

Social Crofting TOOLKITS



Policies for Inclusivity in a Social Crofting Context

Author: Karrie Marshall, Creativity in Care

To ensure the social croft is genuinely inclusive you will need policies and clear guidelines that apply to staff and participants.

- Equality
- Health and Safety, risk assessment and risk management policies.
- Staff or Human Resources policies are needed for pay; working time, bullying and harassment; discipline, dismissal and grievance; maternity and paternity; redundancy; smoking, drugs and alcohol; whistle-blowing.
- Data Protection and GDPR
- Safeguarding policies to protect vulnerable adults and/or children. Adult protection policy; Child protection policy; PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups); Individual goal setting plans.

Useful Information and support

- Acas <https://www.acas.org.uk> equality policy; staff policies. and safety policy; risk assessments.
- Volunteer Scotland <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/> volunteer policies; adult protection policies; disclosure services for the PVG scheme.
- Check with your local council or NHS for safeguarding support.

What could you offer?

Start small and use feedback to build the service: Planting, weeding, tending, reaping; cooking; animal feeding, moving and care; rural crafts, chores and repairs; sign making; walks, stories, education, and talks; event organising, team work, communication.

Identify rules (policies) people need to follow for each of your activities. Find ways to illustrate the main points. Use as a basis for participants' goals setting.

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Checklist for inclusivity: The following checklist (developed by Creativity In Care CIC) offers a basis to work from.

Sense of comfort

- ◇ An accessible toilet.
- ◇ Clear signs about what to do if using a compost toilet.
- ◇ Hand washing facilities. Soap is best; hand gel minimum 60% alcohol.
- ◇ Seats for people who are unsteady, or who tire easily.
- ◇ Warmth and shelter. Have an indoor option on cold, wet, or wild days.
- ◇ Remind people about hats, coats, gloves and boots. Have spares.
- ◇ Make blankets available (ideally with hoods and waterproof backing).
- ◇ Make refreshments available to warm-up, cool down, or raise energy.
- ◇ Where possible make ground/pathways even or level.

Senses of safety and belonging

- ◇ Provide information before the visit so people feel reassured.
- ◇ Ensure staff and volunteers are friendly and welcoming. This has a significant impact on participants' wellbeing.
- ◇ Have enough people available to support someone who needs to walk more slowly, or needs some quiet time away from the group.
- ◇ Use bright, clear signage and give as many clues as possible about what you expect people to do. Use images as well as large font.
- ◇ Ensure animals are not at risk of being stressed by crowds, and avoid introducing animals with unpredictable behaviours.
- ◇ Check all gates, latches and locks.
- ◇ First Aid equipment; Health & Safety. Risk assessments.
- ◇ Insurance (public liability; employee liability).
- ◇ Safeguarding policies and contact details.

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Sense of interest and meaning

- ◇ Consider a range of sensory experiences to engage people e.g. smelling plants, touching fleece, tasting food, listening to birds or wind. Think of different ways for people to connect with the social croft.
- ◇ Have a few interesting ideas as a back-up, in case your main activity does not fully engage everyone. E.G. a set of laminated images, a guidebook, model animals, familiar poetry about nature, farming or land (William Wordsworth, Robert Frost, John Clare, Kathleen Raine).
- ◇ Be enthusiastic and passionate about your work.
- ◇ People living with dementia can connect more emotionally than cognitively, so the energy of your feelings will matter.

Sense of pride

- ◇ If you ask a question, wait patiently for an answer, and value all contributions. Encourage answers, even if wild guesses and never belittle 'wrong' answers.
- ◇ Research shows that when people are engaged in fun or meaningful learning their sense of achievement, self-esteem and wellbeing increases.

