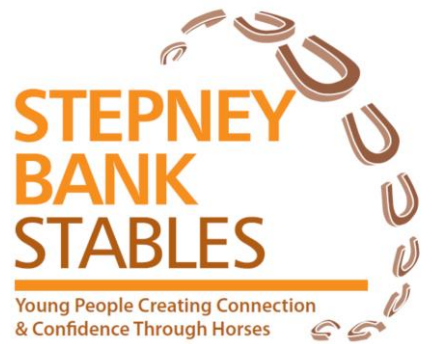




Stable Lives – enabling
young people to thrive.
A plan for 2025-2030

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – why we do what we do

Our Vision: All young people should have access to opportunities which enable them to discover their talents and interests.

Horses aren't for everyone, but everyone should have a chance to find out!

Our Mission: To bring joy and enhance the wellbeing and lasting life chances of young people through caring for and riding horses.

We provide young people with somewhere to go, something to do and someone to trust 363 days per year.

Legal Structure: Registered charity and not-for-profit company.

Location: Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Established: 1993 as part of Byker City Farm (now Ouseburn Farm).
Registered as a separate charity in January 2001.



*"The horses calm my
anger and make me
feel safe."*

Young person

Charitable Objectives:

- To support disadvantaged and at-risk youth
- To provide vocational training and life skills
- To promote mental wellbeing and social inclusion

Stepney Bank Stables (SBS) provides transformative opportunities to around 125 vulnerable young people per year through unique youth volunteering programmes. We offer life-changing access to horses, sports, cultural activities, accredited equestrian training, and positive adult role models.

The volunteering programmes are open to all 8–18-year-olds, promoting social mixing and creating space for unexpected and meaningful friendships to flourish through a shared passion for horses. We work in close partnership with schools and community organisations to reach those who need us most. Many of the young people we support are facing the challenges and compounding effects of **poverty, poor mental health, and neurodiversity.**

By taking part in our programmes young people gain confidence, build self-esteem, and develop the social skills needed to form lasting friendships and thrive in other areas of life. Some will stay with us throughout their childhood and teenage years, providing enormous scope to positively impact the trajectory of young lives.

We Believe where you grow up shouldn't decide your future.

In Newcastle, young people face some of the toughest challenges in the UK - from poverty to poor mental and physical health.

At Stepney Bank Stables, we work to change that by helping young people find their passion, build confidence, increase activity levels, and connect with positive role models through horses.

OVERVIEW - what we offer and who benefits

Stepney Bank Stables (SBS) offers a calm, safe, fun and friendly environment where the wellbeing of horses and humans is at the core of all we do.

Services Offered at SBS:

- Youth engagement and volunteering programmes
- Alternative education provision through equine-assisted learning (using the Changing Lives Through Horses syllabus)
- Adult volunteer opportunities
- Riding and horse care lessons for children and adults
- Equestrian examinations via BHS and Pony Club
- School holiday provision
- Community events and private facility hire

24 young people currently benefit from access to SBS's Alternative Provision offer – Changing Lives Through Horses (CLTH). Created by the British Horse Society, CLTH is mapped across the National Curriculum. It is complemented by the Equischolars curriculum which is a more therapeutic intervention.

Delivered in small groups with a ratio of 3 students to 1 coach; support is tailored to young people's needs and interests and is adapted according to how they present each day. Young people are referred via schools, Pupil Referral Units, Youth Justice workers, Mental Health Professionals and also self-refer.

Young people frequently move between accessing youth volunteer programmes, CLTH, commercial riding lessons and holidays provision. The range of services provided allows a variety of entry points and a tailored approach to meet young people's changing needs as they develop.

It currently costs £500,000 per year to operate. A broad range of income streams spreads financial risk and reduces pressure on horses.

A centre of excellence

SBS holds a 5-star license from the Local Authority - the highest possible award following independent assessment by a veterinary professional. SBS is also a British Horse Society (BHS) approved centre, undergoing rigorous independent inspections to ensure all staff are fully trained and qualified - including safeguarding and first aid - and that the horses and facilities meet the highest standards of care and safety.

