



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Stable Life

Email: info@stablelife.org.uk
Website: www.stablelife.org.uk

Tel: 01750 32277
Dryden Farm, Ashkirk, Selkirk
TD7 4NT



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WHAT WE DO

Stable Life supports disadvantaged young people and their families in the Scottish Borders who are experiencing personal challenges in their lives.













By working together using the horse and its environment we help young people to discover a sense of self, learn transferable life skills and look to a healthier and happier future with empowered choices, aspirations and dreams.

Our day by day operational purpose is to improve the health and well-being of these young people through 1:1 or group sessions

We offer safe and confidential environments to:

- Enable the young people to discuss their current situation and develop positive coping strategies
- Support young people with social, emotional or behavioural issues to continue in mainstream education, and learn life skills
- Reduce the need for intervention through the Children's Hearing System
- Bring multiple benefits to children, young people, their families and communities

To achieve positive outcomes for our young people, our programmes focus on 3 key areas:

Stable Life Focus Areas...	Help Young People Develop...	Help Young People to Become...	Help Young People to Achieve...
<p>Healthy Life Choices</p> 	<p>Improved Self-Esteem & Confidence</p> 	<p>More Resilient & Adaptable</p> 	<p>Improved Well-Being</p> 
<p>Community Mindedness</p> 	<p>Leadership Skills, Tolerance & Empathy</p> 	<p>Responsible Citizens</p> 	<p>Improved Attainment</p> 
<p>Education & Career Success</p> 	<p>Recognising The Importance Of Education</p> 	<p>Prepared For The Future</p> 	<p>Improved Life Chances</p> 

CHAIR'S FOREWARD

Our year from April 2019 to March 2020 has been yet another year of challenge, change and commitment.

In my view as Chair, the hardest challenge remains the financial one. Our team are constantly seeking funds from every available avenue and watching all our outgoings like hawks. We benefit from large grant giving bodies such as Children In Need, Big Lottery, The Robertson Trust and Scottish Government to private family trusts and generous individuals.

Each donation is as important as the next. And we are grateful to all who support us. Last year we acknowledged that we could not rely on our reserves going forward, and I am pleased to say we have addressed that issue. Our commercial income has continued to support us as well as form our physical base. Next year, we will see the benefit of the refurbishment of the indoor school.

All of this is very welcome as we entered into the uncharted waters in March of Covid-19. I will not dwell on the impact, as this will fall into next year's report more fully other than to say I am proud of the strength of our teams to support our young people and our horses as we moved into lock down and beyond.

Leaving Covid aside, our challenges have followed our new ways of working, new teams and new opportunities for our young people. I am happy to report that the challenges are embraced by all, and the organisation grows more vibrant with them enabling us to meet our mission statement.

Other changes are of course include personnel. I am stepping down from Chair, and Board. It has been a privilege to have worked with all at the Stable Life family, and my heartfelt thanks to all. Project staff too are on the move, Alyson and Jenna left earlier in the year and post summer farewells are to Leslie and Chloe. New faces on the horizon.

Commitment is all around Stable Life, from our resident Landlords the Arres family, our staff, our clients, our volunteers and our young people.

With our steady hands on the finance, our organisational skills and forward looking staff striving for new ways to help our young people achieve their potential, Stable Life will continue to serve our community.

Anne Rutherford
Chair

OUR MISSION

Is to provide a safe, nurturing and learning experience using the horse and its environment to help disadvantaged young people reach their full potential and achieve their aspirations and dreams.

OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

We have had another very productive year at Stable Life and as an organisation we feel we have grown, developed and enhanced the services we offer to the young people we support.

In May our project staff completed training in Equine Assisted Learning (EAL), and Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT) which allowed an insight in to the power of change and experience the feelings for themselves through the interactive training. They have also successfully completed their Youth Achievement Awards and Hi5 training as well as Mental Health first aid.

Our Out of the Woods pilot project came to end in March 2020. This has been a fantastic project which has enabled us to deliver the SQA National Progression Award Level 4 Horse Care in partnership with Borders College developing our pathway for young people participating at Stable Life.

Over the year our Project Team have worked hard supporting 156 young people through our main services and Out of the Woods project. 93 of these young people have completed their intervention with us and we are currently supporting 49.

Our Equine Centre has been busy again this year which is testament to Sam and the Yard staff's hard work to build a welcoming, friendly centre. Year on year we see more and more customers enjoying the various equine activities on offer.

The Indoor School upgrade project took a huge leap forward this year as we undertook a fundraising campaign. Through everyone's fantastic generosity we managed to raise around £30,000 which along with grants that we have secured means we can push on with the project.

