



# Green Care Quality Mark: Guidance for applicants

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# The Green Care Quality Mark

## Overview

Green care includes nature-based services such as Social Care Farming, Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH), community gardening, and animal assisted services. Green care sites provide health, social and / or specialist educational care services for the benefit of service users with a range of defined needs (health, social or educational) through the use of farming, gardening or animal-related activities.

A structured programme of meaningful, hands-on activities in nature in a garden, on a farm or other natural environment, promotes physical and mental health and well-being and can provide excellent therapeutic and educational opportunities.

The **Green Care Quality Mark (GCQM)** is a clear set of standards, intended to meet the requirements of referral agencies, service users and their families to show that organisations meeting the Quality Mark are safe, professional and efficacious. It is intended as a Quality Standard for green care provision, assured through a process of self-assessment.

The Quality Mark assesses the organisation rather than the individual delivering green care and is site specific. An organisation delivering green care at multiple sites but sharing the majority of their policies can use our multiple sites option, once the initial site has gained their Award. This allows the additional sites to gain the Award at a reduced price.

As green care provision is very diverse, some elements of the Quality Mark may not be relevant to all sites. These guidelines are designed to recognise this.

The self-assessment applications are peer-reviewed by experienced green care practitioners and Social Farms & Gardens (SF&G) staff, affirming the organisation's commitment to following the Quality Mark. In this way, quality standards are maintained by green care providers and their stakeholders themselves, without imposition from external agencies.

It is the responsibility of the green care organisation to provide accurate information. Each green care provider is fully and individually responsible for the way it carries out its business: Social Farms & Gardens can only serve to enable and facilitate, and not accept any liability.

This Quality Mark represents a set of minimum standards to which green care providers should adhere. It is the aim of Social Farms & Gardens to ensure that all green care providers in the UK go through the GCQM process to maintain high quality service provision within the green care sector.

Green care providers use different words to describe the people who they provide services for (e.g. client, service user, co-farmer, garden / farm volunteer etc.). In this Quality Mark we have used the term 'service user' throughout, however this is not necessarily the preferred term. Also, throughout the application we use the term 'volunteer' to refer to a person who provides support to the service users but is not a paid member of staff.

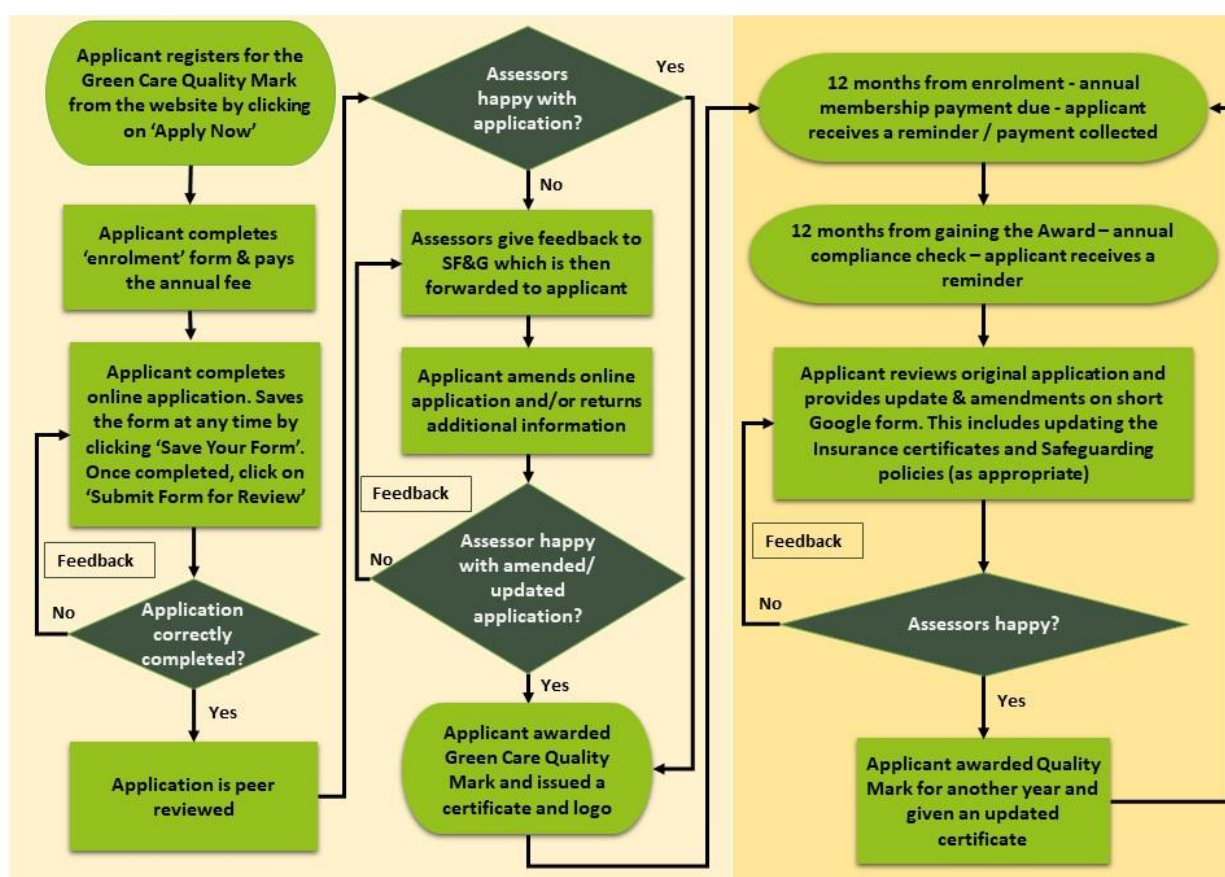
## GCQM Process: Overview

The GCQM process is shown in the flowchart below. As the applicant, you complete and submits the GCQM application online (see notes on completion in the next section) and then emails mandatory documents and any other supporting policies or documents directly to [qualitymark@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:qualitymark@farmgarden.org.uk).

Once the application and supporting documents have been received a pre-check is carried out and if necessary, we will contact you for further clarification or documents. When everything is complete, we will send it out for peer review, and they will either approve or provide feedback on what is required to gain the Award. This may mean you will need to provide further clarification, or updated policies to reflect the feedback provided.

Once the Award is made SF&G will write and let you know and provide your certificate and the 'Meeting the GCQM' logo, which can be used on your website and other materials. In addition, your details will appear on the approved providers map on our website and your SF&G record on our searchable list of green care providers will be updated to show that you have gained the GCQM.

Flowchart of Green Care Quality Mark process



The annual membership fee will be due on the anniversary of the date of enrolment onto the scheme. If the enrolment was online then a recurring payment would have been set up, which will be automatically collected, alternatively you will be sent an invoice for the membership fee. On the anniversary of gaining the Award you will be asked to complete a compliance check. This is a chance to review the original responses, update us on any changes and provide updated documents. You will receive reminders at the relevant dates that payment and compliance are due and therefore we ask that contact details are kept up to date in order for these notifications are not missed.

### GCQM Process: General points and what the reviewers will be looking for

The GCQM starts with a section called 'About our organisation' which asks for some basic information about your site, to help provide a more accurate understanding of your provision.

After the 'About our organisation' section, the GCQM itself is divided into three sections, each comprising a number of different standards:

1. We run a responsible organisation
2. We care about the people we work with
3. Our organisation is a safe place to be.

Each Standard in the GCQM has one or more statements which are considered evidence for meeting it.

There are radio buttons where you can click 'Yes' or 'No' as to whether you meet that statement and a text box to provide a more detailed explanation or supporting evidence. **If you have answered 'No' to the statement, you will need to insert information in the text box within that section to provide an explanation as to why this statement is not applicable to your organisation.**

Some Standards are more critical than others and these standards will also require you to provide specific documents (e.g. Safeguarding Policy and Service Level Agreement). Without these mandatory documents, an application cannot be approved<sup>1</sup>.

Each standard has a corresponding section in this guidance document that gives more information and outlines what is required for the standard and links to further sources of information that you might find useful. The Contents page provides hyperlinks to navigate to the relevant place in the document by clicking on the standard in the list of contents.

You can save your Quality Mark application form at any point and come back to it. Just click the 'Save form' button at the end of the form and then you can logout.

When you have completed your application and are ready to submit your form for review you will need to acknowledge that you have read and accept Social Farms & Gardens' privacy notice (<https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/privacy-policy>) and then you can click the 'Submit Form for Review' button. Once this has been done, please email your supporting documents [qualitymark@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:qualitymark@farmgarden.org.uk). If the documents are in the public domain, you can add a link to the document in the text box within the relevant section of the application form. If you use Google docs or Dropbox you can provide links to all the documents you wish to submit, but please make sure [qualitymark@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:qualitymark@farmgarden.org.uk) is authorised to access them via the links.

As a reminder the following documents are mandatory, but additional documents can be provided to support your application:

- Safeguarding policies & procedures (Adult and/or Child)
- Service user agreement (this may be more than one document covering things like term & conditions, payment terms, contact details, emergency contact, consent forms etc – *see guidance for statement 2.3 for more details*)
- Insurance certificates (Employer Liability & Public Liability – showing the level of cover)
- Health & Safety policy

When going through the Standards, the reviewers will cross-reference between standards to see if they are consistent: sometimes, statements appear to contradict each other, and will need to be queried.

