

Care farming in the UK – Key Facts and Figures

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1. Care farming - key facts and figures at a glance

- **How many care farms are there in the UK and where are they?** 115 care farms took part in a survey in 2012, representing 66% of the 180 care farms that are currently operating in the UK. Care farms are located mainly in England but also in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; at the present time the South West, East Anglia and the West Midlands contain the largest number of care farms.
- **What sort of farms are care farms?** The majority of care farmers (78%) describe their care farm sites as farms or smallholdings and the organisational type as a farm, charity and/or company. Care farms have a mix of field enterprises and livestock, typically grazing, vegetables and woodland with chickens, sheep, pigs and cattle. Care farm size ranges from 0.4 to 648 ha - average care farm size 49 ha.
- **What services do care farms provide and for whom?** Care farms provide a variety of services including the development of social skills, basic skills, work skills, animal assisted interventions and horticultural therapy. The majority of care farms cater for mixed groups of clients including those with learning disabilities, mental health issues and drug and alcohol dependencies, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and with disaffected young people. The total number of care farm users in the UK is around 2998 per week (although this is number is likely to be much higher as only 79 of the 115 farms provided this data).
- **What are the benefits for care farm clients?** Care farmers tell us that the benefits to participants include improved physical, mental health and wellbeing and social benefits. Typically improvements to physical health are development of farming, functioning and basic skills and increased mobility. The mental health benefits clients receive from attending the care farm include improved self-esteem, well-being and mood, increased awareness, self-confidence, enhanced confidence or trust in other people and calmness. Social benefits include development of social skills, team working, independence, formation of a work habit and personal responsibility.
- **How are care farms funded and who commissions their services?** Funding sources for care farms vary extensively: care farms access client fees originating from personal budgets; from Local Authority Social Services; self generated funds; charitable trust donations and some care farmers also receive funding for care farm visits through Educational Access payments as part of the Higher Level Stewardship scheme. Many different organisations commission care farm services but the majority of farms have clients referred to them by social services, Community

Mental Health Teams and education services; together with clients who are self-referred, referred by family or from 'other' sources.

- **How long are care farm sessions and how much do they cost?** The majority of care farms are not residential and most care farm for 4-5 days a week. The usual length of a 'session' is 1 day (5-8 hours). Care farms usually charge for their services - per individual, per session on average £51 per day session (although this ranges between £0- £240 dependent on client ability and degree of care).
- **How many people are working in care farming and what qualifications do they have?** A total of 513 paid staff (246 FTE and 267 PTE) are employed by the 79 care farms who gave us this data in the survey, together with 698 volunteers. The average care farm employs 3 FTE and 4 PTE staff and has 10 volunteer staff. Qualifications held by care farm staff varies, but 61% of farms have staff with teaching qualifications, 54% of farms have staff with farming qualifications, 48% of farms have staff with health and social care and 30% of farms have staff with horticulture qualifications.
- **Why are farmers involved in care farming?** Motivations to: make a difference; extend a service; give opportunity to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups; provide a connection to nature; share the farm environment. Farmers say that care farming is special because there is so much variety; they are farming in a social context and are changing lives.
- **What are the successes of and the challenges to care farming?** Successes highlighted by care farmers include: seeing the effects of care farming on people, making a difference to people's lives, helping the excluded become included into society and/or work and positive feedback from participants, families and referring bodies alike. Challenges include: various funding issues (cuts, more competition, and for all aspects of care farm); transportation of clients to the farm; expansion of services and coping with increased demand; and accessing commissioners.
- **What help do care farmers need?** Care farmers say that they need support with: raising profile of care farming at national and policy level (and within mainstream farming); signposting to funding; dissemination of good practice; accredited training; advice on accessing commissioners; and developing and accessing the evidence base.

2. What is Care farming?

Care farming is the therapeutic use of farming practices¹.

Care farms utilise the whole or part of a farm (*commercial agricultural units, smallholdings or community farms*) to:

- Provide health, social or educational care services for one or a range of vulnerable groups of people (*Includes people with mental health problems, people suffering from mild to moderate depression, adults and children with learning disabilities, children with autism, those with a drug or alcohol addiction history, disaffected young people, adults and people on probation*)
- Provide a supervised, structured programme of farming-related activities (*including animal husbandry (livestock, small animals, poultry, crop and vegetable production, woodland management etc.)*)

¹ See <http://www.carefarminguk.org/>

- Provide services on a regular basis for participants (*where clients/participants attend the farm regularly as part of a structured care, rehabilitation, therapeutic or educational programme*)
- Are commissioned to provide care farming services by referral agencies (*such as social services, health care trusts, community mental health teams, education authorities, probation services, Connexions etc. Clients can also be self-referred as part of the direct payments scheme, or be referred by family members*)

Care farming in the UK is supported by Care Farming UK (which is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status) that aims to provide a voice and support services for care farmers, to inspire decision makers and to develop policies and actions that will support care farming in the UK.