We have a few changes in the team this year, Anne Rutherford our Chair is stepping down after 3 years at the helm. Jenna and Alison have also moved on to pursue different careers and we wish them all the very best and huge thanks for their time, support, knowledge given to Stable Life and the people it supports.

Can't finish without mentioning the impact of Covid-19 on Stable Life. During lockdown we had to stop all our services with our young people and customers which was heartbreaking and very frustrating for us all. We all (including our ponies) really missed not having all our visitors. We are focusing on working through the challenges this epidemic is bringing and the ever changing environment we all find ourselves in.

All that we achieve is down to our Board, staff, volunteers, funders, landlords, customers, supporters and stakeholders and we can never thank you enough. But most importantly a big thank you to the young people who participate in our services for they are the real hero's.

Mags Powell
Chief Executive



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

From April 2019 to March 2020 we have received 100 referrals to our Equine programme, Environmental programme and Life Skills programme. Over the year we supported 142 young people, in addition 8 referrals were unsuitable and 7 young people did not engage. We are currently supporting 49 young people and have a waiting list of 8.



Supported 142 young people through our three main services



Delivered 219 1:1 sessions

We have changed how we deliver sessions, they are now in a rolling programme of 17 sessions, the groups are closed which allows for building relationships in a safe environment. The session plans are structured to be able to provide a structured psychosocial intervention, using evidence based activities. This has proved highly effective with the new groups, with a high engagement rate. Sessions are now planned with the outcomes designed to fit the specific needs of the group. Due to the groups being closed it means that they are specifically focused around referral criteria and age group, allowing the young person to be able to access the most relevant and effective support package, they will develop at a similar rate which allows the group to progress further in their riding abilities.

We have ran 337 equine group sessions consisting of between 4-6 young people, staff and volunteers, and 219 1:1's, 36 Environmental sessions of which 6 young people participated and 31 Life Skill sessions of which 14 young people participated.



Delivered 337 group sessions



Delivered 36 Environmental sessions

All group sessions usually last around 2 hours and 1:1's run for one hour. We deliver our sessions during term time within school hours. We have also provided taster sessions to all young people who had been referred - this is a short visit to the yard to meet the ponies and have a look around to see if this is something they would like to participate in.

In addition to this 30 young people participated in our summer programme which involved 11 different activities including berry picking, beach trip, visits to local attractions and estates, picnic rides and a visit to the local college to visit their small animals.



