

# Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship

## Annual Impact Report - 2017



Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship is a registered charity which provides therapeutic and learning opportunities for young people, people with disabilities and other disadvantages and those suffering social exclusion, through engaging in activities with horses, all set within the context of the natural environment.

Our vision is for marginalised or excluded young people and adults to improve their wellbeing, become more resilient and be better able to overcome the challenges and disadvantages they face in order to have more positive life outcomes.

Sirona worked with 121 participants last year and we are pleased to share our headline figures for 2017:

**90%**

90% OF PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED ON CITY & GUILDS LEVEL 1 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE QUALIFICATION

**100%**

100% OF SIRONA PARTICIPANTS IN 2017 REPORTED IMPROVEMENTS ACROSS A RANGE OF INDICATORS

**64%**

64% OF SIRONA PARTICIPANTS IN 2017 REPORTED SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS ACROSS A RANGE OF INDICATORS

Sirona offers a wide range of activities to suit the diverse needs of participants:

**Therapeutic Horsemanship** provides the opportunity for people to gain new skills, increased confidence and other benefits through participating in equine based activities centred on a positive horsemanship approach.

**Equine-Assisted Therapy** sessions with qualified therapists are particularly beneficial for young people for whom conventional therapy is too intense or threatening.

**Equine-Assisted Learning** provides horse based-educational sessions leading to City & Guilds Level 1 & 2 Horse Care and are for young people who find the formal classroom environment challenging.

Many benefits are reported from Therapeutic Horsemanship and Equine-Assisted Learning and Therapy. From our evaluation and feedback we have received from our students, parents, carers and teachers we have seen increased levels of self-confidence and self-esteem, better communication skills, improved relationships and a rise in school attendance.

Throughout 2017 Sirona has continued to receive referrals from Devon County Council fostering & adoption teams, mental health teams, pupil referral units, youth offending teams, schools, learning disability residential services and other charities and service providers.

64%

REPORTED AN  
IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR  
HORSEMANSHIP SKILLS

61%

MORE CONFIDENT IN  
TRYING NEW THINGS OR  
MEETING NEW PEOPLE

70%

FELT CALMER IN  
CHALLENGING  
SITUATIONS

58%

FELT BETTER ABLE TO  
UNDERSTAND AND  
COMMUNICATE FEELINGS  
AND EMOTIONS

65%

BETTER AT STICKING TO  
THINGS THEY FOUND  
DIFFICULT OR  
CHALLENGING

68%

FELT MORE POSITIVE  
AND HAPPIER  
IN THEIR LIVES

### Case Study:

14 year old Claire had not been attending school due to extreme anxiety and emotional issues. She had been hospitalised at various times due to her mental health.

Claire initially attended 6 sessions of therapeutic horsemanship with Sirona which helped her become more aware of how she was feeling and ways of processing and dealing with her emotions.

She then progressed on to the Level One Horse Care course which she attended with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn new skills. It was noted by her social worker that on the journey to Sirona Claire would be very quiet and withdrawn but on the way back she would be animated and happily talking about what she had done and achieved.

Claire successfully completed the course and in turn was able to return to school part time. She said she felt more confident within herself and had by working with the horses found transferable skills that helped her to focus and stay calm in difficult circumstances.

Claire's mother stated that the difference in her daughter was "amazing and a joy to see, her life had become more positive and they could look forward to the future".

"The horses make me feel happy and confident because when they are happy and relaxed I feel more happy which makes me feel more confident".

"I've learnt new things to do with horse and I've learnt that no matter how low I feel horses always cheer me up".

"Helping at Sirona has helped me with confidence and self-esteem".

"I feel relaxed after spending time with them (horses). Make you feel happier afterwards".

"Sirona has helped me improve my confidence around other people and at school. Also with making friends. I wanted to be around horses because I love them and they are the only thing that helped me feel safe".

"Sirona has helped me a lot. It's peaceful and makes me feel calmer".

"I feel more confident (now). I find that the horses reflect how you should treat people. I'm a lot nicer".





“The benefits for Andy\* have been considerable. He describes it as being the highlight of his week and something that he spends the rest of the week thinking about”.

*Family Practitioner*

“I can’t rate Sirona highly enough. I feel Olivia\* has benefited immensely and is developing a sense of responsibility for her actions. She is empathic to people’s needs (now). She has grown in confidence, her self-esteem has been heightened and she has also been able to attune to her feelings and relay them in a much more positive way”.

*Social Worker*

“We have found Sirona to be a very positive experience for Cath\* and one we would highly recommend. She is able to tell me how she thinks the other animals are feeling by reading their body language”.

*Social Worker*

\*Names have been changed for confidentiality

In 2016 Sirona was supported by the Child Outcomes Research Consortium\* to conduct a pilot project using the Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS) to measure the impact of our activities with a group of 8-21 year olds. 19 young people took part and we are pleased to report that:

- 94.7% of participants demonstrated improvement in life functioning over the course of the intervention
- 42.1% of participants demonstrated *reliable*\*\* improvement in life functioning

\* Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC) 4-8 Rodney Street, London, N1 9JH | [www.corc.uk.net](http://www.corc.uk.net)

\*\* Based on 5 point or more improvement consistent with Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services outcomes

