

The Nineveh Charitable Trust Impact Report, November 2023



We are delighted to have had the opportunity to work with The Nineveh Charitable Trust to offer opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to connect with nature to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Our sincere thanks for your grant of £5,000. This has helped us towards supporting a total of

46

young people through our Woodland Wellbeing programme in the last 12 months



This wouldn't have been possible without your support, so from all of us at Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust - thank you! Read on to find out more about the difference your support has made.

Woodland Wellbeing

Our Woodland Wellbeing programme enables young people who are disadvantaged through isolation, poor mental health or socio-economic reasons to discover woodlands, connect with nature in a meaningful way and to do something positive for the environment.

NHS data shows that one in six children were identified as having a probable mental health problem in July 2021. Mental Health Foundation research shows that spending time in nature is associated with lower depression and anxiety levels. It is vital that young people are given the opportunity to get out into the countryside.

Over the last year, we have supported 46 young people, across four groups through our Woodland Wellbeing programme which uses the principles of forest school to enable young people to connect with nature in a meaningful way over the course of six weeks, and to develop the skills and confidence to spend time in green spaces.

“This is like Afghanistan! I played in the river there. Back in my homeland, I had no friends but thanks to this I have lots now.”
Participant from Keighley College group





Our Partners

We work closely with a variety of partners to ensure we are working with young people in our region who are most in need, as well as ensuring quality and success in our delivery.

11 young people

attended from **Motiv8 College** which supports young people in the Bradford district who may not thrive in a larger college or mainstream academic environment.

20 young people

from **Keighley College's English as a Second Language (ESOL) course** took part in our woodland wellbeing course. All participants were refugees or asylum seekers.

5 young people

attended from **Holme Wood Family Centre** in Bradford which supports parents and children from a very deprived area of our region.

10 young people

attended from **Westgate Primary School, Otley**. Those attending were year 6 pupils with additional support needs.

Holme Wood, Bradford

One group we have worked with this year included 5 young people, aged 10 and 11 from the Salvation Army Family Centre in Holmewood, Bradford who completed Woodland Wellbeing at Austwick Hall in late 2022. The group did a great job of getting to grips with being outdoors in all weathers and learnt new skills such as whittling and cooking on fires. Activities focussed on developing interpersonal skills and boosting confidence in the hope that the young people would be better equipped to navigate the challenges they face at home and in school on a daily basis. One participant noted how proud of herself she was for trying new things:

“I don't normally like trying something new because I'm scared I'll get laughed at if I get it wrong. I feel like I could live in the woods now and keep warm and make my tea!”

Observations - HolmeWood

Some of the observations made after the sessions delivered to 5 young people in partnership with Holme Wood Family Centre reflect the impact these sessions can have on young people:

Louise has come out of her shell. She is better at controlling her anger; worries less about things that aren't relevant; she is now able to stop and think before acting out to something she doesn't agree with.*

Louise appeared to show significant progress of her self-awareness, self-regulation and social skills during the course of the programme.

Robert* is better at controlling his anger. He still has tantrums that can make him seem much younger than he is. He is much more helpful and listens to instructions better.

Edward* initially tended to sit on the periphery of the group, but as the weeks progressed he made significant connections with safe adults.

***All names have been changed for confidentiality**



Fiona Busfield, YDMT Green Futures Manager, delivered the Holme Wood sessions and reflected on the group's progress:

Each of the individuals in the group demonstrated measurable change, with youth workers saying they have noticed a reduced regularity to emotional outbursts for all involved. They are showing they are able to think before acting and are displaying improved self-regulation.

The participants were exposed to a new environment and each responded to the uncertainty and unknown in their own individual way. Coming from one of the most deprived and urbanised areas of Bradford in to a vast, unrecognisable landscape of the Yorkshire Dales via a 90 minute bus trip each week, the group were introduced to new ideas, concepts and perceptions of themselves. Each of them was able to achieve goals they set, connect with others and develop safe and nurturing relationships. They were given space to reflect on their behaviours, their self-perception and their place in the world. I hope that the experience stays with them and they they continue to draw on their successes.

Having worked with under-privileged young people for the last 15 years, this group provided me with some of my most challenging working moments to date. I have had to take stock and reflect on my own ways of working and reflect on the impact of the work that I do.