Ran a summer programme for 30 young people



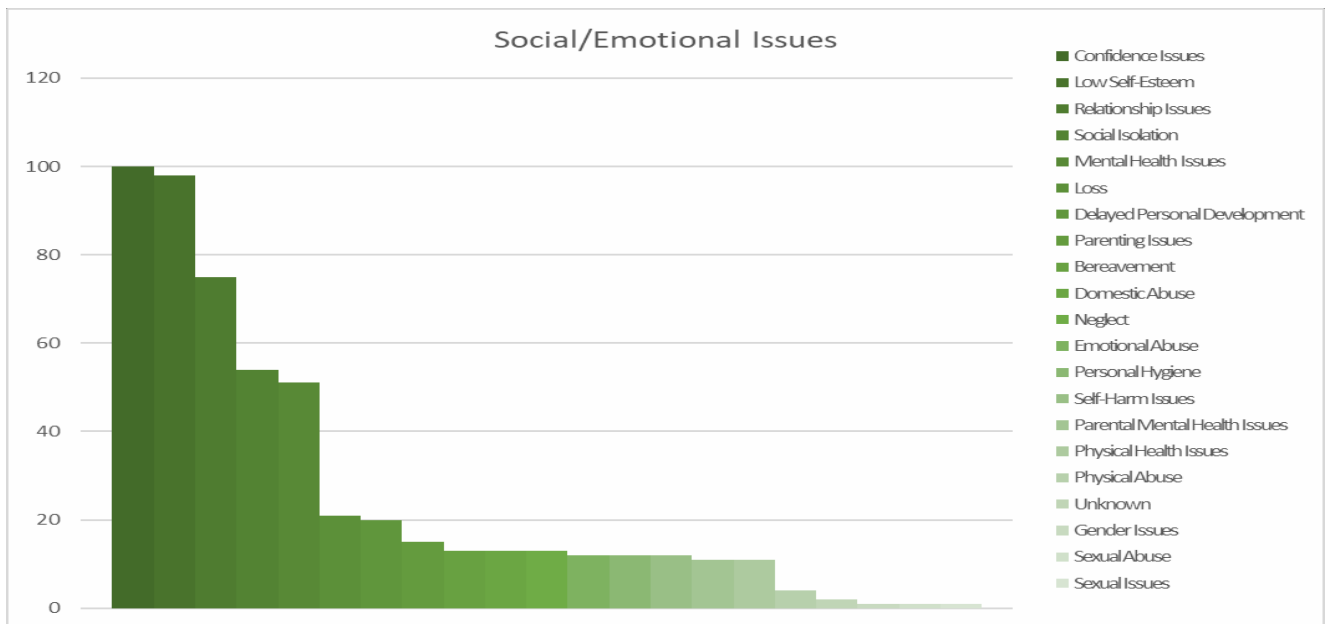
Delivered 31 Life Skills Sessions

We also continued our life skills programme over the summer where 3 young people participated, 10 young people attended 1:1 sessions over the summer period and 4 young people (under the age of 10) participated in small EAL groups.

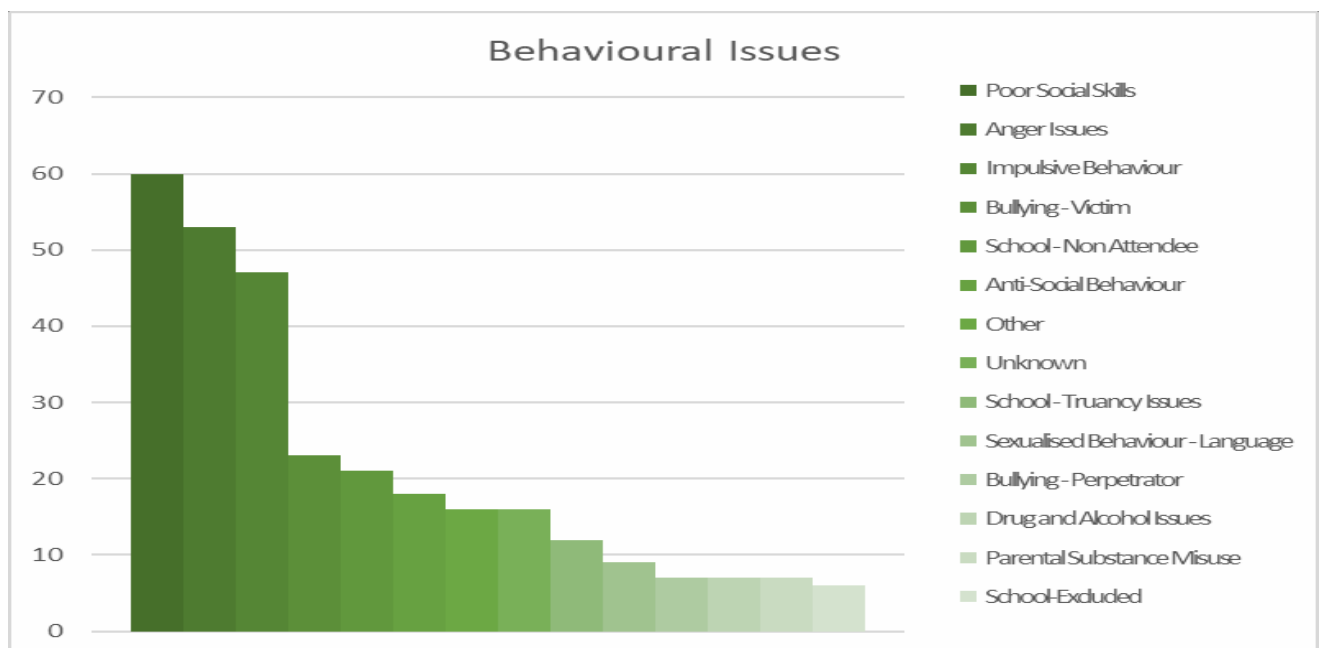
Feedback from a young person
"This is the first time I have felt proud of myself"

