

HorseWorld Trust  
(A company limited by guarantee)  
Company No. 06353944  
Charity No. 1121920  
in England and Wales



**HorseWorld**

**Annual Review** 2024





# People helping horses helping people

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## **Our vision**

A world where horses and people help each other to live and work in harmony.

## **Our mission**

To create a safe community where horses and people connect together and enjoy lifelong learning.



**HorseWorld**

Saving horses since 1952



# Introduction

from our Chair



**Desi Dillingham MBE**  
Chair of HorseWorld Trust

I am delighted to introduce the HorseWorld Trust Annual Review for 2024. This is now my fourth report as your Chair and I am incredibly proud to see our impact on both horses and humans continue to grow. Through the dedication of our hard working staff and passionate volunteers, we are delivering life changing work. You will read several examples of this in the case studies throughout this report.

2024 was a year of two halves. Petra Ingram our CEO since 2020 retired and was succeeded by Jo Coombs. A one month handover enabled us to ensure a smooth transition. We are extremely grateful to Petra for her dedication and leadership as we evolved our standard operating procedures and built an organisation focussed on our beneficiaries needs. Jo Coombs takes over at a time when demand for our services for both horses and humans is at an all time high. Her passion, expertise and network makes her ideally placed to take us into 2025 and the future.

With new ways of working in place our Equine Welfare team have been able to focus on the rehabilitation and retraining of abused, neglected and abandoned horses. This is specialist work and takes expertise, time and dedication. The combination of the above has enabled us to rehome 32 horses this year, the highest in our history. This means 192 horses now have a second chance of a meaningful life in a loving family home, creating space in our Welfare Centre for more horses in desperate need. At the end of 2024 we had 87 horses, ponies and donkeys living on our Farm in Whitchurch receiving rehabilitation and retraining.

In our Equine Assisted Learning programme, Discovery, we continue to raise facilitator skills and capabilities by sponsoring them through a level 3 OCN diploma in Equine Assisted Services which they will finish in 2025. We were also fortunate to be able to provide them all with Thrive™ training, to align with many of the schools across the four local authorities we work with.

Every story I hear about the Discovery programme fills me with joy. Although it is heart-breaking to know that some young people have had such a challenging start in life, we are able to provide them with the experience of working together with one of our gentle rescued ponies. To see these students build confidence, improve communication skills, and work together to explore a love of learning, it reminds me why I have so much respect for horses and the restorative powers they have.

We are also aware of how important it is to ensure our financial model is sustainable to protect our work into the future and have built a more robust approach to raising funds, looking after our supporters, raising awareness of HorseWorld and building new partnerships. This is a mid-term plan to reverse a fundraising decline which a large number of charities are also facing.

Alongside these developments, on a day-to-day basis we continue to provide vital support to the rescue of abused and neglected horses, that are suffering at the hands of fellow humans. However it is clear the cost of living crisis is also affecting even the most committed and loving horse owners as more and more ask for our help as a last resort. During the past 12 months, we have rescued 17 horses from dire situations. And we have given sanctuary to another 10 whose owners simply couldn't cope any more. All of them receive a HorseWorld hug and have a home for life.

Our sincere thanks go to all our supporters, your generosity enables us to do this amazing work. Whether you have been with us for many years, or have just begun your support, on behalf of the Board of Trustees and all the team, two legged and four, we are eternally grateful.

# About us



HorseWorld Trust was founded as The Friends of Bristol Horses Society in November 1952 by the formidable Mabel Cocksedge, its mission to rescue Bristol's work horses at risk of abuse, abandonment and death as their working roles became irrelevant. A year later, Marjorie Pelling and Madge Checkley joined the Charity. Together they dedicated their lives to the cause and for 45 years they ran the Charity on the outskirts of Bristol.

Today HorseWorld is based in Whitchurch, South Bristol at Keynes Farm, a site purchased by the charity in the '70's. We have approximately 100 horses on 180 acres of grazing land. In addition to providing a home for life to a small number of sanctuary horses, we also rescue emergency cases, rehabilitate and retrain horses for rehoming. Since 2007 we have also been running an Equine Assisted Learning Programme, Discovery, in which some of our rescued horses support disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.

## Rescue, Rehabilitation and Retraining

We believe every horse deserves to live a meaningful life, free from pain and suffering. Unfortunately demand for our services increases every year. We work in collaboration with local authorities, the police, RSPCA and other equine charities to undertake emergency rescues where the welfare of a horse is in serious danger. In addition to providing a sanctuary for long term residents on our farm, we are also involved in rehoming horses where they can build a special relationship with one of our many loaners. Preparation for rehoming of our rescued horses involves a specialist trauma-informed rehabilitation and training process undertaken by our skilled team, and then horses are matched to suitable homes. We have about 200 horses in loan homes mainly across the South-West of England.

## Helping People

Horses not only provide companionship, but there is strong evidence to support their therapeutic role to improve the well-being and mental health of people. The HorseWorld Equine Assisted Learning programme Discovery provides a safe, nurturing environment, in which every child, young person, and horse are accepted; a place where they can belong and achieve.

Every year Discovery supports approximately 200 local children and young people who are at risk of exclusion or who are experiencing life challenges due to their social, emotional, mental health and learning needs. Attendance on our Discovery programme can help young people to:

- Better manage their lives.
- Develop positive relationships.
- Learn problem-solving techniques.
- Develop communication and social skills.

We are a registered Alternative Learning Provider and through a variety of carefully designed activities with the horses and nature we support young people to realise what they can achieve in the right environment. The horses, which have been specially chosen for their calm nature, also bring about calmness in the young people, helping them to concentrate, communicate effectively and engage in their learning, all of which has a positive impact back in the classroom and at home.

Through our specialist trauma-informed equine care and our Equine Assisted Learning Programme Discovery we are championing and protecting the health and happiness of horses in the UK, ensuring they continue to live a meaningful life, by our side, for the future.

