

Holme Farm, Surrey

Evaluation Report

November 2024

helpforce



Executive summary

The project

Holme Farm is a community hub offering activities such as a community garden, biodiversity and conservation activities, arts and crafts sessions, and upcycling of donated items. Their aim is to promote and encourage health, wellbeing and community, providing a therapeutic environment where people within Surrey can socialise, learn and thrive.

Evaluation approach

Using its established [Insight & Impact](#) evaluation service, Helpforce follows a consistent methodology to determine the impact of volunteering roles on health and wellbeing outcomes. Target outcomes are identified across a range of beneficiaries representing the people and organisations involved, and then the necessary data is collected to prove and evidence the outcomes. This evaluation consisted of:

- A survey of 250 Holme Farm volunteers;
- Interviews with five volunteers to gather more in-depth feedback; and
- Gathering of testimonials from three partner organisations.

Key findings

- High levels of satisfaction and expectations being met or exceeded.
- Increased connection to nature, the community and individuals, leading to reduced feelings loneliness / isolation.
- Perceived improvements in mental and physical health and skill development for most volunteers.



A selection of outcomes evidenced by this evaluation.

Conclusions & recommendations

Holme Farm is a vital source of community support, with the lease of the site and funding from multiple donors / commissioners required to secure its future and ensure it can continue to benefit the local community. Findings from this report and the planned social impact analysis based on it should be used in discussions with relevant bodies and in marketing to attract new volunteers and raise Holme Farm's profile. Volunteers provided valuable feedback on suggestions for improvements, which should be considered to optimise experiences for all.

Service overview

- Opened in 2022, Holme Farm is a community hub and registered charity in Woodham, Surrey. The site covers eight acres and was previously a disused farm.
- The aim of Holme Farm is to promote and encourage health, wellbeing and community, providing a therapeutic environment where people within Surrey can socialise, learn and thrive.
- They offer a variety of activities, including a community garden, biodiversity and conservation activities, arts and crafts sessions, and upcycling of donated items.
- Holme Farm is community- and volunteer-led, with no paid members of staff. Everyone involved with Holme Farm, whether they are attending activities, an activity leader, back-office support or leadership, gives up their own time to do so. Throughout this report, these individuals are referred to as ‘volunteers’.
- Previous studies into nature-based activities have found evidence that increased exposure to green space and nature is associated with slower cognitive decline, reduced risk of diabetes and increased physical activity.¹ A study into green social prescribing also showed positive impacts on emotional wellbeing, including improved happiness, life satisfaction and anxiety amongst people with mental health needs.²
- The purpose of this evaluation is to understand the impact that Holme Farm is having on its volunteers.



¹ [How the natural environment can support health and wellbeing through social prescribing](#). 2022. Page 5.

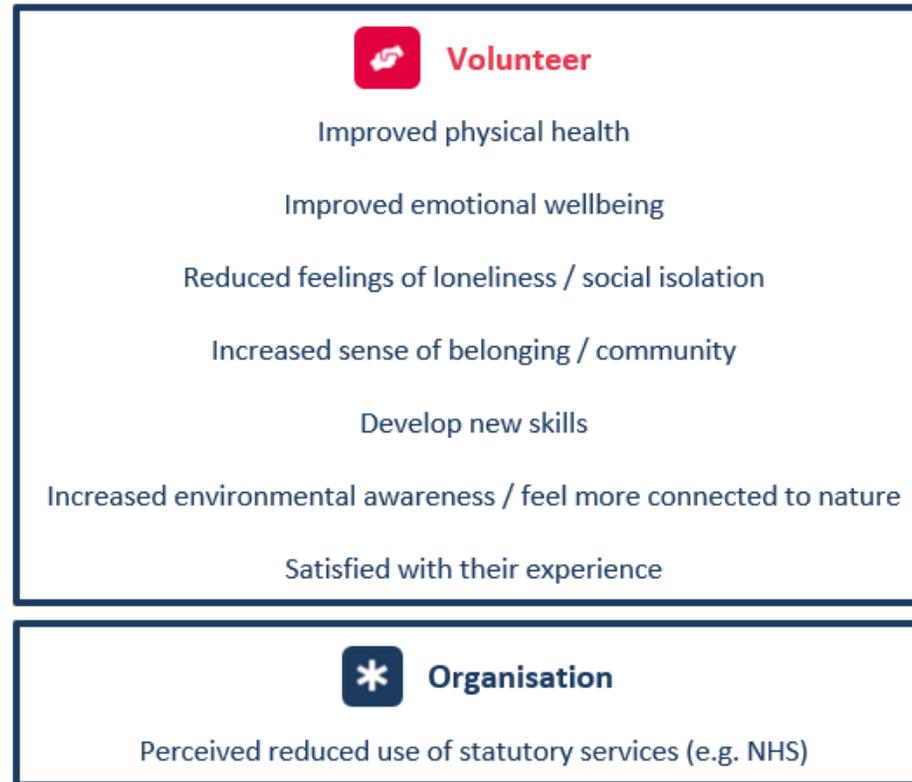
² [National Evaluation of the Preventing and Tackling Mental Ill Health through Green Social Prescribing Project: Final Report Briefing](#). January 2024. Page 2.

Evaluation approach: Outcomes

Helpforce's approach to evaluating...

Using its established [Insight & Impact](#) evaluation service, Helpforce follows a consistent methodology to determine the impact of volunteering roles on health and wellbeing outcomes. Target outcomes are identified across a range of beneficiaries representing the people and organisations involved, and then the necessary data is collected to prove and evidence the outcomes.

The target outcomes for Holme Farm were:



Evaluation approach: Methodology

The evaluation employed three different data collection methods to gather evidence and feedback:

- An online volunteer survey, open to anyone who had been involved with Holme Farm, whether attending, participating in or leading on activities. The survey asked questions about the impact volunteers felt Holme Farm has had on them, their satisfaction with their experience, and where else they may have sought support if Holme Farm wasn't available.
- Volunteer interviews, lasting up to 45 minutes each, focussed on gathering more in-depth feedback from the volunteers about their experience and the impact on them.
- Engagement with partner organisations to understand the impact they feel Holme Farm has had on their service users. Feedback was gathered via a variety of methods: answering questions on a call or via email, or by the organisation providing a written testimonial.



All data collection was completed in September and October 2024.

Throughout the report, data findings are linked back to the beneficiary using icons at the top right-hand side of the screen. Evidence strength is also rated using icons. These icons are as follows...



