

Newsletter, May 2011.

Our Vision Statement

'A healthy society where grief and loss are recognised as a normal part of life and appropriate support is available to all'.

Our approach

A peer-group support programme to share and understand together loss and grief.

2010/11 has been an eventful year

Grief and loss continue to create a growing need. We have experienced a year-on-year increase in the number of enquiries regarding the need for support for children and young people who have experienced loss and bereavement.

In response we have ever improving programmes in Seasons for Growth. We have negotiated a new licence with Good Grief, Australia, to run the programmes in England and Wales. We have in Seasons for Growth a strong product. The new training pack is now in place. It is clear, structured and ensures consistency throughout; and the new adult programme resources have been distributed to all trainers. It has good potential for linking with several current national strategies - Suicide Prevention, The Big Society, Public Health White Paper, and Transforming Community Services.

To deliver this we have a growing pool of experience and skills to draw upon. The dedication and commitment of trainers, group companions and trustees has successfully laid the foundations and led the organisation towards achieving its mission. A very significant step forwards has now been achieved with the appointment and training of two trainer mentors for England and Wales, bringing the capacity to sustain growth internally.

Close on a thousand children and young people have been supported by the programme over the last 12 months. Thanks to growing sales of programme materials and success in winning several grants, finances nationally have been put on a much firmer footing, with a sustainable business model. The national office has moved to new quarters in Pimlico. Meanwhile the improved website - at <http://www.seasonsforgrowth.co.uk/> - enables more effective sharing of ideas, and innovations, as well as learning from best practices and policies.



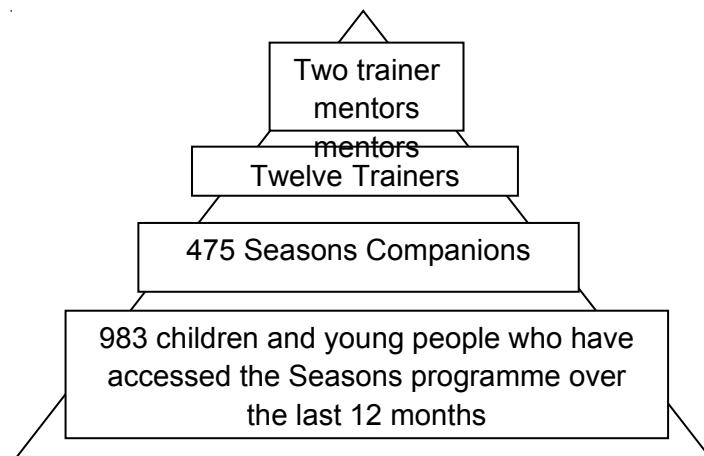
2010/11 has not been without its challenges. Many of the support services which are running programmes locally are facing worries over future funding and staffing* in the context of the new government's spending review, but there is a commitment to finding solutions for the future.

SfG provides a wonderful role model for working through a difficult period of change towards a healthy place from which to go forward

Programme growth - The developing national picture

Trainers and Trustees met for an away day in Cheshire in November 2010 to take stock of the growth of SfG in E&W and determine our priorities for the future.

By this stage we now have:



Regions where Seasons is established

London Borough of Hillingdon; London Borough of Ealing; Denbigh and Conwy in Wales; Shropshire; Wirral; Halton and Stockport; Leeds; Leicester; and Essex.



New regions of growth over the last 12 months

Hertfordshire; Morecambe; Lancashire;

Weston Super Mare; Somerset; and Coalville in Leicestershire.

Highlights of this year's work have included

- In Leeds Well-being teams are being established across the city, and the programme has been recently expanded to support schools within army garrisons in North Yorkshire.
- Consultation has begun to develop a questionnaire for children, companions and trainers to provide comprehensive data to inform research on outcomes; and we are investigating links with research institutions
- **In Hillingdon** over half of all schools now have Seasons Companions. Over 200 children have attended the programme in 2010, with 18 new companions trained this year. They have estimated that in the 10 years the programme has been active in Hillingdon, more than 1000 children have participated in the programme.



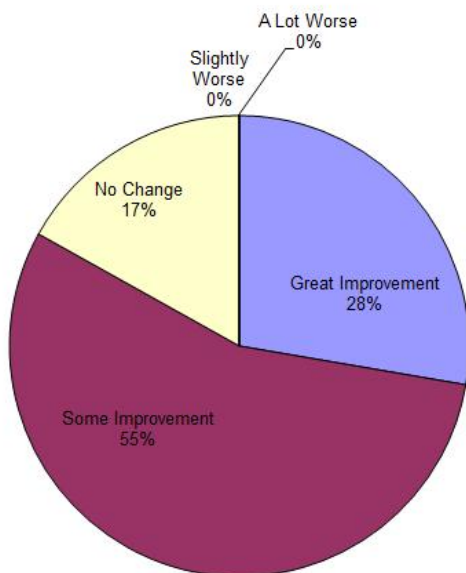
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Evaluations returned give very encouraging evidence that Seasons for Growth has made a positive difference.