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, provide templates for any policies you may be planning for your own organisation as every green care organisation has different circumstances, needs and services. We are also aware that some green care providers are part of a wider organisation who might have their own templates but please ensure any template is adapted for your organisation.

An important part of the assessment process is where feedback is provided. This may be a request for further information where additional clarity is deemed necessary, or it may ask for existing policies to be reviewed and updated. A request for clarification or policy revision will be clearly detailed and advisory comments are also provided as suggestions on how things can be improved. You will be asked to respond to the feedback and where necessary provide additional documents or revised policies. Your application will not be able to be progressed towards gaining the Award until these responses are received.

## Contact Social Farms & Gardens

### For help with GCQM

Contact Green Care resources: [https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/services-and-support/publications-and-resources?field\\_topic\\_target\\_id%5B%5D=11](https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/services-and-support/publications-and-resources?field_topic_target_id%5B%5D=11) Resources <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/services-and-support/publications-and-resources> or email: [qualitymark@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:qualitymark@farmgarden.org.uk)

### General enquiries

Social Farms and Gardens is based in Bristol, but its staff work from all over the UK.

Social Farms & Gardens  
Windmill Hill City Farm,  
Philip Street,  
Bedminster,  
Bristol BS34EA

Website: <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/>  
Email: [admin@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:admin@farmgarden.org.uk)  
Tel. 0117 923 1800 (head office who will take a message)

*Social Farms & Gardens is a registered company and a registered charity. Company No: 2011023 & Charity (England & Wales) No: 294494, Charity (Scotland) No: SC039440*

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## About our Organisation

This section is aimed at providing information about your organisation and your site. As green care organisations and sites vary enormously, please answer all the questions. The information you provide is purely to help us get a feel – and understanding - for your organisation and what services you are providing, where, and for whom.

### 1. Is your site fully operational?

You are given two options:

- Yes, we are delivering services to individuals with a defined need
- No not yet, we are working towards delivery

### 2. Which of the following best describes your site?

You are given several options, either pick the one that best applies to your site, or check other and tell us more in the box provided:

- Allotment
- City farm
- Community garden
- Equine centre
- Farm
- Garden
- School farm
- Smallholding
- Wildlife or conservation site
- Other

### 3. What is the size of your site?

Approximate answers are fine, this is just to give the assessors an idea of scale but remember to include the unit of measure (e.g. acres, hectares etc).

### 4. What is your organisation's legal governance structure?

It is essential to know where clear accountability for your operation lies. Please pick the option from the list that applies to you or check 'other legal entity' and tell us more in the box provided:

- Not constituted
- Charity (Unincorporated)
- Charity (Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee or Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO))
- Community Interest Company
- Limited Company
- Partnership
- Sole Trader
- Other legal entity

### 5. Is your organisation part of, or dependent on, a different enterprise or organisation?

This can include a: commercial agricultural unit, horticultural site, educational establishment, riding school, wildlife reserve, school, care organisation etc. You are given two options:

- Yes, we are linked to another enterprise
- No, we are independent.



The application is site-specific so even if you adopt policies and procedures of a wider / parent organisation, the information you submit in your application must relate to the site for which the Green Care Quality Mark is being sought.

#### **6. What enterprises or land uses do you have on your site?**

You can pick all the options that apply or feel free to check 'other' and tell us more in the box provided:

- Agricultural crops
- Garden
- Glasshouse / polytunnel / under cover growing
- Grassland and rough grazing
- Orchard fruit
- Soft fruit
- Vegetables and/or herbs
- Water e.g. inland fishery
- Woodland
- Other

#### **7. Do you have animals on your site?**

You are given two options:

- Yes
- No

Some of the questions in the Green Care Quality Mark are about animals, however we know that many sites do not keep animals. If you do not keep any animals, please answer 'No'

By animals we mean anything from the list in the next question.

#### **8. What animals do you have on your site?**

You are given several options, pick the ones that apply or feel free to check 'other' and tell us more in the box provided:

- Camelids – alpacas, llamas
- Cattle – dairy / beef
- Chickens
- Domestic pets – cats, dogs
- Equine – horses, donkeys
- Exotics
- Goats
- Other poultry – ducks, geese
- Pigs
- Sheep
- Small animals
- Other

If you do not keep any animals, please click the 'None' box

#### **9. About the age of the people that you deliver services to**

You are given three options:

- We work with adults (over 18s) only
- We work with children (under 18s) only

- We work with both adults and children

#### **10. a) About your service user groups – Adults**

We appreciate that organisations often deliver commissioned services for a variety of different service user groups and that these groups may change over time. In this question we would like to ask you about those who *regularly attend your site currently*. Pick the options that apply or feel free to check 'other' and tell us more in the box provided.

- Carers
- Ex-Service personnel
- Homeless
- Learning disability
- Long-term condition such as Autism, Dementia, Parkinsons etc.
- Neurodiverse (Learning difference)
- Offenders / ex-offenders / those on probation
- Physical disability
- Poor mental health
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Substance addiction / recovery
- Other

#### **10. b) About your service user groups – Young people under 18**

We appreciate that organisations often deliver commissioned services for a variety of different service user groups and that these groups may change over time. In this question we would like to ask you about those who *regularly attend your site currently*. Pick the options that apply or feel free to check 'other' and tell us more in the box provided.

- Excluded from school or on Alternative Curriculum Provision
- Learning disability
- Long-term condition such as Autism
- Homeless or Looked After
- Neurodiverse (Learning difference)
- Physical disability
- Poor mental ill health
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Substance addiction / recovery
- Young Carers
- Young Offenders / at risk of offending / involved with the criminal justice system.
- Other

#### **11. Please tell us about the people working at your site**

Please tell us about the people working at your site in the three text boxes:

- Number of staff (include yourself and / or owner if working on the site)
- Number of volunteers who are supporting delivery<sup>2</sup>
- Any other information you would like to add

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<sup>2</sup> A volunteer is someone who works at the green care site for the main purpose of benefitting someone else. Volunteers are not employees and are not paid

**12. Please tell us if your organisation has registrations with external accreditation schemes**

These external schemes could include Farm Assured Food Assured Standard, RSPCA Assured, Organic Certification etc. Just use the text box to list any of these you are registered with.

**13. Any other relevant information about your site that you feel hasn't been captured above?**

Please use the text box to give us any further information that you feel is relevant to your application.

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# 1. We run a responsible organisation

## 1.1 Legal status and business structure

### Standard:

The organisation can provide a clear statement showing type of legal entity and where responsibilities fall. The business structure and operation comply with legal requirements.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have registration certificates or other publicly available information for our organisation – i.e., company, charity, CIO, CIC etc.*

You may give us extra information in the ‘Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard’ box; you can also provide a link to relevant documents if you need to (e.g. a link to your Companies House record); (this is optional).

### Guidance:

A legal entity is a lawful or legally standing association, corporation, partnership, proprietorship, trust, or individual, and that has legal capacity to:

- enter into agreements or contracts,
- assume obligations,
- incur and pay debts,
- sue and be sued in its own right, and
- to be accountable for illegal activities

Definition of LEGAL ENTITY (Black's Law Dictionary)

The green care provider needs to be a legal entity, either in its own right or as part of a larger organisation, to ensure that there is clear accountability for the operation. (see question 4 on legal governance in ‘About your organisation’). Unofficial arrangements or a vague business structure will raise questions as to whom is legally responsible for the enterprise if this is not clear.

This publicly available information could include Companies House registration, Registered Charity, Sole Trader, Registered Partnership, Community Interest Company (CIC) etc. as applicable.

### Further information:

- Companies House: <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>
- The Charity Commission (England and Wales): <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>
- Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator: <https://www.oscr.org.uk>
- The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland: <https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk>
- Community Interest Companies: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-regulator-of-community-interest-companies>
- Social Enterprise UK: <https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk>
- Social Farms & gardens offers occasional training on governance for members, and a range of useful resources here - <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/services-and-support/publications-and-resources>.

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## 1.2 Statement of Purpose / Vision / Mission

### Standard:

The purpose of the organisation is clearly identified and in the public domain.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*The purpose of our organisation is clearly identified and can be seen in the public domain (e.g. on our website).*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of relevant documents if you need to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

A statement of purpose for a business defines your company's core goals and purpose; it describes what you do, where you do it and who you do it for.

The organisation must operate within the definition of green care provision: '*Green care organisations provide health, social or specialist educational care services for individuals from one or a range of vulnerable groups.*'

- This does not have to be the sole purpose of the enterprise, but it needs to be a clear aspect of the operation.
- For organisations such as Charities or Public Limited Companies, a Statement of Purpose is a legal requirement, not so for Limited Companies, Sole Traders or Partnerships. For reasons of transparency, organisations meeting the Green Care Quality Mark should also produce a Statement of Purpose.
- 'In the Public Domain' can mean that it is mentioned in the organisation's registered statutes, on a web site, in a brochure or on the farm gates.
- You may have a vision, mission statement or objectives which indicate what the green care provider commits itself in working towards. This needs to be in line with the principles of green care provision.
- If you do not have a statement of purpose clearly identified and in the public domain, please use the extra evidence section to provide an explanation.

