

Stable Life

Annual Report 2022



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Feedback from head teacher

"I feel Stable Life is a necessary and very valuable resource that helps to support and develop the resilience and confidence in children overtime"

About us

Since 2008, Stable life has been supporting disadvantaged young people aged 10 to 18 and their families in the Scottish Borders who are experiencing personal challenges in their lives.

Utilising Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) and Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT), working together using the horse and its environment, we have built a safe nurturing environment for vulnerable young people where we help them to discover a sense of self, build resilience, learn transferable life skills and help them move onto positive pathways.

Our Mission

To provide a safe, nurturing and learning experience using the horse and its environment, to help young people reach their full potential, and become healthier and happier with aspirations and dreams.

Our Aim

Young people are inspired and empowered to achieve their aspirations, be happy, healthy and make positive contributions within their communities.

Our Values

Respect

We will treat people with respect and consideration and provide our services without judging or discrimination.

Collaborate

We are committed to working in collaboration with one another, our partners, service users, volunteers, customers, and communities to achieve the best possible outcomes for our young people.

Empower

We seek to empower all those whom we work with, building self-esteem and providing opportunities to learn new skills.

Integrity

We take responsibility & accountability for our actions and are open and transparent in all we do.

Foreword from our Chair

It was with a sense of relief that as an organisation we have seen the gradual decrease of Covid-19 restrictions over the past few months and in return began to enjoy a normal living and working environment, after what has been a life changing two years for all of us.

The long-term effect of the pandemic is yet to be calculated, but I am aware of the profound effect it has had on both the financial and welfare aspects of Stable Life as we have faced the challenges brought about by this global issue.

No sooner have we recovered from one crisis, and we are faced by another, this time around the significant increases in the cost of living which has now began to take its toll at all levels both at home and abroad. For charitable organisations like us that are dependent on funding to operate this is a challenging time, with costs for items such as feed, heating, and lighting already rising and set to continue into the next year and beyond. As an organisation we need to take a pragmatic approach on how we may require managing our operations and service provision should our core funding streams become less easy to access and more restricted.

Despite this I am happy to report on plenty of positives that have happened over the last twelve months within Stable Life. Firstly, I am delighted to welcome Carra Baker on board as our new Equine Operations Director, she brings a wealth of experience to the organisation and has clear aspirations on where she wants to take us in the future. It has been a frustrating time searching for the right candidate for this particularly key role, but Carra fits the bill perfectly and we look forward to working with her.

A special mention to our CEO Mags Powell who has proved yet again that she has been the “glue” holding Stable Life together and has worked tirelessly to not only ensure we have been able to access the required funding but has also been heavily involved in a managerial capacity, filling the void before the appointment of Carra.

Congratulations must also go to Cindy Davie our Director of Children’s Services on her successful completion of the two-year point in the Therapeutic Play element of her Postgraduate Diploma. This is a tremendous achievement, particularly when it is a part-time course fitting in with work and normal life! My thanks also to the work Iain Ross has done in relation to developing a Career, Training and Development pathway for the staff within Stable Life that fits in with our proposed longer-term planning.

In addition, can I take this opportunity to thank our Treasurer, Martyn Buckley who is stepping down at this year’s AGM after many years’ service ensuring our accounts are healthy and in good order. A mention also to outgoing Trustee Paul Tomlinson who has also stood down, many thanks Paul for all your contributions over the years, and a warm welcome to Holly Kirkwood and Zoe Kidd who join us with all the required enthusiasm and ideas!

I have been very encouraged by the results of our recent staff survey which indicates that all our employees enjoy being part of the Stable Life team and working with the young people who attend on a regular basis, this enjoyment extends to working with the horses and ponies as well! This combined with the incredibly positive feedback gained from our recent media coverage, Countryfile’s Comic Relief episode, and ITV’s Border Life, shows us in a great light and bodes well for the future.

I am extremely proud to be part of this inspirational organisation and am looking forward to the future and the challenges it will bring.

Graham Easton

Our activities over the year



Supported 133 young people



Delivered 148 weekly equine 1:1 sessions



Delivered 505 weekly equine group sessions



Delivered 78 weekly rural skills sessions



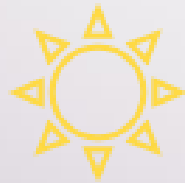
Delivered 58 EAL Healing Hooves Sessions



Delivered 13 Healing Hooves fitness sessions



Delivered 7 Healing Hooves Counselling Sessions



Delivered 12 Pony Care Sessions for the "Summer of Play" programme



Provided 7 volunteering opportunities for young people that came through our main service

Overview of the year

As we eventually start to ascend from the Covid pandemic and everything has gone back to some kind of normality at Stable Life we have welcomed the ability to have everyone back on the premises and for our services to run as before.

