



The Horse Course

Evidence to date

March 2016

When talk-based provision does not work
– people are disengaged, disruptive or shut down –

we provide a new option: an action-based programme with impressive evidence of effectiveness

Multiple external studies backed by Universities and sector experts, findings:

- In Prisons: 27 % point reduction in reoffending in high risk violent young offenders; £8.30 return for every £1 spent in prisons (NPC & CLINKS, peer-reviewed by CSAAP, MoJ)
- Youth: 80% of young people reduced serious problem behaviours; 85% improved attendance and engagement at school; Anxiety reduced by 33% on average (CES)
- Drug & Alcohol: The majority moved from NOT making progress in treatment to engaged and moving forward in treatment (EDP Drug & Alcohol Service)

By referral from professionals in: Schools/PRUs, Social/Childrens Services, Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol, Offending & Victim Support



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Research & Evaluation: offenders

“TheHorseCourse exemplifies the right attitude and approach towards collecting and analysing data in order to test and demonstrate impact, as well as develop practice responsively.” James Noble, New Philanthropy Capital.

TheHorseCourse at HMP Portland: Interim Evaluation Findings 2012

Prof Rosie Meek, Criminology & Psychology Royal Holloway University

- Action-research project 2010-2013 with Prof Meek and Prof Hemmingway
- Development of defined programme, plus support materials
- Development of our THC Skills Star (correlates with multiple frameworks, *see page 8*)
- 74% decrease in adjudications (statistically significant)
- 72% decrease in negative behaviour reports
- 168% increase in positive behaviour reports
- positive qualitative data from participants and staff
- updated 2015

Criminology Dissertation, 2013

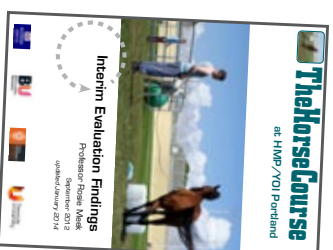
R. Thomas, BSc Applied Social Sciences (Criminology).

- A careful analysis of exit interviews with prisoner participants backs up our earlier interim evaluation report as well as teasing out further insights into the positive effects of the course and the mechanisms of change.

An Exploration of an Equine Facilitated Learning Intervention with Young Offenders 2014

(SOAN-1158R1), Hemmingway, Meek, Ellis-Hill

- peer reviewed academic journal
- examines our Observation Tool (used to track body language and behaviour change in our daily case notes)
- describes our non-verbal strategies to manage difficult behaviours and build positive behaviours



TheHorseCourse Evidence Review, working with offenders, 2015 published by New Philanthropy Capital & CLINKS

- disengaged/disruptive high risk violent young offenders
- Peer reviewed by the Ministry of Justice CSAAP panel
- **27 percentage point reduction in 12 month reoffending** among offenders v. OGRS 12 month predicted scores¹. This is a small sample (n=25), yet a statistically significant result. The MoJ expects a maximum shift of 10%²
- Theory of Change and Contribution Analysis
- Extensive literature review: the academic underpinning of our theory of change relies on the fields of criminology and desistance, learning theory, neuroscience and psychology as well as the emerging evidence around equine-assisted practice
- Triangulated evidence indicates the 8 core skills on THC Skills Star are improved
- Triangulated evidence indicates four intermediate outcomes:
 1. greater engagement with training & work
 2. reduced problem behaviours
 3. improved relationships with peers, family, professionals
 4. improved identity (self belief, hope, agency)
- **100%** completion rate amongst offenders, many of whom had been excluded or removed from accredited courses
- **100%** of participants achieved Parelli Level 1 following external assessment
- every **£1 spent** on our work with young offenders produced a **saving of £8.30³**
- **costs 50% less** than comparable interventions

£8.30 return for every £1 spent



1 OGRS has good predictive validity for both general and violent reoffending NOMS Segmentation: Necks and Evidence 2012

2 Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending, Ministry of Justice 2013

3 Conservative estimate by NPC based on 1yr prison-cost only.

“I’ve been on anger management courses, alcohol courses, things like that - this is much different, you’re learning it physical, not mental if you know what I mean. It’s helped me more, without a doubt. I don’t like talking... normally, with other courses you’re in a group of people... you have to talk about your issues and things like that, but here you get it out in a different way, you’re doing physical things not just talking. I’ve been doing that since I was 6 years of age and it’s never worked. I learnt a lot about myself. I can actually do things. I always say I can’t but I can.” Young offender

Research & Evaluation: youth

TheHorseCourse Youth Outcome Summary, 2015

supported by Charities Evaluation Service, Monument Trust and Children in Need

- A detailed study of 20 young people 10-17 years
- **100% completion rate** when 35% was expected by referrers
- 100% of participants achieved Parelli Level 1 following external assessment.