### Further information:

- Writing a Mission Statement for Charities and Non-profit Groups: <https://www.better-fundraising-ideas.com/writing-a-mission-statement.html>
- Guidance document from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on writing a Statement of Purpose – aimed at CQC providers but the advice is sound for green care organisations and gives a good overview: [https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20180807\\_100456\\_guidance\\_for\\_providers-statement\\_of\\_purpose\\_v4.pdf](https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20180807_100456_guidance_for_providers-statement_of_purpose_v4.pdf) and <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/registration-notifications/statement-purpose>

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## 1.3 Accountancy procedures

### Standard:

Appropriate systems are in place for the type of business, as well as banking arrangements detailed in contracts.

#### **What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *Our end-of-year accounts are audited, independently examined or otherwise externally certified.*
- ii) *Our green care operation has a dedicated bank account in place.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of relevant documents if you need to (this is optional).

#### **Guidance:**

A sound business knows what their financial situation is, as monitored by a third professional party. It also ensures that the business is legal for tax purposes, adheres to VAT legislation (where applicable) and can manage its finances responsibly.

- You may have End of Year Accounts or other paperwork from a Chartered Accountant or Independent Examiner depending on your legal status. Small businesses may only have Tax returns, which can also be acceptable.
- Annual accounts generally include: a balance sheet; a profit and loss account; supporting notes about the accounts; a director's report; and an auditor's report (unless the company is exempt from audit, in which case independently examined accounts).
- When to register for VAT and how to manage invoices depends on your provision and clients; it is complex and may require specialist advice.
- Where the enterprise is part of a larger organisation accounts need to clearly identify the green care provision.
- Home-produced accounts are not acceptable, unless signed off by an accountant or independent examiner.

#### **Further information:**

- General advice on VAT registration: <https://www.gov.uk/vat-registration/when-to-register>

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## **1.4 Financial planning**

#### **Standard:**

Appropriate systems are in place for maintaining financial sustainability and a business plan or strategy (either formal or informal) is in place and regularly reviewed and updated.

#### **What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have a financial plan in place.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of relevant documents if you need to (this is optional).

#### **Guidance:**

Continuity of service, both for service users (clients) and staff employed is essential to allow for the provision of quality services and to reduce the risk of service disruption or closure and

consequently disappointed / displaced service users and staff. Without a detailed plan, including a detailed budget, some real or potential cost elements may not be considered in determining the viability of the enterprise, or the fees that need to be charged.

A business plan or strategy should give due consideration to delivery costs which may include for example:

- Staff Costs
- Administration & Insurance
- Equipment & Materials
- Overheads such as power
- External Registrations
- Transport & Food (if appropriate).

Margins are based on a contribution towards:

- Return on Capital, Profit
- Fixed Costs
- Repairs & Maintenance costs
- Marketing and other costs.

#### Further information:

- General advice on writing a business plan: <https://www.gov.uk/write-business-plan>
- Search online for many other examples of business plan templates.

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## 1.5 Insurance

### Standard:

Adequate insurance is in place as appropriate for the organisation, i.e. public liability insurance, employers' liability etc.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

- We have employers' liability insurance in place at all times.*
- We have public liability insurance in place at all times, and*
- We have all other insurance(s) required for our operations, in place at all times.*

If you answer 'yes' you need to provide a copy of your insurance document which provides details of dates and level of cover (**confirmation of EL and PL insurance are mandatory documents**)

### Guidance:

A green care provider must have adequate insurance in place. As a minimum this should include:

- **Employers' Liability:** this covers the green care provider against any claims made by staff and volunteers for sickness, damage or injury sustained when performing their work duties. It is a legal requirement for all businesses employing one or more people. The level of cover should be at least £5 million. Some commissioners insist on £10 million, so check with potential commissioners before insurance is purchased. Note that Employers' Liability documents should be displayed in a public area of the green care site.

- **Public Liability:** this covers the green care provider against any claims made by service users, or any other member of the public, for sickness, injury or damage to their property as a result of the green care provider enterprise. It is not strictly a legal requirement but without it a green care provider could be personally responsible for settling a claim made against the owner or organisation. This could amount to hundreds of thousands of pounds. In addition, most commissioners require public liability insurance, as lack of it could result in a service being in jeopardy due to a claim.
- In addition, buildings and contents cover is strongly advised, as a major incident such as fire could jeopardise the green care providers site if insufficient funds are available to rebuild.
- A list of what is considered necessary to insure should be created. Premiums may be reduced if activities are all considered low risk, for instance if service users do not use tractors, powered mowers or power tools. If the general public is rarely on site, this may also reduce costs.
- Several quotes should be obtained and carefully compared. Balancing manageable risks and the level of excess may be necessary.

#### **Further information**

- Social Farms & Gardens provides additional information and for members an insurance broker may be able to secure a better deal for you:  
<https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/services-and-support/publications-and-resources/insurance-members>.

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## **1.6 Feedback**

### **Standard:**

Appropriate systems are in place to receive and respond to feedback from service users, staff and all other stakeholders.

### **What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have an arrangement for evaluating our operation and for collecting and processing feedback which informs management decisions.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of relevant documents if you need to (this is optional).

### **Guidance:**

Asking for feedback from service users, staff, volunteers and all other stakeholders (e.g. commissioners and members of the public), and subsequently using the information to make relevant adjustments to the service provided, is a vital part of ensuring continuous service improvements.

- Feedback can be obtained in a variety of ways, including - but not exclusively - questionnaires (in an accessible form for your service users), face to face interviews, group discussions, or other surveys.
- Although some suggestions may not be acted upon due to financial constraints or unrealistic expectations, where trends are observable, or shortfalls made apparent, action should be taken and reported back to service users and commissioners.



- It is good practice to maintain a register of feedback suggestions and any actions you have taken to demonstrate to commissioners and other supporters that you take feedback seriously.
- Feedback should be regarded as different from complaints; the latter must be dealt with speedily and thoroughly, following a policy that you should make available to everyone who may come into contact with your service. It should include the intention to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.
- General feedback is required for evaluation of the green care service as a whole, but specific user evaluation is required after careful monitoring, details of which might be set out in a Service User Agreement / Contract (see Section 2.3)

#### Further information

- Social Farms & Gardens offers occasional training on feedback and evaluation for members, and a range of useful resources [here](#). This includes [Which Tool To Use? Green Care Guide](#): A guide to evaluating health and wellbeing outcomes.

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## 1.7 The Environment

#### Standard:

The organisation has a minimum negative impact on the environment.

#### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have an environmental policy, and associated procedures are in place.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of relevant documents if you need to (this is optional).

#### Guidance:

Green care providers should try to have minimum negative impact on the environment.

- An environmental policy and procedure should be produced which is communicated to staff, volunteers and service users and implemented as part of the curriculum / programme of activities.
- The environmental policy should include - but not be limited to - detail on Reduce, Reuse / Repurpose and Recycle.

Reducing - for example:

- The use of chemicals, whether herbicides, pesticides, cleaning or other chemicals should be monitored, reduced or eliminated where possible.
- Environmentally friendly (e.g. Integrated Farm Management (IFM)) or organic growing and animal husbandry techniques should be used where possible.
- Electronic means of storing information should be used (where possible and appropriate) to save paper.
- Use of mains water should be monitored and replaced by on-farm / garden storage of rainwater where possible.
- Use of electricity for lighting and heating should be reduced where possible and energy efficient methods used.

- Use of peat free compost for raising plants
- Shared transport for service users is preferable to people arriving in single occupant taxis, if appropriate.

Reusing - for example:

- Wherever possible, avoid buying one-use materials, for instance plastics.
- Repurpose materials such as pallets, plastics, paper and packaging.

Recycling or Repurposing - for example:

- Ensure all recyclable materials are correctly dealt with.
- The policy should ideally demonstrate a commitment to continually improve your environmental performance by monitoring progress against targets and objectives on a regular basis, prevent pollution, reduce your impact on the environment (as above), and comply with all relevant environmental legislation.

### Further information

- There are many examples of environmental policies and how to write them on the web; your local authority will also have its own. Organisations that you are a member of should also have their own policies and may be willing to help you develop your own.
- Ensure that you don't just 'copy and paste' but make the policy specific to your site and what you can achieve.

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## 1.8 Animals

### Standard:

The organisation adheres to legal obligations where applicable.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements, as appropriate:

- We are a registered holding and have flock / herd numbers.*
- We have appropriate animal passports / identification.*
- We have medication and medicines records in place as appropriate.*
- We have secure storage of all medication, veterinary equipment and sharps.*
- We comply with licensing requirements under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 as required by our Local Authority (Note: this is for green care sites in England only).*
- We have suitable, safe and secure animal isolation facilities.*

**Note:** the standard applies where you keep any animals on site, not just farm livestock, although not all elements may be relevant. You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of relevant documents if you need to (e.g. a farm / animal assurance scheme that you are accredited with) (this is optional).

### Guidance:

The green care provider needs to demonstrate that it conforms to all legal requirements regarding farm and companion animals. It must be noted that these requirements apply whether the holding is a commercial farm or a smallholding / garden with very small numbers of 'pet' animals.