SBS is a recognised Pony Club centre and a proud member of the Urban Equestrian Centre network. The charity has been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in recognition of its outstanding community impact.

Currently, SBS employs 16 members of staff, including seven former beneficiaries who have returned to contribute professionally. The organisation is further supported by 48 dedicated adult volunteers who play a vital role in delivering its programmes and benefit from being part of a supportive community where their time and talents are valued.

"I volunteer at SBS because I love being part of a community that makes such a difference to young people and horses. I'm always learning... and it's fun!"
Tracey G, adult volunteer for over 15 years.



Young volunteer and CLTH student April on her final day as she 'graduates' from CLTH. April heads to Northumberland college to continue her equestrian education in September.

Mum says *"Thank you for everything, CLTH helped her get through school knowing she had this to look forward to every week. She has learnt so much, you guys are amazing."*



A with Paddy at the BHS Riding School Championships where they placed 7th

Case study

A first came to Stepney Bank Stables at age 15, first as a rider and then as a participant in the Changing Lives Through Horses (CLTH) Programme. Due to a chaotic childhood, **A** had missed out on much of her formal education.

At SBS, **A** thrived. She showed remarkable maturity and enthusiasm, and despite initially lacking confidence in her ability to learn, she excelled in both theory and practical elements. Within a few months, she successfully passed her British Horse Society (BHS) Stage 1 Ride and Care exams.

A showed real promise and we were lucky enough to secure sponsorships to enable **A** to start a Grooms apprenticeship at SBS, allowing her to continue learning while earning a wage. By this point she was living independently so having a monthly income was vital.

Since starting the apprenticeship in January 2025, **A** has participated in a British Dressage programme, represented Stepney at the BHS Riding School Championships, received one-to-one tutoring in Maths and English, and has grown in confidence every day. She's made new friendships and travelled abroad. We're so proud to be able to offer these life-changing opportunities.

Who We Help

- Young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET)
- Those facing mental health struggles
- Young people living in poverty
- Neurodiverse young people



Leap of Faith on Summer residential.

"I learnt that I'm not afraid of heights as much as I think I am."

Teamwork and partnerships

We partner with schools, social services, local businesses, charities, colleges, and more to reach those who need us most, share resources and information and keep improving what we offer.

"All the staff go over and beyond for our students. Supporting them to develop confidence and self-esteem. Encouraging them to believe in themselves. Our students struggle with their emotions and through attending sessions at Stepney they have been able to develop skills managing their emotions and channeling it into their work with the horses."

Teacher at Southlands School



CLTH students working with Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Wild Roots Community Garden and Ouseburn Trust to create community compost bays (and having a blast).

What makes Stepney Bank Stables different?

Stepney Bank Stables isn't just a place to ride — it's a place to thrive.

- Newcastle's only charity working with horses to transform young lives
- A unique urban stable right in the heart of the city's most deprived area
- A proven track record changing lives for over 30 years
- A passionate team - many with relevant lived experience - dedicated to supporting young people
- A rare mix of charity and commercial riding that serves everyone

"I just wanted to share how amazing Stepney Bank's CLTH programme has been for my daughter! She spends half a day each week there, and it has been a game changer for her. From riding to helping out in the stables, she's gained a real sense of achievement from her experiences. Every visit fills her with joy and a sense of responsibility and purpose.

*What I appreciate most is how welcoming the fantastic team at Stepney Bank are. They've created such a warm and inclusive environment that truly makes everyone feel like part of the community. Because of this positive atmosphere, **she just hit 100% attendance at school for the first time since 2018!** It's like a whole new world has opened up for her, and I know Stepney has played a huge role in that.*

A massive shoutout to the wonderful staff for making such a difference in her life! Thank you, Stepney Bank!"

