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GROWING MANCHESTER PROGRAMME FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

JANUARY 2013

EMERGE LEARNING GARDEN

FALLOWFIELD SECRET GARDEN

MOSS SIDE COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

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Unless otherwise stated, all images were taken by the authors

"It's about pride. I think people are feeling very proud that they can grow this and that they can eat it."
GROWING MANCHESTER GROUP LEADER.

"I think it's about the building of a community really, as much as the growing."
GROWING MANCHESTER GROUP LEADER.

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KEY FINDINGS

This report documents the findings of an independent evaluation of Manchester City Council's 2012 Growing Manchester programme. Growing Manchester's aim is to support community food growing projects to become more sustainable by providing access to a range of tailored support and opportunities. It is coordinated by the Food Futures team at Manchester City Council who involved three different training providers: Groundwork, Sow the City and the Hulme Community Garden Centre. A variety of support is offered including training courses, site assessments and small grants (to select groups). A pilot in 2011 was found to be worthwhile following an internal assessment; it was expanded to support 34 groups in 2012. The projects range from community allotments to sites owned or managed by intermediary organisations such as schools, day centres and housing associations. Despite problems posed by the extreme weather this year, and difficult site conditions for some of the groups, almost all have been successful in establishing or developing their sites, and the vast majority have succeeded in growing food.

The background research included a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, the analysis of which is detailed more fully in the body of the report and from which recommendations are derived. Briefly stated, the key findings are:

ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTCOMES FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

1. Participation in the project has had a positive impact on the participants in terms of increasing their food growing skills
2. Considering the health impacts, consumption of fruit and vegetable has widened (including the willingness to taste new types of fruit and vegetables).
3. Participants have engaged in more physical activity through their participation in gardening as well as walking to and from the site. Some participants significantly lost weight.
4. Participants who take least exercise and eat fruit and vegetables the least learned more about the well-being benefits of fruit and vegetable growing than was achieved amongst their fellow participants who already engaged in these behaviours. Coupled with participation in the project, this could result in change of lifestyle among those people and increase the frequency of healthy behaviour.
5. There is abundant evidence of the therapeutic benefits derived from the project's gardening activities including improving and calming mood through contact with plants and increasing the confidence via a sense of achievement. The programme has resulted in connecting communities together through socialising with others and meeting new people in the community.
6. Many groups have successfully raised awareness of the programme and engaged the local community.
7. Two of the groups investigated in more detail expanded in size; others were successful in engaging with neighbouring allotments and bringing in wider stakeholders.
8. Ascertaining carbon literacy and change in pro-environmental attitudes as a particular outcome of the programme is much harder to isolate though there does seem to be knowledge around this area. The training providers and the leaders included issues relating to air miles, organic food growing and wildlife gardening in their activities. Many participants were already engaging in pro-environmental behaviour and were keen to do more, which suggests the potential for these issues to be further emphasised, and well-

received, in future rounds of the programme. Expansion of the strong roots workshop to include more on sustainable growing, including more emphasis on carbon literacy (see MCL programme)

EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Group leaders, participants and training providers spoke highly of the project. The application process was thought to be very straightforward. There was a quick turnaround time from the application date to receiving support early in the growing season that proved particularly valuable to kick-start new projects. Below are some conclusions relating to various elements of the programme, accompanied by recommendations for future work.

INVOLVING AND RETAINING PARTICIPANTS

1. The Growing Manchester groups represented a good geographical spread across the city. However, ethnic minority groups were underrepresented. Further research would be useful to understand why this was, so that enabling activities and outreach to be made more appropriate and better targeted.

    - **Recommendation:** The Food Futures team should support groups in providing appropriate activities and targeted outreach to better include a wide demographic. This should be informed by research to better understand the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities.

2. It was emphasised by the group leaders and training providers that involving children via participation of parents in the food growing projects, or vice versa, is desirable and there have been examples of the interest in the food growing and healthy lifestyle passed on within families. Involving whole families can thus reinforce the fruit and vegetable consumption and pro-environmental behaviours.

    - **Recommendation:** The Food Futures team should support involvement of families in the Programme and promote family-oriented activities.

3. The networking opportunities provided in the programme for the Growing Manchester groups were well received.

    - **Recommendation:** The Food Futures team should continue to provide information and networking activities for groups involved in food growing in Manchester.

4. At this early stage, many groups tended to attract people who are currently active in their local community, or already supported by social services. There is therefore an opportunity for outreach to widen the participant base, and such activities should be encouraged and supported by the Food Futures team. Some examples are provided in section 5.2.

    - **Recommendation:** Encourage and support groups in carrying out outreach work in order to widen and diversify their participant bases.

LEADERS

1. There is a need for additional support for the project leaders, some of whom could not commit fully to the project due to other work requirements, and did not have the necessary food growing skills to guide their group. Whilst most of the leaders have claimed that they benefited from being involved in the programme, some of them highlighted the need for training in people management skills. Offering a paid leader position (such as a community worker) for the groups struggling to attract volunteers or faced with particular problems on site could be beneficial.

    - **Recommendation:** Additional support should be made available to project leaders, which should not be limited to skills directly related to food growing and preparation, but also to more general skills such as site management and volunteer coordination.

THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

1. The site assessments provided by 'Sow the City' were thought to be extremely useful, albeit some groups thought that earlier assessments would enable them to fully benefit.

    - **Recommendation:** The initial site assessments are a valuable feature of the programme and should be continued. The Food Futures team should consider scheduling them earlier in the programme.

2. The other core elements of the training programme in 2012, 'Strong Roots' workshop and 'Introduction to Fruit and Vegetable Growing' would benefit from being more accurately tailored to the needs of the groups taking part. The training provided was seen as valuable and learning outcomes relating to food growing skills, and awareness of environmental issues were reported. For example, the content and format were not seen as appropriate for school children or those with learning difficulties. Whilst the training providers were able to adjust the content to the requirements of the particular groups, they would be able to ascertain better learning outcomes if they were aware of the characteristics of the groups in advance.

    - **Recommendation:** The training programmes would benefit from being more appropriately tailored to the needs of the specific groups. The Food Futures team can assist this process by making training providers aware of the characteristics and needs of the groups in advance.

3. The need for more advanced and varied training in food growing (such as permaculture or bee keeping) and cooking skills was flagged up by some of the groups. Some of the groups took the training in their own hands, but the Food Futures team and the training providers expanded the training portfolio to include such activities, and there was a good level of interest in this more advanced training. In future rounds of the programme, groups should be presented with a range of training activities, from which they can choose the most relevant ones to their skills and interest; this could be achieved by an early stage 'training fair' event. However, once the groups sign up for the training, it should be compulsory for them to attend to avoid low attendance and no-shows which happened on several occasions in the 2012 round of the

programme. The compulsory attendance to training also increases its value in the perception of the participants.

- **Recommendation:** The training on offer should be presented to the groups in the early stages of the programme at an event where they can also sign up to the sessions of interest. A wider range of training options should be accommodated and, in order to maximise the benefit of the course, emphasis should be placed on ensuring good attendance and low absenteeism.

4. The research indicates that increasing carbon literacy was not given sufficient attention by the trainers or the leaders, as it was not a clear objective of the Growing Manchester programme. Given that many participants were interested in environmental issues, future rounds of the Growing Manchester programme offer an opportunity to better equip them to make personal changes that could have a carbon impact.

    - **Recommendation:** Increasing carbon literacy should be a clear objective of the programme and should be developed as a more substantial part of training, combining information on environmental issues with advice on making personal changes.

5. Delivering the training on site was preferred by both the group leaders and the training providers, as some groups had experienced difficulties with travelling to other venues where the training was held. However, having the training on site was sometimes associated with a lack of shelter from rain or inadequate teaching facilities.

    - **Recommendation:** Training should continue to be provided on-site, and audits should be carried out to ensure that sites have appropriate facilities and provide resources to these. If the sites are not suitable for delivering training, alternative venue should be secured (see below).

6. There is some evidence that participants experienced difficulties in travelling to training; this was particularly true for those older participants or those with ill health. Assessing this in advance would enable support to be given where necessary.

    - **Recommendation:** Sites should be assessed for travel accessibility for all participants, and potential participants, and assistance provided where necessary.

7. Delivering the training to two or more groups at one time did not work out well due to the different characteristics of the groups.

    - **Recommendation:** Wherever possible, training should be provided to groups on a one by one basis. Where resources preclude this, only groups with shared characteristics and requirements should be paired.

8. The training providers would benefit from improved communication between them, and also between them and the groups to avoid duplication of activities. When one training provider is responsible for developing a set of training materials, there needs to be good open communication to ensure that instructions are transmitted. Similarly there should be a feedback loop so that training providers can learn what works (and what doesn't) with existing learning materials in order for them to be more flexible and adaptable.
    - **Recommendation:** The Growing Manchester co-ordinators should facilitate effective communication between the training providers that enables them to share resources. This could be acheived through regular meetings. The providers suggested establishing a hierarchy, whereby one is responsible for managing and overseeing the work of other providers. Alternatively, a framework could be provided with a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. Further, there should be rules on engaging with the groups (who, when, and on what topic) to prevent duplication of activities and communications.

9. One possible option for establishing this hierarchy is to outsource the coordination of the entire Growing Manchester programme to one of the training providers, with the other training providers acting as sub-contractors. This could reduce the pressure on the Food Futures team resources, whilst maintaining the benefits of involvement of the various training providers.
    - **Recommendation:** The Food Futures team should explore the option of having one training provider to coordinate the programme and manage the other training providers.

10. There is a need for clear rules on the responsibility for any additional and unexpected costs (e.g. relating to hiring a venue; photocopying materials) between the training providers and the Food Futures team. In addition, rules relating to recommending suppliers of food growing materials to the groups should be set up. The training providers were keen to avoid indirect, even if unintentional, promotion of certain suppliers through the programme.
    - **Recommendation:** A clear set of rules relating to expenditure, procurement and recommendation of suppliers should be developed between the Food Futures team and the training providers.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

1. The framework of the programme, including the core training, the site evaluations, supplementary courses and the grant procedure works well. The grants were able to either kick-start projects or ensure their continuity. This initial investment has helped them to either achieve sustainability or move towards self-sufficiency.
    - **Recommendation:** Any future allocated support and grants should be prioritised to support existing projects before looking towards creating new ones.

2. Both participants and the leaders are keen to acquire more land and expand the food growing projects. We strongly recommend the 'meanwhile' use of the currently unused land awaiting development as temporary food growing sites; this, as an agreement between the community group and a housing association actually helped one of the sites to expand their food growing area. The evaluation shows that the investment of time into securing the site will be easily offset by the well-being benefits delivered by the site. This can have wider benefits such as raising awareness of particular issues such as disabilities or presenting Manchester as a green city.

- **Recommendation:** Opportunities should be taken to make 'meanwhile' use of currently unused land awaiting development as temporary food growing sites.

3. Our research indicates that the satisfaction of gaining new skills is one of the main drivers of involvement. Whilst using the skills for career has not been the main driver, it may be possible to develop formal qualifications or link with existing schemes, such as an NVQ in Horticulture, as a valuable by-product of involvement.

    - **Recommendation:** Consideration should be given to developing the training programme in such a way that participants have the opportunity to gain a formal qualification.

4. There is a wealth of evidence of good practice and recognition of positive impact. A brochure summarising these achievements would be a very useful marketing and PR material and be a vehicle for spreading good practice. Such a document should not be limited to the food growing aspects of the projects, it should also emphasise the connections with health and well-being, community building and self-sufficiency.

    - **Recommendation:** A brochure should be produced that summarises the achievements of Growing Manchester, as a vehicle for raising its profile and sharing good practice. Such document could be utilised in promoting Manchester as a green, sustainable city.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

1.1.1 FOOD GROWING IN THE UK

Food growing for personal and local consumption has long been part of urban Britain's food supply; a boom in allotment provision and use occurred following the 'Dig for victory' campaign during World War II, when people were encouraged to grow their own produce to address food shortages (New Local Government Network, 2009). Subsequently, rising prosperity, urban development, and the availability and accessibility of convenience foods resulted in a waning of interest; between 1970 and 2005, the number of allotment plots has more than halved (Crouch, 2009).

More recently, interest in personal food growing is witnessing a revival that can be attributed to recession, the rising cost of food, and concerns over health and the environment (Association for Public Service Excellence, 2008; Stokes, 2009). Approximately 33% of the UK population are already growing or intending to grow their own vegetables (TNS, 2009). However, the supply of growing land is not adequate to accommodate this: in 2008 there were 100,000 people on local authority allotment waiting lists (Campbell and Campbell, 2009). In addition, increasing numbers of people are living in dwellings without gardens. Consequently, community growing initiatives, where people come together to utilise land not normally considered for food growing, may prove to be a solution to providing land for growing food in high-density urban environments. The Growing Manchester programme, as part of Food Futures, is one of a wealth of initiatives that reflect this growing interest. The Big Dig, run by the Kindling Trust, Real Food Wythenshawe, and Todmorden's 'Incredible Edible' project are others examples.

1.2 BENEFITS OF FOOD GROWING

Food growing brings numerous environmental benefits. Locally grown foods can help to reduce carbon emissions. About 50% of food consumed in the UK is from countries outside the UK (FSA, 2010) and nearly 90% of the UK's fruits are imported (MAFF, 1998). Food transportation accounts for one quarter of all UK HGV vehicle mileage, and 10 M tonnes of CO_2 are emitted annually in the UK as a direct result of food transportation (DEFRA, 2005). A typical allotment plot for growing soft fruits, root vegetables, legumes, leafy greens and alliums provides a saving of approximately 1.5kg CO_2/m^2 (Elbourne, 2009).

The Natural Environment White Paper (HM Government, 2011) emphasises the importance of green infrastructure to support ecological networks, particularly in urban areas. It also highlights the multiple benefits that green space can bring through a commitment that established a Green Infrastructure Partnership to support green space development and: 'consider how green infrastructure can be enhanced to strengthen ecological networks and improve communities' health, quality of life and resilience to climate change' (HM Government, 2011: 73). Using land for food growing, due to its function as a green space, may help communities to adapt their locality to climate change by absorbing excess rainfall and lowering temperatures (Gill et al., 2007).

1.2.1 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BENEFITS

Involvement in growing food can contribute towards well-being directly, through improving access to and knowledge of food, increasing physical activity and providing contact with green space, and indirectly, through developing new skills and aiding inclusion in society. By promoting physical exercise and healthy eating, community food growing can help prevent problems such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, cancer and strokes (NT, 2009). Direct access to healthy produce can help participants to meet the '5 a Day' target for fruit and vegetables that is recommended by the NHS[1]. The recent Marmot Review of health inequalities identified lack of access to green space and healthy food as issues disproportionately experienced by those on low incomes (Marmot, 2010).

Contact with nature in green space has been shown to reduce stress and improve attention (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989), and other psychological benefits are possible as a result of increased serotonin through sunlight exposure and sense of achievement and empowerment (Leake et al., 2009). Regular gardening activities can reduce the risk of dementia by 36% (Simons et al., 2006), emphasizing the importance of engagement of elderly in food growing. A study of over 350,000 people, published in The Lancet, showed that populations that are exposed to the greenest environments also have lowest levels of health inequality related to income deprivation. The authors conclude that physical environments that promote good health might be important to reduce socioeconomic health inequalities (Mitchell and Popham, 2008).

Food growing may also improve the resilience of certain communities to withstand fluctuating prices; those in the lowest earning brackets tend to cut back on staple foods, including fruit and vegetables, when prices rise or there is a recession (Defra, 2012: 23) and this has been recognised in a Manchester-wide campaign that highlights food poverty in the city (e.g. Rawling, 2012; Linton and Glendinning, 2012).

Another advantage of participation in food growing is that individuals gain additional skills that improve their employability and aid their inclusion into society (Chanan, 2004). This strategy of training was successfully put into practice in Putting Down Roots, a gardening project run by the St Mungo's charity in London for the homeless and people in treatment for drug and alcohol abuse (St Mungo's, 2009).

Despite research findings and policy pointing towards the benefits of community growing initiatives, there has been little evaluation of specific initiatives, particularly in respect to the benefits to well-being and carbon literacy, as perceived by those who take part in any initiatives.

1.3 THE GROWING MANCHESTER PROGRAMME

Food Futures at Manchester City Council exists to encourage the development of a thriving good food culture and economy in Manchester. It does this through influencing policy, supporting local food production and distribution, campaigning and promoting good food, and fostering partnerships with all those interested in good food in the city. Their Growing Manchester programme, funded by Public Health Manchester and Manchester City Council's Low Carbon Reserve Fund, evolved out of this. The aim is to support community food growing projects to become more sustainable and ensuring that local people with the enthusiasm to grow food can access support to ensure their projects succeed. In doing so, the programme hopes to improve physical health and well-being of

[1] http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/5ADAY/Pages/5ADAYhome.aspx

participants; assist the projects to become financially sustainable; improve the environmental awareness of participants and make them more resilient to climate change; and to increase access to sustainable, locally grown food. Thus, the programme combines the objectives of the number of initiatives at Manchester City Council including the climate change strategy outlined in *Manchester: a Certain Future* (Manchester City Council, 2009) and green infrastructure-related programmes.

Following a pilot initiative in 2011 amongst 12 organisations, the programme expanded to include 34 groups in 2012. Predominantly located in areas of material deprivation, they vary in size from four to several hundred participants (the latter in the case of schools; Figure 1). The selection of groups was based on a list of criteria including their location in Manchester; size (at least five people involved); good geographical spread across Manchester, with a particular focus on deprivation areas; a variety of groups, including community initiatives, supported housing and children centres and schools. Also, the groups prioritised in the process were those in real need for financial support: groups already in receipt of grants, such as Big Lottery Funding or Awards for All, were not prioritised. The Food Futures team were supported in the selection process by a representative of a third sector environmental group.

The groups are supported by tailored training opportunities devised by Groundwork, Sow the City and a consortium led by the Hulme Community Garden Centre (involving Debdale Eco Centre, Kindling Trust, MERCi and Bite).The main parts of the training programme involved the following elements:

- Lot 1: Introduction to Fruit and Vegetable Growing: This training is five two-hour workshops that cover planning a plot, developing land, preparing soil, practical growing skills (sowing, potting, crop rotation, etc), pests and diseases, seasonality and plant care.
- Lot 2: Site Assessments: Some projects were provided with a site assessment and plan that measured the land area and sketched out a plan for the area based on aspirations of those involved in the project, soil composition and light / shade.
- Lot 3: The Strong Roots workshop (a full-day, or five two-hour sessions): This workshop is designed to provide projects with a thorough introduction to the various aspects of Growing Manchester. The workshops covers the importance of vision and planning, involving others, an introduction to funding; legal issues, land and design, and sustainable growing.

Following the internal evaluation of the training programme and answering to the need of more advanced and more specific training, further short courses were introduced. As these are at a very early stage, we are unable to provide an assessment of them, but their introduction is in line with the recommendations contained in this report. The sessions are:

- Advanced Food Growing
- Carpentry
- Chicken Keeping
- Composting
- Container Growing
- Developing a project idea and fundraising

- Developing your community group
- Fruit Tree Maintenance
- Fundraising for your project
- Green Roofs
- Inspiring Sustainable Growing: Tour of Projects
- Manchester Carbon Literacy Training
- Practical Planning of a Plot
- Publicity for your project
- Recruiting and Managing Volunteers/ Involving Others
- Wildlife Gardening

1.4 THE EVALUATION

The current evaluation responds to a need for a systematic collection of information about the state of food growing projects in Manchester with a consideration of the barriers to their future sustainability. The evaluation also gauges the extent to which the Growing Manchester framework is functional, and whether any elements can be beneficially amended. The University of Manchester was contracted to carry out this evaluation with the aim of assessing whether Growing Manchester has achieved its aims and delivers tangible outcomes for volunteers and participants.

Our specific objectives were:

- to investigate the satisfaction of the project participants and group leaders with the Growing Manchester programme;
- to evaluate the impact of participation in Growing Manchester on the health and well-being, and pro-environmental knowledge and attitudes of the participants, with a particular focus on carbon literacy.

This report summarises the main evaluation findings carried out between May 2012 and December 2012. Chapter 2 outlines the replicable research strategy. Chapter 3 thematically presents the results. The report concludes with a set of recommendations for future programmes and assessments (Chapter 4).

Location and size of Round Two Groups

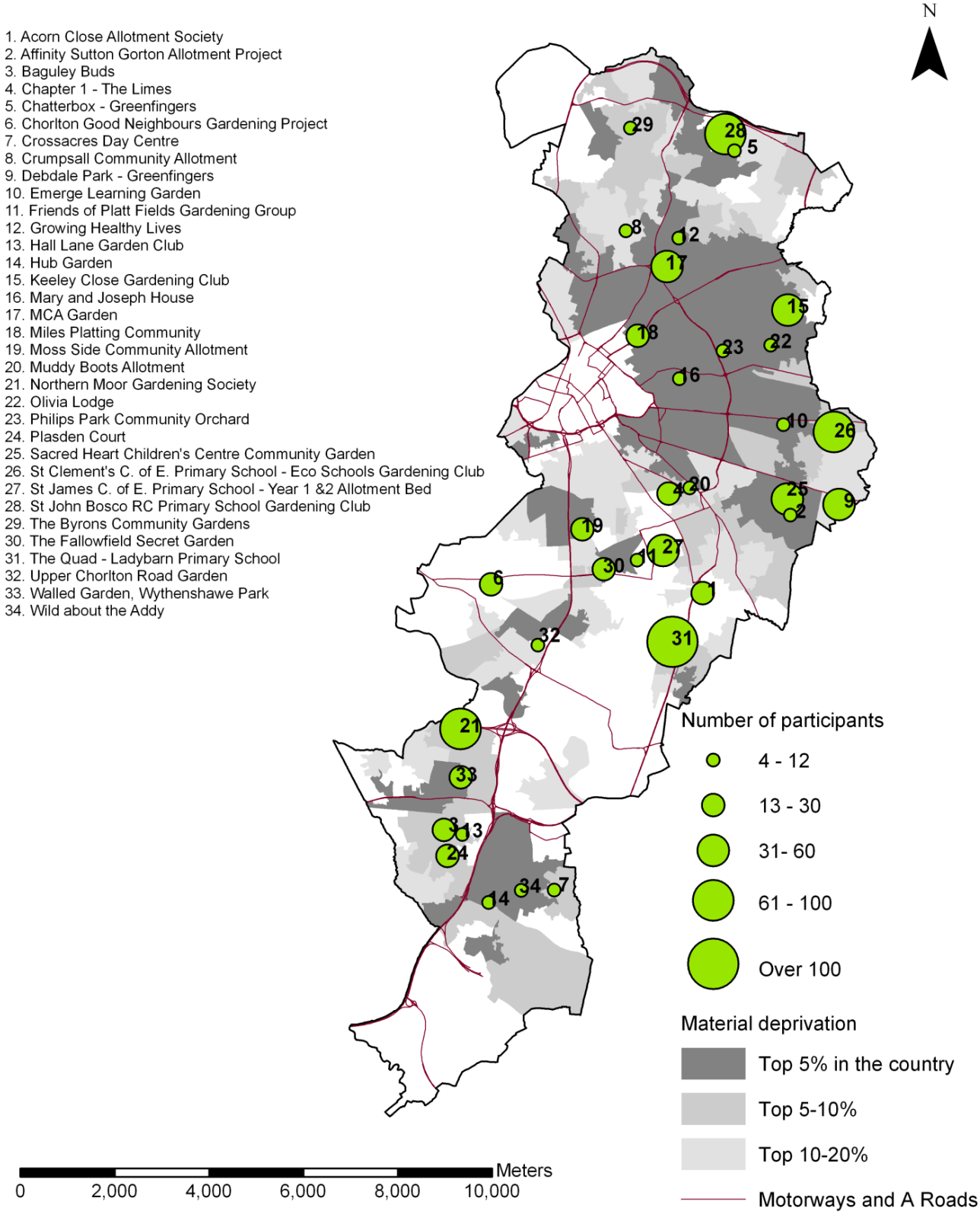


Figure 1 Location and approximate size of Round Two groups. The material deprivation data is based on Indices of Material Deprivation 2010 (CLG, 2010). Base map is © Crown Copyright/database right (2012). An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.

2 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The evaluation comprised of multiple methods in order to gather data from a number of different viewpoints and to research the programme in greater depth than a simple questionnaire could allow. Therefore, interviews, case study observations of groups in practice, and visual data were sourced alongside a quantitative survey (see Table 1). The process was entirely collaborative and, at all stages, the team at Food Futures commented on the work as it emerged.

