**Dundee Public Social Partnership**

**Tests of change proposal – Therapeutic Allotment**

**Background**

In partnership with RecoverTay, Tayside’s Grassroots Recovery Community, Hillcrest Futures currently provide access to a therapeutic garden allotment; this is a proven activity to support people’s mental health and wellbeing.

**There are several drivers behind this proposal:**

Engaging in meaningful activity is beneficial to support recovery and general wellbeing.

Connecting with other people on a regular basis, particularly people who have or are going through a similar experience is an important factor for initiating and sustaining recovery from substance use.

Learning new skills is beneficial to building confidence and self esteem.

**Proposal**

In partnership with RecoverTay, we want to expand the access to their allotment in Dundee. We will provide access to meaningful therapeutic activity, this will be available to anyone in recovery and their family members and supporters.

We will be supported by Hillcrest Therapeutic Gardner who will help us use sustainable methods in our approach to the allotment management. This will involve recycling and using eco methods to prevent weeds, reduce pest, nurture plants and encourage bee friendly flowers.

We have recently secured funding to improve the facilities at the allotment, (new shed and tools) and can provide waterproof clothing to keep people dry in inclement weather.

This will be available to anyone with an interest in supporting recovery and involvement will be guided by RecoverTay’s values. RecoverTay group members will be available to ‘buddy’ people along to the allotment.

We will provide learning sessions to those volunteering and also have sessions for a women’s only group.

We will also be marking the space out with some individual plots, so people can grow what they would like, with the advice and guidance of the therapeutic gardener.

This will be widely promoted by ISMS staff; they will encourage people to get involved at the allotment as part of their treatment/recovery agreement. We have had early discussion regarding how this might work as an alternative to attending clinical appointments but further conversation is required to address all of the issues that might arise.

**Outputs**

* Staff input including an experienced therapeutic gardener
* RecoverTAY buddy if required
* Provision of tools and clothing
* Own individual piece of the allotment

**Outcomes**

* Numbers of people attending allotment group
* Number of individuals supported to access through ISMS keyworker
* Number of people reporting improved mental wellbeing
* Number of people accessing other recovery support including mutual aid meetings
* Number of people reporting improved confidence and self esteem
* Number of people with increased knowledge around allotment management.

**Recommendations**

The allotment is already available but is underused. It is being prepared for winter and will be available for group by spring 2021

There will be opportunity for shared learning with other recovery/therapeutic allotments across the city such as the one being developed by WAWY.

This can link with the Lochee Hub and Spoke TOC as another avenue for people to engage with meaningful activity and with organisations who can support them including Hillcrest Futures, ISMS and RecoverTay.