

A lush green forest scene with tall trees and dense foliage. In the middle ground, there is a dark wooden shelter or gazebo. A large, thick log lies horizontally across the foreground. The ground is covered with a layer of light-colored mulch or small white flowers.

Impact Report

**1AUGUST 13 JULY 2025 – 30 JUNE
2026**

The Avon Centre

Registered Charity Number: 281648

The
AVON
— CENTRE —

Welcome to The Avon Centre's annual impact report. 2025-2026 has been an exciting time for the Centre in terms of development and growth. We were lucky enough to not only secure funding to renovate the downstairs of the building to make it accessible and future proof, but we were also able to successfully Crowd Fund to replace our indoor arena surface.

We were pleased to be supported by the Ovo foundation to help us implement a new activity stream of Nature based activities, and being the Community Causes for both Tesco and the Co-op has helped us to raise our profile within the wider community.

The management team would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff, volunteers and equines who have helped us make this amazing year happen. Here's to an equally successful 2026-2027.

- Claire Evans, Operations Manager

Impact at a Glance

Impact at a Glance 2025-26



The Avon Centre | Registered Charity 281648

Executive Summary

2025-26 was a year of growth, achievement and investment at The Avon Centre. Through therapeutic riding, equine-assisted activities, wellbeing programmes and community engagement, the Centre continued to transform lives while investing in improved accessibility and long-term sustainability. During the year:

- 4,003 therapeutic sessions were delivered.
- 174 participants were supported through Avon RDA.
- 81 new participants accessed services for the first time.
- 115 volunteers supported delivery.
- A major accessibility improvement project commenced.
- Riders achieved success at regional and national competitions.
- A new Nature Based Activities Provision was launched.

"4,003 therapeutic sessions delivered to 174 participants through the power of horses, nature and community."

Demand for services remains extremely strong, with 147 people currently waiting to access therapeutic activities, reinforcing the need for continued investment and expansion.

Avon RDA Group Impact

Avon RDA Group provided therapeutic riding and equine-assisted activities to 174 participants during 2025-26. Of these, 81 participants were new to the programme, demonstrating both strong demand and the charity's ability to welcome new beneficiaries while continuing support for existing participants.

The majority of participants were children and young people, with 107 participants aged 15 and under, representing 61% of all service users. Services were delivered to individuals across a wide age range, from young children through to older adults over the age of 75.

Participant Age Profile

The participant age profile demonstrates the breadth of Avon RDA's reach across the community.

New and Returning Participants

Of the 174 participants supported, 81 were new participants and 93 continued from previous years, creating a healthy balance of participant retention and growth.



Delivering Life-Changing Activities

Throughout the year, Avon RDA delivered a diverse programme of therapeutic, educational and competitive activities.



Activities included:

- Therapeutic Riding
- Horse Care
- Reflective and Wellbeing Sessions
- Mechanical Horse Training
- Dressage
- Show Jumping
- Endurance
- Countryside Challenge
- Endeavour Awards
- Proficiency Tests
- ASDAN Programmes
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- Regional and National Championship Participation

These activities enabled participants to improve confidence, communication, independence, physical wellbeing and social engagement in a safe and supportive environment.

Scale of Delivery

4,003 Therapeutic Sessions Delivered

The Avon Centre delivered 4,003 therapeutic riding and equine-assisted sessions throughout the academic year.

Sessions operated across eleven regular weekly session periods during term time, enabling participants to access consistent therapeutic support and opportunities for development.

This extensive delivery programme represents thousands of individual opportunities for participants to improve physical skills, emotional wellbeing and social confidence.



147 People Waiting for Support

Demand for our services continues to exceed current capacity. For every 100 participants currently supported, approximately 84 more people are waiting for a place.

Participant Growth and Demand



Therapy - Achievement - Fun

Demand Snapshot

- Current Participants: 174
- Waiting List: 147

This means there are almost as many people waiting for support as are currently accessing services, demonstrating the significant unmet demand that exists across the region.

The high proportion of new participants alongside a substantial waiting list indicates both the continuing relevance of the Centre's services and the need for future capacity growth.

Achievement and Success

The Avon Centre continued to support riders in achieving personal and competitive goals.

Highlights included:

- Participation in in-house dressage competitions.
- Participation in in-house show jumping competitions
- Giving participants the opportunity to complete endurance tests.
- Qualification for Riding for the Disabled Association National Championships.
- Success in virtual championships and skill-based competitions.
- Delivery of proficiency tests and personal development awards.



The Centre also hosted regional competitions, welcoming participants from neighbouring RDA groups and strengthening the wider Disabled riding community.

"FYI after the show jumping I noticed a change in L immediately - a lightness a sort of joy - it lasted for at least 24 hours ... I don't see that very much. L doesn't experience that same amount of support and success anywhere else... school are amazing, but you and the whole Avon crew bring her a missing dimension. She meets milestones that are really meaningful to her and I see that it heals her in a way other things don't.

It's huge, you are a big part of making a huge difference to her little life that is otherwise quite complex and confusing for her."

Improving Accessibility



A major focus during 2025-26 was investment in accessibility improvements.

Following successful fundraising and grant support from Bristol City Council's Community Resilience Fund, the Centre began significant renovation works designed to improve access for participants, families, staff and volunteers. The project aimed to remove barriers to participation and create a more inclusive environment for future generations.

