

Care Farming: Transforming People's Lives

"I have never come across an intervention that is so successful in helping broken and emotionally damaged individuals to rebuild their lives" Commissioner, Norfolk

What is care farming?

Care farming is the therapeutic use of farming practices – where service users regularly attend the care farm as part of a structured health or social care, rehabilitation or specialist educational programme. The powerful mix of being in nature, being part of a group and taking part in meaningful farming-related activities is what makes care farming so successful. Care farms deliver a range of farming-related activities as part of their service provision, including care of livestock, growing crops and vegetables, horticulture and land management.

Who is care farming for?

Care farms provide services for individuals with a defined need or diagnosis - most frequently for adults and children with learning disabilities, for people with mental ill-health, dementia, children and adults with ASD, those with a drug or alcohol addiction history, children excluded from school and ex-service personnel with PTSD. Around 250 care farms provide services for an estimated total of 8,750 service users per week across the UK. Care farming is becoming more widely recognised by health, specialist education and social care commissioners for delivering a professional, quality service to a range of service user groups. All sorts of different organisations refer people to care farms – from social services, PRUs and APIs to GPs and families.



Who benefits from care farming?

Care farming provides health and social care and specialist education providers with an innovative and effective care option. Society as a whole benefits by reducing the strain on statutory services and the NHS. Farmers have an alternative way to use their farm, to provide health, social and educational care services in addition to or instead of commercial production. Most importantly the service users benefit, with improvements to mental and physical health, increased self-confidence and self-worth, reduced social isolation and for many, care farming changes their lives.

The Growing Care Farming Project

Social farms & Gardens, in partnership with Thrive, are delivering the £1.4m Growing Care Farming Project, part of the Government's Children and Nature Programme (supported by Defra, funded by the Department of Education and managed by Natural England). The Project will expand and transform care farming services across England through a programme of central support, regional engagement, training and quality assurance. The Growing Care Farming Project is a wonderful opportunity to transform the scale of the care farming sector across England, creating more opportunities for both children and adults with a defined need, to benefit from health, social and specialist educational care services delivered on care farms.

For more information email: carefarming@farmgarden.org.uk or visit: www.farmgarden.org.uk/GCF

"I like looking at the animals, like the surroundings, meeting and talking to people – helps me with getting back into work, to gear myself up again. Feeling stronger and physically fitter because of it – especially after my breakdown" Care Farm Participant

