



Impact Report 2024

Brightening Children's Lives





Introduction

Like many charities, we are navigating challenging times. Our budgets are stretched by the ongoing cost of living crisis, and our partners are facing similar pressures. Despite these challenges, we are proud to work with, on average, 3,000 children each year.

The charity continues to develop new initiatives, such as family-based weekends and extended support for young people who are in or at risk of entering care.

Our school partnership network is steadily growing, and our school and community advisory group is helping the charity reflect on and refine its practices. As an ambassador for Child Friendly Leeds, we are committed to recognising the 12 wishes of the children of Leeds and aligning our work with these goals wherever possible.

This report includes direct feedback from our partners and, perhaps most importantly, from the young people who benefit from our services – children from backgrounds of challenge and disadvantage from Leeds.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We are grateful to all our dedicated supporters, as our work would not be possible without you. Thank you for making such a positive impact on the lives of children who need it the most.

Dave Norman

DAVE NORMAN MBE

CEO

Leeds Children's Charity at Lineham Farm

Championing the Children of Leeds.



**Leeds
Children's
Charity at
Lineham Farm**

Our impact	4-5
The need	6-9
Charity objectives	10-11
Our work and how we help	12-13
Our partners	14-15
Achievements	16-17
Case study	18-19
Our developments	20-21
Changes at Lineham	22-23
Join our business supporters	24-25
Ways to get involved	26-27

OUR IMPACT

An unforgettable break

Every child is unique and so are the memories they make at Lineham Farm. Some will remember it as their first ever holiday. Others will ride a bike for the very first time. For many, it will be about taking time away from very challenging and chaotic lives.

We now have over 60 partners who we collaborate with, including schools, community groups, and social welfare teams.

24%

of Leeds children, (36,496) were living in poverty (2020), which is

5% higher

than the national average. (DWP/HMRC statistics)

“

Never been on a holiday before - it was ace!

CHILD

Leeds has a longstanding gap between more and less advantaged children achieving their potential, particularly during the early years, and especially for our most disadvantaged children. (DofE)

“It is a fabulous place I felt like a weight had lifted off me for the day! It was great to have a laugh after a difficult year”

GRANDAD AND FULLTIME CARER TO A YOUNG GRANDSON

100 PERCENT

100% of children said that they felt happy whilst at Lineham Farm

“

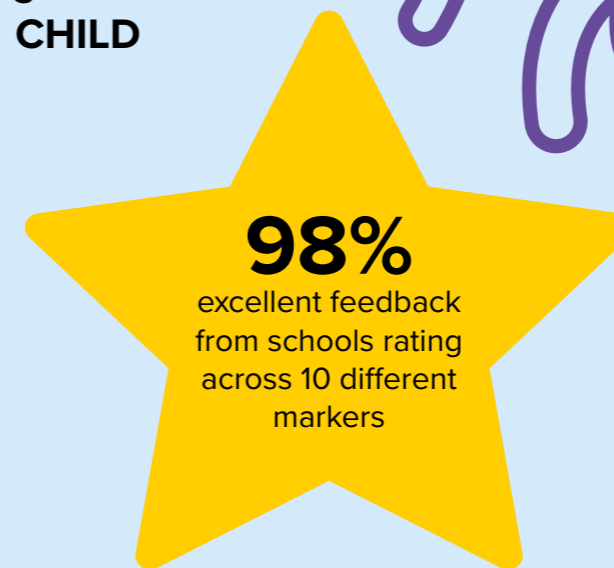
I learnt sometimes things are hard, but if you keep going you will get better”.

CHILD



“The children experienced new activities which have enabled them to develop socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively.”

TEACHER



On average we support around **3,000** young people a year

94.8%

of children said that they wish to spend more time in the outdoors

“

I felt happy because I felt safe”.

CHILD



THE NEED FOR OUR SERVICE

Our commitment to young people

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outlines every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of activities.

Children should have the opportunity to be outdoors, and interact with and play in natural environments and the animal world. They should have opportunities to explore, understand and shape the cultural and artistic heritage of their community.¹



“

Children's rights are indivisible and inter-connected; there are strong connections between the child's rights to health, to education and to play.”

**THE HERITAGE COUNCIL,
CHILDREN AND THE OUTDOORS**

Tackling limited access to outdoors

Three-quarters of children want more time in nature, says the National Trust.

We know that providing safe, outdoor spaces for children to play and explore is linked to good physical and mental health. But still not every child gets to enjoy a full childhood. Not every child gets to experience the world around them, and be regularly in nature.



