

# Case Study: OrganicLea

## ABOUT ORGANICLEA

OrganicLea is a community food project based in the Lea Valley in north-east London. They produce and distribute food and plants locally, and inspire and support others to do the same. Their work includes running a fruit and veg box scheme, farmers markets, offering a range of training courses and working with local schools.

## THE MODEL

Building on their existing work-based training scheme, the Farmstart was a response as to where people could move onto after the training scheme. People do a specific Farmstart traineeship for 9 months - the first three months are work based training and mentoring within the OrganicLea production team, the next three months are setting up their own micro-plot on the OrganicLea site, and the final three months are about moving on to their own land and developing planting plans for the next season. At the end of the 9 months, OrganicLea provides land for them to move onto or supports them to find their own land, moving into an 'incubation stage' where they get some mentoring support.

If people are looking to earn a full livelihood they generally outgrow the sites and move on to find their own land and grow their business. A lot of people earn a partial livelihood from it.

## MARKETS

There is the option to sell produce through the OrganicLea box scheme and markets - they get help with quality control, packaging, getting

produce to market on time. Some growers grow directly for restaurants or have other routes to market.

## TRAINING

People have to have gone through one of the OrganicLea training schemes before joining the Farmstart to make sure they have the skills and enthusiasm. Their training offering currently includes Level 1 and 2 courses in Horticulture, traineeships and apprenticeships. When they are on the OrganicLea site, they are growing salad and veg for the OrganicLea market, of which 50% of the market rate is placed in a bursary for when they set up independently.

## COST

There is no cost to the traineeship, but people may have to pay for the horticultural courses (they are means tested). People do not pay rent for the land at the incubation stage but are not provided with any infrastructure, only what is existing on the land.