If you keep farm animals, you must ensure that:

- The site has a CPH (County Parish Holding) number (may be referred to in Scotland as Location Code).
- Be registered as a keeper of livestock (as applicable).
- Have a herd or flock number for relevant type(s) of livestock and obtain and use relevant tags or other identification methods when transporting or selling stock.
- Maintain relevant animal passports for cattle and equines.
- Keep approved types of movement records.
- Comply with licensing requirements under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018. *Notes: this is for green care organisations in England only. Regional interpretation of this by Local Authorities vary, check with your own LA.* See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/486/contents/made>
- Register for, and use, the relevant online movement services.
- Comply with regulations concerning standstill periods for livestock.
- Comply with vehicle disinfection regimes after transporting livestock.
- Maintain an approved type of veterinary medicine record (for 5 years for food producing animals).
- Comply with any veterinary or animal disease requirements
- Maintain suitable isolation facilities for livestock.

#### Further information:

- Up to date information on all these requirements can be found on the relevant country Agriculture Department web sites. Most issues are covered in one place for England, Scotland and Wales <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare>, with Northern Ireland having some specific differences <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare>

#### General advice:

- England: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>
- Northern Ireland: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) <http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/>
- Wales: Welsh Government <https://gov.wales/animal-welfare>
- Scotland: Scottish Government <https://www.gov.scot/policies/animal-health-welfare/animal-welfare/>
- Record keeping for medicines administered to food producing animals: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/record-keeping-requirements-for-veterinary-medicines>
- The Animal Welfare Act 2006 applies in England and Wales: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents> and similar in Scotland <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/11/contents> and some differences in Northern Ireland <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/16/contents>
- The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018 applies in England only: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/9780111165485> with guidance for local authorities on licensing <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities> and from the British Veterinary Association <https://www.bva.co.uk/media/2986/bva-guide-to-the-animal-welfare-licensing-of-activities-involving-animals-england-regulations-2018.pdf>

## 1.9 Animal welfare

### Standard:

The operation meets the Five Domains of Animal Welfare as set out by the RSPCA, RSPCA Cymru, USPCA and SPCA.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *We have an animal welfare policy in place.*
- ii) *We meet all welfare of animals during transportation legislation.*
- iii) *We have annual veterinary inspection reports, or equivalent other external evidence.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of relevant documents if you need to (e.g. a farm / animal assurance scheme that you are accredited with); (this is optional).

### Guidance:

If the green care site has animals (applicable not just for farm livestock), it is important that the site can demonstrate a commitment to animal welfare. Unlike most commercial farms, farm animals reared and kept on green care sites tend to have contact with large numbers of people, many of whom will have no experience of livestock and may not know how to behave around farm animals. Close monitoring of the stock at all times is therefore of great importance to prevent misuse and / or ill-treatment.

- The Five Domains of Animal Welfare as described by the RSPCA, RSPCA Cymru, USPCA and SPCA should be adhered to and form the basis of a written Animal Welfare Policy. These are:
  - Nutrition
  - Physical Environment
  - Health
  - Behavioural Interactions
  - Mental State / experiences
- An annual veterinary inspection should be carried out and where appropriate (i.e. where the green care site has commercial numbers of livestock) registration should be considered with an appropriate inspected assurance scheme.
- Good stockmanship is crucial and trained and experienced staff and volunteers should be employed to work with livestock.

### Further information:

- Relevant information is contained in section 1.8 Animals above.
- Welfare of animals in transit in England since leaving the EU: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare-in-transport>, in Northern Ireland: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/welfare-animals-during-transport>, in Scotland <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2006/606/contents/made> but consultation is likely to change some details.
- The British Veterinary Association also has advice: <https://www.bva.co.uk/take-action/our-policies/welfare-of-livestock-during-transport/>

## 1.10 Health and Safety Policy

### Standard:

The organisation has a health and safety policy which shows our commitment to our staff and service users.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *We have a comprehensive health and safety policy in place that meets the standards required by the Health and Safety Executive. You also need to provide a copy of the relevant policy document (this is a mandatory document)*
- ii) ***Our health and safety policy is signed by the most senior member of staff, dated, and reviewed annually.***

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence or comments for this standard' box.

### Guidance:

The green care provider should produce a comprehensive Health and Safety Policy and Procedures document. A policy should contain:

- Details of who has overall responsibility for Health and Safety
- Details of who has day to day management of Health and Safety, that is, an appointed and trained Health and Safety Officer
- A statement of general policy, including:
  - prevention of accidents and work-related ill health by managing health and safety risks,
  - training provided to staff and where necessary, volunteers and service users,
  - details of engagement with staff and volunteers on day-to-day health and safety issues,
  - details of Emergency Procedures to cover fire, flood, inclement weather, illness and any other possible risks,
  - details of the maintenance of safe working conditions for everyone at the green care site, including maintenance of equipment, machinery and buildings, safe storage of materials, and correct training of staff and service users.
- The Policy and Procedures and performance, including near misses, should be reviewed annually. The documents should be signed off by a senior member of staff, and senior officer of the governing body.
- Copies of the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures, Training Certificates for staff, chart of areas of responsibility of staff, health and safety discussion from staff meetings, risk assessments, and copies of Emergency Procedures documents should all be accessible to staff.

### Further information:

- General advice on writing a Health and Safety policy is available from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/policy/how-to-write-your-policy.htm>.
- Health and safety made simple - The basics for your business: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/>.

## 1.11 Staying informed [explore whether we can add a prompt for details]

### Standard:

The organisation is keeping abreast of understanding any changes in legislation or commissioners' policy.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We keep abreast of understanding any changes in legislation or commissioners' policy.*

Please provide details in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box of which organisation you are subscribed to for updates; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

It is important for a green care provider to keep up to date with:

- Current legislation:
  - By signing up to receiving relevant regulation updates, and by networking with commissioners and other green care organisations you will increase the likelihood of keeping abreast of changes. For instance, legislation around Child and Adult Protection or school curricula can change very quickly, and it is crucial to be aware of these and respond by updating policies and procedures.
- Requirements of local commissioners:
  - Contractual requirements, openings for new commissions and possible contracts may all become apparent at networking events.
- You may also wish to network with other green care providers to learn examples of good practice used; this could include visits to and from other green care providers.
- Discussions between green care providers could result in cooperation rather than competition for particular service user groups or geographical areas. This results in a more coordinated picture for commissioners and greater certainty around contracts.
- It is also useful to maintain minutes of networking meetings, emails showing invitations and replies, minutes of staff or governing body meetings with reference to networking meetings.

### Further information:

- Many organisations allow you to sign up for free newsletters to keep you abreast of developments / changes, such as the Care Quality Commission  
<https://www.cqc.org.uk/news> subscribe to their newsletter  
<https://www.cqc.org.uk/news/newsletters-alerts/email-newsletters-cqc>
- Directories of provisions similar to yours are often maintained by local authorities to give you an idea of what other providers are offering, and through them you might collaborate or seek local advice on local changes e.g. in Somerset:  
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/school-life/alternative-provision-directory/>
- Local Safeguarding Children / Adults Boards are multi-agency bodies set up in every local authority.

## 1.12 Changes to the organisation

### Standard:

The organisation is aware that any significant changes to the way it is run, occurrence of any major incidents etc. can affect it's 'Quality Mark' status.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We agree to keep Social Farms & Gardens informed of any significant changes.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

The Green Care Quality Mark guidance is a live document and is continually reviewed to ensure compliance with changes to legal requirements. It is therefore regularly updated. It is the responsibility of the applicant to respond to any notified changes and to update documentation as required.

- The applicant should review the evidence contained in their application regularly, at least annually and update as necessary.
- Also, as mentioned in the Process section those who meet the Green Care Quality Mark will be asked to confirm that they still meet the standards and to report any changes or challenges.
- Issues that are essential to be notified include (this is not an extensive list):
  - Introduction of new enterprise elements (e.g. animals on site, staff or volunteers newly appointed)
  - major accident
  - regulator investigation
  - closing of service
  - liquidation/non-viable business
  - name change, etc.

### Further information:

- See also Standard 3.1 Health and Safety records and reporting

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## 2. We care about the people we work with

As a reminder, throughout this application we use the term ‘service user’ to describe the people who are receiving the services of the green care provider, and we use the term ‘volunteer’ to refer to a person who provides support to the service users but is not a paid member of staff.

### 2.1 Preliminary meeting

#### Standard:

The organisation understands the needs of all parties. A preliminary meeting is held to mutually agree the services required.

#### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We hold preliminary meetings with the service user (and other stakeholders as appropriate) to ensure needs are discussed and agreed.*

You may give us extra information in the ‘Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard’ box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

#### Guidance:

It is important that the commissioner and service user have an understanding of the ‘offer’ made by the green care provider and that the green care provider understands, agrees with, and is able to deliver the outcomes required by the commissioner. The service user should visit the green care site and preferably undertake a taster day of activities before regular attendance.

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### 2.2 Induction

#### Standard:

The organisation has a clear induction process for new service users.

#### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have an induction process for service users and their support.*

In the ‘Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard’ box please provide an outline of your induction process; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

#### Guidance:

It is important that a green care provider has a written and clear induction process for service users and their support. This does not necessarily need to be a standalone document but could be contained within another item such as a Service User Agreement / Contract.

