



LIVING THE LIFE YOU WERE DESIGNED FOR

Willowdene Farm

Chorley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 6PP

T: 01746 718658

E: info@willowdenefarm.org.uk

W: www.willowdenefarm.org.uk



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About Willowdene

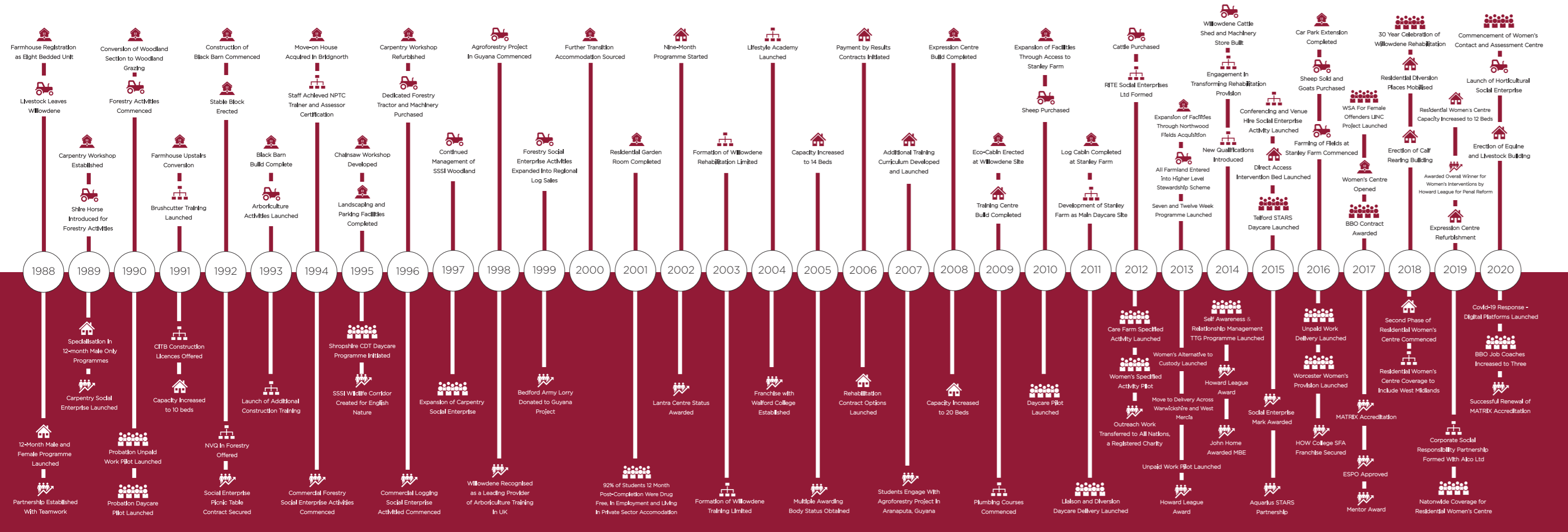
Founded in 1988, and built on a Christian foundation, Willowdene prides itself on providing an inclusive, safe environment where men and women can identify, acknowledge, and tackle the issues of their past so that they can understand their present, and build their future.

To this end, Willowdene has established a track record of working in partnership with private, public and third-sector organisations to develop and deliver innovative and effective services to break generational cycles of offending, homelessness, substance misuse, mental health issues and unemployment.

Based in the heart of West Mercia, Willowdene provides an opportunity for lasting life transformation through a proven approach to rehabilitation, that includes trauma-informed therapy, training, work-experience and resettlement.

At the heart of Willowdene's mission is a commitment to ensure that students have access to interventions that will enable them to step into the life they were made for.





CASE STUDY 2

BACKGROUND

Female (P), late 30s:

- History of substance misuse and poor mental health
- 15 previous convictions including violence, dishonesty and drug possession
- Referred to Willowdene homeless, as a diversion from further criminality
- Subject to severe bullying at school and left with no qualifications
- Domestic abuse and sexual violence victim
- Suffering from PTSD following kidnap for ten days by a drug-related gang
- Children subject to a care order

OUTCOMES

Improved outcomes in key areas

P participated in and took ownership of her Willowdene Care and Recovery Plan (CARP) to identify/address her needs, priorities and strengths. She identified financial independence as a key goal.

Accommodation

When P left Willowdene she moved into secure accommodation as part of her job (40% of women entering Willowdene are NFA, but 100% leave into secure accommodation).

