

# FUTURE ROOTS

Commissioning Agency Prospectus  
2021





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## INTRODUCTION

Founded in 2006, Future Roots offers unique and varied opportunities for young people who have found learning in the traditional classroom environment challenging. Set on a 30-acre farm in rural West Dorset, Future Roots engages young people – especially those who find it difficult to trust – in alternative learning and nurture groups.

Future Roots' mission is to ensure all young people have an opportunity to learn in an inclusive environment that is safe, enabling and creative enough to meet individual need.

Future Roots' beliefs and values are that we don't give up on young people, because they all want to learn. We believe in a strengths-based approach to find solutions to problematic behaviours.

Using a balanced approach between accredited and therapeutic programmes, young people are helped to overcome trauma and emotional challenges while they gain skills and knowledge. Our programmes incorporate a resilience model, which allows the discovery of personal insight and opportunity to identify solutions to difficult issues. This can be individual work or in small groups or teams. The ethos of Future Roots and the farm environment is structured to feel a safe space for everyone, and we expect all people who work or participate to feel valued and welcome.

We have a strong track record of working with individual young people who may:

- Have social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- Have behaviour that includes aggression, anger, and anxiety.
- Have medical conditions.
- Have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Have social and communication difficulties.
- Be at risk of exploitation.
- Be associated with criminal activity.
- Be vulnerable to drug and alcohol misuse.
- Be young people who learn better through experiential learning.
- Not attend school due to anxiety or poor mental health.

Many of the young people we work with are at risk of, or have been, excluded from school or do not attend school due to their anxiety. Most are considered at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education and Training).

'Future Roots' values are that we  
don't give up on young people'





# THE FARM

## Rylands Farm

Future Roots use the purpose-designed farm site for animal assisted therapy, mentoring and accredited programmes for 8-18 year olds. The farm buildings and atmospheric kroftas are transformed into spaces for classroom learning both for group and individual sessions. The farm environment is used by the team to offer a broad range of experiential, physical, and emotional learning opportunities, responding flexibly to meet individual needs and abilities. **The farm has been designed to offer young people who have complex lives a safe place to develop and progress positively in life.**

Our programmes include opportunities to learn transferable skills and develop the young people's positive qualities through the resilience model (page 7). We are also a registered NOCN centre and deliver functional skills at different levels. Our animal care activities support a range of life skills and give an opportunity to understand positive relationships.

Future Roots are proud that they have never found it necessary to exclude any young person from a programme. The team are highly experienced in working with young people who have complex behaviour patterns and work in ways that manage these safely and positively.

I don't know where I would be now if I hadn't been to the farm

# LEARNING AND MENTORING

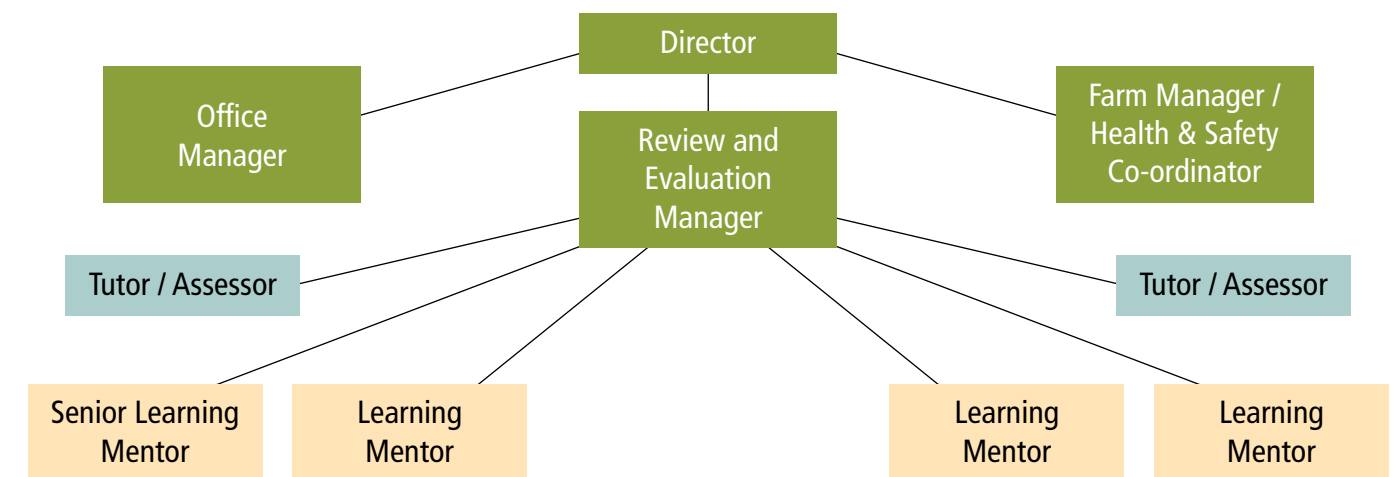
The aim of our Learning Mentor team is to build sound and effective relationships with young people, generally in group sessions, or tailored one to one programmes. Young people are helped to explore their current situation, reflect on the challenges they face, find solutions and act on these. We want all young people who attend Future Roots, no matter their experiences or situation, to be able to make safe and informed decisions about their life and build resilience and compassion to take with them on their journey into adulthood.