- This should include, but not exclusively:
  - A site tour



- Introduction to key staff
- Refreshments
- Toilet facilities
- Health & Safety, including available personal protective equipment
- Emergency procedures
- Personal possessions when on site
- Behaviour
- Use of medications (if appropriate).

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## 2.3 Service User Agreement / Contract

### Standard:

The organisation has service user agreements / contracts / or similar in place for all service users.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have service user agreements / contracts / or similar in place for all our service users.*

For this standard, you need to email a copy of the documents which make up your service user agreement, contract or agreement (**this is a mandatory document**)

You may also give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; (this is optional).

### Guidance:

The agreement should ideally include all of the following:

- Responsibilities of the green care provider, commissioner and service user, including transport, refreshments, provision of personal protective equipment.
- Personal details of the service user including name, address, emergency contact, any specific health needs, allergies or dietary requirements.
- Outcomes.
- Health and safety and insurance.
- Pricing and invoicing details, e.g. in advance (termly/monthly).
- Arrangements in cases of non-attendance or closure of the green care site.
- Dates of attendance.
- Change in circumstances.
- Breach of contract including no show.
- Details of monitoring of service user progress and setting of further progression targets.

Ideally the above are contained within a single document, but if multiple documents are used, please ensure you provide a copy of all relevant documents.

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## 2.4 Safeguarding policies and procedures

### Standard:

The organisation has safeguarding policies and procedures in place for adults at risk, and for children - as advised by their Local Authority.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements (as applicable) and to provide copies of the relevant safeguarding policy **and** procedure documents (**these are mandatory documents**):

- i) We work with **both** children and adults and have separate adult and child safeguarding and protection policies in place as advised by our Local Authority\*, **or**

We **only** work with adults and have adult safeguarding and protection policies in place as advised by our Local Authority, **or**

We **only** work with children and have child safeguarding and protection policies in place as advised by our Local Authority.

*\*except in Wales where a single combined 'Children at Risk and Adults at Risk' is required.*

- ii) We have a named Safeguarding / Protection Officer in place.  
iii) All our staff doing 'regulated activities' are Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked.  
iv) We have all policies in place as required by our Local Authority(ies) and regulating bodies (e.g. social services, Ofsted etc.).

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard'.

### Guidance:

Green care providers, by definition, work with

- children (anyone under 18)

and /or

- adults (18 years and over)

who:

- Have needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),

and/or

- Are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- As a result of those needs are unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.' (*Care Act 2014, section 42*)

Green care providers have a duty to have suitable and effective measures in place for detecting and effectively managing allegations or suspicions of, or actual, abuse or neglect taking place.

Policies for child and adult safeguarding (if you have both child and adult service users) should be separated to reflect the different terminology, reporting requirements, issues and legislation etc, except in Wales where a combined Children at Risk and Adults at Risk policy is expected.

The policy(ies) should consist of:

- A named Safeguarding Officer is in place.
  - This is the Safeguarding Lead, who is responsible for following up safeguarding concerns or allegations and be the contact person for the local Safeguarding Board, relatives, professionals and/or the Police
  - This person is named in the Safeguarding Policy and contact details (ideally mobile numbers) are available to all present at the green care site.
  - Include a named Deputy with contact details, in case the DSL is absent
- All staff doing 'regulated activities' are Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked.
- The definition for 'Regulated Activities' is quite vague for adults, and more straightforward for children. DBS Certificates give peace of mind for applicants, knowing that their workforce has no previous relevant convictions.
- All Policies required by the Local Authority(ies) and relevant regulating bodies are in place.
- The Policies need to be regularly updated and reflect current legislation.
  - Green care providers are required to meet the local Safeguarding Board(s) standards.
  - Good practice is for green care providers to sign up to their local Safeguarding Board(s) updates service (where available).
  - Procedures need to be practicable, and issues around confidentiality need to be clearly indicated.

#### Further information:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (England and Wales):  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>, in Scotland see <https://www.mygov.scot/basic-disclosure/apply-for-basic-disclosure>
- Summary (and links to the full Act) in Wales <https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/information-and-learning-hub/sswbact/overview>. Section 7 defines Children at Risk and Adults at Risk
- The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) give up-to-date information to compare Policies against. See for example: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/templates/example-safeguarding-policy-statement> and <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding>.
- The Local Government Association has collated useful resources: <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/social-care-health-and-integration/adult-social-care/safeguarding-resources>
- Guidance specific to charities: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-for-charities-and-trustees>.
- Guidance around not using 'vulnerable adult' terminology (see section 5.2)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-policy-protecting-vulnerable-adults/sd8-opgs-safeguarding-policy>

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## 2.5 Confidentiality and Information sharing: data protection and storage

### Standard:

The organisation complies with all legal requirements relating to data and confidentiality.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *We have a confidentiality policy for staff (including volunteers) and service users.*

- ii) *Our use and sharing of data are compliant with current UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulations.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

**Guidance:**

A green care provider must have policies in place to ensure confidentiality of information of staff, volunteers and service users (and company Directors or Trustees if applicable). This must be in line with current data protection legislation, The Data Protection Act 2018 (this is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)). Hard copy data must be kept to a minimum, and, if unavoidable, stored in secure, locked cabinets.

The policy should include statements about what information will be retained and who will have access and under what circumstances, and that confidential information regarding clients will only be sought in their best interests such as to improve service delivery, and only shared with the clients' permission or under specified and published circumstances. The policy should include seeking permission before any people are photographed where they might be identifiable. Confidentiality should relate to all staff, service users and volunteers, and the policy made available.

Under the Data Protection (Charges and Information) Regulations 2018, individuals and organisations that process personal data need to pay a data protection fee to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), unless they are exempt.

**Further information:**

- General Data Protection Regulation: <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>
- It is good practice that the care farm registers with the Information Commissioners Office: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-fee/self-assessment/>
- Fees: Your data protection fee depends on your size and turnover. There are three tiers of fee ranging from £40 and £2,900, but for most organisations it will be £40 or £60, which can be reduced by £5 if you pay by direct debit. The payment is always VAT: nil. Charities only pay £40 regardless of their size and turnover. You can use a fee [tier calculator](#) to find out how much you will need to pay.

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## 2.6 Personal belongings

**Standard:**

*The organisation takes care of personal belongings.*

**What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We provide facilities where personal belongings can be kept secure.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

**Guidance:**

A green care provider has a responsibility to staff, volunteers and service users to ensure that personal belongings can be kept secure. Lockable offices or lockers for staff and volunteers, lockers or other secure areas for service users should be supplied.

There may be a need to discourage service users from bringing valuable items such as jewellery or mobile phones to the green care site, and this should be made clear to the service user and commissioner.

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## 2.7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

### Standard:

The organisation's policy is applicable to all those associated with the organisation.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone.

- Commissioners require a clear statement that those responsible for operating a green care provision understand and implement inclusive practice.
- Service users (or their carers), staff and volunteers need reassurance and a reference document for redress if concerns are identified.
- A policy needs to go beyond what might be regarded by the reader as 'glib' statements where there is scope for either misinterpretation or, importantly, insufficient clarity in how the statement will be implemented. It should be comprehensive, and all practicalities of implementation understood.
- Include reference to accessibility (Standard 2.17)

### Further information:

- For more guidance about the Equality Act 2010, see here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>
- Sample policies are available on the web, on many Social Farms & Gardens members' websites, and your local authority will have theirs; do not be tempted to just 'cut and paste' a sample without careful consideration and understanding.

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## 2.8 Lone Working

### Standard:

The organisation has a protocol in place for people working out of earshot or sight away from colleagues, so they can communicate in emergencies.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have a lone working policy and associated procedures in place.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

As an employer, a green care provider has a legal duty of care<sup>3</sup> and responsibility to ensure that everyone works in a safe environment, minimising risks to themselves and to others. Service users are in the same position.

A lone worker - or the service user(s) they are working with - may become ill, have an accident, be attacked, be accused of sexual or other harassment, observe dangers or potentially dangerous situations etc., and need to be in a position for them, and the employer, to work within clear rules and be able to communicate.

The Lone Working Policy and Procedures must be in place which clearly demonstrate understanding of the issues, details all the expectations and practical actions required by all staff and volunteers, and the training and ongoing support that will be provided, which must of course commence prior to placing a person in a lone working situation.

### Further information:

- Health & Safety Executive (HSE): <https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/>
- HSE Leaflet: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust: <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-at-work>

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## 2.9 Staff & Volunteer recruitment and retention

### Standard:

Staff (including volunteers) are recruited according to written procedures which meet all legal requirements; employment policies are in place; skills and knowledge of staff (including volunteers) are matched to particular service users / group(s) wherever possible.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *We have a recruitment policy and associated procedures.*
- ii) *We ensure that job descriptions are used in our recruitment.*
- iii) *We have an induction process for staff (and volunteers), including a list of topics covered.*
- iv) *We have all relevant employment policies in place.*
- v) *All our employees have a contract in place.*
- vi) *All our volunteers have an agreement in place.*

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<sup>3</sup> often defined as taking all steps which are reasonably practicable to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing, both physical and psychological

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

**Guidance:**

Staff / employees: an employee works in the service of the employer under an express or implied contract of hire that gives the employer the right to dictate the employee's work duties. Volunteers are defined as undertaking any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives; unlike staff / employees they cannot have a contract.