3. About the 2012 scoping study

In 2007/8 the National Care Farming Initiative commissioned the University of Essex to conduct a scoping study to investigate the extent and type of care farming in the UK². Five years later in 2012 the University of Essex updated this work in partnership with Care Farming UK by replicating the scoping study in order to report new figures to care farmers at the UK National Care Farming Conference in November 2012. This key facts and figures document represents an overview of these findings.

4. About UK Care Farms

This section contains information about the care farms, including:

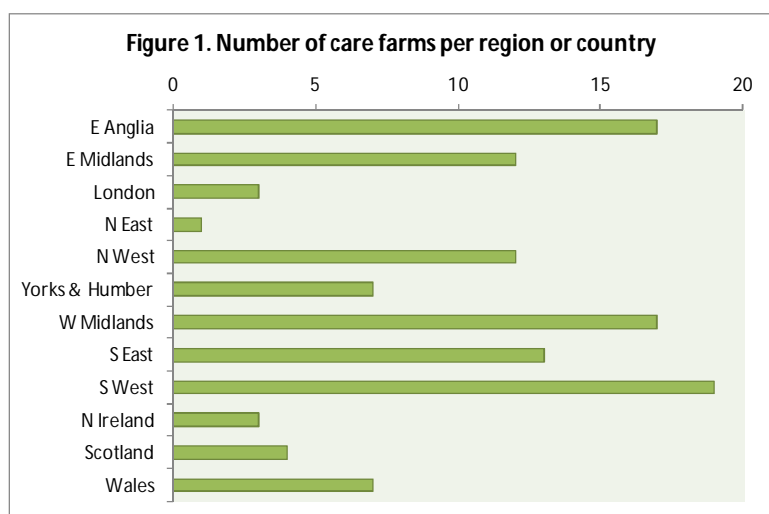
- Number, size and location of farms
- Type of enterprise, site and organisational status
- Sources and proportions of funding

4.1 Number, size and location of care farms in the UK

In 2007 76 care farms took part in the original scoping study. In 2012, a total of 115 care farms returned questionnaires to the University of Essex (representing 66% of the 180 care farms that are currently operating in the UK).

Care farm size has remained constant with farms ranging in size from 0.4 to 648 ha, with the average farm size at 49 ha.

Care farms who took part in this study are located mainly in England but also in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Figure 1 shows number of care



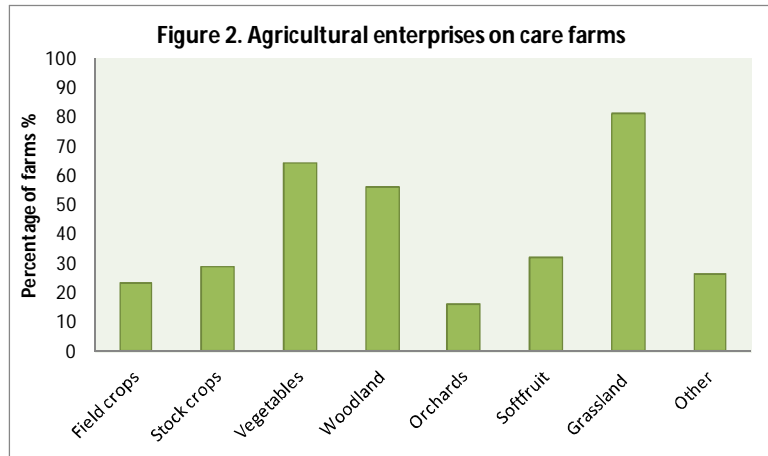
² the results of this study can be found at:

<http://www.carefarminguk.org/sites/carefarminguk.org/files/UK%20Care%20Farming%20Research%20Study.pdf>