Please note that most chart labels under 4% have been removed to aid chart readability



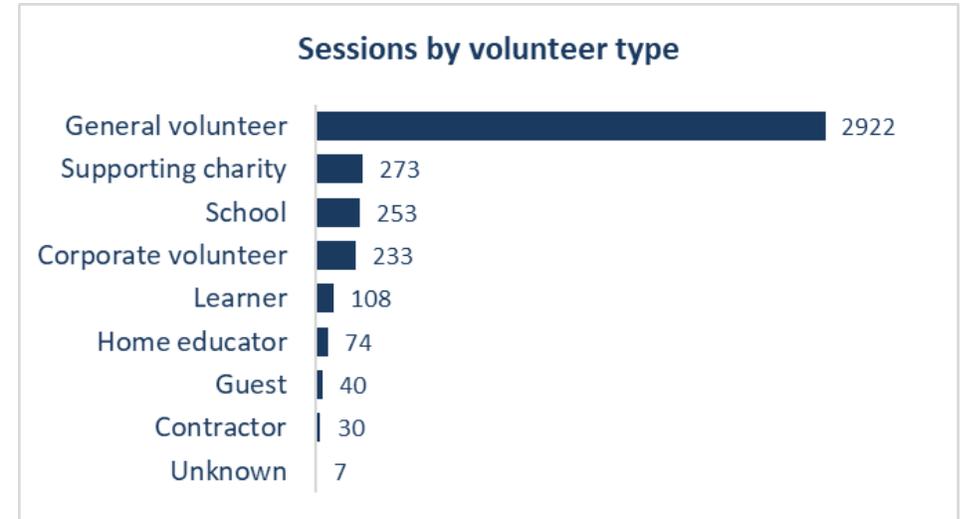
Insight: Volunteer activity

Holme Farm have collected some data on volunteering sessions and time. Between May 2022 and June 2024...



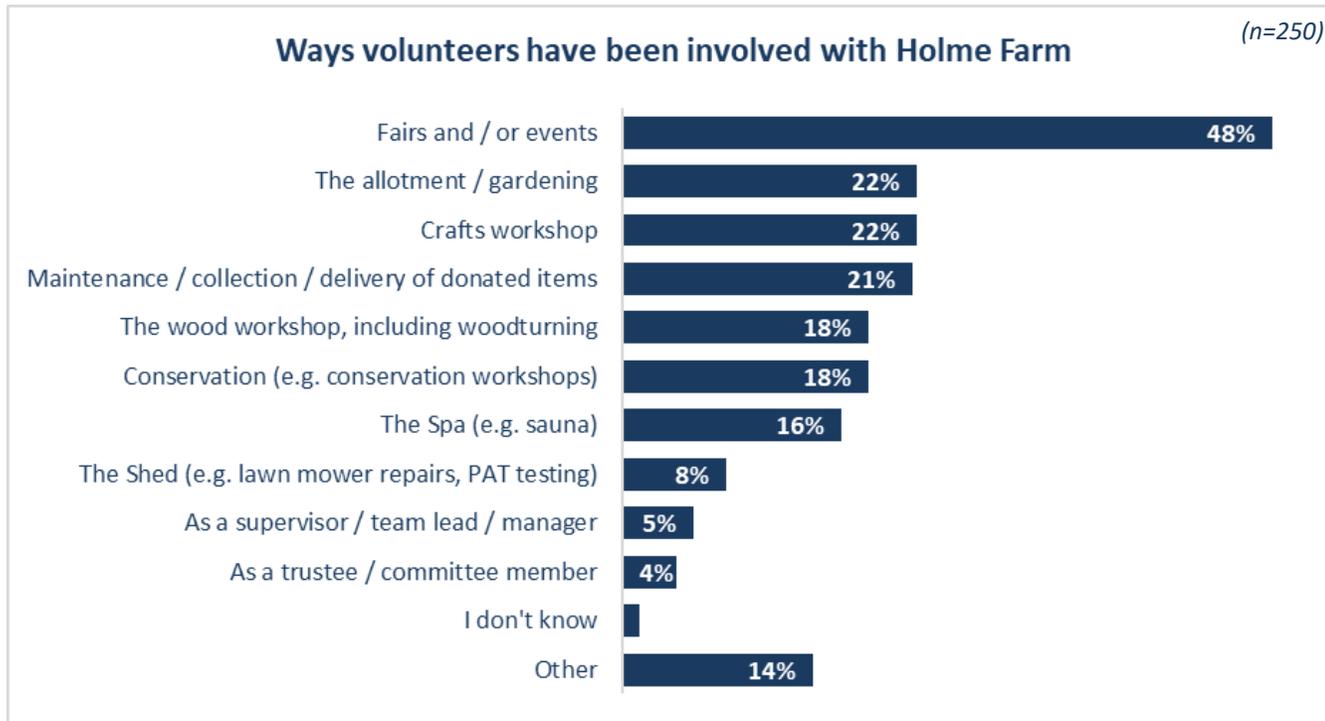
However, data has not been gathered consistently and has only been recorded for 14 months out of the 26-month period, therefore the actual total is likely to be higher. While school, corporate volunteer and supporting charities are recorded in the sessions, the number of unique individuals is not always tracked for these volunteer types, therefore the number of unique individuals is also likely to be higher in reality.

The vast majority of sessions have been completed by general volunteers (74% of the total). These are volunteers who may have attended of their own volition or been signposted by a partner organisation, but all are attending independently and without supervision. A good amount of activity has also taken place with partner charities, schools and corporate volunteers.





