

spadework
sowing the seeds of opportunity

Impact Report Update 2023

"All sorts of things happen because of coming here."

Spadework Ltd. • A company limited by guarantee • Registered Charity No. 291198 • Registered Company No. 01820460
Spadework Social Enterprises CIC • A Community Interest Company • Registered Company No. 13099464

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Our mission

Spadework is a charity that enables people to be more independent, feel less isolated and live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives.

We do this through our provision of care services providing meaningful opportunities for adults with learning and other disabilities, people living with dementia and people experiencing problems with their mental health.

On our five-acre site we have a Café, Farm Shop, Garden Centre and Gift Shed that are open to the public seven days a week. All the proceeds from our Social Enterprises go back into the charity, to make up the shortfall in statutory funding.







Introduction



Welcome to this Impact Report Update, which aims to demonstrate how we continue to fulfil our mission to enable people to be more independent.

Much has happened since our previous Impact Report, in 2022, which was our first. In viewing our work through the lens of our Theory of Change, our working practices have continued to evolve, based on outcomes and not outputs. This has happened in one of the most challenging economic climates. Post-pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis has affected many people, the demand for our services has increased and social care funding is tighter. I am proud that through the hard work of our Trainees, staff and volunteers, along with the support of many individuals, organisations, Trusts and Foundations, we continue to have positive news about the impact of our work.

I am particularly proud of the comments on page 8, which come from one of our adults with learning disabilities. We are an inclusive charity and perhaps there can be no better evidence of our impact than through the words of one of our Trainees. Sarah (not her real name) was generous and brave enough to share with us how coming to Spadework has impacted her life. She knows that these comments may encourage others to come to Spadework and show our supporters how she benefits from our service. She is helping us, while we help her. It is this relationship that is at the heart of Spadework, which in 2023 was named Kent Charity of the Year.

We are pleased to share for the first time the impact of our dementia and wellbeing services. They were introduced in response to the challenges of the pandemic and the need for us to extend our services to the wider community.

Please get in touch with me if there are any aspects of this report you would like to discuss. If you would like to see first-hand what we do at Spadework, I would be delighted to take you on a tour of our site in Offham, especially as in 2024 we celebrate our 40th anniversary.

Kris Healey

Kris Healey, CEO



Our Social Impact



831

attendances by people living with dementia

2,062

hours of care for people experiencing problems with their mental health



113

Trainees supported in 2023

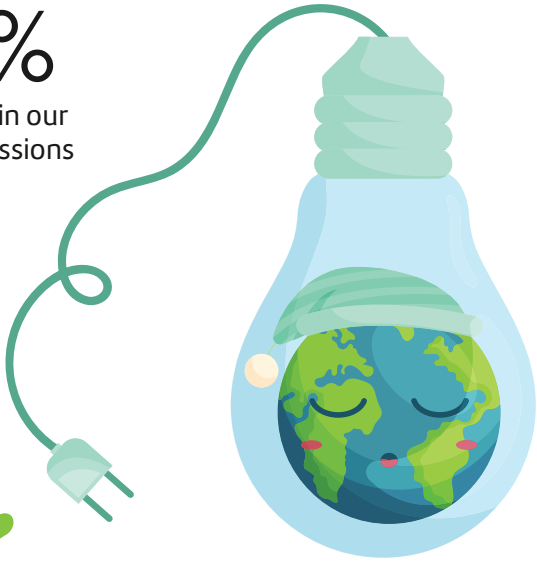
Our impact on the local environment

We are committed to measuring our carbon emissions and striving to become a net zero organisation by **2050** or before



73%

Reduction in our carbon emissions



23%

Reduction in our use of electricity

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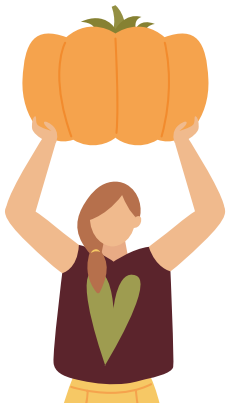
Our impact on the local economy*