Keighley College

6 woodland wellbeing sessions were provided for a group of 16-19 years old students from Keighley College this year. All students were asylum seekers or refugees from Afghanistan, Sudan, Iran and Pakistan. The programme focused on developing bonds between the students as well as supporting their language skills.

Activities included making a campfire, cooking on a campfire, woodland wool craft, putting up hammocks, playing team games, looking at maps and walking, and much more!

This group spent time in various outdoor locations including in the Yorkshire Dales and in Keighley, their local area, which we hope will help young people to spend time in nature outside of these sessions. In fact, the students enjoyed their trip to the Dales so much that they are now planning a return visit to Malham.

During the sessions, students supported each other in understanding the tasks, encouraging each other to persist at tasks they found difficult and they all showed a willingness to get involved.



Keighley College staff reported after these sessions that: “Since the students have been on the programme, their interpersonal relationships in the classroom have developed to the point where they are supporting each other academically. Their attainments are significantly higher than in previous years. Their behaviours are much more settled than ever before. There is no friction or awkwardness around gender (e.g. boys and girls working together) where there has been historically.”



The ESOL course leader said: “It has been the best ever introduction to the [ESOL] course, and it has been going for at least 10 years”

Participants shared: “This is magnificent!”

“I have not used hammocks before. Very relaxing.”

All the students have said that they loved the Woodland Wellbeing programme. College staff confirmed that attendance at some classes in college can be low, but for this session everyone showed up. This is hugely positive feedback as it shows that the sessions have addressed some of the issues young asylum seekers and refugees face: social isolation and lack of a peer group.



Wellbeing Impact

Where possible, participants complete a baseline and follow up survey, measuring changes in their wellbeing.

Our survey is based on Mind's 5 Ways to Wellbeing, whilst also making use of other recognised wellbeing and nature connectedness tools. The 5 ways to wellbeing are: connecting, being active, taking notice, learning and giving; and our indicators reflect these.

We ask young people to score themselves across 8 indicators, scoring from 1 to 9, and see the changes made over the 6 weeks. For these sessions, we were able to gather complete surveys from 16 young people, across 2 of the groups (and are awaiting a data set from a third group).

I enjoy spending time outside

I feel happy talking to others

I feel I can help others

I feel happy taking part

I feel peaceful and relaxed when I'm outdoors

I am happy to try new things

I feel I can help the environment

I take notice of wildlife and nature wherever I am

94% of young people surveyed showed progress across three of more wellbeing indicators

On average, improvement was seen across 6 indicators per young person.

60% of participants showed a significant increase* in at least one indicator

(*seeing an increase by 3 points or more)

Motiv8 College Group - Average Responses 5 Ways to Wellbeing Survey

— Baseline — Follow up



Keighley College Group - Average Responses 5 Ways to Wellbeing Survey

— Baseline — Follow up



These charts show the average responses across each of the two groups surveyed. We had 11 complete surveys from Motiv8 College and 5 complete surveys from Keighley College. Each group is impacted differently by these sessions but we were thrilled to see improvement across all indicators, showing just how much of an impact the Woodland Wellbeing programme can have on various aspects of a young person's wellbeing.

We are constantly reviewing our monitoring processes (see challenges below, for further information). We would be very happy to discuss this data in more detail with you, and share more individual responses for a deeper insight in to our impact.



Challenges faced

We have come across some challenges this year, particularly with our Monitoring and Evaluation.

- Some young people were unable to attend the first session, and therefore missed the collection of our baseline surveys, hence the small amount of data particularly for our Keighley College group.
- Some of the young people we worked with were from incredibly deprived communities, they had highly complex needs, which provided some challenges with delivery as well as gathering monitoring information.
- We faced language barriers with one of the groups, again making monitoring information difficult to collect.

We are continually reflecting on what we can learn from this year's sessions, and will apply these lessons going forward.

We have a further group running in November and December, with 10 children with Special Educational Needs, from a school in Otley. We look forward to seeing the impact on these young people.

Next year, we aim to continue running Woodland Wellbeing sessions, working in partnership with various organisations in our region, to reach the most at need individuals. We have seen the massive impact these sessions can have, and hope to reach 50 young people in the year ahead.

Our sincere thanks once again, for your support in helping to make this programme possible. We look forward to changing more young peoples' lives in the coming year.