“

The powerful combination of a diversity of play experiences and direct contact with nature has direct benefits for children's physical, mental, and emotional health. Free play opportunities in natural settings offer possibilities for restoration, and hence, well-being.”

ENGLAND'S NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

The value of outdoor learning

Our commitment is to make it possible for every child in Leeds to have the chance to experience the outdoors, and the benefits it brings. There is a wealth of research regarding how outdoor learning addresses the needs of children, including:

- **Wellbeing**
It increases when children spend time connecting to nature.²
- **Educational gain**
Children's confidence develops enabling children to try new things.³
- **Exercise**
The outdoors encourages active play.
- **Taking risks**
The outdoors lends itself for children to gain confidence in appropriate risk taking
- **Socialisation**
Outside encourages children to work together in an unstructured environment
- **Appreciation of nature**
Connecting to nature, develops appreciation and the desire to look after it.⁴

Children's mental wellbeing is declining. Over the past 3 years, the risk of a child aged 5–16 having a mental health problem has increased by 50%. Around 1 in 5 (19.9%) 7- to 16-year-olds live in reduced income households, and this was true for more than 1 in 4 (28.6%) of children with probable mental disorders.⁵

Currently, around 29% of children in the UK live in poverty.⁶ Economically disadvantaged children tend to have less nature contact⁷ and are more likely to report low wellbeing and to be unhappy at school⁸. But when children get outside, they're getting physical activity, enrichment, and a chance to relax and feel free.



THE NEED FOR OUR SERVICE

Children from low-income families, especially those who live in homes with no gardens or nearby green space, are isolated from natural environments. Growing up like this is limiting, both in terms of opportunities and experiences, but also mental health and wellbeing.

Studies have shown⁹ that busy urban environments stimulate brain activity linked to fear and stress, while natural settings activate areas associated with stability, love, and empathy. Depriving children of time outdoors is depriving them of the chance to grow and develop to the best of their abilities.



There's far too much time where children aren't playing outside. Combine that with increasing volumes of children needing counselling, spending time on social media, more screen time, and they just don't know the impact being that outside and enjoying nature can have on their health and their wellbeing."

HEADTEACHER

¹UNCRC (Article 31), 1989.

²National Children's Bureau, 2021.

³Institute of Education, Nature Nurtures Children, 2019.

⁴Harvard Medical School, 2018.

⁵NHS.

⁶Child Poverty Action Group, 2023.

⁷Mears et al.; Natural England, 2019.

⁸The Children's Society, 2023.

⁹Aspinall et al, 2013.



Brightening Children's Lives

We are dedicated to improving children's lives by providing unforgettable experiences of adventure, challenge, connection, and respite to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children in Leeds.

Our partners include specialist local authority teams for children experiencing abuse and neglect, along with schools, community groups, and community based organisations in the areas of highest deprivation.

We strive to give all Leeds children the opportunity to connect with nature and have new experiences. This approach supports aspects of child development including physical, mental, cognitive, and social growth.

Lineham Farm provides outdoor learning and play activities including climbing, biking, animal care, cookery and environmental work. A stay at Lineham Farm is filled with adventure and fun, all in a safe and happy environment – it's childhood as it should be.

Our goals:

1. To provide respite and holiday opportunities for children and young people aged between 7 and 11 years old from backgrounds of challenge and disadvantage who live in Leeds.
2. To assist in enabling disadvantaged children of Leeds to realise their full potential for the benefit of themselves (primarily) and the wider community.
3. To ensure that any child within Leeds has access to respite, encouragement, and learning opportunities in a safe and happy environment.

During a young person's time with us we:

- Show them they are not alone
- Make them feel safe
- Allow them to express their thoughts, fears and feelings
- Teach them that helping others is a good thing
- Instil positive values and behaviours
- Help them make friends
- Let them experience childhood as it should be
- Help them create happy memories



“

My favourite thing is seeing children achieve things they thought impossible and overcoming their fears. Be it conquering the climbing wall, learning to ride a bike, or just staying overnight and developing independence.”

ACTIVITY WORKER

OUR WORK



Outdoor physical activity and experiencing nature can have a positive impact on young people's lives, yet youngsters living in disadvantaged areas face many barriers to participation.

It is well known that children from disadvantaged backgrounds living in deprived urban areas have less opportunities for outdoor play, something which has been variously attributed to parental fear, crime rates, a lack of resources and limited green space in inner-city areas.