Future Roots works alongside young people, enabling them to learn by experiencing new challenges through mentoring. We believe that all young people deserve opportunities and will be able to achieve success in their lives given the right positive experiences and emotional support.

## Mentoring Team

Our team has a wealth of experience in working with young people who have had difficulty engaging in other learning environments and with other agencies. Team members are experienced in assessment, planning and delivery of group and personalised sessions, reporting, and recording outcome measures and achievements. Specific team members can deliver and assess learning programmes including City & Guilds (land-based operations) and Functional Skills. Young people are therefore able to participate in both group programmes and be supported to learn and gain a recognised qualification.

## Leadership and Staffing – The Future Roots Team



Skills are transferable. The main jobs young people go into following their time at Future Roots: plumber, plasterer, shepherd, farm contractor, dairyman, calf rearer, nursing assistant, carer, cook, builder, butcher's apprentice, mechanic



We have an experienced, advisory board of non executive members that meet quarterly and give guidance on health and safety, safeguarding HR and safeguarding. Trainees and volunteers are also welcomed and supported to help out on sessions if they have Future Roots beliefs and values regarding young people.

Our staff team bring a diverse range of skill, knowledge, and experience to the organisation and our programme delivery for young people. This includes qualifications in teaching, social work, sport training, outdoor leadership, and experience in working with children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing, animal assisted therapy, land, and environmental based activities.

All staff are supported in their work through a framework of professional development which includes:

- Individual supervision
- Peer supervision and reflective practice sessions
- Access to team and personal training and development programmes
- An annual Performance and Development Review (PDR)

Future Roots follows safer recruitment guidance, and all team members are appointed after the receipt of at least two satisfactory references and a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure. You can meet the Team by visiting our website at [www.futureroots.net](http://www.futureroots.net)



# OUR PROGRAMMES

Therapeutic and wellbeing programmes may be stand-alone or incorporated into accredited learning sessions if required. Alongside our therapeutic and wellbeing programmes we offer a variety of regulated qualifications including Functional Skills in Maths, English, Young Health Champion and vocational qualifications in Agriculture and Cooking. We can offer sessions on well-established or newly developed programmes designed to reach children and people with a range of needs. These cater for young people who can work in group settings alongside peers and those who need a more specific tailored programme with enhanced (1:1) support.

The programmes are designed around personal goals and outcomes which are reviewed, monitored and evaluated in partnership with parents and referrers or the school. We use our resilience model to assess where we need to focus on the sessions and strengthen protective factors.

Examples of our programme types

- Land Based Operations and Animal Welfare
- Nurture and animal therapy
- Dorset Families Matter (DFM) Individual Therapeutic and Family sessions
- Functional Skills Maths and English
- Specific outcomes 1:1 sessions
- Dorset Future Foresters (Forest School type)
- Short Group Programmes - Specific Focus
- Holiday time Short Break sessions (EHCP dependent)
- Employability and independence skills

More details about our programme offer can be found in the appendices to this document.