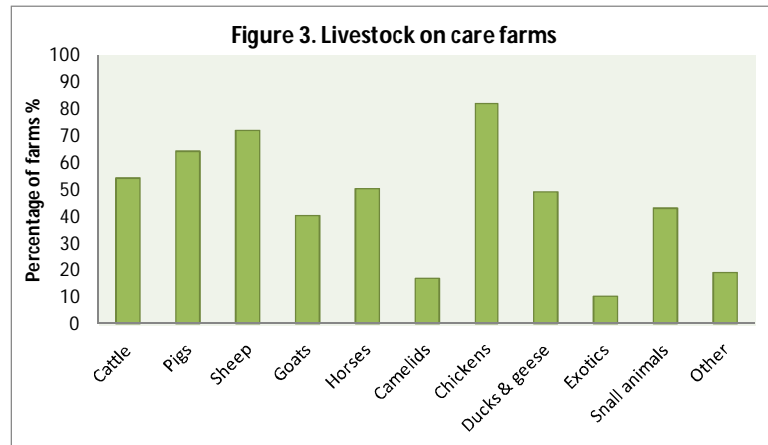
farms by region, but currently the South West, East Anglia and the West Midlands contain the largest number of care farms.

4.2 Type of enterprise, site and organisational status

The majority of care farmers (78%) describe their site as either a farm or a smallholding - 51% as a farm, 27% as a smallholding, 9% as a city farm, 4% as woodland and 9% as 'other'. Gardens and allotments are amongst the site types specified by respondents as constituting 'other'.



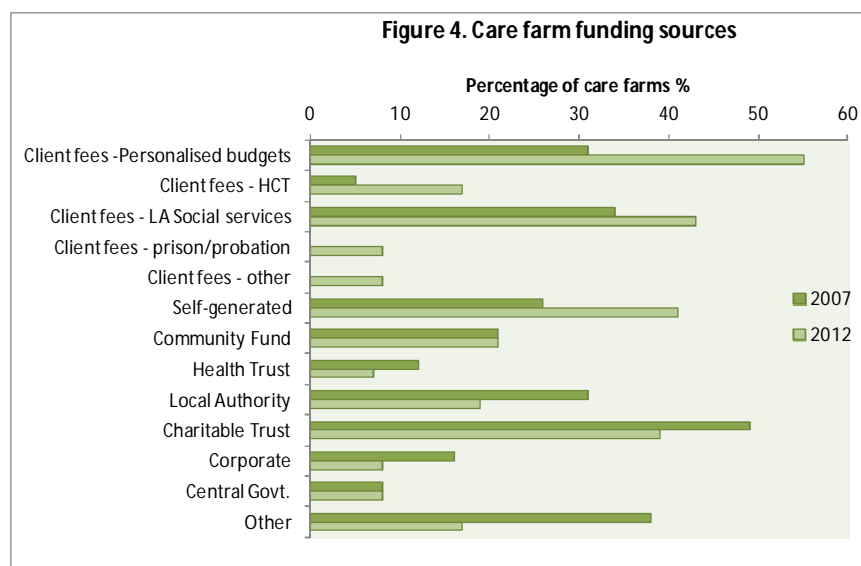
The majority of care farms all have a mix of field enterprises, with 81% of farms having grazing land, land for vegetable and salad crops (64%) and woodland (56%) - see Figure 2. Similarly care farms generally have a variety of livestock on their sites, with the most frequently kept livestock being chickens (82%), sheep (72%), pigs (64%), cattle (54%), and horses (50%) – see Figure 3.



Farmers also classified the type of organisational structure of their care farm - 59% of farmers describe their organisation type as a farm, 36% a charity, 23% a company, 16% community group and 11% as a city farm.

4.3 Sources of funding

Funding sources for care farms vary extensively with 55% of care farms accessing client fees originating from personal budgets, 43% from Local Authority Social Services, 41% self generated funds and 39% charitable trust donations. Some care farmers also receive funding for care farm visits through Educational Access payments as part of the Higher Level



Stewardship scheme. Sources of care farm funding have varied over the five years since the previous study (Figure 4).

