

# Social Crofting TOOLKITS



## Health and Wellbeing in a Social Crofting Context

Author: Karrie Marshall, Creativity in Care

### Benefits

The human body and brain benefit from fresh air and connecting with nature. People report positive changes in mood, alertness and cognitive abilities. There are powerful sensory stimulations that support high quality engagement beyond verbal communication.

The focus on nurturing plants and animals has an uplifting emotional impact. People describe feeling a sense of belonging and being useful (social inclusion) due to learning new skills or being part of something meaningful. The calming effect of farms and natural landscapes is also well documented.

Research confirms that connecting with nature reduces stress levels (Thompson C.W. et al 2012); reduces symptoms of depression. (Berman M.G. et al 2012); enhances mental well-being (Granerud A.& Eriksson G. 2014); and increases energy (Ryan R. 2012)

### Who could benefit from your social croft?

People recovering mental health. Around one in three people are estimated to be affected by mental illness in any one year, with insomnia, eating disorders, phobias, depression, anxiety and disorders affecting personality, mood or concentration. However, with the right support people can recover and find ways of living well with and without symptoms. Being outdoors and connecting with nature are considered important aspects of recovery.

People living with dementia: Dementia is an umbrella term for different sorts of brain changes caused by head injury, lack of oxygen, stroke, alcohol or disease. Symptoms vary. Each experience is unique. Difficulties can occur with verbal language; memory retrieval, confusion, navigation, disturbed vision, concentration, and personality changes. However, people's intelligence, sensitivity, and humour often remain. Social crofts offer more visual and tactile ways to increase brain function, interest and connection.

# Social Crofting TOOLKITS



## Health and Wellbeing in a Social Crofting Context

Author: Karrie Marshall, Creativity in Care

People with learning disabilities: A learning disability affects a person's development before adulthood, and has a lifelong impact. The person is likely to need support to learn skills, communicate and lead a full life. Some people with learning disabilities may also have physical and mental healthcare needs. However, people can overcome many social barriers. Social farming offers people opportunities to develop skills and feel part of a team.

Other groups of people: families with young children; people recovering from addictions; family carers who need a break; people with sensory impairment; people with mobility needs; people with autism; or business employees dealing with high stress levels.

### Identify support needs and payments

Ask individuals, family carers or staff about their particular support needs. Have open conversations to clarify responsibilities. Work out your costs for staff, materials, activities, drinks and snacks, protective equipment and overheads. Discuss the charges, which may start at around £50 per day depending on the activity and whether funded by grant or direct payment.

### Social prescribing

Doctors can prescribe walks and community activities. It is worth contacting local medical centres with information about your social croft events, activities, and contact details.

# Social Crofting TOOLKITS



## Health and Wellbeing in a Social Crofting Context

Author: Karrie Marshall, Creativity in Care

### Useful initial questions:

- Are you happy to help us understand your needs?
- What would an ideal day be like for you?
- If you need additional support, who would come with?
- Do you use walking aids (walking stick? wheel walker?)
- Do you use a wheelchair?
- Do you need support for steps, or walking on rough ground?
- What dietary needs do you have? How often do you need to eat (if diabetic)?
- Are there any medical issues that can cause sudden changes for you (epilepsy, diabetes, noise, anxiety, heart condition, vertigo, allergies)?
- If you are on medication do you manage this yourself? (or who is responsible for your medication?)
- What most helps you feel calm if something upsets you?
- What would you like us to know about your personal care needs?
- What most helps you feel comfortable in a group?
- If you lost interest, or needed time out, what could you bring with you to do?
- What is your experience with dogs/animals?
- What is your experience with gardening/ plants?
- When was last tetanus injection?

### Further Information

Mental Health - [Medical information](#) Mental Health- [Recovery](#)

Dementia - [Information](#) Local one day programmes- [Contact](#)

Learning Disability - Government Strategy: [Keys to Life](#)

Autism - [information](#)

Use the [policies for inclusivity factsheet and checklist](#). This will help you to become clearer about what you can offer.