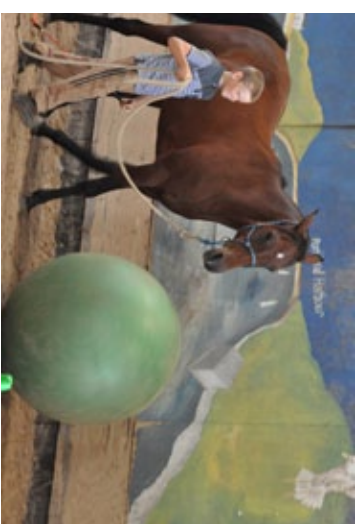
Target group

- At referral around 4 problems were reported for each child (average 4.2). The number of children with each problem is listed in the table below.

Of 20 young people, how many had each problem?			
Anxiety	11	ADHD (Hyperactivity)	3
Communication difficulties	10	Victim of Domestic Violence	2
Anger/aggression	9	Offending	2
Not attending school	9	Elective mute	2
Relationship difficulties	8	Attachment disorder	2
Lacking confidence	7	Depression / low mood	2
Mood Swings/Impulsivity	6	Risk Taking/Lack of boundaries	2
OCD	4	Self Harm	2
ASD (Autistic spectrum)	4	Anorexia	1

- The majority of children referred to us were **involved with 2/3 services** (2.5 on average) at the time of referral, and were considered to be the hardest to help because they were 'stuck' or disengaged. Spread as follows:

Services involved	Number of services involved	Number of young people
CAMHS, Mosaic Bereavement Services, Waves Domestic Violence Services, Pupil Referral Centre, Educational Psychologist, Troubled families, Behaviour Support, Children out of School, Children's Services, Shadows, Police, YISP, Adoption Services, Alternative Learning	1	⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗
	2	⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗
	3	⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗⊗
	4	⊗
	5	
	6	⊗



Outcomes reported by referrers in detailed follow up 2 months post-course:

- 29% average gain across **eight core skills** on our TheHorseCourse Skills Star.

Calmness	Assertiveness
Focus and perseverance	Realistic planning
Taking responsibility	Communication
Empathy	Engagement/ Learning
- 80% showed reduced **problem behaviours** such as offending, eating disorders, self harm (45% strongly)
- 95% made positive changes in **identity**, such as improved self esteem and confidence (45% strongly)
- 85% increased **attendance / engagement with education** (35% strongly)
- 80% improved **relationships** with peers, family members and professionals (45% strongly)
- 80% of referrers attribute improvements to TheHorseCourse (55% strongly)
- Detailed interviews with referrers, participants and family members strengthen the case that TheHorseCourse ReStart delivers 8 core skills and leads to 4 intermediate outcomes which have a proven impact on life chances.

Our ongoing data collection / analysis shows we are maintaining these outcomes with larger data sets.

"He used to shout and punch walls, now he goes for a run to calm down. This is huge." parent

Research & Evaluation: drug & alcohol misuse

Moving Forward in Recovery, Summer/Autumn 2015

EDP Drug & Alcohol Services and TheHorseCourse Pilot

The aim of the pilot was to monitor the effectiveness of

TheHorseCourse as a tool to re-engage people with treatment at EDP Drug & Alcohol Service and move them forward in their recovery journey away from problematic alcohol or drug use.

Target Group

Twelve people were selected for the pilot who EDP identified as:

- those who are difficult to engage
- those who are making very little progress in their recovery
- those who have been through treatment on numerous occasions without being able to maintain abstinence for any significant length of time.

One was unable to participate (taken into custody for a previous offence), making the pilot group eleven.

Those taking part in the pilot were a mixture of opiate and non-opiate users with varying lengths of dependency. The pilot was not about the severity of their use but about their progress in recovery.

