

Community Growing Provision in Northern Ireland.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that Councils adopt a target level of provision of 1250 sqm (0.3 acres) per 1,000 households of community growing space in their Council area. This could be in the form of allotments, community gardens or orchards. This target should be reached in co-operation with other public bodies, for e.g., the Housing Executive and the Education Authority. For comparison with the format in which UK standards of provision are phrased (in terms of allotment plots per 1,000 households), 1250 sqm is the equivalent of 5 full size allotment plots. This target could be staged, e.g.: 1250 sqm per 1,000 households in 5 years, and 3750 sqm in 15 years' time.
- Community development support and horticultural training should be built into a programme of expansion, with funding available to community groups and allotments associations.
- Councils should adopt a proportionate Community Asset Transfer policy for release of land to community groups wanting to set up a community garden. See Appendix 1 for a sample procedure. For larger projects requiring investment on the part of the community group, longer term and more secure leases will be required.
- Councils should set targets for waiting-lists times for allotments.
- Councils could explore a centralised, more transparent, waiting list system for people to register their interest in obtaining an allotment plot. This system would enable Councils to have an instant picture of demand and whether demand is being met. A shared mapping platform could be explored to provide an NI picture of provision and demand.
- Councils should establish a clear point of contact for communities wanting to grow.
- Councils should draw up a community food growing strategy for their area, to help achieve some of these targets.
- Community planning and GIS mapping facilities should be used to make sure that new developments favour areas of greatest disadvantage.
- Groundwork should be done on coordinating this work with other landowning public bodies, potentially through community planning, neighbourhood renewal partnerships or Sustainable Food Place partnerships.
- Investigation should be undertaken into the potential for Local Development Plans and planning guidelines to include specific mention of food growing space.



You can read the full report and recommendations here: [The Case for a Benchmark Standard for Community Growing and Allotment Provision in Northern Ireland](#)