16,176
pumpkins and squashes sold

1,050
pumpkins donated to other charities and businesses

32
volunteers

10 alongside Trainees
9 within Dementia services
4 within Wellbeing services
8 in Social Enterprises
1 in the Office

53,450
hours of support for people with learning and other disabilities

63
staff members

62
employees live in Kent



Wilder Kent Gold Award in recognition of positive action for nature

Images by Freepik

*2023 dashboard

What we do

Adults with learning and other disabilities

We support our Trainees (adults with learning and other disabilities) to develop their independence and personal skills through meaningful activities. Our core sessions, provided to an average of 45 people every weekday, include horticulture, woodwork, creative activities and lifeskills.



HORTICULTURE (GREEN)

Our Trainees develop a range of horticultural skills. They are aware of the impact of nature on the environment. They maintain the gardens of our five-acre site, plant and grow vegetables used seasonally in our café. From March to October, they grow pumpkins for our annual pumpkin festival, which is one of our biggest fundraisers.



CREATIVE ACTIVITIES (PINK AND RED)

Our Trainees let their creativity shine through hobbies, arts and crafts, performing arts and by participating in our "Spadio" podcast.



WOODWORK (BROWN)

In their woodwork sessions our Trainees make puzzles, placemats, bird boxes, Christmas decorations and other items. They also renovate furniture for use in our café.

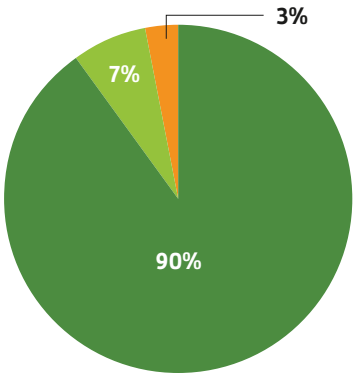


LIFESKILLS (ORANGE AND PURPLE)

Our Trainees learn how to cook food (including fruit and vegetables grown in our allotment gardens) and make healthy food choices. For many Trainees this is their first experience of cooking for themselves and others, which is key to their becoming more independent.

Our impact

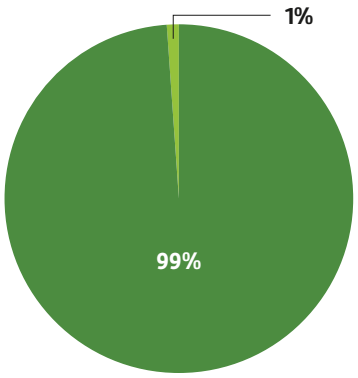
Statistics from 2023 survey. 73 Trainees replied to the survey. 10 parents/carers replied to the survey.



More independent

90% of our Trainees say:

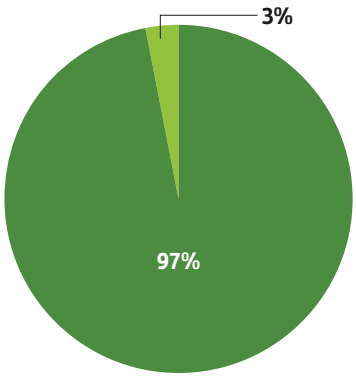
"I am brave to try new things."



Less isolated

99% of our Trainees say:

"I have made new friends at Spadework."



Increased wellbeing

97% of our Trainees say:

"Lots of things about me are good."

KEY: Strongly agree/agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree/strongly disagree

In our last survey **81%** of our Trainees said they were brave to try new things.

Our staff have come up with new and innovative ideas to ensure new approaches and different ways of using and developing the skills of our Trainees. Our activities are now known by the colour of the room in which they take place.

90% of parents/carers saw more confidence in our Trainees.

In our last survey **96%** of our Trainees said they had made new friends.

Our Trainees sometimes arrive at Spadework with friends from school or other care services. Through each eight-week programme of activities, these friendships evolve. Others make new friends. Our Trainees learn to interact with more people.