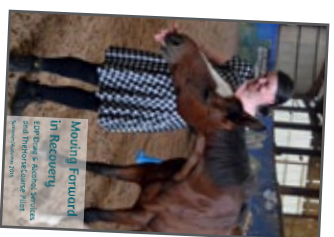
The programme was offered to both men and women.

TheHorseCourse engagement and retention

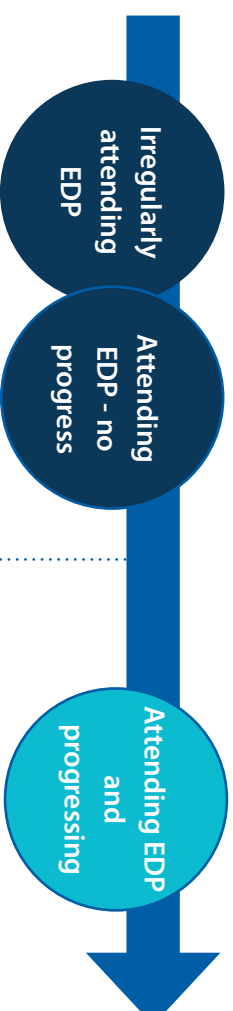
In a population targeted for lack of engagement and attendance, only 1 participant dropped out part way through. However, his case study suggests that he still benefited from the course.

Feelings of success

All ten who completed the programme passed Parrelli Natural Horsemanship Level 1, externally video-assessed in the USA - a significant achievement.



The Recovery Journey



Implications of addiction plus cost of services means high cost to society

progress in recovery means reduced cost to society

Before TheHorseCourse



After TheHorseCourse (2 months post)



* Each star represents one of the eleven people in the study, showing their progress on the recovery journey from before the course to 2 months post-course.

Research & Evaluation: ongoing

TheHorseCourse with Learning Disabilities Study, 2014

Dr J Scheiner, Goodmayes Hospital, London.

- **NHS-commissioned study**
- patients (including personality disorders)
- peer reviewed paper is in progress

Current research

With **Bournemouth University** we are in progress with two pieces of research:

100 person quantitative and qualitative Youth study 2015-16

Professor Ann Hemingway, Public Health

- young people suffering education exclusion with a range of mental health and behavioural problems
- 12 month repeat follow up by external academic:
 - repeat scores on THC Skills Star
 - support staff and participant perspectives
 - detailed case studies
 - attendance/exclusion and attainment data
- treatment as usual comparison group
- aiming to scope an RCT

Early data suggests that for a third of our community-based participants

TheHorseCourse is the “turning point” for them to engage fully in mainstream education, training or work. For others it enables them to better engage with specialist support. The result is reduced costs to social, criminal justice or mental health services.

Neuro-physiology study investigating the role of emotions in learning 2015-16

Professor Ann Hemingway (Public Health), Dr Sid Carter (Learning Disability)



In-house monitoring & benchmarking

- We collect before and after data on all participants (subject to consent)
- With our recent increase in service delivery (full time in Dorset and developing hubs elsewhere), we are now building substantial data sets for monitoring and evaluation and to ensure responsive programme development

The need we meet

We have begun research amongst our referral partners, asking what percentage of their caseload match our criteria: “**those who do not engage with talk-based support, or get “stuck” in treatment because talking isn’t helping**”. The responses so far from Schools, CAMHS, and specialists in Domestic Violence and Drug & Alcohol services show that **10-20% of their caseloads meet our criteria and are suffering an unmet need**. We plan to publish a detailed survey in 2016.



Dr Sid Carter testing equipment in a pilot (2015) which demonstrated that emotional responses persist from a session with horses in the arena into a later session in the laboratory watching the filmed arena session. A larger study is now underway, using much more sophisticated laboratory equipment to measure numerous responses which cannot be tracked through portable devices.

Recognition for research & evaluation

TheHorseCourse is founded on innovation and has taken the approach of testing and evidencing the impact of our innovation from day one. This is a costly and time-consuming approach, but the only one we feel is ethical or sustainable.

At the heart of all evidence scales is the weighing up of the value of outcome data, neatly encapsulated in a table taken from 'The Magenta Book' (HM Treasury's guidance for evaluation) and recommended for evaluation design by NSPCC.

