

REPORT ON THE GRAIN CHAIN

THE GRAIN CHAIN, has been a development project working closely with local partner organisations which look after emotionally-disturbed and excluded children, and adults suffering with mental health issues, in some cases, quite severe depression. These locally based groups were all part of the Grain Chain:

1. Wings Residential School
2. Growing Well
3. South Lakeland MIND

A total of 144 people of all ages from teenagers up to late 60's took part across the partner organisations and the 18 sessions delivered.

Many of the participants to The Grain Chain, led by Nell Dale, teacher and artisan baker, have had severe depression and issues with leaving their homes. Many of them did not cook for themselves and indeed, some were unable to use knives, or to attempt to cook, eat or even touch certain ingredients. The process was then slow to begin with until many of the participants became more comfortable with the routine and the therapeutic nature of the work. Some participants who felt unable to cook, began to draw in the flour, and this made them feel they had contributed. Others would offer verbal input but find themselves unable to pick up the bread ingredients or vegetables.



All participants agreed at the end of the first phase of the project, that the one thing that helped most was to sit down together, and to eat a meal which they had all had a hand in preparing – whether this was from verbal input or from physical, this part of the day's session was the most rewarding and successful. Some people felt they had achieved a lot by seeing something they prepared being cooked and eaten by others. Many said they would now try to cook for themselves at home.

Some comments from MIND were:

“This had a very positive effect on my mental health, I found myself able to participate in almost all the activity”

“Nell was very patient, a good teacher”

“I feel better able to choose healthy food”

“I feel closer to nature here, away from the town I live in”