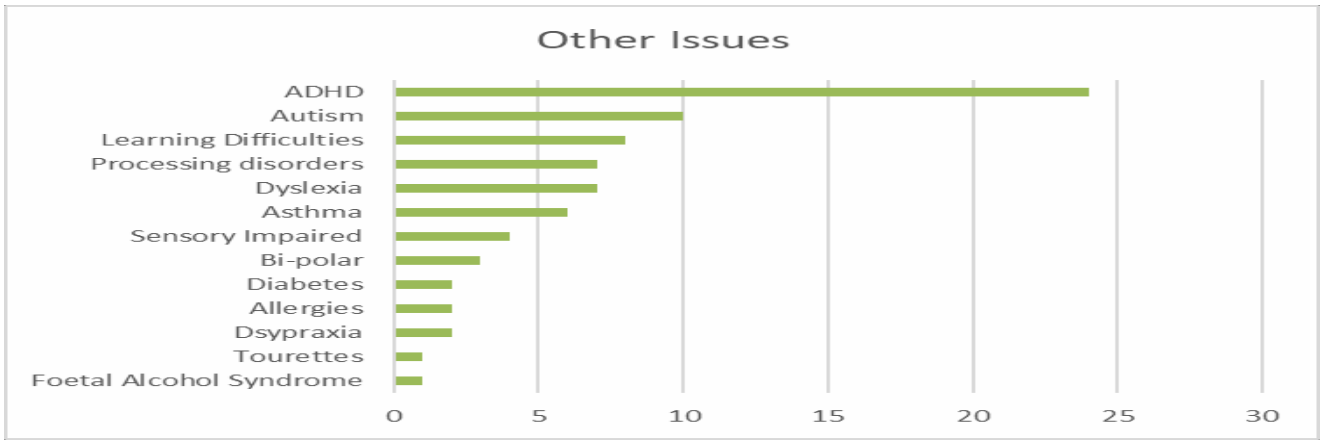
REFERRALS OVER THE YEAR

Our records show that the young people were referred for the following reasons:

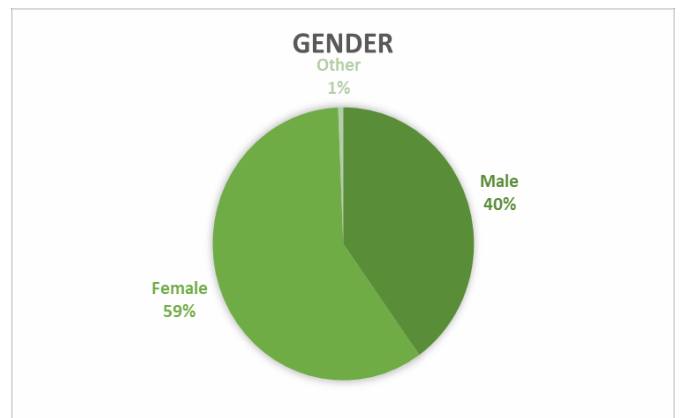
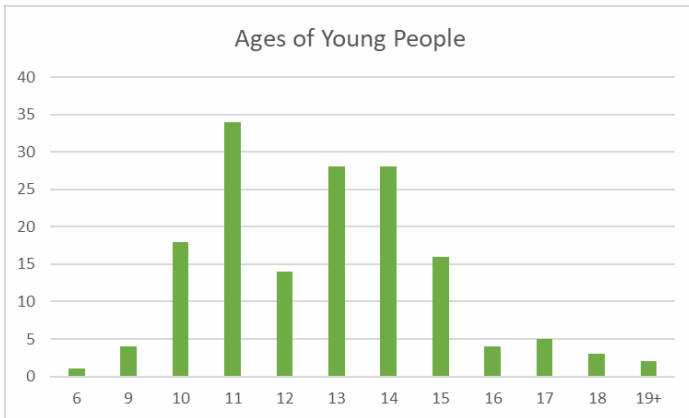


“Working with Stable Life appears to have unlocked potential that others already saw in X”
Social Work feedback

