

Routes to Registration for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioners

Completed in April 2026 – this document continues to develop as the application processes for the register are created and consulted on.

Terms **highlighted in blue** are further explained in the Glossary at the end of this document.

The Routes to Registration are for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) practitioners who wish to apply to become a registered practitioner and included in the register held by the UK Association for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (ASTH). The application documents can be accessed here: ([webpage link to be added when available](#)). Paper version of forms can be requested and sent out by post for a fee.

An STH practitioner is a trained professional who engages with people using plants, activities centred on horticulture and nature connection to enable people to improve their physical health, mental health and wellbeing. Practitioners seek to bring about a tangible or experiential benefit for each client in response to clients' defined need(s) and goal(s), taking a holistic and person-centred approach. Practitioners bring about benefits through three key processes, facilitating time: in nature, in meaningful activity, and in a positive social environment.

This document will guide you through the process of deciding which route to apply under (Routes 1A, 1B, 2, or 3), and the documentation and evidence you will be required to submit. You can apply to join the register if you are an independent/self-employed practitioner or working as a practitioner for an organisation (e.g. third sector, NHS, social care).

When reading this document, and completing an application to join the register, please also refer to: [The STH Practitioner Competencies, Practice Standards, Code of Ethics, ASTH Register Terms and Conditions](#), the application form for the route you are choosing to register through, and the Evidence of Learning and Practice detailed on page 5 of this document.

Purpose and aims of the register:

- To provide benefit to public health and wellbeing, through the provision of high-quality STH.
- To register STH practitioners who meet the register requirements and provide a high quality, safe, and effective service for clients.
- To maintain accessible application processes that allow all who meet the register requirements and are practicing as outlined in the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, and meet the STH Practitioner Competencies to join.
- To assess applications using fair, transparent and ethical processes.

There are four routes to registration 1A and 1B for those who have completed specific training in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture, Route 2 for those with training in health/care (with additional training and/or experience in horticulture and STH), and Route 3 for those who do not meet the requirements to apply via Routes 1A, 1B, or 2.

Routes are outlined below. Applicants should apply to the route they fit best – contact the ASTH if you are unsure of which route to choose			
Routes 1A and 1B: Training in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture		Route 2: Training in Health/Care	Route 3: Competency Assessment
Route 1A: Training in STH - newly qualified route	Route 1B: Training in STH and have been practising for more than 1 year	Route 2: Training in Health/Care with additional training and/or experience in horticulture and STH	Route 3: If you do not meet the requirements to apply via Routes 1 or 2, the ASTH will consider your application on a case-by-case basis
<p>Apply via this route if you have completed an ASTH approved course in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (or above) *(see course list below this table)</p> <p>AND can provide the Evidence of Learning and Practice on page 5 of this document.</p>	<p>Apply via this route if you have completed an ASTH approved course in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (or above) *(see course list below this table)</p> <p>In addition to the above you should also:</p> <p>Have a minimum of 500 hours in practice including delivering TH sessions, session preparation, and other related activities.</p> <p>AND can provide the Evidence of Learning and Practice detailed on page 5 of this document</p>	<p>Apply via this route if you have:</p> <p>English (OFQUAL) Level 5 / Scottish (SCQF) Level 7 or above in a recognised qualification that equips you to work with individuals and groups with an identified health/care need in a professional capacity. This may include an HCPC/allied health profession*, General Medical Council (doctor), nursing/midwifery, social care, social work, counselling.</p> <p>AND have horticultural training/experience that allows you to meet the STH Practitioner Competencies in Horticulture. For example but not limited to training in horticulture (e.g. SVQ/NC in Horticulture, RHS Level 2) or evidence of work experience/voluntary work in horticulture throughout all four seasons.</p>	<p>Examples of those applying to the register via Route 3 may include those with international qualifications, or qualifications from professions not listed in Route 2, or those who have been working in STH and are not able to register through Routes 1A, 1B or 2.</p> <p>You will be able to evidence how you meet the competencies of an STH practitioner through the following:</p> <p>Horticultural training/experience that allows you to meet the STH Practitioner Competencies in Horticulture. For example but not limited to training in horticulture (e.g. SVQ/NC in Horticulture, RHS Level 2) or evidence of work</p>

		<p>AND have completed either:</p> <p>a. 150 hours of learning at English (OFQUAL) Level 5 / Scottish (SCQF) Level 7 or equivalent that supports your transition into delivering STH (e.g. the Thrive non-Ofqual Award in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture - 150 hours)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>b. 750 hours working in STH</p> <p>AND can provide the Evidence of Learning and Practice detailed on page 5 of this document.</p> <p>(*HCPC recognised / allied health professions include: art therapist, music therapist, drama therapist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist, speech and language therapist.)</p>	<p>experience/voluntary work in horticulture throughout all four seasons.</p> <p>AND have completed either:</p> <p>a. 150 hours of learning at English (OFQUAL) Level 5 / Scottish (SCQF) Level 7 or equivalent that supports your transition into delivering STH (e.g. the Thrive non-Ofqual Award in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture - 150 hours)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>b. 2000 hours working in STH</p> <p>AND can evidence that you meet the STH Practitioner Competencies outlined in the Competencies Assessment.</p> <p>AND can provide the Evidence of Learning and Practice detailed on page 5 of this document.</p> <p>If the registration panel assess that you do not meet the requirements for registration via route 3, you will be provided with advice and</p>
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<p><i>Link to Route 1A application to be added here when developed</i></p>	<p><i>Link to Route 1B application to be added here when developed</i></p>	<p><i>Link to Route 2 application to be added here when developed</i></p>	<p>guidance on how to do so. This may require you to complete additional training, research, shadowing, and/or supervision to enable you to reach the standards required to join the register.</p> <p><i>Applications via this Route may, in future, result in a higher fee due to time taken to process. Route 3 will not incur a significantly higher charge in the initial years of the register opening.</i></p> <p><i>Link to Route 3 application to be added here when developed</i></p>
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***ASTH approved courses:**

1. Diploma in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (English non-OFQUAL Level 5 – 1200 hours of learning) *(previously called Professional development diploma in social and therapeutic horticulture with Coventry University).*
2. Professional Development Award in Developing Professional Practice in Therapeutic Horticulture (Scottish - SCQF level 7) (has now been approved by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and is hoped will be available from 2026 onwards in Scotland).

(Other STH qualifications at Ofqual Level 5 / SCQF level 7 / or above will be considered as the UK ASTH builds a bank of recognised education/training).

Each route has its own application form.

Evidence of Learning and Practice:

1. Case study (template provided).
2. Certificates of education, training, and learning relied on in your application.
3. For route 3 only: CV detailing years of experience (voluntary & paid) in delivering STH.
4. Evidence of up-to-date safeguarding/protection training relating to children and/or adults.
5. Evidence of police checks/Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

These requirements will be reviewed annually and may be amended as the work of the ASTH progresses and STH practice develops in the UK.

Glossary

DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service. These checks are processed by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – more information can be found here: [DBS checks: detailed guidance - GOV.UK](#)

HCPC – [Health and Care Professions Council – more information can be found here: The Health and Care Professions Council \(HCPC\) | The HCPC](#)

OFQUAL - The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

SCQF - SCQF stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, Scotland's system for grading and comparing all types of qualifications.

SQA – Scottish Qualifications Authority, regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in Scotland.