



# From Well-Being to Work Skills

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Supported by



# Farm Ability

**From well-being to work skills**





- educational charity hosted by a working, organic livestock farm (FAI Farms)
- farm-based day service for adults with autism and learning disabilities
- grew from a school visits programme and LNFYS 2011
- 23 'co-farmers' attend across 4 days a week, 50 weeks in the year
- funded through contributions from Personal Budgets, grants, corporate and individual donations, and fundraising events
- the original aim: to provide the best day service in Oxfordshire...

# What did we learn? Can the farm offer more?



Outdoors, in nature, working environment  
Around animals, growing vegetables  
In small groups, learning skills, making friends

Well-being, self-esteem, physical health, improved sleep patterns, reduced anxiety  
Evidence of new skills (independence farm/animal-related)  
Increased communication, sociability, something to talk about  
But **away from the farm?**

- What did Mencap, NAS research tell us?
- What were families, support workers saying?
- What other activities do our co-farmers engage in?
- And employment?

# The farm as a learning space...

- the Oxford REAL Egg project (social enterprise model)
- the ASDAN awards programme
- informal apprenticeship scheme (eggs, vegetables, cut-flowers)
- comprehensive evaluation of FarmAbility (co-farmers, their families, farm staff, FarmAbility staff, and research)





# From well-being... ...to work skills?



**From social care to social change..?**

### A new vision:

- transferable work skills and behaviours
- supporting those who fall 'beneath the radar'
- harnessing the positive impact of farms, farming and nature

### And the challenges?

- too much emphasis on employment?
- moving on from FarmAbility
- employers having the resources and capacity
- working in partnerships and with other providers