Finance, Benefits and Debt

Barriers to accessing accommodation included rent arrears. These were addressed in P's CARP and a repayment plan implemented. P was not on benefits at her point of referral, and so staff worked with her to access Universal Credit online. She also attended

budgeting sessions hosted by NatWest, a Willowdene partner to define essential/luxury spending and determine her income/expenditure needs.

Education, Training and Employment

P completed 17 qualifications, from entry level 3 to level 2. She created a CV and commenced a job search.

Emotional Wellbeing

P engaged in weekly individual trauma-focused therapy to identify and address past issues, including domestic and childhood abuse, and how these issues impacted her current thinking and behaviour. P also attended group sessions on emotional wellbeing which included multiple units, for example dealing with problems in daily life, self-talk, and confidence. Willowdene offered wrap-around support with an allocated female staff member who supported P through her journey.

Social Inclusion and Family

P had become disconnected from her family. Using family counselling and working closely with social services (with support from her Willowdene key worker), P reunited with her parents and was able to have supervised contact with her children on-site in Willowdene's dedicated family room.

Lifestyle, Dependency and Recovery

P was initially on a methadone script. Willowdene supervised a drug reduction programme which enabled her to become drug-free after 12 weeks. Her health needs were screened, and staff helped her to

access dental, optical, sexual, and physical health interventions. Living a safe/offence-free life following tailored trauma-responsive/trauma informed services through Willowdene's holistic, trauma-informed approach and tailored therapy, P was able to move away from the baggage of her past. She gained confidence by developing self-worth, gaining qualifications, and having an achievable goal of stable independent living.

Upon leaving Willowdene, during a review of her CARP, P identified further community-based goals. Staff supported her for a further three months to attend sessions on fitness and wellbeing, interview techniques, how to apply for jobs online and complete further skills training. P also attended Willowdene activity sessions as a volunteer to develop a working routine and increase her skills/confidence. As a result of following her CARP, P gained live-in employment in a hotel working on reception and housekeeping duties. She was subsequently promoted to a management role. Two and a half years after her first contact with Willowdene, she remains drug free and purposefully employed in the care sector with a working routine; she maintains contact with her children and is in a committed and supportive long-term relationship with stable accommodation.

CONCLUSION

P said: "Willowdene has given me the opportunity to live a normal, healthy, happy life, and build a foundation to only get better, and better myself in life and work."

BACKGROUND

Female (L) aged 24:

- *Referred to Willowdene for a Women's Whole Systems Approach (WSA) LINC Project day intervention by her drugs worker*
- *Significant dependent cannabis use*
- *Described her life as "spiralling out of control"*
- *Came from a previous abusive relationship*
- *Had a 3-year-old daughter, subject of a Special Guardianship Order to L's parents*
- *Stayed at a variety of addresses*
- *Struggled to make friends and to trust others*

OUTCOMES**Improved outcomes in key areas**

L's Care and Recovery Plan (CARP) focused on addressing her primary presenting need (purposeful use of time and becoming substance-free) through gaining a variety of qualifications (life-skills and vocational) on-site, and developing confidence by both participating in training and working with a support worker on her personal goals. Over the 15 weeks of her intervention, L constantly achieved her targets, and continually reviewed and developed her CARP.

Accommodation

L was supported to build relationships with her family, enabling her to move back to the parental home permanently, and to take a more established role in her daughter's life.

Education, Training and Employment

L was supported to apply for a voluntary position at a local charity. From that experience, L gained a part-time long-term paid role there. After achieving multiple qualifications at Willowdene, L gained confidence and wanted to further her education – realising the labels she had applied to herself in the past were not true, and she applied to college and commenced a course in law.

Finance, Benefits and Debt

L was supported to resolve the financial and emotional implications of her plans and to break them into smaller sub-aims which were reviewed with her each week.

Emotional Wellbeing

As part of her CARP, L participated in the Freedom Programme with a Willowdene partner organisation. This assisted her in developing her approach to relationships for the future, as well as to understand the abusive experience of her previous relationship. All work with L was trauma-informed, gender specific and focused on her strengths and personal priorities.

Social Inclusion and Family

L socialised with other women at Willowdene and increased her ability to talk about herself and her priorities. She was supported in setting and meeting targets to spend time positively with her parents, sister and daughter.