A grateful parent

OUR PLAN for 2025-2030

Our plans for development and growth

1

Grow CLTH

Increase the number of sessions provided per week by 100%

2

Expand the youth offer

Work with partners to create a wider non-equestrian offer to broaden opportunities for young people

3

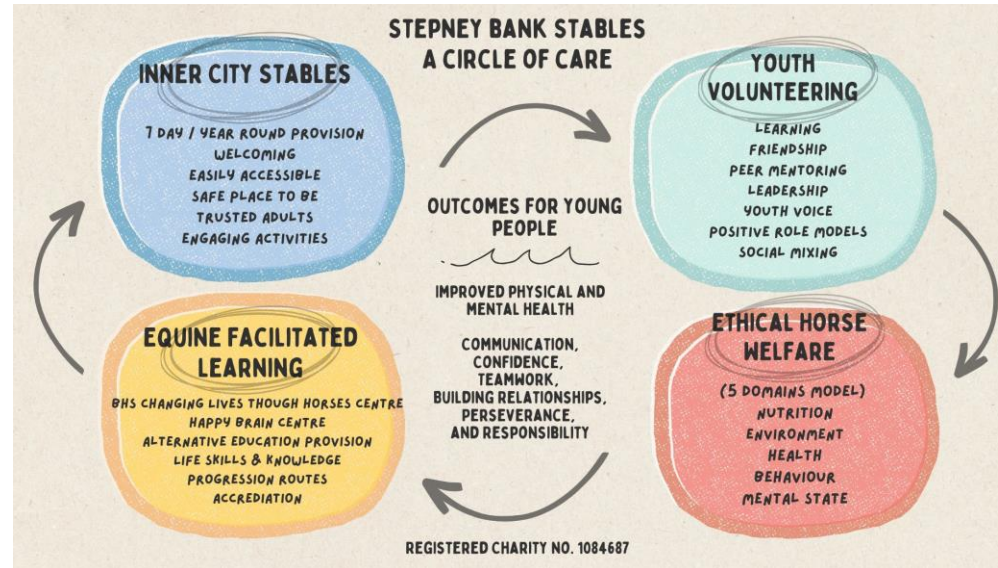
Reach new audiences

Work with partners to offer unique events and experiences at Top Yard which bring new people in.

4

Develop the role of adult volunteers

Involve adult volunteers in new initiatives such as heritage tours and events.



We are incredibly proud of the outcomes that we achieve with and for young people. The world is changing fast and, if we want to continue to support young people for a further 30 years, SBS needs to continue to **adapt and evolve**. To achieve our targets, we need investment in key areas.

New staff hires - £216,000 to provide resource in the areas of CLTH growth, volunteer training and support, events and hire, fundraising and marketing.

IT review and ongoing costs - £35,000 to ensure we're making the best use of technology.

Capital investment - £112,000 to improve facilities

PARTNERSHIPS

Our key Ouseburn partnerships: Ouseburn Trust, Seven Stories, Ouseburn Farm, Wild Roots Community Garden, Smile for Life, Gingerinos, Collie Makes Coffee. **Area for development – local makers and artists**

Our key local partnerships: Hotspur Primary, Byker Primary, Christchurch Primary, Southlands school, Bridges School, Trinity School, Byker Community Trust, Byker Children and Young People Partnership, Northumberland Wildlife Trust, NE Youth. **Area for development – The Lighthouse Project, Newbridge Street Project**

Our key national partnerships: British Horse Society, Pony Club, British Equestrian, Urban Equestrian centre network. **Area for development – Association of British Riding Schools (ABRS)**

New posts

In order to achieve our vision for 2025-2030 more staffing resource is required.

CLTH Growth – A new CLTH Development Manager post would enable enhanced communications between SBS and schools, ensuring that student's progress and achievements are reported back in full each half term and any issues dealt with efficiently.

So often, parents and carers of CLTH students have had to deal with a significant amount of negative feedback from professionals about their children. This can have a profound negative impact on relationships. This new role will enable SBS to keep parents regularly informed of young people's successes and triumphs so that they can also celebrate success with the young people. We know from experience that this can be game changing for young people's home lives and deepens the impact SBS makes.