- Staff are those whom the green care provider gives responsibility to for working with service users, or who may engage with service users during their time on the green care site. They are key to service users obtaining the best experience and progression during their time at the organisation.
- The green care provider needs to be aware of their legal responsibilities to staff (e.g. working hours, holiday entitlement) and have clear policies and procedures for recruitment to find the best people for the role and not to be discriminatory.
- Service users placed at any individual green care site may have different needs from either other 'types' of service user or other environments, and as such, recruitment should take account of the knowledge and skills of prospective staff and recruit those who are best placed to meet the specific needs of particular types of service user(s) at the green care site.
- Non-care staff, such as cleaners, administrators or maintenance workers, must also be included in the same staff recruitment policies and procedures, unless they will never be on site at the same time as service users – in which case some requirements, such as DBS checks, will not be required (see standard 2.4).
- In terms of roles, practices and conditions of employment, the green care provider needs to be clear of their expectations of staff and volunteers, and staff and volunteers need clarity on what is expected of them.
- For the purpose of insurance volunteers are regarded as staff.
- Contracts and job descriptions for staff (and a 'volunteers charter' or 'agreement' for volunteers and role descriptions) allow the green care provider and their workforce to clarify expectations, for instance:
  - to know where responsibilities lie
  - line management
  - when and how concerns (or formal complaints) will be addressed
  - remuneration and expenses
  - working hours
  - professional boundaries.
- A contract also reduces the risk of disputes. It is a legal requirement for all employees to be provided with a statement of employment particulars within the first two months of employment. For most employers this statement is either incorporated into or serves as the contract of employment.
- Some contracts include, or refer to, value statements that everyone involved in the green care organisation is expected to adhere to. Staff should have access to a staff handbook /



online source containing all the green care provider policies and procedures, emergency and other contact details etc., for reference.

- Induction. This should include, but not exclusively:
  - A site tour
  - Introduction to key staff and their roles within the organisation
  - Health & Safety, including available personal protective equipment
  - Emergency procedures
  - Personal possessions when on site
  - Behaviour
  - Training available / required where relevant, for instance Safeguarding (adult safeguarding and/or child protection), health and safety, first aid
  - Access to all policies and procedures
  - Contract details including pay, holidays, sick leave, supervision, probationary period etc.
- Volunteers should receive similar induction, replacing contract details with a volunteer agreement.
- Service users should not enter the green care site without the knowledge or permission of the green care provider.
- Newly established organisations that may have employed family members for instance, may not necessarily have formal contracts in place straight away – this would need to be explained further in the further comments section. Even if all staff are family members, you should have clearly demarcated responsibilities and policies to implement.
- A new green care provider preparing to start working with service users may not have every policy document in a staff handbook finalised but should have identified and listed them and the timeframe in which they will be completed.

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## 2.10 Staff development

### Standard:

The organisation provides opportunities for staff development.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *All staff receive ongoing training, support, and appraisals.*
- ii) *We keep a record of all our staff training and appraisals.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

It is not sufficient to employ staff (and recruit volunteers) and expect that they will self-teach, keep up with changes in practices, and assess their own performance. Suitable training must be provided as well as regular opportunities to review and appraise both performance and enjoyment / satisfaction in their role(s).

- New working practices, or application of new policies (internal or externally imposed), should be recognised as requiring both training and support.
- This time represents a financial cost which needs to be committed.



- Safeguarding training is essential for all staff and volunteers who may come into contact with service users, and useful for all other staff (e.g. early morning cleaners) who should be made aware of the issues as part of a whole-organisation team and should be provided every three years as a minimum.
- Evidence of training will often be required by commissioners and by the Health & Safety Executive if a breach of safety occurs.
- Training records are also appreciated and useful in providing evidence at inspections, and for staff when they eventually leave the organisation.
- The green care owner may feel that they run the provision themselves but without recognition and commitment of time and other resources to ongoing training, the organisation risks becoming illegal or not implementing good practice.

#### **Further information:**

- Reporting a health and safety issue: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/tell-us-about-a-health-and-safety-issue.htm>

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## **2.11 Volunteer development**

### **Standard:**

The organisation provides opportunities for volunteer development.

### **What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *All volunteers receive ongoing training and support.*
- ii) *We keep a record of all our volunteer training.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### **Guidance:**

All volunteers should receive ongoing training and support of which a record should be kept. It is not sufficient to recruit volunteers and expect that they will self-teach, keep up with changes in practices, and assess their own performance. Suitable training must be provided as well as regular opportunities to review and appraise both performance and enjoyment / satisfaction in their role(s).

- New working practices, or application of new policies (internal or externally imposed), should be recognised as requiring both training and support.
- This time represents a financial cost which needs to be committed.
- Safeguarding training is essential for all volunteers who may come into contact with service users and who should be made aware of the issues as part of a whole-organisation team and should be provided every three years as a minimum.
- Evidence of training will often be required by commissioners and by the Health & Safety Executive if a breach of safety occurs.
- Training records are also appreciated and useful in providing evidence at inspections, and for volunteers when they eventually leave the organisation.

- The green care owner may feel that they run the provision themselves but without recognition and commitment of time and other resources to ongoing training, the organisation risks becoming illegal or not implementing good practice.

**Further information:**

- Volunteering policies and guidance is available from: [Volunteering England](#), [Volunteer Scotland](#), [Volunteering Wales](#) or [Volunteering Matters](#).

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## 2.12 Staffing plan

**Standard:**

Designated people are responsible for working with service users and the staff: service user ratio is safe and appropriate for the particular service user / group.

**What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have a staffing plan in place that reflects the appropriate staff: service user ratio.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

**Guidance:**

Depending on the needs of the individual service user, not everyone will be comfortable, or able, to relate to several members of staff, at least not in the early days of the placement. Each service user is an individual. They have person-specific needs that must be identified in consultation with their commissioner / carer, and then reflected within a Client / Service user Agreement. It is therefore essential to have a designated person for each service user to both build a positive relationship and engender confidence and respect, and with the ability to best represent the individual in review meetings, report writing etc.

- Parents and commissioners alike are keen to know that the individual has a key worker; staffing levels need to reflect this need.
- The support needs of the individual or, if appropriate, for the group of service users, will help determine the ratio of staff-to-service user to deliver a safe and fruitful placement. This should be reflected in the Client / Service User Agreement and associated cost implications.
- If the identified needs as outlined in the Client / Service User Agreement cannot be met with the current staff-to-service user ratio that the Agreement states is necessary, you should consider not accepting the placement. It is not acceptable to merely 'aspire' to meeting the needs.
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## 2.13 Indoor facilities

**Standard:**

A dry, warm and comfortable space is available in case of extreme weather, as well as somewhere to eat and take a break.

**What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have suitable indoor space available.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

**Guidance:**

Many service users will be experiencing the green care environment for the first time and need to become acclimatised, while others may only be able to work outdoors for limited periods due to medical or other reasons.

- If the weather becomes extreme it may be necessary at short notice to take all service users indoors.
- There will also be occasions when an indoor facility is needed for some practical work, meetings, events and celebrations etc.
- It is simply not sufficient or acceptable to offer purely outdoor facilities, without a warm and dry place in which service users can sit, and a place in which to eat or have a break from outdoor activities. The facility(ies) must also be fully accessible to all service users.

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## 2.14 Alternative activities

**Standard:**

Alternative activities are available in case of extreme weather or any change in need of service users.

**What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We provide alternative activities as necessary.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

**Guidance:**

Weather conditions can change quickly, and the needs, interests or preferences of service users vary between individuals and can also change over time.

- It is therefore essential to be prepared for these occasions with both facilities and activities planned in advance; these 'alternatives' to planned activities should not be delivered 'on the hoof' or at a moment's notice, as they are likely to not meet the needs of the individuals or be a second-rate experience.
- Activities should have clear aims and objectives, and there should be measurable outcomes and scope for progression.
- Many commissioners will expect to know what the alternative activities might be to ensure they are suitable and accessible to their service user.

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## 2.15 Organisational balance

### Standard:

The organisation maintains a balance between service user outcomes and day to day operations.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We organise activities in order to prioritise service user outcomes over day-to-day operations.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

The needs, interests and preferences of service users vary between individuals and change over time. It is important to provide a choice of activities for service users in order for them to feel empowered to have the ability to make decisions, and for the staff / volunteers to work with the individual from a position of comfort and confidence, gradually building greater challenges and opportunities at the pace and complexity suitable for the individual.

Time-specific operational needs of the garden or farm need to be planned to allow staff to focus on service users. Choice will of course be limited by staffing, facilities and the available environment and other resources, but the wishes and abilities of the service user must be considered within those parameters, and what is stated within the Service User Agreement / Contract.

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## 2.16 Structured activities

### Standard:

All sessions are fully planned, taking into account service user needs.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *We have activity plans in place.*
- ii) *If more than one (individual / group) service user is on site at the same time, we take the potential impact on each other into consideration and deliver activities accordingly.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

A green care provider must be able to show evidence of careful planning of activities that meet the needs and interests of service users and take account of weather conditions by offering bad weather alternatives.

- Activities should have clear aims and objectives, and there should be measurable outcomes and scope for progression.

- On a green care site where more than one group of service users are on site, or where the needs, preferences or interests vary within a group, it is important to have activities planned so that there is no competition for facilities, or to prevent undesired interaction between members of different groups.