Table 1 Research Timeline

Year	Month	Activity
2012	June	Delivery of first questionnaire tranche
	June/ July	First round of interviews with group leaders
	August	Interim evaluation report
	September	Case studies
	October	Second round of interviews with group leaders
		Interviews with training providers
		Interview with Food Futures team
	November 2012	Delivery of second questionnaire tranche
2013	January 2013	Final report

2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY WITH THE PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

Two rounds of the questionnaire survey were carried out, investigating the behaviour, knowledge and attitudes of the respondents. The first, issued at the beginning of the growing season, assesses these in the period prior to taking in the project. A second questionnaire was distributed at the end of the growing season (beginning of November) to investigate the effects of the participation in the programme on the participants. The aim was to compare the results of the survey before the growing season against the findings at the end of the growing season to estimate the change in behaviour and levels of knowledge.

2.1.1 DISTRIBUTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The delivery of the first questionnaire, initially planned for May 2012, was delayed until the beginning of June since the 2012 growing season began later owing to unseasonable frost. The cut-off point for the collection of the questionnaires was set as the 1st of August. Group leaders provided the initial contact and distribution point amongst participants. A total of 283 questionnaires were delivered to 24 groups (Figure 2), the participants of which were deemed by The University of Manchester and Manchester City Council to be capable and suitable from the ethical perspective to complete the questionnaires (groups involving children and vulnerable adults were excluded). An exception was groups jointly managed by the Manchester Disability Partnership and Manchester

City Council (Walled Garden, Hall Lane Garden Club and Debdale Park - Greenfingers) where the staff agreed to help the participants with the completion of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were returned to the University of Manchester in pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes, sent either by the group leaders or by the individual participants. The questionnaires are entirely anonymous.

2.1.2 CONTENTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questions were developed by The University of Manchester with the assistance of the Food Futures team at Manchester City Council. It also underwent a small pilot with participants of the volunteering group Cracking Good Food. There are a total of 40 questions that are split across five sections (see Appendix 1):

Section 1. Generates the unique identification code for each participant, to track the answers given on the spring and autumn questionnaires to the same participant.

Section 2. 'About the food growing programme' explores the motives for joining and levels of participation both in the programme generally and the training aspects specifically.

Section 3. 'Your lifestyle and well-being' covers food shopping habits, and proxy indicators of well-being such as consumption of fruit and vegetables and time spent outdoors.

Section 4. 'Food, Environment and Climate Change'. In the absence of an agreed standard for measuring carbon literacy, yet fully aware of the City Council's commitment to promoting carbon literacy (e.g. Manchester City Council, 2009), we developed questions that relate to knowledge of the environmental issues and climate change and the pro-environmental attitudes. This drew on thinking at national government level through the work of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and its carbon literacy programme (Defra, 2011).

Section 5. 'About You', draws on Census 2011 questions (ONS, 2009) to ask about specific character attribute questions such as gender, age, ethnic origin and employment status.

In the first round of the questionnaire, the participants were asked if they were willing to partake in in-depth interviews; they could leave their contact details for this purpose. Whilst 29 respondents provided us with their contact details, nine of those were project leaders or those working for an intermediary organisation running the project, thus not suitable for an interview as a participant. Of those remaining, there were six erroneous contact details. Another 4 did not return phone answer messages or declined the offer of participation. Six participants were either individuals with learning disabilities or people suffering from mental health problems. The remaining participants did not provide a sufficient spread across the groups to constitute a representative sample. The strategy of carrying out interviews was abandoned to concentrate on the case studies (see section 2.5).

Number of questionnaires distributed in June

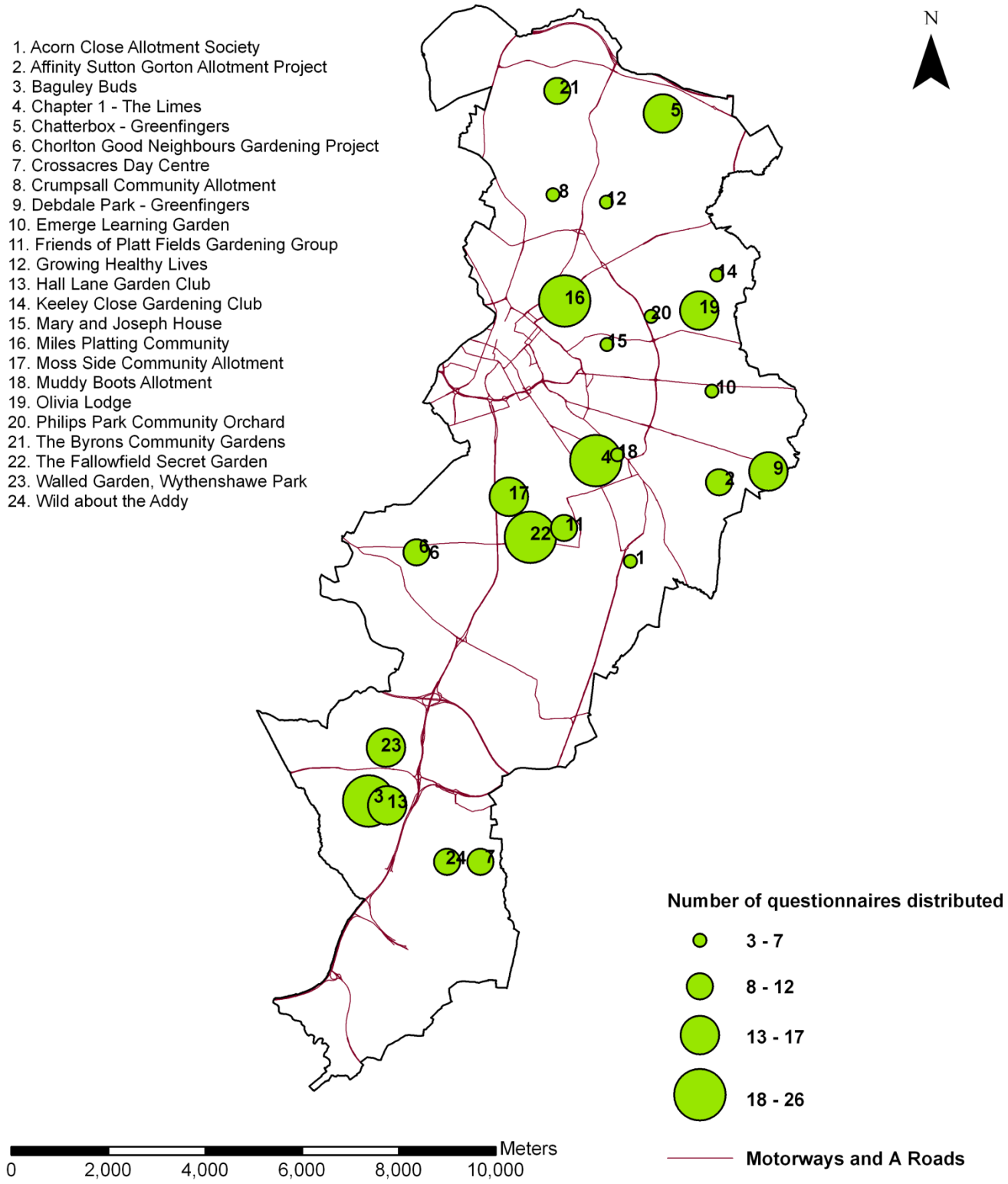


Figure 2 Questionnaires distributed in June to the groups taking part in the Growing Manchester Programme. Base map is © Crown Copyright/database right (2012). An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.

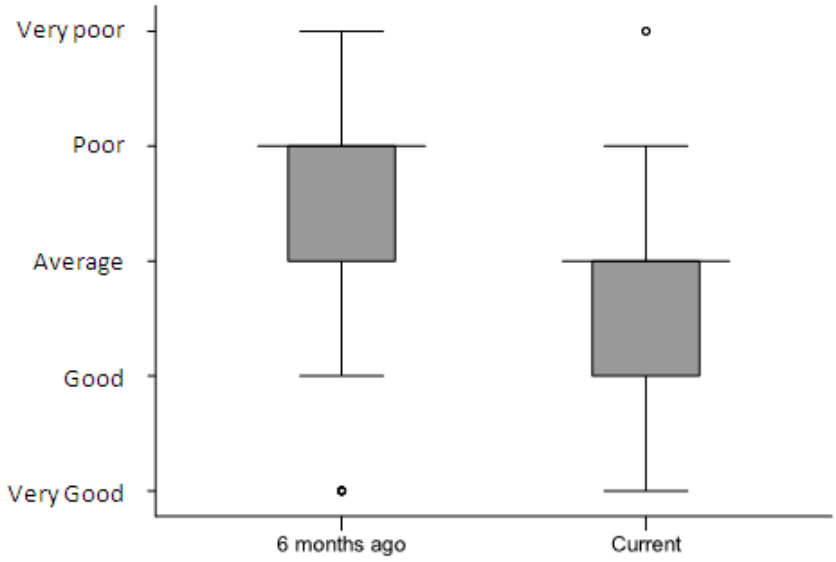
2.1.3 ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The data was analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Statistics v19 software. The distribution of values for individual variables has been described. Correlations were used to assess the relationship between variables. Results were compared among groups of respondents or between variables in a graphical manner using box plots, which are described in Box 1.

Box 1 Explanation of graphs used in the report.

This graph is called a box plot. It allows us to compare two variables that cannot be measured on a number scale. In this example, we can see how food growing skills have changed, on average, over the six month period.

The grey boxes represent where the middle 50% of the values are concentrated. The lines inside the grey boxes refer to 'median' value – it is the value halfway through the ordered data set amongst all respondents. The 'whiskers' show the minimum and maximum values in the dataset. The circle indicates an 'outlier' or a very unusual and perhaps extreme observation in the data. So this graphs shows that the food growing skills 6 months ago were poor (and for the middle half of the participants ranged between poor and average); currently, the food growing skills are 'average', and for the middle half of the participants ranging between average and good.



2.1.4 RESPONSE RATE

In the first tranche of the questionnaire, 72 completed questionnaires were received (25.1% response rate). The responses were received from 15 groups from the 24 to which the questionnaires were sent. Table 2 presents the number of questionnaires received from the different project groups.

The process was repeated in November 2012 (in order to send the second round of the survey 6 months after the first one). In total, 189 questionnaires were sent out to 17 groups (based on the amended participant figures, excluding the groups not considered suitable for survey methods or those who reported that they had chosen to grow other items: see Table 2). The response rate of the questionnaire issued in autumn received by the beginning of January was very low (10%) and only 8 respondents completed both rounds of the questionnaire. This was probably due to the late date when the questionnaire was sent when the majority of the food had been harvested and the groups were not meeting any more. In future evaluations, both questionnaires could be issued to the groups a month or two earlier. The low response rate to the second questionnaire meant that we were not able to carry out 'before' and 'after' comparisons. Consequently, this evaluation report is based on the responses received in June 2012.

Table 2 Responses to the questionnaire survey by group.

Project site	Number of questionnaires received		Number of respondents completing the survey in both tranches
	Jun 2012	Nov 2012	
Acorn Close Allotment Society	2	4	1
Affinity Sutton Gorton Allotment Project	0	0	0
Baguley Buds	7	0	0
Chapter 1 – The Limes	5	0	0
Chatterbox - Greenfingers	4	0	0
Chorlton Good Neighbours Gardening Project	6	5	2
Crossacres Day Centre	6	3	2
Crumpsall Community Allotment	2	1	1
Debdale Park – Greenfingers*	0	0	0
Emerge Learning Garden	3	0	0
Friends of Platt fields Gardening Group	2	1	1
Growing Healthy Lives	0	0	0
Hall Lane Garden Club*	0	0	0
Keeley Close Gardening Club	0	0	0
Mary and Joseph House	3	0	0
Miles Platting Community	6	2	2
Moss Side Community Allotment	8	0	0
Muddy Boots Allotment*	0	0	0
Philips Park Community orchard	1	0	0
The Byrons Community Gardens	0	0	0
The Fallowfield Secret Garden	0	0	0
Walled Garden Project*	10	0	0
Wild about the Addy	7	0	0
Project unknown	0	2	n/a
Sum	72	18	8

*Due to the characteristics of the groups (participants with learning difficulties) the questionnaire was not carried out / not repeated in Autumn.

2.2 INTERVIEWS WITH GROUP LEADERS

Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected group leaders, representing the following types of groups:

1) Adults with learning disabilities (Interviewee 1; I1)
2) Older people (I2)
3) Schoolchildren (I3)
4) Community allotment initiative, established before receiving support from *Growing Manchester* (I4)
5) Community allotment initiative, established shortly before receiving support from *Growing Manchester* (I5)
6) Intermediary organisation setting up the project – a social landlord (I6)[2]

In order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, no details of the organisations/community groups they represent are provided in this report. The interviews were carried out at the beginning of the growing season (late June/early July 2012) and then repeated in October 2012 in order to estimate the benefits of the food growing programme over the growing season.

The interviews in both rounds lasted approximately 45 minutes and were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed using qualitative software NVivo 9. The questions explore themes relating to the specific learning targets of the Growing Manchester programme as well as practical details that can assist in improving the support and training offered in any similar programme in the future. See Appendix 2 for the full set of questions.

2.3 INTERVIEWS WITH THE TRAINING PROVIDERS

Representatives of the organisations contracted to provide the elements of support (training, site visits, strong roots workshops and community development) for Phase 2 of the Growing Manchester Programme, including Groundwork, Sow the City and Hulme Community Garden Centre were interviewed in October 2012 and explored the following issues:

1 The type and level of support offered to the food growing groups;
2 Comments on the content and format of the training from the provider perspective;
3 Comments on working with the groups involved in the programme; changes in participants' knowledge and behaviour relating to food growing, health and carbon literacy between the beginning and the end of the growing season;
4 Their perceptions of working with the Food Futures team and within a framework of providers;
5 What went well and what could be improved in the future in relation to delivering the training.

[2] Interviewee 4, the leader of a food growing initiative from social housing was unable for the 2nd interview in October due to long-term sickness. However, for this particular group the support from Food Futures formed only a fraction of the financial, training and labour-related support that the group has accessed since their establishment.

The interviews lasted between 37 and 56 minutes. The recordings were transcribed and analysed in NVivo 9 software. See Appendix 3 for the full list of questions.

2.4 INTERVIEW WITH THE FOOD FUTURES TEAM

Members of the Food Futures team were interviewed in October 2012 in order to assess, from the City Council's point of view, how the project had emerged, where it fitted into existing policy and strategy, and how they judged the project's administration. The interview lasted 42 minutes. The recording was transcribed and analysed in NVivo 9 software. See Appendix 4 for the full list of questions.

2.5 CASE STUDIES

Two case studies were carried out with the groups Baguley Bugs and Emerge Learning Garden (see pp. 51-2; pp. 68-9). These were based on observations of the participants and unstructured groups interviews. In the case of both groups, the researcher spent between 2 and 4 hours on site. The case studies aimed to investigate in more detail the perceptions of the project by the participants and the impacts of the project on participants' knowledge and behaviour. In the two groups investigated, the main topics were 'healthy eating' and 'training' and the case studies are reported in the sections 3.4 and 4.5 relating to these aspects.

3 THE FINDINGS

3.1 THE FOOD GROWING PROJECTS

3.1.1 SITE CHARACTERISTICS

It is apparent from the interviews with the six selected group leaders that the size and quality of sites differed between the projects: from a couple of raised beds in a rear garden and a potted roof top garden at the day centre for the elderly, through to a central quadrangle at a school, 36x55 metres in size. Some community allotments had access to larger plots of land with sufficient space for 18 raised beds. Previous uses included green spaces in the grounds of the intermediary organisation (in 2 cases), derelict land (2 cases), fragments of urban parks (1) or an already existing community allotment site with underused plots (1).

Most of the sites required a considerable amount of preparation work to make them usable. This is the reason why two of the projects involved in the programme, Chorlton Good Neighbours and Miles Platting, have not started food growing this year. The preparation work included thinning and removing trees; removing horse tail; building and moving raised beds, soil improvement, levelling the ground, and building or clearing abandoned polytunnels and greenhouses and making them fully functional. As one leader commented 'I think people don't realise the physical grafting that we've done to get it to where it is now' (I1).

The main site disadvantages were those thought to be 'too shady' (3 sites) or because the soil was poor (2 sites) or waterlogged. Two of the leaders mentioned that they had 'worked out the areas not to grow things in' (I2) but even though this meant lower than expected yields of food; they treated this as a learning curve rather than failure. Two growing plots were affected by crime: one had suffered instances of theft and vandalism that resulted in £300 worth of losses; another was victim of attempted arson and subsequently invested in anti-vandal paint (Figure 3). Another project struggled to cope with animal and insect interference that destroyed their produce. All groups were affected by the weather, and those established during 2012 spent a lot of time and effort preparing the sites rather than reaping the benefits.

Figure 3 Anti-climb paint used on some plots

The group leaders reported that their projects grew a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Some group leaders even reported that their participants liked to grow 'quirky' items such as purple carrots, blue potatoes or Jerusalem artichokes. Potatoes, lettuces, the onion family, and different types of beans were the most popular items along with strawberries and herbs. For beginners, the favoured crops were those that are easy to grow and ready to harvest soon after planting; those producing spectacular results (marrows and sunflowers for size; chilli peppers for heat); and staple foods i.e. potatoes.

The produce was distributed among the participants as the crops were growing. Some of the produce was given to other people using a given service or cooked on site. A small proportion was utilised for the purposes of a service or sold:

> *I2: We've given it up to the café, they put in soups. We actually do some chutneys, which we sell, you see the stall out there (…) it's only a small amount of money, and obviously it's goes into [organisation's] funds but then that's all ploughed back into various different groups of which the gardening is one of.*

For the project held at Wythenshawe Park, selling the produce was seen not only as a way of making money out of the produce but also as being beneficial for the park and the local community: *'It's beneficial to the park because it brings people down, brings customers that are asking for bedding plants (…) there's been years where we've had a really successful summer and we've made a couple of thousand pounds in the shop (…) And people know that the stuff that we sell is good, we've got quite a good informal reputation'* (I1)

3.2 INDIVIDUALS TAKING PART IN THE PROJECT

The analysis of the questionnaires indicates that the gender distribution was almost equal, with a slightly higher percentage of women (54%). The age groups were well represented, with a marginally higher percentage of younger people. The participants were predominantly white, followed by Black African. Other ethnic groups were represented by individual persons (Figure 4). In comparison to the overall population in Manchester (Manchester City Council, 2012), Asian groups are underrepresented, as they form 9.9% of the Manchester population.

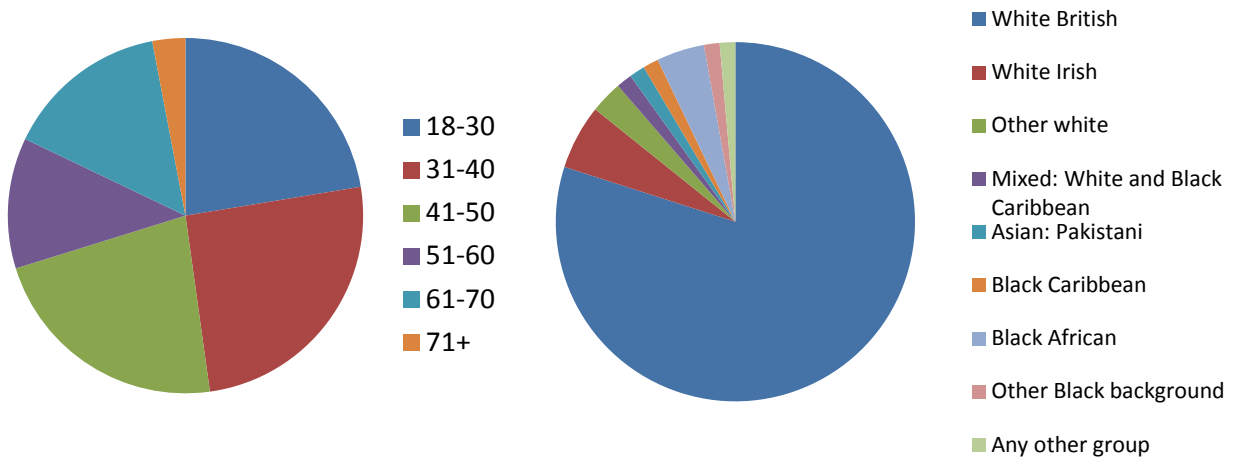


Figure 4 Age and ethnic origin of respondents to the questionnaire

Nearly half of the respondents were owner occupiers, a third were renters (17% social, 15% private) and 5% lived in sheltered housing. Other types of accommodation (15%) included a hostel, supported accommodation and living with parents. Below a quarter (23.4%) of the respondents lived on their own and 17% had children under 16 living with them; 28% considered themselves to have a disability. Only around a quarter of the respondents were in full time employment; another quarter were in part-time work or retired. The sample contained a high number of long-term sick or disabled individuals. Over one-third of the respondents held a university degree as their higher qualification; however, a significant proportion had no qualifications (Figure 5).

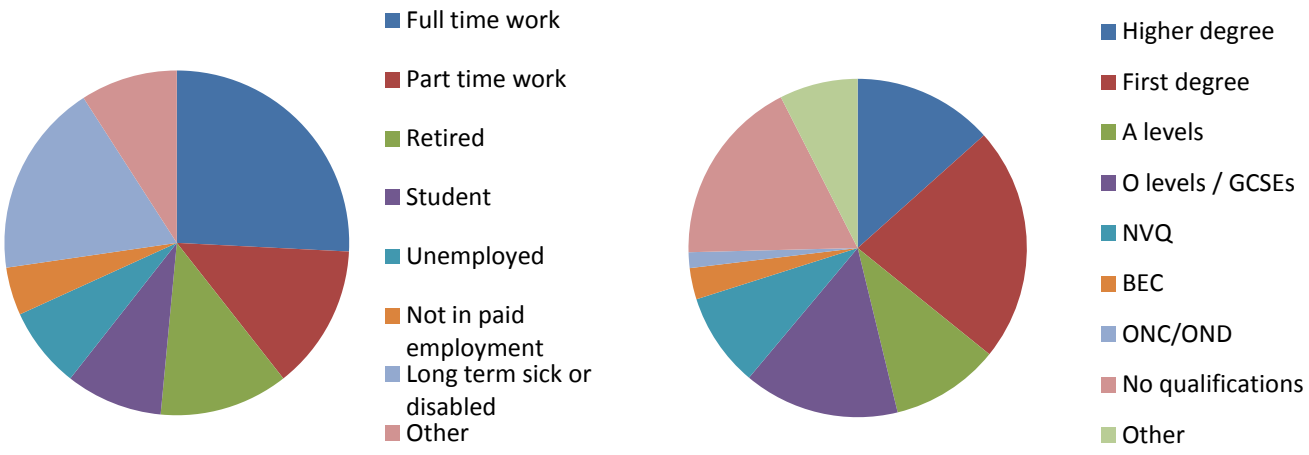


Figure 5 Employment status and qualifications of the respondents.

The majority of the participants lived within one mile of the site (Figure 6), indicating that the food growing projects were accessed mainly by local residents. This was confirmed by one of the group leaders: *'It has to be local because otherwise people won't come, on a regular basis, unless it's on their doorstep, they won't indulge them'* (I5).

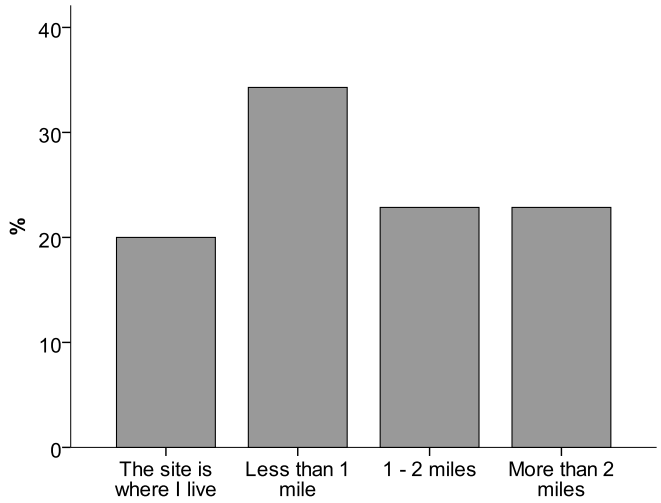


Figure 6 Average distance of respondents' dwellings from their food growing site

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3.2.1 BECOMING INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAMME

Over one-quarter of respondents found out about the project from managers or other members of staff at the organisations supporting the food growing project. The two other main sources of information were word-of-mouth or directly from a centre that the respondent was attending through involvement with other projects. This was followed by the information passed on from the service provider, e.g. supported accommodation staff, and being a volunteer with the organisation starting the project (Figure 7).