The new role will provide direct line management to the delivery team. The appointee will take over from a member of the delivery team as the second Designated Safeguarding Lead and will deal with any safeguarding issues when the Centre Manager isn't available, as well as ensuring all schools are provided with the safeguarding compliance documents and declarations required.



Children from Byker Primary School meet Colorado and Katie on a visit to SBS. Photo credit Adam Fanthope/British Equestrian

The new role will enable pro-active marketing to schools with the appointee able to travel to meet staff and students to get engagement (potentially with a pony). The appointee would also lead on developing learning resources and the learning spaces to ensure that they are of the highest possible quality and supporting the delivery team to address any engagement or behaviour challenges with individual students. The appointee will hold a relevant degree, have experience working with SEN young people and be a passionate advocate of young people.

Bring in new audiences – A new Centre Lead post will add resource at senior level, ensuring that there is consistent cover from a senior manager across SBS opening hours. The Centre Lead will be responsible for the continued development of the top yard site to bring in income through paid events and/or hire, to bring in new riding clients and beneficiaries through free to access events and to ensure the balance of charitable and commercial usage. They will work with the Operations Manager to provide excellent customer care to our commercial riders, ensuring that their experience is a consistently positive one and that they spread the word to others. They will recruit and train volunteers to support with non-equestrian activities such as reception cover, planning and running events and maintenance of facilities.



Meeting a racehorse at SBS as part of National Racehorse Week

Maximise grant and donation income – A new Business Development Assistant post will support fundraising efforts through the gathering and analysis of impact data and evidence of need. This will support both bid writing and reporting and the development of fundraising campaigns. They'll work with the Center Manager to create communications with previous and current donors that keep them engaged and encourage repeat and regular donations.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS – how we tell the Stepney story

Our Brand Values: Inclusive, therapeutic, educational, community-focused marketing channels:

- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn)
- Website
- Local press
- Community events including free to access open days
- Partnerships with schools and youth services
- Partnerships and collaborations with local businesses
- External and internal displays
- Stepney Western national and international tour

Our Engagement Strategy:

- Showcase success stories
- Encourage community involvement and donations
- Highlight volunteer opportunities
- Showcase horse welfare standards
- **Capture the joy!**



Case study

E was first introduced to SBS by her Youth Justice worker after being involved in newsworthy offending behaviour. She came with many pages of risk assessment but presented as an incredibly underconfident, vulnerable 14 year old.

On her first visit she was reluctant to get close to the ponies and had to be persuaded to stroke one of the smaller ponies. On her second visit she was persuaded to try riding and from there she was hooked. She was enrolled on the Changing Lives Through Horses program five days a week with her education worker coming to SBS to provide additional Maths and English tutoring. Within a few months of her attending SBS she'd made enough progress for many of the risk assessment stipulations to be withdrawn and for social services contact with the family to be removed. The police were no longer at the door each night.

E caught the attention of film maker Harry Lawson because of her humour and fierce personality and became the star of Stepney Western, a 40 minute film capturing the lives of a group of young people at SBS through a Western lens. This was hugely empowering for E and has brought with it opportunities to talk on various stages about her involvement in the film. She recently read aloud a long piece of academic writing about the film in front of a large audience – a feat for anyone but especially for someone with no secondary education!

E successfully applied to Northumberland College to study for a Level 1 in horse care but only managed to attend for 2 weeks. The travel and formal classroom settings proved too great a barrier. She is however still engaged in filming work with Harry which includes a new film and an opportunity to travel to a film festival in France. We are currently sorting out a passport!

E has experienced interventions from social, education and youth justice services within her 17 years of life at a significant cost to the taxpayer. The one that was most successful, and probably the lowest cost by a considerable margin, was SBS.