## The Resilience Model



Our use of the resilience model includes identifying protective factors and where there are gaps. Young people who attend the farm generally have experienced trauma and adversity through no fault of their own and we look for solutions that they can add to their recovery tool box.

All areas of our site are covered by health and safety legislation and where necessary risk assessments. The context of our programme delivery includes:

- A farm environment that promotes animal and environmental welfare.
- Outdoor spaces with a variety of animals and plants.
- Indoor spaces for one-to-one and small group sessions.
- Workshop and Classroom facilities.
- A demonstration kitchen.
- Accessible toilets and showers.
- Provision of PPE when needed.

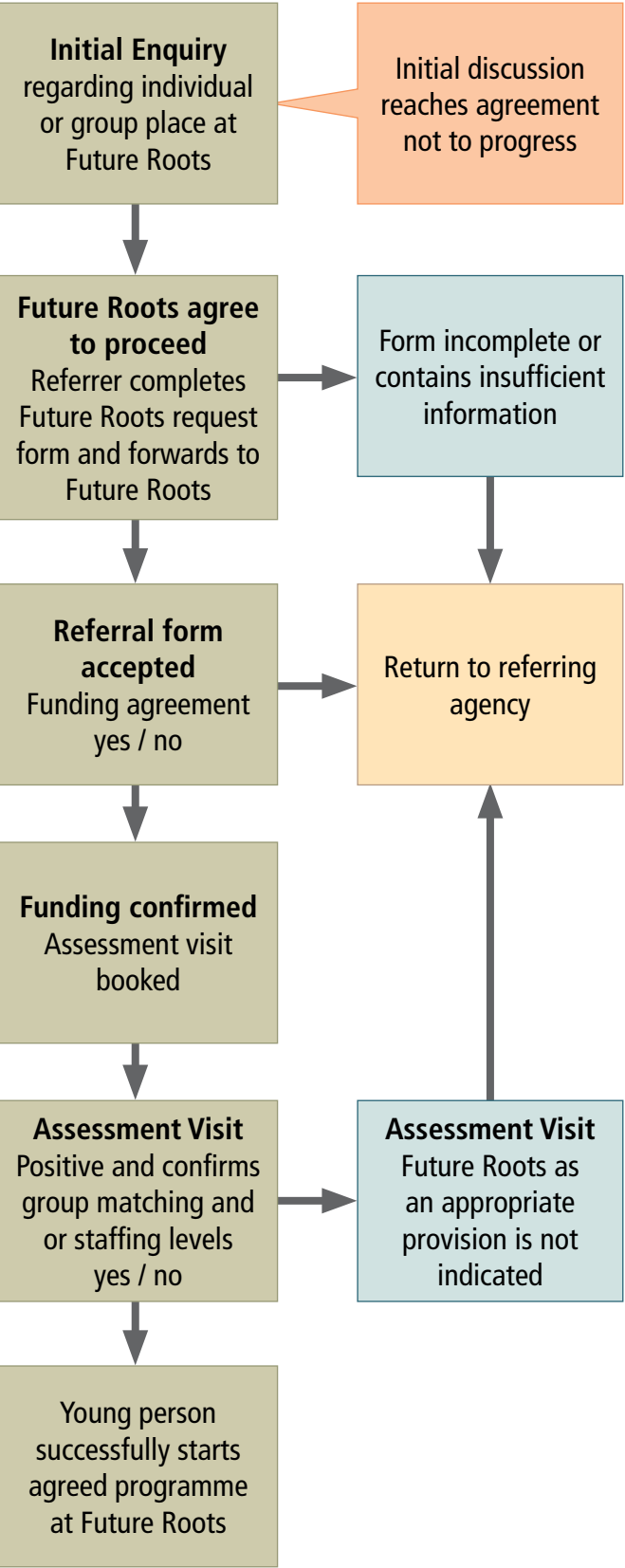
### Referral Criteria

Future Roots has implemented a quality assurance framework designed to ensure that children and young people have the best possible experience while attending the farm environment and participating within an educational and resilience building programme.