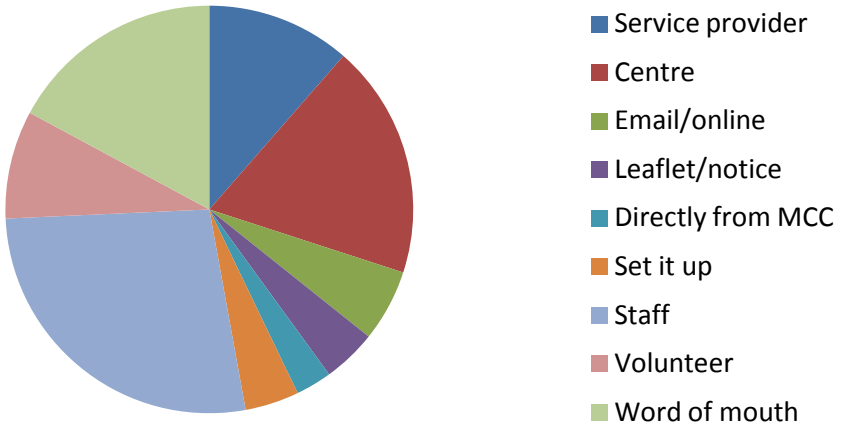

Figure 7 Sources of information about the Growing Manchester projects.

The most important driver to become involved in a food growing project came from a desire to learn new skills (94.3% of the respondents said it was very important or important to them). Access to safe food and being able to exercise in the fresh air were also identified as very important by a high proportion of people. Doing 'something new' was indicated as very important or important by over 90% of respondents (Figure 8). Interestingly, saving money on fruit and vegetables scored the lowest. Group leaders clarified this in later interviews by observing that many of the participants did not buy fruit and vegetables. Therefore, obtaining them for free was not a replacement but an additional experience (See section 3.4.7). Other reasons listed by the respondents in the

comment box included: to benefit the local community (6 people), to help others learn about food growing (2 people) and to involve their children in gardening and food growing (2 people), but also recognition of the therapeutic qualities of working with plants and to 'swap and share ideas with other gardeners'.

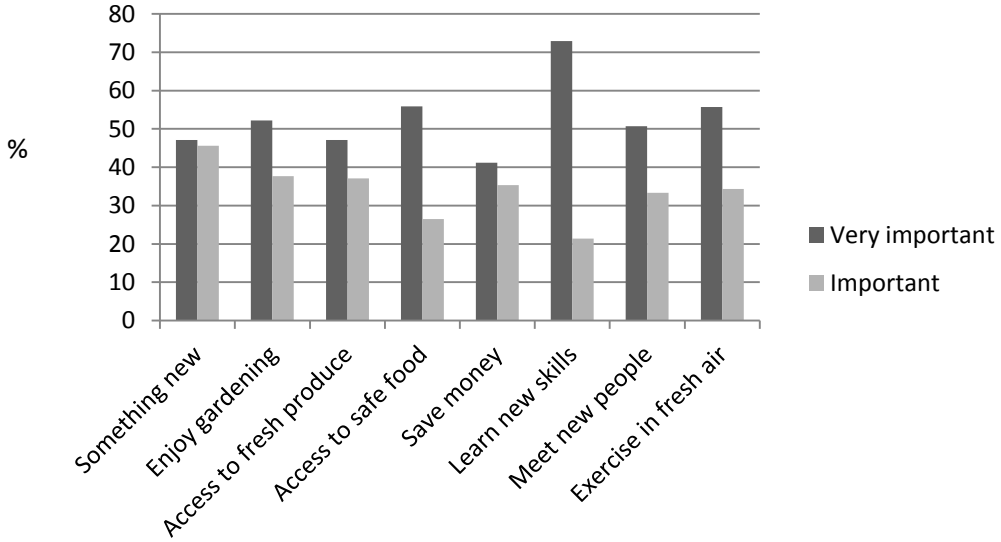

Figure 8 Reasons to become involved in the food growing project.

Out of the six projects represented in the group leader interviews, two had been established for over a year. Three of the projects (involving school children, the elderly, and a community allotment project) began in early 2012, directly triggered by the Growing Manchester Programme. The motivation to apply for funding was not always closely linked to growing food. In two cases the initial impulse came from the residents in the area. In one case the motivation was the recognised value of working with plants outdoors. Another leader was looking for an appropriate activity to reduce the social isolation amongst older men:

> *I2: It sounds a bit sexist, but men only seem to come to quizzes, and to computers, and, occasionally, painting and drawing, but any craft thing they wouldn't come to, so, we, sort of, thought how can we get engaged with more older men in the locality, and gardening was, sort of, suggested.*

The leaders were able to identify barriers to recruiting and retaining volunteers. Some communities experience high levels of crime which led to fears that the site would eventually become vandalised. Another barrier to involving volunteers was found in areas where there are high proportions of transient populations, for example, in areas where there is a high percentage of student lets. Identifying and engaging certain hard-to-reach groups, such as those with learning difficulties, was also problematic. Time constraints also stopped people from becoming involved in food growing: '*People haven't got time, people work all week and they've got to do their shopping at the weekends or go out somewhere or might be going away for the weekend*'(I5).

Despite the barriers, the interviewed group leaders have engaged in a wide range of methods to generate interest. Word-of-mouth was the common way of spreading the information about the project particularly through existing personal contacts. Being able to actually see the activity from public places was also a useful way of attracting volunteers:

> *I2: If you're telling people to come … inside the building, and they can't always see what's going on, people are maybe put off, but we often find that people lurk on the outside of groups, and just watch what's going on, and then, maybe, the next week they might come and ask a question, and then the following week they'll join, and, so, yeah, that's when you're outside you will get people naturally coming over, and, you know, chatting with you.*

Some groups were holding training events open to anyone in community. Two groups used leaflet drops to spread the information in the community. The most active group leaders engage volunteers from other organisations. At one site, 4CT[3] were used one day a week, *'so it's advertised that the garden is open for volunteers in a very open public way'* (I6). Also involving the Orange RockCorps[4] helped to show the potential participants that '*they are getting something back. And it might be that's the way to do it initially, to get people to use it and to think that they have got something to gain from it.'* (I6). Some group leaders have used both traditional and social media to advertise their projects; for example, by posting videos of their progress on *You Tube* or advertising their activities through a blog.[5]

Open days and community events, such as barbeques, were organised or planned to raise awareness. Involving the local media (e.g. The South Manchester Reporter) particularly generated interest. One leader involved local children who sold raffle tickets in the local community to publicise the allotment and, at the same time, teach the children about the value of teamwork and saving money:

> *I4: …Instead of going knocking on a door with flyers, I thought an indirect way of doing it would be to send the kids round, to let them know what we've got an open day or this is going on and would you like to buy a raffle ticket? And we've been very successful in that and the idea is when the tin is totally full, we're going to get the kids to open it, going to get the kids to count it, and then we're going to ask the kids where they want to go on a trip, and maybe taking them to Alton Towers or take them somewhere where the kids want to go, so then the kids have felt every process of where that money's come from, how, how it all mounts up if you save it and what they can do as a team and this is the education we're trying to get through to them and in, indirect ways rather than, be, be total, total upfront with them, we like to just do it indirectly because that*

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[3] 4CT are a Manchester-based organisation that works in partnership with various voluntary and charitable organisations to support the regeneration of East Manchester. See http://www.4ct.org.uk/

[4] Orange Rock Corps is an initiative to reward people for volunteering by giving them exclusive tickets to music gigs. See http://www.orangerockcorps.co.uk/

[5] For example: The Moss Side Community Allotment at http://mosssidecommunityallotment.wordpress.com/; 'The Moss Side Community Allotment': http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_gaAiyDxPE; Chorlton Good Neighbours Gardening Update: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCHJ7zZ473E; The Fallowfield Secret Garden, Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Fallowfield-Secret-Garden-Community-Project/269699839720719

way they seem to take it in a lot more and they get a lot more satisfaction out of it and achievement out of it as well.

3.3 THE GROUPS

The core, active groups in those represented by the interviewed leaders are typically small: between 6 and 12 people although a school-based project involved up to involve 450 children (see also Figure 2). They are based in areas of high material deprivation. The school initiative contained a large proportion of children who receive free meals. The interviewed group leaders indicated that the volunteers were drawn from the immediate area. Although three of the groups investigated in more detail were targeted at specific sections of the population, such as children, older men, or those with learning disabilities, the others were able to involve a variety of participants, which helped to divide the roles:

I5: We got a group of lads who do the heavy work. They're quite willing to do the heavy work, not very good at planting or maybe they're not interested in planting, more interested in the digging and the making of the boxes and stuff like that.

The groups typically meet once a week, usually in the evening or at the weekend. The frequency fluctuates over the year, depending on the season, and amongst different participants. For example, some leaders and/or volunteers are present almost daily and provide an opportunity to engage more frequently. The involvement of school children was more regular due to the size of the group.

Groups who met weekly usually began the day planning their activities (with the ubiquitous cups of tea). Group leaders indicated the additional social benefits that this brought to the project (see section 3.4):

I2: Cup of tea, piece of toast, and they often like to sort of chat, (…) then at about probably half ten, maybe quarter to eleven sometimes, just go out and see what needs doing, and it's probably only about an hour to an hour and a half of actual physical work, and then they, they all go, will either go for lunch at twelve, or, or go home

The highest proportion of questionnaire respondents confirmed that they visited once or twice a week. Visiting less than once a month was rare (Figure 9). Nearly half of the questionnaire respondents spent between 1 and 3 hours on the site per visit; shorter and longer visits were made by a quarter of the respondents. We were able to gain an insight into volunteer retention through the interviews. Most groups initially struggled to retain participants or were affected by fluctuating numbers:

I4: I'm trying to recruit more volunteers because as you can probably understand, there's a bit of a dropout rate (…) sometimes we can have 10 volunteers just trickle in and other days there can be just two of us.

The fact that the numbers of volunteers change throughout the lifetime of the food growing projects is reflected by the varying length of involvement in the food growing project. In the sample of the respondents, there were almost an equal proportion of those who have been involved for less than a month, between 1 and 12 months and over a year (Figure 10).

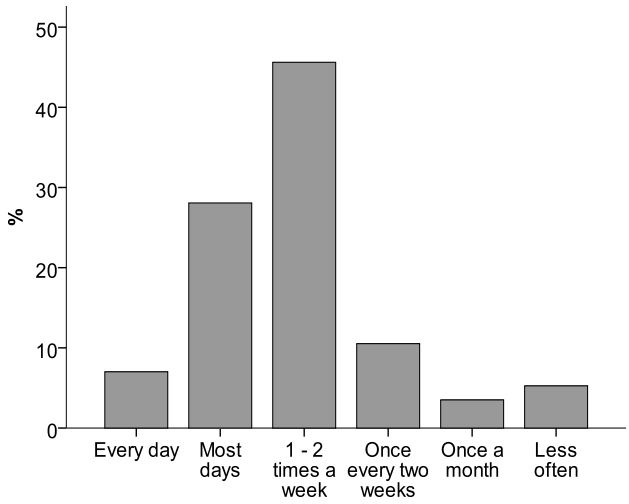


Figure 9 Frequency of visits to the project site.

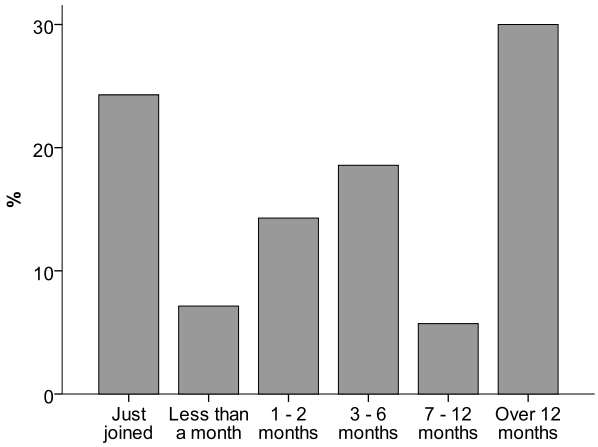


Figure 10 Length of involvement in the project.

3.3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECTS THROUGHOUT THE GROWING SEASON

In June, all six interviewees described future plans to develop their plots. These included obtaining more raised beds, growing exotic produce, engaging in keeping bees or chickens. Other groups looked towards introducing additional features such as building a small hill, introducing water features, or having a straw bale classroom.

In the short timeframe between June and October, some of these plans came to fruition. The produce grown on the sites diversified through the year: two sites began keeping chickens and two others who had not experimented with fruits planted fruit trees and fruit bushes; two sites engaged in chicken keeping. The interviewed group leaders all reported harvesting some produce, even those who committed most of the 2012 to establishing the site.

Two projects, from the six interviewed, increased in size in both area and volunteer numbers. One increased fourfold in numbers and reused abandoned plots within the allotment area and the other by receiving more land from the housing association supporting the project. For one project a crucial development that attracted more volunteers was through the provision of amenities including a shelter and ladies toilets. Ensuring accessibility to the site was particularly important so that people of all abilities could use it:

I6: There are a couple of ladies who aren't able to go digging in the ground, but in the raised beds they are. So we've tried to plan the garden originally to be able to support that and allow people who might be less mobile to be able to grow, in boxes and tubs and raised beds.

The leaders also expressed their interest in taking more people on board if space becomes available. A couple of the groups have increased in size; one project added two individuals to the 'core group' and with strong recognition in the local community and a possibility to engage more people, whilst the other increased twofold:

I5: I think at that time [June interview] we had about fifteen to twenty maybe, and we've got about thirty, and we've not pushed it at all, it's all done by word of mouth and still people want to come in and join.

Most of the leaders aimed to increase the level of responsibility amongst project participants, whilst stepping back themselves. In some groups this was achieved incrementally throughout the year. The leaders were asking the participants what they would like to grow and involving them fully in planning activities, and people were coming up with their own ideas and initiatives as the year went on and become stronger as a group:

I4:They do [ask me for advice] but people are starting to learn that good old Google and things and if they need to find some answers out then they've taken it up on themselves to go and do their own bit of research and bits and pieces that way.

Whilst the leaders were willing to experiment with different modes of working as a group, they still emphasised that there is a need for a strong leadership:

I5: Unless there's somebody there to, to lead it, it doesn't get done really because people haven't got the confidence to do it themselves

The confidence/level of ownership of the participants in some groups is indicated by the fact that they started to identify new funding sources to support the projects. In general, the fact that there are groups interested in seeking additional funding to that provided by the Growing Manchester Programme, may point to their future sustainability.

3.3.2 FUTURE PLANS FOR THE PROJECTS

In terms of the further site development, the interviews with leaders and the case studies indicated that new produce was planned (winter vegetables, more fruit trees, raspberries, herbs). The school planned a greenhouse

in the central quad in addition to the raised beds present there in the moment. The school, and another site, planned wildlife areas and ponds to attract butterflies and other animals to the area.

Confident that the future would see more produce, interviewees based at community centres or schools expressed a wish to use crops in on-site kitchens. The group leaders of these projects also considered engaging with other types of institutions, using the food growing site as a base to bring together people from across generations. They especially emphasized the possibility of bringing together children and the elderly. In general, all of the interviews indicated that they planned to become more inclusive to those in the local community, who may found it hard to find time to do food growing. In both the interviews and the case studies, there emerged a gap between growing the produce and learning what to do with it. Consequently, all interviewees expressed a wish to develop their sites beyond gardening, particularly emphasising the importance of cooking activities (see also the Emerge Learning Garden case study, pp. 68-9):

> *I4: The idea of this site is not just going to be about gardening, there's going to be lots of different other elements to it as well with food and what's around food, and hard to cook food and lots of different types of workshops, you know, so it's going to become more of a community hub this because the idea is, is we're going to make a cafe here to use as a centre hub, a cafe with like a farm shop, because that then, it's, it's a hub for people to come to.*

All of the leaders that we interviewed wanted to secure the long-term character and sustainability of the project. Some of the project leaders believed that after the initial support they were self-sufficient:

> *I2: We've got all the tools, we've got the compost now, so yeah, it'll just be a case of sort of buying plants, and people have been very good at providing stuff and they'll find things, like a lot of the wood, someone was throwing away decking so we got some of that to build raised beds.*

Ecological awareness was indicated through plans that some leaders had made. This included using silicone rich horsetail (normally considered as an invasive weed) to make a fertiliser or to produce their own compost. One of the groups has established the site as 'an official volunteering site' with plans to set up a social enterprise and become involved with the Housing Association who donated the land, City South, by collecting and composting their green waste, and, in return, receiving contributions in kind. The compost could be distributed locally to people '*who don't use the gardens, we'd like them to start growing and for them to sign up to some type of a scheme where they can free food or extremely cheap food if they allow us or, or they get involved with using everybody's gardens that people don't use, and use this as the model, use this as the template, use this as the, the workshops and everything, for people to learn some new skills and also we'll be able to supply them from here in a couple of years with the compost and everything else, to really kick-start the project*' (I4).

The school project leader considered having a fair selling the produce and food made of them by children. Opening a shop to sell the produce was considered at another site. However, worries were expressed about the

ability to muster enough power to keep this going, particularly where the site managed by a social agency. Thus, other funding sources were sought in order to support the projects in the future:

> *I1: the plan within the development of the park is to open a, a shop and to, you know, to tie that in, I'd like some kind of, what I'd like to see is like some kind of food co-op down there, which I think long term is something that we can probably use the monies from Willow Park and kind of tie everything in because it's, we've got, you know, potentially we've got the facilities there and I think it's just a case of working together to do it, I'd love to see something similar to Unicorn down there but we've got the farm who produce beef and lamb and chicken and pork etcetera, and they already stand the farmers market so we could sell the meat, the eggs, grow the veg, sell the veg, you know, and hopefully sell other stuff as well.*

3.4 BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE PROJECT

This section presents the evidence for the positive impact of the programme. It first describes the change in the participants' food growing skills; then it shows the impact on the environmental awareness and attitudes. The further part presents the physical and mental health benefits; improvements in community cohesion and community building, benefits for the local community and wider stakeholders as well as economic benefits of fruit and vegetable growing.

3.4.1 LEARNING FOOD GROWING SKILLS

In the research, we relied on questionnaire respondents reporting their own confidence in food growing and on the observations of the group leaders, rather than carrying out any form of structured assessment of these. Self-assessed food growing skills have improved over the duration of the Growing Manchester Programme. For over half of the participants this was the first time they had been involved in a food growing project; experienced growers were in minority (Figure 11).

According to the group leaders, the levels of initial food growing skills ranged widely between the participants, but each of the groups involved some participants who knew a bit about food growing and could exchange this knowledge with others:

> *I4: Some of the volunteers they've gone off and done a bit of their own research and stuff for the place. They bring in some different paperwork in on how different things work and stuff which is nice.*

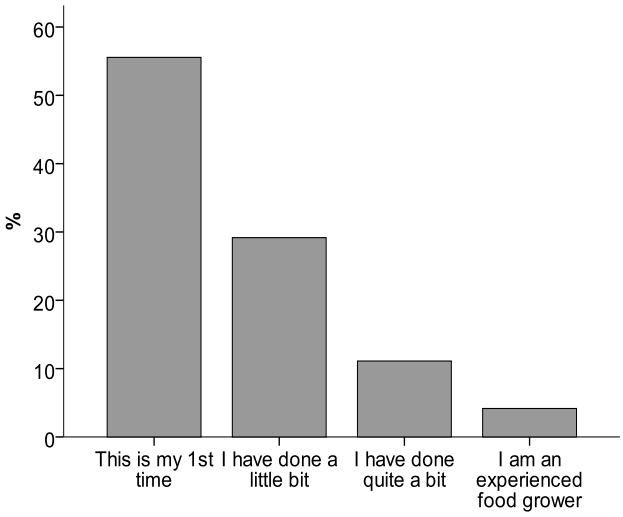


Figure 11 Previous involvement in food growing.

Some participants, in the opinion of the leaders, had a basic understanding of issues associated with organic food growing and growing food locally. Nonetheless, in some communities surrounding the growing plots the basic understanding of food growing was missing:

> *I6: People had no experience of what to do in a garden, and we were talking to lots of people, and particularly children who didn't realise that chips came from potatoes that were grown in the ground, it was just that they come from Asda and they belong in the freezer.*

The vast majority (79%) of questionnaire respondents already had access to a garden or other space where they could grow plants. However, over 70% of the participants agreed that they discovered food growing as a 'new and exciting' activity, thus indicating that whilst they may have been involved in gardening, this had not necessarily involved growing food in the past (Figure 12). For example, in the Emerge case study, one participant confirmed being an experienced gardener but never with food. Thus, the access to their own growing space allowed some of the participants to take their newly acquired growing skills out of the site context:

> *I5: Some people come here who have no idea whatsoever how to grow, so they leave here with better knowledge. They go home, maybe do a bit in their back garden, and plant some strawberries or whatever.*

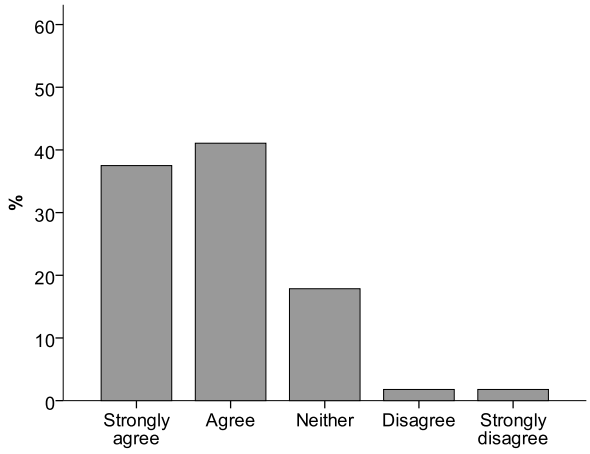


Figure 12 Levels of agreement with the statement 'I discovered food growing as a new and exciting activity'.

One of the training providers shared a charming, and instructive, story about one unlikely food growing neophyte:

> *TP 1: A woman … got involved in drawing the plan of the site, she didn't want to do anything else (...) because all she was wearing was fluffy slippers, pyjamas and had fantastic nails and great hair. She looked wonderful but … was not going to get dirty (...) We had loads of seed potatoes from other projects at that point, so I brought them along to the session (...) and I said [to her], do you like potatoes? She said, oh my son likes them, yeah, in chips. I said, right, oh, he can grow his own potato, what do you think about that? She went, really? Oh my God. You know, she was just amazed by this, she said, yeah, yeah, and she wanted to do it, and that was it, nothing more but she was, it was like, oh my God, you know, and then, wanted to grow a potato, I don't even think she took part in taking care of it but she did learn something and she learnt a bit about strawberries as well, and how they reproduce and stuff like that. Whether she'll do it again in the future, I have no idea, but there was, there was some learning went on there about where potatoes come from, how they grow and that you can do it yourself and you can do it in a little black plastic bag on your patio or whatever.*

When completing the first questionnaire in June 2012, we asked people to describe their food growing skills in December 2011. Only 16.6% of our respondents thought themselves to be 'good' or 'very good'. We also asked them to describe their skills at the time of completion. By this point, 13.9% considered their skills to be 'very good', and 33.3% as 'good'. The median level of food growing skills increased from poor to average across the group of respondents (Figure 13). It would be difficult not to conclude that participation in the Growing

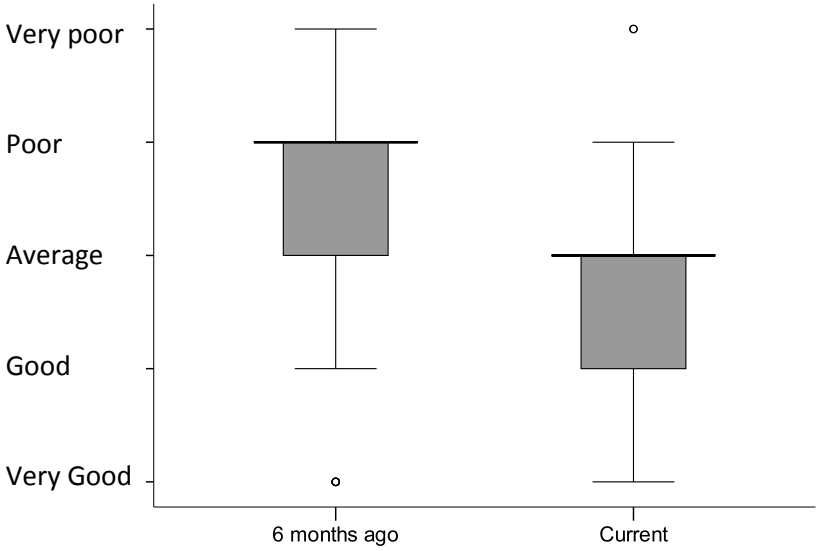


Figure 13 Comparison of the food growing skills at the time of completing the questionnaire and six months earlier.

