

ROOTS

InterAct has started to work with Roots Allotment to develop a new initiative aimed at **reducing social isolation, boosting emotional and mental wellbeing, increasing independence and confidence**, and supporting young people to **build essential social and life skills**. A key aim of the partnership was also to create opportunities for long-term, meaningful friendships to form within a safe and welcoming environment.

The initiative also marked the launch of InterAct's **Plant to Plate** approach — supporting young people to **grow, learn, and thrive** by understanding where food comes from and how it can be grown, prepared, and enjoyed.



InterAct's launch day for the Roots Allotment took place on **Friday 29th August 2025** at the Roots Allotment site in Galleywood Meadow. The event welcomed young people and their families, along with InterAct trustees and members of the wider community who are keen to champion InterAct's work.

Families were offered homemade sandwiches, cakes, sausage rolls, and refreshments including teas and coffees. The relaxed, informal setting allowed people to connect, explore the space, and learn more about the purpose of the allotment. The day successfully set the tone for the project — inclusive, community-focused, and welcoming.



Roots Allotment is a community-led growing space that promotes **sustainable gardening, environmental responsibility, and wellbeing through nature**. The allotment follows environmentally friendly practices, avoiding harmful chemicals and encouraging natural methods of growing, pest control, and soil care.

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InterAct has fully embraced these values. Young people are taught about **natural growing methods**, including **how** and **when** to **plant**, how to **sow seeds** correctly, and how to **protect crops** using safe, **natural alternatives** rather than chemical pesticides. This approach aligns with InterAct's commitment to teaching young people **responsibility, patience, and respect for the environment.**



Since the opening, InterAct visits the allotment regularly. Young people have taken part in planting and growing a variety of vegetables, including **tomatoes, radishes** and **carrots**, while also preparing crops for **future seasons.**

Through hands-on involvement, young people have learned:

-  The importance of patience within the growing cycle
-  How to care for plants from seed to harvest
-  Basic gardening skills and routines
-  Teamwork and shared responsibility
-  How food is grown and why that matters

Produce grown at the allotment has been used during InterAct cooking sessions, including within the Together Club, reinforcing the Plant to Plate journey and helping young people make meaningful connections between growing food and eating it.



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Alongside gardening skills, the project supports wider **life-skill development**. Young people are introduced to concepts such as **healthy eating, budgeting, and sustainability**. They learn how a small number of seeds can produce an abundance of food, highlighting both **cost-saving benefits** and the **positive environmental impact** compared to buying produce from supermarkets.

Environmental awareness is a key thread throughout the project, helping young people understand how small, everyday choices can contribute to a healthier planet.



InterAct plans to continue developing the Roots Allotment partnership as a long-term, supportive space for young people. The vision is for the allotment to become a place where young people **feel safe, welcomed, and empowered** — whether attending as part of a group or on a one-to-one basis if preferred.

Moving forward, InterAct will:

-  Continue teaching food growing, cooking and budgeting skills
-  Expand learning around sustainability and environmental impact
-  Encourage ownership, independence and confidence
-  Support the allotment as a space for connection, wellbeing and friendship

InterAct sees a strong and sustainable future for the Roots Allotment project and believes it will continue to play a vital role in supporting young people to grow — both practically and personally.