

## **QUALITY STATEMENT**

Hitchin Community Gardens and the staff of the Growing Ability project recognise the absolute need to provide safe and effective services which are of high quality.

As a relatively new project (less than one year old) there is, as yet, no formal quality assurance system / model and therefore no form of external accreditation.

We are aware of the need to implement a QA system and are actively considering options (the more generalised PQASSO which is widely used within the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector through which it is possible to secure external validation or Cultivating Quality, a Charities Evaluation Service approved variant of PQASSO specifically for social and therapeutic horticulture projects but which has no system of external assessment. We aim to have been through the first cycle of implementing a quality management system by the end of the current funding round i.e. June 2011.

In the meantime we are striving to ensure that our policies, systems and procedures are as robust and effective as possible. We have employed a project manager who is a qualified horticulturalist and horticultural therapist. He also has experience of running similar projects for a national charity and is aware of the requirements of a good quality assurance system - having implemented several quality management systems and been involved in the development Cultivating Quality.

In addition to core policies, we carry out initial assessments for all new service users to ensure that their support needs are met, and at the same time produce an individual development plan which sets out the aims and objectives for each individual and against which we can measure progress.

We encourage a strongly participative approach from service users and volunteers to enable as many decisions as possible to be driven by them.

We seek to promote a culture of continuous improvement, ranging from reacting to feedback from service users to training and CPD for staff.

John Cliff  
Project Manager  
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