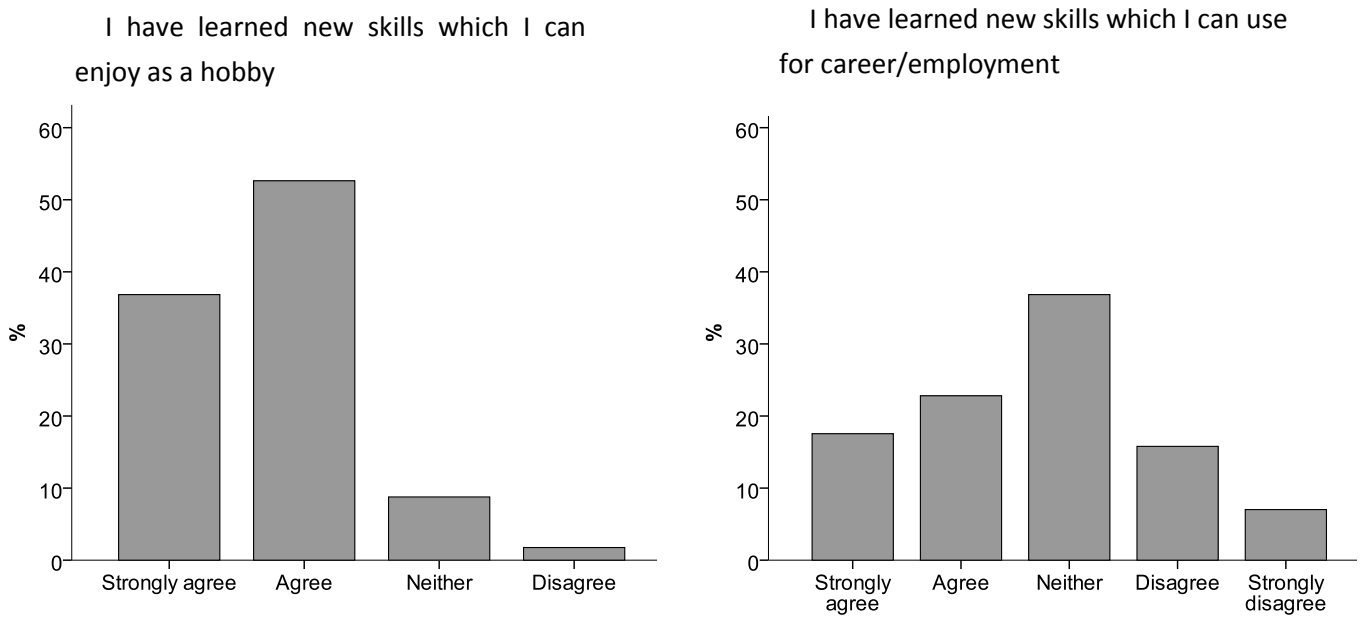


Figure 14 Levels of agreement with the statements about learning of new food growing skills

Manchester programme had increased their skills or, at the very least, people's confidence in their skills. In a further question, participants indicated that these new skills were enjoy as a hobby and, to a lesser extent, could be used to enhance their employability (Figure 14).

According to training providers, the main impact of the training was to encourage the participants to repeat the things demonstrated during the session soon after:

> *TP 3: I'm still in contact with some of the groups (...) some of them will kind of just say come and have a look, see what we're up to. And I mean the gardens are springing up so I'd say, I think everywhere that we've been they've managed to grow things and I don't know how they could have not learnt something whilst they were doing it.*

The participants did not only learn from the training providers. The sentiment expressed in the following quote was evident in all of the group leader interviews as well as the case studies:

> *I2: I think they've swapped a lot, because there's one guy who's quite into growing flowers and herbs and so he's given his advice to people who've grown vegetables.*

Food growing was not the only skill to be learned and this became clear through the interviews and case studies. Carpentry experience was gained through the self-construction of raised beds (two projects). For some leaders, this diversified the attraction of the site through which volunteer enthusiasm could be maintained (I4). To us, it also reflects and reinforces the importance of the directed training offered by Growing Manchester that took into consideration the participants wish for continued development.

3.4.2 LEARNING ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

3.4.2.1 INITIAL KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

Of the survey respondents, 46.5% would like to do a bit more for the environment and 15.5% would like to do a lot more, whilst only 31% were happy with what they were currently doing. Not driving was the most frequently taken pro-environmental decision. In relation to foodstuff, the most frequent choice was to not buy packaged food. Respondents were more inclined to indicate that they would never choose local food (Figure 15). This is difficult to interpret but it may be that the respondents are not willing to give up imported food, or feel that there is insufficient information on what products are local, whereas making a decision not to drive is fairly straightforward and in the hands of the consumer.

In order to gauge the 'carbon literacy' of participants, we asked the extent to which they knew about predefined issues. Three-quarters declared their familiarity (Figure 16). After driving and flying, buying imported food was believed to have a big impact on climate change (53%); and it exceeded the impact of energy use at

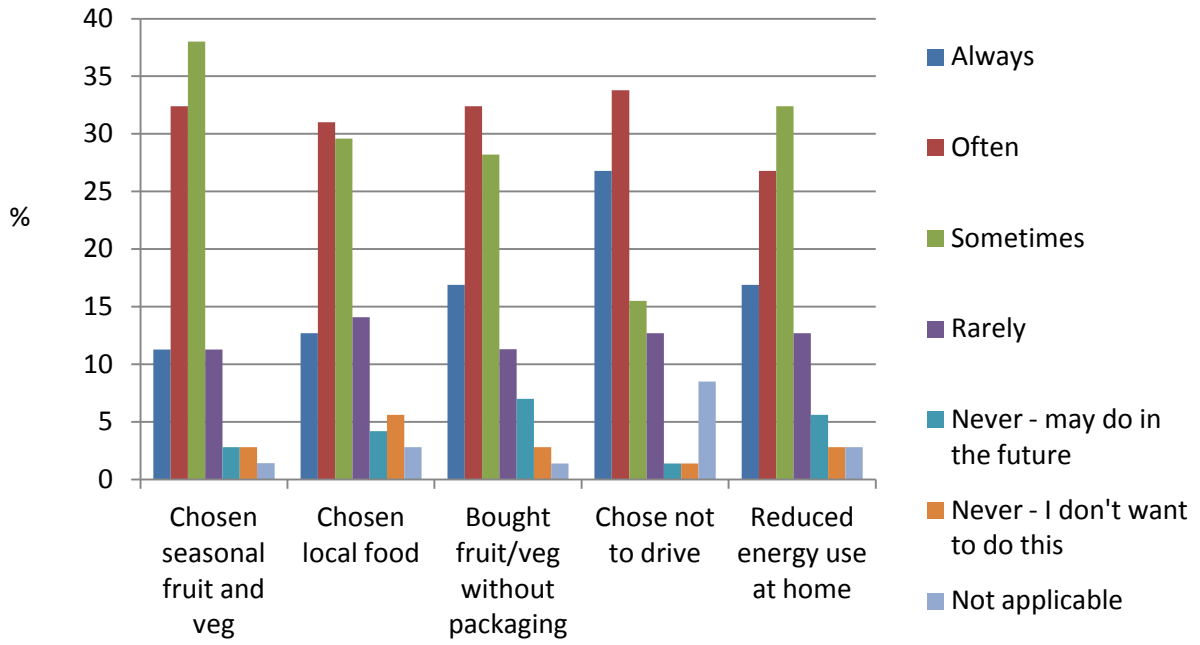


Figure 15 Frequency of the pro-environmental actions.

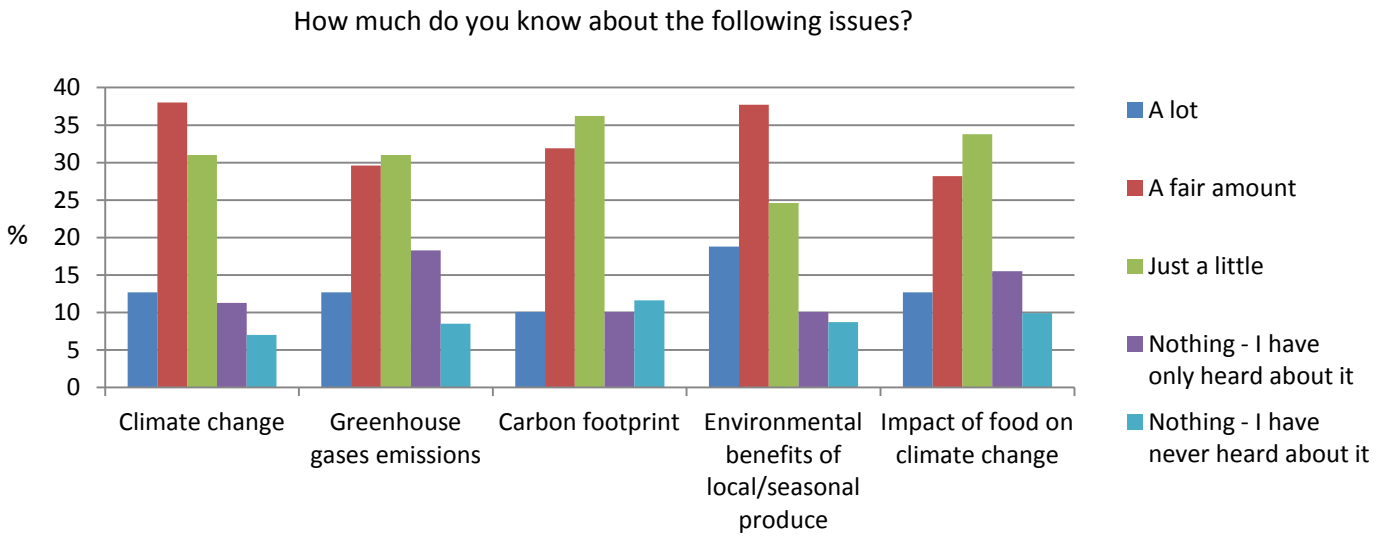


Figure 16 Levels of carbon literacy.

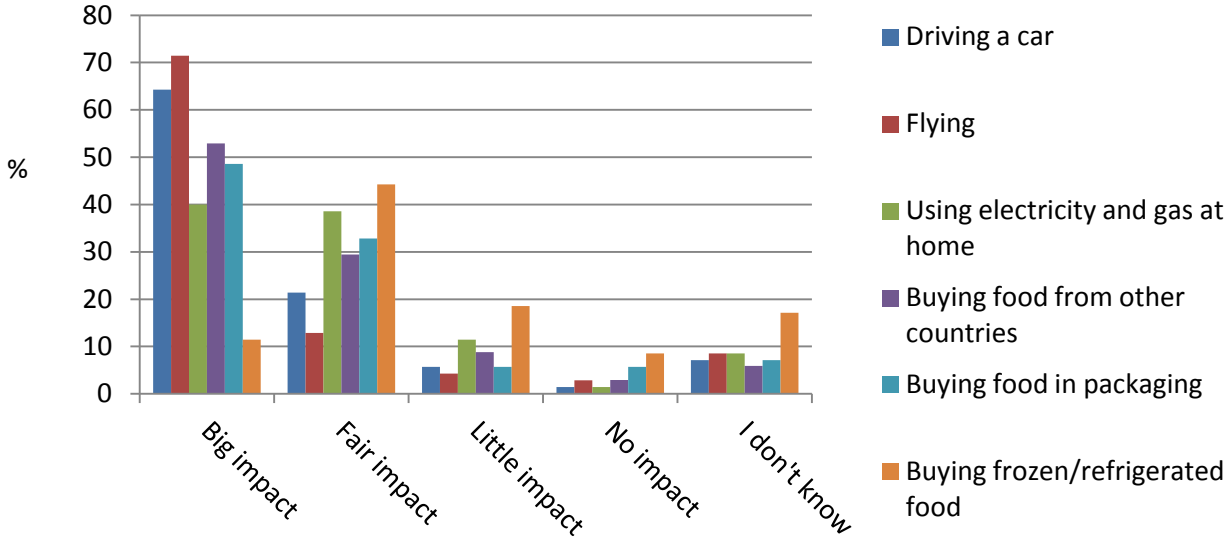


Figure 17 The perceived impact of different activities on climate change.

home. Buying frozen and refrigerated food was seen to have the least impact; food packaging was perceived to have a greater impact on climate change (Figure 17).

3.4.2.2 LEARNING DURING THE PROJECT

Sustainability and carbon footprint issues were not directly covered during the training or the activities on the community food growing plot. However, training providers and some group leaders implicitly covered it during their sessions with the groups, conscious of coming over as 'preachy'. Sustainability issues are usually well-received; one training provider reported a 'pretty positive response' to teaching about organic techniques. Beyond the anecdotal, there is little indication of inducing long term behaviour change.

Some group leaders have tried to educate the participants about environmental issues via direct conversations as well as other information outlets, or by implementing the sustainability principles in practice.

> *I5: They know we're keen to grow organically and sustainably, and be more resilient, and they seem to have copped onto that, well, now some might not have had that idea when they first come on the allotment, but with, with our talking through tea breaks and little stuff we put on Facebook, without actually drumming it down them, they, they seem to accept what's going on in the, in the world regarding food processing and food.*

The training providers said that the people's awareness of environmental issues has increased over the duration of the project. Some group leaders reported that recycling knowledge improved, even in a short space of time, whilst other believed that the initial levels of knowledge among their group participants was quite high.

I2: I sometimes think that maybe older generations aren't really into recycling stuff, but actually they are, and they'll bring in things that they reuse. They're aware of obviously environmental issues like global warming (…) and things like packaging (…) air miles, you don't want all the things being flown in from halfway across the world when you can grow it here so, I mean, maybe they've learnt small things but I think it's more, they've already been quite sort of switched on.

The respondents to the questionnaire survey claimed to have learned about the environmental benefits of local and seasonal produce and the impact of food production on climate change through their participation in the project (Figure 18). Those attending the training attained more knowledge than those who did not ('a fair amount' compared to 'just a little'). This could be absorbed during training days, however, it could equally be the case that the individuals taking part in the training are generally interested in gaining new knowledge and could have learned about climate change from other sources.

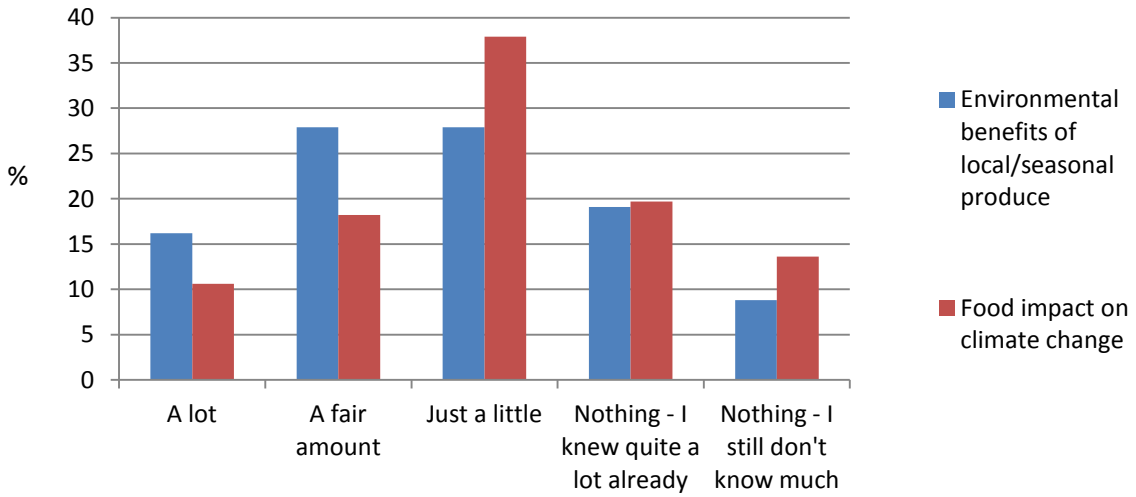


Figure 18 Learning about environmental impact of fruit and vegetables during the project.

3.4.3 PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS

3.4.3.1 PARTICIPANTS' HEALTH AND AWARENESS OF HEALTH ISSUES

Around one-third of questionnaire respondents assessed their current health as 'very good', and nearly half as 'good'. 17% of people said that their lifestyle was 'very healthy' while 48% assessed their lifestyle as 'healthy'. In the six months prior to June 2012, questionnaire respondents reported regularly exercising in the fresh air, using green spaces and gardening, while participation in indoor sports was rare (Figure 19). The majority declared eating the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables on most days. Those assessing their lifestyle as healthier were doing more gardening, more exercise in fresh air and were more likely to be frequently eating the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables on most days.

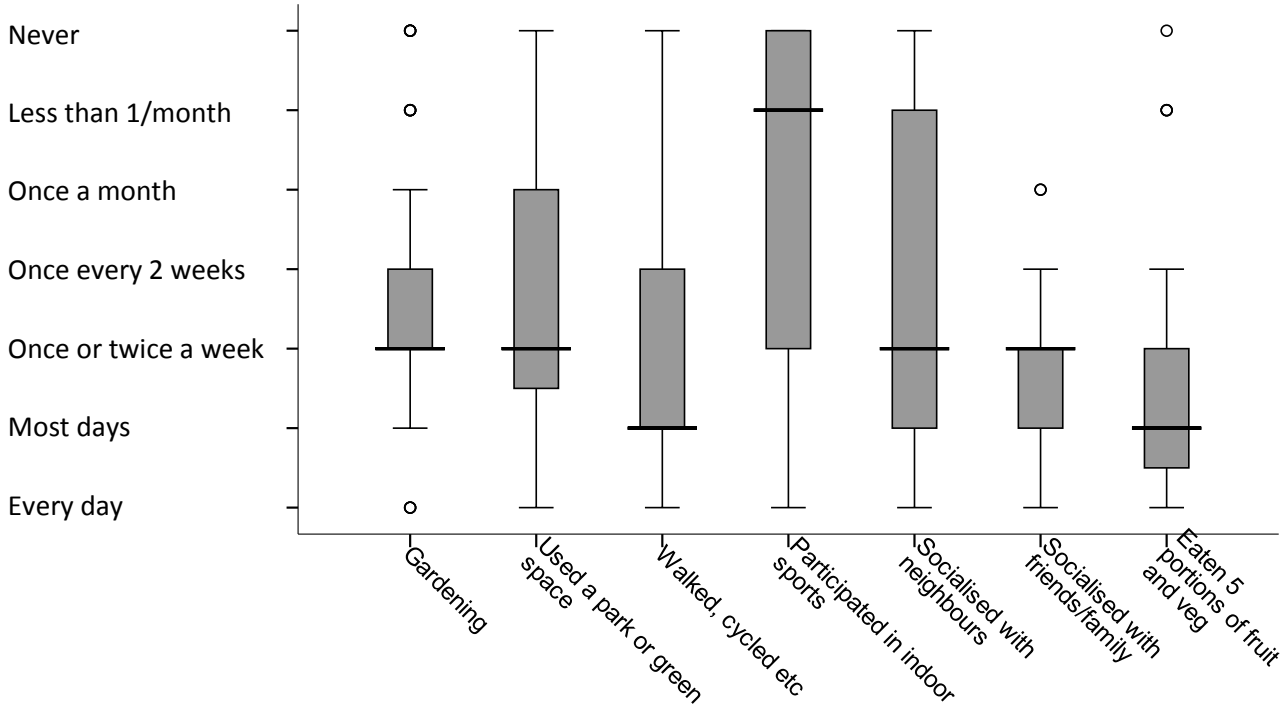


Figure 19 Frequency of activities contributing to health and well-being that respondents participated in.

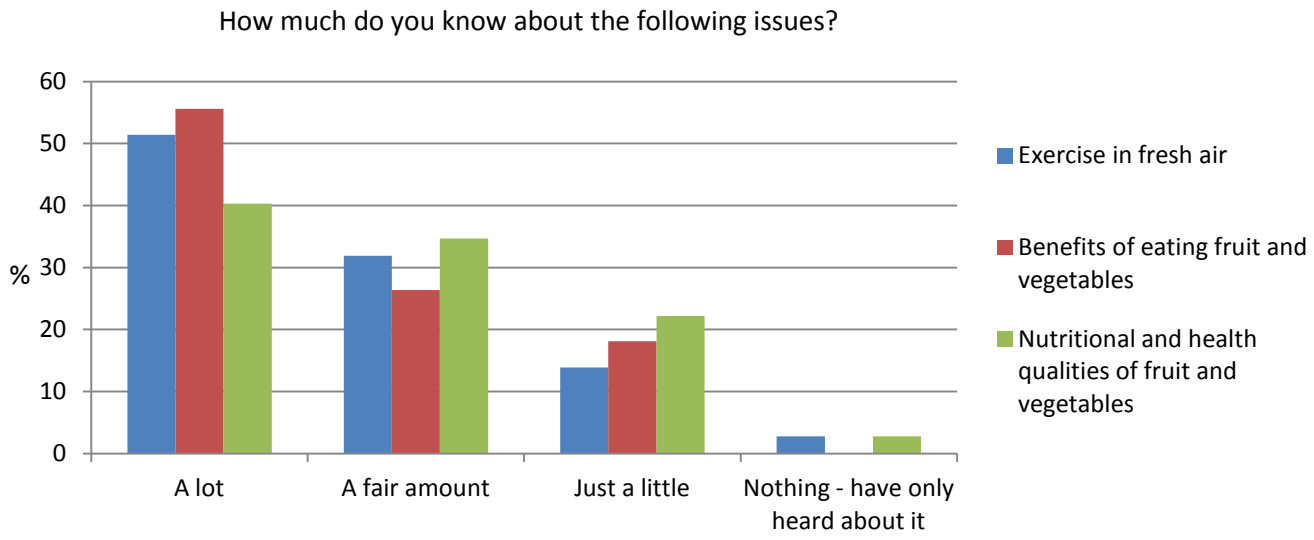


Figure 20 Respondents' level of knowledge about the health and well-being benefits of food

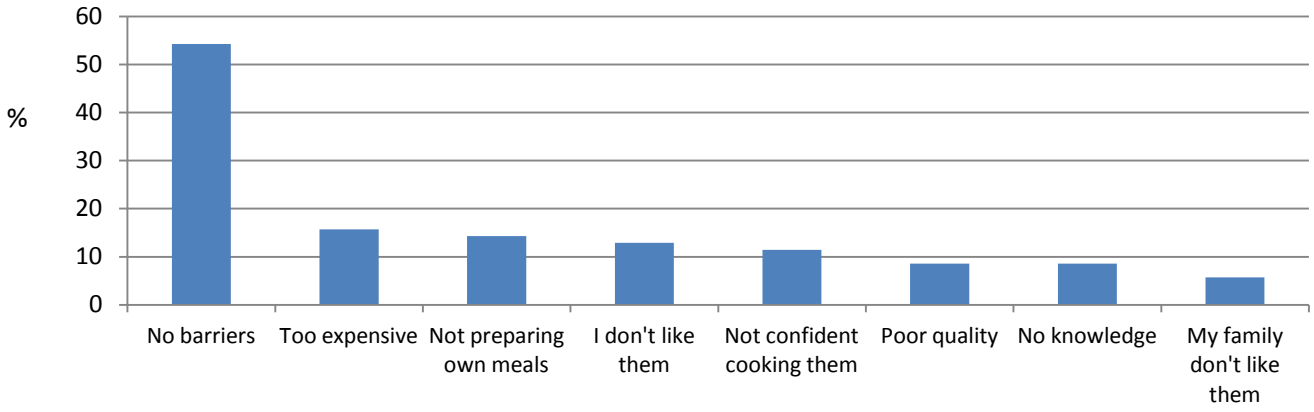


Figure 21 Barriers to consuming five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

The respondents declared that they knew 'a lot' about the benefits of outdoor exercise, the advantages of eating fruit and vegetables, and the nutritional and health qualities of fruit and vegetables (Figure 20). The respondents were asked about the issues stopping them from eating the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. In agreement with Figure 20, over half of the respondents said that they eat the recommended amount already. The most frequently indicated barriers were not having control over meal preparation or the prohibitive cost of fruit and vegetables (Figure 21).

3.4.3.2 IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON HEALTHY EATING

On average, the project food growing site did not provide a significant source of food for the participants, who most frequently shopped in supermarkets, corner shops and greengrocers (Figure 22). This may be associated with the timing of the questionnaire survey and the length of involvement: those who have been growing food for over 12 months had the median frequency of obtaining fruit and vegetables from the food growing plot of 'once a month', compared to the median of 'never' among those who joined less than a year earlier.

The most important issues affecting where people chose to buy their fruit and vegetables from were freshness (very important to 89% of respondents); price or value for money (indicated as very important by 73% of respondents). The opening hours of food outlets were considered to be least important (44% thought they were very important). 54% of respondents thought it was very important how the food was produced. This suggests that an important incentive to become involved in a project could be the availability of fresh, low-cost, and safely grown produce.

