E-DEN: A garden to embed wellbeing into the Emergency Department

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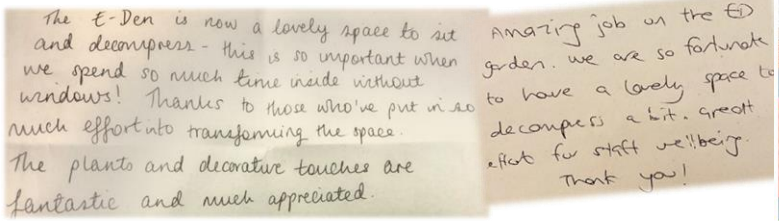
WHY? During the pandemic staff members reported a lack of space to relax and allow for social distancing. At *Charing Cross Emergency Department*, we had an accessible but tired outside space next to the department.

HOW? Forming a team called the ED Garden Group and branding the area 'E-DEN' – Emergency-Den, a logo was designed and fundraising for renovation was begun. The project gathered much interest. Liaising with companies for discounts and donations, the initial design came to life. A local art society created an art competition of which two staff members were judges. They donated proceedings, adding to the buzz around the project. The total amount raised from all sources was £4,025.

E-DEN before:

Together we all worked hard to transform the area into a beautiful venue for rest, relaxation and gardening. Many staff members came in on their own personal time to undertake the project. The maintenance of plants, growth of tomatoes and raspberries and even daily watering really inspired a team spirit and became a source of much enjoyment. The E-DEN outside space allowed for staff to feel a sense of achievement in turning a disused piece of land into a lush, thriving garden space. Spending time in a green and outside area with natural light can benefit staff mental wellbeing. Attractive sights and fragrances can also bring calm. Fun design items such as gnomes and a peacock also added a fun element.

E-DEN after:

Now complete, the area is used daily by staff not only for breaks but also as a meeting venue. Feedback has been immensely positive and has resulted in enhanced team morale. E-DEN has been host to parts of induction and also to well-being events such as Halloween pumpkin carving, a Christmas tree decorating competition, an Easter Egg hunt and a Valentine's day crafts event. Furthermore, E-DEN has been vital to integrating social distancing. On a personal note, leading this project has been an absolute joy. It has allowed me to be creative, bond with colleagues and see tangible results I am genuinely proud of. We believe that any space outside, no matter what size, can be reinvigorated in this way to replicate the fantastic results we have had.