The Trustees recognise the importance of working for the public benefit and achieve this in many ways. This report sets out how we operate for public benefit and general charitable purposes, according to the laws of England and Wales. The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance when reviewing HorseWorld's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

# Our strategy

*We are caring,  
collaborative, proactive,  
adaptable & inclusive.*

Our values define how we structure our charitable programmes, how we implement our work and how we communicate. They guide everything we do.

Since the COVID pandemic we have seen a considerable increase in the need for our services. In 2023 we launched a five year strategy to expand our positive impact on the welfare of equines and the provision of alternative learning for young people, through our Equine Assisted Learning Programme Discovery.

Our approach is based on the concept of lifelong learning, delivered in everything we do, by helping horses, helping people and sharing the knowledge we acquire to improve the outcomes of our beneficiaries.



It is our goal to develop HorseWorld expertise to become a centre of excellence. We aim to scale up our impact by sharing our knowledge with the wider equine sector across equine welfare and equine assisted services through collaboration and outreach.

We are supporting our goals with a set of ethos statements which underpin our approach:

- We will design our programmes based on the needs of our beneficiaries, both horses and young people
- We will ensure our approach provides a quality service which is externally validated
- We will make decisions based on evidence
- We will be a partner of choice, creating a safe community for everyone involved in our Charity
- We will ensure the importance of nature and conservation is woven into our work
- We will be environmentally responsible in our land and buildings management
- We will be inclusive in our treatment of staff and ensure they have the skills to excel in their work
- We will establish a sustainable funding model to ensure our charitable work endures into the future
- We will be locally significant, recognised as a much loved Charity serving the Southwest region for over 70 years

**Over the next five years we have three specific ambitions. We will:**

- 1** Establish a centre of excellence in the provision of equine assisted learning to young people, with a scalable model to benefit all members of society.
- 2** Utilise many years of experience, robust evidence and a deep understanding of the horse, to deliver a world-class horse centred rescue and rehabilitation programme to improve the welfare of horses in our local community.
- 3** Prepare to scale up the positive impact of our work with humans and horses, by working in collaboration with others across the UK to expand our work through education and outreach.

# Our impact

As a Charity we are the custodians of donors' money, it is our responsibility to ensure we direct those funds to deliver the greatest impact. Over the past few years' we have developed a robust approach to ensure decisions are evidence based whether we are developing a rehabilitation programme for a rescued horse, managing our fields to maximise equine welfare or planning a Discovery session for a student who has been excluded from school due to emotional dysregulation.

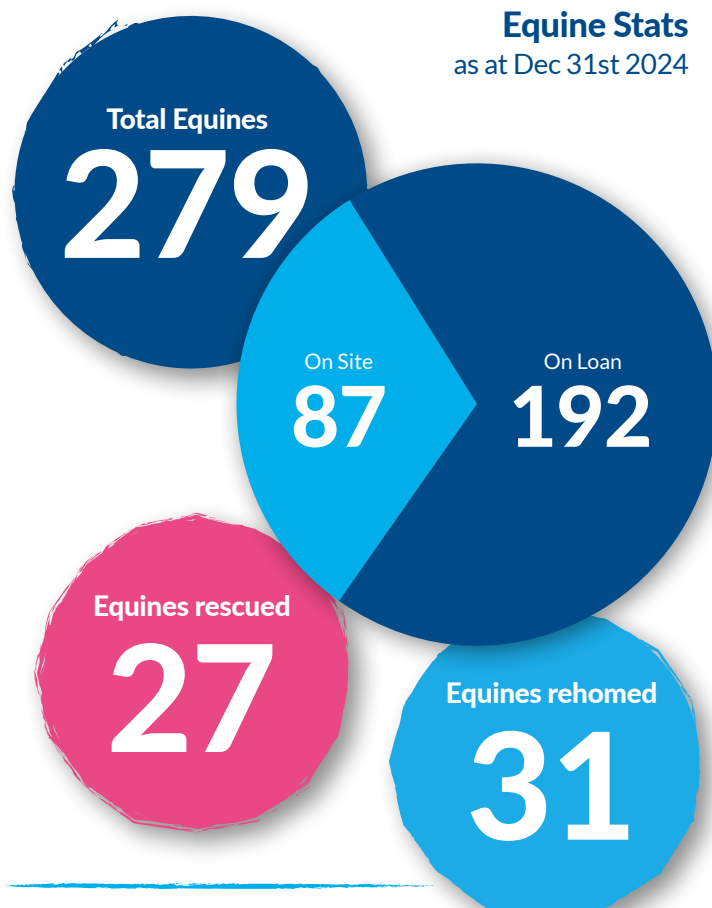


In 2023 we began a research project to explore the equine welfare impact of using a track grazing system compared to more traditional field grazing. The key areas of focus were weight management, foot condition and emotional wellbeing. The results of this have been analysed by Hartpury University and a peer reviewed and approved research paper has now been published in *Animal* journal and shared with other equine welfare organisations via our website and Horse & Hound magazine.

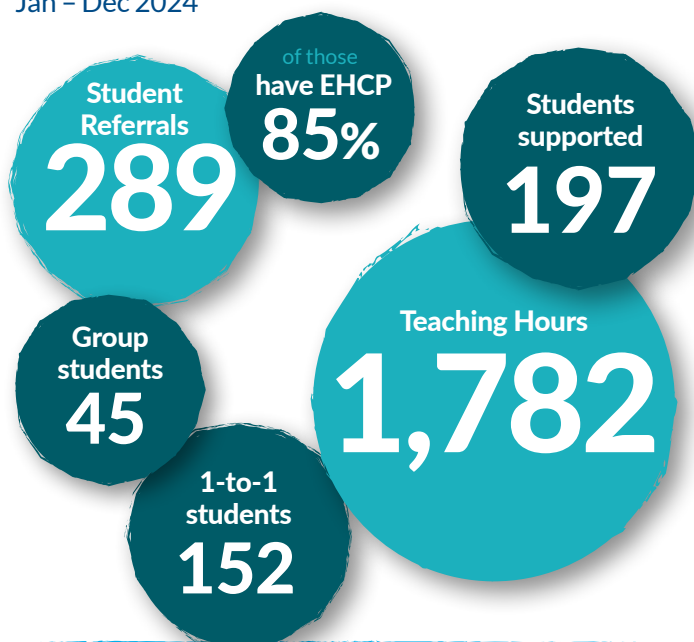
We consistently receive testimonials from our Discovery students and referrers which are reinforced by the results we get using the Thrive education outcome approach. This validates our curriculum and ensures it delivers the desired outcomes or guides us on changes we need to make to the individual programme of each student.

