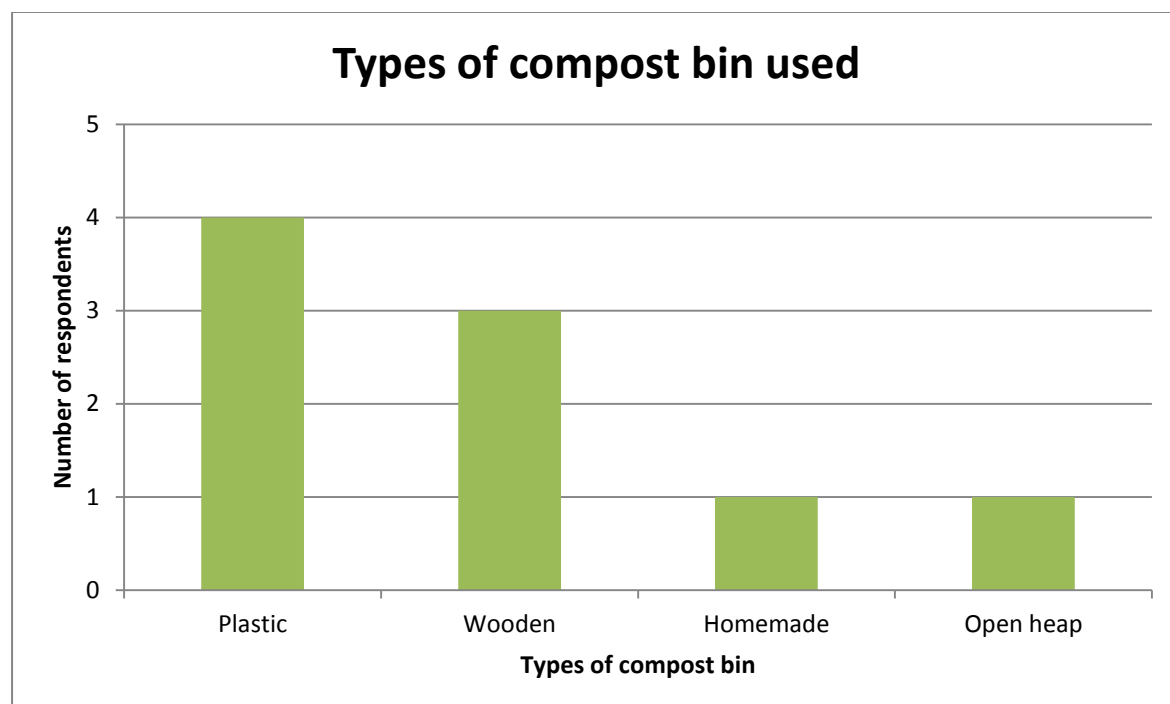


Figure 13: Types of compost bins used

3.5.3 Environmental Impacts: Amount and Range of food grown

Figure 14 focuses whether the amount and range of food grown by participants has changed since their participation in the programme. Turning attention initially to *amount* of food grown by volunteers, half (50%) inform that this has increased, and half state it has stayed the same (a similar finding to the national evaluation). Regarding the *range* of food grown, 83% of respondents report that this has increased since joining the programme and for 17% it has stayed the same (this has increased for slightly more participants than shown in the national evaluation where it has increased for 55%).

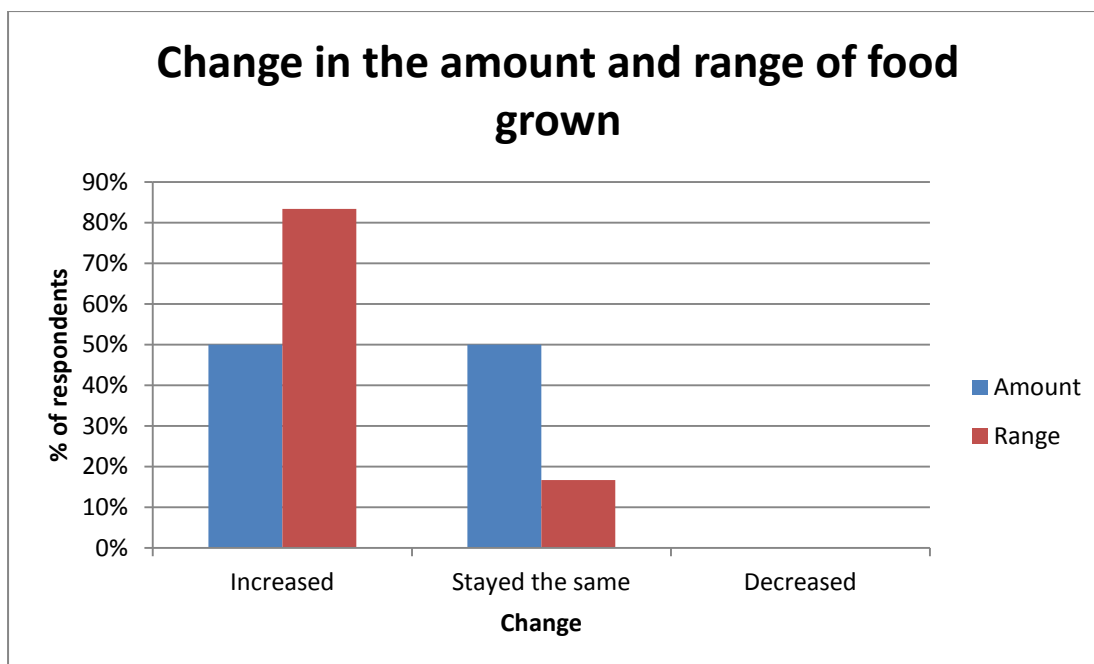


Figure 14: Changes in the amount and range of food grown

Respondents were also asked whether there was anything that makes it difficult or prevents them from growing more food, or from growing what they would like to grow. Five respondents mentioned factors that make it difficult or prevents them from growing more food:

- *Hours in the day*
- *Poor quality soil*
- *Could do with a greenhouse to extend the season and range of crops*
- *Time constraints, full time job, young family, long commute*
- *Size of garden and time.*

The national evaluation highlighted that 'lack of space' and 'lack of time' were the main factors that made it difficult for respondents to grow more food.

3.5.4 Environmental Impacts: Where food is grown

It is clear from Figure 15 that the most common growing space for participants is in their garden. Lower numbers of respondents also grow on allotments, or in community gardens. One respondent indicated that they grow in their field.

