

Hitchin Community Gardens
Growing Ability
Risk Management Policy

Aim:

The primary aim of this policy is to ensure that all people involved in Growing Ability whether gardeners (service users, volunteers, students on placement, staff or visitors) are as safe as possible whilst involved in Growing Ability activity.

The secondary aim is to ensure that whilst following best practice in terms of risk assessment and management, those involved with the project have a positive experience and the opportunity to take part in a wide range of horticultural related activities.

Strategy:

The key elements of the risk management strategy are as follows:

- a) Experienced staff who are trained in risk assessment;
- b) Good liaison with referrers / referral agencies who will know individuals better in the first instance;
- c) Provision of background paperwork (eg for those on CPA);
- d) Robust risk assessment methodology (see below);
- e) Good health and safety procedures.

Risk Assessment Methodology:

The risk assessment methodology employed at Growing Ability is one widely used by horticultural therapy projects. There is a three way risk assessment:

- a) Site risk assessment
- b) Task risk assessment
- c) Individual risk assessment

In light of the risk profile of the individual, it is then for the staff running a session to assess what tasks are appropriate and on what part of the site. For individuals where risk levels can vary from day to day, the threshold of "safe" tasks may also change.

For simple assessments it is acceptable to assess risk as low, medium or high. For more complicated assessments, it is often useful to assess 'likelihood' (i.e. the probability of an incident happening) and 'impact' (i.e. the severity of the potential result of such an incident). Both should be assessed as low medium or high i.e. 1, 2, or 3 points, and the results multiplied together to give a score in the range 1 – 9. Any score over 4 requires immediate attention, as tasks should not be undertaken unless remedial action can reduce the overall risk factor to below 4.

Individual risk assessments should be reviewed at the 6 monthly gardener review. All other risk assessments should be reviewed at least annually.

John Cliff
Project Manager