Throughout this report you will read case studies of how our work has had a positive impact on the welfare of our horses and the engagement of our young people. More case studies can be found in our newsletter or on our website [HorseWorld.org.uk](https://HorseWorld.org.uk).

## Equine Stats as at Dec 31st 2024



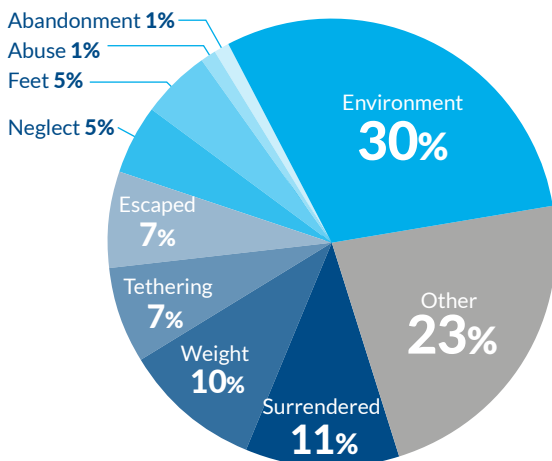
## Teaching Stats Jan - Dec 2024





# Equine welfare

## Reason for welfare report



## People Helping Horses

### Our Equine Impact

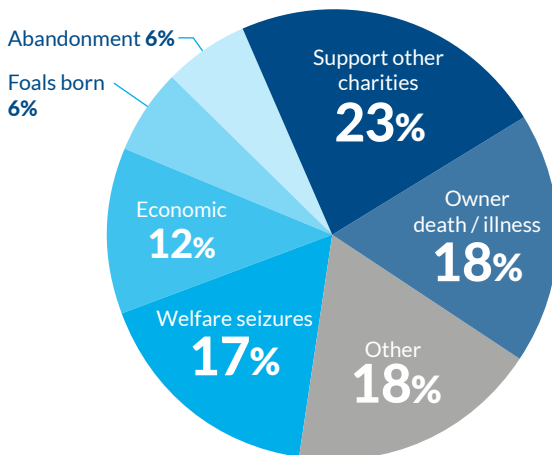
#### Equine welfare:

There was a significant increase in the number of welfare concerns reported to us – up by 93% on 2023. This has been seen across the country with other welfare organisations also reporting increased numbers. Over 6,000 equines were at risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment across the UK in 2024. Unfortunately, demand for our services is increasing and so is the complexity of the cases we are working with.

#### 2024 Equine Intake:

We took in a similar number of horses in 2024 as 2023 but we saw an increase in the number relinquished by owners who could no longer afford to keep them. The number abandoned also increased slightly. We continue to work closely with the RSPCA and other welfare organisations to support with rescues and removals even if the equines don't end up coming to HorseWorld. This is essential to help reduce abuse and neglect in the long-term. In particular, we work with the RSPCA, Redwings and World Horse Welfare on the management of horses on sites where there are large herds at risk due to irresponsible breeding.

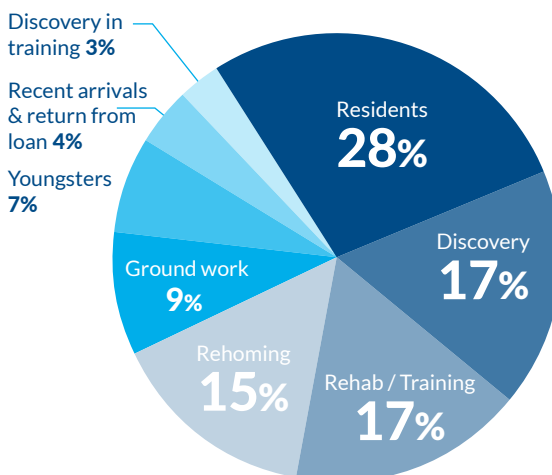
## Equine Intake



#### Horses on site:

The number of horses on site ranged from 109 in January to 87 in December, with us ending the year with capacity to assist with rescue situations when most other charities were over capacity. The number of horses on-site with us at the end of 2024 was a record low due to the great success of our rehoming team and the wonderful rehomers offering loan homes to the horses we rehabilitated over the year. This meant we could start 2025 with space for new rescues to come in, January to March is usually a busy time for many welfare centres and often finds them at capacity. As at end of March 2025 we have been able to take in 28 horses in desperate need.

## Horses on site



A concentrated effort was made to focus on training horses for Discovery with the aim of 20% of horses on site able to participate in sessions. Due to the complex needs of our equines, and the importance of safeguarding the young people in our care, this is not an easy target, but we finished the year with 17% fully trained and a further 3% in training.

## Case study Elsa

**Elsa was rescued in 2020 from a situation where the owner's mental health had led to a drastic deterioration in welfare standards.**

There were over 100 ponies being left to breed indiscriminately and receiving little to no care. HorseWorld took in 5 ponies from this case.

Underweight, unwell and pregnant on arrival, Elsa surprisingly gave birth to a healthy colt in 2021. The trauma from the rescue situation left Elsa with both physical and emotional scars and she needed plenty of time to heal and then a lot of specialist rehabilitation to get her comfortable with humans again.



In 2024, Elsa's sweet nature had been given time to shine, and she simply loved being with children, so she began her training to become a member of the Discovery team. Today, she is a firm favourite with many young people.

Also in 2024 we rehomed Elsa's foal Buttons, he is currently in a foster home and will return to us in a couple of years to hopefully join our Discovery Herd and rejoin his mum. We've never had a mother and son in Discovery before, so this would be a new first for us all.