Insight: Volunteer activity

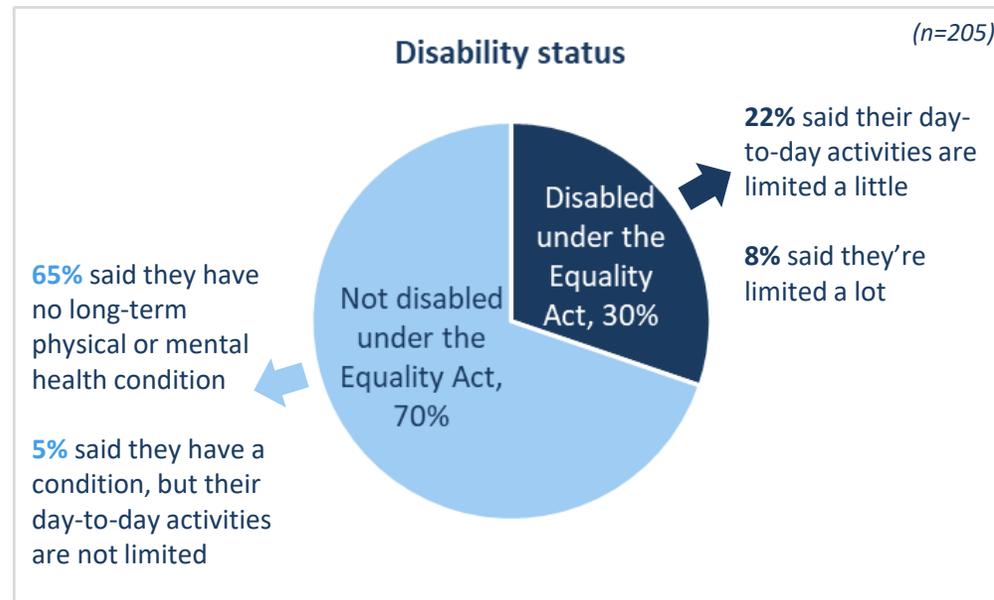


- In the survey, volunteers were asked in what ways they had been involved with Holme Farm. They were able to select as many options as were applicable to them.
- As the most common response, nearly half of volunteers said they had been involved with fairs and/or events at the site.
- Similar proportions of volunteers (ranging between 18 and 22%) had all been involved with some of the main activities on offer at Holme Farm, such as gardening, crafts, maintenance, wood workshop and conservation
- 14% said they had been involved in other ways which included:
 - Organisation support, e.g. marketing, photography, consultancy, ambassadorship;
 - Wildlife activities, e.g. apiary, owl watching;
 - Being parents of children attending activities, e.g. with cubs;
 - Wellbeing visits / walks; and
 - Campfire nights.



Insight: Volunteer demographics

In order to understand more about the volunteers at Holme Farm, questions were asked about their disability status and home postcode. These questions were not compulsory however a sizeable proportion chose to provide answers (82% and 84% respectively).



- Amongst those who answered the disability question, 30% are classed as being disabled under the Equality Act.
- When compared to the local population, this proportion is higher than for Surrey (13.7%) and Runnymede (14.7%) as a whole.³
- It is unclear whether the greater prevalence of disability is purely a result of Holme Farm catering for those with disabilities, or whether it may also be linked to other factors (e.g. if volunteers are skewed older, this may naturally lead to higher prevalence of disability compared to the general population in the local area).

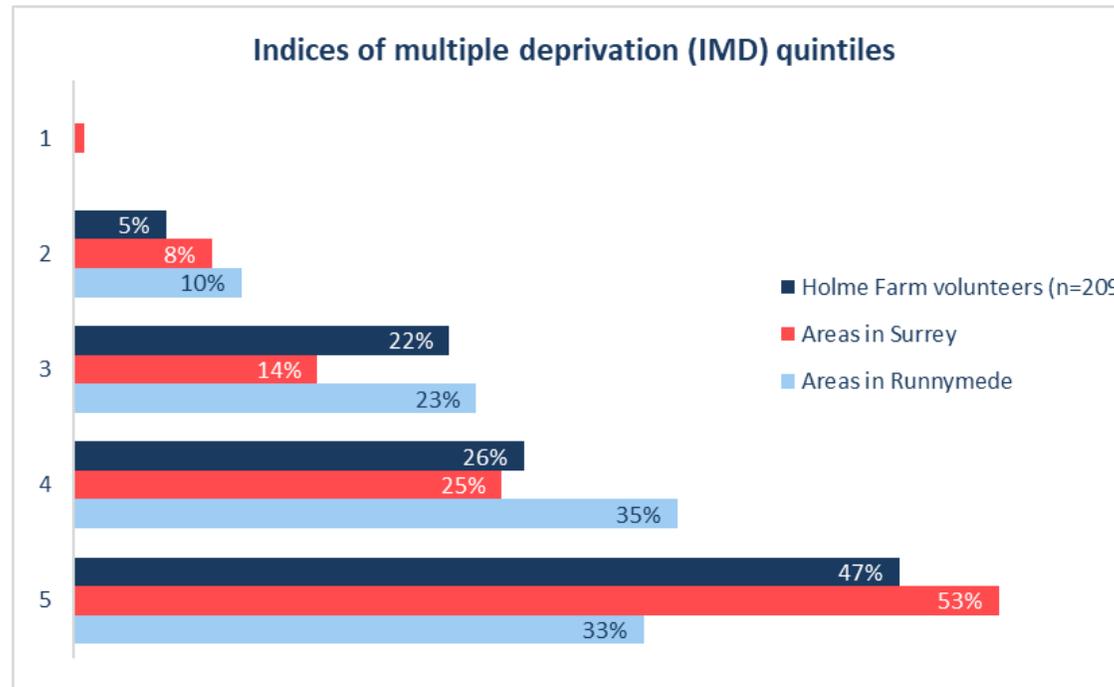
³ Data from the 2021 Census - [2021 Census: Disability | Surrey-I](#)



Insight: Volunteer demographics

The 209 volunteers who provided usable postcode data lived across 18 different local authorities. The majority live in the same local authority as Holme Farm, Runnymede (61%), followed by neighbouring local authorities Woking (20%) and Spelthorne (6%). Fewer than 4% of volunteers live in each of the remaining local authorities, which are spread across Surrey, Greater London, Hampshire and Buckinghamshire.

The postcodes can also be used to look at the level of deprivation in the areas volunteers live in, using the indices of multiple deprivation.⁴ The data has been split into ‘quintiles’ where 1 represents the 20% most deprived areas in England and 5 represents the 20% least deprived areas in England. When compared to Surrey as a whole, the volunteers follow a similar pattern of which deprivation quintile they fall into. When compared more specifically to Runnymede, however, the volunteers over-index on living in the least deprived areas (quintile 5).



⁴ [English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK](#). Volunteer %s are based on total volunteers who provided a usable postcode. Surrey and Runnymede %s are based the number of Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within that area that fall into each quintile. %s are therefore not directly comparable, as one is based on individuals and the others on areas, however LSOAs are designed to contain a similar number of residents and households so have been used as a benchmark. IMD data for Surrey and Runnymede obtained from: [Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 | Surrey-i](#).