From April 2021 we have supported 133 young people through our main service, our Healing Hooves project and the Pathway to Rural Skills programme.

There has been a few staffing changes over the year with us saying farewell to Sam our Equine Director, Kat Macey – Yard Assistant, Paige Renwick - Yard Assistant and Brogan McIntosh – Yard Worker and we would like to thank them for all their commitment and support they have given to Stable Life and wish them all well with their future ventures. In addition we have welcomed Adi Kay, Jo Arres, Steph Carter, Gemma Robertson, Connie Haddock and Charlie Cockburn to the team.

Securing adequate funding to meet our costs continues to be a challenge for Stable Life and we must aim to generate sufficient income to meet our costs . That must be our target for the future and from 2022 forward.

As we have developed to the level we are now at, we believe that not only does Stable Life provide an effective intervention for young people it also provides a constant point of reference as it can be visited and there are opportunities to participate in activities long after completing an intervention with us. It is a safe place that young people can return to as volunteers, employees, visitors or just for a chat.

Once again the hard work, commitment and determination shown by the Board, Staff and volunteers over the last year has been incredible and I thank you all. A huge thanks also to our funders, who without their support none of the work would be possible. Finally a big thank you to all the young people who work so hard to turn their lives around.

It is a special place full of special people, staff, volunteers, visitors, friends and most of all the young people who work so hard to turn their lives around.

Mags
Chief Executive

Statistical Information

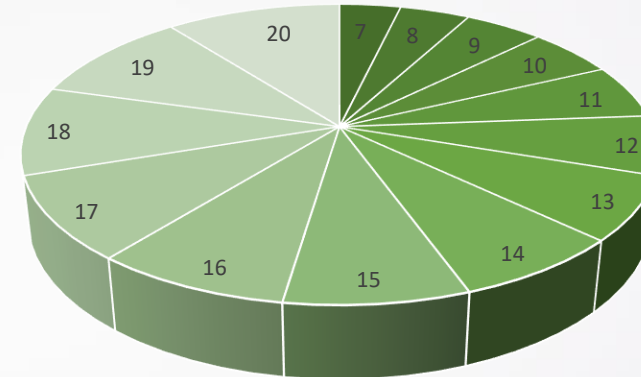
Over the last year our records show that the 74 young people referred were referred with the following issues:

- 80% low self-esteem
- 77% self-confidence issues
- 45% relationship issues
- 39% socially isolated
- 34% mental health issues
- 32% poor social skills, impulsive behaviour
- 31% anger management issues
- 23% anti-social behaviour
- 20% parent mental health issues, emotional abuse, bereavement, loss

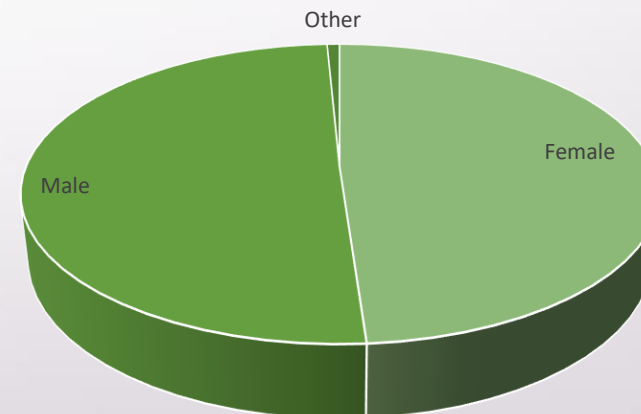
In addition

- 13 were diagnosed with autism
- 11 were diagnosed with ADHD
- 4 young people with processing disorders
- 4 had a learning disability
- 4 were home schooled

Ages of the young people supported



Gender of young people supported



"Mary has loved her time spent with you, she has learned how to cope with difficult emotions and has become much more accepting of herself. Her anger has been non-existent which is awesome and the constant sibling rivalry has turned into a deep friendship. Thank you so much!" Feedback from a parent

Our Outcomes

Over the last year of the 94 young people we have supported through our main service, 60 completed their intervention with us. Of those 60 all have become healthier and fitter, learnt new life skills, had fun and experienced increased well-being. We have also evidenced:

95% Show Increased Self-Confidence



Nearly all young people referred to Stable Life have been referred due to self-confidence issues. Our staff work hard to develop relationships with these young people individually and in the groups.

93% Are More Resilient & Have Better Life Styles



Transferable skills learned such as trust, respect, boundaries, routines, nutrition, responsibility and self-control enables our young people to find courage when dealing with anxiety and personal challenges.

95% Have Improved Social Skills



The young people we support are really struggling with relationships at school with both teachers and pupils and in the home. They learn about communication skills through the horse and how some of their behaviours may impact on their own relationships and strategies to help change these behaviours.