Youth Voice and Impact Measurement

We are committed to ensuring that young people shape provision through meaningful engagement. We run a weekly youth committee and regularly survey young people and parents, shaping the provision according to their responses.

Young volunteers rated how much their experience helped their personal development (scale 0-10, 24 responses):

- **Communication:** 88% excellent, 12% good
- **Confidence:** 83% excellent, 12% good, 4% slight improvement
- **Relationships:** 83% excellent, 12% good, 4% slight improvement
- **Teamwork:** 83% excellent, 17% good
- **Responsibility:** 79% excellent, 21% good
- **Perseverance:** 71% excellent, 25% good, 4% slight improvement

New friendships made: 69% yes, 31% no

Overall: 81% of responses were rated 7-10 (excellent), 17% rated 4-6 (good), and 2% slight or no impact.

As a result of the friendship result (which surprised us) we have increased the number of social and team building events we put on. We also discussed with young people what they consider to constitute a friend.

I started at Stepney in 2016 and I wouldn't be where I am today without them. I have grown in confidence through the encouragement of the lovely team I was able to achieve things I thought I never would.

I met so many wonderful people who are now very loved friends of mine. I met some amazing horses along the way who have helped me in their unique ways.

Stepney will always hold a special place in my heart because it has opened new doors for me and gave me a head start in life. Never forget the place you grow up!!"

Key metrics for ongoing evaluation:

- Number of young people engaged annually
- Qualifications and positive outcomes achieved
- Mental health and wellbeing improvements
- Number of adult volunteers engaged
- Number of volunteer hours (adults and young people)
- Number of attendees at open days
- Number of attendees through school visits

Data is collected via: Beneficiary surveys - Partner testimonials
Case studies - Sign in app - Volunteer app (from 2026)



Pony Prom! a result of young people saying they didn't feel comfortable attending traditional school prom but still wanted to dress up and celebrate.

Case Study

Adam Short first came to Stepney Bank Stables (SBS) at the age of 7. Growing up in Newcastle with no family background in horses, SBS gave him the chance to discover a passion and natural talent for riding. He took part in our programs for both younger children (8–11) and teens (12–18), spending much of his spare time at the stables.

Thanks to SBS staff and their connections, Adam progressed to riding more advanced horses and began competing at local events. After completing a year studying at Newcastle University, he realised academia wasn't for him. Seizing an unexpected opportunity, Adam applied for and secured a job with international event rider William Fox-Pitt. This role allowed him to travel the world, gaining invaluable experience in top-level equestrian sport.

Adam then moved on to become Head Travelling Groom for Tom McEwen, the current world number one event rider. He was part of the equine support team at the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

Now living and working at the prestigious Gatcombe Estate—rubbing shoulders with royalty—Adam remains deeply connected to his roots. As Patron of Stepney Bank Stables, he plays a vital role in raising awareness of our work and inspiring the next generation of young people.

Top right : Adam as a child at a competition with SBS pony Pedro

Bottom right : Adam at the Paris Olympics with JL Dublin



Risk Management

- Key Risks:
 - Safeguarding vulnerable young people
 - H&S incidents
 - Funding shortfalls
 - Staff/volunteer turnover
 - Horse welfare
- Mitigation Strategies:
 - A positive culture where young people feel safe to confide in staff, knowing that they will be taken seriously and supported.
 - Staff and volunteers who are confident in the appropriate procedures to follow and are well supported by their line managers.
 - A commitment to reflection and learning from incidents so that incidents do not become accidents.
 - A commitment to ongoing staff and volunteer training and development.
 - An organisational culture which celebrates each individual's unique strengths and talents and where successes are celebrated. This ensures that everyone feels valued and a sense of belonging to a team working towards a shared goal.
 - Build reserve fund to provide resilience in lean times.
 - Create strong partnerships and diversified funding streams.
 - Have a 'horse first' approach.
 - Bring in support from leading welfare experts (SBS has recently been selected as one of 6 pilot centres as part of the ABRS Riding School Futures program to receive a year of coaching and development from top industry experts).