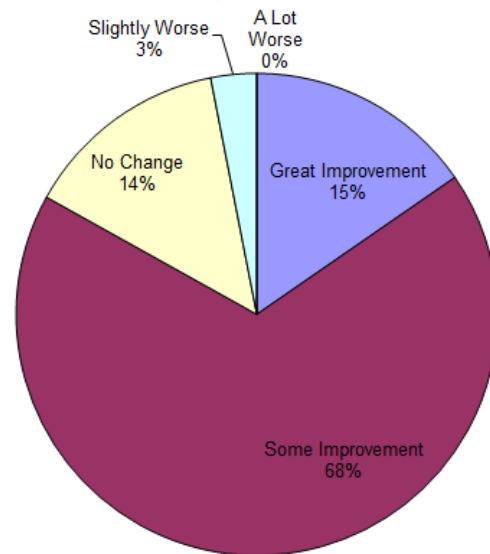
More than 80% of participants show growth in areas such as contribution and quality of classwork, confidence and self esteem, and relationships with peers and adults. See charts below. In 2011 SfG in Hillingdon plans to build on the adult programme and hope to introduce Seasons for Growth into children’s Centres and other organisations.

Extracts from Hillingdon evaluations

Level of self-esteem



Ability to communicate effectively with peers

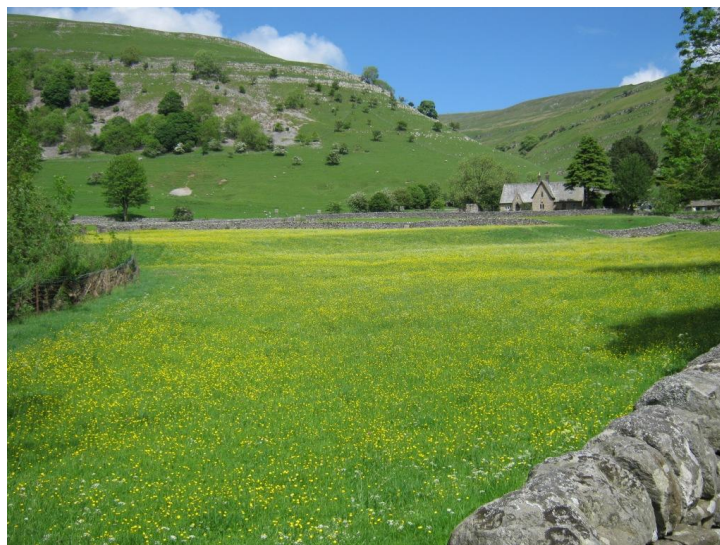


- In the North West**, the Catholic Children’s Society for the diocese of Shrewsbury has demonstrated how far one organisation can have an impact in delivering the Seasons for Growth programmes. After commencing in 2007, in the Wirral and Halton by 2010 the number of courses run approached 50 per year, with well over a hundred trained companions, and approaching 600 children and young people participating. Seasons for Growth training events have also been provided further afield – for example in Stockport, Shropshire, and Cheshire.

Seasons for Growth in the North West has been embedded within/ become part of a more comprehensive support service – Chrysalis - addressing the impact of change and loss, in particular as caused by bereavement, on young people. Chrysalis acts through direct work with individual children, consultancy, and in-service training for staff, alongside Seasons programmes being run for groups of children and young people. These strands provide together a holistic approach for schools and services, families and children. The service believes strongly in partnership between schools, agencies, and families, to best provide support for children and young people.

- **In North Wales** Seasons for Growth groups have been running since 2006. Support for Companions (71 trained companions in this area by August 2010) has been assured through a very effective peer mentoring network. Three groups were run in 2006; but by 2010 this had reached over 20. Seasons for Growth is now operating in the majority of schools in the counties of Conwy and Denbighshire.

North Wales Data:



The growth of the programme is prompting us / we now want to:

- Attract funding for a National Co-ordinator
- Produce an operational manual for trainers, consolidating all policies, procedures and useful documents for the delivery of Seasons for Growth at a local level
- Explore options for social enterprise funding
- Evidence impact to support bidding for future marketing of the product and fundraising.

Thanks for our funders

We would like to express our thanks to our core funders Trust for London and London Borough of Hillingdon for their continued support for our work.

Many thanks too to Betty Lonergan (a friend of Fr Peter Scott) who ran the gruelling 2011 London Marathon in aid of Seasons for Growth

OFFICE MOVE

From 1st April 2011 the national office for Seasons for Growth (England and Wales) has relocated to:

47 Cumberland Street
London
SW1V 4LY
Tel: 020 7828 0778

This is in Pimlico, in offices attached to the Holy Apostles RC church, not far from Victoria coach station and Westminster Cathedral.