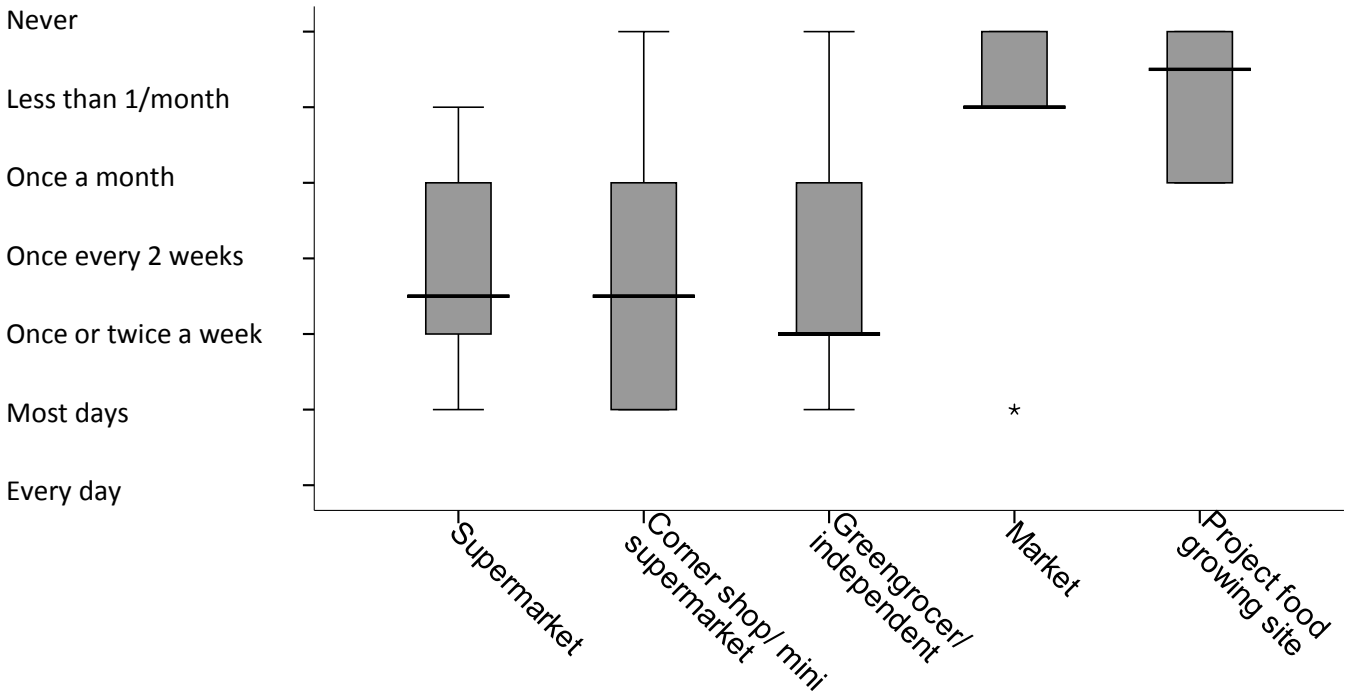


Figure 22 Places where respondents bought their fruit and vegetables from.

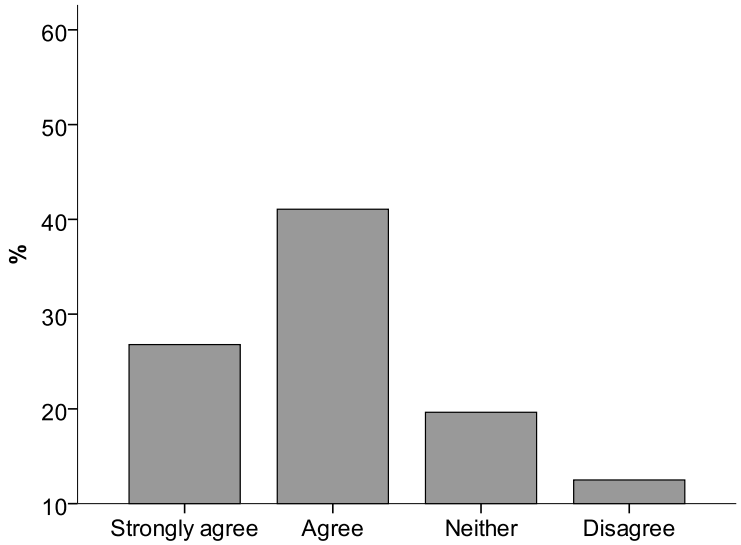


Figure 23 Levels of agreement with the statement 'I have gained access to fresh and healthy fruit and vegetables'

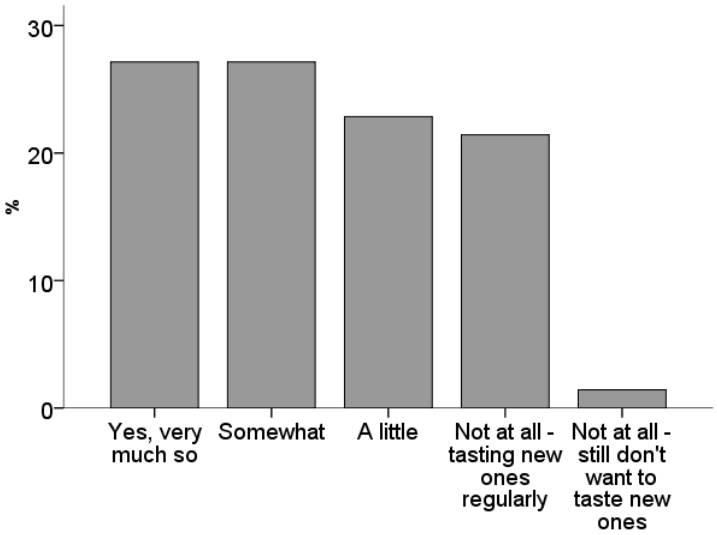


Figure24 Has the project increased your willingness to taste new fruit and vegetables?

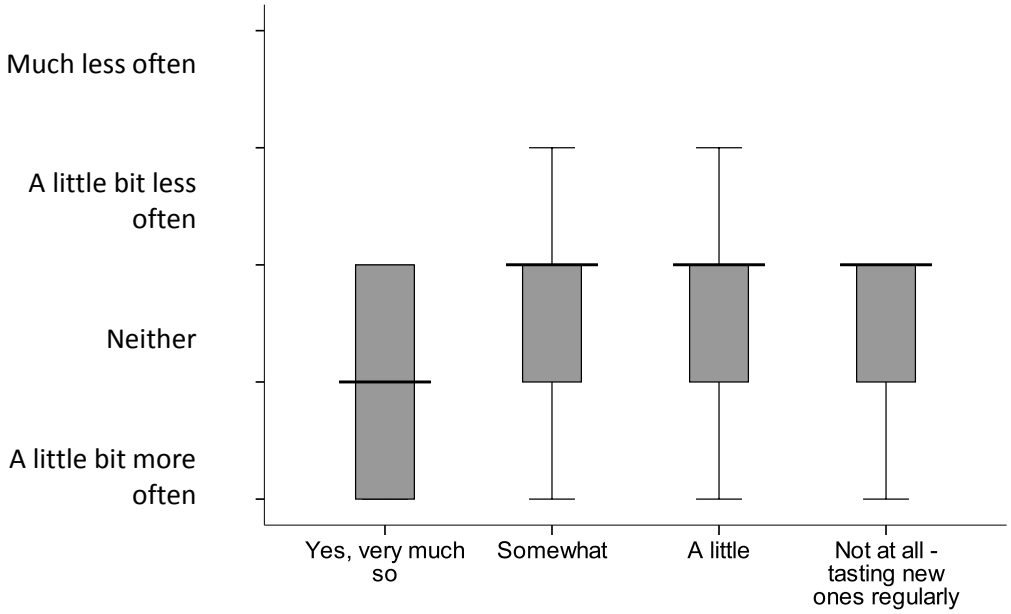


Figure 25 'Five-a-day' consumption cross-tabulated with willingness to try new fruit and vegetables.

Two-thirds of the participants agreed that through participation of the project they had gained access to fresh and healthy fruit and vegetables (Figure 23). The majority of respondents agreed that taking part in food growing had increased their willingness to taste new types of fruit and vegetables (Figure 24), which suggests that the project has the potential to increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables among the participants. Indeed, those who said that they were encouraged to try new fruit and vegetables have increased the frequency of eating the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day (Figure 25).

Evident amongst the groups were the benefits derived from having access to the fruit and vegetables grown and using them for cooking at home. Two leaders observed that people were more inclined to eat new/more fruit and vegetables due to the better taste and the knowledge that they grew them themselves. Moreover, participants may now also be more willing to try fruit and vegetables they had never tasted (for example raspberries, gooseberries and plums).

> *I5: You often find that where they wouldn't go and buy it in a shop, they come in [to the site] and they see it growing and they taste it, as a sample. And then, they realise that it's quite nice and probably will take, or they will want to take some home then. But it's the fact they've never tried it, they wouldn't go and buy it, but while it's here, they see other people eating it and they take, try one and see how it is, and they change their mindset really.*

In particular in the group consisting of people with learning difficulties, the impact on the consumption of fruit and vegetables has been considerable:

> *I1: There's one guy in particular that's got Down's (…) He'd never eaten tomatoes. Staff said to him why don't you try one, they're really nice? They're really sweet. And that was the start of it and now he'll eat virtually anything, the peppers, courgettes.*

Having produce readily available also encouraged participants to experiment with different recipes, thus potentially increasing their cooking skills:

> *I5: Nobody had ever heard of marrow cake before, but there is somebody on the group who made a lovely marrow cake and now they're looking at ways of how we can utilise stuff on allotment to do that sort of thing, make preserves, make chutneys, make cakes (…) they're looking at ways themselves of how we can, which prior to that they probably wouldn't.*

Although around one-third of questionnaire respondents claimed to know quite a lot about the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables and their nutritional qualities, the majority declared that volunteering on the food project had increased that knowledge (median value – 'just a little'). Around one-fifth of respondents believed that they had learned 'a lot' (Figure 26). Those who had eaten less fruit and vegetables in the past gained more knowledge than others: those doing this up to once a week learnt 'just a little', whilst those doing so less often

than once a month learnt 'A fair amount'. This suggests that these food growing projects encourage education on healthier lifestyles, particularly for those currently not following a healthy diet.

The training provided by the Growing Manchester Programme appears to play a significant role. Those participating in the training learned more about all of the issues related to eating fruit and vegetables than those not taking part in the project (Figure 27 and Figure 28). The training providers verified that they mentioned the nutritional and medicinal health benefits of plants during tutoring and were often prompted to do so by inquisitive trainees:

> *TP 1: People might say something in a workshop but they, they broach it and it could be anything, I don't know, something to do with not sleeping, I'll say well, did you know rosemary, which is even stronger than lavender, can helping you like get a good night's sleep? You know, so it, general sort of stuff (...) don't peel your potatoes, because they've got less vitamin C in the skins, that kind of thing, so we drop it in where we can.*

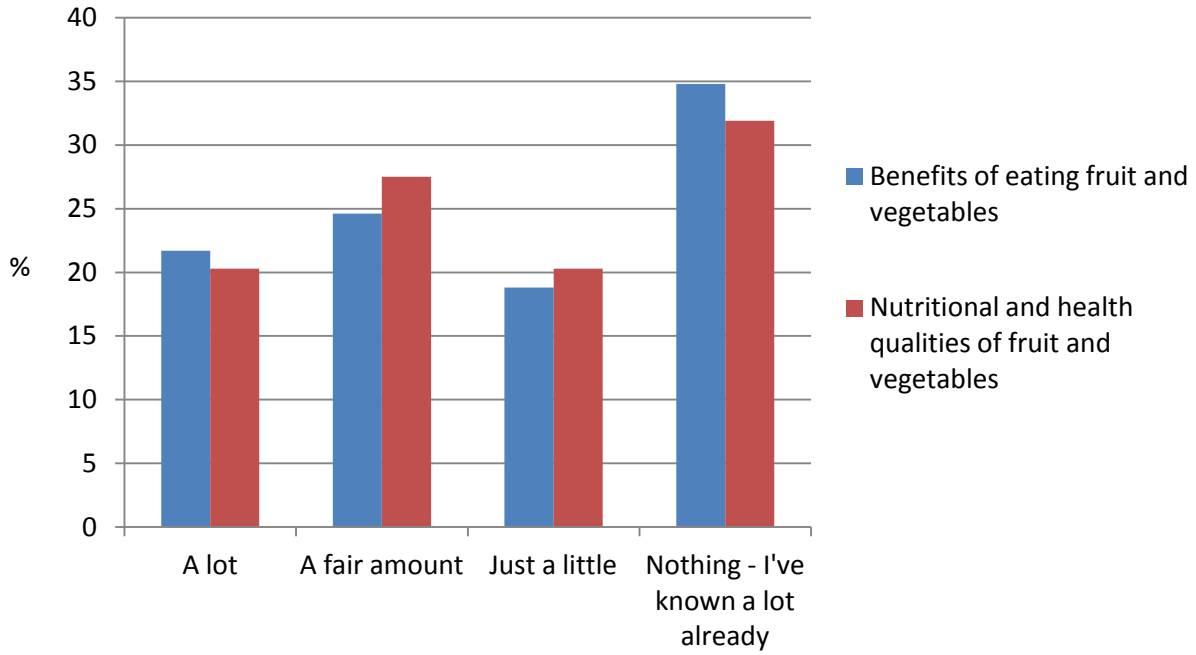


Figure 26 How much have you learnt about the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables?

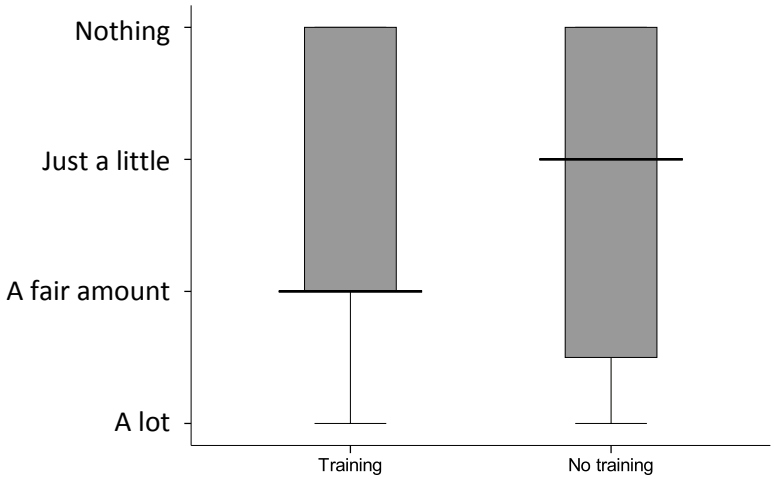


Figure 27 Difference in the amount learnt about benefits of eating fruit and vegetables between those taking part in the training and not.

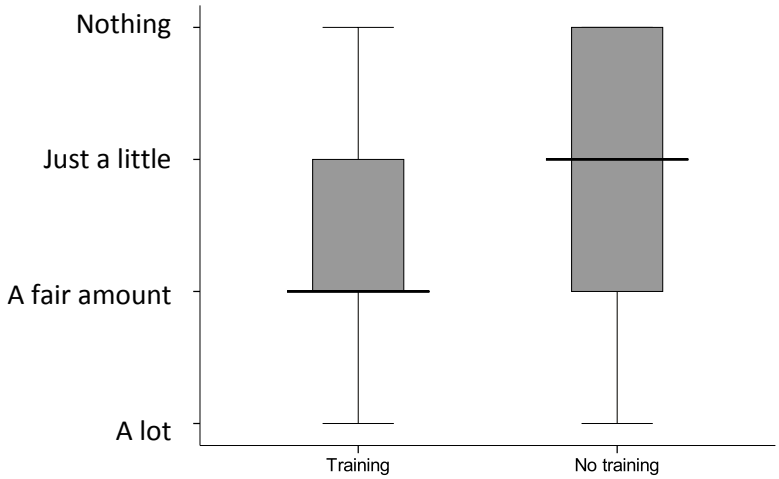


Figure 28 Difference in the amount learnt about the health and nutritional value of fruit and vegetables between those taking part in the training and not.

BOX 2

Baguley Buds Case Study **Growing Manchester: A route to healthy eating?**

Baguley Buds is a food growing initiative that forms part of the varied activities at Baguley Sure Start Centre. Located in Manchester's original garden city, Wythenshawe, the Sure Start centre had access to underused greenspace around the building perimeter. It is located in an area of high multiple deprivation and poor health. Survey data indicates that 21% of the ward's population is not in good health (Manchester average 17%; national average 7%) and consumption of at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day was at 19% (Manchester average 21%; national average 30%) (NHS Manchester and Manchester City Council 2011). The Group Leader called Baguley 'a food desert' with particularly poor access to shops selling fresh fruit and vegetables within walking distance to people's homes.

The food growing initiative is targeted at mothers and their children who use the Sure Start Centre. With funds from the Growing Manchester programme, the group were able to access training support and to buy some tools and materials so that they could make a start on the outside space. Usually, Baguley Buds meet every fortnight for a couple of hours on a Tuesday or Thursday morning. Up to 20 people can be involved although there could be disruption to regular attendance over school holidays and at the start of the new term. However, it was observed that this is not necessarily negative and could mean an influx of potential new recruits.

The growing space is on a tight, angular sloping space and it contains two raised beds that were made by the participants during Growing Manchester training ('I'd never used any of that kind of equipment before so that was a new skill'). There is wood sitting in order to make more. Hanging from the fence are trays made from empty margarine and yoghurt tubs that the children had planted cress seeds in. Participants mentioned that they grew beetroot this year as well as herbs such as basil. There is also a compost bin, and learning about composting within the Growing Manchester training programme was cited by the participants as being a revelation ('You wouldn't believe that learning about grades of compost was fascinating. I took my husband to the Wythenshawe Garden Festival and started talking about grades of compost and he just looked at me and was like: "What!?!"'). The training provided an initial backbone and during the gardening sessions, participants relied on each other's knowledge.

Mostly, the participants' conversations veered around what to do with food once grown. From some harvested beetroot, one lady spoke to her mum and then looked for a pickling recipe on the internet. There was some discussion on the health benefits of certain foods, such as iron content, particularly necessary during pregnancy. There had been an abundance of basil and tomatoes on site and one lady shared a pesto recipe. She was thought to be 'quite a good cook anyway and it was great to have her as a backbone that other participants can learn from'. The participants said that even though they had mostly tried the vegetables grown at some point in their life, they were not items that they regularly bought because they were perceived to be too expensive, e.g. basil, courgettes.

The participants also learnt about the characteristics of different crops – for example, that pumpkins grew above ground. As they looked good and could be cooked, they planned to plant them in the future. Other future plans included getting more raised beds in place and connecting to the existing 'FareShare' scheme that is currently run from the Sure Start Centre, in which local shops (a baker and Wythenshawe market) donate food for distribution in the community. The Group Leader thought there were future opportunities for extending the project, particularly around the learning aspect for children as well as utilising an on-site kitchen to connect food growing with cooking skills.

Figure 29 On-site compost bin

Figure 30 A raised bed made by participants

Figure 31 Raised bed with beetroot

Figure 32 Cress pots made by children

3.4.4 IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Over 70% of the participants agreed that they spent a considerable amount of time gardening at the project site (Figure 33). Over the six months preceding June's questionnaire survey, respondents reported that they were, on average, gardening and doing exercise in the fresh air more often than in the equivalent six months of the previous year (Figure 34). This could be associated with the food growing project: there was a correlation between the frequency of visits to the project site and frequency of gardening and between the frequency of visits and the use of green spaces. This suggests that participation in the project could have increased the amount of time spent outdoors. One group leader observed that even participants who '*have got that quite healthy outlook already*', growing food '*…encourages them to be even more healthy and active*' (I2).

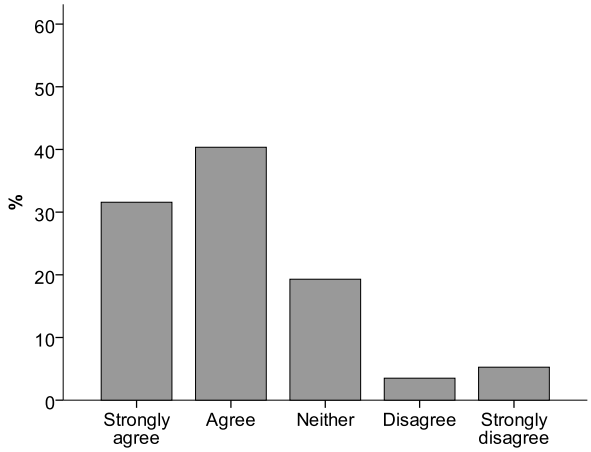


Figure 33 Levels of agreement with the statement 'I have spent a considerable time gardening at the project site'

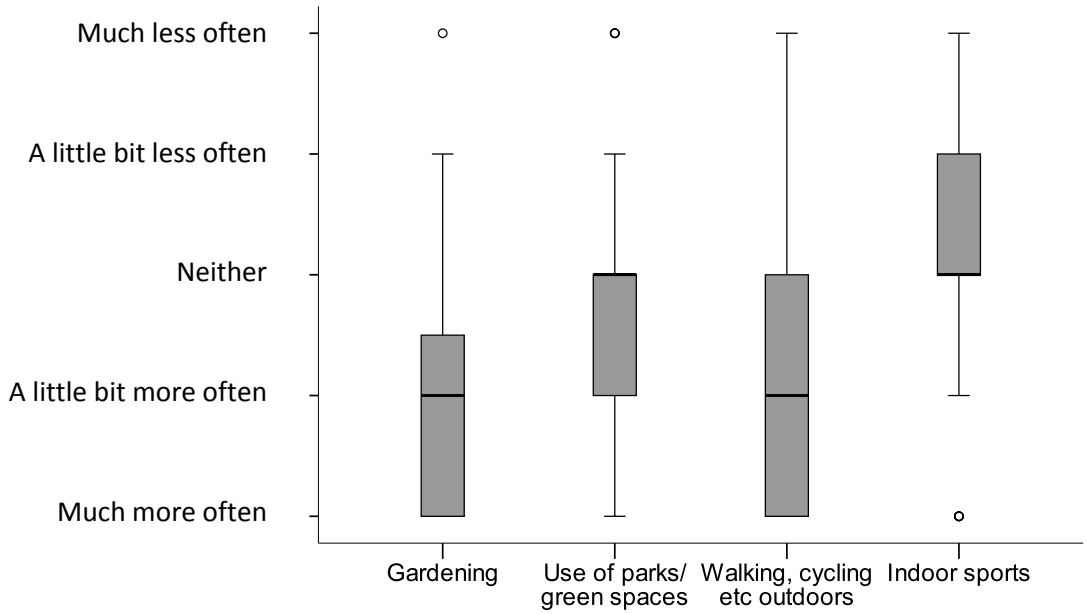


Figure 34 Frequency of physical activities between January – June 2012 as compared to January - June 2011.

The leaders observed that physical exercise was rarely a motivation for the participants to become involved; nonetheless, the derivative exercise obtained by working on the food growing plots was seen to be very important, with one leader claiming that *'they're getting physical exercise without really realising it'* (I5). For the group containing participants with learning difficulties, the extra activity on the food growing projects brought tangible benefits:

> *I4: I think …they are all a lot fitter down there and I think you can physically see with some of them that they have dropped weight, not in a drastic way. They'll show you their muscles because they've been digging all day so they are kind of beefed up some of them now but it's good.*

Although over 40% of the respondents already knew quite a lot about the benefits of exercising in the fresh air, the majority declared that they have learned something more about it (median value – 'just a little'). Around one-fifth of respondents believed that they had learned 'a lot' (Figure 35). The training providers paid attention to mentioning the health benefits of gardening in their workshops:

> *TP 1: I talk about gardening, and how [it] is more sustainable than joining a gym. It's less expensive, has a much wider benefit, so all that kind of stuff, so I'll drop that in where it's appropriate and say oh yeah, it's really good fun, it's a good way of managing weight, getting to know other people, that kind of thing. So I drop it in where it comes up rather than home in on somebody who's got a weight problem.*

Those who had exercised less frequently in the past gained more knowledge from the project than others: those doing this up to once a week learnt 'just a little', whilst those doing so less often than once a month learnt 'A fair amount'. This may suggest that learning in the project may encourage a healthier lifestyle for those currently not exercising outdoors.

