

## **Adults with learning disabilities**

This year we have enjoyed working alongside our partners at Autism Wessex and Tricuro, with the support of Skills & Learning Bournemouth Dorset & Poole, to help adults with profound learning disabilities to enjoy new experiences and a higher quality of life, and to develop crucial coping skills which help them deal with change and new challenges.

We have provided intensive, overnight stays packed with positive activity to adults across Dorset, and services to adults living in supported accommodation locally. This remains one of the core services at Magdalen.

***The journey of our lives is measured in Firsts.***

***First job,***

***First car***

***First holiday with friends.***

***For someone living with a disability a lot of those Firsts can seem out of reach.***

***Magdalen has provided our clients with a whole new range of Firsts:***

***The First time I fed a goat,***

***The First time I picked my own lunch, fresh from the field.***

***The First time I stayed away from home.***

***This is how you enrich a life, grow as person and make wonderful memories.***

***We hope that more Tricuro clients will have these wonderful opportunities and maybe make some Firsts of their own.***

*Feedback from management of The Ridgeway Centre, Weymouth*



# Outcomes for Adults

## Adults with poor mental health

While Magdalen is generally considered pretty remote, but we are lucky to be within a few miles of one of the region's foremost self-help groups for people with poor mental health; WATCH in Chard. We were pleased to host a visit from WATCH members in early 2018, and to provide opportunities for new experiences, to foster improved self-confidence and self-esteem, as part of the recovery process.

This year we did our first piece of work with Dementia Adventure, hosting couples living with dementia on the farm, enabling them to have a break from day to day life and supporting their experience of the countryside and nature.

Our main partner in the sphere of mental health, however, is the Mosaic Clubhouse in Brixton, London. If we had an award for Enthusiasm to Learn, Clubhouse members would definitely win it. They have been with us several times this year, eager to try new experiences and pushing themselves physically. This is remarkable as anxiety and clinical depression are prevalent, as well as other conditions which make farm-life very difficult. Surviving all the mud and chaos with OCD must be quite a challenge. People who knowingly choose to put themselves through that challenge deserve our greatest respect.

**“I have built up confidence  
that I didn't know I had in me”**

**Feedback from a resident at Autism Wessex**



## Syrian refugee families

While we have worked with unaccompanied refugee children for many years, we had not provided anything for refugee families... until now.

In the summer of 2018 we worked with every Syrian refugee family resettled by the British government into Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole, providing a rare opportunity not only for this displaced and embattled community to come together and share some common heritage, but also to learn more about the country in which they now live, and to enjoy access to its countryside and wildlife.

In the autumn, we extended this offer to families resettled into Somerset.

Working with charities ICN and CHARIS, and with the local authorities, our services for Syrian refugee families in the region will continue to grow next year.

## **Services to refugees increase 4-fold.**

**We provided therapeutic experiences and a warm  
welcome to 164 refugees in 2018,**

**That is 4 times greater than the number for 2017, and  
8 times greater than previous years**

## Families in crisis

Throughout the year we have continued to provide weekends for families referred through Dorset Families Matter who need additional support, respite and just a positive shared experience in order to overcome the psychological effects of tragedy or difficult circumstances. We are very happy to oblige.



# Outcomes for Families

This year we have commissioned improvements in the Farmhouse, creating a wonderful space for our increasing numbers of client families to relax and feel at home in.

Families come to us throughout the year to build memories and to enjoy the countryside and farm life, but the charity's work with families is concentrated on...

- Families with a child with autism or another disability
- Syrian refugee families
- Families in crisis

## Families with a child with autism or another disability

While we welcome people with disabilities of all kinds, most of the beneficiaries with a disability coming to Magdalen are on the autistic spectrum.

Families with children with autism or similar learning disabilities often live in profound isolation, owing to lack of understanding and even ostracism by their neighbours. Their children can exhibit behaviour which many people find extraordinary and alarming, even threatening and intimidating due to the lack of awareness of personal space, unpredictable bursts of noise and physical activity, non-responsiveness and verbal ticks. As a result, families feel they cannot leave the home, they cannot shop together, go to the park or the beach or enjoy normal life in public places.

In early 2018 we delivered a series of Sleepover weekends and one-day Short Breaks. Day to day costs of this programme were supported by the Big Lottery Fund, but your support helped us to give this programme a future, enabling us to plan, fundraise and to establish important new partnerships with parents and organisation, which in turn has led to the Big Lottery Fund agreeing to fund the project for the next 5 years! Dates for events in the first half of 2019 have been publicised and snapped up at astonishing speed.

We are also delighted that parents of children with disabilities are represented on the project's steering group, and have brought fresh ideas and extraordinary zeal.

