

Changing Lives Case Studies

Adam

When "Adam" arrived, he was obviously nervous as he'd not had any prior experience with horses. He'd been referred to us by his care home after he'd shown an interest in animals - just about the only thing he did have an interest in at the time.

He had completely disengaged from formal education and was identified as "at risk of offending" , with a history of absconding from care. He had been diagnosed with ADHD and sometimes showed anger management issues.

On his first day, it was obvious that he was very restless but he was keen too and so, we got him doing physical tasks such as filling haynets and sweeping the yard - which he did very quickly but not necessarily to standard! However, right from the start, he was willing to learn and after a couple of weeks, he was doing these tasks to a better standard.

He received daily training in all the usual tasks on the yard and also started to ride. Being a typical boy, he wanted to gallop about rather than learn the basics but the horses soon taught him that basics are vital because no matter how much he tried to make them gallop about, they simply wouldn't! When he got frustrated, they reacted to him by becoming even less cooperative. Very soon, he was listening to his instructors and started to understand the thrill of working hard to achieve a goal - something he'd never before done.

This was the major breakthrough that we were looking for. His progress sky-rocketed and, as a result, he started to settle down. The physical aspects of the work really helped his ADHD. So much so that a few months after starting with us, his doctors were able to reduce his medication.

His carers reported that his behaviour in general was significantly improved and his outbursts of anger had virtually ceased. He had also stopped absconding when he was unhappy and instead was able to communicate how he was feeling. With our support, he even re-engaged with school and attended one morning a week for Maths and English.

12 months later, he left us a different person than when he'd arrived. He was self-confident, self aware and motivated, so much so that he felt able to enrol at a catering college.

Kate

"Kate" was referred to us by her college. Being 17, she had to be in formal education but had not done particularly well in her GCSEs. They had enrolled her on business course but she needed 3 days placement elsewhere.

She had no experience with horses but had an interest in animals and whilst she had not disengaged from education per se, she didn't really know what to do with her life.

Initially, she was very scared of the horses but little by little, she gained confidence and with that, self-belief. We trained her in all aspects of horse care and she started to understand that academic achievement wasn't necessarily the be all and end all. Ironically, that gave her the courage to set her sights high and when she left us, she had secured a place on an academically demanding Veterinary Nursing Course! She now has a full time position as a veterinary nurse with an animal charity.