70% of parents/carers said our Trainees have made new friends at Spadework.

In our last survey **94%** of Trainees said lots of things about them were good.

Our Trainees have enhanced wellbeing, greater self-esteem and are positive about their future. They decide what activities they would like to participate in. Measured against individual objectives, they discuss their progress with staff.

70% of parents/carers said our Trainees feel optimistic about their future.



Sarah's story*

Before I became a Trainee here, I first had a look around Spadework with my mum. Then I came for a taster day – before Christmas I think it was – and I thought: 'Wow, I would like to come here.'

I like coming to Spadework because it gets me out and I meet new people. I do new tasks that I haven't done before. I like doing gardening. It helps me with my anxiety. I really enjoy it here. I know I am tired afterwards, but I get a lot of fresh air.

I've tried woodwork. I had never done that before. I made a wheelbarrow. I asked if I could take the one I made home. It's in memory of my grandad, because he was good with his hands. It now has plants and flowers in it.

I've done cooking in the Orange Room. The first week we had a packed lunch. Then we write down to see what we want menu-wise. We choose together what we'll be making. I've made spaghetti bolognese, pasta bake, pizza, jacket potatoes, cheese on toast, beans on toast, sandwiches, wraps, cakes and little cup-cakes.



(*Name has been changed)

“When I first came here, my anxiety was terrible. I cried quite a lot, and I had trouble catching my breath.”

At home I try to do a bulk cook, so I don’t have to eat microwaved meals. I made a pasta bake with my support worker. I’ve done chilli con carne and sausage casserole in a little slow cooker. I tried to do some cookies – they didn’t work out, but I did try!

I haven’t done Spadio or performing arts. If there are a lot of people around, I get a bit clingy, but I may choose to do this next time.

I moved into assisted living this year, because my mum wanted me to live on my own and be more independent. I was a bit nervous moving out and I told Gemma [Spadework’s Welfare Manager]. She helped me through it, calmed me right down and said it was going to be all right. I do get a bit nervous but they [Spadework staff] have really helped me with my anxiety.

When I first came here, my anxiety was terrible. I cried quite a lot, and I had trouble catching my breath. I still cry sometimes, but the Spadework staff hold my hand and say: ‘Look at me, and then just breathe.’

A year later, I’m better. I’m on medication for it, but coming to Spadework has really helped me with my anxiety. I still get panic attacks, but they’re not as bad and sometimes I can control them, especially little ones. Sometimes I can control bigger panic attacks, but not the really big ones. I’ve done so amazingly here, thanks to Gemma and Gill, Ashleigh, and Bethan [Spadework care team]. Everybody is there for me. If I do go into a really big one, I’ve got my mum on the end of the phone, and she talks me through it. My support workers are lovely.
Next year I’m becoming an auntie. I can’t wait to hold the baby when he’s born.



I also volunteer in a charity shop. I like meeting customers.

I would recommend Spadework to other people. It’s a good charity to work for. I’m not really a volunteer, I’m a Trainee, but if they said to me after being a Trainee, would you like to volunteer, I would come back to volunteer.

I do feel more confident. If I didn’t come here, my anxiety and my stress level would go up. But I’m doing all different things. I like having my photo taken or dressing up as a snowman [in Spadework’s Christmas video] and other things!

Those girls in the office are wonderful, especially Bethan and Gemma. Gemma really helped me through things. I can talk to her about anything. They all helped me through different things and calmed me down. I started on January 10 last year. I’ve got to keep at it!

What we do

Dementia services



"Spadework's Dementia Awareness Day provided us with really useful information, greatly appreciated conversations and the most incredible Virtual Dementia Tour. This day gave me the strength to carry on."

Over the last year our dementia services have grown. They now include memory cafés, carers groups, a singing group, a walking group, a music and movement group and an arts and crafts group.



These services are provided for people who have a dementia diagnosis and for their families and carers.