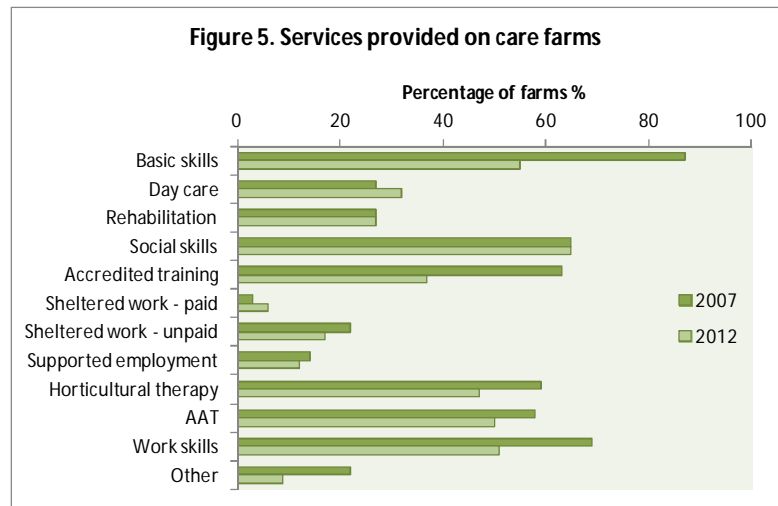
5. Services provided on care farms

This section contains information about the services provided on UK care farms and their cost.

5.1 Care farm services

The services provided by care farms in the UK are varied, but overall the most common services provided are the development of social skills (65% of farms), basic skills (55%), of work skills (51%), Animal assisted interventions and therapy (50% of farms), horticultural therapy (47%) and some form of accredited training or education (37%) – Figure 5.

The duration of care farm sessions vary from a 2 hour session, a half day, or on the farm for the whole day. Alternatively some care farms offer care farming every day for a week or for a full-time course of care for a specified number of weeks. The most common length of time for a session was for one day (between 5-8 hours) and typically care farms offer care farm services for 4-5 days a week. The majority of care farms in the UK survey do not offer residential care (73%) but 27% of care farms are residential.



5.2 Charges for care farm service provision

The majority of care farmers charge per individual, per session. 68% of farms charge per client per day, which works out at an average charge of £51 per day (although it ranges between £0- £240 on client ability and degree of care required) -this represents an increase in charge from 2007. 19% of farms charge for a half day session per client (on average £54) and 13% of farms charge for a session lasting for 1-2 hours (no conclusive data for charges).

6. About the people receiving and commissioning care farm services

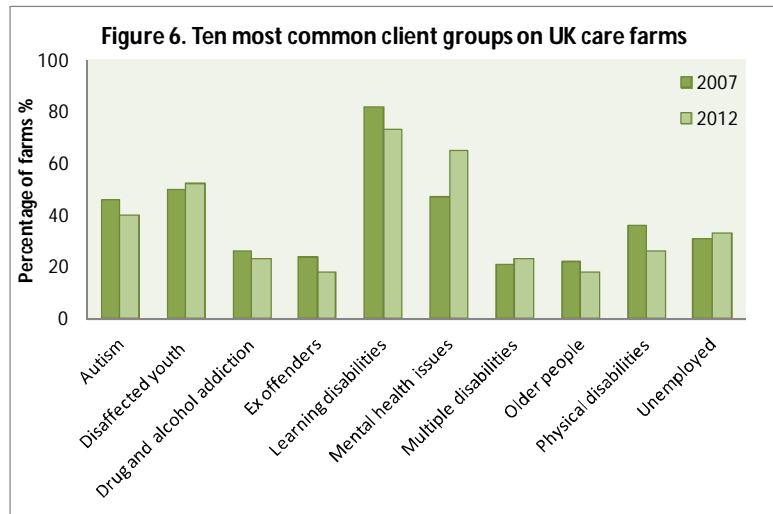
This section contains information about the people attending UK care farms and those who commission the services and includes:

- Numbers and variety of care farm client groups
- Referral and commissioning agencies

6.1 Number and type of clients

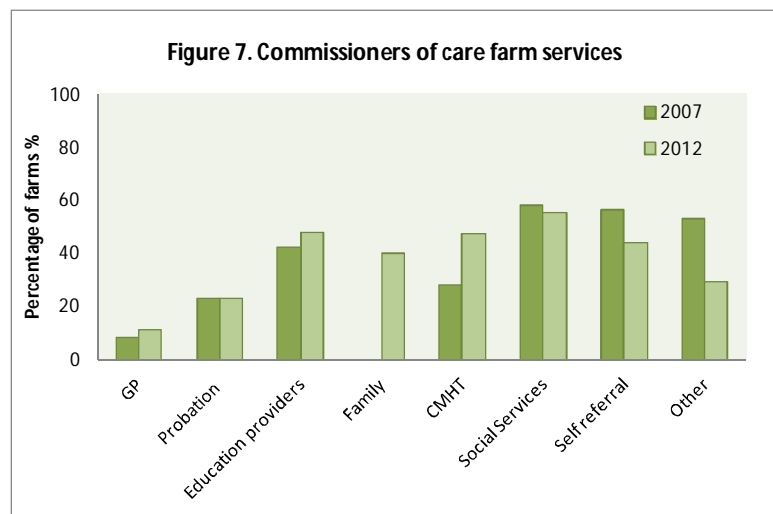
The total number of care farm users in the UK is around 2998 per week - not all the farms who took part in the survey gave us this data however, so this figure is likely to be an underestimate. Numbers of clients visiting a care farm varies from 2-3 to 400 users per week, with an average of 39 clients per farm, per week.