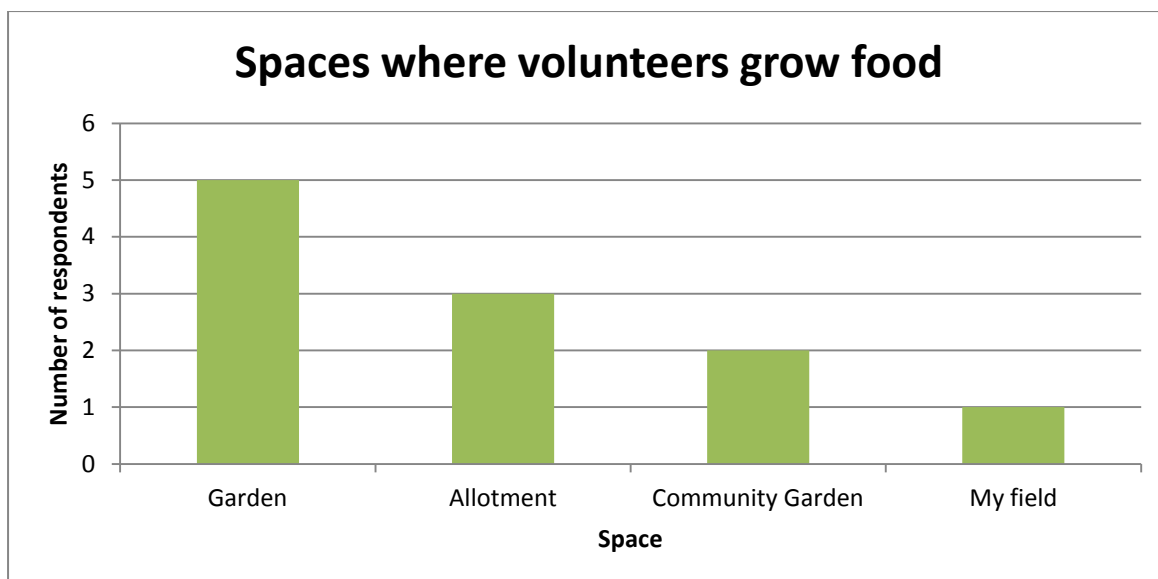


Figure 15: Space where respondents grow food

3.5.5 Focus Group Discussions: Environmental Impacts

The main point of discussion when asked about the environmental impacts of the programme was to do with wider behavioural change, in the sense of individual behavioural change being small, but contributing towards a wider context, with one respondent reflecting on attitudes towards green space.

- Green-space

*“People **valuing their green space** instead of tarmacking it over for the car. I mean, especially in Medway being such a built up area I think you know, any inner city gardening project has got to encourage people to make the most of every green space available.” (Medway Focus Group).*

- Wider behavioural change (and recognition of collective action)

*“**What we do as individuals isn’t going to achieve huge changes. Especially environmentally.**” (Medway Focus Group).*

*“the point that Jill¹² made, the conceptual change, that **people are starting to think more about their environment**. Using Master Gardener to get people to start people recycling, composting, thinking more about where their food comes from and how they can support local growers and trying to locate it as part of a whole.”* (Medway Focus Group).

“We are all a small part of a big picture.” (Medway Focus Group).

Within the national focus groups, themes in the area of environmental impact included increased awareness of the seasonality of food and an increased awareness and knowledge of composting (described as part of an overall awareness to reduce waste and to be more ‘sustainable’). Discussions in all of the focus groups made reference to sustainability in terms of a wider awareness of the environment and the ecosystem, and organic production – the use of chemicals was discussed in all of the focus groups, but was particularly apparent in the Warwickshire and Norfolk discussions

¹² Name has been changed

3.6 Social Impacts

Social Impacts	<p>4 Food purchasing behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the amount you spend on food changed since joining the programme? • Have you made any changes to where the buy food since joining the programme? <p>5 Social activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How satisfied are you with their involvement in leisure activities / hobbies, and has this changed since joining the programme? <p>6 Social / community relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How satisfied are you with feeling part of a community, and their personal relationships, and has this changed since joining the programme?
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3.6.1 Social Impacts: Food purchasing behaviour

One third of respondents stated that they have not made any changes to where they buy their food from over the past year or so; one respondent had (17%); three respondents didn't answer the question. This respondent who had made changes informed: *'I started buying more from greengrocers and less from supermarkets as it is better value'*.

The national evaluation showed that just over half of respondents indicated they had not made any changes to where they buy their food from over the past year or so (53%). The remaining 47% informed they have made changes such as purchasing locally sourced food (32%), shopping at Farmers' Markets (19%), buying more organic produce (17%), and shopping at different supermarkets (13%) for example.

3.6.2 Social Impacts: Amount spent on food

When looking at the amount of money volunteers spend on food per week, this is quite evenly spread as shown by Figure 16 (reflecting a similar picture nationally). One third of respondents spend less than £40 per week, another third spend £70 -£100 per week on food. Seventeen percent spend £40-£70 each week and another 17% spend £100 or more on food each week.

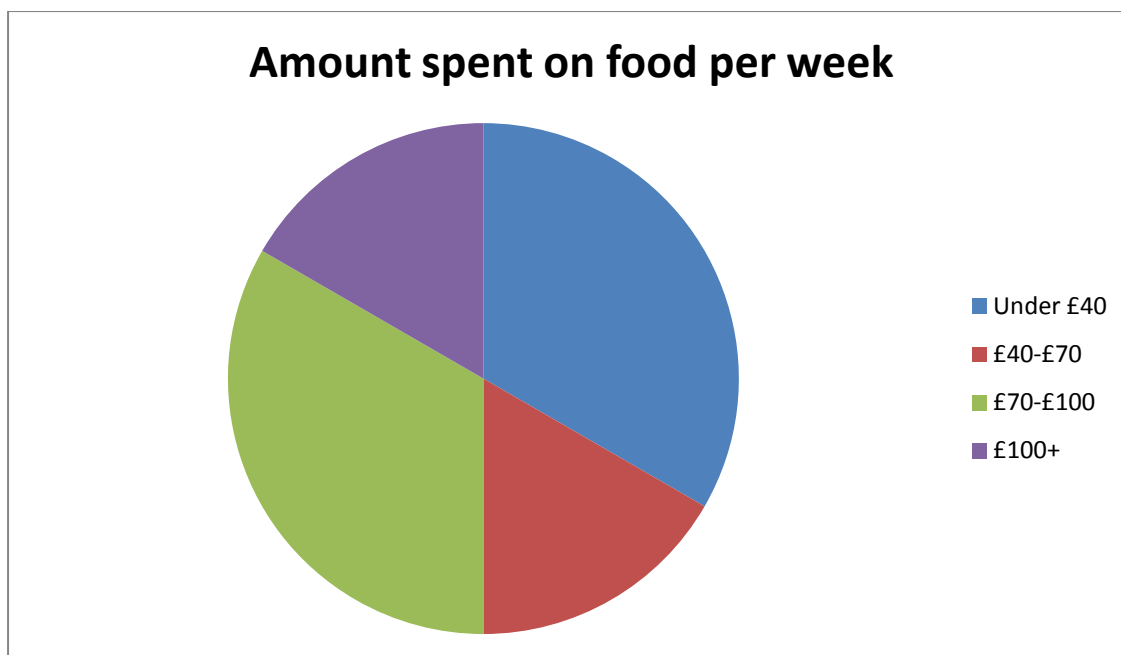


Figure 16: Amount spent on food per week.

For the majority of respondents (5) the amount they spend on food since joining the programme has not changed however for one respondent it has gone down. Nationally, for most respondents the amount they spent on food stayed the same (69%), for 24% however it had decreased (and only increased for 8% mainly due to cost of food increasing and buying higher quality produce).

The amount respondents spend on food has stayed the same due to the following reasons (which are generally the same as those from the national evaluation, although food price increased cancelling out savings made from growing food was also apparent):

- *'It hasn't needed to'*
- *'I was growing the same amount before becoming a Master Gardener'*
- *'My lifestyle has stayed the same'*
- *'Never enough money to buy what we want to'.*

The amount one respondent spends on food has decreased due to the fact that they are growing more food (which is the main reason it had decreased for respondents from the national evaluation).

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions: Impact on Local Food Systems

Volunteers were asked in the focus group what the main impacts of the programme are on local food systems. Responses revolve around an increased knowledge or desire to know where food comes from, and an increased support of local produce. This relates to the programme indirectly educating households by encouraging them to grow their own food.

