# Impact Report 2025-2026

## What We Do

Season Well's purpose is to inspire and enable people in Yorkshire, particularly those in marginalised communities, to grow, cook and eat more seasonal, sustainable fruit, herbs and vegetables. Improving the wellbeing of people and the planet.

## Our Year 2025-2026

In a challenging year, with larger grants harder to come by and partners facing similar pressures, Season Well is proud that we were able to reach over 1,000 beneficiaries with one-off workshops, short courses or longer projects, all focused on our 4 main outcome areas.

1. **People are more knowledgeable about sustainable food**
2. **People are taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint for food**
3. **People are taking positive steps towards growing their own food and cooking seasonally**
4. **People have improved their wellbeing**

As well as continuing some of our long-term partnerships, we managed to reach new people by securing new work with Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Leeds City Council and several new partner organisations in communities across Leeds and North Yorkshire.



In total, our team delivered 174 different sessions over the year. These range from one-off workshops in seasonal cooking, such as a session on fermenting and pickling we delivered in the RHS Wellbeing Garden Hospital at St James for hospital staff and local community, to long-term courses such as the weekly sessions we run in an allotment for Harrogate Skills For Living, enabling people with Learning Disabilities to grow food and cook with it all through the year.

We have worked with schools, community gardens, community arts organisations, community centres, National charities and even our local funeral directors who give us the use of their garden to deliver sustainable food skills sessions and grow many seedlings to take all over Leeds.



We are a really flexible organisation and meet communities and organisations where they are, in terms of skills, needs and geography, so that we can bring food skills and knowledge, particularly to marginalised communities, to enable healthy sustainable eating for all.

Well done to our great team of facilitators and a big thank you to all our partners and participants.

Let's keep growing together.

With 5 funding grants received as well as our commissioned work, we were proud to engage with:

**1000 + beneficiaries, including:**

**423 children**

**48 people with learning or physical disabilities**

**77 older people**

**41 community organisations and**

**10 schools,**

**predominantly in areas of urban deprivation**

## Season Well's Activities and Outcomes 2025/6:

### Network Facilitation




We now co-ordinate two local food-growing networks in inner-city Leeds, enabling community groups to support and learn from each other as they grow food in harmony with nature for their communities. Continuing the "Food For Thought East" network and expanding to the South, 52 people from 20 organisations took part in regular skills-sharing sessions and events to help strengthen and support sustainable, community food growing locally. (Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 met plus community cohesion and improving access to food in areas of deprivation)

*"The opportunity to share good practice with one another is really valuable. While we all work in the same area, there's a variety of contexts, approaches and learning from these differences is really useful, both in skillshares and the conversations that come about as a result of us being together."* (Network member)

## Community ‘Yarden’ Project



A community arts centre in inner-city Leeds wanted to turn their unloved backyard into a community green space for food growing, nature and socialising outdoors. Along with centre users and wider community members, we co-designed and built an accessible outdoor ‘Yarden’ and planted herbs, vegetables and flowers, funded by National Gardens. We have applied for further funding for workshops to make use of the space. (Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 met)

*“The cafe volunteers really appreciate being able to look after plants” (Centre Manager)*

## Cooking for Mental Wellbeing



Our “Feed Yourself Well” initiative received new grant funding from Leeds Community Foundation this year, and was developed to include a Pay as You Feel Cafe open to the community. Further to this, mental health charity Mind, commissioned us to run a number of sessions in North Yorkshire.

We were also commissioned by long-standing partner Orb Community Arts to deliver a 12-month Plot to Plate programme, with monthly cooking sessions teaching food hygiene and preparing food for termly celebrations using produce grown in our weekly gardening sessions.

In total 20 people with mental health difficulties were supported to cook with local seasonal produce, while benefiting from the social and mental wellbeing benefits of preparing and sharing food. (Outcomes 1, 3 and 4 met)

*“This tastes really nice. I'll have to try and cook more myself" (participant)*

## Working with Schools

We have developed a partnership approach to working in schools where we can add value to organisations whose sole focus is on schools. We have worked with the national charity, School Food Matters, to deliver a programme in 4 Leeds primary schools to teach a class of children to make simple, nutritious, seasonal dishes over three progressive sessions.




We also worked with West Yorkshire-based CIC Grow To School to devise a pilot course for Leeds City Council Public Health, involving working with parents of young children to grow food and use it to cook simple seasonal meals. This pilot has been met with great success and more courses are planned (Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 met.)

*“I found out it’s better to eat food that’s near us, not stuff that comes from a long way on planes as that’s bad for the environment.”* (Child participant)

## Growing Projects - New and Ongoing



Continuing two long-standing projects, plus a new contract with NHS Mental Health Rehab and Recovery team and another with a new charity, all working on organisations’ allotments or vegetable gardens to enable service users to grow food for harvest. In total around 50 people, with learning disabilities and or mental ill-health, attended weekly sessions. (All outcomes met, plus community cohesion - fostering a stronger sense of belonging, with service users and volunteers working together without barriers.)

*"The fresh produce helps with healthy eating. The sessions with Helen prompted me to cook something new"* (Adult participant)

### ‘Healthy Holidays’ Programme



Our seventh year working on Healthy Holidays in Leeds saw us working with 14 schools and organisations, helping over 300 children experience the fun of hands-on food growing and cooking in their holidays. (Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 met.)

“The great thing about this meal is that none of it has been bought from a shop, it’s all been grown!” (Child participant)

## Longer Term Benefits

We use feedback from our facilitators, comments from organisations and participants themselves to evidence medium and longer term benefits to communities beyond the initial outcomes detailed above.

Participants reported:

### Increased food knowledge and confidence

People learn lost skills in growing, cooking, and preserving food, leading to greater confidence, independence and resilience in their day-to-day lives.

Children exposed to healthy food habits early are more likely to continue them into adulthood.

Knowledge is shared beyond participants - through food growing networks, schools, families and community organisations to spread through communities

### Sustainable eating habits

- Participants continuing to lower their carbon footprint by cooking seasonally and growing their own produce
- Families and children are introduced to achievable sustainable food options early, so behaviours can become established

## Improved mental health and general wellbeing

- People with mental ill-health benefitting from being outside, physical activity through gardening, confidence in cooking and social connection.
- Eating better for wellbeing, particularly amongst vulnerable groups like Learning Disability or people with mental health needs
- Community spaces and outdoor growing projects create lasting opportunities for wellbeing beyond individual sessions

## Community cohesion

- Building stronger links and tolerance between disparate groups
- Sustainable networks that continue beyond our involvement create a route to connect to share knowledge and support
- Local organisations and individuals collaborating on food projects create a sense of collective ownership and contribution

## Access to food

Improved availability of fresh produce for vulnerable groups who may experience barriers to accessing fresh food

Stronger networks mean more groups are able to grow food, creating greater local capacity to grow and share fresh produce longer term