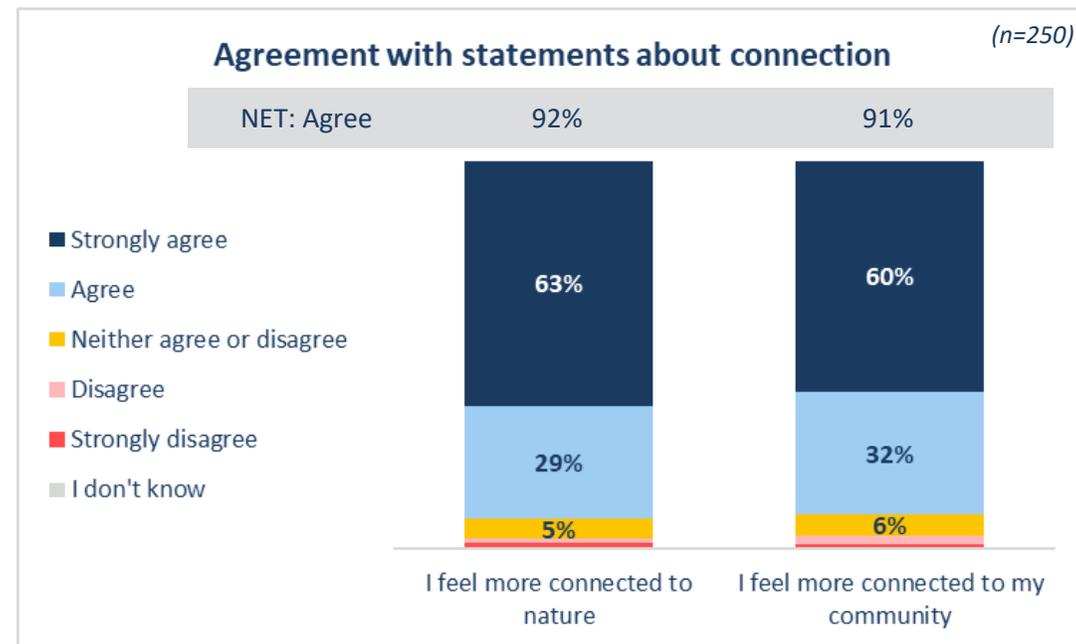


Impact: Connection

- Feedback from volunteers shows that Holme Farm is fostering connection, both to the natural environment and the local community more generally.
- Over 9 in 10 volunteers agreed or strongly agreed with statements regarding connection: that they feel more connected to nature and more connected to their community after attending Holme Farm. Very positively, at least 3 in 5 strongly agreed with each statement.

“The Holme Farm team were so friendly and supportive. The farm is beautiful. It was an excellent environment to learn new skills, spend time outdoors and meet like-minded people who care about life, growth and sustainability. Holme farm is the very essence of community.”

“There is a real sense of community at [Holme Farm] and it's not long before you find your happy place whether it's outside connecting with nature, being part of the allotment and gardening or conservation team or inside helping with arts and crafts, woodworking, sorting or pottering and making new friends.”

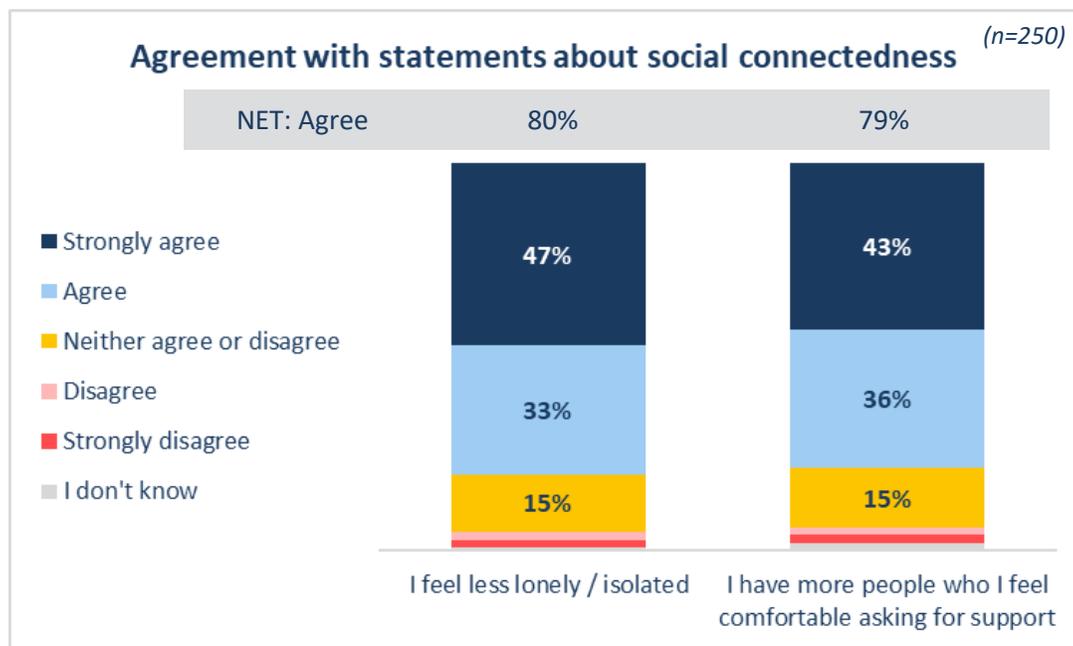


“The atmosphere and community spirit, the welcome and acceptance received by all and the spirit of inclusion regardless of ability. This place works!”

“I like the community aspect. It gives me a place to meet and socialise with members and share life experiences and skills. Working towards a common outcome, a happy community.”



Impact: Social connectedness



- There are also strong levels of agreement on the impact that Holme Farm has had on volunteers' connection with others.
- 4 in 5 volunteers each agreed or strongly agreed that they feel less lonely / isolated since attending Holme Farm and that they have more people who they feel comfortable asking for support, implying that their social support networks have expanded.

"My brother volunteers there on a weekly basis and it's given him a whole new interest and group of friends after his partner died during the pandemic. I am very grateful to them for this."

"I just love going to Holme Farm, there is always something to do and people to talk to. I like doing crafts and help run a group once a week. It has meant I am not at home doing things on my own all the time. The craft group has enabled me to make some great friends."

"Seeing the difference Holme Farm makes in the community to combat loneliness is remarkable."

"Granted the ability to interact with people and not feel like I was a hindrance."

Volunteer story



Tara started attending Holme Farm two years ago when she felt like she needed to find something that was just for her. After taking retirement when she was made redundant, she spent a lot of time at home and focussed on others, with caring responsibilities for older family members and her adult daughters. She found out about Holme Farm after seeing a post on Facebook.