There is much variety in the client groups attending care farms in the UK and most farms provide for mixed groups of clients. The majority of care farms cater for people with learning difficulties (73%) and mental health issues (65%) with 52% catering for disaffected young people, 40% for those with autism (and ASD) – see Figure 6.



6.2 Referral and commissioning agencies

There is much variation between the types of organisation which refer clients to UK care farms but the majority of farms have clients referred to them by social services (55% of farms), Community Mental Health Teams and Education services (both at 47%). 44% of farms have clients who are self-referred, referred by family (40%) or receive clients from 'other' sources (29%). Main changes since 2007 are a rise in referrals from Community Mental Health Teams up to 47% from 28%; and a slight drop in self referrals – Figure 7.



7. Benefits to participants

Care farmers were asked to describe the benefits that they felt participants gained from attending their care farms. These perceived benefits to participants of UK care farms have been split into 3 categories: those affecting physical health or physical attributes; mental health benefits; and social benefits. There are more detailed and scientifically robust studies into the direct health, wellbeing and social benefits to participants attending care farms and some of these can be found at: <http://www.carefarminguk.org/resources>. Evaluation methods used by care farmers for clients are covered in this section.

7.1 Physical health benefits

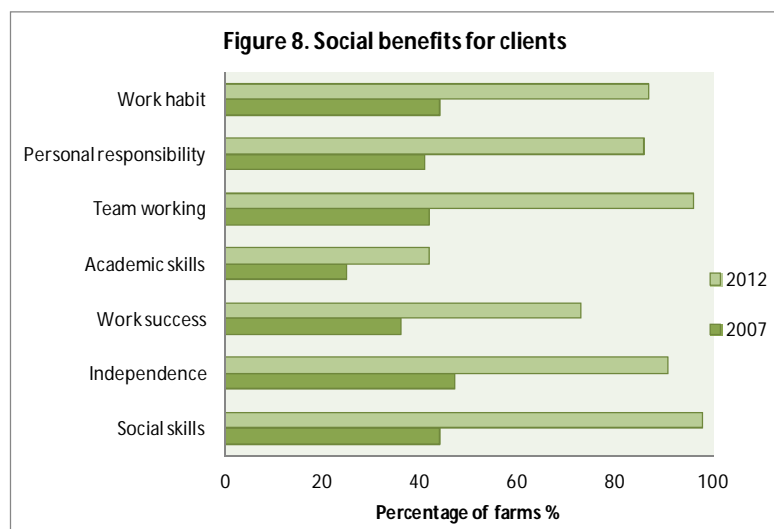
The majority of all care farmers described that the physical benefits to clients include improvements to physical health (97% of farms), development of farming skills (73%) and of other skills (95% of farms). Skills categorised as 'other' include functional skills, increased mobility and development of basic skills.

7.2 Mental health benefits

The mental health benefits clients receive from attending the care farm as specified by the care farmers feature improved self-esteem (100% of farms), improved well-being (99% of farms), improvement of mood (95 % of farms) and increased awareness (89%). Other benefits specified included an increase in self-confidence, enhanced confidence or trust in other people and calmness.

7.3 Social benefits

Social benefits reported by farmers are the development of social skills (98%); team working (96%); independence (91% of farms); formation of a work habit (87%); and personal responsibility (86%) - Figure 8. Other social benefits mentioned by care farmers include an improvement in discipline, responsibility, flexible attitude, initiative, motivation, commitment and health awareness.



7.4 Evaluation

We asked care farmers in the UK about the forms of evaluation that they currently use on their farms to evaluate the degree of success for clients. The majority of care farmers do carry out some kind of evaluation, mainly informal discussion (66%) and written evaluations (46%) with 20% carrying out external evaluations (such as Commission for Social Care Inspections (CSCI), Ofsted inspections, Riding for the Disabled Association inspections etc). Other forms of evaluation include photos, videos, testimonials and SROI (Social Return on Investment).