<p>Low power Small number of observations and / or effect small relative to noise</p>	<p>Weak design Poor counterfactual or none at all</p> <p>Unlikely to detect difference between groups or over time. And even if we do, we have no confidence in attributing it to the programme.</p>	<p>Strong design Realistic counterfactual</p> <p>Unlikely to detect sufficient difference between groups (because a small effect size could be lost in the "noise").</p>
<p>High power Large number of observations and / or effect large relative to noise</p>	<p>Very likely to find a significant difference between groups but this does not mean it can be attributed to the programme.</p>	<p>Very likely to find a statistically significant difference.</p>

The proper route for innovation is to be subjected to exploratory studies with low numbers, building up to stronger study design and control groups (counterfactual). That we already have one high power, strong design study (peer reviewed) and multiple low power, weaker design studies within 5 years of inception is remarkable.

We do not suggest that our intervention is 'proven' at this point, but that it has demonstrated very promising results against multiple robust evidence scales. As was acknowledged in the Catch 22 *Realising Ambition* report - there is a real paucity of impact evidence for programmes in the youth interventions field - including very widely commissioned programmes. Both in youth work and in the field of equine-assisted practice, we stand out for our evidence and for the very difficult to reach populations we target.

Recognition

- Attained **Promising Intervention** on the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) evidence scale (peer reviewed by CSAAP MoJ)
- Attained level 2-3 on **Nesta's Standards of Evidence** scale
- Validated at level 2 on the **Project Oracle Evidence Scale**. "Very few youth organisations assemble such a range of high quality evidence about a programme's effectiveness."
- Described in a recent peer reviewed academic literature review as **one of the most prominent equine-assisted methodologies worldwide**. The review concludes that results are promising for at risk youth and that further research is required, particularly randomised controlled trials. *Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy with Children and Adolescents: An Update and Literature Review*, Jennifer A. Lentini & Michele S. Knox, *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, Routledge.
- Scored **78% 'fully met'** on the *CES Measuring Up Action Plan*, recommended by the Cabinet Office
- Invited to contribute to **NSPCC Evidence Hub 2015**
- **"Outstanding report, excellent evaluation tools"** **Children in Need, 2015**
- *"It is unusual for us to support work involved with animals. The fact that your application was so highly rated at peer/panel assessment, (one of the highest), speaks volumes for the importance of what you do. We are delighted to support you."* Paul Streets, Chief Executive of Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Selected for **School for Social Entrepreneurs** Scale Up programme
- Founder: speaks nationally/internationally on both outcome evaluation and equine-assisted practice; awarded **Winston Churchill / Prison Reform Trust** fellowship; engaged in **PhD in Applied Psychology**, Salomon Centre, Canterbury Christ Church University 2015 (part-time practice-based, to support ongoing research).

"Evidence to date indicates that TheHorseCourse provides a very promising range of benefits, particularly for people who are not able or willing to make progress in in conventional services. We are engaged with THC in a range of studies to measure efficacy and understand the change mechanisms"