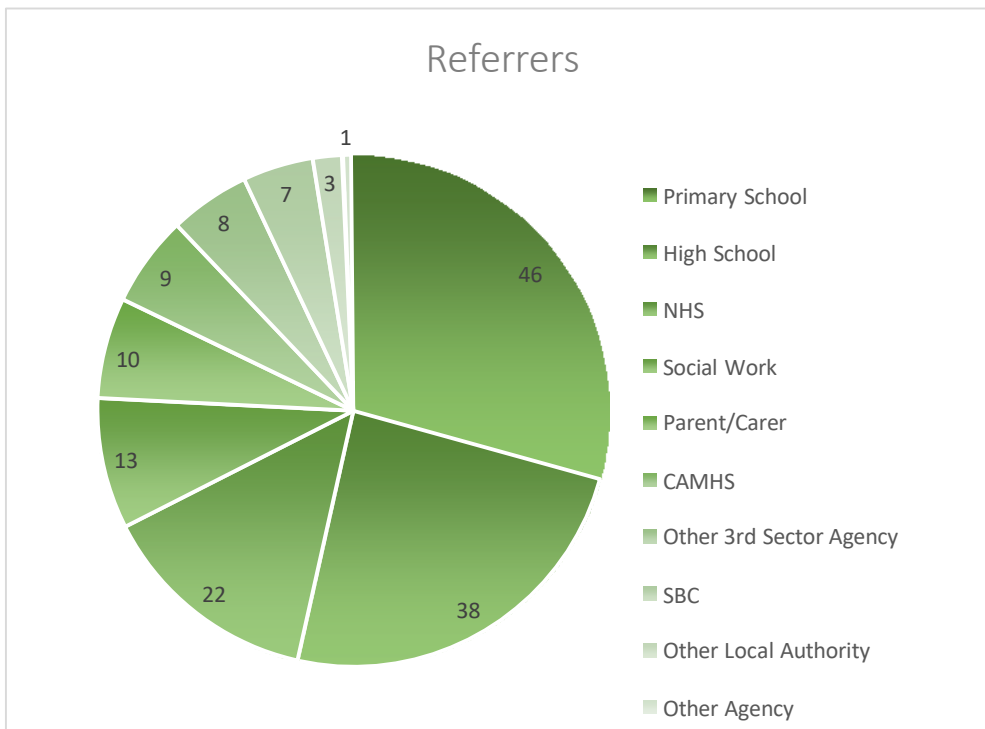




The ages and gender of the young people referred were as follows:

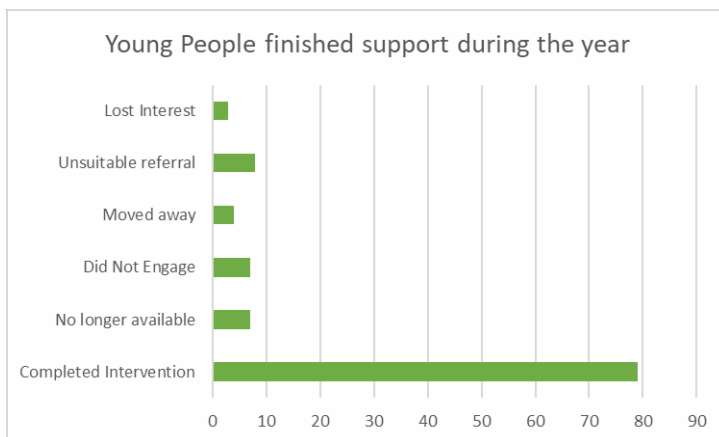


The referrals we received came from the following sources:



This shows that the majority of referrals are still through the local authority with 53% from education and 8% from Social Work. However this also shows an increase in referrals through the NHS (School nurses and GP Practices) as well as from parent/carers compared in previous years which we believe is due to more publicity of the organisation.

OUTCOMES OVER THE YEAR



Over the year, 79 young people completed their intervention with our main programmes, 7 were no longer available, 4 moved away and 3 lost interest.

Although some young people did not complete the programme we still saw various improvements in them and feedback from the young people also showed that they had felt some benefit of attending Stable Life.

All of the young people we have supported over the last year have increased their level of physical fitness through participation in the sessions. This includes practical hands-on work looking after the ponies, learning to ride which increases core strength and stamina and other outdoor activities.

Working through our sessions we give continuous feedback around the skills which are being developed each week, it can be an improvement in their riding, or handling of the horse. Self-belief is closely linked in to the sessions we deliver, this is a direct correlation between an individual's self-belief and their self-esteem. Young people tend to have a distorted belief system around their self-worth and their abilities to be able to facilitate changes within their lives. Embedded through our sessions is an underpinning philosophy to start to challenge their belief system and create cognitive dissonance to allow the young person to examine their limiting beliefs, once a growth mindset is created it becomes a game to keep challenging themselves.

We create an outcome based around a positive experience which we can then use as evidence to be able to give feedback to the young person, showing how their limiting beliefs are held within their own schema. The young people will also feed in to the group through exercises which encourages them to share positive traits through feedback for others, the use of repetition to be able to start to create new positive thought processes to allow the young person to start to challenge their own thinking.

Feedback from a young person

"I didn't think it was possible to achieve everything that I have"

Creating a safe space to discover new opportunities for growth build each session they attend, our observation allows us to see physical changes in posture which shows their confidence has grown, they sit up taller on the pony, can easily lead them to and from the stables from the school, picking up their feet, each challenge is completed through perseverance and repetition, we give feedback verbally each session on how they have grown and developed new skills.

