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| **Name** | **WELLIES Project** |
| **Learner Group** | Adults with poor mental health, typically anxiety and depression. |
| **Place** | WELLIES HQ, Chapel on the Hill, Sudbury, Derbyshire. UK |
| **Website** | www.welliesproject.org.uk |
| **What does it do?** | Therapeutic activities with animals, plants and the countryside. |
| **Duration of learning programme** | 5 week blocks- participants can attend for a total of 3 x 5 week courses per year |
| **How often do they attend?** | One day each week from 9.30am – 3.30pm |
| **How are people referred?** | From the National Health Service (NHS) Community Mental Health Team |
| **Aims** | To improve confidence, self esteem, wellness and wellbeing of people with mental ill health |
| **How is success measured?** | * By using an Individual Learner Record where individuals set their own goals and targets. Tutors give feedback on here too. * Observed behaviour such as a participant being more optimistic, active or starting to help others. * WEMWBS- Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale- a questionnaire used to measure wellbeing at the beginning and end. * Group discussion and evaluation |
| **Evaluation techniques used** | Group discussion, learner feedback forms, focus groups of learners, volunteers and referral agencies. |
| **Name of organisation** | Care Farming Development Community Interest Company |
| **Governance and Management** | 3 Directors of CFDCIC and 2 Project Managers/faciliaitors  Staffordshire County Council (the funders) manage the contract and observe lessons and oversee the quality |
| **Learning pathways/progression routes** | A four-week volunteer training course is provided. Participants can progress to being a volunteer.  Participants go on to further learning. |
| **How is it funded?** | Through Staffordshire County Council, Adult and Community Learning |
| **What is the cost per learner per day?** | £75  Including transport, materials, lunch, tuition, project management and admin |
| **Typical activities** | Gardening, cooking, woodland tasks, countryside management, animal care, keeping chickens, |
| **Challenges** | * On-going funding – funding is for revenue costs but doesn’t cover replacement or purchase of equipment or core costs. * Participants can get reliant on the project and want to keep attending rather than seeing it as tool to help recovery. This is difficult as it can be the thing that keeps them well. * Not all volunteers are the right sort of volunteers so this has to be dealt with sensitively * There is a lot of compulsory paperwork and bureaucracy- the contract is very demanding * The project is very much about learning and ACL are very clear that they don’t fund therapy. * We have to embed numeracy, literacy, British Values and ICT into all sessions. |
| **What problems are tackled and how?** | * Social isolation- by providing an opportunity for those with mental ill health to come together with others and take part in a variety of activities in a safe environment * Poor diet- the group cook a healthy seasonal inexpensive lunch and eat it together * Low confidence and self esteem – participants take part in a wide variety of activities with animals, plants and the countryside and * Mental ill health- the project engages with other organisations and agencies to improve mental wellbeing by providing meaningful and appropriate activities. |
| **Social Impact** | * Keeping people well and out of hospital * Teaching coping strategies for wellness and wellbeing- preventing deterioration of health * Happier and healthier people with improved diet through teaching /learning cookery and giving people skills, confidence. A WELLIES Recipe Booklet is produced and distributed * Reduced cost to the public purse of health care |
| **Links to National Strategies** | * Five Ways to Wellbeing * Five a Day * Blurt Foundation – 365 Days of Self care |