- Knowing where food comes from and supporting local producers

*“So I started purely by buying organic milk and then the next thing I know I’m looking into other things, I end up fully organic. So it’s the same with the gardening, people might actually be growing their own salad leaves, but you sow that seed of **questioning the food source** and it will eventually filter in to their way of life.” (Medway Focus Group).*

*“**The provenance of food** I think, yes, that’s very important I think. People are only questioning that now aren’t they?” (Medway Focus Group).*

*“Well hopefully, they’d start **supporting the produce grown locally**. I mean we grow a lot of apples in the area and potatoes. I don’t know, you’ve got farm shops slowly cropping back up again hopefully it will just boost, I mean even butchers and things like that, they’re all encouraged to produce local meat now.” (Medway Focus Group).*

*“For me it’s obviously **supporting British farmers** etc. Most people won’t produce much food for themselves, certainly not enough to sustain themselves, so the minute that they start growing anything at home they then **start questioning the produce that they’re buying**. So it’s the bigger picture. You might only put broccoli and carrots on your plate but you’ll start questioning where your potatoes have been grown and other produce so **it’s almost indirectly educating people on what they eat and questioning it**.” (Medway Focus Group).*

- Importance of knowing how to cook food (wider advice and support)

*“I think that when people get over this threshold of **not actually knowing what to do with vegetables**, then it’s much easier for them to think about cooking food*

that they buy from a butcher as opposed to pre packed, going down to the greengrocers that have shot up in Chatham High Street.” (Medway Focus Group).

*“I do think as James¹³ says, that’s part of the thing of being a Master Gardener, it’s not enough to actually know how to grow things. **You’ve got to know how to show somebody what to do with it at the end.** We’ve all grown novelty things, mouse melons.” (Medway Focus Group).*

- Importance of organic

*“The other thing, coming back to, people should grow other things and of course growing organically, the average lettuce grown commercially is sprayed about six or seven times with pesticide and herbicide. So **organic, you know, that’s an important discipline.**” (Medway Focus Group).*

Volunteers taking part in the national evaluation felt that the impact on local food systems would take a while or would be slow to start due to a shift in attitudes and therefore a change in behaviour. Therefore, it was apparent that volunteers felt as though it was too early to tell if there was an impact on local food systems. However, from having time to process the question a number of aspects in relation to impact on local food systems were debated within the focus groups which focused on the cost of food with volunteers discussing inequalities and the need for people to have a fair choice. In terms of having more control some volunteers felt that as people are able to grow their own food, ‘*from soil to plant to plate*’ for example, they have a greater sense of control. Within the focus groups volunteers felt that people are more aware of where their food comes from and are therefore more aware of their shopping habits. It was therefore felt that the impact was in terms of thinking about the wider perspective of where food comes from. Volunteers discussed the factors contributing to this change in attitude and behaviour which was due to a wider awareness and appreciation of ‘taste’, ‘quality’ and ‘cost’ through households growing their own food. This was described as a longer term impact.

¹³ Name has been changed

3.6.4 Social Impacts: Social activities

The findings show that 67% of volunteers are overall satisfied with their involvement with leisure activities and hobbies (lower than the national evaluation finding of 83% satisfaction). Breaking this down, 50% are very satisfied and 17% are fairly satisfied. One respondent reported being neither dissatisfied nor satisfied (17%), and another is dissatisfied (17%)

When looking at whether their level of satisfaction with leisure activities and hobbies had changed at all since involvement in the Programme, only one respondent felt this had increased, the remaining five respondents reported it as staying the same. Satisfaction in this area had increased (46%) and stayed the same (48%) for equal number of participants in the national evaluation.

3.6.5 Social Impacts: Social and community relationships

Overall, 84% satisfied with personal relationships, (67% very satisfied and 17% fairly satisfied), with only one respondent dissatisfied (17%) (similar to the 87% satisfaction rate in the national evaluation). A similar number (83%) of respondents are also satisfied with feeling part of a community (33% very satisfied and 50% fairly satisfied) (this is higher than the 72% of respondents who felt satisfied with this area of their life in the national evaluation), with only one respondent dissatisfied (17%).

For the majority of respondents, satisfaction with feeling part of a community (80%) and with personal relationships (83%) has stayed the same since taking part in the programme (feeling part of a community had stayed the same for 32% nationally, and satisfaction with personal relationships had stayed the same for 70% nationally). However, for one respondent feeling part of a community had decreased and for another respondent satisfaction with personal relationships had increased. (satisfaction with 'feeling part of a community' based on 5 responses). The national evaluation showed a higher reporting people experiencing an increase with feeling part of a community (61%) and personal relationship (26%).

3.6.6 Satisfaction with time spent with friends and family

For 80% of respondents, satisfaction with time spent with friends and family has stayed the same since joining the programme, but has increased for one respondent. Results are

based on 5 responses. For the majority of respondents in the national evaluation this had stayed the same (83%), for 11% it had increased, and for 6% it had decreased.

3.6.7 Social Impacts: Hours growing food

Interestingly, 67% of respondents reported spending 8 hours or more growing food; 17% spend around 4 hours growing food and 17% of respondents spend around 3 hours growing food each week. The national evaluation showed a greater variation in terms of hours per week growing food with the highest number of respondents (27%) spending 8 hours or more per week growing food, which is much lower than the number of hours volunteers in Medway spend growing food.

The average number of hours spent per week growing food has increased for 50% of respondents and has stayed the same for 50% of respondents, which is similar to the national evaluation.

3.6.8 Social Impacts: Amount of time spent on programme

Two thirds of respondents feel as though the amount of time they spend volunteering through the programme is 'just right', whereas one third feel they spend 'too little' time on the programme. This is quite similar to the data from the national evaluation but slightly more respondents felt it was too little (48%), and slightly less respondents felt it was just right (51%).

The amount of time volunteers spend on the programme is quite varied; 50% spend 1 – 4 hours per week on the programme; 17% spend around 5-9 hours a week on the programme and one third of respondents spend 10-14 hours per week on the programme (a similar reflection of the national findings).

3.6.9 Social Impacts: Knowledge of food growing

All respondents reported an increase in their food growing knowledge since joining the programme. A large number of respondents (94%) from the national evaluation also indicated that their knowledge of food growing had increased since participating in the programme; 6% stated they felt it had stayed the same.

3.6.10 Social Impacts: Personal Goal

Half of respondents reported having a personal goal at the start of the programme, which are listed below.

- *'To develop a community garden and enhance the capability and confidence of others'*
- *'To apply the organic method of growing in all aspects of horticulture'*
- *'To have five active households'.*

Two respondents reported on having achieved their goals; the respondent whose goal was to have five active households did not answer this question. Goals from over half of volunteers from the national evaluation mainly included to help others grow food, to learn more about growing food and to recruit households.

3.6.11 Focus Group Discussions: Social Impacts

When discussing the social impact of the programme within the focus group, a range of themes were apparent. The notion of 'sharing' – sharing produce, ideas, knowledge was apparent through the discussion.

- Variation in social impacts (based on community groups or individual)

*"I think it varies. With my group I've got three people who are active on a community allotment so there's a lot of **interaction** between the three of them about growing and so they're **sharing information and also sharing the produce and things**. and then I've got two separate households, one of which has been very successful, very enthusiastic, and the other one that lives not too far away from here has been a bit more of a struggle. But those two households are not part of a wider group, they're just operating individually, so it's only really in the community allotment where you've got people interacting with each other."*
(Medway Focus Group).