## Rehoming success

When a horse comes to HorseWorld they have a home for life, ensuring their welfare for the rest of their life. When we rehome a horse with one of our rehomers, they go on permanent loan, meaning the rehomer can return the horse to us at any time should they need to. We take our time to rehabilitate and retrain our horses so they can have a second chance at a meaningful life. We then carefully match the horse to the home to ensure a successful placement. We regularly visit our horses to make sure both rehomer and horse are happy with the placement. This matchmaking service and continued review is essential in ensuring the success of the placement, the happiness of the horse and our ability to manage the number of equines on site so that we have room for more rescues in desperate need.

We had a great year in 2024, rehoming a total of 32 horses with only 9 returning. We held 39 viewings, and we received a total of 170 rehoming applications. This is the most we have rehomed since 2017. We recruited a Rehoming Coordinator at the start of 2024 and the combination of having the horses trained and ready for rehoming, along with having a full training and rehoming team, led to a successful year.

Only 9 horses on loan were returned to HorseWorld.

- 1 end of foster
- 1 taken back by HorseWorld, due to weight
- 3 change on loaner circumstances
- 3 loaner ill health
- 1 equine behaviour/vet treatment needed

# Case study

## Coco & Aura



### Aura – rescued HorseWorld pony shines at the Royal Bath & West show

In 2020 Aura was part of one of the biggest animal welfare operations ever in the UK. She was found with a group of 130 neglected and suffering horses living in appalling conditions. HorseWorld, along with other equine charities collaborated with the RSPCA to rescue the horses. When she was rescued she was very nervous, unhandled, severely underweight and suffering from worms and a lice infestation. Thankfully the expert care from our HorseWorld team meant that Aura was able to make a full recovery.

During her rehabilitation programme the team quickly identified the sweet natured Aura could be suited to join the Discovery equine team, helping vulnerable young people cope with social, mental and emotional challenges. Part of the equine training process for some of the younger Discovery equines is to spend time in a foster home before they start working with children on the programme. Aura found a fantastic foster home with Elizabeth and Coco Hembrow.

“Since she came to live with us, Aura and Coco have formed a beautiful bond. Coco suffers from OCD and ADHD and struggles with mainstream education. Aura helps her cope and face life’s challenges.

Together they have been out and about competing and joined the Pony club. They have competed in a dressage series, run rides and galloped across the Mendips, where they love unwinding together. Going to the Royal Bath and West show was a big step up for Coco & Aura. The show had a real buzz about it and I was very nervous for both of them, but every time I checked in with Coco to see how she was feeling, she just said “I’m fine Mum, I know Aura is the best pony here and I trust her 100%”. She was incredible and I am so proud of both of them. Aura has stolen our hearts, she is simply perfect” Elizabeth Hembrow.







## The increasing cost of care

Since we started providing sanctuary to horses in 1952 we have seen a dramatic change in the type of horses needing our help and the complexity of those horses' needs. Originally we were essentially a retirement home. But in the last 20 years there has been a huge increase in the number of horses abused, neglected and abandoned. Our limited space has had to be prioritised to those most in need.

But these equines come with more complex needs, which in turn, requires more resource to manage, more time for retraining and more veterinary intervention. Our practical and pragmatic approach means that we assess every horse during their quarantine to determine the best course of action for each. Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made to minimise suffering for the horse and to ensure efficient use of our donors' funds, however with specialist rehabilitation and retraining most horses are able to have a second chance at a meaningful life.

During 2024 we needed to provide the equines in our care with:

**710 farrier sessions**

**165 dentist treatments**

**64 physiotherapy & chiropractic sessions**

Our vets at B&W Equine Vets attend the site every Wednesday and Friday for essential & routine care and are on 24/7 call for emergencies.

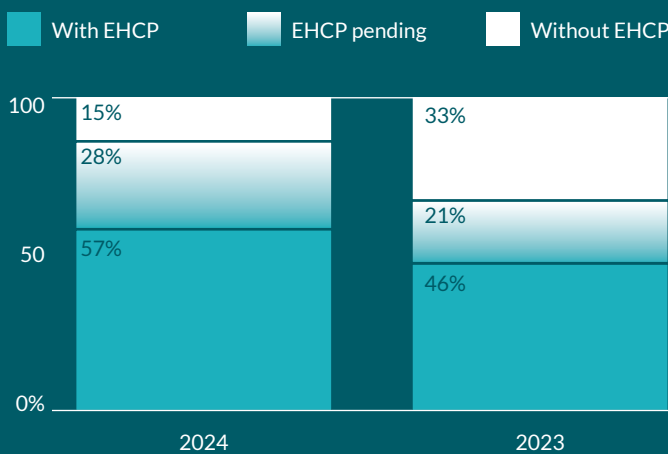
	Average cost per horse	Average monthly cost	Annual cost for 2024
Vet fees	£700	£5,855	£70,200
Farrier	£205	£1,700	£20,500
Dentist	£92	£750	£9,000

# Discovery

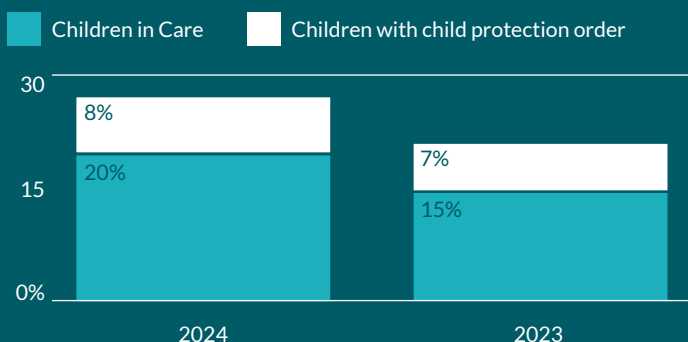
As a registered Alternative Learning Provider (ALP), we work with local schools, local authorities, the police and other children's service providers across four local authorities to improve the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

Since 2007 we have been working with children and young people who are at risk of exclusion from school, have special educational needs or who are experiencing life challenges due to their social, emotional and mental health needs. By bringing them together with rescued horses we see results when nothing else has worked.

