



University
of Exeter

Sig

social innovation group

Perennial Wellbeing Research Report 2025 Executive Summary

For the Horticulture Sector

The full Wellbeing
Research Report 2025
and ways to take
action can be found
on our website
perennial.org.uk



Helping people
in horticulture
Perennial

Executive Summary







In Spring 2024, Perennial and the University of Exeter's Social Innovation Group (SIG) came together to research the wellbeing of workers in the horticulture sector. The research consisted of a survey completed by workers.

Following the survey, sector leaders reflected on key findings at a workshop and scoped collaborative actions to improve wellbeing across the whole sector. The recommendations that are summarised below have been formulated in light of our research, discussions with sector leaders and, where relevant, other research studies. Importantly, these recommendations are for industry and intend to spark action and collaboration across the sector.



Perennial will collaborate with the horticulture sector to work on the recommendations that are made below. They will use the learning that was established through this research to support industry and build a better future for people working in horticulture.

Recommendations for Industry





Actions for sector-wide issues

-  The creation of connected networks that share guidance, best practices and case studies at a local level and across the sector. Ideally, sector area-specific networks (e.g. for gardeners) would be connected locally and to a central network that is used to share relevant information across the sector. A diagram of how these connected networks would work can be seen in the appendix (Item 1).
-  Perennial can be used and promoted as a source that signposts information about local support. Local signposting can be further enhanced by building relationships with other relevant organisations, such as local voluntary sector infrastructure organisations.
-  Employees need to be encouraged to seek advice and/or support early into problems. Support should be non-judgemental and provided in comfortable environments.
-  The challenges that are endured by self-employed workers should be given consideration. Sector-wide discussions around ensuring support for self-employed workers – especially those in roles that involve long periods of lone working – should be initiated across all sector networks.
-  Employers in relevant sector areas can be encouraged to support local networks for self-employed people – particularly by offering their networking activities to self-employed workers.
-  Elevate the sector's value in the public domain via the establishment of a policy steering group. The main outcome being to attract added investment in the short, medium and longer term.


Actions around employment

-  Employment appraisal and review processes may be used to share person-centred financial guidance that is available through organisations like Perennial. The sharing of guidance and information around pensions should be part of these appraisals and reviews.
-  Appraisals and reviews can be used as an opportunity to explore career development plans and boost confidence around the uptake of relevant training opportunities.


Actions around wellbeing

-  Employees should be provided with space and time to discuss their wellbeing.
-  Where possible, discussions around social activities that workers value should be facilitated and encouraged.
-  Measures that prevent the escalation of poor physical and mental health amongst workers should be recognised and adopted in workplaces. A checklist of actions has been provided and can be seen in the appendix (Item 2).
-  Early reporting of accidents should be encouraged as a form of prevention. Even minor impacts on physical wellbeing can become more problematic for an individual in the future if they are reported late.

Actions around financial management

-  Personal financial management approaches, such as household budgeting, can be more effective if applied in peer-to-peer groups. Peer-to-peer groups reduce stigma and a sense of being patronised. It should be noted that this recommendation is based on recent national research and peer-to-peer approaches in this area have not been tested in relation to the horticulture sector.

Actions around digital skills

-  Workers would benefit from the signposting of information on how to spot and stay safe from online (phishing and malware) scams.

The recommendations above are drawn from our research which demonstrates that workers in the horticultural sector have a lower level of life satisfaction compared to the national average (53.60% scored lower than the national average). The Office of National Statistics's (ONS's) score for life satisfaction was used to determine this finding. Low scores for life satisfaction are linked to financial precarity, job security worries, confusion around career development opportunities and co-morbidities (two or more diagnosed conditions). Of these, no confidence or empowerment with money has the greatest impact. The statistics for the relevant findings are summarised below:

- **61.26%** of individuals without an emergency fund (savings amounting to three months or more of salary) scored lower than the national average for life satisfaction.
- **66.19%** of workers who did not know where to find career development information scored lower than the national average for life satisfaction.
- **66.53%** of workers with comorbidities (two or more health conditions) scored lower than the national average for life satisfaction.
- **74.38%** of workers who had job security worries scored lower than the national average for life satisfaction.
- **88.16%** of workers who had no confidence or empowerment over money scored lower than the national average for life satisfaction.

Additionally, physical discomfort remains a key issue for workers in the sector. 84.84% of workers that took part in our research reported experiencing aches and pains in the last six weeks. In 2021, similar research showed that 78.00% of workers experienced aches and pains in the last six weeks.

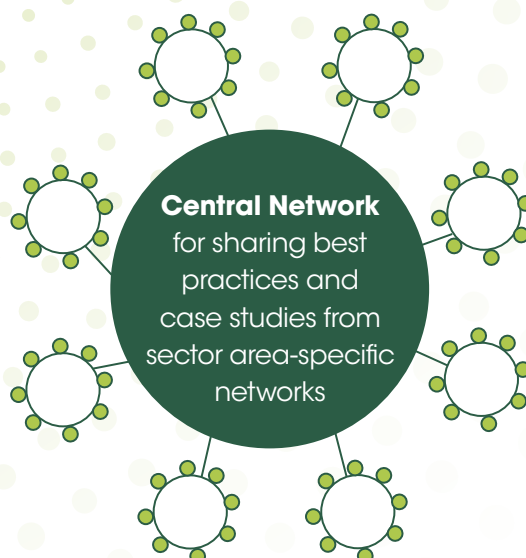
The full report that outlines the research that was conducted can be requested from Perennial.



Appendix

Item 1. Diagram demonstrating connected information networks

The red circles represent the sector area-specific networks (e.g. for gardeners), which are connected to local areas (represented by the smaller yellow circles).



Connections to local areas will help to gather and share (signpost) social activities for workers. Perennial can be used as a resource for signposting relevant local support. All sector area-specific networks are connected to a central network for sharing best practices and case studies.

Item 2. Checklist of actions around preventing the escalation of health-related issues at work

Reducing or changing working hours or allowing flexibility	Time off to attend medical or rehabilitation appointments
Rotation of tasks with co-workers	Re-locating to more accessible workspace
Working from home	Reduction of physical loads / intensity of work
Provision of tailored equipment (desk, chair, mouse, keyboard, voice-activated software)	Restriction of time spent doing repetitive tasks
Car park space nearer to workplace	Provision of flexible working
Longer or more frequent breaks	Re-deployment to a more suitable role
Provision of suitable space for stretching	Providing support for travel to/from work

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