



Wild Acres

Alternative Provision
at Bath City Farm

Kelston View, Whiteway,
Bath, BA2 1NW



bathcityfarm.org.uk



Alternative Provision

“I want to be a farmer when I’m older to be honest”

at Bath City Farm is set amongst 37 acres of regeneratively farmed land. We have been a community working Farm for over 20 years. Our mission is to educate, improve wellbeing and transform lives through building a community rooted in nature, food, farming and each other.

Our bespoke approach gets children and young people involved in all aspects of life on a busy Farm. We focus on building trusting relationships with session leaders, peers and animals to support development in key areas.

We create a space where participants can learn strategies to regulate their emotions, enjoy unique successes and build self-esteem.

As a result children and young people develop a stronger sense of self and a more positive attitude towards their futures. We offer flexible programs that keep the individuals at the centre of our practice. We work closely with those who know the child best with whom we review and reflect regularly.

“[My child] is elated after every session and has so much to tell me. She learns so much from the sessions and loves every single minute, even when it's cold and raining. She would have a session everyday if she could!”



Why the Program Matters

Within B&NES are some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the whole country. Recent studies have shown that the need to support children and young people is at it's highest. In 2022/23 one in seven primary and one in four secondary school pupils, in B&NES were persistently absent from school. More young people in B&NES are admitted to hospital with mental health issues than the national average, most frequently linked to eating disorders and alcohol use, and crisis referrals are increasing. Girls, and those living in more deprived communities, are most likely to be affected.

“It is the **ONLY** provision that has worked for our child. She speaks passionately about it.”

Substance misuse and youth offending are both high in Bath compared to the rest of the country. Each young person has their own challenges, but disengagement, from education, training, community, or the wider society, is a common theme here.

At Bath City Farm we are working hard to support these young people with their challenges. We build their resilience by giving them purposeful meaningful tasks to immerse themselves in, a safe place to belong and a more positive outlook for their futures.

Who do we work with?



Our services work best for children from reception up to young people aged 18 who are facing social, emotional, health or personal challenges. Our aim is to provide an environment in which they can flourish and build skills needed to move forwards with their lives.



Children and young people may be referred for a number of reasons:

- Displaying signs of low mental health
- As part of a school's alternative education program either due to behavioural or social needs
- Low engagement with education
- As a supplementary learning opportunity to a traditional academic program
- As part of a home-schooling program





“The Farm helps me to concentrate more and it makes me learn new things.”

This program is an opportunity for real change which takes place over time and is not a 'quick fix'. After an initial 6 week 'getting to know each other' period we would expect another 6 weeks to be attended for real change to start to show. Young people who attend beyond this time frame benefit the most from the work done at the Farm. For the provision to have maximum impact it is important that the young person/s attend all the sessions.

A Typical Session

A session can be for a morning, afternoon or whole day. The variety of activities in each session are influenced by the young person's interests, the seasons, and what is happening on the Farm. Our most valuable resource is the land, which provides us with ingredients and materials for cooking and craft, such as willow, wool, hazel and foraged plants. Lots of time is spent with the animals, with many opportunities to slow down, enjoy their company and have a cuddle.

We will never ask a young person to do anything they are not comfortable with. However, over time we will support you to face things you find challenging on or off the Farm.

Rough session outline:

- You'll be greeted by your session leader outside the Farm office
- You'll head out onto the Farm to spend time with the animals
- Enjoy a snack break
- Choose from craft, cooking, bushcraft, tool work or more animal time



The pathway from referral to participation

We take referrals from schools in Bath, North East Somerset and B&NES council as well as self referrals. The process from referral to participation is as follows:

- We send you an application form to complete which is reviewed by the Farm team to ensure that we are the best setting to meet your needs.
- Subject to availability you will then be invited to visit the Farm for an initial session free of charge.
- Funding is then confirmed and a written agreement is established between the Farm and the setting.
- A date is set for you to attend your first official session.

In most cases we will work with individuals on a 1:1 basis initially before bringing them into a group that we believe is right for them. Groups are usually small at a ratio of no more than 1:2 adult to participant. We do however accept group referrals with a maximum number of 6 participants (please be aware that our ratio of 1:3 is still observed and would require staff from the pupil setting).

In your first session we will chat to you about the goals you wish to achieve whilst at the Farm.

“He really enjoys his sessions with Charlotte. She has truly gained his trust and understands his needs perfectly. He is learning lots of skills, knowledge and she's great at keeping him focused and calm.”



Monitoring

The foundation of our work is a resilience model inspired by research from George Mason's University. It guides us in understanding a young persons' assets and supports their needs. We also consult with schools and families to help understand the individuals intentions.

We use this assessment to plan provision that works simultaneously on a few of the individuals needs . We evaluate frequently to accommodate for any changes.



We are a registered AQA Unit Award Centre. Pupils work through practical, bespoke units of learning and are awarded with certificates of achievement, recognising their progress, whether that is in large leaps or small steps. We aim for participants to complete 1 to 2 of these per term in animal care, conservation work, gardening, craft, bushcraft, cooking and more.

A summary of participants progress is made half termly including awards they have completed and some next steps.

Outcomes

The Farm program outcomes for individuals include: increased confidence and self esteem, increased happiness and positivity, improved emotional regulation skills, improved communication skills and more independence.

Young people gain a variety of practical skills including; knowledge of animal care for a variety of farm animals, crafting skills, growing their own food, foraging knowledge, cooking and more.



Students always talk very positively about the Farm. Most seem to talk about how they held the chickens and were able to be hands on with the animals.



Staff team

The alternative provision team is made up of adults who have a range of experience working with young people. We are all former primary or secondary teachers, and have chosen to support young people in alternative ways. This means we have a good understanding of the challenges facing schools and how we can help.

Staff are supported to carry out their work with:

- Individual supervision
- Ongoing training and development opportunities
- Regular peer reflection
- Annual reviews

We are a registered member of Social Farms and Gardens.

Quality assurance including safeguarding

We take safeguarding of our participants at the Farm extremely seriously. All members of staff have regular safeguarding training and our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is an experienced teacher with many years in the DSL role. Our policies and procedures are available on request.

Contact



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