Of the 93 young people we have seen the following outcomes:



Well-Being:

- 22 young people with a significant increase
- 36 young people have shown a moderate increase
- 35 showed a slight increase

Self-Confidence:

- 12 young people with a significant increase
- 40 young people have shown a moderate increase
- 41 showed a slight increase



Resilience:

- 10 young people with a significant increase
- 48 young people have shown a moderate increase
- 35 showed a slight increase

Social Skills:

- 10 young people with a significant increase
- 38 young people have shown a moderate increase
- 43 showed a slight increase



Life Skills:

- 4 young people with a significant increase
- 46 young people have shown a moderate increase
- 42 showed a slight increase

Other achievements for our young people included:

- 11 re-engaged with school
- 5 went into further education
- 7 gained accreditation
- 4 have become Peer Mentors
- 3 have become volunteers on our yard and all have obtained Saltire Awards for the hours of volunteering they have completed
- 7 young people have completed work experience on the yard
- 4 young people have completed College placements on the yard
- 6 young people have gone on to start commercial riding lessons
- 7 young people have gone on to join other new groups i.e. Scouts, youth club.

“Really enjoyable experience for B, has helped him to take a step back when things don’t always go right and analyse the effects of behaviour on the outcomes of the situations. This should develop his skills for life for the future” School feedback

OUT OF THE WOODS

Running till March 2020 our “Out of the Woods” pilot project was part funded by the European Social Fund and the Scottish Government. The project was supported by the £9.7m Growing the Social Economy Programme as part of the Fairer Scotland Action Plan to tackle poverty and equality. It was developed to grow the capacity of Stable Life allowing us to increase and improve our current services. This included giving us the opportunity to encourage young people to participate in an alternate provision where they would work on completing a SQA accreditation giving them a more positive attitude towards lifelong learning and prepare them for the transition to adulthood, further education and working life.



During the time of the project we offered 41 young people the opportunity to participate in our programme and of that 31 engaged. 9 disengaged at various points for various reasons and 1 was removed.

Of the young people who have participated

- 22 achieved their SQA NPA Level 4 in Horse Care
- 4 completed units of the SQA NPA Level 4 in Horse Care
- All have developed life skills and shown an improvement in resilience
- 91% have shown an increase in their self-confidence and self-belief
- 5 young people re-engaged with school
- 4 young people went on to volunteer at Stable Life
- 3 young people have taken up riding lessons
- 2 young people secured college placements
- 1 young person found employment

These developments over the last two years have given us the increased range of services with added value that we were looking to offer the young people we support as well as upskilling our work force.

An external evaluation on the project it estimated that the “Ratio of Return of public investment in the Out of the Woods project is £5.16 of ‘cost saving’ for every £1 invested”

“She has certainly gained recently from the SQA course; it’s allowed her to build on her skills and knowledge. However it has also given her an opportunity to talk through any worries/issues and hear good advice from a trusted adult and she has had the chance to work with other young people too. She is a lovely girl but she does need support regarding peer relationships and so Stable Life has been another opportunity for her to develop in this area” Education Feedback

"The pilot project allowed 26 young people to complete their NPA in Horse Care or units towards it. The project allowed the young people to develop new skills around horse care and management. Riding was not part of the criteria, however under the expert eye of Kat all young people upskilled their abilities, creating a surge in confidence and competence. The personal growth allowed for young people to progress onwards, including returning to education, starting employment and gaining a space at college. The time schedule was tight to allow us to be able to meet the targeted outcomes, however staff and young people rose to this challenge and showed great use of Parkinson's Law!"

Out of the Woods allowed Stable Life to have a progressional pathway to offer young people in the Scottish Borders, It developed working relationships within education and Borders College. This was a positive step forward for Stable Life, ensuring that young people can access an educational pathway while being supported through any challenges which may present.

Currently we are working with Selkirk High School to offer Pathway to Countryside Careers, which allows young people to gain their NPA in Rural Skills alongside their NPA in Horse Care. We hope to be able to develop this further allowing it to be offered in more schools within our locality"

Cindy Davie
Team Leader

With huge
thanks to



"The horse care course was brilliant for her and a real boost to her self-confidence. She has taken her certificate from this to show family, friends and other people she has input from (Children First and CAMHS) which shows how proud she is of her achievement" Parent Feedback

"Sometimes I'm speechless at how much they've done for her" Parent Feedback

"I'm definitely more confident to talk to people" Young Person Feedback

"I noticed significant change in attitude towards education and plans for future. I also noticed increase in confidence and self-esteem. M has made new and meaningful friendships. There is a gain in social skills, maturity and ability to self-regulate. Her love for horses changed into passion which allows M for life stability" Key Worker Feedback

"I'm attending school pretty often now" Young Person Feedback



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LOOKING FORWARD

We are currently looking at future delivery of our services and what format they might take following government guidelines as we move forward through the crisis. Social distancing, group sizes and make-up, travel and capacity on the yard are all factors that we will need to take into consideration and be prepared as much as possible to change quickly in this ever changing environment to ensure our young people, staff, volunteers and customers are all kept safe.



