

Growing Connections



Our Growing Connections guide aims to help gardens become more age-friendly and inclusive and was delivered by Capital Growth with support from the Centre for Ageing Better and DCMS.

The core values and principles were designed by community gardens in our network who met to explore volunteering experiences and the barriers to people getting involved.

Core Values

- Be **welcoming** in everything you do
- Create a culture of **care & respect**
- Recognise that **inclusivity** does not mean your garden has to be perfect
- And **listen** and be open to **feedback**

Key Principles

- **Flexible and responsive.** This could be seeking to accommodate children, offering a different time for induction, or being relaxed about commitment.
- **Enabled and supported.** You should provide an accessible environment, for instance having accessible paths, using raised beds or kneeling mats.
- **Sociable and connected.** Encourage good neighbourliness and garden as a community.
- **Meaningful and purposeful.** This could be creating a culture of reward and recognition.
- **Makes good use of my strengths.** Make use of individual skills, knowledge and expertise.

How to use

The Garden Review Tool (overleaf) can be used to help assess where your garden is currently at in terms of Age Friendly and Inclusive volunteering and help you prioritise areas for improvement. It can be undertaken by the garden leader, but is best used as part of a group to facilitate discussion. It is also best used in conjunction with the guide.

To find out more or download the full guide visit:

www.capitalgrowth.org/growingconnections

Growing Connections inclusivity self-review

You could use this as a self-reflective group activity with volunteers and garden leaders to baseline and progress your inclusivity. On a scale of 1 to 5, where

1 is **not at all** and 5 is **completely**, how would you rate your garden against achieving the following Age-Friendly and Inclusive Volunteering principles?

	1	2	3	4	5
Our garden has flexible volunteer opportunities to suit the different needs of volunteers					
Volunteers are welcomed and supported to get the most out of their experience					
We plan our activities so that our volunteers have time to chat and socialise					
Our volunteers know they are valued and appreciated					
Our volunteers are given meaningful and purposeful tasks and roles					
Volunteers are encouraged to make good use of their strengths					
We actively seek to engage people who face barriers to taking part					
We help people to stay volunteering with us, even when things change for them					
Our garden has been designed to be accessible and age-friendly					
Overall, our garden provides age-friendly and inclusive volunteering opportunities					