She sees Holme Farm as *'a bit of escapism from my normal life'* which allows her to leave her worries behind: *'when I go through the gate, the outside world stays on the other side of the gate. And then when I'm in Holme Farm, I just lose myself in what I'm doing'*. She feels this has had preventative benefits in terms of her wellbeing: *'I think if I stayed in and thought about it long enough, I could probably easily go to the doctor and get antidepressants'*. She has seen improvements in her mental health, physical health and connection with others.

During her time volunteering, Tara's role has developed from participating in activities to taking on more of an activity leader position. She now takes great joy from supporting other volunteers to achieve their potential: she likes being able to spot *'that someone else has a need for something and try and make that come true for them. So that gives me a buzz...because I'm in a position at Holme Farm that I can make a difference to Holme Farm the charity but also to other Holme Farm volunteers'*.

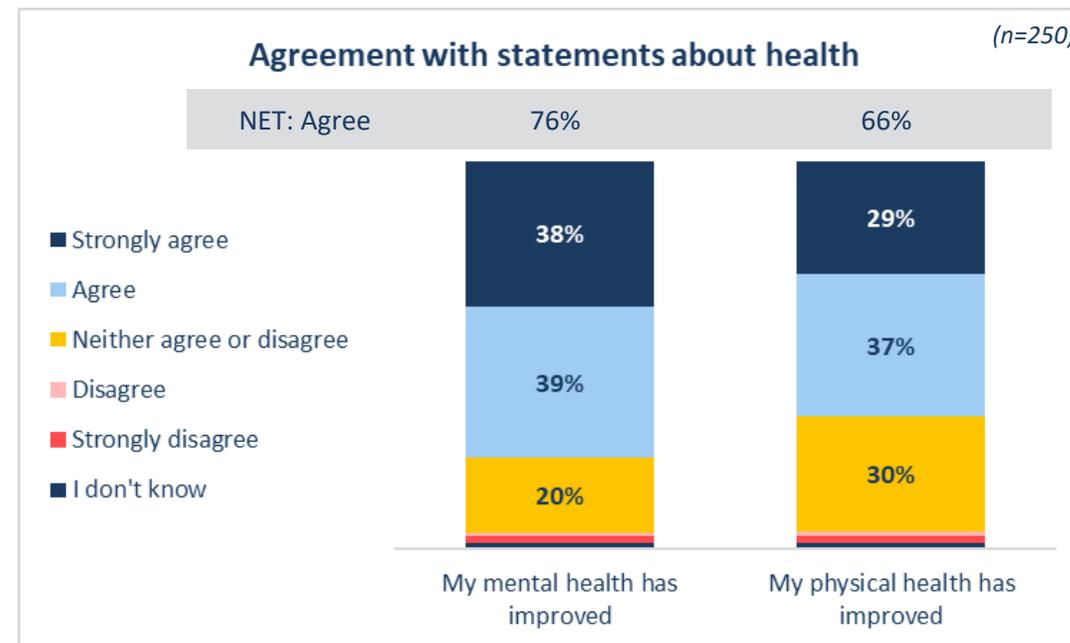
She recognises that great change can happen to people when they have a responsibility and purpose: *'I think that's where some of this starts. You need to have something to get out and get out of bed for, and this provides it for whatever capacity you want to be there in'*.

NB: This case study is based on interviews with volunteers and has subsequently been anonymised. Name has been changed and the image is used for illustrative purposes only.



Impact: Health

- Three quarters of volunteers agreed or strongly agreed that their mental health has improved since attending Holme Farm, a key goal for the organisation. This is reflected in many of the comments given by volunteers.
- Lower levels of agreement were seen for improved physical health, at 66% agreeing or strongly agreeing, however not all activities at Holme Farm directly impact on physical health. Agreement rises to 74% when looking just at those taking part in gardening / allotment activities.



“They have so many different things going on and this is a fantastic place for the community especially as NHS waiting lists for mental health adults & children are years long.”

“I am much better. My mental health was really bad. It has made me feel 100 percent better. The friendship has been great.”

“I have seen people turn up at Holme Farm who have been in a bad place mentally, and witnessed their improvement. For some individuals this has been life- changing.”

“It literally saved my life. I was at rock bottom after my divorce and meeting new people and working on the project helped me through it. Without it I may not even be here today.”



Volunteer story



Sylvia and John are a married couple who found themselves in *'a bit of a bad place mentally'*. John had an accident where he sustained a brain injury and was later diagnosed with PTSD because of old experiences the accident brought back. They spent all of their time focussed on John's recovery. Sylvia says that at the time, *'we were very tired and we needed something to take our minds off of it and to get involved in and to be able to do something that was totally different'*.

The couple found out about Holme Farm through a chance encounter with one of the trustees when they were at a garden centre. They started attending three weeks after the site opened, and now volunteer one morning every week. While they both got stuck into whatever needed doing at first, they now tend to each do specific activities at the site.

Sylvia takes part in furniture restoration which gives her a great sense of satisfaction and purpose: *'you can start doing something, and when you finish it you're really proud of what you've done and then they go and sell it...Somebody appreciates what you've done'*. But more importantly, it has provided her with mental relief: *'I can totally switch off and that is so lovely to be able to do that because I can forget about everything that's going on outside and at home...it just helps me to totally relax. And we come away from there completely refreshed'*.