In January 2020 we secured funding from Comic Relief for our Healing Hooves 5-year project which is an enhancement of what we currently provide. Working with a fitness trainer and mental health professional we will develop and deliver a programme of support for young people aged 8 to 18 with mental health issues combining equestrian sport and therapy, psychotherapy and fitness to build resilience, core strength, social skills and confidence increasing mental well-being, self-belief and nurturing empowerment. We were looking to start this in April but due to Covid19 this had to be put on hold till July.

We have decided that to enhance our volunteers experience and give them a much better understanding of what we do volunteer training will be developed to include information and a basic understanding around the psychosocial side of our sessions, with an introduction to talking based therapies.



"To be able to be supported in a non-academic environment and out with the family home, within a small group setting suits many of the young people who are struggling with aspects of their lives. Other agencies are available, however none work in the holistic way that Stable Life does." Social Work Feedback

CASE STUDY

This young person was referred for issues around relationships, confidence, self-esteem behavioural problems and trust. She was supported on a 1-1 basis for approximately ten sessions. She was very engaging from the start and made references to how her past is now affecting her with her emotions and confidence. She said she didn't trust people particularly men and sometimes found it difficult to maintain friendships. She was very insightful about her behaviour and recognised that she could react quickly and negatively and that her behaviours could be erratic. She described herself as going from 0 to 60 without thinking about the consequences or how to slow things down.

Initial sessions were looking at building trust with the pony and staff so she could feel relaxed and safe in the sessions. Roslyn (pony) was a great partner for her as they connected quickly and understood each other. Roslyn presented no challenges for the young person, this made the young person feel relaxed and safe. Working on the lunge without a saddle or reins built a trusted relationship and confidence and helped her understand communication and what we give out and what we receive in return. This encouraged communication both verbal and non-verbal, spatial awareness and respect. It allowed the young person to see how assertive she was; did she show leadership skills? How did the pony react to her commands? The session gave a chance to reflect on how her behaviours and emotions have impacted on her and what she would like to change. This session allowed discussions about taking responsibility for our actions and that we are responsible for how we conduct ourselves and how we treat others. The session was as success, it was fun, and she was relaxed and patient and gave clear instructions.

She also participated in bare back riding learning breathing exercises and allowed for direct contact with the pony where she could feel and mirror the pony's slow relaxed breathing. This encouraged discussion around when and how to use this breathing and how it made her feel. The breathing exercise helped support with the going from 0-60 as it gave her time to think before reacting and encourage a sense of calm. Other sessions covered specific outcomes, such as finding trust and getting rid of anger and replacing it with something positive.

All of the sessions helped the young person to gain a new perspective. The young person could see that she didn't need to let past events dictate her future. She developed trust and self-awareness and was able to see how her actions and reactions were effecting her day to day life.

She was able to identify positive solutions empowering her to take responsibility for herself and her actions. She is now focusing on a bright future with better relationships, and tools to help her to move forward.

EQUINE CENTRE UPDATE

I have now been running the Equine Centre for over five years and what a very busy, productive, exciting and enjoyable five years it has been!

The growth and development of the business has been dramatic and I am very proud of what as a team we have all achieved. With the help of our fantastic yard staff and volunteers we are running a welcoming, friendly, professional, vibrant, tidy centre not only for the Commercial side but the Project also.

As you are all aware our Indoor school was in great need of an over haul. This has been a few years in the planning and I am delighted to say that the works will be carried in 2020. The indoor school is vital to the successful delivery of the Project and the Commercial side and will be very attractive to outside individuals and groups who would like to hire our wonderful new facility.

On a sadder note we lost two of our more mature ponies this year, Tass and Donald due to age related issues. Words cannot describe how very special both these ponies were and I can't tell you how sad we all were to lose them and how much they are missed. However, on a happier note we welcomed Smartie to the team. She is such a special girl and an absolute sweet heart and has settled really well into her life with us. One of our younger ponies Blue felt that life here was just a bit too quiet for her so we sold her to a lovely family and I am happy to say she is loving life being a competition pony!

This year we have welcomed a few school groups to the centre – Langlee Primary School and The Montessori School from Edinburgh attended on a weekly basis and as part of their Summer Activity programme Jed Grammar and Earlston High School brought up to 20 young people for a morning session which includes pony care, riding, lunch and an obstacle course to finish the day off.

We continued to offer some much needed work placement opportunities for Borders College students who may want to pursue a career in horses, secondary school pupils, Vet students needing to develop their Horsemanship skills and young people who have come through the project who need a little extra support and a positive and rewarding work placement experience.