*"Well the thing is, we do meet each other once a week and as I say, we pick, we eat, we talk, we decide on whatever we do in the community garden and it's... and we **share** each other's ideas. **It's nice to be with likeminded people** too,*

you know that share your interests. They're all very very keen to grow vegetables my lot." (Medway Focus Group).

- Interaction

*I think just actually **interacting** again with other people and actually... because most people are very busy they realise that in order to pull anything off successfully, it's going to be easier to interact with other people, and **share things**, seed swaps and that kind of thing and just give them a **sense of community**, a gardening community again, rather than each person doing their own thing in their own back garden." (Medway Focus Group).*

- Support to overcome barriers, or to improve confidence

"But yes, they get a chance to get going and a chance to overcome some of the barriers they see about not knowing anything. And not having a clue where to start. We break it down into bite sized chunks for people, that helps them to get going and then some people need a bit more help and some people need a bit less." (Medway Focus Group).

*"I think now that they can **access people with knowledge at the drop of a hat**, I've managed to pick households that have either got very modern day busy lives and not actually executed a great deal or schools with obviously limited funding for these things. So most of the people I've come in contact with **it's about sowing the seed**, pardon the pun. But actually, **just giving it a go** and just knowing that if they just give it a go and it doesn't pan out. I'm at the end of the phone or on the computer and they can just question that and keep going. So just the **support** really." (Medway Focus Group).*

- Need for more events for households

*I don't think, I haven't been able to pull my group together to do something in common, partly because two of them don't get on, but also [...] people have very very busy lives and can't always get out to meet. And I haven't really thought actually, and that might be an interesting way to do it, about showing them what **community resources** are around **community food** and **community food***

growing and they might enjoy that. They might feel that there's a **bigger network of like-minded people** out there and that Master Gardeners and myself are not the only channel to access some of those ideas." (Medway Focus Group).

- Wider behavioural change

Yes I was going to say it's a bit too early to tell I think in this area. Master Gardeners is definitely part of a much greater awareness of food growing and food supply issues and food security and health. That's community health.

- Increased understanding / knowledge

*I think it varies according to the actual household and where they are in terms of their experience and how easy they find it to take it on. But generally what they gain is veg produce, **they gain an understanding of the season** and you know, how to grow things, and become **a bit more in touch with plants if you like, with life**, I suppose. Rather than just going to the supermarket and buying something and taking it back." (Medway Focus Group).*

The focus groups in the national evaluation mainly focused on feeling part of a community, and increased learning and knowledge which is widely comparable to those themes coming from the Medway focus group.

3.7 Health and Wellbeing Impacts

Key Evaluative Impact	Headline Questions
Health and Wellbeing Impacts	<p>7 Life satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your life now, and one year ago? • To what extent do you feel that your participation in the programme has influenced your overall life satisfaction, and why? • Components of wellbeing <p>8 Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How satisfied are you with your health, and do you feel this has changed since joining the programme? <p>9 Fruit and vegetable consumption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average per day how many pieces of fruit and vegetables do you eat, and has this changed since you joined the programme?

3.7.1 Health and Wellbeing Impacts: Life satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their overall life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10 at the time of questionnaire completion (1 year into the project) and one year ago. Respondents were asked to indicate whether their life satisfaction had changed since participating in the programme for one year. Table 8 shows that the average life satisfaction score for volunteers has increased by 1 point since participating in the programme; this is the same as the national evaluation which also showed an average increase of 1 point. The average life satisfaction score for volunteers is higher than the households score (in Medway and national) and the point increase is also greater for volunteers. When making comparisons to the national data on life satisfaction, the average life satisfaction for Medway (after participation in the programme) is higher than the UK average for 2012/2013, by 0.8 (before participation in the programme it was higher by 0.2). Table 8 demonstrates the average life satisfaction rating for each round of the evaluation, and the national average life satisfaction rating when available. Results are based on 13 responses for the national evaluation and 6 responses for the Medway sample. Further questions were asked to explore whether there is a relationship between involvement in the programme and life satisfaction (expanded on below).

Table 8: Volunteer average life satisfaction score			
Life satisfaction (volunteers)	1 year before completing the questionnaire	Time of questionnaire completion (1 year in to the programme)	Change (-/+)
National evaluation average (2010-212)	7.1	8.1	1+
Medway average (2013-2014)	7.3	8.3	1+
National average life satisfaction			
	2010*	2011/12	2012/13
Defra* / ONS ¹⁴	7.5	7.4	7.5

One third of respondents reported in increased in their life satisfaction since joining the programme, and two thirds felt it had stayed the same.

As slightly higher number of volunteer respondents (49%) in the national evaluation reported that their overall life satisfaction had increased since taking part in the programme for around one year (nearly half of respondents, 49%, reported that their overall life satisfaction had stayed the same, 1% informed it had decreased).

¹⁴ http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_328486.pdf page 9

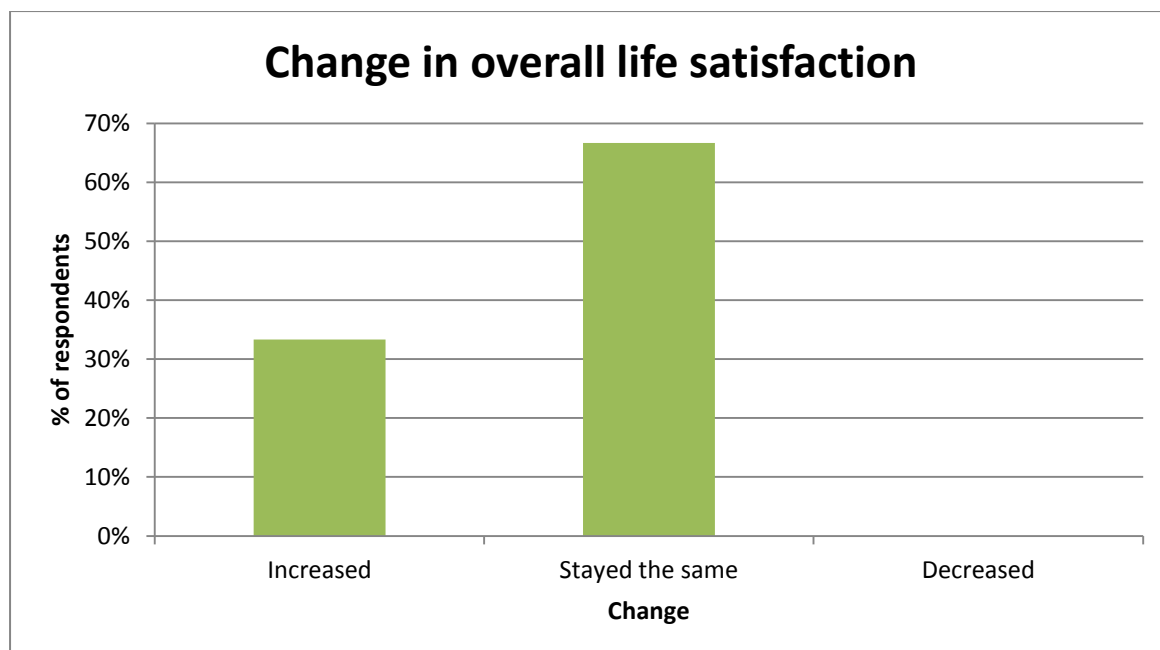


Figure 17: Change in overall life satisfaction

When looking at the extent to which involvement in the programme has influenced volunteer's life satisfaction, 83% informed it had influenced their overall life satisfaction to some extent (17% informed to a large extent and 67% informed to a little extent). One respondent highlighted that they felt their involvement in the programme hadn't influenced their overall life satisfaction (17%).