Lifestyle, Dependency and Recovery

During her time at Willowdene, L became comfortable with who she was and realised the use of cannabis was a coping strategy. She was supported in reducing her usage to the point where she was abstinent. Two years later, she remains abstinent.

Living a safe/offence-free life following tailored trauma-responsive/trauma informed services upon leaving Willowdene, and while continuing to be supported by Willowdene's WSA post-intervention services, L applied for a law course at college. She completed this alongside her part-time employment. Following her course, L applied for a local funding scheme to train as a Freedom Programme facilitator and currently works delivering the programme for a local Criminal Justice and Domestic Abuse project. She continues to prioritise her parenting role and to spend most of her time outside work with her daughter and family.

CONCLUSION

L said: "I am proud of myself and proud of my story. I could not have done this without the help and support that I had from Willowdene and LINC, they made me realise that only I could change my story, and with their help, this is exactly what I have done."



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Structured Day Care

Outcomes

Since 1988, Willowdene has delivered innovative and unique models of rehabilitation combining therapeutic input, vocational and life-skills training and purposeful, meaningful use of time in a work-focused setting. This model has consistently delivered sector leading outcomes that have underpinned lasting life-transformation in the men and women who access our services.

Those results, together with our ongoing innovation in service design and delivery have led to Willowdene being regarded as one of the premier providers of rehabilitation and training in the U.K.

We have worked closely with probation services both CRC and NPS, the Ministry of Justice and Public Health to develop ground-breaking services for men and

women facing wide-ranging and significant barriers to purposeful living.

We passionately believe that everyone is capable of achieving lasting freedom from destructive thoughts and behaviour patterns and building a purposeful lifestyle, filled with hope and aspiration.

That belief shapes our approach, which identifies and tackles the root cause of those destructive patterns, equipping and empowering the individual to remove at source the factors that keep them from living with purpose, hope and aspiration.

We are a Matrix standard accredited organisation, that offers high quality Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) Services.

“Approach to student support was adjudged as a particular strength at this assessment, over and above their duty of care. The organisation delivers its IAG service sensitively and comprehensively, always with the student’s needs at the forefront of the process.”

Willowdene deliver best practice programmes and are an approved supplier in the sector offering:

- **Accommodation**
- **Education, Training and Employment**
- **Finance Benefits and Debt**
- **Dependency and Recovery**
- **Family & Significant Others**
- **Lifestyle & Associates**
- **Emotional Wellbeing**
- **Social Inclusion**
- **Young Adults Personal Wellbeing**
- **Women only holistic services**

Accreditations:



Willowdene have successfully achieved the Matrix Standard.

“The organisation are passionate about their work and show an admirable integrity and professionalism in their service delivery, having excellent working arrangements with those they partner with.”



Recipients of the Howard League for Penal Reform awards: 2013, 2014 and 2019.

With unparalleled success rates, Willowdene has a proven track record of delivering outstanding outcomes.

Willowdene’s Women’s Residential Alternative to Custody delivers a three fold reduction in re-offending rates, compared to custody.

Pass rates for completion of the skills training we provide is in excess of 98%.

For more than 30 years, Willowdene has been a pioneer of innovative rehabilitative solutions for men and women facing the complex issues that stem from a life filled with factors including offending behaviour, homelessness, poor mental health, substance misuse and general disconnection from community and society at large.

Through our innovative rehabilitative pathway, targeted training, wrap-around support and social enterprise activities, we provide an opportunity for men and women to take control of their future and build a life filled with purpose, intent and confidence.

Day services consist of community-based interventions, for students referred from Criminal Justice, Public Health, Department for Work and Pensions organisations and other professional bodies. Students are either collected from a convenient location and brought to Willowdene to undertake a structured day of purposeful and meaningful activities or these are delivered in the community.

With over 30 qualifications across ten vocational areas on offer, as well as practical work experience, our students

engage in skills training in a non-institutional and supportive environment. Structured day interventions can be gender specific and range from 5-25 days. Students will benefit from supported access to a variety of services across all of the pathways to reducing reoffending and improve health.

For many of our students, coming to Willowdene is the first time they have actively engaged in learning and personal development, and this often becomes the catalyst in developing a positive attitude to life-long learning.

Our day services overcome traditional barriers for engagement, in particular those arising from issues of rurality, and deliver outstanding results, with a 98% pass rate for qualifications and a retention rate of over 85% across the range of community interventions we offer.