5 Became Volunteers



5 started up equine lessons



1 Got Involved In Community Activities



11 re-engaged with school



3 Secured College Placements



"Alison was a selective mute who used to not speak at all at school before attending Stable Life. She has become really verbal in school and confident to speak to peers and staff. She participated in group work in school and was very sociable in the playground" Feedback from a Deputy-Head

Healing Hooves

Healing Hooves is a 5 year pilot project funded by Comic Relief. Working with a registered Counsellor (BCAP) and a fitness trainer, this project will deliver a programme of support for young people in the Scottish borders with mental health issues. It will combine equestrian sport, equine assisted learning, psychotherapy and fitness to build resilience, core strength, social skills and confidence thus increasing mental well-being and self-belief amongst the young people and strengthen the local support offered to young people.

Group work was able to start back on August 2021 following Covid restrictions which was great and for the first time we were able to put the programme together to include the personal trainer, Counsellor and equine assisted activities. The feedback from staff and young people has been very positive around the structure and it had a good flow throughout. Absences due to Covid outbreaks within schools or families continued to impact on the attendance for groups.

During this period we received 24 referrals to the Healing Hooves project and delivered 58 EAL Sessions, 13 fitness sessions and 7 Counselling Sessions. Each young person has the opportunity to engage in all the activities. 96% attended the EAL sessions, 92% attended the Personal Trainer sessions and 79% attended the sessions with the Counsellor.

15 young people completed their programme and of these:

- 93% showed an increase in confidence
- 100% had improved social skills
- 80% showed increased resilience

- 3 Young people re-engaged with school
- 1 young person joined a new group
- 1 young person started up equine lessons



DJS Counselling



" My boy has absolutely loved coming. He has faced his fears, made friends and opened up about previous trauma and at the same time found something (riding/horses) that he loves + will continue into adulthood. His learning to keep himself safe skills have really improved and his confidence has sky rocketed. I cannot thank you guys enough." Feedback for a parent

Pathway to Rural Skills

Our first NPA Rural skills course, in conjunction with Selkirk High School and Borders College was completed in June 2021 with four young people successfully gaining SQA NPA Level 4 in Horse Care and Rural Skills.

Our next cohort of students started in August 21 with 8 young people and over this time we delivered 73 group sessions with the 6 young people completing the units they required for SQA's NPA Level 4 in Horse Care and Rural Skills by April 2022.

The course covers a variety of activities, and the young people have gained experience horses, estate maintenance, land based industries, employability skills and animal husbandry. They have been doing a wide variety of jobs from planting bulbs for spring flowering, fencing both wooden and wire stock proof fencing and the importance of good field drain management. The group have also learned the importance of good stable/yard practice, knowing why we use certain types of bedding/feed for our animals in order to keep them healthy. All the group agreed they were learning things they never thought they would.



Selkirk High School



"Paddy just makes everything better, I want him to come home and live with me" - Young Person

Case study

Colin was referred to Stable Life for anger, relationship and bullying issues. It was stated that he had been involved in several physical altercations, where he had behaved aggressively and impulsively and had refused to talk about his behaviour.

During Colin's third session at Stable Life he said that "I find it hard to say how I feel" and thought "this is why I get angry and into trouble." That Colin felt safe enough at Stable Life to begin to process and talk about his emotions and behaviours was huge progress. Using the ponies, we continued to work on naming and regulating emotions, encouraging Colin to recognise his and other's emotions and how his behaviour affects others.

In Colin's first few sessions he would tear others down in the group, speak over the top of them and laugh at them. He displayed anger when he was frustrated, talking back to staff and arguing with them. However, on session five Colin worked with a pony who asked for her own personal space and respect from Colin. Colin quickly learned to respect his pony, regulate his anger and frustration around the pony and confidently put his own boundaries in place. He quickly formed a connection with the pony and began to pay attention to how his behaviour was affecting the pony; he stopped thinking about how others were getting on and tearing them down and instead focused on his relationship with his own pony.

For the first time he demonstrated respect, kindness and teamwork. He no longer spoke over the top of others in the group but would politely raise his hand when he wanted to say something and went out of his way to help others in the group. As the weeks progressed Colin encouraged those he had previously torn down, building them up with words of affirmation and kindness. He showed care and concern for his team mates and pony. Once under-confident and easily frustrated, Colin now repeatedly says "I am so clever!" and gives huge smiles while riding.

Professional Feedback

"Increase in J's confidence to go and try something new by herself and be successful and get good feedback from it. Helped her realise she has positive qualities to offer others. It also really helped her isolation and activity and see the benefits in social company on her mood.