8. **About the care farmers and their staff**

This section contains information about care farmers and their staff and includes:

- Motivations for starting a care farm
- What is special about care farming
- Number of staff employed on care farms
- Qualifications held by care farmers and their staff

8.1 Motivations

Farmers were asked about their initial motivations for becoming involved in care farming. Answers were of course varied (depending on the context of the farm) but the most frequently stated reasons include:

- to make a difference
- to extend a service
- to give opportunity to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups
- to provide a connection to nature
- to share the farm environment

8.2 What makes care farming special

When asked what makes care farming special to them, farmers gave us a myriad of different reasons, but essentially they concern working with people and the countryside and the pleasure of helping others transform their lives:

- So much variety!
- Working with people and countryside
- Farming in a social context
- Changing lives

“Watching people grow and feel valued”

“The environment is the best I have ever had as a backdrop to working with people and animals”

“We have always loved living here on the farm and now that we have others to share it with our life feels more whole”.

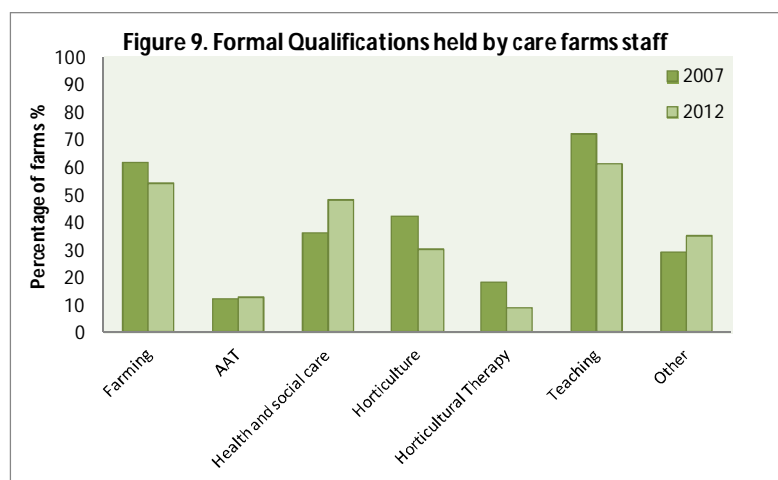
“ I am proud to be part of a growing movement to promote this very down to earth way of increasing wellbeing”

8.3 Staff numbers

A total of 246 full-time staff and 267 part-time staff are employed by the 79 care farms who gave us this data in the survey (513 paid staff in total), together with 698 volunteers. Staffing levels appear to have dropped but only two thirds of farms surveyed gave us this data. The average care farm employs 3 FTE and 4 PTE staff and has 10 volunteer staff.

8.4 Formal qualifications held by staff

The type of formal qualifications held by care farm staff varies, but 61% of farms have staff with teaching qualifications, 54% of farms have staff with farming qualifications, 48% of farms have staff with health and social care qualifications and 30% of farms have staff with horticulture qualifications. Changes from the 2007 survey include a small rise in health and social care, Animal Assisted Therapy and other qualifications and a slight drop in farming, horticulture,



Horticultural Therapy and teaching qualifications – Figure 9.

9. Successes, challenges and support needed

This section is about the successes, challenges and further support for care farming that is needed from the perspective of care farmers.

9.1 Successes

UK care farmers were asked to describe what they feel have been the successes of their care farms and although these varied widely between individual care farms, 3 broad themes emerged:

- Seeing the effects of care farming on people, making a difference to people's lives
- Helping the excluded become included into society and/or work
- Positive feedback from participants, families and referring bodies alike

"Seeing people who did not think they could do anything find that they could"

"Providing a unique and innovative service"

"Developing self-esteem and building self-confidence"

9.2 Challenges

When asked about the challenges that they faced, farmers told us that the main challenges are:

- Funding
 - cuts in funding
 - more competition for the same funding sources
 - funding for all aspects of care farm (service provision, infrastructure, staff etc)
- Transportation of clients to the farm
- Expansion of services and coping with increased demand
- Accessing commissioners

9.3 Support needed

Care farmers highlighted the following areas that they require assistance and support from Care Farming UK:

- Raising profile of care farming at national and policy level
- Signposting to funding
- Dissemination of good practice
- Accredited training or quality assurance
- Advice on accessing commissioners
- Developing and accessing the evidence base