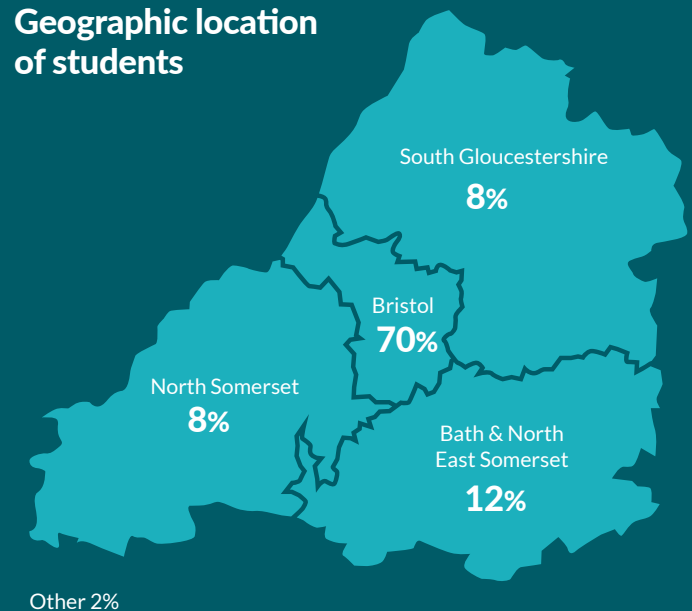
## Students with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)



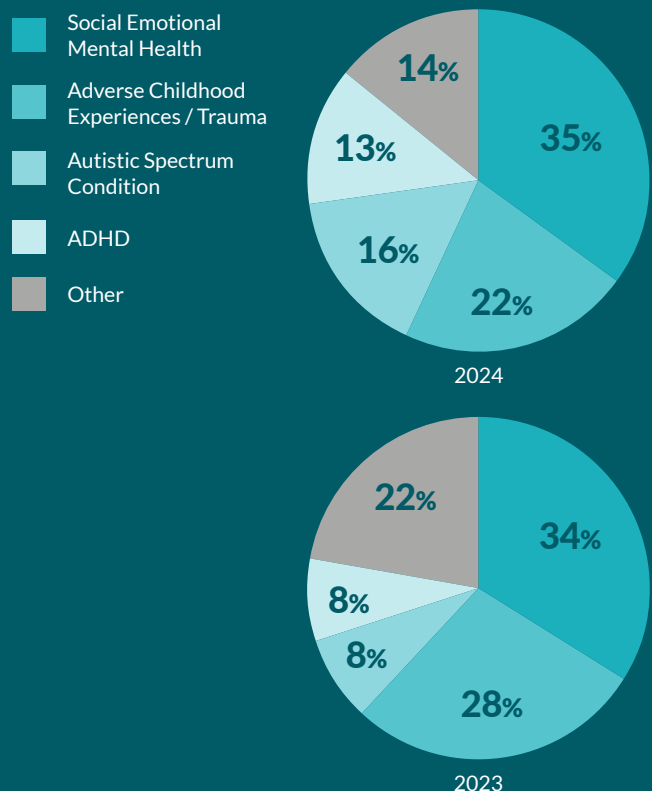
## Percent referrals for Children in Need (CiN)



## Geographic location of students



## Primary reason given for referrals





## Feedback from referrers (2017–2024)

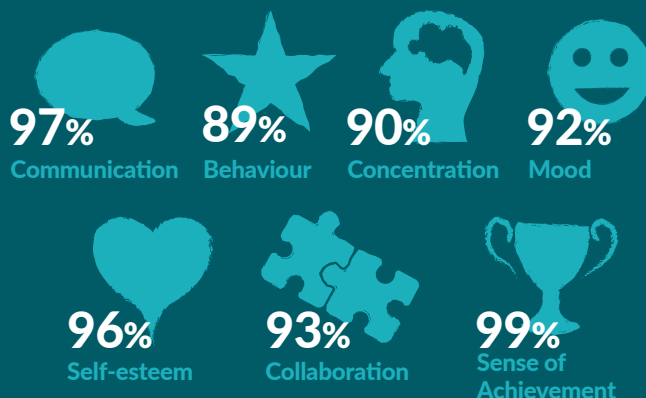
**90%** rate Discovery as *excellent*

**90%** of students are *very / highly* engaged

**93%** see a *positive change* in attitude to learning

**86%** see a *positive impact* in the classroom

## Soft skills reported improvements



## The Discovery approach

Following the nationally recognised Thrive approach to learning, our facilitators deliver trauma-informed support to improve the educational, mental health and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people. Drawing from the latest research in neuroscience, attachment theory and models of child development our horses and facilitators help young people learn to regulate themselves, build confidence and resilience so that they are better able to engage with life and learning.

Each young person's time with us starts with a Team Around the Child meeting; together with child, carer, school & referrer we agree desired outcomes. Then the facilitators tailor the programme accordingly. All our trained Discovery horses & ponies have their own stories and quirks and we find our young people can often connect with these. The horses know nothing of the child's past and work only with what they see today, this lack of judgement and gift of time, can be nothing short of transformational.

“ Whilst L struggles with motivation to attend her school she has been enthusiastic to attend HorseWorld each week and has not needed any encouragement from me. Her comment after the first session was, ‘Legit, I could’ve stayed there all day’. When she made this comment L was attending school for 1 hour per week. Whilst attending Horse World, we have been able to increase her school attendance to 3 mornings.

– L’s Key Social Worker

“ The team at Discovery at HorseWorld and of course those amazing horses have given me back my girl’s smile and I’m slowly seeing her confidence grow a little more each time and I am forever grateful for this opportunity.

– M’s Mum

“ It has been such a gift to my daughter and me for her to be able to attend the 6-week HorseWorld Discovery Programme. Not only has it provided my daughter with her first introduction to being up close and personal with ponies and horses in a safe way. It has been a place, where her own individual needs and personal challenges are met. It has enabled my child to grow in confidence and she has loved the opportunity to be able to connect with the horses and learn how to care for them. Also, to develop meaningful relationships and trust with her assigned workers.