When looking at the extent to which involvement in the programme has influenced participants life satisfaction in the national evaluation, nearly 84% informed it had to some extent, which is nearly exact to the Medway findings. However a higher number of respondents (26%) stated that it had influenced their life satisfaction to a large extent (compared to 17% in Medway).

The respondent that felt as though their involvement in the programme had *not* influenced their overall life satisfaction positively felt as though 'my life was complete as I already shared my knowledge and experience. This programme records it' (this was the case for a lot of respondent staking part in the national evaluation).

The respondent who recorded that their involvement in the Programme has influenced their life satisfaction to a *large extent* stated: 'my interest has increased and my willingness to learn'. Three respondents stated why they felt as though their involvement in the programme has influenced their overall life satisfaction to a *little extent*:

- *'Contributing to greater good. It has plusses in that I've met some great people, and minuses in the time and energy it demands on me'.*
- *'It is nice to meet like-minded people'*
- *Meeting new people and seeing their confidence grow'.*

This personal aspect was also a main reason for volunteers taking part in the national evaluation.

3.7.2 Health and Wellbeing Impacts: Health

All respondents reported being satisfied with their health, with one third 'very satisfied' and two thirds 'satisfied'. This is more significant than the national evaluation with 86% recording a general satisfaction with their health (11% were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied and 3% were dissatisfied).

For most respondents this had stayed the same (67%) however for one respondent this had increased (17%) and for another it had decreased (17%). These findings are similar to the national evaluation however for slightly less it had decreased (12%) and for slightly more it had increased (24%).

3.7.3 Health and Wellbeing Impacts: Fruit and vegetable consumption

The average portions of fruit and vegetables consumed by volunteer respondents is 5 per day. As Figure 18 highlights, equal fractions of respondents consume 4 pieces, 5 pieces and 6 pieces of fruit and vegetables per day. These findings were very similar in the national evaluation. For both samples, the average portions of fruit and vegetables consumed per day is 5 (0.9 portions higher than the national average)

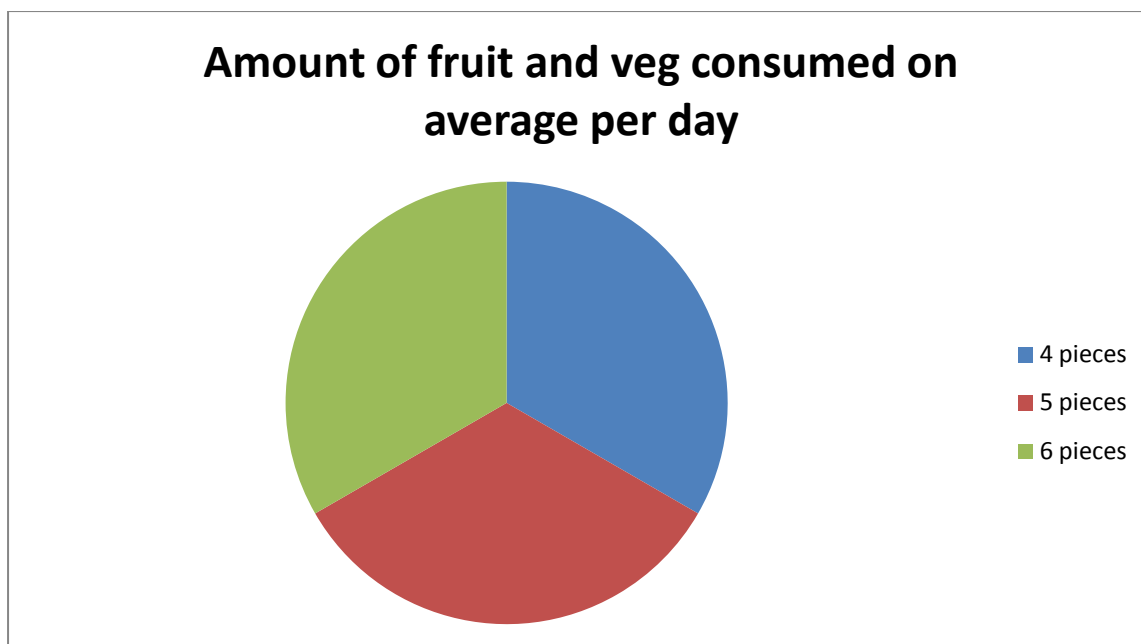


Figure 18: Pieces of fruit and vegetables consumed on average per day

All respondents informed that the amount of fruit and vegetables they eat on average per day has stayed the same since participating in the programme (which was true for 85% of respondents nationally, with 14% informing it had increased, and for 1% it had decreased).

3.7.4 Focus Group Discussions: Health Impacts

The health benefits of the programme were also discussed in the focus groups. Volunteers felt through growing their own food people's diets have improved as they are leaning to cook with fresher produce and are therefore eating fresh produce. Discussions also took place around people exercising more through growing their own food as well as benefiting in their mental health through taking part in a sociable and positive activity.

- Recipes – eating new things, importance of cooking knowledge

*“Certainly, at an individual household level people are reporting back that they’re having a, **they’re feeling a bit healthier, they’re eating different diets, they’re eating better diets.** They’re eating things that they haven’t eaten before. I’m into recipes now with one of my householders to try and show her how to cook stuff that they’ve grown. Very very successfully grown, and realise that they didn’t know how to cook it.*

That's what the BBC website's for.

Well, sometimes people need a bit more hand holding." (Medway Focus Group).

- Eating fresh produce

***"Fresh vegetables** I think, eating fresh. When you can of course, you know. **Growing them and eating them is the most wonderful experience**, you know, rather than buying them from the shop or eating them out of the freezer. Marvellous experience and lovely for the children in the household as well. You know, to see that it actually doesn't come from Sainsbury's or Tesco, it comes out of the garden.*

"Another family whose children are eating fresh vegetables in a way that they just didn't do before because they could see where it comes from and they've grown it themselves and experimenting with different foods."

*"Well really following on from what has been said, **people are eating better, fresher** and I think Jane¹⁵ is right, they do start to question where the food that they buy in the supermarkets comes from." (Medway Focus Group).*

- Exercise

***Another chap is getting a lot of exercise up at his allotment** and he's got to fall back and ask about advice, he's not getting disheartened and he's able to feel that he can keep going.*

*Then of course, there's the exercise. There are a couple of people that I work with that are a bit overweight and **exercise out in the fresh air, try to get them to do as much as possible**, and not rely on me. There's multiple benefits of it.*

- Mental health benefits – a practical, positive activity, personal contact and interaction

¹⁵ Name has been changed

*Yes, I don't want to kind of extrapolate upwards from my little group, but I've got a lady with some kind of **mental health issue, depression issue who's been very happy, you know, she needed the jolt that Master Gardeners gave her to get out and start growing.***

*I think you've got, I mean I personally haven't, but I think if you've got people gardening as well that are retired it also **gives them an opportunity talk to other people.** You can never walk along an allotment path without being nabbed by just about everybody that you go past."*

Similar themes were discussed in the focus groups from the national evaluation especially in linking with cooking home grown produce and therefore eating healthier. The impacts of physical and mental wellbeing were also discussed in terms of being outside and connecting to nature as well as being more active.