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## 2.17 Accessibility

### Standard:

As much of the green care operation is accessible as possible to people with additional needs.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We endeavour to make our green care site as accessible as possible.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

Accessibility usually relates to the limit of addressing physical barriers, e.g. ramps rather than steps for wheelchair users, but must also take account of the different needs of the individual service user.

- Depending on who the green care organisation is working with, this may involve avoiding for example claustrophobic spaces, materials that cause sensory or physical discomfort, or room / activity instructions that cannot be read or understood.
- As much of the green care site as possible should be accessible to the individual service users the organisation intends to work with.
- Not all of your site needs be accessible, in particular areas that need to be made safe with limited staff / volunteer access such as slurry pits or machine stores.
- You could make a description of the site and facilities that are accessible to service users contained within a brochure and site map, but in sufficient detail that commissioners / carers can clearly see and understand what is accessible to their service users.
- This standard should be referred to in your Equality, Inclusion & Diversity policy (Standard 2.7).

### Further information:

- The Sensory Trust: <https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/guidance/visitor-access-guides>

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## 2.18 Parking and vehicular movement

### Standard:

Adequate, safe parking is available on site (or accessible to the site) and vehicular traffic is separated from pedestrian walkways (where appropriate).

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *Adequate, safe parking is available on site (or accessible to the site).*
- ii) *Vehicular traffic is separated from pedestrian walkways (where appropriate).*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

**Guidance:**

Service users will most likely be taken to the green care site by car or other form of transport. The site may only provide for mainly drop-off points, but these must be sufficient to allow for taxis and minibuses to safely move service users from the vehicle into the site / reception area and allow for the number of expected service users arriving at any one time. Wheelchair users will need adequate space for access and egress to / from their vehicles.

- Adequate parking should be made available for staff and the intended service user group and needs to be clearly identified to minimise the risk of accidents. To that end it should, wherever possible, include the separation of vehicles and pedestrian walkways.
- Where the service user works with livestock, or if walking where livestock may have defecated, it is essential to provide boot / wellington cleaning facilities before entering the parking area if footwear changing does not take place elsewhere on the farm. This biosecurity measure will reduce the risk of transferring potential zoonoses from the farm to the vehicle and home where it may not be adequately removed.
- You could consider including a description of the site and facilities within a brochure and site map, clearly showing where vehicles are allowed, including parking, and traffic and pedestrian flow.

**Further information:**

- See also Standard 3.9.
- When assessing the area needed for staff and – if appropriate – service users / driver parking, the current British Standards Institute norm for parking spaces is 2.4 metres wide by 4.8 metres long, although the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee recommend minimum dimensions for bays reserved for disabled badge holders as a minimum of 2.7 metres wide and 6.6 metres long.

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### 3 Our green care site is a safe place to be

The Health & Safety policy is covered in detail in Statement 1.10; this section explores the implementation of your health & safety policy.

#### 3.1 Health and Safety records

**Standard:**

*The organisation maintains all necessary safety records.*

**What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) We comply with relevant environmental health standards.*
- ii) We comply with the relevant legislation on accidents, injuries and near misses and illness.*
- iii) We have all electrical safety certificates (e.g. Electrical Inspection Condition Report (EICR)) in place at all times.*
- iv) All of our portable electrical appliances are regularly EET (Electrical Equipment Testing – previously PAT - tested as required.*
- v) As we use gas on site (either mains and / or LPG), we have a current gas safety certificate in place at all times.*

You may give us extra information in the ‘Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard’ box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

**Guidance:**

The records requested in this standard, provided they are kept consistently and accurately, ensures that everyone present on the farm are as safe as possible from risk of harm, injury or ill-health. Should mishaps occur, well-kept records enable the detection of possible causes for the occurrence.

- **Health and Safety Law Poster**

This is no longer a legal requirement, as long as workers are provided with a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) approved leaflet or pocket card.

- **Risk Assessments**

For every activity or environment where significant hazards may exist, a Risk Assessment needs to be carried out and recorded. These need to include:

- the nature of the hazard(s)
- who is at risk
- the severity of the risk
- the likelihood of the risk occurring
- practicable precautions which need to be taken to reduce the risk
- the level of risk with the precautions in place.

Risk assessments need to be reviewed regularly and signed off by the person responsible for Health and Safety. [Standard 3.6 goes into more detail]

- **Accident records**

As a rule of thumb, every time first aid is administered an Accident form needs to be completed. Near misses and dangerous occurrences also need to be recorded. The Health

and Safety Policy should state who is responsible for contacting Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) in case of serious incidents, and how Accident reports are used to improve safety.

- **Staff & Volunteer training records** (also see Standard 2.10 & 2.11)  
These apply to Health and Safety-related activities, such as using equipment or machinery, manual handling, food safety, etc. An organisation needs to know whether its workforce is licenced to perform certain activities and is competent.
- **Electrical Safety Certificate**  
An Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is for the fixed electrical installation. A five-yearly Certificate is recommended.
- **EET (previously PAT) testing**  
Electrical Equipment Testing (EET), formerly Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is the term used to describe the examination of electrical appliances and equipment to make sure they are safe to use. A general rule of thumb is that EET testing should be carried out every 2 years.
- **Gas Safety Certificate (where applicable)**  
Wherever natural or bottled gas is used, a valid Certificate needs to be in place; please state if there is no gas on site.

### Food hygiene

The Food Standards Agency website states when training and certificates are required, most are available for free. If waste food / catering ingredients can't be guaranteed to be free of meat or meat products they should not be composted (unless using an anaerobic **digester** or Bokashi; larger quantities may require a T23 waste exemption from the Environment Agency).

- **CoSHH Records (also see Statement 3.4)**  
As a minimum this will include the CoSHH register, CoSHH risk assessments and associated data sheets.

### Further information:

- See HSE: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm> Leaflet <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/lawleaflet.htm>
- RIDDOR: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>
- PAT: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/faq-portable-appliance-testing.htm>
- EICR: <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/find-an-electrician/periodic-inspection-explained/guide-to-condition-reports/>
- Gas Safe Register: <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/gas-safety/gas-safety-certificates-records/>
- Food Standards Agency: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-hygiene-for-your-business> and <https://www.food.gov.uk/food-safety?navref=main>
- Guidance on compost heaps: [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-animal-material-in-home-work-or-community-compost-heaps?fbclid=IwAR2wkxjwzU0kb\\_X-aTi2XvGH-Q0QF-XAtD2zIbqLdpwBwBYHsPuLdQj0KA8](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-animal-material-in-home-work-or-community-compost-heaps?fbclid=IwAR2wkxjwzU0kb_X-aTi2XvGH-Q0QF-XAtD2zIbqLdpwBwBYHsPuLdQj0KA8) Also Environment Agency waste: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-t23-aerobic-composting-and-associated-prior-treatment> and Social Farms & Gardens composting in the community network <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/services-and-support/publications-and-resources/composting-guide>

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## 3.2 Emergency procedures are in place

### Standard:

Practical Emergency procedures are written and effectively disseminated, for emergencies (such as fire, missing persons, severe weather, behaviour management policy and procedure, power failure, etc.).

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statement:

*We have all required emergency policies and procedures in place.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

Green care providers need to be prepared for when things go wrong, so as not to put people at risk when serious adverse events occur. An Emergency Policy describes what people should do in various scenarios, and should be easy to follow, practicable, and made readily available to all.

### Further information:

- The Health and Safety Executive have clear guidance on what should be included in the Emergency Procedures: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/workplace-health/emergency-procedures.htm>
- First Aid requirements: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/firstaid/index.htm>

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## 3.3 Equipment

### Standard:

All equipment is appropriate and in good working order.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *All our tools, equipment and machinery are safe and in good working order. Maintenance, repairs, and replacement records are kept are applicable.*
- ii) *All our tools, equipment and machinery are used by competent operators only. Training records are used to ensure correct use of equipment.*
- iii) *All our tools, equipment and machinery are safely stored and secured where necessary in case of unauthorised use.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

For every job there is the right piece of equipment or machinery. Each needs looking after to make sure they are effective and safe. The green care provider should satisfy themselves that

whoever uses a piece of kit is competent and fit to do so. 'Making do' can seriously jeopardise safety, it may be safer to get a specialist to do a job for you.

- Keep maintenance and repair records: regular servicing, maintenance and repair of tools, equipment and machinery is important for keeping them in good working order. Keeping records minimises the chance of anything going wrong.
- Competency sometimes involves a qualification or training. Secure storage in this context means protecting tools and equipment from unauthorised, i.e. incompetent, users.
- Training records should be kept ensuring correct usage of equipment by the right people.

#### Further information:

- Use of equipment and changes since leaving the EU: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/user.htm>

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### 3.4 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

#### Standard:

Use of COSHH substances is kept to a minimum, control measures are in place, and records kept.

#### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- We maintain a COSHH register on site (including data sheets for each COSHH substance).*
- All of our COSHH substances are risk assessed.*
- All our COSHH substances are safely and securely stored as per requirements.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

#### Guidance:

Good plant and animal husbandry means using a minimum of harmful substances, and, where this is unavoidable, they are handled and stored with caution and with records kept.