Thank you for offering such a great service to J, it is invaluable to have places we can suggest young people can access this type of support. The referral was taken and offered place very promptly, thank you

Without these type services it is really difficult to help the young person really experience change. In a verbal therapy you can talk about things but having places they can go and actually experience for themselves the impact for instance activity, social goals, working with others, team etc has on their mental health is vital and can then be reflected back in talking therapy again" Paediatric Clinical Psychologist

Equine Centre Update

After 12 years of being at Stable Life, Sam moved on to pastures new in December. One of the original team Sam has been a huge part of Stable life, she has supported our young people for many years and then worked hard to develop our commercial activities and making our yard the friendly, welcoming place that it is today and although we were very sorry to see her go we wish her all the best on her new exciting journey.

After a long recruitment exercise we were very happy to be able to appoint Carra Baker as our new Equine Operations Director and she will be joining us in May 22. Carra comes to us with many years experience in the equine sector in various riding schools. She is a BHS registered Coach and BHS AI.

The commercial side of the business is picking back up following the Covid pandemic and it's been great to welcome back our regular customers as well as new customers. Our riding sessions include tiny trotters, groups sessions and hacks, school groups and individual sessions. In addition each Friday we run our own unique Hoof Beats Club which is a tailored program of riding, stable management and general horse care. In the summer holiday we ran twice weekly pony care sessions through funding we received from Youth Borders and the Scottish Government's "Summer of Play" programme which was very well attended and lots of fun was had by all.

This year we very sadly lost our beloved Roxy. Although a bit stubborn at times as well as definitely knowing her own mind, she was the kindest, most giving pony who was hugely sensitive and intuitive and knew exactly what was needed to carry out all aspects of her role here. We all loved her and will miss her greatly.

On a happier note we were very excited to welcome Bert to our wonderful gang in November. He is a 7 year old pure bred Highland with just the nicest personality and attitude. We were very lucky to find him not far from here with the lovely Fraser family and are very grateful to them for entrusting us with such a special boy. He has settled in very well and stolen all our hearts.

Special thanks must go to our many volunteers who give up their time to help on the yard, 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.



Our lovely Roxy



Say hello to Bert

Financial Review

This report relates to the accounts of the organisation for the year ended 31st March 2021, 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 end of the year, cash at bank and in hand amounted to £155,056 (2021 - £117,693) after funds with negative balances were net against positive balances (Bank £165,571, overdraft £10,515). Overall, the income generated by the organisation decreased from £397,069 in 2020/21 to £308,605.

The other equine activities remain 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 £237,489 (2021 - £205,216) or 64% (2021 - 67%) of overall costs and the current operating model resulted in a total spend of £373,585 (2021 - £305,649). As the business goes forward in future years, it is vital that income streams continue to provide ongoing affordability to meet demand. An operating deficit of £64,980 (2021 - surplus of £91,420) was therefore generated during 2021/22, which decreased the reserves bringing total funds to £256,549 (2021 - £321,529).

For the last two years the impact of Covid and the uncertainty it brought made financial planning difficult. Looking forward, with costs rising very steeply, cost pressures on our service users leading potentially to lower commercial income and increasing competition in sourcing grant funding, business planning and review together with careful budgetary control will continue to be vital.

Martyn Buckley
Treasurer

SUMMARISED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES 2021/2

Incoming Resources	£	Total Expenditure:	£
Voluntary Income:	169,256	Costs of charitable activities:	286,046
Activities for generating funds:	135,391	Trading Activities:	87,539
Investment income:	3,958		
Total incoming resources:	308,605	Total expenditure:	373,585
Net income/(expenditure):	(64,980)		

A full set of accounts are available on request

thank you

All this would not have been possible without the investment of our funders for which we are eternally grateful.

We are also incredibly grateful and blown away for all the amazing support we receive in the local community.

Our volunteers provide a brilliant service and without this vital support, we would not be able to provide our service.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us, whether that help came via a financial donation, materials or a generous gifting of time and skills.



The Mainhouse Charitable Trust
Quins of Galashiels
Selkirk Colonial Society
Mr & Mrs Turnbull
Jo Arres
Mark Arres
Family & Friends Vanessa Henderson
Family & Friends of Malvinn Fenty
Selkirk Distillery
Smelly Rug Co

Berwickshire Wheels
Mr & Mrs P Robson
Hayward Sanderson Trust
Lady Sal Strang Steel
Mr & Mrs J Bell
Caitlin Heard
Winter Spring Summer & Fall
Callum Horsburgh
Family & Friends of Lynda Ballantyne
Alan Millar

Family & Friends of Mason McKenzie
Hamish Reid
Our Kiltwalker Participants
Annabel Vause
Ali B
All our Pop Up Shop contributors
ITV Border Life
Woodland Trust





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