The charity's work encourages young people to never stop trying and to believe in themselves and what they can achieve.



How we help

The foundations of every childhood

Working with our partners we help the young people we work with and support experience what every child should: fun; learning in a new environment; developing new skills; taking part in outdoor activities such as riding a bike, climbing, spending time in nature and caring for each other and themselves.

We don't consider these experiences to be luxury, or nice to have; we believe that these experiences and skills are the foundations of every childhood.



Fostering positive values

The charity works with and supports young people away from their usual environment at Lineham Farm.

We want the children in our care to experience...

Independence
Adventure
Fun
Safety
Nurturing



Activities and experiences

Our delivery activities are diverse – their aim is to develop confidence, trust and self-belief, whilst creating lifelong memories.



First time experiences



Beautiful countryside and nature



Teamwork, resilience and skills



Animal care



Fun and happiness!

MILLS & REEVE
Achieve more. Together.

“

Leeds Children's Charity truly takes a holistic approach to brightening the lives of disadvantaged children in Leeds. Not only do they provide invaluable breaks for these children, giving them both respite and the opportunity to learn skills that many of us take for granted, but they also distribute products through their partner schools and community groups. The support they offer children extends well beyond their visit to the amazing facilities they have at Lineham Farm.”

**ANDREW MARTIN,
MILLS & REEVE (BUSINESS SUPPORTER)**

OUR PARTNERS



The centre is used by our partner schools during term time. These residentials are designed around the needs of the young people, with learning outcomes and activities linking back to their formal school-based learning and development.

Whilst with us, teachers are encouraged to take part in all the activities with the young people. This provides a very important link between the young people and their teachers, a link that is further developed in school.

The young people who visit from our partner schools have many different needs; a large number being identified as SEND. Because they are from partner schools, the young people are from backgrounds of challenge and disadvantage.



Community based partners

We have several community-based organisations who the charity regards as partners. These organisations are based in the most disadvantaged communities in the city, and we work with these groups at weekends and during school holidays. This work is a combination of single day, residential or weekend residential delivery.

Family focused welfare teams

The charity has very close working relationships with service sectors such as the MST CAN multisystemic team and Family Action. These agencies work within our target schools and provide referrals for our work with families and young people with caring responsibilities.

We help close the loop on specific family focused work. This ensures our work is not delivered in isolation of other support – it is part of an overall plan for the child or family.



Lineham Farm provides a calming and lovely space in which parents can gain confidence and model skills from the excellent patient staff. The children have lots of fun and develop positive memories."

MST CAN STAFF TEAM MEMBER

ACHIEVEMENTS

2023 and 2024 Highlights

Continued our work supporting family weekends.

Piloted work alongside women and their children seeking refuge.

Provided once in a lifetime opportunities in partnership with LUFC, for hundreds of children across the city.

Made significant upgrades to the centre, new furnishings, painting and bedroom upgrades.