3.7.5 Health and Wellbeing Impacts: Components of wellbeing

Table 9 demonstrates Defra's wellbeing components, five of which this section of the report will focus upon. The Master Gardener results for the five components, for the Medway evaluation and the national evaluation are presented in Table 13, along with Defra's national average (2010). More up to date data is currently unavailable at the time of writing this report but the 2010 averages do provide some level of comparison. As the results show, many of the averages are quite close. However, satisfaction with accommodation is lower for the Medway sample compared to the national sample, and the national average. Satisfaction with feeling part of a community is higher in Medway than it is for the national evaluation and the national average, and satisfaction with future financial security is higher than the national sample but near enough equal to the national average.

Table 9: Components of wellbeing

	Medway average	Volunteer average (over three rounds)	Defra's average (2010)
Standard of living	83%	86%	86%
Accommodation	67%	90%	87%
Personal relationships	83%	87%	86%
Feeling part of a community	83%	72%	63%
Future financial security	67%	56%	66%

3.8 Views on Programme

Key Evaluative Impact	Headline Questions
Views on the Programme	<p>10 Enjoyment in the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you enjoy being part of the Master Gardener programme? Would you change anything about the programme? <p>11 Benefits from participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the main benefit you have gained from taking part in the programme? <p>12 Advice from Master Gardener</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How satisfied are you with your advice from your volunteer co-ordinator?

3.8.1 Views on the Programme: Enjoyment of the programme

All respondents informed that they enjoy being part of the programme. Respondents were asked to state why in particular, four of which did:

- 'Meeting new people, helping them group, and the Master Gardener team'*
- 'People, knowledge, helping others, being part of something together'*
- 'Rewarding to see food grown and to pass on knowledge to others'*
- 'Sharing knowledge and assisting more people to grow vegetables'.*

The social side to the programme as well as learning and sharing knowledge were key reasons why volunteers enjoyed the programme stated in the national evaluation.

3.8.2 Views on the Programme: Motivations for participation

Volunteers were asked why they decided to participate in the Master Gardener Programme. The following reasons were stated:

- 'I enjoy growing and wanted to help others to grow'*
- 'My interest in gardening'*

- *'My own interest but to share experiences with community garden'*
- *'Wanted to contribute Garden Organic's work in Medway'.*

These reasons are similar to those responding in the national evaluation – helping others, sharing knowledge, meeting new people and to learn more about gardening.

Motivations for participation were also discussed in the focus group. Volunteers reported becoming part of the programme for a number of reasons: contributing to the work of Garden Organic, an interest in organic growing, and the opportunity to help other grow food. Some of the volunteers were already members of Garden Organic before their participation in the programme.

"I was already a member of Garden Organic so I already knew about their work and I was keen to bring it down to the South East and do my bit."

"I became a Master Gardener because... I became a Master Gardener because I have been growing for many years, long been interested in organic growing principles. Have an allotment and a garden and really liked the opportunity to help other people grow a bit more of their own food as well."

"I've been a member of Garden Organic for more years than I care to remember actually and also being an enthusiastic veg grower for more years than I care to remember and having the opportunity to pass on some tips and allowing other people to grow, it's an idea opportunity, I jumped at it." (Medway Focus Group)

3.8.3 Views on the Programme: Satisfaction with resources

Volunteers were asked to express their satisfaction with various Master Gardener resources. Responses are displayed in Figure 19. It is clear to see that respondents are 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied' with all Master Gardener resources, with the exception of one respondent who is 'neither dissatisfied nor satisfied' with the Master Gardener website.

When asked for any comments they would like to make about the resources, one person felt that 'rain coats would be useful', and another stated that if it is not possible to attend

the training then having the materials / training information to put in the ring binder would be useful.

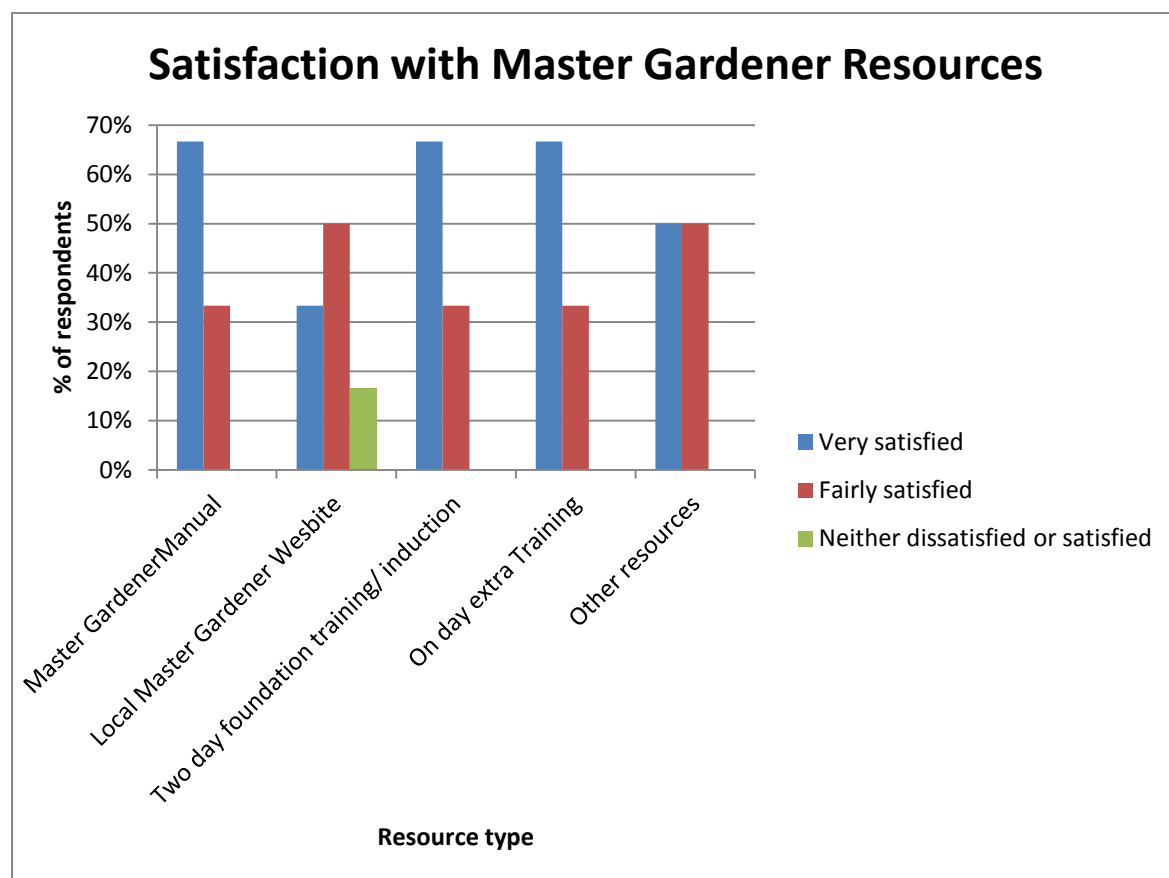


Figure 19: Satisfaction with Master Gardener Resources

3.8.4 Views on the Programme: Changes to the Programme

Only one respondent said they would change something about the programme although when asked, didn't state what. All other respondents said they wouldn't change anything.

