Autumn/Winter 2026

RIDE HIGH

Newsletter



It's been another busy and rewarding few months at Ride High, and this newsletter highlights just some of the wonderful things happening across our charity.

You'll read how Ride High is helping young people like Jayden find their voice and grow in confidence, and hear how our work makes a profound difference to their families too.

We've also been making improvements to our facilities, welcoming some adorable new four-legged friends, enjoying trips and activities with our members, and benefiting from the incredible generosity of our volunteers and supporters. And, of course, there's plenty to look forward to.

As we approach the festive period, our Big Give Christmas Challenge offers a wonderful opportunity to help more children benefit from Ride High. Any donation you're able to make during the campaign will be doubled. Please support us by donating anything you can.

Thank you, as always, for being part of the Ride High community. Wishing you a happy festive season.

Olivia Sugdon - CEO



Finding his voice

When Jayden, aged 14, was referred to Ride High by his school, he was experiencing significant anxiety and was barely attending school, with attendance at just 1.7%. He had become isolated at home and was initially too anxious to take up the offer of a place at Ride High.

When he finally joined, Jayden was extremely quiet and felt overwhelmed. He communicated mainly through nods and yes-or-no answers. However, as he began to feel more comfortable, we saw a remarkable change.

By his third session, Jayden started to open-up, chatting in full sentences with other children and sharing stories about his walks with the family dogs. His confidence around the horses grew too. He progressed to rising trot and impressed us all with his determination and by participating in activities he'd previously avoided, including picking out the horses' hooves.



Jayden finished his programme with us with a greater confidence, improved communication and a willingness to try new things. We hope this progress will help him take further steps towards learning and opportunities beyond Ride High.



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Help us give children a brighter start to 2027

This Christmas, help us change young lives by supporting Ride High's Big Give Christmas Challenge, running from 1–8 December.

Thanks to match funding from Niftylift, Cranswick Convenience Foods and a Big Give Champion, every donation made through our campaign page will be doubled! Together, we're aiming to raise £14,000 to help 47 children waiting for a place at Ride High benefit from our 12-week programme starting in January.

Please take a look at the campaign flyer inside to find out more and discover how you can donate.

Every gift makes a difference!

Christmas Challenge BigGive

What's new at Ride High





Meet our newest four-legged friends!

We've welcomed some very cute new arrivals to Ride High! Pygmy goats and Valais Blacknose sheep have joined us, thanks to a generous donation from Sarah Stoute of Keysoe International.

They've already made themselves very popular, with our members enjoying getting to know them, feeding them and giving them plenty of fuss. They've also been keeping our staff and volunteers entertained!

Their day-to-day care will also be supported by Aim High, our Alternative Education Provision for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Some children who attend Ride High may go on to Aim High, which offers a supportive, practical environment to gain qualifications, develop life skills, and build confidence for the future.

A fresh look for Ride High's changing room

Ride High's children's changing room has had a makeover, creating a more welcoming, practical and organised space for the young people who use it every day.

With more than 120 members visiting each week, making the best use of our facilities has never been more important. The refurbishment has improved storage, made better use of the available space and introduced a new sink, so children can wash their hands more easily after spending time with the horses.

The project led by our Volunteer Manager, Joanna, was made possible thanks to funding from Persimmon Homes and the Morrisons Foundation, alongside generous practical support from local businesses. Blum UK designed, built and installed the new cabinets and fittings, while Able Plumbing installed the sink and updated some of the existing plumbing.

Our volunteers also played an important part, sharing their knowledge of how the room is used, staining the new fittings and helping clean and reorganise the riding equipment. The result is a smarter, more efficient space that works better for children, staff and volunteers alike.

It's a wonderful example of what can be achieved when funders, businesses and volunteers come together to make a practical difference to children's everyday experiences at Ride High.

We are hugely grateful to everyone who helped bring the project to life.



Volunteer Spotlight

Jane has been volunteering at Ride High since 2021 and has become an invaluable part of our team, supporting us in so many different ways.

During a typical weekly volunteering session, Jane helps to ensure everything is ready for the children before they arrive. From helping them get changed and ensuring their riding helmets fit properly, to supporting them around the yard, leading ponies and offering encouragement, she's on hand to help every step of the way. Jane also helps in the office, supporting with important admin tasks that help keep Ride High running smoothly.

So, what does Jane enjoy most? Her weekly pony snuggle is definitely a highlight! But what she finds particularly rewarding is seeing children who may have experienced difficulties in their lives grow in confidence and blossom during their time at Ride High. She also loves the friendships she's built with staff and fellow volunteers along the way. We're incredibly grateful to Jane for everything she does. Her warmth, commitment and willingness to help wherever she's needed make her a very special part of the Ride High family. Thank you, Jane!





Golf day raises vital funds

Twenty teams joined us at Woburn Golf Club for Ride High's fifth annual Charity Golf Day, enjoying a fantastic day of golf, networking and fundraising in glorious sunshine. Held on the prestigious Marquess Course, the event included on-course competitions, a Q&A with internationally renowned golf coach Dan Grieve, a delicious dinner and a Live Auction. Congratulations to winners Slice and Dice, followed by dbstructural in second place and Boughton Loam (Bennie Group) in third.

