

30<sup>th</sup> August 2022

## Inclusive gardening project announced at Newton Community Hospital in St Helens

- Patients, visitors and NHS staff to benefit from improved garden space at hospital, with innovative project to be led by social care charity Community Integrated Care



An inclusive gardening project will take place at Newton Community Hospital in St Helens throughout the rest of the year, allowing people with learning disabilities, autism, and mental health concerns to learn and develop new gardening skills, helping to deliver a new and improved garden space for hospital patients, visitors and NHS staff to enjoy.

The innovative project is being led by national social care charity Community Integrated Care, and is being funded by healthcare investor Renova and with additional support and investment from Community Health Partnerships (CHP), a key part of the NHS family. Support for the gardening project is also being provided by St Helens and Knowsley NHS Trust who provide inpatient ward services at Newton Community Hospital.

The project builds on a [successful initiative last year](#) that saw Community Integrated Care and the people it supports create an accessible garden space at the hospital – detailed analysis of last year’s activities showed that for every £1 invested, over £13 in social value was created. To continue this work, the new inclusive gardening project is now underway and will run for a full year, including:

### Creating unique opportunities for people who have care and support needs

- The project will give people who access care and support an exciting platform to form friendships, achieve personal successes and develop horticultural skills.
- Community Integrated Care will re-engage volunteers from last year’s initiative as well as engaging new volunteers, creating opportunities for personal and social development and a potential pathway to paid work or volunteering.
- An online learning component will also be introduced for those in care that are unable to access the opportunity in-person – through online learning, even more people will be able to gain new skills, improve their personal development and develop their gardens at home

### Delivering a welcoming garden space for hospital patients, visitors and NHS staff to enjoy

- The accessible garden space delivered last summer will be further maintained and improved, with a professional gardener now appointed to help oversee the space, and the training of volunteers involved
- Gardening work the volunteers will carry out over the summer months will include herb basket making, planting and cutting of flower beds, potato growing, wildflower meadow creation, and willow and hazel fence making

### Bringing the excitement of the Rugby League World Cup to the hospital

- Community Integrated Care is the Official Social Care Partner of the Rugby League World Cup (RLWC) tournament that will take place in the Autumn, so the RLWC will continue to be a key theme of the planting work taking place at Newton Community Hospital, including RLWC themed planters
- There are also plans for a celebration event later this year, with RLWC representatives and players meeting with volunteers and staff and key partners from the garden project

[Community Integrated Care](#) is one of the UK's biggest and most successful social care charities, supporting more than 4000 people who have learning disabilities, autism, mental health concerns and acquired brain injuries. Founded in the North West, they are the largest social care provider in the communities of St Helens, Knowsley, Warrington, Widnes and Runcorn.

**John Hughes, Director of Partnerships and Communities at Community Integrated Care, says:**

*"The Newton Community Hospital gardening club was an incredible success in its first year. It has created life-changing opportunities for many people who access care and support, and enabled care services across the region to connect with a passion for gardening.*

*"It cannot be understated how important it is that people who access social care have aspirational opportunities to make friends, develop talents and enjoy new experiences. Renova and CHP should be commended for their vision in backing this project. On behalf of Community Integrated Care, I would like to thank our partners for their real commitment to making a difference to the lives of people who are frequently overlooked in society."*

Renova, owned by healthcare investor Fulcrum, has helped to deliver 17 community healthcare facilities across the North West, serving the Merseyside and Cheshire boroughs of St Helens, Knowsley, Halton & Warrington.

**Renova General Manager Shaun Anders said:**

*"We are proud to continue our funding for the inclusive gardening project at Newton Community Hospital which is not only offering unique opportunities to those in social care but also offering a huge boost to everyone at the hospital with a welcoming garden space to enjoy. We look forward to the project and community garden continuing to take shape over the coming months."*

CHP are the head tenant at Newton Community Hospital, responsible for providing facilities management for various NHS services including a 30-bed inpatient ward. These patients are often older people moving from hospital, via intermediate care at Newton Community Hospital, then returning to their homes.

**Simon Waters, CHP National Lead for Social Value, said:**

*"We are delighted to continue our support of the garden project at Newton Community Hospital in partnership with Renova and Community Integrated Care. We understand that gardening and horticultural therapy reduces anxiety and improves overall well-being whilst also helping to combat loneliness and social isolation. It is for these reasons that it's so important to have projects such as this in the heart of the community and we look forward to seeing the garden and the users thrive over the coming year."*

- Ends -

**Notes to Editors:**

**Community Integrated Care:**

Community Integrated Care is one of the UK's largest and most successful social care charities. It supports more than 4000 people who have learning disabilities, autism, mental health concerns and dementia. It was named as the 2019/20 Charity Times Charity of the Year for its impact and innovation. [www.c-i-c.co.uk/](http://www.c-i-c.co.uk/)

**Renova Developments**

Renova is owned by Fulcrum, an investor in over 40 community health centres under the NHS Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) Programme in partnership with Community Health Partnerships. Renova is based in the North West of England, delivering health centres that serving the Merseyside and Cheshire boroughs of St Helens, Knowsley, Halton & Warrington. [www.fulcrumgroup.co.uk](http://www.fulcrumgroup.co.uk)

**Community Health Partnerships**

Community Health Partnerships (CHP) was established in 2001 to improve primary care and community access to services across local communities through Public Private Partnerships (PPP). Wholly owned by the Department of Health and Social Care, CHP oversees the public sector investment in the development of primary care and community health estate through the NHS Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) programme, acting as the public sector shareholder in 49 LIFT companies. As experts in healthcare infrastructure, CHP also provides expertise and resource to support health and social care systems to develop and implement local estate strategies, enabling integration and transformation of service delivery. In addition, in 2013 CHP became head tenant for the £2.5bn NHS LIFT estate, comprising 310 health premises, managing almost 900,000 sq.m. of high quality, well-maintained accommodation for more than 1200 tenants delivering a wide range of integrated health and care services out of hospital. [communityhealthpartnerships.co.uk](http://communityhealthpartnerships.co.uk)