

Karlie's Story

Karlie was born with a physical condition that causes joint stiffness and pain, and muscle weakness in her limbs and she began riding at RDA in July 2020 at 18 months old. At this time she was unable to walk or even crawl and was pretty frustrated as she really wanted to move! So horse riding opened up a whole new world for Karlie.

Before she started, Karlie had been through a lot of regular casting for her legs which was pretty traumatic for her, and she had a lot of trust issues with adults that were not family. I watched as the staff at RDA kindly and patiently worked through this with Karlie, allowing her to develop trust and progress as she felt ready. It was within 4 months of starting RDA that Karlie began to crawl and I have no doubt that the riding therapy gave her the idea and extra motivation to work out how to get her body moving. She will also more willingly do her stretches and exercises during therapy because she just enjoys the experience so much. As Karlie has gotten older she has developed a love of horses, and it gives her a real sense of belonging to have a physical sport that she can do. Every week after riding there is a noticeable increase to Karlie's level of physical activity.

She is now 4 years old and is currently progressing well towards gaining her balance and walking. She has developed a trusting relationship with her coach and RDA staff, and we are so grateful for the RDA programme and the benefits that Karlie has gained through attending over the last 3 years.