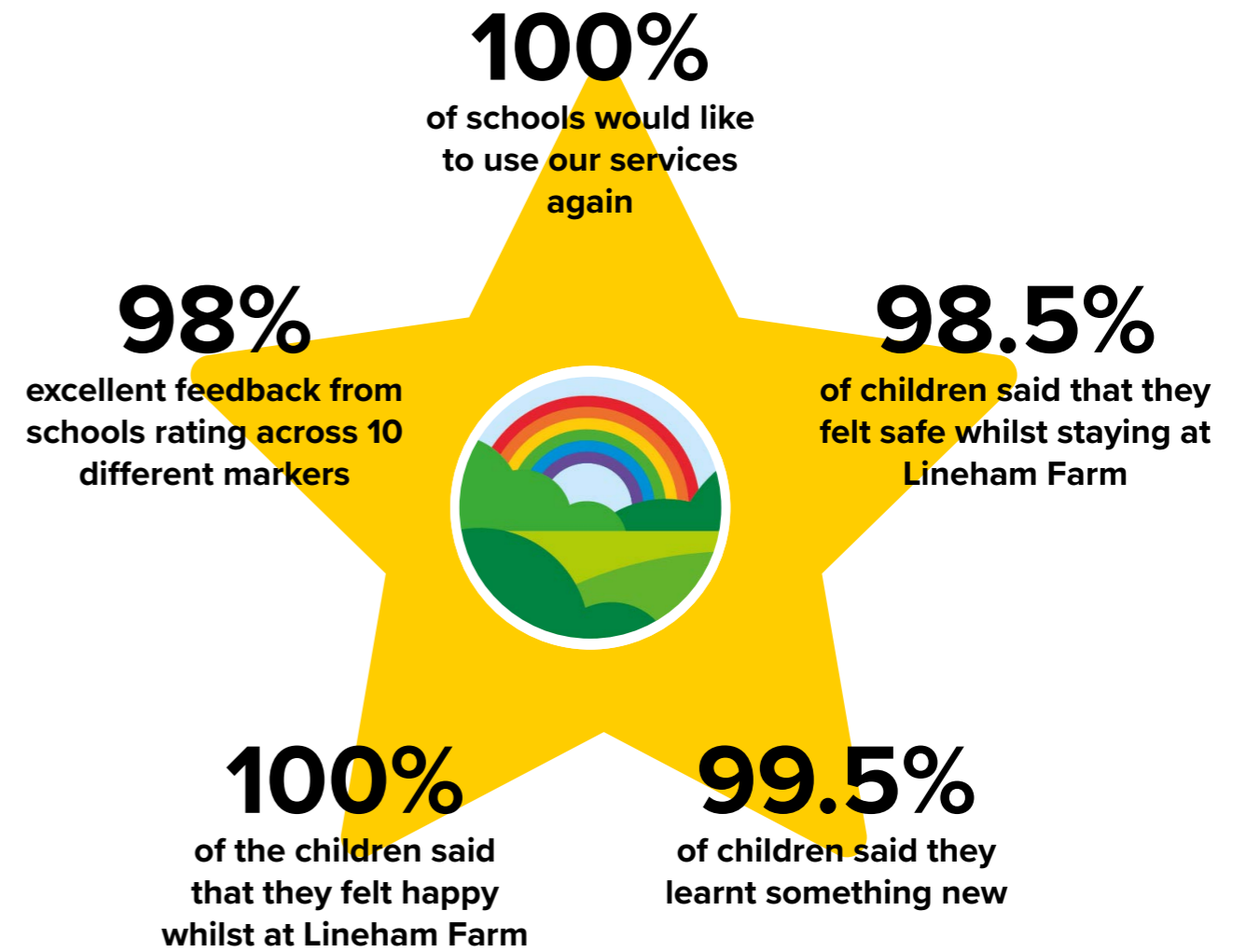
Supported more vulnerable young people during school holidays who often lack access to nutritious food and refreshment.

Introduced work with new partners on school linking; working with and linking other schools across communities where children all experience disadvantage.

Received and distributed over 8,000 gifts to vulnerable families as part of our Christmas gift appeal.

Celebrated our 30th Birthday Celebrations for Lineham Farm and launched our 30 for 30 camping campaign – the start of the build of a new, dedicated and fully serviced camping area!

New and upgraded activity equipment such as two state of the art off road accessible bikes.



Your dedication to providing the perfect environment for vulnerable children to learn new skills, challenge themselves and have a sense of accomplishment is commendable. An enjoyable experience and I am sure that they will remember forever.”

SCHOOL STAFF



CASE STUDY

Why I like Lineham Farm by Kai, aged 9

I like coming to Lineham Farm because it is a refuge for me.

Everyone is welcome, even children with disabilities are included in everything. You don't have to worry if you don't know how to do something or are a bit scared, the amazing staff will always help you. They make you feel safe.

Lineham Farm is full of nature. It has animals you can care for and woods where you can learn to light fires and play games with your friends. My favourite activities are the ones that include nature such as walking through streams. You never need electronics at Lineham!



“They make you feel safe.”

The food is always excellent, and you can always have more if you are hungry. Nobody is ever hungry or cold at Lineham. It doesn't matter if you forget things because Lineham Farm has everything you need including fleeces, wellies and coats. You can even get a toothbrush and some toothpaste.

Recently I came to Lineham in the summer and met some Leeds Utd players, that was a very special treat.

I think that people should donate lots of money to Lineham so that more children like me can visit.

Thank you, Kai.



OUR DEVELOPMENTS

Since the covid pandemic, the charity has spent hundreds of thousands of pounds rejuvenating the building. We have installed new carpets, new wooden flooring in the barn and communal areas, upgraded lighting and the kitchen facilities, a new educational nature classroom, a pergola for outside learning, and increased secure and dry storage facilities.

Some examples of what charitable donations have paid for:

Upgraded bike track

New garden and wildlife areas

New library and living area refurbishment

Centre resurfacing including the courtyard and surrounding areas



THE FUTURE

Our charity's initiatives are shaped by feedback from our beneficiaries and partners. Continuous feedback, evaluation, and adaptation are central to keeping our work relevant and making sure it delivers impact where it should.

