**Longmead Community Farm**

Longmead Farmhouse, Milborne St Andrew, Dorset DT11 0HU

01258 837960 denise@longmead.org www.longmead.org

**Process for Referrers**

This is the way that we start working with a family:

1. Referrer/ member of staff contacts me by email to discuss a new family coming here. It helps to have information about the family and anything else you think we need to know, particularly in terms of their needs, health and any problems or risks. All information is treated as confidential. A decision needs to be made as to whether the family need respite and/or help with solving family problems. The former is to offer a break/rest/recuperation and the latter involves a more structured programme of activities to address specific problems. We send you a Referrer Form to complete; it needs the agreement of the person(s) being referred.
2. I will then discuss this with our team and check whether we are able to take on another family - we are increasingly booked up so planning well ahead is imperative. I will let you know if we can help and the dates that are possible.
3. Longmead’s work involves committing to a family over an extended period of time. The length of time varies but initially we would commit to around 6 visits in the first 12 months and then review how things are going at the end of the year. If a family continue to need support, and they are benefiting and/or making changes to their lives, there is no reason why the relationship with Longmead cannot continue for a longer period. We make this commitment in order to build a relationship with a family based on care, trust and friendship, and this takes time. Often this is beyond the time that social service agencies are involved.
4. All who come to Longmead do so voluntarily, but they must agree to
   * + - 1. Work around the farm, with the animals and in the garden
         2. Be on the job rota (washing and clearing up, feeding the animals etc)
         3. Help with meals (harvesting, preparing and cooking)
         4. Follow all health and safety instructions (it is a working farm)

This needs to be made clear to families before they come but will be done again on the introductory day.

1. The first step is to invite families to an introductory day – normally a Saturday or Sunday from 10am to 4pm – so that they can have a look at the farm, join in our work, and decide whether they would like to come for a longer stay. It helps, but it is not a requirement, that they are accompanied their referrer on the introductory day.
2. If the family decide they want to commit to the programme and come for regular, normally weekend, residential stays, then we will fix the dates of the next visits (normally about 6 to 8 weeks apart). And once these are completed, we will consider further bookings on the same basis.
3. We need a contact number of the referrer over a family weekend to be used in emergencies or situations with which we need may help.

I hope this helps to clarify the procedures and working methods. I think it is important that those referring people to us have visited Longmead so that they have a clear idea of what we do, and can talk in an informed way to their own service users/clients’.