Professor Ann Hemingway, Public Health, Bournemouth University



THE MONUMENT TRUST

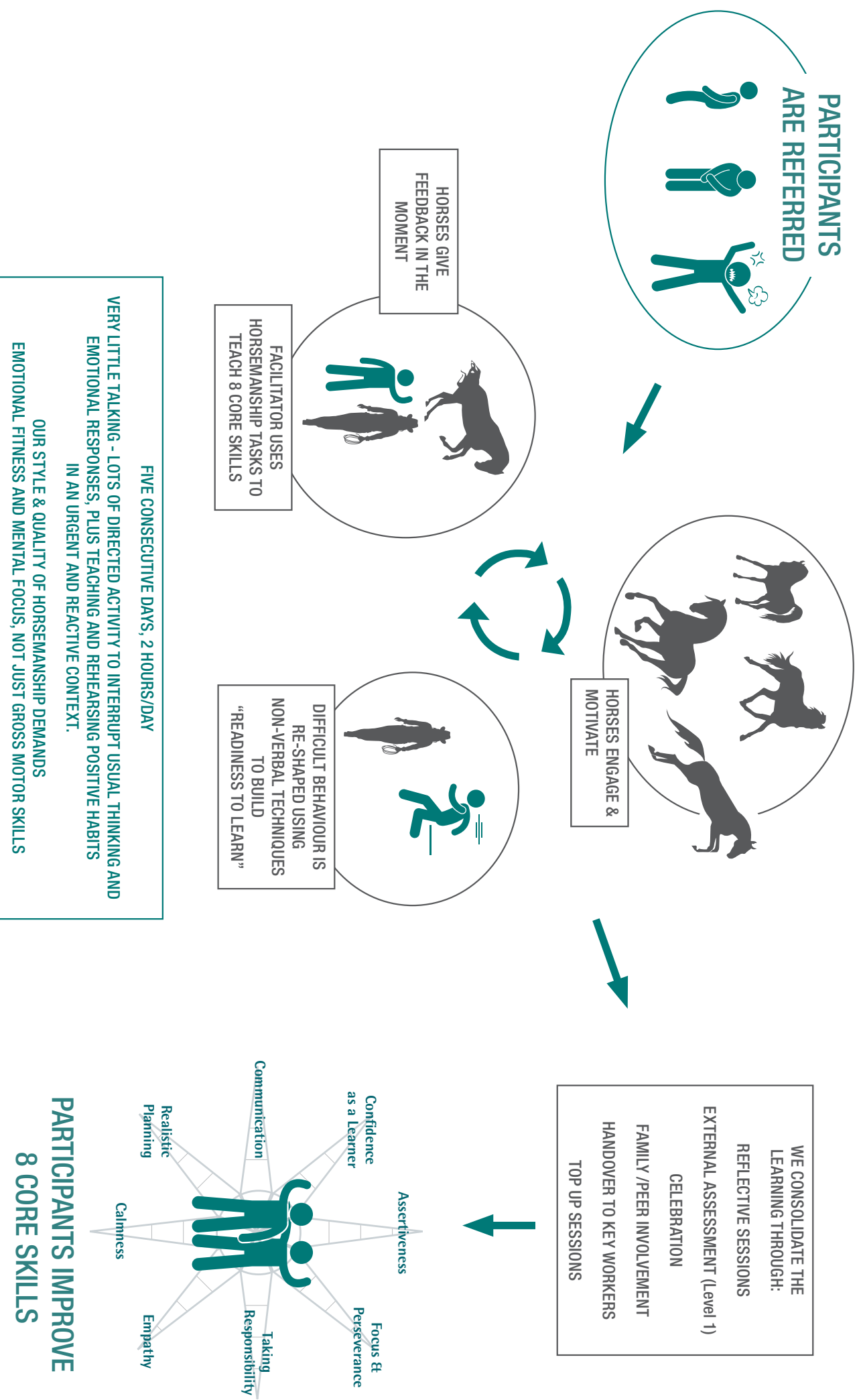


TheHorseCourse.org

Registered Charity No 1141654 Patrons Lord Knight of Weymouth Martin Clunes

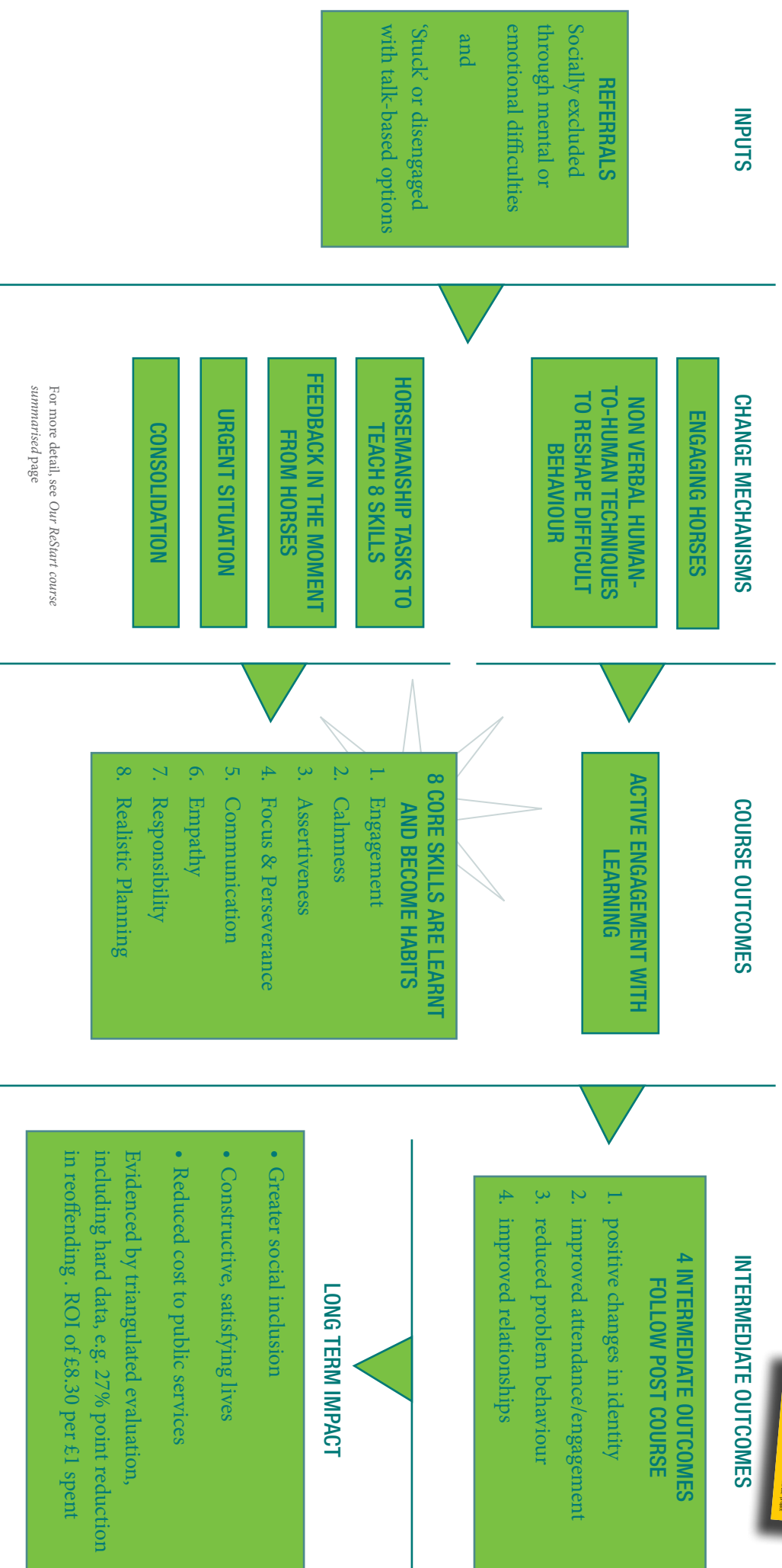
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Appendix A: Our ReStart intervention summarised



Appendix B: Our Theory of Change summarised

This is a summarised version of our theory of change which was developed as an **exemplar** within the New Philanthropy Capital/CLINKS project, *Improving your Evidence*, funded by The Ministry of Justice and peer reviewed by CSAAP, MoJ. To see the more detailed version, with a complete contribution analysis and extensive literature review, see www.thehorsecourse.org/docs/TheHorseCourse_Evidence_Review_2015_web.pdf (56pp).



"You have to make the horse feel safe. You learn self-discipline, and how to read body language so you understand. This course can make a proper angry person calm down a lot. You get less frustrated." Young offender

Appendix C: TheHorseCourse Skills Star explained

The skills we develop:

There is “no one single [emotional resilience] skill that acts as a silver bullet” to improving life outcomes, so in line with current thinking, our work focuses on developing 8 core skills:

- Calmness
- Focus and perseverance
- Taking responsibility
- Empathy
- Assertiveness
- Realistic planning
- Communication
- Engagement/Learning

The Star shown opposite is used at referral to ensure we target the right people, as a reflection tool with participants and for evaluation. It was developed within an action-research project 2011-13 with Bournemouth and Southampton Universities.

Mapping to other frameworks

These skills correlate with identified core skills from a range of frameworks including OASys for Offenders. The Young Foundation “clusters of capabilities”² (which predict life success), the Early Intervention Foundation “social and emotional learning skills”³ (which predict better outcomes in education, work, mental health and physical health). They also align with a number of Drug & Alcohol programmes and the Character Enquiry by Demos. For some participants success with us means they can then move into talk-based services and progress, for others our intervention is enough for them to begin to flourish in mainstream settings.