To this end, the charity is developing the following programmes:

- **Family Weekends:** This initiative is for families in need, offering respite breaks in collaboration with other partners.
- **Camping Experiences:** Building on a successful pilot programme, we are expanding our camping initiative to provide more enriching outdoor experiences.
- **Alternative Educational Provision:** We are exploring new opportunities to work with partner schools to create alternative learning environments for young people who find mainstream education challenging.

Supporting communities and building new perspectives

Children from areas of deprivation and disadvantage in Leeds experience the challenges that come with living in poverty. Statistics show that these young people are more likely to suffer neglect, abuse, poor health (physical and mental), and unemployment in their adult lives.

We need to break down barriers and help to build new perspectives and opportunities that are accessible, and not feared. At Lineham Farm, we teach children that helping others is rewarding, and that they can succeed at things.

We teach new skills, instil positive values, and give children the encouragement to reach their full potential. This reduces the likelihood of them having a negative impact on society as adults and shows them how to make a positive contribution to the lives of others.



The farm is a magical place and the dedication to improving the lives of disadvantaged children is fantastic to see. The charity has ambitious plans that I hope will allow even more of our city's most vulnerable children to receive much-needed respite and fun in the wonderful surroundings of the farm."

TOM RIORDAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

Future plans

It would be very easy for the staff team at the charity to continue delivery as it has and to consolidate its delivery. There is always a balance to be reached between expansion and consolidation and the following has been agreed.

Animals are a very important aspect of life at Lineham Farm. Unfortunately, and because of old age or predation some of our animals have died. The animals we plan to replace include guinea pigs, the farm cat, and a peacock.

To extend and increase the numbers who can use the centre, plans are afoot to develop a new camping area. Facilities will include a new toilet, shower, and cooking facilities, along with a fire pit and activity spaces.



We are planning for:

- New animals
- New camping area
- A new low ropes course
- New doors and windows
- New partner-based events



I have two top memories. Climbing is my first because everyone was saying never give up and encouraging everyone to go further, I got to the top! Biking is my second because I finally learnt how to ride a bike!"

PARTNER SCHOOL PUPIL



JOIN OUR BUSINESS SUPPORTERS

Commit to making a difference for the children of Leeds and join our business supporters. Make a donation or fundraise with a target in mind, receiving support from us!



Challenge Champions

Take on a challenge to help champion the children of Leeds!



Change Makers

With a £500 membership donation, our Change Makers create a positive impact on the lives of young people.



Business Heroes

Our incredible business heroes pledge to raise a target of £5,000 or more throughout the year.



Many young people, through no fault of their own, are unable to access the opportunities they need to thrive. Leeds Children's Charity at Lineham Farm helps them to access these opportunities and allows them to spend time with their peers.

This is something that we are passionate about supporting young people to do."

**WILLIAM REID, OPERATIONS MANAGER
EMR, LEEDS**



Why do businesses support us?

- ✓ Show community spirit by supporting local charity
- ✓ Visit for CSR days and see the impact your support has
- ✓ We can share and promote your support online
- ✓ Get support from our dedicated fundraising team
- ✓ The children we work with could be your future employees

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Please help us reach more young people across Leeds

Your support is vital to our success, and there are loads of great ways to get involved. We never cease to be amazed at the innovative ways people raise funds for us.



Champion a child

It costs an average of £250 to send a disadvantaged child for a week of fun. Donating £250 or whatever you can afford helps us to continue supporting the children who need it most.



Give monthly

A small monthly contribution of just £5 over a year provides a child with a day's stay at Lineham Farm. £20 per month covers the cost of a week of fun for one.



Organise a fundraiser

Bake-sales, fun runs, five-a-side tournaments, bungee jumps – there are endless possibilities, and we'd love to hear from you!



"My favourite thing is seeing children achieve things they thought impossible and overcoming their fears. It makes me feel so proud when I see children conquering the climbing wall, learning to ride a bike, feeding the sheep and for some just staying overnight away from home and developing independence."

ACTIVITY WORKER



Thank you

Thank you to all the wonderful businesses, organisations and individuals who support the work of Leeds Children's Charity at Lineham Farm. It is so wonderful to give the young people of Leeds the same chances that every child deserves.

For more information visit

www.leedschildrenscharity.org.uk

For ways to donate visit

www.leedschildrenscharity.org.uk/support-us/ways-to-give/

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DONATE NOW