'Changes to the Programme' was something that was discussed in the focus group. There appeared to be some confusion over the online space for Master Gardeners which led volunteers to call for a Facebook page or a discussion page for instantaneous communication, rather than having to look up people's details. The Volunteer Coordinator reminded the volunteers that there is a forum on the website. This may be something that needs further promotion or explanation as part of the Master Gardener training.

Some volunteers discussed the possibility of having support with additional communication with households. As the national evaluation found, although Master Gardeners are very knowledgeable about growing, they are hesitant about being known as 'experts'. Some volunteers from Medway therefore felt that a monthly information sheet for example may be useful for them to have to send or give to their households, which contained additional information about monthly activities. The following extract from the focus group demonstrates this point:

*"I think even just able, I know we can email our households with things to do that month etc, but that involves sitting down and actually typing out a whole page of something, there are so many seed companies that actually send monthly out what you can be doing that month, **it would be nice if the Master Gardeners actually had a system where we could all just email that straight from them to our households.***

(General agreement)

Because then they would be getting something every month as well with a long list of things, I mean there's moreveg, I think it's moreveg, a seed company, and they do more unusual seeds and even now in September, they're sending me a list of about 20 things that can still be grown.

That's right yes.

*And you know, **if you can email something like that out that just keeps people involved all year round.** So they don't think, oh it's too late in the year, I can't do anything now.*

I can't do anything now yes.

In fact I've even signed up to a couple of different sites and they send monthly.

[So you'd like to see that perhaps as part of the monthly newsletter that gets sent out?]

Even just as a household, I think if you sign up as a household, it would be nice to know that you would get an email once a month with things to do.

I think there's probably a case for the remapping of all the information support to Master Gardeners.

Rather than relying on your Master Gardener as an individual to be a worldly knowledge on everything that's going on each month.

That's right, absolutely yes.

But I wouldn't mind delivering that myself, if it was in an easy format, you could print off a double A4 page and when you next see..." (Medway Focus Group).

Schools and children were seen as key target areas where the programme could work, and where it would have impact. Schools (and community groups) were however a part of the pilot programme (although the national evaluation focused predominantly on 'households'); further research is needed to explore whether this is something the programme wants to continue with in the future. The following quotes reflect the focus group discussion on the aspect of school and children.

*"So that would be my only thing is initially it was all about households and I know that I've been approached by schools more than households [...] and I think maybe with Garden Organic insisting on it being a household, and trying to get into homes, then **maybe they're missing a trick by not just opening it right up and acknowledging that schools want it as well.***

Yes, absolutely .

*Because **cooking** and that is now back on the curriculum isn't it? So, **for a long time there was disconnection.***

General agreement.

Now it's back on the agenda.

Because I think you'd gain a lot more households through being in a school.

Yes I think so.

*And having access to all those children in the first place because **parents will get lots of information from their children going home**, especially in primary and if they know it's there then they're more likely to come forward and say, could you help me?*

Getting kids onside is very important. [...]

I wonder if kids go home and refuse stuff! [...]

So it proves that getting the kids onside really does have an effect because they take the message home." (Medway Focus Group).

This discussion about schools led on to a wider point about linking the Master Gardener Programme with other programmes which would address the disconnection between ‘families growing at home and schools improving their school meals’. One volunteer however recognised the difficulties of cross-programme coordination, but this could be something for the programme to consider.

*“It would link up with the **Food for Life** because you’ve got schools who do the food for life which is supported by people like Garden Organic, when they’re obviously encouraged to **improve their schools meals**, but there’s nothing between **families growing at home** and schools improving their school meals. **If you put the two together, you’d actually have a full chain there.**”*

That would depend on the funders and what they want specifically out of the individual programme. It depends on funders getting together and coordinating their aims and objectives, and I can tell you that’s a very tricky debate.” (Medway Focus Group)

3.8.5 Views on the Programme: Benefits from participation

Volunteers were presented with the question: ‘what is the main benefit you have gained from taking part in the programme?’ Results include:

- *‘Being part of a like-minded group of people, with which to share experiences’*
- *‘Encouragement of my families to grow vegetables’*
- *‘Extended knowledge from fellow Master Gardeners and trainers and met new growers’*
- *‘Feeling part of something bigger, using my skills and knowledge to help others, promoting the organic message, meeting local people and making friends’*
- *‘Knowledge of unusual plants and growing methods’*
- *‘Meeting nice people, learning and sharing’.*

The social aspects as well as the extended knowledge were all common answers from the national evaluation.

The benefit of participating in the programme to volunteers was also discussed in the focus group. Reported benefits (similar to those highlighted in the questionnaire) include being part of a support group /being part of something larger, the ability to try new things, increased knowledge, a gain in personal skills. These are demonstrated by the following extract from the focus group:

"I think personally it's been a great opportunity, I've learnt a lot."

[...]

"Feeling for me being part of something large has been very enjoyable."

"I've certainly been more organised and grown more since I've been with Master Gardener"

"Tried out different things. Yes."

"Yes, experimented more with things. Just because you know you've got somebody to share that experience with when you've done it."

"You've got a peer group."

"Not just your partner looking at you like oh god!" (Medway Focus Group).

3.8.6 Views on the Programme: Communication with Volunteer Coordinator

Most respondents reported an informal and flexible communication with the volunteer coordinator on an 'as and when' basis (60%). One respondent reported monthly communication (20%) and the other fortnightly communication (20%). Results are based on 5 responses. As with the national evaluation, the highest proportion of respondents communicate with their volunteer coordinator on an as and when basis. Due to the larger sample in the national evaluation, this obviously increased the variety of responses.

All respondents are satisfied with the support they receive from their Volunteer Coordinator with 50% being 'very satisfied' and 50% being 'satisfied'. The national findings show that 95% of respondents were overall satisfied with the support from their volunteer coordinator (84% of those respondents being 'very satisfied' and 11% 'fairly satisfied'). Only 3% of respondents reported being 'fairly dissatisfied' with the support

from their volunteer coordinator, and 1% of respondents were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'.

3.8.7 Views on the Programme: Comments about Volunteer Coordinator

Respondents were asked if they would like to make any comments about their volunteer coordinator; half of the volunteers took the opportunity to, and comments were positive (as they were in the national evaluation).

- *'Friendly, enthusiastic and supportive'*
- *'Pleasant and easy to get on with'*
- *'She's great'*.

3.8.8 Views on the Programme: Prevention from participation

To gather views on potential barriers to participation, volunteers were asked whether there would anything that would prevent them from volunteering in the future. Three respondents indicated that time may be potential barrier (also a potential barrier recognised in the main evaluation), and one respondent felt that home commitments may be.

3.8.9 Views on the Programme: Problems with households

Half of respondents stated they had a problem with any of their households but half didn't report any problems.

For two volunteers, their household's lack of time impacted on their commitment to the programme. Another respondent reflected on personality differences, but didn't report on any major issues associated with this. Problems highlighted in the national evaluation were mainly to do with lack of willingness from households and difficulties with communication.

3.8.10 Views on the Programme: Additional comments

Volunteers were asked whether they would like to make any additional comments about their involvement in the programme; only one respondent took the opportunity to do so:

- *'I enjoy the sessions and workshops tremendously although I can't always make them due to family commitments but they are well-organised and friendly'*.