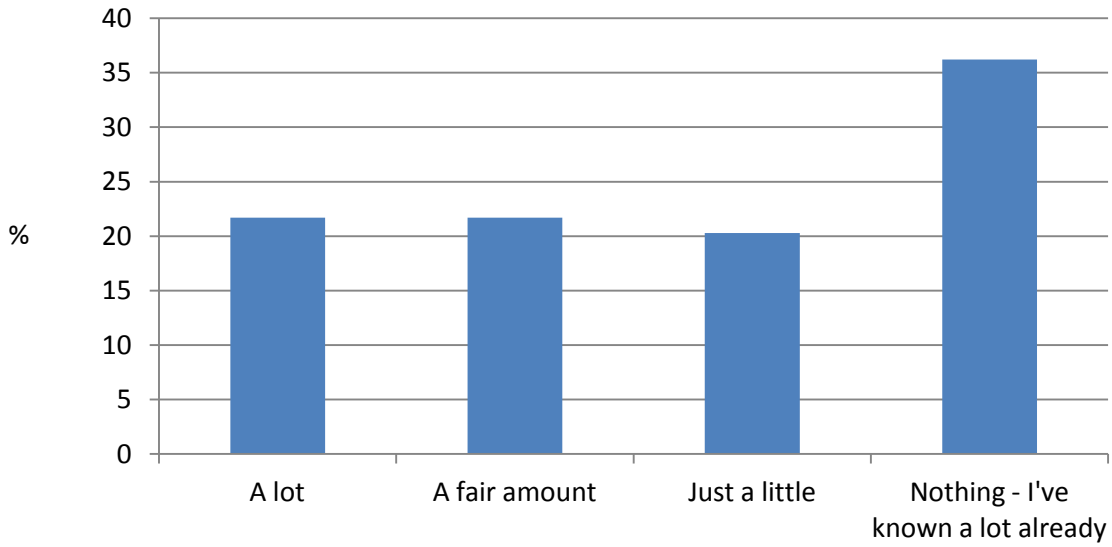
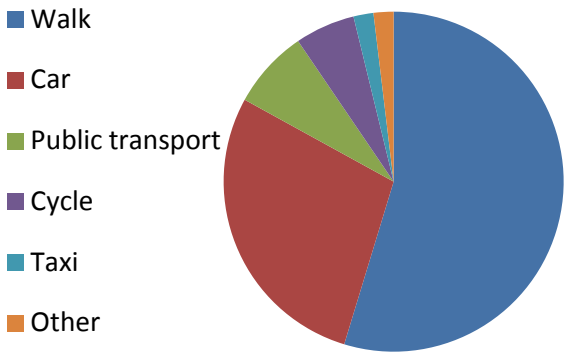


Figure 35 How much have you learnt about the benefits of food growing?



In addition, over half of the participants walked to the food growing site, and the second most popular mode of transport was by car (either as a driver or passenger) (Figure 36). Those living closer to the project site were much more likely to walk or cycle to it: among those living less than a mile away over 90% walked or cycled, whilst 75% of those living more than 2 miles away drove to the site (Figure 37). So, sites that are located closer to where people live may provide derivative health benefits from additional physical exercise in travelling to the site: 64% of the visits once or twice a week were done on foot or by bicycle.

Figure 36 Modes of transport to the project site.

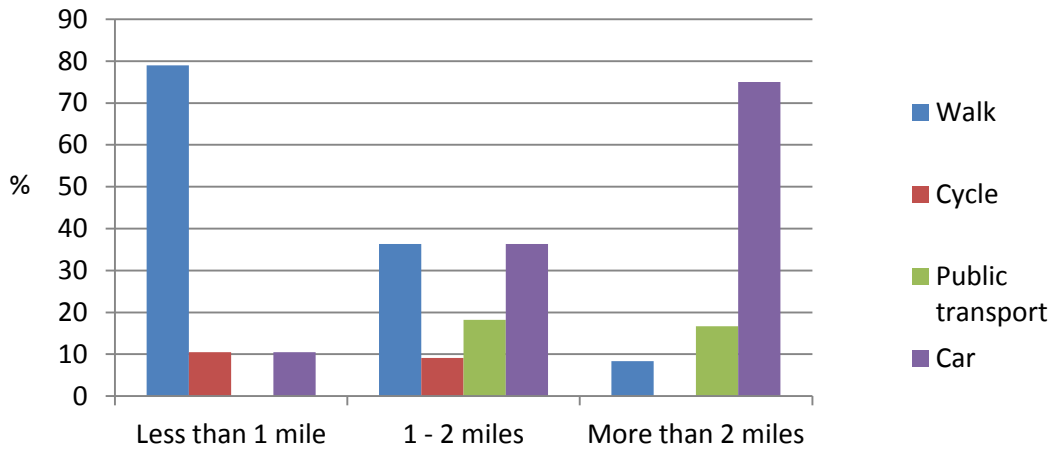


Figure 37 Mode of transport depending on the distance from home to the food growing site.

3.4.5 BENEFITS FOR MENTAL WELL-BEING

The interviewed group leaders unanimously believed in the therapeutic benefits derived from being in green spaces and working with plants in each of their projects. For those groups containing people with learning difficulties or previous mental health issues, these effects were observed. For example, in one organisation that worked with vulnerable adults:

> *I1: There's a big guy (…), who's profoundly autistic, quite difficult to engage until he knows you, but now every time I go he links my arm and says come on, what jobs are we going to do, and I walk down to the garden with him and we pulled some rhubarb so he helped us pull the rhubarb out and take the tops off the rhubarb.*

This was evident across all groups and, so, applied across the age spectrum. Therefore, food growing projects can offer additional therapeutic benefits to their participants. When we attended a networking event on the 11th July 2012, one person described his severe depression following a heart attack being signed off work due to ill health. Becoming involved in community food growing helped them to improve their mood. In this person's own words: 'I just sit there and look at a cabbage and I'm happy, how sad is that?'

The sense of pride achieved when growing was also deemed important to questionnaire respondents (Figure 38). This was particularly marked for people with learning difficulties or those living in more deprived areas. Improving self-esteem through participation in the Growing Manchester projects was observed by the group leaders; in particular, transferring responsibility from leaders to participants (see section 3.3.1) boosted the sense of achievement.

> *I4: A prime example is a person [who] suffers with various mental health issues. She used to have a really loud mouth and a big front and I've changed her from that, from the last time I spoke to you, to this now, hardly an f word comes out of her mouth, she's here nearly every day when (…) She's become an asset. It just goes to show that if you give somebody a chance what they can do, you know, and it's quite rewarding.*

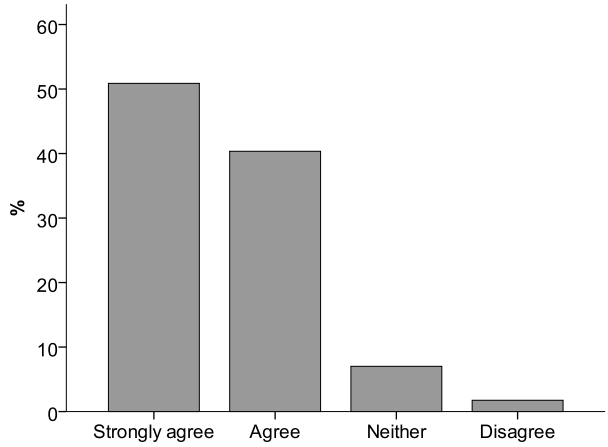


Figure 38 Levels of agreement with the statement 'I have a sense of pride that I have achieved something'

3.4.6 SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

The leaders had no doubts that the social element of community food growing was extremely important. Acquiring team work skills, and helping each other, was observed. Over 90% of the participants said that the participation in the project helped them to meet other people in their community (Figure 39) and also in the opinion of the leaders the projects resulted in '*people coming together would never normally meet'* and that *'there's more interaction with the people I wouldn't normally interact with' (I4)*. The food growing activities have also helped to break down community barriers. The leaders hoped that the sites will continue as community hubs bringing people together:

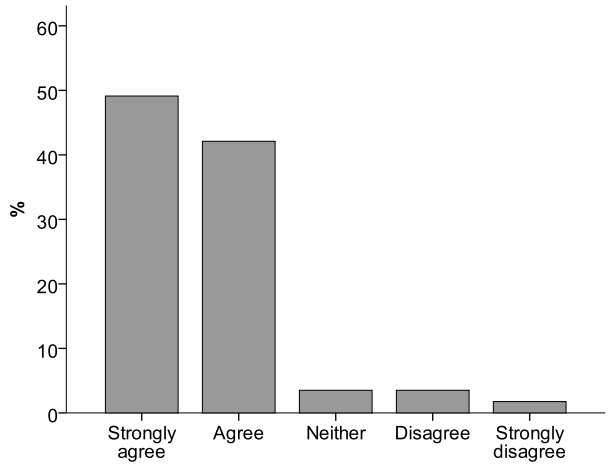


Figure 39 Levels of agreement with the statement 'I have met other people in my community'

I5: It's people [who] have never met, have met here, so we've actually built a separate community on the allotment, normally we'd only say good morning to some of the people, to each other, but now they've become friends and we communicate and have a good chat and discussion.

For the project leaders, the bringing of the community together and engaging them has been the highlight of the programme and the thing that they frequently listed as something that went well.

3.4.7 ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

Over 40% of the survey respondents claimed that they saved money by having access to fresh food and vegetables (Figure 40), and there was a general awareness of the fact that locally grown food is a cheaper option. It was observed by one group leader that many of the participants would not actually buy fruit and vegetables, so they would not eat them if they were not available from the growing plot (see also the Baguley Buds case study, pp. 51-2). However, the leaders stated that the sites do not produce a sufficient amount of food yet to eliminate entirely the need for shopping for fruit and vegetables among the participants.

I4: People on the project do realise that this is, it's going to be a much healthier and sustainable way of living because really next ten years the prices of food is just going up and up and up and up and we feel that land like this is going to be gold dust in ten years' time.

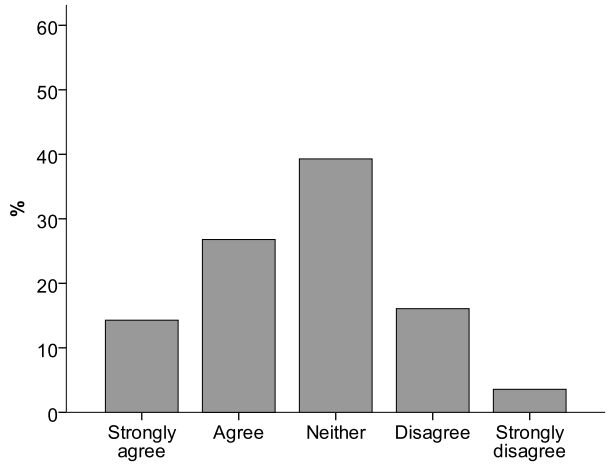


Figure 40 Levels of agreement with the statement 'I have saved money by having access to cheap or free vegetables'

3.5 BENEFITS FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

In some of the cases (overgrown sites already used for food growing purposes or gardens associated with an establishment), the use of land as a food growing site has improved its appearance and provided an additional use. This was particularly visible in the case of one site, which is bordered by four streets with 170 houses, where the improved appearance has also helped to prevent vandalism:

> *I6: [The project site] was essentially a fly-tipping piece of overgrown land full of all sorts of junk and rubbish… I think that people really do accept that it's...they are quite proud of it or they like it because it's nicer than looking at a horrible old grot spot which it was previously.*

In some projects, a part of the produce grown on site is already shared with the wider community; others have future plans to share the crops with local schools or other community centres (I6, I2). The awareness of how food is grown and that eating fruit and vegetables is important may also be growing in the community:

> *I1: When it's a nice sunny day people come down and we'll say to the kids come on, try a strawberry, blackberry, and do you want to pick some, come and have a look, and people buy stuff and the rhubarb and all different things.*

One project attracted children as it was perceived to be somewhere to meet after school. Therefore, some of the community food growing sites have the potential to become the heart of the community. Engaging the local community with the food growing projects involving people with learning difficulties was seen as a potential mechanism for familiarising people with disabilities and breaking down 'the fear factor':

I1: I've done something similar at other projects where we've worked with people with mental health and learning disabilities and worked with community groups, and the general public response tends to be really positive towards the client group we've got. I don't know if that's because it's like, you know, you do get the, 'oh it's a shame group' and then you get the 'oh I didn't realise they could do that' kind of group, and [so] it changes people's perceptions.

Also, the food growing projects can help to engage the community with Manchester City Council, housing associations and other public bodies; through Growing Manchester, people in disadvantaged areas can see that getting involved does pay off and that things can be changed. One group leader observed '*the culture starting to shift, and that people realise it's still there and the cynicism is vanishing a little bit more and people are starting to actually think wow, we are doing this*' (I6).

3.6 WIDER IMPACTS

Some of the projects have gone beyond the borders of the immediate local community to involve people. The voluntary sector, ex-offenders, Community Payback Teams, Fire Service, non-English residents, film and occupational therapy students, and private sector initiatives brought benefits both to the project site and also those involved:

I1: Business in the Community came one day (…) They're all like senior managers at the Co-op and it was really funny because there was a Scottish guy there, (…) he was chatting away and these two women just looked at each other and went can't believe him, doesn't speak to you in the office, he shouts at you, he's really nasty, he's really awful (...). Just shows you, it's a different environment, I said, (...) that's the therapeutic benefit of gardening.

Some groups reported working together with other food growing initiatives, for example, by being involved with the Allotment Society or doing plant swaps with allotment holders. A future ambition for many of the groups was to become more involved with other food growing projects. During the course of the evaluation, the BIG Lottery fund awarded £1 million to the 'Real Food Wythenshawe' initiative[6] and is well-positioned to coordinate networking between different initiatives in the same area of Manchester.

[6] http://realfoodwythenshawe.com/

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE GROWING MANCHESTER PROGRAMME

This section starts from presenting the general remarks about the Growing Manchester Programme by the participants, the group leaders, the training providers and the Food Futures team. Then it goes on to explore the individual elements of the programme: the training and the application process, the small grants and other support provided.

4.1 GENERAL RESPONSE TO THE PROGRAMME

4.1.1 THE PARTICIPANTS

In general, respondents were satisfied with the Growing Manchester programme (Figure 41). The highest rated aspects were the growing sites and the group leadership. The training provided within the programme and the range of produce grown received lower marks (the only issue receiving negative marks). The latter can be explained by the delayed growing season and the fact that some of the projects had not started growing food at the time of the questionnaire survey. For a more detailed assessment of the training, please see section 4.4.

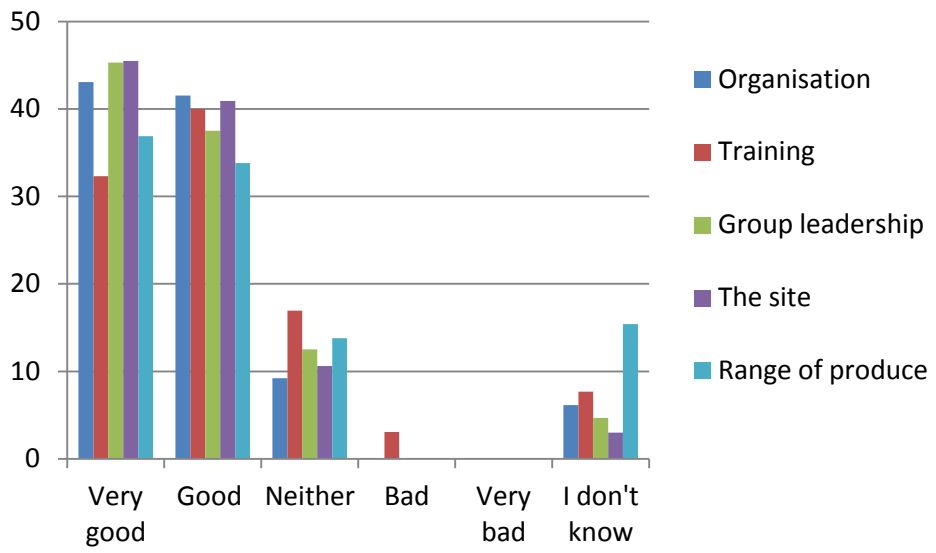


Figure 41 Satisfaction with different elements of the *Growing Manchester* Programme.

In terms of what the respondents would like to see improved, half of the comments related to the actual food growing site: the respondents would like to have more space (11 comments, or 15% respondents), more raised beds, and to be able to grow a wider range of produce (three comments). This was later achieved in the growing season, as the projects have developed (see section 3.3.1). Five respondents felt that their project would benefit from more members and better community engagement; one person would appreciate help with community outreach. Four people would like to see improvements in training, such as a better availability of workshops, more advanced or topical training. Finally, two respondents observed that the projects would be running more smoothly

if the leaders were paid; one person said that the high proportion of learners to leaders makes it difficult to run the project efficiently.

4.1.2 GROUP LEADERS

In general, the leaders interviewed felt that their project was a success. This was mainly attributed to engaging a high number of people, maintaining their enthusiasm and physically changing the site that they are each working on for the better.

The overall success of the food growing initiative can be indicated by the awards won by the projects. One project won 'Best Feature' at the Tatton Park garden show and the Fallowfield Secret Garden, only in operation for eight months at the time of winning, obtained silver at the Royal Horticultural Society awards as well as receiving a Manchester Community Diamond award.

Regarding encountered difficulties, lack of time was one of the main problems particularly for those whose food growing leadership had to be balanced with other work demands, for example, their role as care managers or teachers. Lack of expertise in food growing and other issues was also a hindrance, putting the leaders in the role of *'the blind leading the experts'* (I2). However, the training offered by Growing Manchester ameliorated this somewhat.

Managing the group dynamics was another issue, particularly where involving or retaining volunteers proved difficult. However, the overall feeling was that the groups worked well. In order to maintain volunteer enthusiasm, one leader thought that the site had to be presented as a good place to be involved in. Hence, the training offered within the *Growing Manchester* programme became an important incentive for the participants.

Finding the right balance between teaching others and letting them take the ownership of what they are doing was one of the issues the leaders were grappling with. Nevertheless, managing people meant that one project leader gained other skills aside from food growing which enabled confidence to develop:

> *I4: I've never actually really had to manage people before. So it's a learning process isn't it? I like the challenge, I love the challenge and I relish it. It's great and it's given me so many new skills and teaching me so much. It's given me so much more confidence. I feel that by the time this project's done … I just feel I could walk into pretty much most jobs and just really - because I'm that confident on what I've done so far and what I'm about to.*

4.2 THE FOOD FUTURES TEAM

In the interview carried out in October 2012, the Food Futures team assessed the running of the Growing Manchester programme favourably. In particular, they were satisfied with the framework established in the programme, and the core elements including the small grants, and the training including 'Strong Roots' workshops, 'Introduction to Fruit and Vegetable Growing' and individual site assessments (see also section 4.3 for the training providers' perspective and section 4.4 for the general assessment of training). The lessons learnt from the first round included mainly being more flexible in terms of the support and training offered for the groups, and tailoring the programme's offer to the individual groups. However, it was observed *that 'it's quite tricky to put together a framework that meets everyone's needs all at the time'*.

The difficulty for the team was to balance the need for support in the case of some groups with the aspiration of the project to *'get everybody up and running and then they can sustain themselves in the future'*. However, the lessons from the round one of the programme indicated that for some group the 'independent' path was not achievable.

It was observed that having a paid worker to run the project works well in hard to engage communities, such as for example the 'Green fingers' initiative at the Chatterbox project. Providing this group with a paid community worker has allowed the project to continue throughout round one and two of the Programme.

In comparison to Round One, the move from having one training provider to a number of providers has proven a challenge in terms of management. The training providers were contracted based on a tender, and then matched with the groups to deliver the training, based on location in Manchester, the timing of the training and the experience of the provider.

The organisations involved as training providers have different skills and expertise that they can share with the groups, and are more flexible in terms of the delivery of the training ('one of the examples I remember from the first phase where, and we had one provider, the times that they could provide training was, was sort of between the hours of nine to five Monday to Friday'). However, having several organisations involved was described as being associated with difficulties related to the procurement processes as well as the day to day management, which 'takes more resource and capacity of the team'. This, combined with the larger number of groups involved in round two of the programme, and the fact that the Food Futures managers also had other responsibilities beyond the project, meant that the Food Futures team felt they did not have sufficient time on their hands to manage the expectations of the groups.

The improvements to the programme considered by the Food Futures team included having an introductory event explaining the Programme to the groups potentially interested in applying. This could involve the providers explaining what the different elements of the training were and could help to tailor the training and support to the individual groups.

The team are keen to carry on with the programme. However, any future plans for the Growing Manchester programme are uncertain due to the funding issues: *'the issue of public health moving to the local authority and sort of lack of clarity about what the funding arrangements are for that, coupled with the broader cuts in the council, so it is actually very difficult for us to say we can secure funding in the long term for this'*.

The management of the programme in the future may change, and it may be commissioned to one training provider or an external organisation to take on the coordination role and reduce the demands on Manchester City Council staff and capacity.

4.2.1 CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER MANCHESTER PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES SUPPORTED BY THE COUNCIL

The Food Futures team observed that the Growing Manchester Programme has a good recognition across the Manchester City Council. There is interest in it and support for it in the Environmental Strategy Team, as the programme helps to deliver their objectives around climate change. The Oxford Road Corridor partnership expressed interest, as one of the ideas for the future development of the area is to create 'incredible edible' campus area involving the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University. The partnership was interested in the lessons learnt from the programme.

The programme is seen by the Food Futures team to have influenced the receipt of a million pound funding for the Real Food Wythenshawe. The knowledge about the food growing projects present in Wythenshawe and supported by Manchester City Council has helped to develop that bid. In addition, the Kindling Trust's 'Big Dig' project has been influenced by the Growing Manchester programme. Cooperation with these projects is needed in order to avoid repetition and to pick up the gaps in the current programme: *'for instance one thing we don't focus on so much but they, they focus on is about producing market gardens. I mean, you know, production of food for selling, which is something we don't really look at so much'* (Food Futures team).

The Growing Manchester programme is also seen by the Food Futures team as dovetailing well with the Cooking Manchester programme to promote the idea that people are 'growing their own and linking it up with making sure that they've got the cookery skills to do something with the produce'. In addition, the Food Futures team report that there is an interest in the health issues among the groups (see also section 3.3.3), which provides an opportunity for linking the groups with health trainers. Finally, the Food Futures team believe that, based on the Baguley Buds experiences [see also pp. 51-2], there seems to be an early indication that the programme may influence the children's centres and Sure Start centres to take up food growing.

4.3 THE TRAINING PROVIDERS

4.3.1 WORKING TOGETHER

The training providers rated the cooperation of the Food Futures team highly. However, mirroring the experiences of the Food Futures team, the training providers found working in the team of three organisations as challenging. They felt that some of the other organisations behaved as if they were in competition, not a team. There were some issues associated with the copyright of the materials that were used in the training. There were also overlaps in communication with the groups by different providers on different elements of the training.

> *TP 1: I think it would be good to be able to share, you know, good practice with the other providers but I don't know whether they'd want to.*

> *TP 3: I think there was a bit of confusion about who was doing what when the programme first started. The groups put their application in, found out they were successful and then they just started getting phone calls from me. I was organising Lot One and [another] was organising Lot Two so they had two phone calls from one organisation. But if they also were on Lot Three, Strong Roots or something, then another organisation was ringing them up and they're all talking about the Growing Manchester programme and it's not easy for the groups to understand what's happening to them. I think there was quite a bit of confusion, and I think some of them were a bit miffed about it really, because they just didn't like being confused.*

4.3.2 TRAINING CONTENT AND FORMAT

The training materials were developed by one of the training providers. It was found by those delivering the programme that whilst the content was comprehensive, there was still a need to provide site-specific information,

which required them to be flexible enough to adapt the curriculum. It was found that the format of the original materials, based on PowerPoint presentations was not necessarily the most engaging or the most appropriate to the characteristics of the groups. In addition, the training was aimed at the beginners, when attendee skills were highly variable. One example was the delivery of a beginner's course to a group who had held an allotment for over fifteen years (TP3).

The training providers voiced the opinion that the format was not working well for all the groups, and that extending the training over a number of sessions did not maintain good momentum. This resulted in the providers adjusting the format and the content as they delivered the sessions, to make it relevant to the group's needs and engaging.

The Group Leaders thought that participants in the training found the issues relating to funding, practical skills, and soil to be the most useful. Conversely, the training providers had different experiences delivering sessions on soils and crop rotations; for some groups this was fascinating, for others challenging. This again emphasises that the training needs to be adjusted to the individual groups. Moreover, also, that the training providers should exchange experiences on how the training is delivered to make it as engaging as possible for the participants and deliver good learning outcomes.

A gap recognised on the curriculum was the absence of teaching related to the practical skills, such as for example building raised beds. This was addressed by the training providers first, and then by the more advanced training sessions offered within the programme.

