

Transforming mental wellbeing through horses

in partnership with



**Sport
In Mind**



1 in 4

people in the UK
experience a mental
health problem
each year.



3.8 million

people were being
treated by NHS mental
health services in
2023/24.



1 million

of those were
children and young
people.



£1.2 billion

generated in social value,
supporting wellbeing,
connection and
communities across Britain.



Our ambition

To ensure anyone who is struggling with mental wellbeing or has a mental health condition can benefit from the healing power of horses.

The challenge



Across the UK, many people experience mental health challenges that impact their confidence, relationships and ability to engage in everyday activities.

Participants can experience:

- anxiety**
- low confidence**
- social isolation**
- PTSD**
- depression**

This can make it difficult to leave the house, meet new people or take part in physical activity.

The intervention



Through weekly equestrian sessions, participants:

- Learn to ride and spend time around horses
- Take part in stable-based activities
- Build relationships with others facing similar challenges
- Develop routine, responsibility and a sense of purpose

Why horses?



Equestrian environments provide:

- Calm and connection**
a grounding relationship with animals
- Movement**
gentle physical activity
- Purpose**
routine and responsibility
- Confidence**
achievement and learning new skills
- Belonging**
supportive environments where people feel accepted

The impact

For many participants, the sessions become more than just a sporting activity. Impact reports show real and lasting changes.



Improved confidence and wellbeing

Coaches involved in the programme report seeing participants develop confidence both around horses and in themselves.



Reduced isolation

Coaches report participants forming friendships through shared experiences and supporting one another's wellbeing.



Purpose and routine

Some participants have progressed from attending sessions to volunteering, caring for horses and supporting others.



"For six weeks my child wouldn't speak to anyone or leave the house. This horse-riding session is the first time she has smiled and laughed with her new friends. It's the highlight of her week."

- Parent

"You watch them slowly go from being quite nervous about climbing on a horse to, 'Oh, look, we're trotting, we can steer.' It's a massive sense of achievement. Their personality starts to shine through."

- Coach

"I almost didn't come today, but my daughter said, 'just go and do it!' I'm so glad I did, I've met some lovely people. This has shown me that I can do new things."

- Participant