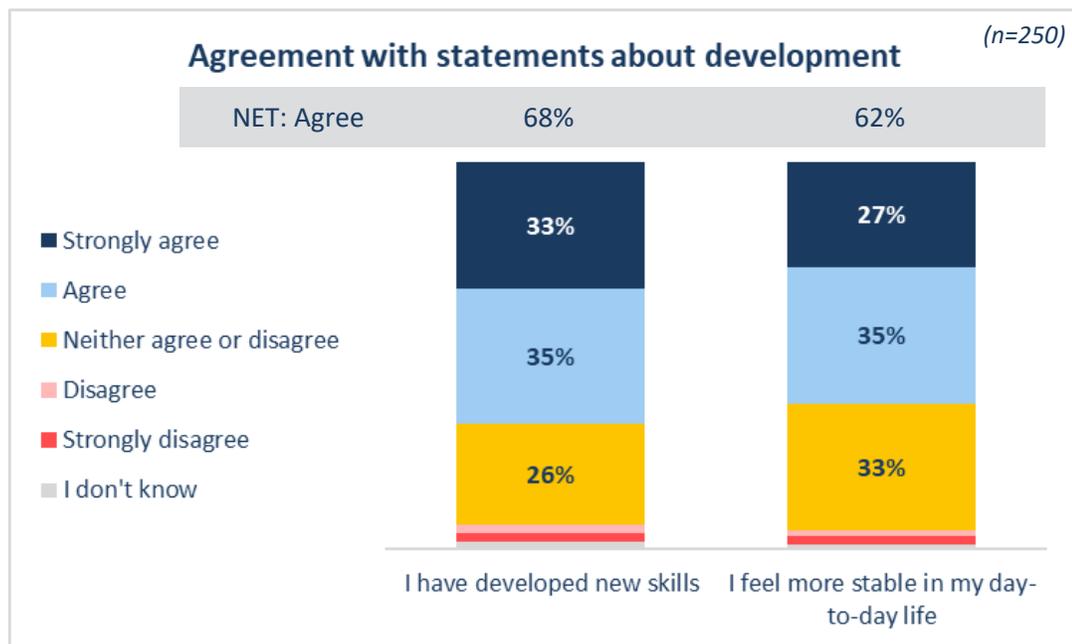
John mainly focuses on woodworking and gardening, but has found building relationships with others going through challenges the most beneficial: *'you can bounce off, you can talk to these people 'cause you've got something in common with them'*. There's a sense of mutual support rather than being one-sided: *[another volunteer is] 'glad to have a chat with me because I've been...going through it, now she's going through it, and we can talk together without fear of other people listening...Now we can sort both our worlds out'*.

The couple appreciate that they can go to Holme Farm together but participate in activities independently: *'We both knew that we needed something separate for us both to do to help each other'*. They consider Holme Farm *'like heaven sent'* and *'we class ourselves as extremely lucky that we were just there at the right time when someone said "have you heard of Holme Farm?"...We just looked at each other and we said that's what we've been looking for...And just suddenly it was there'*.

NB: This case study is based on interviews with volunteers and has subsequently been anonymised. Names have been changed and the image is used for illustrative purposes only.



Impact: Development



- 68% agreed or strongly agreed that they had developed new skills. Comments show this includes learning about nature and conservation, building confidence, and learning practical skills like crafting, DIY and horticulture.
- 62% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more stable in their day-to-day life. Although a lower result lower than other outcome measures, this still demonstrates that three fifths of volunteers feel more stable after their participation, with some personal stories from volunteers of this benefit.

Volunteer story

Gareth started attending Holme Farm just over a year ago, after being encouraged to try it out by a local mental health team. He had been referred to the team after feeling he had reached crisis point and was considering suicide. He initially attended for just 2 hours per week, but is now at the site almost every day, taking part in lots of different gardening and allotment activities.

He reported that being at Holme Farm helps to *'keep the dark thoughts away'*. He previously spent most of his time at home by himself: *'I used to sit indoors 24 hours a day with things going through my head... [now] I'm down here from 8 in the morning till 4, 5 at night, go home and I only have like 2 hours' worth of dark thoughts'*.

He has found his involvement with Holme Farm more beneficial than professional mental health support he's received in the past: *'when you talk to someone down here, they know what you're going through. So they don't sit there and they don't ask stupid questions like, "how does that make you feel?" Well, you know how it makes me feel'*.

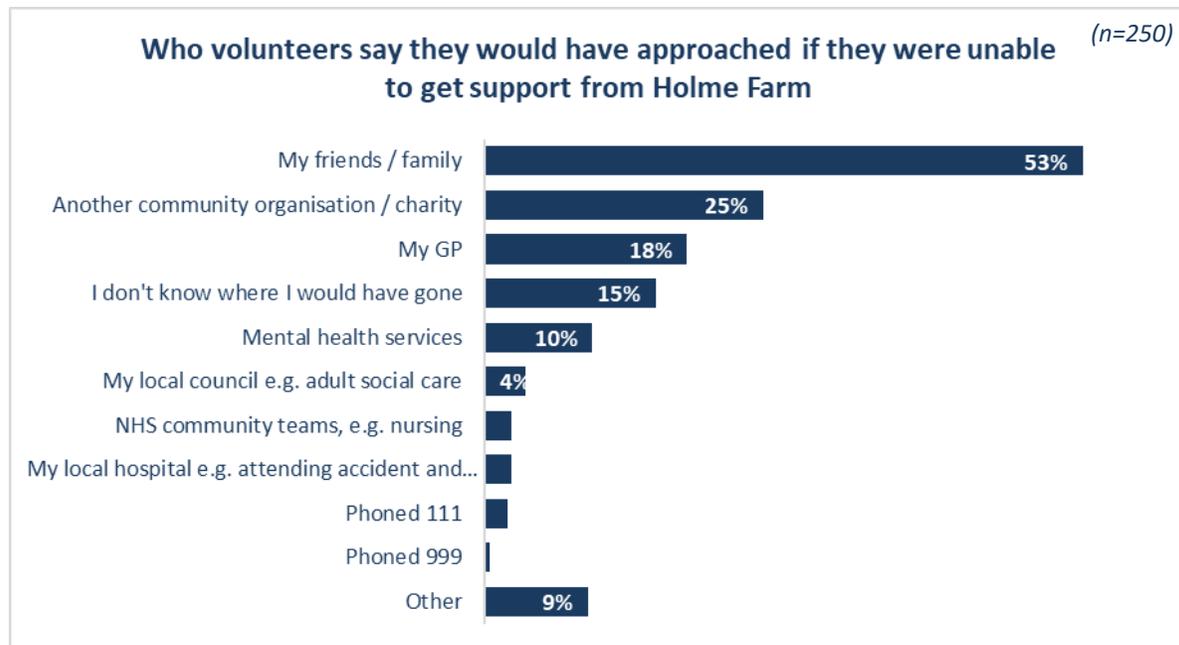
Speaking to other volunteers, he finds *'You don't have to keep explaining yourself. We're just more like a big family. If someone needs help, then you're going to help them. If you need help, then they help you'*.



NB: This case study is based on interviews with volunteers and has subsequently been anonymised. Name has been changed and the image is used for illustrative purposes only.



Impact: Alternative sources of support



- Half of volunteers say that they would have approached their family or friends for support if they hadn't been able to get support from Holme Farm. This is followed by other community organisations or charities, at 25%.
- In total, 23% said they would have approached a healthcare provider, most commonly their GP. Critically, however, 15% said they don't know where they would have gone, implying that Holme Farm is meeting a need for which there is no known alternative for some volunteers.
- 9% of respondents selected 'Other' and most of these expressed the question wasn't applicable to them or that they didn't need support. It is important to recognise that some Holme Farm volunteers will not be attending because they need support and, while they may gain benefits from attending, their main reason for being there is that they want to volunteer.

