

FINE FETTLE

CASE STUDY
PHASE ONE 2022-2023



**BARNSELY
MUSEUMS**

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FINE FETTLE

Phase One 2022 - 2023

Fine Fettle was developed to create a shared understanding of how cultural and non-cultural services can jointly identify and resolve issues for vulnerable adults with lived experience of mental health. *Fine Fettle* brought together 10 partners from Barnsley Council services, the NHS, and community sector organisations based in disadvantaged communities in the district. *Fine Fettle* demonstrated the benefits of the Wentworth Castle Gardens Partnership as a commissioning service for the delivery of social outcomes for Barnsley.

Fine Fettle responded to the increase of mental illness in adolescent and adult populations in the UK, accelerated by Covid-19 pandemic. As pressure on stretched NHS mental health services mounted, alternative options for improving emotional wellbeing have been explored through a national focus on Green Prescribing.

The *Fine Fettle* programme helped meet this need through a comprehensive outdoor learning programme which supported adults with lived experience of mental health to develop outdoor volunteering skills through a range of creative activities and experiences based at Wentworth Castle Gardens. *Fine Fettle* participants built their knowledge, skills, and confidence whilst working therapeutically in nature.

Fine Fettle was designed using action research principles to embed learning from each year to shape the next. Participants' voices were central to this approach. The first year focused on establishing recruitment and progression partnerships, developing creative outdoor engagement activities, and devising an appropriate evaluation framework.

Fine Fettle provided a platform for people to achieve a range of emotional wellbeing and physical health outcomes. Participatory approaches were used; people's individual interests, hobbies, and their personal goals were all integral to shaping the delivery of the sessions to promote positive experiences. The range of activities included bush craft, wood whittling, cooking on the fire, listening and telling folklore stories, nature exploration and reflection.



RECRUITMENT

Overall, 31 people attended sessions. Participants overcame social anxiety, fibromyalgia, osteoporosis, dyslexia, complex mental health diagnosis and depression to participate in *Fine Fettle*.

17 adults, recruited from 4 wards and districts in Barnsley, attended 24 *Fine Fettle* sessions on 52 occasions between February and October 2023. The referral partners included Humankind/Recovery Steps, BMBC Community Development Officer, Refugee Council, Living Hope Community Garden CIC, Social Prescribing Link workers, Adventuring Angels, Age UK, Veterans Support Groups, Northern College and the Wentworth Castle Gardens Partnership.

'Taster days' complemented efforts to inform support service professionals by offering the opportunity to gain further insight through experiential learning. 13 professionals from 7 organisations came on two separate days and were joined by a curious member of the public as part of the Creativity and Wellbeing week platform.

DELIVERY

Planned Delivery

Initially a six-week programme was designed with the intent of delivering 5 cohorts over the Spring and Summer period. The programme focused on 5 components encompassing a holistic approach to delivery. These components were identified as:

Explore – an opportunity to explore the environment and what lives there.

Mindfulness– the opportunity to connect with nature using all your senses in your own way to support positive mental health.

Skills – the opportunity to learn new skills in the outdoors using tools and equipment.

Imagine – the opportunity to develop imagination to create projects using creative methods in the outdoors.

Reflect and Review – the opportunity to reflect on the experience and review personal development, transferable skills development and progression.

The programme was supported by a 'My Fine Fettle Portfolio'. A book where participants can record their development, what they have achieved, skills learnt, reflect and review, as well as photos. The intent for this book was to provide a meaningful document for participants to record their journey and provide evidence of transferable skills learnt.

Actual Delivery

Due to the numbers of participants being lower than expected and the inconsistency of participation, it became apparent that the initial programme was too structured and needed to be more fluid and responsive to the people attending. The barriers that occurred were medical appointments, fluctuating health needs, differing expectations and transport, particularly the return journey home at the end of the session.

Within two months the programme dates were removed, and the programme became a weekly roll on/roll off approach. This was more successful as it gave people permission to participate when they could and felt well enough.

In response to participant feedback the programme responded on a daily basis to the people attending, including the most popular activities which were cooking lunch, mindfulness times and outdoor craft. The natural development of the programme enabled participants more time to talk and this developed into participants supporting each other. The five components continued to be observed throughout and were identified during the sessions.

Future Delivery

Participants from 2022-23 have been invited to join year two of *Fine Fettle* as a Peer Mentor, where they will support new people and join in activities whilst enhancing their own leadership skills in the forest.

·The regular day a week is successful, and it was felt that this should remain for the next year of delivery.

·Cooking and eating lunch together were very successful and enabled connection and a stronger sense of community.

The Beech Bank outdoor site has undergone work to ensure the site is fenced and livestock free alongside tree removal for safety in winds.



OUTCOMES

“SUCH A GENTLE ADVENTURE,
IN A BEAUTIFUL PLACE,
NO PRESSURE, NO STRESS,
JUST THE RIGHT PACE”.
FEBRUARY 2023

The participants' wellbeing improved, with making friends and connections being key to it all. Typically, people attended three sessions with new people being welcomed regularly throughout the programme.

“Doesn't matter if it's cold outside – you'll feel warm and at home, and really supported to spend the time as you want to.” Professional insight, February 2023.

The following outcomes were expressed by more than two participants:

Technology:

- Great to take a breather from screens

“Time to learn about myself and the route I want my life to take. I will develop the confidence to follow this route.” Participant, September 2023

Nature:

- Good to reconnect with nature
- Another way to connect with nature
- An environment free of judgement.

“I want to slow down and reconnect with nature – today has achieved this.”
Participant, September 2023

Self-Care:

- Allowing myself to slow down
- Gives me the time to not feel guilty about spending time doing things I enjoy
- Learning new and traditional skills
- Realising I'm not weird for wanting to learn forestry skills.

“I've been able to de-stress guilt free. I've been able to have a few hours without thinking of pressures at home.” Participant, September 2023

One Participant's Journey...

‘It was good to have a person to challenge my thought processes, encouraging me to see things from a different perspective’ (Clara, 2023)

Clara has always had an interest in forest school, folklore and exploring the outdoors. After attending a taster day, she realised that this approach correlated with her own value base and would benefit personal positive mental health.

During the sessions Clara enjoyed revisiting the wonder of childhood, exploring shape, height, and texture was all part of this experience; being able to do all of this without judgement was so important. Learning new crafts satisfied Clara's creative streak and challenged her imagination. Having sufficient space and time with the appropriate tools was important to feeling successful.

Clara appreciated having the option to choose activities, this gave her a certain freedom. On each session Clara attended with an open mind which helped her to rise to the challenge, although if more people had attended there would have been more challenge through increased engagement and interaction with other participants.

Whilst on the programme Clara reported that she made an effort to get outside regularly, although this has decreased since the programme finished. When time was spent in the outdoors Clara reported clear thought patterns and reduced brain fog.

Six weeks after the programme finished Clara has reported that she realised that she liked to have challenges where she can really push herself. With this in mind she has returned to kick boxing and is now working towards grading. She has joined the gym to increase fitness and focus. *Fine Fettle* has been the catalyst to developing better decision-making skills, a greater sense of pride and belief in self. This is leading to Clara slowly building a new lifestyle, creating a more outdoor life for herself and her son.