4.3.3 TRAINING THE GROUPS

The training providers reported that every group who accessed the workshops displayed a huge appetite for learning among the participants by asking for more. However, as highlighted above, the make-up of some the groups made the training in its original format not appropriate. Further, the training providers on a number of occasions were not informed in advance what type of group they were expected to deliver the training to, thus either had to be prepared for all possible situations, improvise, or had to do a pre-visit to the site. The variety of the group types involved also meant that the providers found it difficult to deliver the training for more than one group at a time. For example, due to the need for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks community members could not be present at a training event for children, as originally planned.

> *TP 2: When I did have a mixed group of adults with special educational needs and a group of kind of young adults, who didn't have any kind of particular needs, mixing them together did and didn't work. It worked on the fact that the young adults obviously knew quite early on that we were working alongside adults with learning needs and were more tolerant of that but whether that hampered their own learning at the base level I'm not quite sure because again we had to tailor it for all. Not that it's a problem, it kind of proves to other people that, you know, the delivery staff can, diversify and do that kind of thing. But in an ideal situation, not that we want to split them, but if I'd have known a little bit in advance we could have tailor-made it possibly and group them slightly differently.*

4.3.4 PLANNING COURSES

The timing and location of the training were quoted reasons for poor attendance. Some of the groups could not come to the places where the training was held; holding the training at the actual growing site was seen as the best solution. When the training was held was also an issue. Whether the training should be held before the start of the growing season or after the groups had a chance to start growing was discussed. Also, being able to stage the training sessions throughout the growing season was seen as important.

> *TP 2: You're looking at training around February, March, the beginning of the growing season which is ideal but not everybody can have the training at that particular time of year otherwise you'd have hundreds of people in your class.*

The venues where the training was delivered were sometimes problematic. Lack of shelter was an often mentioned problem by the providers, particularly considering the adverse weather conditions in 2012; in other places the providers could not access the buildings. In some cases the providers ended up booking the venues of their own budget.

The training providers were disappointed by low numbers at some courses, since the training was not compulsory. This meant that whilst ten 'Strong Roots' workshop sessions had been planned; only six were actually held. The providers debated whether the training courses should actually be compulsory.

> *TP 1: I think that in the first round Strong Roots was compulsory, although how well that was enforced is another matter. I think it's always been the kind of idea that we'd really want people to have that because, otherwise it could go back to the, you know, well just give me some money and we'll run it and. then it folds, but yeah, you know, we've, we also want to be flexible so we don't want to make groups that actually are just nearly there but just need a bit extra, do everything, because again that's not flexible.*

Certain group leaders thought that low attendance stemmed from freely offering the courses and, consequently, their worth was underappreciated (I4) or that having to travel to a training session is a sign of commitment to the project, and that it pushes boundaries:

> *I6: And in lots of ways I don't think that's a bad thing because it encourages people to go beyond their comfort zone as well. (...) If you have to go somewhere, you have to make more effort. But we have talked to the group and they've come round to the idea that, you know, that it's not that far away, and they're prepared to go, so it's okay.*

For those involved in the project through intermediary associations, such as schools or care homes, their superiors had signed them up. The training providers focussed on the lack of transport for groups, particularly where training courses were held off site. The need to book the venues, combined with the cost of the training

materials (e.g. seedlings) and photocopying the training materials resulted in significant costs and were time consuming for the training providers.

> *TP 3: We realised that we were doing a lot of printing and then I thought … why don't we just give them a book? (...) I think on Amazon it was like three quid, four quid and I'd say we were near enough spending that on printing per participant by the time you've finished with it.*

4.3.5 FUTURE IDEAS FOR TRAINING

The providers would like to see more opportunities for exchange of knowledge and experiences between themselves in order to maintain the standards of delivery and deliver good learning outcomes. Having one organisation overseeing the work of the remaining ones was suggested as a possible framework for future delivery by all three. Central coordination could also help to ensure that the procurement processes are well-organised and run in accordance with the Manchester City Council's procedure.

Improving the marketing of training courses was seen as a potential way of increasing the interest in the courses on offer and securing attendance from more groups. In agreement with the Food Futures team, the providers would be interested in having a fair, or other introductory event, that advertises the courses on offer.

In order to increase the attendance from groups, the providers suggested removing the need to go out to do training as much as possible, and delivering the training on the site. Logistically, training needs to be provided where groups can access it most easily. For example, some of the Wythenshawe groups had difficulty attending sessions in inner city Manchester, particularly when group transport has to be organised. Also, prior sign-up from the groups was seen as a way of securing that they actually turn up to training. Regarding the content of the training, the providers observed the need for more practical rather than theoretical learning. The additional courses should help to meet the needs for more advanced training expressed by the groups. Tailoring the courses in the future to the individual groups' needs, after delivering the training on basics to them, was seen as the way forward.

4.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE TRAINING BY THE LEADERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Overall, the training done was assessed as useful and enjoyable. The support offered for site development was particularly appreciated. The site assessments provided by 'Sow the City' were singled out and perceived as 'fantastic' and 'brilliant'. In the opinion of the group leaders, the learning outcomes of each course were achieved. In 'untypical' groups, i.e. those including children or adults with learning disabilities, it was due to the ability of the trainers to adjust the content and format of the course to the characteristics of the group, beyond the original curriculum and training manuals designed for the course.

Even so, the supporting resource pack was assessed as useful. For those without any food growing skills, the training was seen as a very useful 'starting point' (I5). The training offered was also seen as a good way of organising their knowledge and equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to take the project further:

I6: I think it's been very useful because it's formalising what they are doing and it's helping them to...well, it's improving their skills, obviously equipping people with the knowledge they need to be able to learn how to grow properly rather than just potter around. (…) I guess it's enabling them to make decisions and to have confidence to be able to not just take direction from somebody else, but to actually know what to do and to basically be far more knowledgeable about it than I am.

Although some group leaders thought that the issues covered were too basic for their group, others highlighted beneficial learning about site organisation and planning that inspired them to do more than they previously had thought was achievable. For others, the training included material exceeding the level of growing that they planned. This variability emphasises a need to adjust training to suit the needs of individual groups.

Since travelling to the sessions was difficult for some participants, providing training sessions on the group-specific growing plots could be a future development. The timing and level of detail was not acceptable for all projects, or perceived as incongruent with their day-to-day activities. A second round of training has been introduced to include the more advanced sessions. Though we cannot comment on these, it demonstrates that close dialogue between the groups and the training providers regarding their specific needs and organisation of the sessions can significantly help to shape the training programme in the future. Some of the leaders were in favour of the training being mandatory as it also helps share knowledge between groups and builds confidence:

As mentioned above, people management issues were a problem for leaders without prior experience and so this emerged as an important training gap for them:

I4: The management side of it is where I could probably do with a few more skills and stuff. Because it's quite challenging and I just have to learn as I go along at the moment. But, yes, maybe a bit more on how to deal with people and stuff.

The leaders and the participants engaged in other training, including Big Dig sessions, management training with Action for Sustainable Living, sessions offered by Kindling Trust, and permaculture courses. The Emerge Learning Garden case study describes the cooking skills course offered by this project. Certainly, some of the group leaders identified a gap in knowledge between growing food on the one hand and learning what to do with it on the other. Given the extent of cookery skills programmes already provided in the city, there may need to be some work to connect the two agendas together more clearly.

BOX 3

Emerge Learning Garden Case Study ***Taking the Growing Manchester training further***

The Emerge Learning Garden is run by a non-profit organisation EMERGE, which provides recycling and reuse services to businesses and schools, and promotes sustainable resource management advice through information and education services within the wider community. The allotment is located at the front of New Smithfields Market (an industrial estate) and occupies 20m2. It is fairly visible and has a large advertisement board given by Manchester City Council. There are 16 wooden raised beds in addition to a large polytunnel. The produce is abundant: beetroot, chillies, sweetcorn, garlic, oregano, tomatoes, onions, courgettes, parsley, and (albeit unintended) wild mushrooms. Typically, the allotment is open 11am - 4pm at the weekends and begins with 'a cup of tea and some banter' followed by activities from planting seedlings or weeding as directed by the Group Leader.

The Emerge allotment is carried through by a strong and dynamic group leader. Although there could be up to 15 volunteers, usually there were never more than 1 to 2 people at any one time. Sometimes, these were drawn from the volunteers to other Emerge initiatives. The group leader observed that it was difficult to get enough volunteers to take ownership of the project and to keep that size of site going well.

The Growing Manchester support was used to buy some supplies, but mainly it was the volunteer training that the Group Leader believed to have been most beneficial, particularly the Strong Roots workshop and individual support from Sow the City. The training manuals provided during the Strong Root workshop were easily accessible to the participants in the storage room on site. Whilst the participants generally looked to the Group Leader for directions to activities and advice on what to do (for instance, how to harvest beetroot), some of the volunteers looked in the training manuals for advice when the Group Leader was otherwise disposed. The participants discussed their previous experience of growing or of others growing, usually referring to parents or grandparents and then admitting that they 'were not much of a gardener', but that the project offered great learning opportunities. In particular one volunteer, working also on other Emerge projects, had previously been homeless and thought that the training provided by the Growing Manchester programme could be added to his CV in order to boost his chances of gaining employment. Another volunteer through her participation in the project started growing some things at home in small pots from a supermarket.

It was also thought that the food growing skills could be improved by networking with others running similar projects in the local area: since, in the words of the Group Leader, 'at the end of the day, we are not competing against one another and we should learn from one another about what works well and what doesn't.

The group also took the training in their own hands. On the day of the site visit, a cooking activity using the harvested produce was organised in order to show volunteers and passers-by what to do with fruit and vegetables, and also to promote healthier eating. This activity attracted eleven participants, balanced across gender and age groups, including women and children from ethnic minority backgrounds. One of the volunteers acted as the cooking demonstrator, presenting how to wash and prepare vegetables to make borscht and tomato soup and some of the participants then followed. During this activity, the participants spoke among themselves about food poverty and child obesity. This may have been influenced by a contemporaneous Manchester Evening News campaigns on such subjects. The participants thought that allotment projects like Emerge could help to alleviate this. The Group Leader and volunteers were environmentally aware and indicated that this was one of the main reasons to get involved. Through working on the allotment, ideas around water scarcity and sustainability were much easier to understand through the demonstrations on the allotment site.

Figure 42 Inside the Emerge Learning Garden polytunnel

Figure 43 Group leader demonstrating harvesting beetroot to participants

Figure 44 Group leader and volunteer undertaking a cooking skills demonstration using harvested produce.

4.5 APPLICATION PROCESS, GRANTS AND OTHER SUPPORT

The application forms used in the programme were based on the documents used in other initiatives by Manchester City Council. The application process for programme support was described by the group leaders as 'quite easy', 'straightforward' and 'really simple'. The groups first applied for participation in the programme (in January 2012) and then for the small grants, up to £500 (in March 2012). The initial funding helped to kick-start many the projects. The groups used the funds for a variety of purposes such as purchasing plants, manure, equipment, or to pay for the transport of these. Some only accessed the training programmes. For those who were given cash grants, the usefulness of purchased tools to ensure that enough was available for participants was particularly emphasised.

One improvement that the Food Futures team plans is to bring together the application for training and support, and that for small grants, to allow the groups making the investment into tools, seeds and other necessities at the beginning of the growing season. However, this is difficult with a financial year that ends in March. This financial rigidity, and other necessary processes, could be circumvented by outsourcing the management of the whole programme to another organisation.

Yet, for many groups, the timing of receiving the funding was less important, as they saw it as a contribution to the longevity and sustainability of the project. Receiving funding was also seen as a confirmation that the project is worthwhile and has a future. Even for groups that have received funding and training support from other sources in the past, the financial support of Growing Manchester was invaluable:

> *I5: We've got like eight people here on a nice sunny Saturday, you need like tools for them to work with, not just having one shovel and one fork or one this or one that, you've got to have sort of seven or eight of each, so, yeah, things like tools that came in handy.*

The need for increased networking among the groups was voiced consistently. The networking event on the 11th July 2012 brought together 16 leaders and participants from 10 sites (plus the training providers, Food Futures representatives and the evaluation team) and provided an excellent opportunity for exchange of experiences on involving and attracting volunteers and strengthening capacity and leadership. An example of action taken by one of the groups to develop contacts with other food growers is setting up a Facebook page and 'that's been good because they are getting a bit of input from other people outside of their community' (I6). Subsequently, a training course is provided that allows participants to tour other group projects. This should be welcomed and extended. Best practice in engagement should be shared more widely and include all available media.

5 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 THE PARTICIPATING PROJECTS

With a good geographical spread across the city, Growing Manchester has offered many opportunities for citizens to become involved in food growing who would not otherwise have done so. The plots are varied in size and type, and most have delivered produce. However, many still require a substantial initial investment of time and physical efforts to make them suitable for food growing. Combined with 2012's poor growing conditions, production was delayed. Despite this, the work completed on such sites improved their appearance and gave their participants something to be proud of. Presuming that 2012's activities can be sustained, they will be more prepared for the 2013 growing year.

A wide variety of produce was grown: from the quick and easy (tomatoes, herbs), through to staple foods (potatoes, beans), and even to more exotic and unusual produce. In all cases that we viewed, the participants actively chose what was grown in order to give them the ownership of the project. Where produce was plentiful, it was distributed amongst participants, cooked on site, or exchanged or sold to the local community. Much of the produce was organic; an important driver for participants where the quality and price of fruit and vegetables were observed to be the main barriers to increased fruit and vegetable consumption. This emphasises the importance of initiatives such as Growing Manchester by potentially removing these barriers and providing access to free and safe fruit and vegetables.

The group leader interviews demonstrated that sites increased in size, volunteers were attracted and retained, and produce was diversified, even to the extent of keeping chickens. The project leaders and participants looked for ways to increase their sustainability and self-sufficiency, including other sources of funding, or planning to set up social enterprises or running shops or fairs. The interviewed leaders all aimed to keep their projects going in the future. Therefore, while support from Manchester City Council is appreciated by the groups, many of them have reached a good level of self-sufficiency and sustainability and may be able to continue on their own after the initial support and investment.

Many projects received independent recognition by winning awards at national and regional competitions. Some of them were brilliant at marketing themselves and linking with other organisations. This should be tapped into to promote the entire Growing Manchester Programme and gaining more support for it both internally at Manchester City Council as well as obtaining support from other entities.

5.2 THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants to the individual sites mainly came from the immediate area. This was spread out across age groups and socio-economic backgrounds. However, ethnic minority groups were under-represented. Further research into understanding the barriers to ethnic minority participation may help to ensure that future Growing Manchester investment can be accessed by different groups.

Where groups contain a large proportion of food growing novices, the basic knowledge that they have gained should be harnessed, for example, by identifying specific 'champions', in order to spread that knowledge amongst people not familiar with these issues. This could be particularly important in areas characterised by high material

deprivation and low levels of education where a lack of confidence may prove to be a barrier to teaching from outside organisations; in both case studies, participants exchanged information and looked to each other for mutual support. However, the proportion of beginners to advanced growers may pose future problems for group leaders in terms of management, particularly if they are relatively new to food growing. There may be scope here for tailored training or information support to help group leaders combine food growing skills with site management and delegation (see also section 4.4).

At this early stage, many groups tended to attract people who are currently active in their local community or, in the case of care homes, already supported by social services. Therefore, the projects may struggle to make contact with 'hard to reach' groups since a low proportion of their communication is by leaflets, notices, or online. This suggests that the outreach activities should be encouraged and supported by the Food Futures team. Some suggestions here include:

- Help with advertising, for example, by holding a page on the Manchester Zoom website[7];
- Connecting the food growing initiative to other community organisations, for example those focused on building stronger communities, promoting healthy lifestyles or encouraging family-oriented activities;
- Pairing those on the allotment waiting list to food growing initiatives in order to help them understand whether an allotment is right for them;
- Promote the activities amongst organisations that have established networks with certain groups beyond food growing (such as black and minority ethnic networks, cooking skills groups and environmental groups).
- Where there are groups with good retention of volunteers or at a more advanced stage of development, such as the Moss Side Community Allotment, networking events could pass knowledge to the less advanced ones.

5.2.1 INVOLVING AND RETAINING PARTICIPANTS

Learning new skills was the most important driver for the participants to become involved in food growing projects. This is something that could be emphasised during attempts to recruit new participants. However, people did not find that they learnt skills they could use in their career. This suggests that the biggest incentive is the actual satisfaction gained from mastering a new skill. In the future, a formal qualification could be based on participation in training, for example, an NVQ in Horticulture or similar. There is also an opportunity to ensure that group leaders are certain of the employability skills gained in order to communicate to participants how they can use these skills to enhance their curriculum vitae.

Involving children was a reported driver for some participants. Developing family-oriented activities around the sites, and sharing strategies around good practice, could a future element of the Growing Manchester Programme. This may have attendant benefits: the involvement of families is likely to have the strongest effect on the fruit and vegetable consumption and other lifestyle choices as well as providing an opportunity to deepen inter-generational ties.

The leaders interviewed did not have major difficulties with involving the participants. This may be due to the fact that three of the groups concerned were aimed at specific participants (the elderly, school children, those with learning difficulties). However, the community groups had already completed, or were planning, wide outreach

[7] http://www.manchesterzoom.com/

activities and advertising campaigns; two of them have significantly increased the number of participants involved. These exemplary PR and marketing campaigns should be shared with other groups.

5.2.2 LEADERSHIP ISSUES

The leaders have proved to be pivotal to the success of their individual projects. Their commitment, resilience, tenacity, and ability to enthuse others ensured the continuity and development of the projects. Our questionnaire respondents also judged the leaders favourably. However, time constraints and variable food growing experience are significant limiting factors, particularly for leaders who are employed in intermediary organisations that ran some projects (schools, housing associations, and so on). The community workers have in the past ensured the longevity of some projects, e.g. the Chatterbox project. This indicates the value of finding someone to perform a paid role, in particular in communities and places where the leaders are struggling with engaging individuals.

Some leaders have found it challenging to delegate project management to participants and most groups still require strong leadership. Future work could offer additional support to make this transition easier, whether in form of offering training for 'trainee leaders' or by providing some additional funding to support the leader role. This will be particularly useful to groups run by care managers/social workers, who have other responsibilities.

5.3 IMPACT OF THE PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMME: EMERGING ISSUES

5.3.1 LEARNING

As section 3.4.1 shows, there has been a considerable increase in the food growing skills among the participants of the project, which is all the more laudable given that a significant proportion were complete novices The training was perceived as beneficial and participants were observed using the skills obtained through the training and were reported growing food outside their project site. During the case studies, participants were observed exchanging knowledge and experiences.

The most considerable learning about the well-being benefits of fruit and vegetable growing was achieved amongst those doing least exercise and eating fruit and vegetables least. Participation in the project seems to result in lifestyle change amongst those people. Future research could scope out whether this results in raising the frequency of engaging in healthy behaviour.

The awareness of environmental issues associated with growing fruit and vegetables (including the relationship between food growing and climate change) has also increased through the project, and most of the leaders and the training providers said that they included some of these issues in their sessions. However, it is difficult to make judgements on whether this was delivered by the training provided, the food growing sessions, or acquired elsewhere.

We recommend expanding the 'sustainable growing' part of the 'Strong Roots' workshop, or by offering additional training in order to increase the understanding of the environmental problems. This is particularly valid in terms of the carbon literacy issues that have not been covered by either the training or leaders to a large extent. As many of the participants already engage in pro-environmental behaviours, and are willing to do more for the environment, the additional training on carbon literacy issues could result in identifiable behaviour shifts.

5.3.2 WELL-BEING BENEFITS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS AND COMMUNITIES

The results of the questionnaire survey suggest that the participants' visits to the site tend to be frequent and rather long. Such regular attendance at the project site has the potential to positively affect the physical, mental and social well-being of the participants. Indeed, an increased frequency of gardening and spending time in green space has been reported by the project participants in the last six months.

The consumption of fruit and vegetables among the participants has increased between the beginning of the year and the questionnaire in June. New fruit and vegetables were tasted, even by those who had not eaten much fruit and vegetables prior to growing them. The participants have also tried some fruit and vegetables that they would not otherwise buy in a shop because of high price. On most sites, the leaders reported that the food grown was taken home to cook; the participants were also learning new ways of cooking the produce and exchanging recipes among themselves. Given that fresh produce, grown in a controlled manner, was listed as a main driver when choosing the fruit and vegetable retailers, the freely available food grown during projects, given longevity, will be an important incentive for participants to become involved.

The physical exercise done on site during the gardening activities were seen as a by-product of food growing rather than an aim in itself. However, it was observed that the participants gladly engage in the physical activities at a level appropriate to their abilities. In addition, the fact that over half of the participants were walking to and from their food growing site (mainly short distances) is likely to improve their health and fitness if they would not have otherwise engaged in such activities. It was reported that through the activities on the site some participants of the food growing projects have lost significant amounts of weight; others were feeling fitter.

Some improvements in mental health were observed, particularly prominent for those who are older, had pre-existing mental health issues or learning disabilities. The therapeutic effects of working with plants were also observed for the people involved through one-off outreach initiatives; those becoming involved were reported to be happier and calmer than in other circumstances. The sense of pride achieved by growing food, reported by some of the group leaders, is another important contribution to self-esteem and confidence. This can be particularly significant in areas suffering from material deprivation and social problems, where residents can become disaffected and cynical about any improvements. There has been increase in the empowerment of some of the participants, who became active in for example looking for funding. Thus, transferring some responsibility from the group leaders to the participants should be encouraged to promote these outcomes.

Connecting with other people in the community is an important benefit and a large proportion of participants reported meeting new people on site. The leaders emphasised that their growing plots play an important role in bringing community together and improved the social well-being of the participants. The communities around the project sites also benefit from the food being shared with the local community centres or through shops and fairs, thus encouraging the healthy eating beyond the project site. There are aesthetic benefits too since sites are tidied and look more attractive than being largely abandoned plots. Engaging other stakeholders and volunteers, for example, through the Manchester Leadership Programme, opened their eyes to the issues faced by the areas of material deprivation or made them more sensitive to the needs of people with learning disabilities. Thus, assisting groups in learning or activities that reach out to the wider community should be promoted since it benefits both the wider community as well as benefitting the projects.

5.4 THE PROGRAMME

Drawing on the views of participants, group leaders, training providers and Manchester City Council, we conclude that the *Growing Manchester* Programme should be highly regarded. The sites, leaders and overall organisation were thought, by the participants, to be 'good' or 'very good'. The framework of the programme, including the core training, the site evaluations, supplementary courses and the grant procedure works well. The grants were able to either kick-start projects or ensure their continuity. This initial investment has helped them to either achieve sustainability or move towards self-sufficiency. We recommend that any future allocated support and grants should be prioritised to support existing projects before looking towards creating new ones.

While the core framework of training is regarded favourably, there are some aspects of the delivery that could be improved:

Delivery organisations:

- Having multiple organisations delivering the training brings in different types of expertise; however it also poses problems with coordination and communication between the providers and between the providers and the groups. We recommend that:
    - One organisation coordinates the training programme with responsibility for communicating with the groups (to avoid the confusion reported by some of the providers and ensure the most appropriate timing of the training) and the Food Futures team.
    - Training providers remain in frequent contact to exchange their training experiences and ensuring the best possible learning outcomes.
    - There were some issues with the copyright of materials. This needs to be cleared up to enable information to be shared freely amongst the groups and providers.

Course Content and Format:

- Introductory events should be held to explain the training elements. It is advisable that at such event the groups sign up to training events. This could ensure the commitment from the groups and attendance at the training. In order to ensure that the training is valued by the participants, some of the training could be compulsory to the groups, e.g. to receive the grant a group would need to attend one event on preferred subject at the most appropriate level.
- There is potential for the training to be more closely tailored to meet the needs of the groups involved. To do this the training providers need prior and timely access to information about the characteristics of the groups that they deliver teaching to in advance.
- The focus of the training should be on practical skills rather than theory. Additional context could be provided, as it has been, in handouts or packs for those wishing to learn more.
- Courses should be engaging and well-communicated, rather than relying on PowerPoint presentations.
- In June, the leaders also expressed their need for more advanced training, or the training being available at different levels for the less and more advanced participants. This resulted in developing a programme of additional training courses tackling the more advanced areas of food growing and cooking skills.

Practical Arrangements:

- Where there are additional costs to the providers stemming from the need to hire venues and securing teaching materials such as seedlings or soil, these should be included in the budget or agreed with training providers in advance.
- Our respondents to both the questionnaire and the interviews highlighted difficulties in travelling to the training, particularly pronounced for those older or in ill-health. Also the training providers were of the opinion that the training works better if it is delivered on the growing site, providing that there is shelter from the elements available. We recommend that as much of the training as possible is delivered on project sites.