3.8.11 Focus Group Discussions: Overall Impact of the Programme

When asked about the overall importance of the programme, awareness and encouragement were initially identified. However, this led on to one volunteer making a point around the lack of publicity of the programme.

“Awareness? Actually putting the thought of gardening into people’s minds?

It’s encouragement isn’t it?”

“It’s very low level, there isn’t a great deal of publicity.” (Medway Focus Group).

Other volunteers focused on the overall model of the programme and its approach (flexibly, locally embedded, bottom up). The reputation of Garden Organic could also be identified as a strength and how they support their volunteers. The following quotes perfectly summarise these points:

“I think the overall contribution for me, the overall contribution, is that this is a low key, low cost programme, bottom up method of getting people, of helping people to grow some of their own food and starting plugging into wider environmental and social community networks, thinking about food provenance, food suppliers, thinking about their diet and their health. In a way it’s really practical and is (unclear 0.26.22) because it takes them from where they are in baby steps and takes them as far along the journey as they want to go.

*I think the way in which they get people to volunteer Master Gardeners, Composters etc has obviously been successful so that aspect of promoting other areas could be copied. I don’t know about the actual execution thereafter how successful it is, but certainly **the enrolment of volunteers seems to work**. So you know, **they’re certainly very generous with the training days**.*

I think people are quite happy to volunteer for the organisation. So maybe that in itself can be used.

*I think the kind of **peer educator, peer mentor model is pretty well done**. That’s what this is, we’re not people with specialist training in horticulture necessarily, but we’ve got an interest in it. **We’re locally embedded**. I work with here families that are within five minutes walking distance from my house*

deliberately. Because I needed to keep it easy. [...] But I think it can serve as a model. I think it does, it's a well tried model." (Medway Focus Group).

Volunteers within the national focus groups also felt as though the programme should be **publicised** more, and that people should be made more aware of it. Volunteers from these areas also felt that the programme should be 'opened up', '**widened out**' and 'rolled out' to more people and other areas. In all the focus groups the name '**Master Gardener**' was discussed. It was apparent that many volunteers did not feel 'worthy' enough to be called a 'Master'. Other names were suggested such as 'garden buddies' and 'mentor'. Volunteers from all focus groups felt as though the programme provided a **wide range of benefits**, rather than just one particular benefit.

5.0 Conclusions

This evaluation was commissioned to measure Objective 5 of the Master Gardener programme “to demonstrate the health, environmental and social impact of the project on the lives of those households involved and on local food systems” (Master Gardener Business Plan, November 2008). This report presents the analysis of the quantitative data generated (from 6 household questionnaires and 6 Master Gardener questionnaires). The report also focuses upon qualitative data from 4 household interviews and Master Gardener focus group. The report presents results for the households first, followed by the volunteers. In order to clearly address the requirements of objective 5 of the business plan¹⁶, each section is structured around environmental, health and social impacts, as well as views on the programme. Throughout the report, comparisons are made to the national evaluation.

The findings presented in this report, has provided some encouraging insights into the impact of the Master Gardener programme on the lives of those involved in Medway. The findings are largely consistent with those from the national evaluation. In terms of the fundamental aim of the programme, to encourage people to grow their own food, this has clearly been achieved with nearly 70% of household respondents having **increased the amount of food they grow** (compared to 80% nationally). Moreover, 80% of respondents have also **increased the range of food** they grow since joining the programme (compared to 76% nationally). The programme has also had an effect on volunteers as for 50% the **amount of food they grow has increased** (compared to 55% nationally), and for 83% the **range of food they grow has increased** (compared to two thirds nationally). Overall, 80% of householders agreed that their **knowledge of food growing has increased** substantially (compared to 88% nationally). Similarly, over 94% of volunteers informed that their **knowledge of food growing has also increased** (the same proportion as nationally). It is clear that the households value the knowledge and support of the volunteers – **78% were overall satisfied** with the advice (the same proportion as national). Again, the results show that **100% of volunteers overall satisfied** with the advice from their coordinator (compared to 95% nationally).

¹⁶ Objective 5 of the MG programme is “to demonstrate the health, environmental and social impact of the project on the lives of those households involved and on local food systems” (Master Gardener Business Plan, November 2008).

The findings provide some indications of the **health impacts** of the programme. 75% of household respondents had **increased the number of hours spent growing food** (compared to just over two thirds nationally); this is also the case for 50% of volunteer respondents (44% nationally). For 50% of household respondents said their **satisfaction with their health had increased** since participating in the programme (compared to 24% nationally); this has stated the same for the majority of volunteers (satisfaction with health had increased for 24% of volunteers nationally). However, it is in terms of **life satisfaction and well-being** that some of the most interesting results have occurred. The household results show that the average life satisfaction score before taking part in the programme was 6.8 (out of 10). Around one year in to the programme, **the average life satisfaction score has increased** by 0.8, to 7.6 (compared to an increase of 0.7 from 7.2 to 7.9 nationally). Focusing on the Master Gardener volunteers, the **average life satisfaction score** since participating in the programme for one year has **increased** by 1 point, from 7.3 to 8.3 (which is similar to the national data which showed a 1 point increase from 7.1 to 8.1). When asked to state the extent to which involvement in the programme has influenced life satisfaction, **80% of household respondents** (77% nationally) **and 83% of volunteer respondents stated that it had, to a little or large extent** (compared to 84% nationally).

In terms of **environmental impacts**, one of the key indicators is that 20% of householders (one third nationally) had **increased the amount of food and waste composted** whereas for most volunteers the amount they compost has stayed the same (compared to it increasing for 29% of volunteers nationally).

In terms of the **social impact** of the programme, some intriguing results are emerging in terms of expenditure on food, which has a strong potential impact on family budgets. When asked whether the amount spent on food has changed since participating in the programme, 50% of household respondents stated that it had not changed (65% nationally) and 50% **stated that the amount they spend on food had actually decreased** (29% nationally) since participating in the programme, which seems quite significant given the rising food prices generally over the last few years; most volunteer respondent stated that the amount they spend of food has stayed the same (this had decreased for 24% of volunteer respondents nationally). The decline in expenditure was due to purchasing less food due to **consumption of home grown produce**.

Interestingly, household respondents and volunteer respondents stated that they **had made changes to where they buy their food**, buying locally being the main change and buying less from supermarkets. These findings suggest that the programme may be

having an impact on local food systems by encouraging people to 'think local' in terms of food.

The evaluation has highlighted some strong impacts of the programme on the lives of the volunteers and the households. An important point to make is that a **number of impacts** are evident; the project seems to have a wide ranging impact on participants rather than in just one particular area. The findings also point towards an interconnectedness of the benefits the programme delivers. Although the sample size for Medway is relatively small, strong comparisons can be made to the national evaluation across areas giving confidence that it is having a similar impact.

The data and analysis presented in this final report has provided some insights into the impact of the Master Gardener programme on the lives of both households and volunteers Medway, comparable to the national evaluation. In terms of the fundamental aim of the programme, to encourage people to grow their own food, this has clearly been achieved. An important point to make is that a **number of impacts** are evident; the project seems to have a wide ranging impact on participants rather than in just one particular area. The findings also point towards an **interconnectedness** of the benefits the programme delivers. The evaluation has clearly generated data which points towards an **overall positive impact** of the programme when viewed alongside the national evaluation. In terms of further investigation of the impact of the programme in Medway, it would be beneficial to repeat the data collection (or parts of it) using an increased sample size. This would allow for a more robust and representative analysis.