Growing Care Farming

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Care farming is the therapeutic use of farming practices

Care farms:

- Deliver health, social or specialist educational care services for individuals from one or a range of vulnerable groups of people.
- Provide a programme of farming-related activities for individuals with a defined need
- Provide supervised, structured, bespoke care services on a regular basis for service users
- Are commissioned to provide services by a range of referral agencies
- Adults, young people and children

No such thing as a ‘typical’ care farm!
Current health issues

- Obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Mental ill-health
- Dementia
- Comorbidity

Challenges for NHS in treatment and for Public health in prevention

- Interest in commissioning new cost-effective interventions for mental health
- Increasing recognition of importance of nature for health (mental and physical)
Mental ill health in adults and children

- Scale of problem
- Health inequality and mental health
- Increase in mental health prescriptions
- Impacts on:
  - individuals
  - society
  - natural environment too

- Care farming – part of the solution
Care farming – where does it fit?

Green Care
(Nature-based therapy & care interventions)

Therapeutic interventions
- Special populations

Nature-based health promotion

Health promotion - Particular populations

Nature in everyday life
Primary prevention - General population

Health & social care interventions

Public health initiatives

Public health messaging

Source: Adapted from Bragg and Leck, 2017; and Thrive, 2017
Care farming – where does it fit?

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Health promotion - Particular populations

Nature in everyday life
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Targeted/ Specialist

Universal/ Targeted

Universal

Green Care
Care Farming;
Horticultural Therapy & STH;
Animal Assisted Therapy;
Nature therapy;

Source: Adapted from Bragg and Leck, 2017; and Thrive, 2017
Care farming – where does it fit?

Green Care
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Therapeutic interventions - Special populations

Nature-based health promotion
Health promotion - Particular populations

Nature in everyday life
Primary prevention - General population

Specialist education provision for young people (individuals) with e.g. ASD, SEN, behavioural issues etc.

School visits (groups) to farms to learn about food & farming

General messaging about food & farming

Source: Adapted from Bragg and Leck, 2017; and Thrive, 2017
Who is care farming for..?

People with:
- learning disabilities (93% of care farms)
- ASD (86%)
- mental ill-health (70%)
- Physical disabilities (53%)
- Young people excluded from school (50%)
- Young people with mental ill-health (40%)
- Older people (31%)
- Dementia (31%)
- Drug/alcohol history (26%)
- Ex-service personnel (17%)
- Young offenders (16%)
Why does care farming work?

Research shows benefits come from the interaction of three key elements:

**Natural surroundings**
- Psychological restoration
- Reduced stress
- Attentional capacity
- Sense of calm and safety

**Social context**
- Part of a group
- Social contact
- Inclusion
- Sense of belonging

**Meaningful activities**
- New skills
- Sense of achievement
- Responsibility
- Confidence

Source: Bragg and Atkins, 2016
Multiple outcomes from care farming

- Multiple outcomes
  - simultaneously produces positive life outcomes
  - wider than clinical outcomes
  - Integrates health and social care
  - Is therefore cost-effective
  - Also enjoyable – people go back!

- Ticks many of the boxes for health and social care policy
- Ideal for social prescribing and OT
- Still a need to raise awareness of what the service can offer – with commissioners and patients alike
Other facts about UK care farms:

- Typically a care farming session lasts a full day (10am -3pm)
- Most care farms open for 5 days a week
- The majority of care farms (79%) see up to 50 clients a week
- Most service-users attend care farms between 1 and 3 times a week
- Clients come via a variety of commissioning routes
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Referral routes for care farm clients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referral Route</th>
<th>Percentage of Care Farms %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA - Social services</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via family/ carer</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self referral - via Personalised Budget</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Mental Health Teams</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA - Schools</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third sector</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self referral - other</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist education services</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gps</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation/ criminal justice system</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via social Prescribing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• 2016/17 survey

• Approximately 200 care farms in England

• 250+ care farms in UK

• Providing 8,750 places per week

• Currently approximately 320,000 places per year

• Much potential for increase in scale
Care farming is good for agriculture

- Increased viability of farms (esp. family run, post Brexit)
- Involves more people in farming and wider community involvement in farms
- Reduced isolation (for farmers as well as service users)
- Another example of multifunctional agriculture – *Public money for public goods*
- Shows how farming is beneficial for wider society
Growing Care Farming – a wonderful opportunity

- Transform the scale of care farming
- Increase capacity and infrastructure
- Another option for health & social care and specialist education
- An option for farmers
- Ultimate aim: more people with defined needs can benefit
Objective 1: Support the care farming sector to increase the number of care farming places available to 1.3 million places per year - **SUPPLY**

Objective 2: Support the care farming sector to work with the health, social care and education sectors to refer clients into the additional care farm places - **DEMAND**

Objective 3: To gather evidence to complete project monitoring and project reporting and to support programme evaluation
Growing Care Farming

- Building both supply and demand for care farming – NOT delivery
- Target group: children and adults
- For ‘individuals with a defined clinical, social or special educational need’ – i.e. not everyone
- Achieved through partnership working
- Currently in planning and development stage
- Watch this space!
Growing care farming places

Central Support
(Advocacy & promotion, supporting resources)

Training
(for care farmers, prospectives and commissioners)

Growing care farming places – supply & demand

Quality Assurance
(care farming Code of Practice)

Regional engagement & support programme

Growing care farming places
Key Challenges

• Increasing the number of annual care farming places to 1.3 million is ambitious.

• We know there is demand – but unlocking referral pathways and funding is always a challenge.

• We know there is enormous supply potential.

• National support and regional engagement both crucial.

• Need to work together to make this happen.

• In conclusion.....
Growing Care Farming – The opportunity

• Scale of the mental health challenge
• Potential for care farming - part of the solution
• Need to work together to make this happen

• Care Farming:
  • Good for health & social care and specialist education
  • Good for agriculture, farming families and rural communities

• Good for people
Growing Care Farming – opportunity

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