5.5 BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Both participants and the leaders are keen to acquire more land and expand the food growing projects. We strongly recommend the 'meanwhile' use of the currently unused land awaiting development as temporary food growing sites; this, as an agreement between the community group and a housing association actually helped one of the sites to expand their food growing area. The evaluation shows that the investment of time into securing the site will be easily offset by the well-being benefits delivered by the site.

The networking activities, such as the event on the 11th July 2012, should be continued. They support the development of the food growing skills, help to identify the sources of funding, how to attract and retain volunteers, and offer the general camaraderie and moral support for the leaders and the participants.

Participation in competitions such as 'In Bloom', RHS Awards or Tatton Part Flower Shows is a strong driver for the community groups to work on their growing plot. We recommend the organisation of an internal competition for those groups currently participating in the Growing Manchester Programme that could cover 'best looking site' or 'biggest fruit and vegetables'.

We also recommend that the Food Futures team collates the good practice and the achievements from the first round (the awards, the good marketing strategies, the methods of involving the participants, the development of the sites) and produces it as a brochure for the groups wanting to get involved in the future, as well as for increasing awareness of the Growing Manchester programme within Manchester City Council and outside the city. The Programme already has a good recognition among the teams at Manchester City Council, and it can develop good links with other initiatives across Manchester (e.g. Real Food Wythenshawe). A brochure summarising the achievements in the first two years would be useful as a marketing and PR material. Not only the food growing side should be emphasised, but also the benefits for health and well-being; the entrepreneurial spirit of some of the groups; building the community and presenting Manchester as a green, self-sufficient city.

5.6 EVALUATING THE RESEARCH STRATEGY: COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation method employed in this project combined quantitative and qualitative social research methods, including questionnaire survey, interviews and case studies. It aimed at collection of information from a all of those involved in the Growing Manchester programme (the Food Futures leaders, the training providers, the

group leaders and the participants), thus combining the breadth of data with its depth. The information was collected in systematic manner by following sets of questions for each type of respondent (see appendices), whilst maintaining the anonymity of the respondents. Both quantitative and qualitative data was analysed in a systematic manner by using specialised software (respectively, SPSS and NVivo). Thus, the methodology used here is reliable and replicable if the process is to be repeated. However, it needs to be emphasised that due to the transcription of all the interviews, input of data into the relevant software and systematic analysis, the evaluation is time-consuming and costly and that it has significantly exceeded the number of person-days anticipated in the project proposal.

Several difficulties were encountered during the evaluation. Firstly, the timing of the two rounds of questionnaires (at the beginning and at the end of the growing season) was affected by the adverse weather conditions in spring. This resulted in a delay of the initial round of the questionnaire until June, and the second round until November. Whilst the leaders were very helpful in distributing the questionnaires among their group participants, the autumn tranche had very low response rate due to the groups not meeting anymore having harvested their produce. If similar evaluations are held in the future, we suggest that just one round of the questionnaire is send out at the height of the harvesting season (August/September) in order to optimise the response rate. The questions in the survey are formulated in a manner which allows to estimate the impact of the programme on the learning and well-being of the participants and captures their participation in the training, thus the assessment of 'before' and 'after' can be gauged from one tranche of the questionnaire.

Secondly, the contents of the questionnaire were not appropriate to a large group of the participants including children from the participating schools and those with mental health issues and learning disabilities. This has been partially resolved by eliminating the groups including children from the questionnaire survey and by the staff from Disability Partnership helping their clients to complete the questionnaires. However, in the future close communication is needed between those carrying out the evaluation and the Programme leaders to ensure that the vulnerable adults are not approached directly, but that the information about the programme assessment and its benefits for the participants is gathered through interviews with the group leaders.

We also recommend that in order to gauge the impact of the training, it would be useful to include questions specifically relating to training in the questionnaire. For example, it is likely that for issues such as carbon literacy, participants will obtain information from multiple sources. A question should be asked that allows for this variable to be controlled, for example by asking where participants received information from. This will make the assessment of the impact of the training provided by Growing Manchester on carbon literacy more reliable.

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7 APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE WITH PARTICIPANTS

Growing Manchester Evaluation Questionnaire

We are evaluating the 'Growing Manchester' initiative, which involves community fruit and vegetable growing projects like yours. Your answers are very important to us. We want to know about how you came to the project, your experience of food and food growing, and your interest in the environmental issues. We also ask some questions about your well-being, age and living arrangements.

As a thank you for completing the questionnaire we will enter you into a prize draw to win £20 of shopping vouchers

The questionnaire contains 40 questions and should take you no more than 20 minutes to complete. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers! In most cases, you will only have to tick (✓) one box but please read the questions carefully as sometimes you will need to tick more than one. Please answer all the questions if possible but if there is something that you cannot answer then just leave it blank. Once you have completed the questionnaire please post it in the pre-addressed, stamped envelope attached or return it to your food growing group leader.

We will repeat the questionnaire in the Autumn.

If you have any questions, or require the questionnaire in an alternative format (e.g. large print or Braille), please do not hesitate to get in contact with one of us:

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Please return the questionnaire by 15th June 2012 or as soon as possible after that date.

SECTION 1: YOUR IDENTIFICATION CODE

We aim to protect your anonymity in the survey, but at the same time we would like to match the questionnaire you complete now against the answers we hope you'll give in the Autumn as this will mean that we can evaluate the food growing project. This first part of the questionnaire asks you to develop your unique identification code, which makes it impossible for anyone to identify you whilst at the same time allowing us to keep track of your answers.

I. **What is the last letter of your first name?_____**

II. **What is the first letter of your middle name (if none, use X)_____**

III. **What day of the month you were born (for example, if you were born on the 22 December please write 22)? _____**

IV. **What is the first letter of your mother's first name?_____**

The answers to questions 1 - 4 form your own identification code. We will ask you the same questions in Autumn to be able to match your answers to those given now.

SECTION 2: YOUR FOOD GROWING PROJECT

1. **Which of the community food growing projects are you involved in?** PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Acorn Close Allotment Society	☐	Higher Blackley Urban Orchards / Mirfield Road Community Gardens	☐
Affinity Sutton Gorton Allotment Project	☐	Keeley Close Gardening Club	☐
Baguley Buds	☐	Mary and Joseph House	☐
Chapter 1 – The Limes	☐	Miles Platting Community	☐
Chatterbox Project - Greenfingers	☐	Moss Side Community Allotment	☐
Chorlton Good Neighbours Gardening Project	☐	Muddy Boots Allotment	☐
Crossacres Day Centre	☐	Olivia Lodge	☐
Crumpsall Community Allotment	☐	Philips Park Community Orchard	☐
Debdale Park – Green Fingers		The Byrons Community Gardens	☐
Emerge Learning Garden	☐	The Fallowfield Secret Garden	☐
Friends of Platt Fields Gardening Group	☐	Walled Garden Project	☐
Growing Healthy Lives	☐	Wild about the Addy	☐
Hall Lane Garden Club	☐		

2. **How did you hear about your food growing project?** PLEASE STATE BELOW

3. **Have you been involved in food growing before?** PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

No, this is my first time	☐ 1
Yes - I have done a little bit	☐ 2
Yes - I have done quite a bit	☐ 3
Yes - I am an experienced food grower	☐ 4

4. How important were the following issues to you when getting involved in your food growing project? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX BY EACH QUESTION

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
a) *I wanted to try something new*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
b) *I enjoy gardening and growing plants*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
c) *I wanted to get better access to fresh fruit and vegetables*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
d) *I want fruit and vegetables that are safe (e.g. free of pesticides)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
e) *I wanted to save money by having access to cheap/ free fruit and vegetables*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
f) *I wanted to learn new skills*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
g) *I wanted to meet other people*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
h) *I wanted to do some exercise in the fresh air*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
i) *Other reasons – PLEASE STATE BELOW*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3

5. How far do you live from your food growing project? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

The site is where I live	Less than a mile	1 – 2 miles	More than 2 miles
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

6. How long have you been involved in your food growing project? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

I have just joined	☐ 1	3-6 months	☐ 4
Less than a month	☐ 2	7-12 months	☐ 5
1-2 months	☐ 3	Over 12 months	☐ 6

<u>If you answered "I have just joined" in question 6, please go straight to question 11</u>

7. How often do you visit the food growing site? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Every day	Most days	Once or twice a week	Once every two weeks	Once a month	Less often than this
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6

8. On average, how much time do you spend there on each occasion? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Up to an hour	Around 1 – 3 hours	3 or more hours
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3

9. How do you normally get to your food growing site? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Walk	☐ 1	Taxi	☐ 5
Cycle	☐ 2	Other (Please state) _____	☐ 6
Public transport	☐ 3	Not applicable – the site is where I live	☐ 7
Car	☐ 4		

10. Do you agree with the following statements about the project based on your involvement so far? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX BY EACH QUESTION

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) *I discovered food growing as a new and exciting activity*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b) *I have spent a considerable time gardening at the project site*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
c) *I have gained access to fresh and healthy fruit and vegetables*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
d) *I have saved money by having access to cheap/free vegetables*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
e) *I have learned new skills, which I can enjoy as a hobby*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
f) *I have learned new skills, which I can use for career/employment*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
g) *I have met other people in my community*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
h) *I have a sense of pride that I have achieved something*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

11. How would you assess your food growing knowledge and skills? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX BY EACH QUESTION

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
a) *Currently*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b) *6 months ago*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

12. Have you taken part in any training offered by the Growing Manchester programme? TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Yes – Introduction to fruit and vegetable growing	☐ 1
Yes – Strong roots workshop	☐ 2
Yes – Other training. Please state:_____	☐ 3
Not yet – but I intend to do so when given the opportunity	☐ 4
No, and I don't plan to do so	☐ 5

13. How do you rate the following aspects of your food growing project? TICK ONE BOX BY EACH QUESTION

	Very good	Good	Neither good nor bad	Bad	Very bad	I don't know yet - I'm quite new
a) Overall organisation	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
b) Training provided	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
c) Group leadership	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
d) The site	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6
e) Range of produce grown	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6

In the future, what could be improved? PLEASE STATE IN THE BLANK BOX BELOW

SECTION 3: YOUR LIFESTYLE AND WELL-BEING

14. Do you and your household purchase your own food? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes ☐1 No, the food is brought and cooked for me by others ☐2

If you answered "No" in question 14, please go straight to question 17

15. In the past six months, how often has your household obtained fruit and vegetables from the following places? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	Every day	Most days	Once or twice a week	Once every two weeks	Once a month	Less than once a month	Never
a. Large supermarket	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7
b. Corner shop or mini supermarket	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7
c. Greengrocer / independent shop	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7
d. Market	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7
e. Your project food growing site	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7
f. Other - PLEASE STATE BELOW	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7

16. When choosing where you get your fruit and vegetables from, how important are the following issues? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
a. Price / value for money	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
b. Large selection of products	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
c. Freshness of produce	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
d. How far I need to travel	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
e. The opening hours	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
f. How the food was produced (e.g. Fairtrade, free range, organic)	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
g. Other reasons – PLEASE STATE BELOW			
	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3

17. Overall, how good has your health been in the last 6 months? TICK ONE BOX

Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

18. Overall, how would you describe your lifestyle in the last 6 months? TICK ONE BOX

Very healthy	Healthy	Average	Unhealthy	Very unhealthy
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

19. In the last six months, how often have you…? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	Every day	Most days	Once or twice a week	Once every two weeks	Once a month	Less than once a month	Never
a) Been gardening	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
b) Used a park or other green space for leisure (over 30 minutes)	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
c) Walked, cycled or enjoyed other exercise outside (over 30 minutes)	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
d) Been involved in indoor sports, including the gym (over 30 minutes)	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
e) Socialised with your neighbours	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
f) Socialised with your friends/ family	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
g) Eaten the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

20. Compared to similar time in previous years, do you think you have done more or less of the activities listed below (e.g. compare January-June 2012 with January-June 2011) PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	Much more often	A little bit more often	Neither more or less often	A little bit less often	Much less often
a) *Been gardening*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b) *Used a park or other green space for leisure (over 30 minutes)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
c) *Walked, cycled or enjoyed other exercise outside (over 30 minutes)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
d) *Been involved in indoor sports, including the gym (over 30 minutes)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
e) *Socialised with your neighbours*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
f) *Socialised with your friends/family*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
g) *Eaten the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

21. What are the main issues that stop you eating more fruit and vegetables? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

No barriers - I eat the recommended amount already	☐ 1
I don't like them	☐ 2
My family don't like them	☐ 3
Too expensive	☐ 4
The quality of those that are available is not good	☐ 5
I don't know much about them	☐ 6
I am not confident cooking them	☐ 7
I don't prepare my own meals	☐ 8
Other issues – PLEASE STATE BELOW	
	☐ 9

22. So far, has participation in the food-growing project increased your willingness to taste new fruit and vegetables? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes, very much so	Somewhat	A Little	Not at all – I have been tasting new ones regularly	Not at all – I still don't feel like tasting new ones
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

23. How much do you know about the following issues? TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	A lot	A fair amount	Just a little	Nothing – have only heard about it	Nothing – have never heard about it
a) Benefits of exercise in fresh air	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
b) Benefits of eating fruit and vegetables daily	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
c) Nutritional and health qualities of different fruit and vegetables	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

24. How much, if anything, have you learned about the following issues <u>through your participation in this project?</u> TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	A lot	A fair amount	Just a little	Nothing – I knew quite a lot already	Nothing – I still don't know much
a) Benefits of exercise in fresh air	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
b) Benefits of eating fruit and vegetables daily	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
c) Nutritional and health qualities of different fruit and vegetables	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

SECTION 4: FOOD, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

25. Which of these best describes how you feel about the impact of your current lifestyle on the environment? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

I'm happy with what I do at the moment ☐1

I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment ☐2

I'd like to do a lot more to help the environment ☐3

Don't know ☐4

26. How much would you say you know about the following issues? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	A lot	A fair amount	Just a little	Nothing – have only heard about it	Nothing – have never heard of it
a) Climate change	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
b) Greenhouse gases emissions	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
c) Carbon footprint	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
d) Environmental benefits of locally grown and seasonal fruit and veg	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
e) Impact of food on climate change	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

27. How much have you learned about the following issues through your participation in this project? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	A lot	A fair amount	Just a little	Nothing – I knew quite a lot already	Nothing – I still don't know much
a) *Environmental benefits of locally grown or seasonal fruit and vegetables*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
b) *Impact of food on climate change*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

28. What impact would you say the following activities have on climate change? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	Big impact	Fair impact	Little impact	No impact	I don't know
a) *Driving a car*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
b) *Flying*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
c) *Using electricity and gas in my home*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
d) *Buying food imported from other countries*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
e) *Buying food in a lot of packaging*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
f) *Buying frozen or refrigerated food*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

29. In the last 6 months, how often have you…? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never – I may do so in the future	Never – I don't want to do this	Not applicable
a) *Chosen fruit and vegetables grown in season*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7
b) *Chosen locally grown food over food that's imported to the UK*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7
c) *Decided to buy fruit and vegetables without packaging*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7
d) *Decided to walk, cycle or use public transport rather than drive a car*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7
e) *Done something to reduce the energy use in your home*	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6	☐7

SECTION 6: ABOUT YOU

30. Are you a group leader or a participant in your food growing project? TICK ONE BOX

Group leader ☐1 Participant ☐2

31. What sex are you? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Male ☐1 Female ☐2

32. Which of the following age groups do you fit into? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

18 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	51 – 60	61-70	71 +
☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5	☐6

33. What type of accommodation do you live in? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Owner Occupier ☐1

Social Rental ☐2

Private Rental ☐3

Sheltered Housing ☐4

Other (Please state below) ☐5

_____

34. Do you have a garden or access to another space for growing plants (other than the food growing project site)? TICK ONE BOX

Yes ☐1 No ☐2

35. Do you live on your own?

Yes ☐1 No ☐2

36. Do you have any children under 16 in the household? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes ☐1 No ☐2

37. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least twelve months? TICK ONE BOX

Yes ☐1 No ☐2

38. What is your main employment status? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Full time paid work (30+ hours a week) ☐1

Part time paid work (less than 30 hours per week) ☐2

Retired ☐3

Full time student ☐4

Unemployed (seeking work) ☐5

Not in paid employment (not seeking work) ☐6

Long term sick or disabled ☐7

Full or part time carer ☐8

Other (Please state) _____ ☐9

39. What is your highest qualification? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Higher degree (e.g. MSc, MA, NBA, PhD, PGCE)	☐ 1
First degree (e.g. BSc, BA)	☐ 2
A Levels or equivalent	☐ 3
O levels/ CSEs/ GCSEs	☐ 4
NVQ/SVQ (any level)	☐ 5
BEC (General) / BTEC (General) / City & Guilds Craft or Ordinary level / RSA Diploma	☐ 6
ONC/OND / BEC (Higher) / TEC (Higher) / BTEC (Higher) / RSA Advanced Diploma	☐ 7
Other academic	☐ 8
Other vocational	☐ 9
No qualifications	☐ 10
Other (Please state) ____	☐ 11

40. Which group do you identify with? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

White		**Asian or Asian British**	
British	☐ 1	Indian	☐ 9
Irish	☐ 2	Pakistani	☐ 10
Other white background	☐ 3	Bangladeshi	☐ 11
Mixed		Other Asian	☐ 12
White and Black Caribbean	☐ 4	**Black or Black British**	
White and Black African	☐ 5	Caribbean	☐ 13
White and Asian	☐ 6	African	☐ 14
Other mixed background	☐ 7	Other Black background	☐ 15
Chinese	☐ 8	**Any other group**	☐ 16

☺

Thank you very much for taking part in our survey!

Please return the questionnaire by 15th June 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter

✂--✂

By completing and returning this questionnaire, you have been entered into a prize draw to win **£20** of shopping vouchers.

We also want to interview some people about their involvement in the project. Interviews will last **no more than one hour** and we will make every effort to come to a place convenient for you. Every person that we interview will receive £10 of shopping vouchers for giving up their time. If you are happy to be contacted about arranging an interview, you can put your details below (we promise to detach it from the filled out questionnaire as soon as we have received it so that it cannot identify you).
Name …………………………………………………………………………………………..

Telephone Number /Email address………………..……………………………………………………

You can also use our contact details (see page 1) and get in touch if you would like to know more details before you decide that you want to help.

8 APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH PROJECT LEADERS

June interviews

1. Could you briefly describe your food growing site?

2. Could you tell me about the food growing project?

3. Could you describe your project group?

4. Have you observed / do you anticipate any specific problems or opportunities related to the characteristics of your group?

5. Could you describe a typical day on the site?

6. What are the favourite crops? Any idea why these are so popular?

7. Could you tell me what the participants do with the crops grown?

8. How would you assess the application process for the Growing Manchester programme?

9. What do you think about the type of training on offer (Strong Roots Workshop; Introduction to fruit and veg growing)?

10. What other training do you think would be useful in the future?

11. What do you think about the small grants funding offered in the Growing Manchester Programme?

12. Do you think your project would have been any different, if you hadn't have accessed support from Growing Manchester? (I.e. what was the added value of being part of the programme)

13. What other support from Growing Manchester, apart from training and grants, could be useful in the future?

14. What could have gone better in the Growing Manchester project?

15. How much do you think the participants know / have learnt through the participation in the programme to date about the following:
    a. Fruit and vegetable growing skills
    b. Benefits of healthy lifestyle
    c. Environmental issues related to food production (including climate change)

16. Has the project had any impact on the wider community?

17. Overall, what has gone particularly well so far?

18. Overall, what could have gone better?

October interviews

1. In June you mentioned x, y, x advantages and disadvantages of the project site. How have you coped with them / made the best of them? Please give examples.

2. In June you told us you were growing x, y, z crops. Have you introduced something new since then? Why/why not?

3. In June you told us you anticipated x, y issues related to the characteristics of the group. Have these materialised? What were the main advantages and disadvantages? Please give examples.

4. Similarly as in June, could you describe a typical day on the site in the last few months?
    a. How many people come?
        i. What people do? How long for? How often? *[physical activity]*
        ii. General atmosphere at the site and the mood of the individuals *[mental well-being]*
        iii. Are the participants working alone or together? To what extent do they know each other from the site, and to what extent from other places? *[social well-being]*

5. Throughout the project, have you observed in any changes in the participants' behaviour on the site (e.g. more physical activity; happier and calmer mood; have any friendships developed)? Please provide examples.

6. Have you seen any changes in the participants' knowledge and skills related to food growing throughout the project? Please provide examples.

7. Have you seen any changes in participants' knowledge and behaviour relating to health issues (exercise – outside the site; eating more fruit and veg)? Please provide examples.

8. Have you seen any change in the participants' awareness of the environmental issues associated with food production (organics, pesticides, climate change)? Have you observed any changes in people's behaviour (e.g. where they shop; what they buy in terms of the food etc)?

9. What have been the favourite crops? Any idea why these? Have the preferences for crops changed throughout the project?

10. What have the participants done with the produce – e.g. proportion taken home; have they learnt new ways to cook them? Does it have impact on their families (learning; eating more healthily)? Have you sold any of the produce to financially sustain the project?

11. Has the project had an impact on the wider community (site visibility; are people interested; learning from the participants; influence on other people's behaviour)? What is the general perception of the project in the community? Please provide examples.

12. In June, you mentioned x,y,z advantages and x,y,z which could be improved about the Growing Manchester programme. Do you have any further observations or comments about the programme and the training and support which is on offer? What elements of the training were particularly useful?

13. In June, you said that your project would/ would not be any different if you hadn't have accessed support from Growing Manchester. Has your opinion changed? If yes, how?

14. In general, were your expectations of the programme met?

15. is your food growing project likely to continue beyond this year? If so, has the Growing Manchester programme helped your project to become sustainable? How?

16. Can you sustain the project now in terms of funding (or e.g. selling the produce), or do you need ongoing support in the future?

17. In general, in your project, what has gone particularly well?

18. What has not gone very well?

19. What are the next steps for your project?

20. What advice would you give to other people starting as group leaders on a food growing project like yours?

9 APPENDIX 3 INTERVIEWS WITH THE TRAINING PROVIDERS

1. Could you all say in a few words what type of training or support you provided to the participating groups? How was it developed?

2. Was the format of the training/support (e.g. timing, length/number of sessions, location) suitable to the needs of the groups that took part?

3. Content of the training. Which knowledge was particularly interesting to the participants or demanded by them? Was there anything that surprised the participants?

4. Would it be useful and achievable in the future to tailor the content and format of training sessions to the requirements of the individual groups?

5. Have you had a chance to observe any learning about the food growing among the participants? Do you think they gained significant knowledge through taking part in your courses or support? Give examples.

6. To what extent - in the original training devised - did you cover issues related to healthy lifestyle (e.g. fruit and veg eating and cooking, physical exercise benefits of food growing)? Was there interest in these issues? Do you think there should be more of this in the training programme? Why/why not.

7. Have you observed/been told about any change in the participants in terms of their healthy behaviour, e.g. eating more fruit and veg, doing more exercise etc.

8. To what extent - in the original training devised - did you cover issues related to environmental issues (e.g. climate change, environmental impact of food growing, organic methods)? Was there interest in these issues? Do you think there should be more of this in the training programme? Why/why not.

9. Have you observed/been told about any changes in people's knowledge about these environmental issues and their environmental attitudes as a result of training/participation in the programme ?

10. Have you delivered any of the advanced training? What was the interest in it and the feedback?

11. What challenges did you expect before delivering the training? Regarding the groups, sites, type of knowledge to pass on, format of training. Did these challenges occur? How did you overcome them?

12. Which types of groups do you think have benefited the most from the training programme?

13. What went particularly well? (In regards to the training, to working with other providers, working with Manchester City Council and so on)

14. What could have gone better? (In regards to the training, to working with other providers, working with Manchester City Council and so on)

15. What would you like to improve in the future?

16. If not already covered, do you think the framework of providers worked for the groups? What benefits did you encounter when working with other providers? What challenges did you encounter when working with other providers? Do you think that this format should continue in the future?

10 APPENDIX 4 INTERVIEW WITH THE FOOD FUTURES TEAM

1. Can you describe what led to the birth of the project?

2. Could you tell me what the aspirations were; what did you hope to achieve?

3. Could you describe what you learned from the project's first phase and how it was used in the second phase?

4. Can you tell me more about managing the second phase?

5. How did you manage the application process?

6. How did you go about sourcing the training providers and what were the challenges of managing multiple providers?

7. What other training do you think would be useful in the future?

8. Do you think that things could be managed differently?

9. What have you learned from the Growing Manchester Programme

10. Overall, what has gone particularly well so far?

11. Overall, what could have gone better?

12. How will the programme be taken forward?

13. What, if any, wider interest has been shown in the project across Manchester City Council?