– P’s Mum

# Case study

## Charlie's Discovery Journey

Every year, HorseWorld's Discovery Programme works with around 200 young people who are at risk of exclusion or who are experiencing life challenges due to their social, emotional, mental health and learning needs.

Students work together with rescued horses to build confidence, improve communication skills and work together to explore a love of learning.

One such student is 12 year old Charlie. He started attending Discovery sessions in January 2024 after being out of school for three years caused by not being able to cope in the mainstream education environment as a result of his autism and ADHD.

According to Charlie's mum, he's found more than just a sanctuary at HorseWorld, he found a best friend in Archie, the horse. The unconditional support and kindness from the facilitators have reignited his hope and restored his faith in human kindness. "Archie has got a big personality. He was really helped me because he's another friend; like a human. He understands people quite a lot, I think. And he loves hugs! I love animals but I was a bit scared of horses at first, but then I found a love for horses by coming here". Charlie talking about Archie, the horse who has become a non-judgemental friend.



Each week, Charlie looks forward to his Discovery session, which has become a vital part of this healing and happiness. The programme has been instrumental in transforming his life, providing him with confidence and a purpose in life.

Equipped with the essential skills he'll need, Charlie has now returned to school.

Our facilitator worked with his new school and Charlie to help his transition. We'll miss seeing Charlie at HorseWorld weekly but we know he's ready for the next step and are proud to see his amazing progress.



Charlie with Archie and facilitator Kayleigh Sivier.



# Fundraising

**We would like to thank our supporters, who are the lifeblood of HorseWorld – it is only through their generosity we are able to do our much needed work.**

2024 was a tough year for many, with the cost of living crisis hitting many families, including our own supporters. None the less, we raised £1.1m to support our vital work helping improve the welfare of hundreds of horses and support nearly 200 young people through our Discovery programme.

We were honoured that over 2,000 people came to visit us at our Open Day on 10<sup>th</sup> August. The day was highlighted on Points West and Radio Bristol. Guests were able to watch live demonstrations, meet our horses, look around the farm and even sign up to rehome horses in need. It was a wonderful day, the sun shone and we raised over £14,000. We are extremely grateful to those supporters who visited us and staff who worked hard all day to make it an amazing experience for both humans and horses. The 2025 Open Day will be on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

Every year a significant proportion of our income is generated by gifts in wills. In 2024 we partnered with the National Free Wills Network to offer a Free Will service to anyone interested in leaving a legacy to HorseWorld, and in 2025 we will be offering a Home for Life scheme for horse owners to ensure their horse is looked after for life should anything happen to them. We promise these horses a home for life here at HorseWorld.

This is why one of our supporters is leaving a gift to HorseWorld in their will:

“I love all animals / wildlife and cannot look after them by myself. I know nothing about horses but they are fabulous creatures and need care, love and attention so all we can do is offer regular financial support (wish it could be more) and finally a share of our assets so those who have the knowledge, ability etc can continue taking care of these beautiful animals”



We also ran two specific appeals to raise much needed funds to feed our herd in the winter, and to improve our isolation unit for the feral and fearful ponies we have to handle. We also celebrated and remembered our lost loved ones with our Christmas Stable of Stars campaign.

We added three new horses to our sponsorship scheme, Odette the Shettie, Tilly the mule and Soul our brave little star. Sponsors had a chance to meet them and our other sponsorship animals at our Sponsors Only VIP day.



We have been actively building relationships across the local community. Since the closure of the HorseWorld visitor centre in 2014 many people thought that the whole of HorseWorld had closed and didn't realise we were still right on their doorstep and in need of their help. So we have been attending events like the Keynsham Music Festival, WI meetings and Brownie evenings. We've also been fortunate to have a number of local businesses visit the farm to help us; thank you to Coutts, CJ Hole, Bristol Bears and the Avon & Somerset Fire Service. These Corporate Challenge volunteer days are great for us and also help local businesses with the CSR targets, enabling their staff to give back to local charities. We hope to do a lot more of this in 2025.



Supporter development

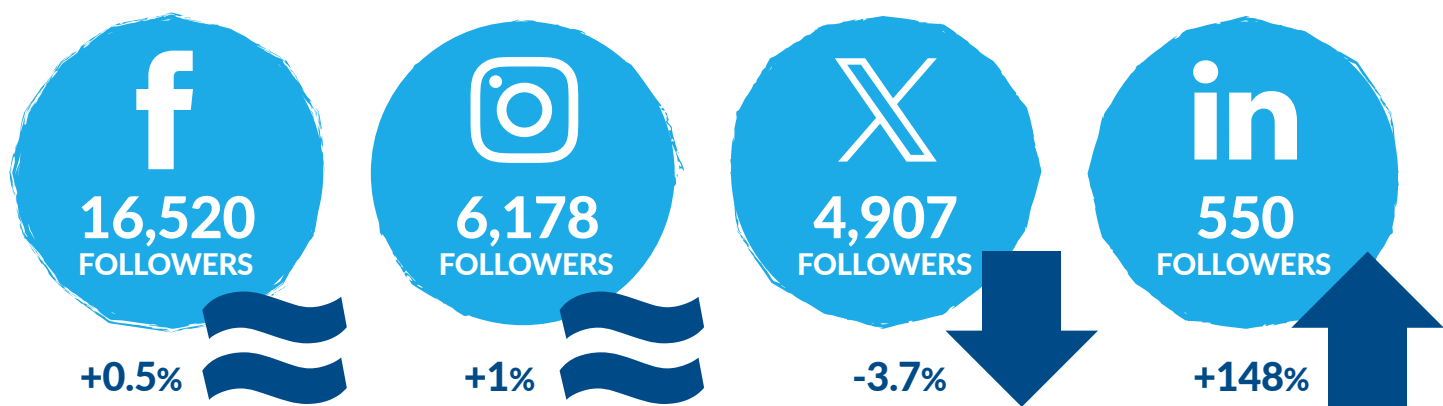
The last Quarter of 2024 and first Quarter of 2025 focussed on implementing a new CRM system for both our Supporter and our Equine data. This will enable us better manage preferences, be more personalised and more timely in our communications.

