

Purpose of the grant

Over the 2022-23 academic year, we have supported 184 children and young people (CYP) on 12 or 24-week programmes (programme-length is dependent on need) who were referred to Ride High due to a variety of mental health challenges (MHCs). Our beneficiaries are aged 8-18, experiencing/or at risk of:

- Attempting suicide.
- Exhibiting suicidal ideations.
- Self-harming.
- Mental illness, abuse, neglect, or emotional trauma.
- Agoraphobia-refusing to leave the house.
- Being a young carer.

Some CYP:

- Display challenging behaviours.
- Engage in anti-social activities.
- Associate with unsuitable groups.

Many of the CYP who join Ride High are excluded from school or academically non or low achievers.

The Nineveh Trust donated a grant of £2,000 towards the riding and horse care sessions for 20 CYP on our programmes, who we identified as being most in need of a place.

How did the grant make a difference?

The grant received from the Nineveh Trust in 2022 has contributed to the places Ride High was able to offer to 20 of our beneficiaries to attend a 12-week programme from January to March 2023.

CYP show a lack of wellbeing when they arrive at RH. Our main outcome is that CYP improve their wellbeing by attending a RH programme. We define wellbeing as being comfortable, healthy, and happy.

All 20 members helped by the Nineveh Trust benefited from attending Ride High and showed an increase in their wellbeing. We measure outcomes/indicators using a combination of the RH wellbeing measure; Leavers Feedback obtained through post-programme sessions/questionnaires; staff observations; the RH Award Scheme, which monitors and evaluates progress in social skills (speaking and listening; participation; self-control; and teamwork) and horse skills.

RH Wellbeing Measure is an assessment tool used to measure wellbeing. Our approach measures six areas which capture the broad range of issues faced by members: emotional resilience, self-awareness and control, relationships, communication, self-esteem and confidence, and contribution. Within each area CYP pick one of four statements they feel most applies to them. Members complete measures at their induction visit and at the end of each half-term. This allows



One of our younger groups

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progress to be tracked with movement throughout a member's RH journey. The measures also inform the Children's Team selection and design of activities, and their approach to target setting for individual members.

We gather qualitative cases studies by observing and interviewing the CYP (paying due attention to ethical and moral concerns, and children's rights). We also request feedback and quotations from CYP, carers, parents, teachers, and referrers to capture more detailed insight into how and why our programmes work.

Changes in wellbeing for those supported by the Nineveh Trust were in line with the whole cohort of 80 CYP who attended a programme from January to March, where 94% reported an improvement in an area of need, and 97% reported an improvement in at least one area of wellbeing.

In the spring term, 100% of members also achieved the Beginner level of the Ride High Award, 71% Trainee and 71% Apprentice.

Volunteers called the parents/carers of a sample of April leavers – two selected at random from each group. (They will call the same people in six- and twelve-months' time.) Feedback from these calls included the following responses:

- *"Since attending, her self-worth and confidence have grown, school has improved, and she is not as aggressive. She interacts with siblings and doesn't stay in her room as much. She has found her voice and will not tolerate bullying. The work you have done with my daughter is absolutely amazing. I have my little girl back. Can't thank Ride High enough."*
- *"Thoroughly enjoyed her time and wished it was longer. Made a friend who attends the same school. Has become more confident and generally more communicative at home. The lady driver was lovely; very caring and kind, made sure she was safe."*
- *"Come on much more since attending the programme. Improvement at school – was underachieving now at expected levels and above. Relaxed, happy – has given her a confidence to talk about something with friends who share her interest in animals. She has gained a sense of ownership and responsibility and her mum commented that she had seen her daughter mature. Ride High has impacted the family positively: happy child, happy mummy"*
- Mum couldn't speak highly enough of Mark (one of the Club Leaders). She was so grateful that her son was given the opportunity to attend. She said: *"It has helped with his confidence, and he is better at going to school. He made friends in the group but still finds it difficult at school. He loved the clubroom as well as the horses."*
- *"Attending gave him a break from the problems at home. He loved Ride High and is now doing well at school. He loved the science bit in the clubroom. He wants to attend the planned re-union."*
- *"She has acute anxiety and has always been reluctant to go anywhere where she might be asked to speak. Ride High has helped with this, and she is now able to join in more with activities and is happier at school. She loves Ride High – she talks about it at home and after initial reluctance she attends willingly. She is very proud of the folder she was given."* Mum hopes she will be able to manage her anxiety better.
- *"She absolutely loved Ride High. When she started, she was reluctant and nervous and didn't want to come. She spent all her time locked in her room and hated dealing with people. Mark was brilliant with her, and her confidence has improved."*