***“Having a child with severe autism and complex needs and behaviours is socially isolating. Magdalen is a very sympathetic, warm and welcoming environment for a family like ours.”***



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at ever for the Forest School  
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that helps

### Engaging young people with employment and further learning

This year we have been pleased to welcome a series groups of young people who find themselves unsure what to do next. They have been accompanied by our partners at Youth Action Wiltshire, SPLASH and Seeds for Success.

We have also worked alongside an organisation with whom we had not worked before; SWRAC, who brought a contingent of young people who have significant barriers preventing them enter the workplace, including disabilities and mental health conditions.

They have come for the mixture of confidence building activities, and an understanding welcome in the context of a real workplace where essential farm tasks are the backdrop for personal development.

There is a particularly exciting outcome from this work in 2018 – a new programme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund called This Is Your Land which is based on our partnership work and which is aimed at precisely these groups of young people. This Is Your Land is going to be great, but you will have to wait until next year to read about it as it does not start until 2019.

### **Children with disabilities**

Throughout the year, we have been very pleased to provide weekly services to students at Mountjoy School – a local special school at which every pupil has a disability which prevents success in mainstream education.

We have also been delighted to accommodate students from 2 special schools, each of them coming over 100 miles to stay with us for residential school trips.

Most of our work with children who have a disability also involves their families...

Please see below.



## Children and young people who are disengaged

### Engaging children in education:

This has been our biggest and most productive year ever for the Forest School Transitions programme. This year we have delivered the service to 8 schools.

Forest School Transitions is an initiative which is unique to Magdalen that helps vulnerable children to engage more successfully with their new school, despite psychological and emotional barriers which make the move up to secondary education all the more difficult.

We use Forest School techniques with small groups of children throughout a school term. The children are all in their transition year – that is, their first year in secondary education – and have been identified as those who may need help settling into their new environment. There are many reasons why a child may need this help, but without it, these are the children most likely to become truant in later years, with poor attendance leading to poor attainment and reduced future prospects.

This work has been kindly funded by The Dulverton Trust, with additional local support from the Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charitable Trust, but your support has helped us cover management costs for the programme, without which it could not be as effective.

In addition, we have been glad to provide ongoing weekly educational sessions for students who benefit from alternative curricula attending two local secondary schools – the Holyrood Academy and the Axe Valley Academy.

***The children themselves certainly report that they enjoy the practical aspect, especially using the tools and lighting fires however the students have, overall, been open with their struggles with anxiety and confidence.***

**Feedback from a school participating in Forest School Transitions.**



How do you feel after this trip?

I am feeling very happy and good.

My feeling changed, my head feels good.

Feedback from a teenaged refugee from Afghanistan at the end of his stay at Magdalen

## Young Carers

Young carers are children with 'inappropriate caring responsibilities' at home. In 2018 we are delighted to have worked with services representing young carers across the South West region, and to have provided them with residential opportunities designed to help meet some of their needs.

Young carers come to us to improve:

- Social skills and communication with others: Severely curtailed opportunities for play can stop young carers developing good interpersonal skills, particularly with their own age group.
- Emotional resilience: Spending time with other young carers, especially over periods of several days, will enable them to share their stories with each other, realise they are not alone in their experiences and to develop a supporting camaraderie.
- Physical health: Magdalen activities are typically outdoors and active, giving young people an excellent introduction into a more healthy and active lifestyle.



## The headline Care Farming figures are:

- **842** people with disabilities or living in significant disadvantage came to us to boost confidence, skills, enhance their quality of life and personal development. These are our Care Farming clients.
- **124** young carers came to us for personal development, learning and respite
- **164** refugees came to us for therapeutic stay

# Outcomes for Children

## Children who are unaccompanied refugees

There has been an underlying theme dominating our Care Farming work this year. For us, 2018 has been the year of the refugee.

The ongoing international refugee crisis has attracted public attention throughout the year, and our work with people who have been forced to flee oppression and violence abroad has dramatically increased. Details are given below in the *children* and *families* sections.

2018 has been our biggest ever year in terms of working with children who have been smuggled or trafficked into the UK, unaccompanied by parents or other family members. We have had a particular focus on trafficked girls and young women, many of whom have escaped not only from war and oppression in their homelands, but also appalling conditions on their arrival in the UK. We have used the resources of other funders to cover specific costs of this work, including staffing, accommodation, transport etc, but your funds have helped us to manage and administer the programme, including setting strategic partnership plans with the British Refugee Council.

Magdalen's role is as a provider of meaningful interventions through which the children can express themselves, feel valued and useful, and can forge friendships and a peer-support network. Unaccompanied trafficked children feel welcome here, and feel accepted, which can have a profound psychological value to them.

This work has yielded some remarkable results, and some surprising, touching events which have helped the young people to work through emotional and psychological trauma associated with their desperate situations and the violence from which they have fled.



### Engaging young people with employment and further learning

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