

PLOT CULTIVATION STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

This document concerns issues related to cultivation and should be used in conjunction with the Buildings and Structures Standards document. The document sets minimum standards and gives guidance upon how standards are to be assessed and enforced.

1. The minimum cultivation level standard.

At least 75% of each allotment plot should be available for cultivation. Up to 25% can be used for buildings and structures such as huts, compost bins, ponds and so on.

Assessment note:

A) Greenhouses and poly-tunnels which are in active use for cultivation can be included in calculating the 75% cultivation allowance.

2. Full cultivation, definitions and allowable crops

The 75% of each plot available for cultivation should be fully cultivated within a complete growing season.

Assessment notes:

B) Full cultivation is taken to mean at least one or more of the following:

- i. The plot is in readiness for growing
- ii. The plot is well stocked with growing produce relevant to the time of year
- iii. The plot is in the process of being prepared for the following crops or season

C) Allowable crops include vegetables, fruit, flowers and herbs.

3. Weed control

Plots must be kept weed free. This standard is relevant to the need not to interfere in a material way with the enjoyment of neighbouring gardeners

Assessment note:

D) Essential elements of a weed-free plot are:

- i. Removal of weed seed-heads before the seed has set
- ii. Control of pernicious weeds which spread via roots (e.g. couch grass, mares tail, bindweed)
- iii. Removal of long grass or detritus that may harbour slugs and snails

4. External paths

Paths should be kept trimmed and free of obstructions.

Assessment note

E) This is normally the responsibility of the plot-holder except where associations organise communal mowing of grass paths.

5. Cultivation and wild-life

It is recognised that conserving wildlife is an important secondary function of allotments. However wildlife areas and features should be managed within a cultivation setting.

Assessment note

F) An uncultivated area just left to go wild is not acceptable as a legitimate wild-life area.

6. The role of each allotment association committee

Each allotment committee is responsible for making each of its members aware of this standards document. Each association committee should hold regular site inspections to advise members who are falling short of cultivation standards.

Guidance note:

G) The association committee should recognise that every plot holder has his or her own personal circumstances which can influence their ability to achieve the above standards; but it also acknowledges that the association has to be managed in a professional way and that each plot-holder has to share that responsibility. An opportunity should therefore always be provided for plot-holders to discuss any particular problems or circumstances which prevent them from reaching these minimum standards.

H) The association committee may find that there are cases where agreement about minimum cultivation standards cannot be reached with the allotment holder. In these cases of dispute the association should invite the Newcastle Allotment Working Group to arbitrate.

7. The role of the Newcastle Allotment Working Group and the Allotment Officer

The Allotment Officer in conjunction with the NAWG Area Representative and the association committee will carry out an annual inspection of that allotment site to examine cultivation and buildings and structures standards.

Guidance note:

I) NAWG recognises that the management of cultivation standards in different allotment sites has historically been specific to that site and so will vary from site to site. NAWG recognises that minimum cultivation levels in all of a site's allotments will not be possible immediately for some sites. In these cases NAWG will expect to see significant movement towards these minimum standards in a time frame agreed with the association on question.