

Greenfingers in the Forest

Moray & Aberdeenshire Forest District

1. Protected Characteristic category

Disability

2. Partner organisations/participants

- Moray & Aberdeenshire Forest District,
- 'Greenfingers' – n Elgin based horticultural project which works with adults with learning and physical disabilities and is funded by Moray Council.

3. Project title and details of Initiative

Greenfingers in the Forest – This initiative provide adults with learning disabilities the opportunity to become involved in a gardening/plant growing “business” activity and develop their own gardening skills.

4. Initiative/Project aims and background

In 2010, the Greenfingers group initially started on conservation and maintenance based tasks in the forest. These included working on scrub clearance, removing western hemlock regeneration and other jobs such as the improvement of forestry access points. In addition, they assisted in the development of a wildlife pond and insect feeding area at the bird hide at [Roseisle](#). Their involvement in the tasks has allowed the group to:

- build their self confidence,
- develop their working skills; and
- let them experience for themselves how relaxing a visit to the woodlands can be.

Sharon Birnie, Greenfingers, stated:

Good Practice case studies

“At present we have a team of 14 service users who join with a staff team of 3 to work in the forest. In the mornings, there is a great sense of enthusiasm amongst them as they prepare for their day in the forest. They are keen to get on their waterproof trousers, boots, gloves and high-vis yellow vests.

The service users are gaining a great deal of self worth by attending these forestry days, there is a real work ethic growing among them. They are keen to get their tools and find out where they are working. Their favourite job is to saw down the trees in the forest. There are very excited looking forward to the new jobs which have been allocated to us through our Forest Ranger.”

5. Future plans

Plans are for the group to help FC staff develop a recreation/picnic site.