Special thanks must go to our fantastic staff of which there have been a few changes in the past year and volunteers who go above and beyond to support us. Thanks also for the many kind donations from individuals whose financial contributions have allowed us to purchase some more ponies and particular mention must go to Mark and Jo Arres who are fantastic landlords and go that extra mile on a daily basis to assist us keeping the yard and fields in good order.

Sam Anderson
Equine Director



FINANCE

This report relates to the accounts of the organisation for the year ended 31st March 2020, prepared and examined by Gall Robertson, Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors. The accounts have been compiled based on all income, expenditure and accounting transactions recorded during the accounting year.

At the beginning of the year, cash at bank and in hand amounted to £55,891. At 31st March 2020, the bank and cash balance was a net of £117,693 (Bank £146,100, overdraft £28,407).

Overall, the income generated by the organisation increased from £287,843 in 2018/19 to £460,963.

The commercial activity remains a key business plan objective for Stable Life and is fundamentally important as the organisation grows, demonstrated by the increased cost of providing our services within the new organisational structure.

Staffing costs amount to £255,103 or 69% of overall costs and the current operating model resulted in a total spend of £371,323 (2019 - £341,544).

As the business goes forward in future years therefore, it is vital that income streams continue to provide ongoing affordability to meet demand.

An operating surplus of £89,640 was therefore generated during 2019/20, which increased the reserves bringing total funds to £230,109.

Following last year's significant deficit it was pleasing to record a surplus in 2019-20.

Expenditure on trading activities remained stable and credit goes to the staff and volunteers for managing the budget so well.

Although the surplus on unrestricted activities is welcome, a substantial part of our reserves will be directed at specific, restricted expenditure in line with funding agreements.

As in 2019-20 budgetary control going forward will continue to play a vital part in the organisation's operations, especially against the background of uncertainty relating to our activities and Covid-19.

Martyn Buckley
Treasurer

SUMMARISED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES 2019/20

Incoming Resources:	£	Total Expenditure:	£
Voluntary Income:	298,276	Costs of charitable activities:	259,993
Activities for generating funds:	157,828	Trading Activities:	111,330
Investment Income:	4,859	Total Expenditure:	371,323
Total Incoming resources:	460,963	Net Income/(Expenditure):	89,640

A full set of accounts are available on request

THANK YOU

We are incredibly grateful and very humbled by all the amazing support we receive and this year has been a big one! On top of our usual fundraising we had to try to raise money to upgrade our Indoor Riding School, not an easy task we thought however how wrong were we! The generosity shown to us completely and utterly blew us all away – from our Barn Dance in May to our Crowdfunding Appeal in August along with donations, grants and fundraising activities of others we managed to raise the required funds and the upgrade is now underway so a huge thank you to everyone involved in helping us achieve our goal – there's just too many to name individually!

We also had our first pop-up shop Xmas fundraiser in Selkirk which was a great success and we must thank everyone who made it so – to the businesses and individuals donating gifts, vouchers & scrumptious treats, to our shop volunteers and to everyone who popped in and supported us.

Our volunteers are priceless and without this vital support, we would not be able to provide our service. Our amazing funders who invest in us to allow us to continue to support our young people and everyone in the Scottish Borders who has helped us, whether that help came via a financial donation, materials or a generous gifting of time and skills - we are very, very thankful to you all.

Asda Galashiels	Grant Kinghorn	Nicole and Ian
ATS Galashiels	Harbro – Hawick	Quins of Galashiels
Andrew and Mary Sherwood	Healthy Tuck Shop - Burnfoot Primary School	Rotary Club of Selkirk
Ballantynes of Walkerburn	Hawick Aldi	Sainsbury's Selkirk
Borders.co.uk	Hawick Sainsburys	Scottish Gas Volunteers
Cindy Hay	Inner Wheel of Eastern Borders	Selkirk Colonial Society
Emily & Friends	Kelso North and Ednam Church	Selkirk Merchant Company
Edith Scott	Lauderdale Limpers	Spark Energy Volunteers
Family of the late Jackie Robertson	Lizzie McLeish	St Boswells "Wobbly Bridge" Race Trail
Family of the late Jennifer O'Flaherty	Lorraine Kyle	St Joseph's Crafters
Farmfoods	Mark & Jo Arres	St Margaret's Chapel Guild
Fiona Busby	Mrs Margaret Inglis	The Incorporation of Hammerman
Frank Knight Melrose	Men@KNE	The Somerset County Youth Orchestra
George Crawford Trust	Morrisons	The Mainhouse Charitable Trust
Scott's Selkirk	Susan Turner	The Hornby Lonsdale Charitable Trust



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Stable Life is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

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Scottish Charity No. SC011786