An essential part of the QA Framework is the initial assessment and referral request process, ensuring that the team at Future Roots has sufficient and current information about the nature of a young person's life experiences, their challenges and aspirations and the family and professional network who are supporting them.

To consider a young person for participation on a Future Roots programme (individually or as part of a group) we ask that the referral step process is followed. This is to ensure a good understanding of a young person's specific needs and to be able to match successfully with an appropriate programme and other young people.

### Future Roots Referral Pathway 2020/21



### Referral Step Process

(see appendix for referral form and flow chart)

1. Please make an initial enquiry to Future Roots to discuss your request for a service. Call on 01963 210703 or email [office@futereroots.net](mailto:office@futereroots.net)
2. Should this initial enquiry indicate that consideration of a referral is appropriate (and there is a space available) please complete the FR Referral Form as comprehensively as possible. Please note incomplete forms or responses are not clear cannot be considered and will be sent back for updating.
3. Please Note Future Roots cannot offer a young person a visit unless we have confirmation that funding is available and has been agreed by the funding agency. Confirmation email from the referring agency is acceptable.
4. A positive young person visit will lead to the offer of a place on an agreed programme and an individual outcome plan with clear objectives will be drawn up. Contract of Expectations and Invoice arrangements will be confirmed.
5. Outcome progress and safe staff level review cycle begins - 6 weekly internal review. Termly Progress Reports sent to referring agency.

### Work Experience

We are committed to offering young people the chance to learn and develop skills they can take forward into their adult life and employment. Therefore, when capacity allows, we may accept a young person on site to undertake a work experience placement. This must be a formal request from a school or college and monitored under the conditions set by the agency requesting the placement. A work experience risk assessment must be completed.

A work experience placement is primarily for young people who have previously attended and are following an agricultural course. Our work experience placement(s) are usually supervised by the Farm Manager or a Senior Learning Mentor.

### Feedback from families, schools and others

We value the feedback we receive from parent/carer, other family members, schools and partner organisations. The feedback enables us to improve our programmes and work closely with a young person's extended network, home and the community around them.

Besides the surveys we put out we regularly get impromptu quotes:

**'Since my daughter came to Future Roots, I have seen a huge change, she is more focused, confident and happy. I can't thank you enough for helping her to come out of her shell.'** (parent)

**'These sessions have been a real lifeline for our students.'** (teacher)

**'What a change, he is a different character. You have really made a difference.'** (Head teacher)

**'Future Roots has given my son a new aspect of life which previously we felt he was failing at. He is now more able to say what is bothering him and the changes are amazing. He is a much nicer child.'** (parent)

**'I think he would be dead or in prison without your support. Thank you.'**

Its' a calm, helpful and friendly place to be



# EVAULATION, REVIEW AND IMPACT

## Impact and Evaluation

Understanding and measuring the impact of our work is very important to us. As an organisation and a provider of services for children and families we meet nationally recognised standards. We are registered with Ofsted and we are accredited by the council for Learning outside the classroom ([lotc.org.uk](http://lotc.org.uk)).

Using our resilience model (page 7) we match outcomes sought by schools, parents, the young people themselves and our own assessment of which protective factors could be developed. The impact of the programmes we run, whether classroom learning, skills-based or therapeutic work with our animals, is designed to maximise life chances and opportunities for the young people we work with. We see the value and importance of young people growing in their emotional health and wellbeing as a basic need, alongside formal qualifications and meeting learning targets. The social value of increasing a young person's resilience, confidence, emotional health and hope through this combination of support has great benefit to the individual young person and the community.

A study, undertaken by Dr Sarah Hambidge in completing her Ph.D. (Bournemouth University 2017) found that young people who attended Future Roots presented as less stressed than those in mainstream school and showed an improvement in their emotional health and wellbeing. The study concluded that the farm (Rylands and Future Roots) provides an intervention for young people disengaged with education that offers a more positive and effective alternative to mainstream settings.