We run a regular dementia day drop-in service for anyone who wants more information about dementia.

We also host an annual information and advice open day, with representatives from other local organisations. This is an opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the wider services that are available locally.

Our impact

Statistics from 2023 survey.
21 people replied to the survey.

100% of people agreed with each of the following statements:



95% of people agreed with the statement:

'I have learned new things/increased my knowledge at Spadework.'

We have evolved our services in response to the needs of participants and 90% of people agreed with the statement: 'I feel that I can make suggestions that affect the dementia services at Spadework'.

For example, we put our peer support group on hold as it was not well attended. We think that is because people are being diagnosed with dementia later than in previous years, due to the backlog at memory clinics. If this changes, we will review these groups.

This year we have added a second memory café and a second carers support group as well as the peer support group and an arts and crafts group.



From a couple who attend several of our Dementia Services

My husband and I have attended the Memory Cafe at Spadework most months since it started. We find the activities helpful in a nice friendly atmosphere. Robert has the opportunity to chat with someone different, and I can chat with other carers going through the same challenging times.

We also enjoy the singing sessions and usually go home with a spring in our step, occasionally Robert will hum a tune in the car!

The recently started music and movement afternoon is fun too and helps to keep Robert's joints going. As he sits a lot these days, we try and do some of the seated exercises at home. We feel these services are so important to people with dementia, to mix with others and be able to support each other.

For us, it's lovely to have these services locally, just three miles from home, in familiar surroundings, as we frequent Spadework nursery and enjoy a coffee in the Cafe from time to time. Long may they continue.

What we do

Wellbeing services





As part of our commitment to supporting the wider community, we host a range of wellbeing services that bring people together around specialist interests. They are open to people experiencing problems with their mental health.

Time to Grow is our community gardening programme and is now held twice a week. Service users are involved in projects that enhance our five-acre site while they share and learn new skills.

Woodwork for Wellbeing has become one of our most popular services. Our Saturday session has been particularly successful. It attracts people who may work during the week and also appeals to those who can be lonely at weekends, when many other services are not available.

Other specialist interest groups include reading, walking and sewing. Our wellbeing services evolve to meet the needs of local people.

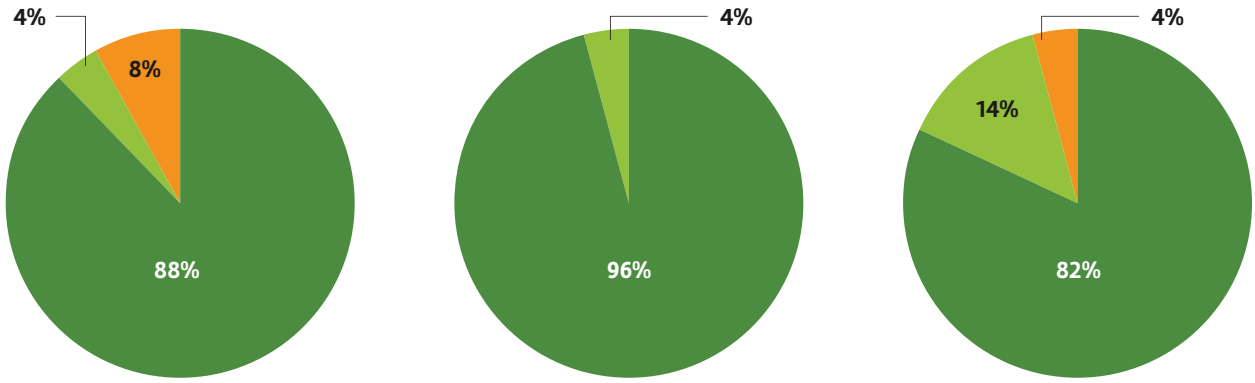




Our impact

Statistics from 2023 survey. 24 people replied to the survey.

As a result of these group activities:
100% of people say they are happier.



88% of people say they have improved physical health.

96% have become less isolated and more socialised with others.