Controlled Access – a risk mitigation case study

A staff safety survey was carried out in the spring of 2025 alongside discussions with young people about how safe they feel at the stables. This highlighted a sense of unease from both groups about issues relating to public access to the building. Whilst access to the stable yard has always been managed through a door code, access to the upstairs areas has been open to anyone. In response to these concerns a controlled access system has been installed. This gives staff much better oversight of who is where in the building and prevents anyone accessing beyond reception unless permitted by staff. We have plans to further develop this system as part of capital investment in the reception area to further improve oversight of who enters and leaves the building. Feedback from staff and volunteers has been positive.



When raft building goes wrong! A young person on our summer 2025 residential learning how to take and manage risks appropriately.

Governance

Board of Trustees: Professionals in education, HR, finance, digital, fundraising and equestrianism. Area for development: Comms and Marketing

“As a trustee of Stepney Bank Stables, I’m passionate about this charity that focuses on something I care deeply about: supporting young people in a unique and creative way. It's a meaningful way for me to give back to the community, helping to create a safe, positive environment where children and teens can grow in confidence, learn responsibility, and develop compassion through their connection with animals. Being part of a dedicated board gives me a sense of purpose, builds my own skills, and connects me with others who share my values. It's incredibly rewarding to witness the transformation that happens when young people find strength, joy, and healing through horses.” Lewis Turnbull, Trustee/Director

- Annual Review Process
- Annual returns to Companies House, Charity Commission
- Compliance: Charity Commission regulations, safeguarding policies, GDPR

Youth Committee meetings



A child meets Dream the Shetland Pony in the Pony Barn

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Appendix A – Our Plan

Objective	Goal	Strategy	Measure	Timeframe
Provide an Alternative Education offer which improves young people's confidence with learning, raises self-esteem and supports young people to successfully transition into further education, training or employment.	Double the engagement in our CLTH programme from 24 to 50 young people per half term by Sept 2026. Broaden the offer to include employability skills for other sectors (hospitality, horticulture etc.)	Promote CLTH through social media channels, events and the press. Become an 'Approved Provider' for NCC. Work with local partners plus the racing colleges, equine colleges and local equine businesses to support young people to explore career options.	Registration forms. Young people's feedback and reflections in their learning journals. Follow ups to gather next step information.	Build numbers over 2025-26 Diversify offer by 2027
Provide a year-round, engaging program of volunteering, equestrian, culture and sport-based activities for 8-18 year olds outside of school hours.	To protect current levels of provision, consistently offering in person opportunities for 18 8–11-year-olds per week and 72 12-18 year olds per week. Create a digital offer for young people who are waiting to join. Broaden the youth volunteer offer to include cultural and employability skills relevant to the local area.	Use grants and fundraising to support salary costs of youth workers who can train, support and supervise young people. Work with local businesses who offer employee volunteering to tap into expertise. Work with local partners in and around Ouseburn to offer a wider range of activities.	Use Volunteerpro to track physical attendance and engagement. Use Wix and social media insights to track digital engagement.	Volunteerpro in place by 2026 Digital offer by 2027
Maximise reach to serve the community with a focus on addressing barriers to engagement.	Bring new people in through an engaging and varied programme of paid and free events.	Use Top Yard for events and Heritage Tours which coincide with other Ouseburn events such as markets, Ouseburn festival and IWD. Work with Ouseburn partners to share audiences.	Visitor numbers	Heritage bid 2026 Top yard open by Christmas 2025
Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities to local adults.	Increase the number of engaged adults from 48 to 60.	Widen the volunteer offer to include office, admin and DIY roles.	Data from Volunteerpro	By 2028
Ensure long term viability through excellent financial management.	Build reserves to 3 months + running costs to ensure resilience.	Grow donor base and keep current donors engaged through regular, impactful communications. Diversify income streams to include a shop, regular events and creative use of space.	Management accounts	Stabilise reserves by 2026