Residential

Willowdene offers a range of structured day and residential interventions that directly fulfil the requirement of the court and probation services to men and women, also offering women only interventions as part of gender specific delivery.

Criminal Justice Interventions

Willowdene has extensive experience and outstanding results in delivering community orders, including:- Rehabilitation Activity Requirements, Unpaid Work and Unpaid ETE hours, Post Sentence Supervision, Home detention curfew and licence, Alcohol Treatment Requirements and Drug Rehabilitation Requirements. These are based around Willowdene's structured day care programmes and directly work in partnership with the probation service.

Residential Interventions

Willowdene offers three female gender specific residential programmes 1) Criminal Justice, 2) Substance misuse rehabilitation, 3) Intervention and diversion.

Programme length is either for 7 or 12 weeks with a comprehensive reintegration and resettlement programme. Programmes are based at the Northwood site at Willowdene's purpose built women's centre.

LINC (Local Initiatives Nurturing Change) Project

Female only project bringing together private, public and third sectors to offer a holistic solution for women to access the support they need, when they need it, and to combat issues including housing, abuse, exploitation, unemployment, personal finance and mental health.

Building Better Opportunities Project

BBO enables students to design the future they want and start living the life they were made for. Providing the tailored support students need to support them with education training and employment, developing the skills and confidence to help them build their future.

Education, Training & Employment Programmes

Students are supported to develop their own individual learning plan to move them towards employment. Students can access skills development through our education, training and work experience programmes and staff support them to move towards employment.

Programmes and Interventions

Willowdene has specialised in providing residential rehabilitation and respite services since it began in 1988. Originally operating as a male only site, a mixed site from 2013 and since 2018 operating a female only residential option.

Since 2013, Willowdene has had a strong focus on developing women's services. The creation of the UK's first (and currently only) residential female alternative to custody established a solid foundation that has underpinned the ongoing development of innovative interventions across both residential and community-based women's services.

Based at our Northwood site, the home of our Women's Recovery Centre, women reside in a tranquil rural setting in self-contained multiple occupancy log cabins, with access to a well equipped communal area.

Whether through a Public Health referral (primarily for substance misuse), or through Criminal Justice (as diversion of, alternative to custody, or post sentence support),

women stay at Willowdene between seven and twelve weeks.

During their placement, women not only access training, counselling, therapy and work opportunities, before making a supported transition back into the community once their placement ends, but also focus on building the life skills they need to build a sustainable and purposeful lifestyle.





Skills Training

Healthy Living



Combining mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health considerations, Willowdene's focus on developing skills for healthy living ensures students are exposed to the fundamental principles of establishing a balanced, healthy lifestyle. Nutrition, fitness, self-care and self-awareness are fundamental building blocks of our training in this area. We also encourage students to gain a firm understanding of dependency and exploitation, equipping them to make healthy choices that help them to avoid harm.

Life Skills



Our bespoke life-skills short courses focus on helping students to develop the key skills they need to discover, build and grow into the life they were made for. Covering topics such as personal finance, problem solving, goal setting, self-awareness and self-management, these engaging and practical sessions help students to gain a better understanding of who they are and where they fit in the world, as well as leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Practical employment-focused courses covering creating a CV, searching for jobs and job interviews help students build on their improved life-skills to build a purposeful, working lifestyle.

“Through timely, appropriate end to end support and receiving practical information, advice and guidance, F received targeted interventions that enabled her to obtain qualifications and achieve her goal of being self-employed.”



Hospitality

Leisure and Tourism is an accessible route for many of our students to become actively engaged in the workplace. By gaining skills and experience, students open up a wide range of possibilities for short-term employment as well as longer-term career development. Willowdene's regular events offer students opportunities to develop the confidence and self-belief for building the life that they want.



Retail

As an active social enterprise growing produce and manufacturing items for sale, students are exposed to the full retail journey, from raw material to final sale. While stopping short of providing shop-floor retail experience, the exposure to a wide range of aspects of the retail process equips students with an understanding of what is required to operate successfully in a retail workplace. Students learn to think on their feet when it comes to situations involving pricing, communicating product attributes and handling transactions and adapt the teaching of numeracy and literacy to the context of a retail environment.

“On completion of interventions, Willowdene worked with B's previous employer to arrange his gradual re-introduction into work. By March 2020, B was back in full time employment.”