Healthcare provider = GP, mental health services, NHS community teams, local hospital, 111, 999.

Impact: Volunteer satisfaction



90% of volunteers were **satisfied or very satisfied** with their experience



79% were **very satisfied**



94% of volunteers had their **expectations met or exceeded**



70% had them **exceeded**

“It’s friendly, welcoming, non-judgemental, the activities are fun, they help my physical and mental health, I feel included and valued, it helps my personal confidence with others of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. If it wasn’t there I wouldn’t be able to feel included, I would feel more isolated. Its value as a community project and safe place is beyond.”

“It’s given somewhere for local people to go and learn new skills and be with nature. In this hectic world, it is exactly what we need. There nothing else like it in our area.”

“Holme Farm is a wonderful asset for the area. The volunteers have done so much to support local wildlife, both flora and fauna. There is a lovely community spirit and it’s somewhere anyone, whatever their age or situation, can go and feel welcome. As a volunteer at the local foodbank, I often recommend it to clients as a place where they can feel supported. It would be a tragedy if Holme Farm has to close because of lack of funding.”

Please note: Of the 20 volunteers who said they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, eight said it had exceeded their expectations and/or only gave positive comments. Therefore it is possible that these negative responses may have been selected in error.



Insight: Suggested improvements

Volunteers were asked whether they felt anything could be improved about Holme Farm. The question was optional, but the 116 volunteers who responded provided valuable feedback for consideration.

Future security

The lease of the site and the funding required to enable Holme Farm to meet its potential were mentioned by a number of volunteers. This has appeared to create a sense of uncertainty about the future and concern that plans can't come to fruition without a longer lease or sustained funding.

Improved facilities

Volunteers commented on the idea of improving the existing buildings and having new ones. Some also mentioned improvements to the accessibility of the site, particularly for disabled people but also for families.

Increased activities

Activities including a sensory garden, animals, social events, family / child-friendly activities, art group / class and lectures were all mentioned. Some also said it would be good if existing activities could be offered more frequently.

Management

The idea of having a dedicated (paid) manager on-site during opening times was mentioned. Some also felt that the overall vision isn't clear (e.g. different people say different things about plans, new projects are started before old ones are finished) and that the organisation may be trying to do too much all at once.

Increased profile

Some volunteers wanted more people to be aware of Holme Farm, both for attracting new volunteers and for wider recognition, e.g. from government. Some said that people they talk to haven't heard of Holme Farm, while others have heard of it but don't know what's on offer.

Communications

Suggestions included a more formal communication process with existing volunteers, monthly meetings about progress / issues, a process for following up with new volunteers to encourage them to return, and being clear on what tasks need to be finished before starting others.

Targeted engagement

Some volunteers suggested specific groups to target, such as more primary schools, children with SEND, stay at home dads. Others said they would appreciate trying to appeal more to the general public as they feel there is too much targeting of specific groups at present.

Site maintenance

Some noted that the site could benefit from some tidying and de-cluttering, both to reduce risk to existing volunteers when on site but also to give a more favourable first impression to potential new volunteers when visiting.



Partner organisation testimonials

Holme Farm works alongside a number of partner organisations, who either attend with their service users or signpost them to attend independently. A handful of these organisations provided their views on Holme Farm and the impact they feel it has had on their service users.

Surrey Choices is an organisation which works with disabled and neurodivergent adults and young people. The relationship with Holme Farm started with their Growth Team, a team of disabled adults who go out as supported volunteers and get involved with activities like countryside maintenance and rights of way work. Since then, some of the customers in their EmployAbility service (employment support including placements, volunteering and paid work) have been attending independently.

A benefit of their work with Holme Farm has been providing purpose and raising the visibility of disabled people in the community: *'The key bit for us is actually disabled people don't get to give back very often. They're receivers of service and not givers of service. So the reason why we were looking to grow our supported volunteering as an organisation is so that we can assist people to be able to give back to communities and be key in those kind of projects. So it actually raises their profile as well as being more visible within their communities.'*

They also appreciate that it means that their customers can build their skills and participate in activities that they may not previously have been able to: *'it's enabled people to kind of practise new skills, to be able to link with other organisations, to talk to other people, just be part of a different group. So for us that's a really big added value for them...I think the key bit is just being engaged in something that isn't that traditional social care format.'*

The flexibility of things people can get involved with means that there are activities which will meet a range of needs: *'I think that's the benefit of Holme Farm is that you can just go along on the day and pick something. There's something to do for everybody, so you can just go along and pick a job...The beauty of somewhere like Holme Farm is that you can be there with lots of other people or you can find yourself a quiet little corner and just shut yourself off. And that's also fine, like no one's going to pressure you. Whereas I think in some settings that maybe we'll go to it's a bit more "everyone needs to do stuff together".'*

The ability to get to the site by public transport and being in a self-contained area are seen as points of difference from some other sites the Growth team attend. They would like to see the installation of a Changing Places toilet to increase accessibility for people with profound and multiple needs to benefit from Holme Farm: *'that would really open up the space for more people with complex needs to come to, or people with their carers or with their parents to come along and have an outside nature-based activity. Which adds value to everyone's life.'*



Partner organisation testimonials

Meath School in Ottershaw, Surrey, is a school for children aged four to 11 with complex speech and language challenges. The school has developed a partnership with Holme Farm to enable children in years 3 to 6 to take part in weekly volunteering. They have been involved in a range of outdoor activities, including gardening, painting and learning new crafts such as sewing and wood crafts, activities which the school says are *'developing [the children's] skills and independence in a unique and eco-friendly outdoor environment'*. They noted that:

'The impact on the children's resilience and independence when overcoming the new challenges presented to them, both through communication and physical activity is evident. Many of the activities experienced by the children are new to them and present varying [Occupational Therapy] challenges but the team at Holme Farm are encouraging, supportive and understanding of how to ensure that all children are able to participate...

'Holme Farm enables the children to broaden their learning experiences in a familiar and structured way...We are extremely proud to be working with Holme Farm and are grateful to them for making such a positive impact on our children's journey and future outcomes.'