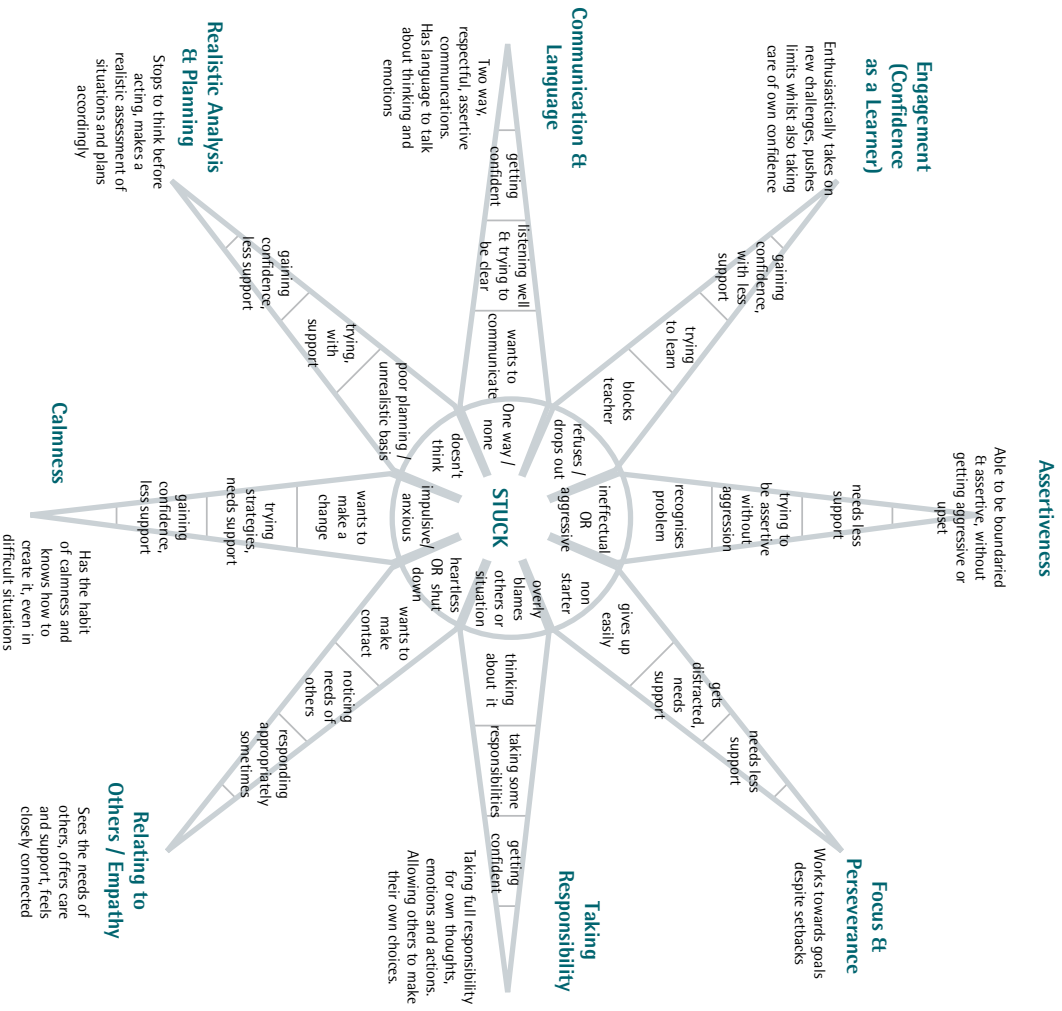
Intermediate outcomes

The academic literature indicates that the 8 outcomes above lead to the following four intermediate outcomes. Furthermore, our primary data supports this view:⁴

1. positive changes in identity
2. improved attendance/engagement
3. reduced problem behaviour
4. improved relationships

1. *Character and Resilience Manifesto 2014*, Paterson, Tyler and Lexmond
2. *A Framework of outcomes for young people 2012*, Bethia McNeil, Neil Reeder and Julia Rich
3. *Social and Emotional Learning: Skills for Life and Work 2015*, jointly commissioned by the Early Intervention Foundation, the Cabinet Office and the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission.
4. *TheHorseCourse Evidence Review, working with offenders 2015* published by New Phlanthropy Capital & CLINKS, www.thehorsecourse.org/docs/TheHorseCourse_Evidence_Review_2015_web.pdf

TheHorseCourse Skills Star



Our funders and supporters

“Tudor Trust supported TheHorseCourse as it is an innovative way to work with young people to address and change challenging behaviour... Trustees were particularly impressed with the evaluation supporting the approach and the frequent comments from professionals about seeing participants behaving differently.”