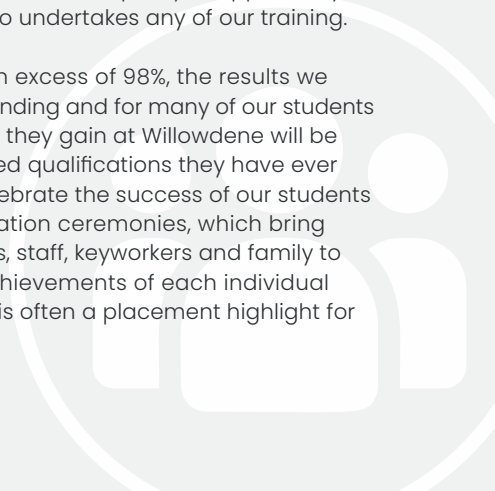
“At the end of D's intervention at Willowdene, D graduated with new qualifications, was offered a work trial and has entered the community as an active citizen.”



In partnership with RITE Social Enterprises, Willowdene delivers over 30 nationally recognised qualifications across ten vocational areas. We work hard to identify industry areas across the West Midlands that offer the greatest potential for our students to embark upon building a purposeful, working lifestyle and ensure that the training and qualifications we offer are focused on maximising those opportunities, by targeting regional skills gaps and requirements in those areas.

Working in fully equipped, purpose-built facilities, our students learn in a safe, welcoming, empowering and non-institutional setting that promotes inclusive learning. Our tutors are highly skilled at engaging with individuals who have faced significant barriers to education, using innovative methods to overcome those barriers and ensure equality of opportunity for every student who undertakes any of our training.

With pass rates in excess of 98%, the results we deliver are outstanding and for many of our students the qualifications they gain at Willowdene will be the first recognised qualifications they have ever achieved. We celebrate the success of our students at regular graduation ceremonies, which bring together students, staff, keyworkers and family to recognise the achievements of each individual student for what is often a placement highlight for all concerned.





Engineering

In state-of-the-art facilities, students can engage in a variety of engineering-based activities. As they learn, students engage in the day-to-day running of the agricultural and horticultural activities, applying the skills they learn in real-world situations, such as, welding feeding troughs, building trailers and carrying out vehicle maintenance and repairs. Students all have the opportunity to make items that they can keep as a reminder of the skills they gained. Qualifications are offered in welding, car mechanics and equipment maintenance.



Agriculture

As a 200-acre farming facility, with a pedigree cattle herd, as well as a breeding herd of beef cattle, horses and goats, students can experience working with livestock in a live farming environment. Students gain first-hand experience and invaluable insight into the practicalities of safely operating large agricultural machinery as part of a working day on a busy farm. With qualifications in animal husbandry, tractor driving and health and safety, students can put in place a firm, practical foundation for developing their rural skills.



Horticulture

Our horticultural site at Stanley Farm provides students with an opportunity to experience the workings of a commercial nursery and gain insight into the farm-to-fork process. Students actively engage in the growing cycle of vegetables, fruit and herbs, while gaining skills, experience and qualifications in working with plants and trees. The work the students undertake not only helps to supply Willowdene with some of the food that they enjoy as part of their day, but also supports the ongoing operations of Willowdene by helping to generate social enterprise revenue.



Carpentry

In a purpose-built and fully equipped carpentry workshop, students are presented with an opportunity to learn skills in the use of hand tools and fixed carpentry machinery. Whether it's making items for use in the upkeep or development of Willowdene's facilities, or working on a project to construct an item that they can take home at the end of the day, students work towards woodworking qualifications while engaging in practical, purposeful and meaningful activities.



Construction

Willowdene is a constantly evolving project, with new site developments being undertaken on a regular basis. These developments – from the construction of log cabins and the laying of concrete, to painting and decorating – all provide hands-on opportunities for our students to gain construction-related skills, experience and qualifications. The existing facilities are an enduring example of student engagement in the construction and development of Willowdene's facilities. This opportunity for students to leave a permanent, positive mark on Willowdene and create something that will be used by all who follow in their footsteps, has a profound impact on the students involved.



Catering

Every student attending Willowdene is offered a freshly prepared and nutritious lunch, using many ingredients that they may have been involved in growing. Our catering kitchen also provides students with the opportunity to gain skills, experience and qualifications that will not only equip them to develop a healthy lifestyle at home, but also lay a foundation should they wish to explore a catering-related career. Students are able to gain a food hygiene qualification and a qualification in basic food preparation, both of which are as applicable to healthy daily living as they are to a career in catering.