During the year, in addition to our annual open day, we held on-site events specifically for our sponsors, our rehomers and our volunteers. We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of volunteers who help at our events, in Discovery sessions and care for our herd.

Social media

We've found social media a great way to keep supporters updated on all the amazing things we do, and all the interesting things our horses do. Our Facebook and Instagram accounts are updated almost daily and are a great way to stay up-to-date with everything happening. At the end of 2024 our social media audiences were:

Our content was displayed to users over 2 million times, audiences engaged with our posts over 160,000 times and links in posts were clicked over 12,500 times. We maximised engagement by significantly increased the number of community centric posts to almost 50%, whilst increasing our focus on income generation.





# Our people

We truly value the dedication of our staff team involved in the day-to-day care of rescued horses, their rehabilitation and training, coordination of our rehoming activities, and delivery of our Discovery programme who support vulnerable and at risk children and young people. Our Welfare and Maintenance teams work 7 days a week to ensure the horses in our care are happy and healthy. We have a small fundraising team who work closely with Welfare and Discovery to promote our work, engage with supporters and raising income from our loyal donors. Our support teams look after the site and maintain efficient processes of internal control. Our whole team enables us to achieve all that we do, they are the heart and soul of HorseWorld.

We invest in the continuous development of skills and structures to add value, improve internal career progression and aid retention. In 2024 we provided 638 hours of training across the organisation, including sessions with Rob Pickles and Jenny Major. Our Discovery Facilitators started their OCN level 3 Diploma in EAS Facilitation and continued to receive quarterly support from Educational Psychologist Anna Sutherland.

We are very fortunate to have a strong Senior Management Team supporting our new CEO. This team has a combined tenure of 56 years at HorseWorld. Their experience and deep expertise combined with Jo's fresh eyes and leadership are a winning combination as we develop plans to go into our 75<sup>th</sup> year and look towards our Centenary in 2052.

## Our Leadership Team

**Jo Coombs**

CEO

*From October 2024*

**Nikki Hart**

Deputy CEO

*21 years at HorseWorld*

**Sarah Hollister**

Head of Equine Welfare

*24 years at HorseWorld*

**Graham Hilliard**

Head of Discovery

*3 years at HorseWorld*

**Lizy Kacou**

Head of Supporter Development

*4 years at HorseWorld*

**Sara Rutherford**

Head of Engagement

*3 years at HorseWorld*



We are also very fortunate to have the support of an extensive range of volunteers, many of whom have been supporting HorseWorld for a considerable number of years. They are much valued members of the team. Our loaners are also volunteers, caring for our extended HorseWorld herd at their home as part of their family. Finally our Trustees, they too are volunteers and bring their time, expertise and networks to help govern and safeguard the future of the charity.

We are extremely grateful to the dedication of all those who give up their time to further our cause, thank you.

# Our partners



It is a core value for us to work in collaboration with others, and we are grateful for the growing support we get from partners.

We have ongoing relationships with several other equine welfare charities including Redwings, World Horse Welfare and RSPCA. We work together on multi-agency rescues. When HorseWorld do not have capacity to take new rescues, we will provide resources by way of staff and transport to support others.

We also have a 15+ year relationship with Avon & Somerset Fire Service who have been coming to us for training to enable them to learn how to approach and rescue large animals that have been in an accident. They also attend our Open Day and give demos of the work they do and have trained for with us.

We are particularly proud to continue working together with Avon and Somerset Police in the Discovery programme for young people at risk of sexual exploitation. This has delivered incredible results and was expanded during 2024 into South Gloucestershire.

We continued our research based educational relationship Hartpury & Bournemouth Universities. And remain committed members of NEWC, HETI & EASP; championing the highest standards in Equine Welfare and Equine Assisted Services.

*We will increase our impact by working with others - together we are stronger.*



## Case study

# An update on The Famous Five



In June 2023 we rescued 5 terrified, malnourished ponies after assisting with a major rescue operation involving multiple rescue charities.

Despite being at capacity with other rescues arriving just a few days earlier, we couldn't say 'no' and when we saw the condition of the ponies, we knew we had made the right decision and were probably saving their lives.

All were unhandled and petrified of humans, they were little more than skin and bone. After spending time in our isolation unit to get immediate veterinary care, our team began to gain their trust, and they were given their names – Pumpkin, Pretzel, Peaches, Plum and Peanut.

It was so rewarding to see them gradually accept basic handling such as wearing headcollars, being walked through the yard and being groomed. Even these simple interactions were impossible to envisage when this once-terrified group of ponies first arrived.

Sarah Hollister, Head of Equine Welfare said "this group of ponies really was one of the most challenging our Training Team have dealt with. The ponies were so scared of people; they would literally try to climb the walls to get away from you. Sometimes we doubted if we'd ever be able to get them happy with even the gentlest of human touch."

With the expertise, dedication and skill of our staff the P-Ponies had an exciting 2024. They are all different personalities, so as their training progressed, we looked at the options of rehoming or joining our Discovery team.

Finally in November 2024 two year old Pretzel and three year old Peanut were given their Christmas wish, and were rehomed together in an amazing foster home. Peaches is still with us in training, unfortunately the oldest of the group 20 year old Plum sadly died in January 2025, and the last one Pumpkin has just found a new loan home and is heading there soon for the next chapter in his life.

# Our 2025 objectives

In 2025 we will continue working towards the aims of our Five Year Strategy, building on the foundations established in the past 24 months, and importantly setting us up for the future. But 2025 – 27 look like tough years, increases in National Insurance will hit us hard, together with inflation and minimum wage increases our costs will increase dramatically. In fact in 2025 we will need to raise an additional £320,000 just to 'stand still'. Thankfully we have built strong foundations, we have 73 years of experience & deep expertise and an incredible supporter base by our side, so we go into 2025 cautious but confident.