82% have shared skills and knowledge

KEY: A lot and a little | Neither agree nor disagreee | Don't know

Woodwork for Wellbeing: Debra's story

"I'd never done any woodwork before. The day I first came here, I had woken up at 3.30am and I was going absolutely scooby with my mental healthline. I thought there was no way I could jump in the car and get to Spadework. The mental health people said I should try. So although I wasn't feeling too good, I decided that even if I got here and couldn't stay it would be an achievement. To my surprise I ended up here and met Matt [a volunteer], who got me started with the wood. I found at the end of my session all my anxiety had disappeared. When I walked back to my car, I knew I was going back to all the horrors of the last two years, but I felt good about coming here and I now look forward to it. It breaks up the weekend when I am on my own. It gets me out. Since coming here, for the first time in my life (it's my 70th birthday next week) I have gone into a café on my own and ordered a coffee. So, there are all sorts of things that happen because of coming here."

What other people say about Woodwork for Wellbeing:

"I enjoy being creative and getting to know other people."
PARTICIPANT J

"It makes me get up on a Saturday morning."
PARTICIPANT JA

How we performed against our 2022 objectives

Our 2022 objectives	What we achieved in 2023
Adults living with dementia ● Introduce Music therapy and movement sessions.	**Adults living with dementia** ● Music and Movement Group in partnership with tmactive. Singing group once a month.
Adults experiencing problems with mental health. ● Evolve Time to Grow and Woodwork for Wellbeing programmes. ● Kick-start Time Together, chatter and natter sessions. ● Reach out to younger people.	**Adults experiencing problems with mental health.** ● Time to Grow sessions held twice a week. ● Woodwork for Wellbeing extended to Saturday sessions, now has waiting list. ● In response to user feedback, we host more activity-based sessions to bring people together.
● Create carer forums for those caring for adults with learning disabilities.	● First forum held in April. Idea shared have shaped groups now held bi-monthly.
● Expand the Farm Shop to meet demand and community support since the pandemic.	● Planning permission granted. Seeking funding to progress.





What's next for Spadework

Our future plans

As we learn more about the needs of our service users and the impact of our work, we will evolve our services.

Wellbeing services

- Evolve the spaces where groups are held for continuity of practice, establishing permanent bases, with appropriate equipment.

- Explore the possibilities of extending our services so we become a hub for our community.

Dementia services

- Additional music and movement session and singing group, so two of each a month.

- Launch Bereavement services to support people struggling with bereavement, grief or loss.










Stay


spadework
Charity
Farm
Shop

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CHARITY
FUNDRAISING
RAFFLE







We couldn't have done it without you!

None of this would be possible without the help and support of many individuals and organisations.

Our Trainees are an inspiration to our staff and volunteers. They come in every day spreading joy. We are grateful for how they, as well as their parents, carers and support workers have contributed to the making of this report and for trusting us to be part of their journey.

The dedication of our trustees, staff and volunteers has got us through a challenging year, when simply delivering our service has not been easy. To have achieved these outcomes is testament to their unwavering commitment to providing high-quality person-centred care.

We are also grateful to our supporters. There are many individuals who have shopped with us, made donations, hosted fundraising events and spread the word about what we do. Thank you to you all.

We are proud to have received a National Lottery Award from The National Lottery Community Fund. On an on-going basis, this will help us to deliver some of our services. The team at Kent Community Foundation have been amazing flagging up opportunities for funding. Many other Trusts and Foundations have helped us this year.

Our local community, including special interest groups and businesses, continues to support us. Our corporate partners – tmactive, MidKent College and Fernham Homes – have been outstanding. Other local businesses like Fairdeal Windows have supported specific projects. We have enjoyed the company and hard work of many corporate volunteers.

Without your support we would not be able to achieve our mission of enabling people to be more independent, less isolated and live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives.
Thank you.

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KENT CHARITY AWARDS

KENT CHARITY
OF THE YEAR
2023