A huge thank you to our sponsors - Tilt Insurance, Able Plumbing, Geoffrey Leaver, Leda Orthopaedics and Brioche Pasquier - alongside everyone who played, donated prizes and helped make the day such a success.

Save the date! The Ride High Charity Golf Day will be back at Woburn Golf Club on 7th October 2027.



A personal reminder of why it matters

On the evening of our Golf Day 14-year old Sam, a former Ride High member, spoke about the difference the charity made to him.

Having never ridden a horse before, Sam was excited to learn about riding and horse care, and found Ride High to be a safe, calm environment where he could build confidence at his own pace. He explained how focusing on the horses made meeting other young people feel more relaxed, helping him form friendships and socialise more confidently. Spending time with the horses also helped him feel calmer when things became overwhelming. Sam particularly enjoyed learning to tack up, riding, and taking part in Pony Camp and creative projects, including photography.

His experience has had such a positive impact on his family that two of his younger brothers are now also accessing Ride High. Sam is also taking his next steps by joining our volunteer training programme, he has also joined our Ride High Youth Panel.

His words were a powerful reminder that the support raised through events like this gives young people opportunities to build confidence, develop relationships and discover what they can achieve.

Discovering new skills and new experiences

Our Ride High members have enjoyed a fantastic range of trips, activities and new experiences, with plenty to look back on from the summer and lots happening in the Autumn term too!

Over the summer, visits to local businesses including Brioche Pasquier, Blum UK and Ken Hall shoe factory gave children the chance to explore different workplaces, discover new skills and learn about the world around them. They also enjoyed meeting former racehorses at Thoroughbred Dressage and a day out at Dunstable Downs.

Back at Ride High Equestrian Centre, a three-day Pony Camp and activity days gave members the opportunity to build on their riding and horse-care skills, make new friends and grow in confidence. We also welcomed new children and families through our Taster Days, offering them the chance to meet the team, find out more about Ride High and enjoy their first ride on a horse.

This term, our Active Adventures members enjoyed an inspiring online talk from adventurer and world record breaker Isaac Kenyon, while Cranswick Convenience Foods led a session on nutrition and healthy eating. We've also welcomed a yoga teacher to lead sessions with our members.

We held the first two meetings of our new Youth Panel, bringing together former Ride High members to share their experiences and help shape the future of our charity.

A huge thank you to everyone who helps make these experiences possible!









Taking the plunge for Ride High

In October, Janet and Adam, and Kelly and Dean, took on an incredible challenge in support of Ride High, completing a charity skydive at Hinton Skydiving Centre. Jumping from 12,000 feet into a beautiful, clear blue sky, the four fundraisers faced temperatures of a chilly -11°C as they took the plunge! We're hugely grateful to them all for their courage, enthusiasm and fundraising efforts, helping to support the children at Ride High. And if you fancy a challenge with a difference, we'll be running our charity skydive again in 2027.

Get in touch with us at events@ridehigh.org to find out more and register your interest.

A big thank you to our corporate volunteers

A huge thank you to the teams from John Lewis Magna Park, SIS.TV, Audi VW, Santander, Network Rail, FCDO and NHBC, who have joined us at Ride High for a volunteering day recently. Every team has been fantastic, bringing energy and enthusiasm to everything they've tackled – from painting and clearing to cleaning and general jobs around the site. It's been brilliant to see everyone roll up their sleeves and get stuck in!

Corporate volunteering is a brilliant way for businesses to support Ride High, giving teams a rewarding day together while making a practical contribution to our work.



Upcoming Events

Get your diary out! We've got a fantastic line-up of fundraising events coming up, and we'd love you to join.

MK Marathon Weekend

3rd May 2027 | Milton Keynes

Grab your running shoes and join the 'Ride High Runners' to take on the award winning MK Marathon or Half Marathon. Finishing at Stadium MK, you'll run through the streets of Milton Keynes with incredible support from spectators cheering you along the way.

7-A-Side Football Tournament

8th June 2027 | Sport Central, MK9 1EN

Gather your colleagues, lace up your boots and enter a team into our Charity Football Tournament. Finish the day with a delicious BBQ, licensed bar, prize giving, and goody bags. This event is open to all abilities and is the perfect opportunity to have fun and bond as a team.

Ride MK

27th June 2027 | Ride High, MK5 8EJ

Ride MK is returning to Milton Keynes, celebrating our city's love of cycling while raising vital funds for the children we support at Ride High. To mark the 60th anniversary of Milton Keynes, this year's event will feature a brand new route. This fundraising event welcomes riders of all ages and abilities to get involved.

To find out more or book now:
www.ridehigh.org/events
events@ridehigh.org

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Get ready for Christmas with Ride High

With Christmas just around the corner, we have some lovely Ride High cards and gifts to purchase! Send a little Ride High cheer with our Christmas cards, featuring a pack of 10 for £5, or pick up a Ride High Equestrian Centre calendar for £5, filled with beautiful photos of the horses.



We also have some gorgeous Christmas decorations inspired by Mulberry, our beautiful palomino Ride High horse.

Thanks to sponsors SIS and RB Equestrian, all profits from sales go directly to Ride High to support our work with children.

Scan the QR code to visit our website for more details and to find out how to place your order.

SCAN ME

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