

Positive outcomes we have observed so far include the following:

a young girl aged 13, diagnosed with anorexia, after only 2 sessions began to eat properly;

a young boy with cerebral palsy, aged 8, managed to relax his overactive body and to still his limbs when close to the pony. He has gained greater voluntary movement in one arm as he grooms and strokes the ponies;

a young autistic child, aged 4 would typically avoid both touch and speech, readily reached out to cuddle a miniature Shetland pony and is now calling out as he approaches;

a 16 year old with bipolar was able to start to make sense of his emotions and feel calmer after spending time with the ponies.



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EQUINE



TAKING THE REINS

Taking the Reins

Taking the Reins is a pioneering project, run by Circles Network, introducing Equine Facilitated Learning to assist a wide range of disabled and disadvantaged children and young people in the UK.

We have a very clear understanding about what helps and hinders people's personal development. There are many things that make a difference and by far the most important are:

Communication Relationships Self Worth

Equine Facilitated Learning (EFL) provides for giant leaps of progress in all three aspects and offers further opportunities over time.

Equine Facilitated Learning

Horses in their natural environment live together in a herd. They are prey animals and communicate through body language in an almost empathic way. Natural horse training methods, used by horse whisperers, use the horses own communication system to work in partnership with the horse for a greater level of understanding from both trainer and horse.



EFL uses these same methods with a trained horse which allows the person to build a relationship with the horse. Such effective communication offers positive rewards, enhancing self esteem and confidence.

An EFL session involves the person working with a horse or pony on the ground in a countryside environment, developing trust, leadership, communication and relationships. It takes place within a round pen or other safe area to provide an enclosed place where the person and their selected horse or pony can spend time working together and create a bond.

As individuals become more aware of their own feelings and energy levels, results can occur very quickly with the person acknowledging the importance of their body postures, gestures, breathing and voice. Once they can use these skills effectively the horse will respond accordingly and the possibilities for further developments increase.

For a child or young person who typically controls very little of their own environment EFL is very empowering. Self awareness and increased self worth quickly follow and the facilitator builds on this to develop further skills and qualities.

Taking the Reins aims to develop these skills and attributes in a person over a number of sessions in a totally person centred way.

**“
EFL can have
positive benefits
for just about
anyone!
”**

Everything we do from grooming to working in the round pen is a very rewarding experience for everyone involved.

At Taking the Reins we are specifically aiming to offer EFL to disabled and disadvantaged children and young people.

We have already seen positive results for children with Anorexia, Autism, ADHD, Attachment Disorder, Depression and other mental, emotional physical, sensory and learning difficulties.