Comments from leavers:

'Coming to Ride High made me happy.'

'I really enjoyed riding, yard work, science, and everything. It made me happy and calm.'

'Ride High makes me feel calm and safe.'

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A case study for one of the young people on the programme really brings to life the difference that Ride High can make to young people in need.

Poppy is 17 and a young carer for her mother, who is in poor health. She was referred to Ride High with severe anxiety and a fear of leaving the house, which had resulted in her being unable to attend school for about four years.

After some time on our waiting list, Poppy joined our Portfolio group in January. Unsurprisingly quiet and awkward in a new setting to start, it was clear early on that Poppy found great comfort in being with the horses, and she progressed quickly with her riding and groundwork.

Towards the end of her time at Ride High, Poppy's confidence had grown immeasurably. She would talk openly to visitors about how she loved the responsibility of looking after the horses, and that being trusted to care for them boosted her confidence.

Armed with her newfound skills and confidence she applied for a course in Equine Management at Moulton College. She took the portfolio she had worked on at Ride High to her interview and was delighted to be offered a place to start in September!



Poppy

How others see us?

The words of one of our referrers sums out what we always aim to achieve and our impact on the CYP attending as a result of Nineveh Trust reflects this:

“When you work with young people and you meet those who have lost all trust in those adults who should and could help, what can you do? Turn to Ride High.

This wonderful charity reach the hearts of those who hurt and are lost, scared and doubting. Together with the amazing mentors and trainers their confidence soars as they build relationships with the horses, learning to care for the equines and RIDE HIGH.

Pride and energy returns and each week can't go fast enough as they wait, chomping at the bit to get back to their charges.



We have watched our young people go from timid, mute, and sometimes very angry humans to smiling and communicative students who build lifelong memories as they feel strong senses of achievement.

RIDE HIGH, it does exactly what it says on the label! Thank you RIDE HIGH, the difference you make is immense.” Karen Wasway, Head of Year 7, Lord Grey Academy

We are proud to report that our programmes have once again managed to help some of the most vulnerable children and young people in our community, by helping them to improve their confidence, self-esteem, and wellbeing, and importantly to see a brighter way forward for the future.

As mentioned above, the key difference our work has made is in terms of helping CYP to improve their outlook on life by raising their aspirations and capacity to embrace life more fully. These benefits can have far reaching impact into a young carer's ability to cope at home and/or in school.

Various quotes from our leavers reflect this:

‘Coming to Ride High has helped my mental health.’

‘Coming here has calmed my issues.’

‘I enjoyed socialising with the friendly workers and friends. I have achieved getting over the fear of meeting new people and I’m not as scared.’

‘I enjoy meeting my new friends. I get to be away from home and to have some time to have fun. My riding has improved and become something I love. I have become more involved with my friends and some of my grades have improved. Ride High has helped me because I love the horses and have become more involved with my friends. I also can use it for my art and DT GCSE too.’

The way forward ...

It is always a challenge to secure sufficient funding to help all the young people who need our help. However, we are taking steps to make our charitable work more sustainable and to diversify income streams - and we are confident that, with the continued support of organisations such as the Nineveh Trust, we will be able to continue to help many of those CYP who need us most!