The accessibility project represents a significant investment in the Centre's long-term ability to welcome people with a diverse range of needs.

Improvements including the installation of four accessible toilets to meet current regulations. An expanded kitchen area to support larger events. An accessible downstairs waiting/café area and a downstairs office, which not only makes staff more accessible, but enables us to accommodate staff with additional mobility requirements. Making the Centre more accessible ensures we can continue to support a wide range of Disabled people over the coming years.

Supporting Wellbeing Through Nature

With the support of The Ovo Foundation, The Avon Centre continued to broaden its offer beyond riding activities.

Nature-based learning and wellbeing programmes provided opportunities for participants to:

- Engage with nature.
- Develop confidence outdoors.
- Improve emotional wellbeing.
- Build social connections.
- Participate in mindful and creative activities.



The Centre has now established a popular “Learn in Nature” Home education group, and were proud to be able to support Borderlands, a Bristol Based Refugee charity to allow their service users to access nature.

“We looked for some tea and saw some horses and some beautiful things. Sometimes I think people need to be outside and get out of themselves.”

“So nice, we had such a good time. Thank you so much for such a nice time”

Holiday programmes included pony experiences, outdoor learning, forest-based activities and wellbeing-focused sessions designed for a wide range of ages and abilities.

Volunteers: The Heart of The Avon Centre

The Centre's impact depends on the extraordinary commitment of volunteers. From leading horses and side-walking during lessons to maintaining facilities, supporting events and caring for our equines, volunteers contributed thousands of hours that made our programmes possible.

During 2025-26:

- 115 volunteers supported activities.
- 13 volunteer coaches delivered specialist expertise.
- Long-service volunteers were recognised for 15 and 40 years of dedication.
- Volunteer training and development continued throughout the year.
- We welcomed multiple corporate volunteers, including groups to help us build our nature area!



Volunteers contributed thousands of hours, supporting participants in lessons, caring for horses, assisting at competitions, helping with events and strengthening the sense of community that defines The Avon Centre.

Community and Fundraising

The Avon Centre continued to play an important role as a community hub.



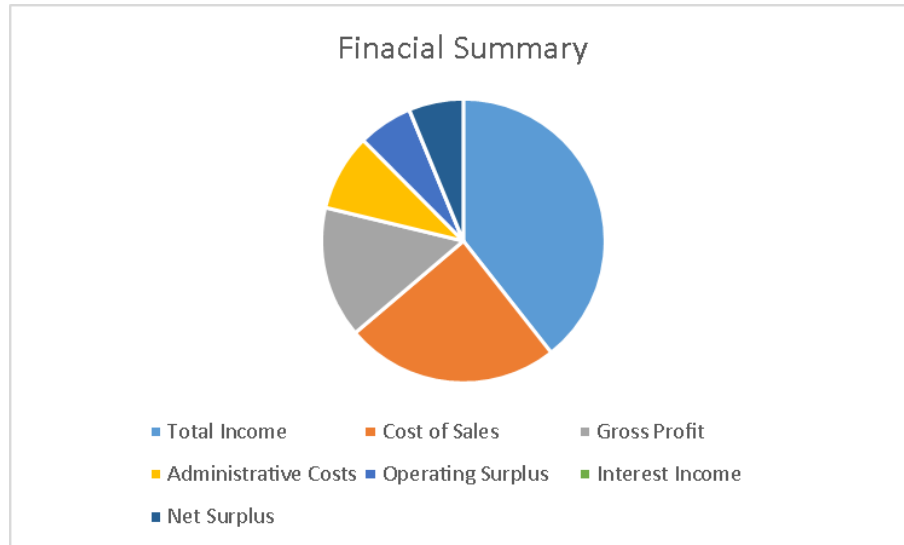
Highlights included:

- Open Day celebrations.
- Volunteer appreciation events.
- Community fundraising activities.
- Horse sponsorship programmes.
- Tesco and Co-op community fundraising partnerships.
- A successful Crowdfunder campaign helping to fund a new indoor arena surface.
- Partnerships with local organisations and supporters.

The generosity of donors, funders, supporters and volunteers enabled the charity to continue investing in facilities, horses and programme delivery.

Finances

During 2025-26, The Avon Centre remained financially resilient, supported by a combination of earned income, charitable grants, donations and fundraising activities. This enabled continued investment in participant services, accessibility improvements, horse welfare and future development.



Looking Ahead

As The Avon Centre moves into 2026-27, priorities include:

- Completing accessibility improvements.
- Supporting more people currently on the waiting list.
- Expanding therapeutic riding and wellbeing provision.
- Further developing nature-based activities.
- Investing in facilities and horse welfare.
- Continuing to support riders in achieving personal and competitive success.
- Strengthening financial sustainability and community partnerships.

Thank You

None of this impact would be possible without the support of participants, families, volunteers, staff, trustees, funders, donors and community partners.

Together, during 2025-26, The Avon Centre delivered thousands of opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to build confidence, develop independence, improve wellbeing and experience the unique power of horses.

Thank you for helping make this possible. Together, we are creating opportunities, building confidence and changing lives through providing access to horses, nature and community.



By the Numbers

Measure	Result
Therapeutic Sessions Delivered	4,003
Participants Supported	174
New Participants	81
Waiting List	147
Volunteers	115
Volunteer Coaches	13
Staff Team	12
Horses & Ponies	16