

Offering Visitors City and Guilds courses



Larkrise Community Farm is a local charity based in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. A purpose-built building provides living space for a population of small and domestic animals, plus room for tuition of students. Large animals live outside with six acres on the main site and a further five acres on adjoining leased land divided into paddocks and field shelters. Here Ashley Wicks explains about the National Proficiency Test Certificate City and Guilds Course offered at Larkrise Community Farm.

<http://www.larkrisefarm.org.uk>

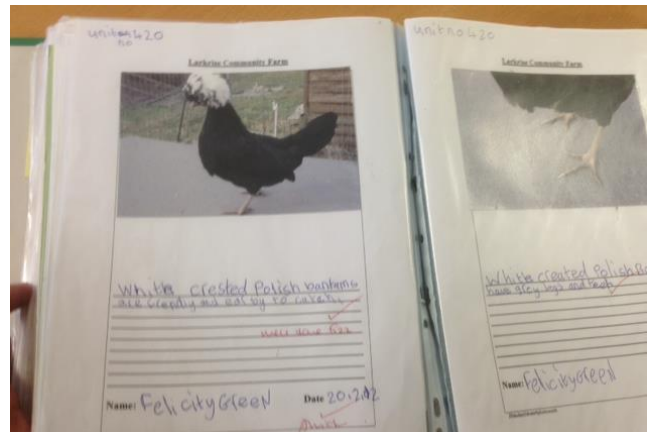
<http://www.nptc.org.uk/>

Here at Larkrise you do lots of different things including regular visits for adults with disabilities, group visits, some through LNFYS and also educational courses?

Yes, we're an accredited centre for a National Proficiency Test Certificate (NPTC) pre NVQ City and Guilds course called 'Skills for Working Life', entry levels two and three. We get lots of children who are excluded from schools or have problems in the classroom.

Do students come from Pupil Referral Units?

Some do, but they mainly come from local secondary schools, children that just can't cope in the classroom. They come here for maybe two or three days a week but they want to get some kind of educational qualification which they are unlikely to get in school. It's a very basic course that involves working with animals, but also includes horticulture and conservation.



So it's a way of people having something to work towards. So if they come on the farm they can actually leave with a qualification?

Yes, it's a selling point for us. If you come here we can offer this which you can't do elsewhere, it's all work based learning.

Do students work as a group?

One of the assessments is working as part of a group. They can ask their Teaching Assistant to scribe for them so they can sit down with them and help them through it. There are sections for poultry, goats, horses, cows, pigs, sheep and gardening. Wendy reads out which student is in which section at registration at the beginning of the week. I do poultry, which is obviously very connected to my previous role as a French teacher!

Have any of the guys come out the other end and said 'I really hope to get a job in farming as a result of this'?

One lad who was a student, he did his level two poultry with us and he has now set up his own poultry business. He is a really clever lad but just didn't click at school, hasn't been since year seven. He has now come back as a volunteer and wants to do level three in poultry. It'll look good on his website to say he's got this qualification. So yes they do use it to get to jobs, also if students want to then go to local colleges the tutors can come and look at the portfolios of the work the student has done here.

How many staff do you have at Larkrise?

There are five of us part-time. We also do a Saturday Club every other Saturday for two or three hours in the morning for local children to look after animals and learn a bit about them. That's mainly main stream children between the ages five and 16, but when they get to 16 they tend to be helpers, we get lots of Duke Edinburgh people volunteering. We charge £7 a child for the morning. We have volunteers; we couldn't do it without them. For visits, including the LNFYS visits, I use a volunteer or get one of the students involved.

So students who are here themselves end up helping others?

Yes, it's good for them and the ones doing the NPTC, part of that is working with a group, its interpersonal skills so you can bring the whole thing together.