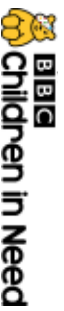
Eryl Foulkes, Grant Manager , Tudor Trust

“This was an outstanding report that clearly showed, across each of the three differences, the impact the project has made on the children and young people. The monitoring and evaluation tools are also excellent using a range of techniques to capture the outcomes.” Juliet Williams, BBC Children in Need

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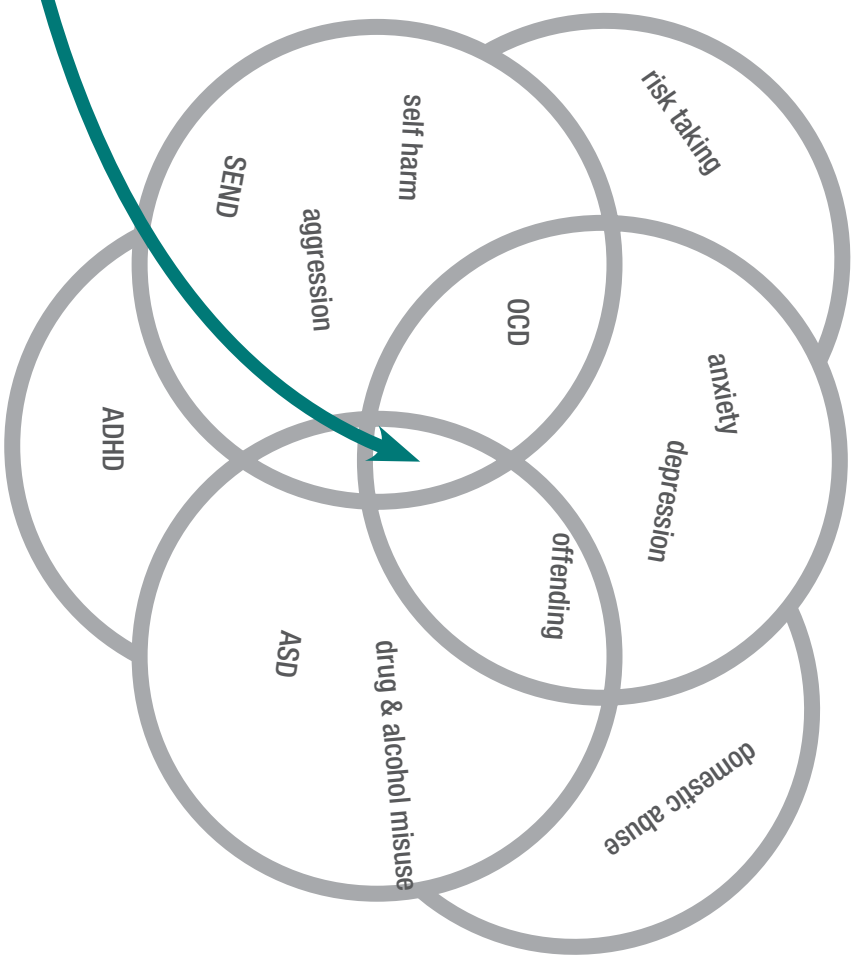


Needs: how our service is used in Dorset

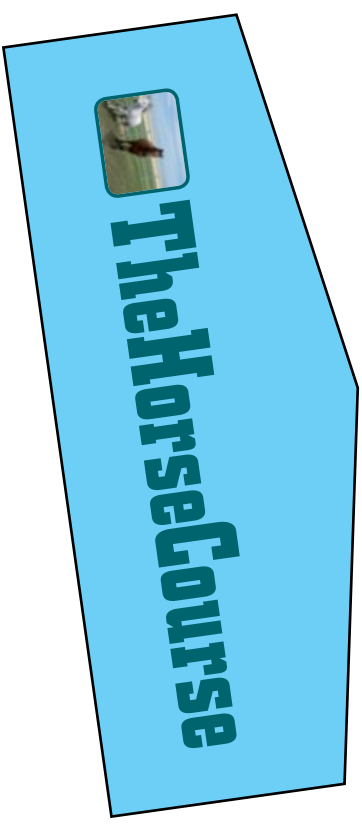
A great deal of support, mainly talk-based, is directed at social exclusion in all its presentations



But around 5% of people are non-responsive to talk-based support and interventions...¹



so, all of the agencies above refer those people to TheHorseCourse for 1:1 action-based interventions



¹ We have surveyed our referrers about their 'difficult to treat' case load