

Taking on a new allotment plot

Guidance for prospective tenants

### **The plot**

Plot tenancies end for a variety of reasons. Sometimes tenants decide to give up their plot at the end of a growing season, and so all may be in order and ready to hand over to the incoming tenant. Often though, plot tenancies are ended when plots are not worked to the standard required. The time taken to terminate a tenancy and then to reallocate the plot may mean that the plot is very overgrown.

New tenants need to be prepared for hard work, clearing the plot and getting it ready for planting. When taking on a plot, after the first two or three months there should be clear signs that the plot is being cultivated and the minimum of 75% cultivation should be achieved by the end of the first year. It is a good idea to focus on a small area first, get some crops in the ground as soon as you can, and then work up the rest.

### **You, your health and ability**

Pace yourself and plan the work that you will do at the allotments to be in line with your health and your physical ability. Regular short visits rather than a few long visits will be kinder on your back and knees. Think about the size of plot that you will be able to manage.

### **Time**

We recommend visiting your plot at least twice a week to keep on top of weeding and other jobs. During the growing season you are likely to need to visit more often, to water and to harvest crops.

### **Tools and equipment**

The tools we recommend for new tenants are a hoe, spade, fork, rake, trowel and watering can. Tools can be new or second hand to save on costs. Think about whether you are going to bring your tools with you each time, or store them in a shed on your plot. For any sheds or other structures on your plot, you should install a water butt alongside, to collect water and reduce the amount of water drawn from the mains supply.

### **Your allotment neighbours**

Your fellow allotment tenants will likely prove an invaluable source of advice and support. It will be worth talking to others and finding out from them what grows well in the soil at your allotment site, and whether they have any handy hints for growing crops and maintaining an allotment.