## In 2025 HorseWorld Trust will

### 1. Continue to improve the outcomes of equines in our care, and increase the number of equines we care for.

- Improving the welfare of horses on site through new wellbeing protocols, continued training, veterinary support and equine-centric land management
- Share our knowledge and learnings so that others can implement our processes to improve Equine Welfare nationally
- Reviewing the retraining pathway especially for Discovery horses and rehoming so that we can help more horses and young people
- Building new and strengthen existing relationships with other Equine organisations for the benefit of horses in society
- Embed our training matrix with clear pathways for both grooms and equines (to include equine fitness plans) and implement alongside a level 2 welfare assessment.
- Continue to educate others on Equine Welfare by implementing the second stage of research in collaboration with Hartpury University and building a relationship with Harper Adams University.
- Review process for new equine arrivals and upgrade isolation facilities with a new system to manage feral ponies so that we can move horses through our isolation process more efficiently and support external agencies.





**2. Continue to improve the outcomes of Young People in our catchment area by increasing capacity and training others nationwide to deliver Best in Class EAS.**

- Work towards a goal of supporting 75 young people each week, with more resources in place and courses as appropriate.
- Hire & and train more facilitators to increase the number of spaces available
- Complete OCN Equine Assisted Services diploma training for all Discovery facilitators and prepare for wider roll out, working together with Alliance members.
- Launch The King's Trust Resilience award with young people.
- Increase the pool of accessible horses for Discovery use, including fully trained horses, and horses for close encounters
- Launch the Learning Centre and make use of this facility for events and students



**3. Raise awareness of what HorseWorld is and does and why it's relevant so that we can mean more to more people.**

- Increase awareness of HorseWorld across Bristol and Bath and the Equine world
- Acquire new donors – individual givers and major donors
- Establish segmented supporter journeys to drive increased lifetime value of every donor
- Develop a Theory of Change to help grow Trusts and Foundations pipeline and ensure we stay focussed on meeting increased beneficiary needs.
- Increase engagement with existing supporters through more events and opportunities to support us

**4. Build a high performing, people centric organisation where everyone knows their role and understands the organisations purpose and mission**

- Continue to embed our culture of lifelong learning
- Retain our best talent
- Ensure all staff have clear personal development plans and clear objectives
- Ensure an inclusive, safe environment for everyone to work in
- Ensure all staff understand their role in the organisation and feel valued for the contribution they make
- Be the best collaborators we can be helping, supporting and learning from others

**5. Build a sustainable financial model that helps us to close the financial deficit and sets HorseWorld up for achieving our goal of 100 years of impact in 2052.**

- Create new partnerships across the equine world
- Create new corporate partnerships
- Invest in and upskill the fundraising skills within the organisation
- Identify revenue generating opportunities within our existing assets

# Towards our future

In 2027 we will be 75 years old, however we are already looking beyond that and towards our centenary in 2052, to ensure we can continue Mabel Cocksedge's legacy of People Helping Horses, Helping People.



## People helping horses

Unfortunately demand for our services increases each year. Horses continue to be at risk of abuse, neglect and abandonment. Whilst spotlights have been placed on elite level equestrian sport, it is in the shadows where mass abuse and neglect live. 'Foal farming' is an increasing issue, indiscriminate breeders giving the whole industry a bad name and often evading prosecution by 'abandoning' youngsters not fit for sale. The majority of Rescue & Welfare centres in the UK are at capacity, forcing organisations like the RSPCA to keep rescues in boarding homes until welfare centres have space or new homes can be found. The lack of governmental support for Equine ID & traceability severely hinders prosecution, and aids those involved in indiscriminate breeding, live transportation and abuse. The horse welfare problem is not going away.

HorseWorld Trust is here for all horses. Unfortunately many responsible owners are struggling with the cost of living, and desperately need our support to safeguard their horses future too. Even if we could take in double the number of horses there would still be demand. Therefore HorseWorld continues to work with the leading welfare organisations and equestrian sports on education, laws and enforcement, increasing awareness and importantly championing new roles for horses within society to reduce the number of welfare issues.



## Horses helping people

Every day a newspaper or media outlet talks about the UK's mental health crisis, the education system crisis or the NHS crisis. If you've ever had horses or worked with them, you will know (and maybe taken for granted) the profound impact they can have on people. It has long been said 'there's something about the outside of a horse, that is good for the inside of a human'. But with 87% of the UK believing that horses are not relevant to them, the majority of the population does not know, or has not been able to experience the healing power of horses. How their non judgemental presence, their stature and their ability to mirror us can help humans find calm, regulate themselves, become more confident and resilient. Equine Assisted Services have an important role in improving the mental & physical health of humans, and can at the same time offer a life-line to the horse, raising it's relevance to society and bringing abuse out of the shadows.

Demand for our Equine Assisted Learning Programme Discovery constantly outstrips our capacity. For 18 years we've been proving the impact of EAS on children and young people by improving their outcomes; helping the at risk and vulnerable to thrive in education and society.

As a registered Alternative Learning Provision we have worked closely with four local authorities and over 30 schools to align the Discovery Programme into the education system as a part-time alternative provision. Working with schools, local authorities, police and other agencies to provide early intervention to help young people better cope with an education system that is struggling to support the increasingly complex needs of our children. Safeguarding and Ofsted compliance is built into how we operate. Ensuring that we are education system partners now and for the future.

As members of Equine Assisted Services Partnership and The Federation of Horses in Education and Therapy International (HETI) we are also championing equine assisted services (EAS) nationally and educating others to deliver impactful EAS services, through providing the OCN level 3 diploma in EAS. In this way HorseWorld Trust is playing an important role in tackling some of society's biggest problems, whilst also raising equine welfare standards.

But demand outstrips capacity across everything we do, so as we look to the future we also look to ways in which we can safeguard the future of the horses and humans who are our beneficiaries as well as the people (staff, volunteers, supporters and friends) of HorseWorld that have been by our side for the last 75 years – and who we want to be beside for the next 75.

*Together towards the future  
of HorseWorld Trust.*





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