From the Horse's Mouth

The Steering Group of The Human Equine Interaction Register (HEIR) are keen to make sure that everyone with an interest in Equine Assisted Services is kept up to date about developments with both the Register and the Sector. Please feel free to share this newsletter and stay up to date by visiting the Facebook page **@HEIRUKHETI**

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HEIR Continues to Raise Awareness of the EAS Sector

Horse and Hound has been regularly checking in with the progress of the Register and has featured several articles. It is important that the equestrian world at large knows about and understand the benefits that horses can bring. In particular, some horses are better suited to this type of activity than other disciplines and it may prove beneficial for the horse to participate in this powerful partnership. Horse and Hound recently featured a full feature about the benefits and HEIR was cited and quoted in the piece.

EAS Partnership is Set to Become CiC

The Charity Commission decided not to approve the application to establish the Equine Assisted Services Partnership as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

The Steering Group held a Planning Day in August and discussed several options for the best way forwards and has agreed to work towards establishing the Equine Assisted Partnership in the UK as a Community Interest Company (CiC).

This will be the right framework, as it will provide similar benefits to a charity in that it would allow us to function as a non-profit, limited by guarantee, company which is still able to attract some grant and charity funding.

The constitution will remain true to the purpose and benefits that were consulted about last year.

Over the summer, we have been working to establish this method of obtaining transparent governance with members' involvement. Once we have undertaken the necessities such as a bank account, insurance, new website to host the Register etc. there will be an open process to appoint some new directors to the EAS Partnership CIC board. This process will involve the membership in an inclusive and democratic way.

Further details will be communicated in early 2024.

NEWS *Insider*

Equine therapy field growing as more people see horses' benefits

Horses are helping people with mental health issues, dementia and terminal illness, and more are being referred for therapy by health professionals

By BECKY MURRAY

THE equine-assisted therapy field is continuing to grow as more people see the benefits horses can offer.

Dementia, mental health and terminal illness are some areas in which equine-assisted therapy is proving beneficial, and providers are reporting an increase in patients referred by social prescribing (when health professionals refer patients to community support).

The Way of the Horse, founded by Dina Shale, treats children and adults for conditions such as stress, anxiety and trauma – including those who come to her via social prescribing. The business also offers training courses on delivering equine therapy.

"We're seeing the industry grow, especially with people who are not horsey. Most of the people that come to us have never been around horses but they are looking for an answer and we have the solution," Ms Shale told *H&H*.

"Our programmes are "trauma-informed", so it's teaching people to develop and understand their bodies. We use horses to demonstrate the fight and flight mechanism and we help people to understand what stress is and how it manifests in the body.

"Our bodies do the same sort of thing as horses' do when they are scared of things, when we feel fear, we respond either by going into fight or flight. When you understand the basics of the science be ind what is happening in your body when you feel anxious or stressed, you have a chance to calm that nervous system and the tools to regulate it."

Grace Olson of Heaven Stone Healing provides equine-assisted therapy to people with terminal illnesses, and has had clients referred via social prescribing. She told *H&H* the equine-assisted therapy industry is "talked about more".

"My therapy focuses on helping these people j art to find inner peace so that they can cope with things like their hospital appointments. Sometimes in sessions all a person wants to do is just stand with a horse, and that's enough for them," she said.

> *"It's a chance to show that horses are for everyone"*
> GRACE OLSON

"Horses have a lot more to offer than we were aware of. I personally feel the vibration of a horse is just naturally healing."

Ms Olson was involved in organising a class at Naston Show on 30 July to celebrate therapy equines. People who could not attend could enter online, and a marquee displayed pictures of the horses and information about them.

"We wanted to celebrate equines as therapists," she said. "If someone had had physical, mental or emotional therapy from any equine, whether they owned the animal or it was at a centre, they could enter.

"The public could meet the horses and handlers and find out how to access this type of help. It's a chance to show that anyone can access horses, even if visiting a equine centre. Horses are for everyone."

A Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) spokesman told *H&H* the charity now has 50 groups offering "tea with a pony" sessions for those living with dementia.

"This started in 2016 at Cotswold RDA, which had become aware of the increasing number of people living in their com munity with a range of life-changing conditions, particularly dementia, and for whom riding was not suitable but who might be helped by some other form of animal-assisted therapy involving horses," said the spokesman.

"Other RDA groups run specialist hippotherapy sessions, and increasingly we are seeing a rise in social prescribing for people with emotional, behavioural or mental health conditions."

The Human Equine Interaction Register (HEIR), of practitioners offering equine-assisted therapy, celebrated its first anniversary in March and has more than 50 providers signed up.

HEIR UK project manager Anna Collins told *H&H* people are "seeing the value of the register".

"The sector is understanding that it needs to be credible. Some people might think that equine-assisted services are a bit quirky, but they're having positive health and wellbeing outcomes for the people benefiting from them," she said.

"There's a whole spectrum of therapeutic equine services, from Godolphin taking former racehorses into care homes, to horses being used to support military veterans, or people with physical mobility problems. It's huge and it's growing.

"We held an event in March to celebrate our anniversary and we had more than 150 people attend from across the industry, including the Princess Royal, and it shows the attention the sector is getting."

MEETING STANDARDS

MS COLLINS added that the organisation has been "delighted" with the applications it has received to the register.

"We're working on the basis that if people don't meet the standards we will advise them how to do so, rather than just say you're not in," she said.

"The most common things that people need support with are making sure they have a safeguarding policy – or that they're insured. We'll look at their insurance policies and say, 'You're not really covered here for what you're doing', and it's quite a shock for them.

"I think it's been really good because collectively everybody's learned that in some areas there may be a few weaknesses, and that's why the register is needed. It's all helping raise the standard."

The equine-assisted therapy industry continues to grow

Godolphin

Save The Date

14th February 2024

Godolphin have kindly agreed to sponsor an event for the EAS sector to be held at Hartpury College. The agenda is being developed with the content being focused on providing additional support to the sector and sharing best practice. This will also be the inaugural AGM for the CiC.

Kindy supported by The Sir Peter O'Sullevan Trust