Sustaining and embedding positive change and resilience are core values and central to our outcome framework. Participants have described a sense of belonging that they take away and continues with them throughout their life. This is a unique selling point and, unlike most other offers, has proved to be life changing for many young people. Our 10 year reunion was attended by around 100 young people past and present, who were able to revisit and reflect on their experience at Future Roots and share stories of the lasting impact.

UPSHOTT is the technology we use as an interactive data base to capture activity and outcomes. We do annual evaluations with parents and commissioners and termly with young people. We have contact with many young people through transitions so we can see if their achievements continue and we can support them in their next learning stage.

## Evidence gathered over 10 years

Attendance	Participants have an average in excess of 95%
Qualifications	100% of learners engaged in a learning programme lead to an accredited award
Enjoyment and satisfaction	Our exit surveys scale at least 4 out of 5 for programme enjoyment from over 100 young people
Feeling safe	100% of young people feel safe/very safe during their sessions on the farm.

## Voice of the young person

The majority of young people have told us over 13 years that the following protective factors offered at Future Roots is important to them: **feeling safe and valued, feeling they are part of and belong to something opportunity to be successful and be trusted**. Having consistent mentors was also highlighted as valuable to the young people.

The participation of young people in a programme at Future Roots is far more than just their attendance. We encourage dialogue regarding their life experiences, their aspirations and what they would like to change. Young people are able to influence their experience on the farm by contributing to their plans and reviews. We value every bit of feedback we receive from young people and use this as part of our ongoing improvement and developments. As a team we recognise that if young people are not enjoying themselves, feel safe and are valued, then the chances of them disengaging are high.

Examples of comments by young people are dotted all around this prospectus. You can also view feedback from our young people on our website by following this link: [www.futureroots.net/about-us/for-young-people/](http://www.futureroots.net/about-us/for-young-people/)

It's an amazing place and it helps me to focus at school

## Community Presence

Future Roots is very much committed to having a community presence and encouraging young people to understand their place in their communities too. We want the young people to develop a feeling of responsibility towards the environment, the community and keeping themselves safe and this is incorporated into the work that is undertaken on the farm. We have seen lasting change in the way young people think about dropping litter, animal care and care of the elderly as well as interest in climate change. Our local community and partners support the work of Future Roots and we have strong connections with local farms and businesses.

Learning Mentors take responsibility for keeping in touch with young people when they are unable to attend sessions and our website blog and Farm Family Facebook page enable young people to keep connected with the Farm news and the animals. This enables young people to remain reflective on what has gone right in their lives, giving them a space where they can return to ask for help or share their successes.

## Affiliations / Memberships / Quality Assurance

Future Roots is registered with Ofsted, and we have experience of receiving Ofsted visits as part of a school's alternative provision. We are on the Dorset's Equality Register and information partnerships, including Operation Encompass – a multi agency approach to safeguard young people.

We are a member of Social Farms and Gardens, which provide an annual quality audit of work and we hold a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge.

The Organisation has a strong and active Board of Directors who monitor and hold to account the quality standards across all services and safeguarding matters. Future Roots is signed up to and follows the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Partnership procedures and guidance. [www.pdsp.co.uk](http://www.pdsp.co.uk). Our Policies can be viewed on our website: [www.futureroots.net](http://www.futureroots.net)



# 'Everything about Future Roots is positive.'

John Nash, former Head of  
Dorset's Children's Services

They have helped  
me lots...like keeping  
calm and getting  
more confident

**Future Roots**  
**Future Farmer**

You can find all the information you need by exploring our website at:  
**[www.futureroots.net](http://www.futureroots.net)**

You can also email us at **[office@futureroots.net](mailto:office@futureroots.net)**

Or call us on: **01963 210703**

Future Roots is a Social Enterprise and we've been successfully providing support and direction to individuals and groups for over ten years. We always appreciate donations as this helps us in our work. You can contribute at **[www.localgiving.com/futureroots](http://www.localgiving.com/futureroots)**



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