Catalyst Support is a not-for-profit organisation, supporting people dealing with challenges from drugs, alcohol and poor mental health. The lived experience team has been working with Holme Farm for almost 18 months and they will signpost or bridge clients to Holme Farm, as well as sometimes attending with them.

The team appreciate that there's support available on-site for those who need it, but without pressure about what people participate in and to what extent: *'People are friendly and welcoming. Try to get service users involved. They're happy for people to just come along and be in the space without being actively involved. There are people around to talk to if there are any incidents/challenges.'*

They also feel it is helping to build community support in the area: *'It's in an area with limited community services, so definitely serves a need. It's great to have an outdoor space...Gives people who want to be outside/ do gardening a space to do that if they don't have their own.'*

They have one client in particular who has seen great benefits, attending every day for 200 days: *'It gets him out of the house and gives him purpose, routine and a structure to his days.'*

Conclusions & recommendations

- Volunteers report having extremely positive experiences at Holme Farm, with many saying that their expectations had been exceeded.
- A clear sense of connection has been fostered, both to the natural environment, the community as a whole and to other individual volunteers, leading to volunteers feeling less isolated and more well supported by others.
- A majority of volunteers also feel they have experienced improvements to their mental and physical health and development of skills, with some feeling their day-to-day lives are now more stable.
- While there is some indication that Holme Farm may have helped to divert demand away from healthcare services, crucially 15% aren't sure where else they would have gone, implying that Holme Farm may be meeting a need for which there is no known alternative for some volunteers.
- Partner organisations also report positive experiences with Holme Farm, with them seeing benefits to their service users such as increased confidence, giving them purpose and generally increasing visibility of some marginalised groups in society.
- Despite overwhelmingly positive responses overall, volunteers provided critical feedback on suggested improvements that could be made, which should be considered to ensure experiences can be optimised for all.
- As a vital community asset, the lease of the site and funding from multiple donors and/or commissioners are crucial to guarantee Holme Farm's future and ensure it can continue delivering benefits to new and existing volunteers throughout the community.
- Following this evaluation, findings will be shared with a local academic to undertake social impact analysis. This report and the supporting social impact analysis should be used in discussions and applications to relevant bodies to show evidence of Holme Farm's impact. The findings can also be used to support marketing to encourage new volunteers to attend and to raise the profile of Holme Farm more generally.



Acknowledgements

Our thanks go to the trustees of Holme Farm for their support of this evaluation project, in particular Ronnie Kendall, Christine Kendall and Martin McEvoy who have provided practical support and acted as day-to-day contacts.

We also extend our appreciation to Dr Andrea Berardi, Runnymede Councillor and lecturer at The Open University, who has provided valuable consultation to the evaluation and will be translating the findings into social value impact analysis to support Holme Farm's future endeavours.

Finally, many thanks go to the volunteers and partner organisations who spent time providing feedback, without whom this evaluation would not have been possible.

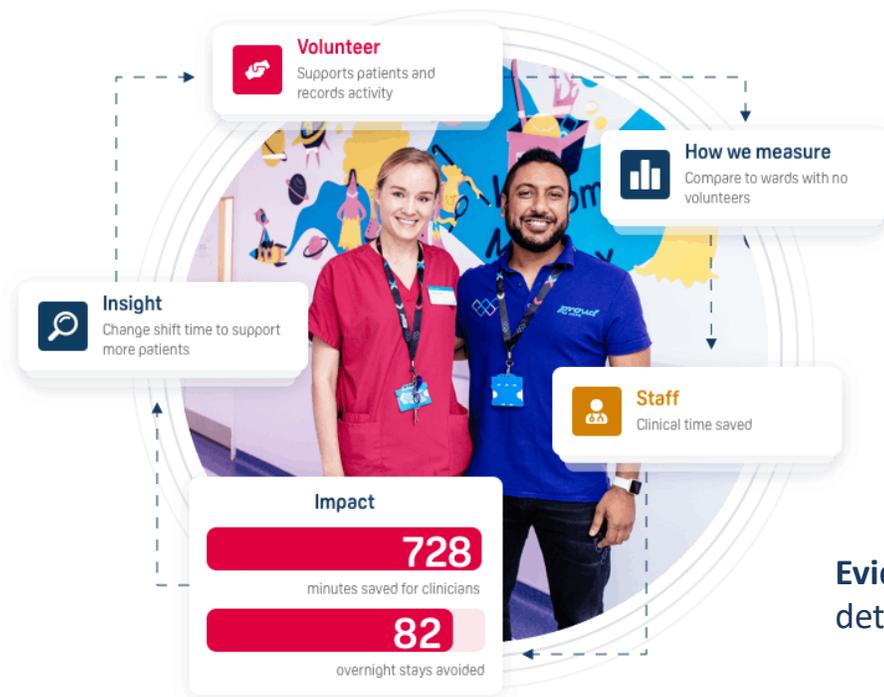
Image credits:

- All images of Holme Farm or its volunteers are taken from the Holme Farm website or Instagram page.
- Slide 12 – Matheus Bartelli via Pexels.
- Slide 14 – Peter Kindersley via Centre for Ageing Better.
- Slide 15 – Mikhail Nilov via Pexels.

Appendix: About the Helpforce Insight and Impact Service

What is it?

- [The I&I Service](#) is an online tool to help you easily and effectively evaluate your voluntary project or initiative.
- It guides you on a simple 4-step process, from designing outcomes for your beneficiaries through to what data we will need to collect - how, when, and from whom.
- Resulting in an evaluation report that our team produces for you, showing evidence of impact made against the outcomes and insights around how the project is working.



How the service is making a difference

We have worked with many NHS and VCS organisations over the last 3 years to collect data on over 100 high-impact voluntary projects. We have produced [evidenced findings](#) against a broad range health and care outcome measures, that have helped to scale up volunteering services and unlock additional funding for our partners.

A guide to some key terms we use



Insights provide an understanding of a situation or problem. They help us to share valuable information around what is working well, and what is not working so well, so that we can advise on potential service improvements and developments.



Impact relates to evidence of lasting and sustainable changes. Impact data helps us to understand the value and difference being made as a result of the project.

Evidence is reviewed against the following criteria to determine if it is **compelling**, **promising**, or **limited**:



- Is the sample size / response rate reliable and robust?
- Is the data direct or a proxy measure?
- Is there a causal link between the evidence and the outcome?
- Is there a control group or comparative data set?
- How was the evidence gathered – directly from participants, or via a third party?
- Was the survey question well designed, or has there been signs of misunderstanding by participants?

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Thank you

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