- In many cases, non-harmful alternatives are now available, and these should be used where possible.
- A COSHH register, including all regulated substances on the farm, should be maintained.
- Risk Assessments and Data Sheets for each COSHH substance should also be maintained.
- All who have access to COSHH materials need to understand the Risk Assessment and safe storage requirements and locations.

#### Further information:

- Detailed information about COSHH requirements can be found on the Health and Safety Executive website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm> Leaflet - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg136.pdf>.

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### 3.5 First Aid

#### Standard:

Adequate First Aid arrangements are available when service users are on site.

#### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *We have a First Aid policy in place.*
- ii) *We have a trained First Aider on site when service users are present.*
- iii) *We have a 'First Aid Appointed Person' for the site [see definition below].*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

#### Guidance:

Green care providers need to be prepared when someone suddenly takes ill or is injured. Suitable arrangements need to be made to provide immediate treatment. The minimum requirement is to have one first aider, with a current First Aid at Work (FAW) certificate, available on site at all times when service users and / or workers are present. FAW training will allow the person to be the designated first aider.

- **A First Aid Policy needs to be in place:** sometimes this can be a section in the Health and Safety Policy. The Policy needs to include a Risk Assessment, to ascertain whether one or more Qualified First Aiders need to be present, and what kind of facilities and equipment may be necessary in relation to the likelihood of injuries.
- **A trained First Aider is present at all times when service users and / or workers are present.** This relates to at least a 'Emergency First Aid at Work' qualified person who are trained as the title suggests, and able to act until the designated first aider can attend. The Risk Assessment determines what level these are trained at.
- **The First Aid Appointed Person is responsible for** keeping the first aid equipment stocked up and available, and for calling the emergency services; they cannot undertake first aid actions.

#### Further information:

- St Johns Ambulance at work: <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/?parentId=12265&categoryId=12279>  
Also see Health and Safety Executive (HSE):
- First Aider: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/first-aider.htm>
- First Aid Appointed Person: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/firstaid/first-aid-appoint-someone.htm>
- General first aid at work: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm> Leaflet <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.htm>

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### 3.6 Risk Assessments

#### Standard:

People on site know what risks are present on site and while involved in various activities, and what has been done (or needs to be done) to avoid harm.

## What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *We have a Fire Safety Risk Assessment in place, as required by law.*
- ii) *We have a written generic Risk Assessment describing the hazards that may be present on site.*
- iii) *We have separate, written Risk Assessments for each activity that carries significant risk without safety precautions.*
- iv) *We have separate personal risk assessments for individuals who, by nature of particular disabilities or behaviour, may alter the level of risk involved in an activity.*
- v) *Risk Assessments are reviewed and updated regularly, at least annually, or if there is any significant change in circumstance e.g. near accident etc.*
- vi) *We will respond to any external issues or pressures (such as Covid-19) with appropriate risk assessments.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

## Guidance:

Already touched on in Statement 3.1, this Standard looks more closely at Risk Management. Machinery, tools, equipment, activities, the environment and individuals may create hazards, and which need measures in place to keep everyone safe. Risk Assessments are useful tools to determine what can be done to minimise risk from these hazards. Working with Risk Assessments greatly reduces the chances of anyone being harmed, they can be educational and help develop responsibility; they should not be viewed as a burden. Any person who, for whatever reason, may cause risk to themselves or others (including animals) may need precautions put in place to minimise these.

- All Risk Assessments need to include Hazard Identification, Level and likelihood of risk, precautions to be in place, and residual risk. Good practice is to also include 'further precautions' as recommendations. Any Risk Assessments which have a 'Medium' to 'High' risk are unacceptable.
- All activities need to be assessed for significant risks and how these can be minimised, taking into account the knowledge and skills of those involved in them, either directly or as bystanders.
- A 'Site' Risk Assessment: this looks at all possible significant hazards on the property, from trip hazards, adjacent roads, open water surfaces to overhead powerlines etc.
- Additional Risk Assessments for current external issues affecting the way the green care site operates (such as pandemics like Covid-19, or animal disease outbreaks like foot and mouth for example) will also need to be developed.
- Risk Assessments need to be 'live' documents, adjusted, updated and reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- Fire Risk Assessment: This is a legal requirement where the workforce is 5 or more people. It ensures that fire risk is at a minimum, and as much as possible is done to prevent damage or injury caused by fire. It is usually done by professionals in the field.
- This Standard also covers animal handling (if animals are on site and accessible to clients and / or staff). Risk Assessments need to be in place for any animal handling which carries risks. Green care providers should have suitable facilities for handling animals safely. Animals need handling or moving for all sorts of reasons. Sometimes it may involve invasive

treatment, such as administering medication or hoof trimming. Particularly for large animals, such as horses or cattle, but also for sheep, goats or bees, animal handling equipment makes the job safer for both beast and handler.

- Risk Assessments need to be carried out and recorded for the moving or handling, at least for the larger classes of livestock, to make sure every eventuality has been thought of and appropriate precautions made.

**Further information:**

- Managing risks and risk assessment at work: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm>
- Fire risk assessment: <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities/fire-risk-assessments>

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### 3.7 Reducing the risk of infection from cross contamination

**Standard:**

The organisation has adequate handwashing and toilet facilities on site. If animals are on site, the organisation meets the Industry Code of Practice “Preventing or Controlling Ill Health from Animal Contact at Visitor Attractions”.

**What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- To avoid cross contamination, we have adequate handwashing and toilet facilities on site.*
- As we have animals on site, we meet the Industry Code of Practice “Preventing or Controlling Ill Health from Animal Contact at Visitor Attractions.”*

You may give us extra information in the ‘Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard’ box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

To help explain, in relation to the Code of Practice a single client/service user is classed as a visitor and therefore that is why we ask people to confirm they follow it. The Code is there to not only help protect visitors but also the farm itself especially in the case of zoonotic infection. HSE and others accept that a farmer following the Code has done everything “reasonable” to prevent zoonotic infections and is unlikely to be found liable. As to signage that is about ensuring there is sufficient for any person visiting the farm e.g. keeping away from slurry pits, but also that signage is appropriate for the visitor, so that might involve the use of recognisable graphics.

**Guidance:**

No green care site is a sterile environment, and workers or visitors may be unaware of the harmful organisms which they may be exposed to, or how to prevent them from affecting their health. Should contact with animal faeces be a necessary part of the day, then the risk of infection and cross contamination is reduced by minimising direct contact and providing adequate and accessible toilet and washing facilities, and ideally removal of outer clothing and footwear before entering indoor areas, or use of disinfectant foot dips [as outlined in your Health & Safety Policy]

- This Standard primarily refers to precautions regarding animal contact: the recommendations in the mentioned Industry Code of Practice are also by and large applicable to green care sites without animals, preventing ill-health from soil-borne harmful organisms. Animal manure is used in many gardens, too. Therefore, all green care sites should follow this Code.
- Warning or awareness notices, tetanus immunisation reminders and the like, are considered good practice.
- Provision of adequate and accessible toilet and handwashing facilities on site are essential.

**Further information:**

- The Industry Code of Practice: <https://visitmyfarm.org/resources/code-of-practice>.

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### 3.8 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

**Standard:**

Suitable and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is issued for relevant operations, and their use enforced.

**What you need to do:**

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *We have a PPE Policy in place.*
- ii) *We ensure adequate PPE is available at all times.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

**Guidance:**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as ear defenders, hard hats, etc. should, by law, be made available freely to those who are expected to carry out work. It is often the first line of defence against injury or ill-health.

- Some equipment has a use-by date, and all equipment needs to be a good fit for the individual and in good working order.
- When sharing gloves, boots or other wearable PPE, disinfection arrangements need to be made, or equipment reserved for single individuals.
- Your policy may state that the client / commissioner should provide certain items such as wellington boots, but you will still be responsible for risk assessing all activities and providing other identified PPE.

**Further information:**

- Health and Safety Executive guidance on PPE: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/ppe/index.htm>

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### 3.9 Signage

**Standard:**

All signs and markings on site are clearly visible. Any health and safety signage are of an approved design, complying with The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

### What you need to do:

In this section you are asked to confirm either *yes* or *no* to the following statements:

- i) *All our signs and markings are clearly visible.*
- ii) *Our Health and safety signs are of an approved design.*

You may give us extra information in the 'Any extra evidence, documents or comments for this standard' box; you can also email copies of the relevant documents if you wish to (this is optional).

### Guidance:

Signage, where it relates to Health and Safety, needs to be unambiguous and easily be understood by all. The Regulation stipulates what is acceptable. The need is particularly important for visitors to the green care site including young children, people with learning difficulties or other special needs, and people whose first language is not English. Many are either confused with some of the hand washing and other signs or can't read the English warnings e.g. advice for pregnant women to avoid contact with ewes and lambs.

- You may wish to consider some of these elements if designing your own signs:
  - avoid using stereotype images of people
  - avoid cartoons that are often misunderstood
  - be aware of cultural symbols
  - if using icons, they should be strong silhouettes showing recognisable instructions or situations use single message signs - no mixed instructions on a single sign.

### Further information:

- The Health and Safety signs regulations and guidance: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l64.htm>.
- The Industry Code of Practice: <https://visitmyfarm.org/resources/code-of-practice>

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For any further support or guidance please contact us:

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