

Approved Centre Criteria

Pony Party

Approved Pony Party Criteria Introduction

Our new BHS Approved Centre Scheme for Pony Party providers is an exciting new initiative designed to engage and support those who are not a riding school, but who provide that all important, first contact with ponies through various occasions, celebrations, and activities.

The scheme is designed to support businesses to provide this much needed service and help to promote safe and encouraging environments for people to experience the benefits of horses, with education and welfare at the heart of it all

Whilst many ponies have lovely natures and may well enjoy the attention they receive when being used for Pony Party activities, the following guidance hopes to outline the essential care needs for ponies to meet the needs of their five welfare domains whilst also explaining some key considerations when deciding if a pony is well suited to this role. The welfare domains relate to the suitability of their physical environment, nutrition, health, behavioural interactions and their mental state.

It is a legal requirement for ponies used in pony party activities to be licensed by the local authority. The type of license will depend on the provision offered by the pony party provider. Anytime a child is placed upon a pony, no matter how briefly, then a riding school licence known as the 'hiring out of horses' licence is required which involves an independent veterinary inspection of the ponies suitability for use. For all other pony party activities, a license is required for the 'keeping or training of animals', sometimes referred to as an 'Animal Activities' license.

This scheme is only accessible for businesses operating out of their own premises. Applications cannot be accepted from businesses based at or operating from either livery yards or riding schools that are not already on the BHS Approved Centre scheme. Any unapproved but licensed riding school wishing to access this scheme would need to initially join us as a BHS Approved Riding school. Information on the scheme can be found at <https://www.bhs.org.uk/for-our-coaches-and-centres/become-bhs-approved/>

How we can help

Our dedicated Approved Centres Business Support team can help Centres in preparation for Local Authority inspections alongside our scheme inspections. This may be support for an initial assessment, or preparation for regular announced inspections, which take place every other year. Whether you need policy templates, risk assessment guidance or advice on how to meet the Safeguarding requirements, you will have access to all relevant benefits, such as of our templates and data sheets.

Our friendly team is always happy to help so if you are unsure about any aspect, simply contact BHS Approved Centre Operations at approvedcentres@bhs.org.uk or call 02476 840509

Pony Party - Business Matters

Number	Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Guidance Notes
1	A Local Authority Licence for the activity must be in place for either non-ridden or ridden activities		✓	✓	<p>For ridden activities https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/hiring-out-horses-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities</p> <p>For non ridden activities https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/keeping-or-training-animals-for-exhibition-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities</p>
2	Insurance for Public Liability to cover the activity that includes Employers Liability for coverage of staff or volunteers as required. Coverage would need to also include off site activity where this is part of the business offer.		✓	✓	As a minimum we ask for coverage value of £2 million but do contact an equine insurance company for further advice as alongside risk assessments, many require ponies to have been in your ownership for a minimum of 12 months prior to using them for pony parties.

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3	Only identified, recognised and approved ponies should be used for the activities. All ponies should be microchipped and have their own passports	✓		✓	<p>Further information on identification can be found following the below links:</p> <p>https://www.bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/ownership-loaning/is-your-horse-microchipped</p> <p>https://www.bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/horse-passports/horse-passport-faqs/</p>
4	First aid provision should be available by an authorised and certified person attending the sessions. This can be the person supervising the session or a person authorised by them.		✓	✓	<p>The below courses are recognised as suitable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSE First Aid at Work https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/firstaid/first-aid-training.htm • BHS Equine Specific First Aid Certificate https://www.bhs.org.uk/careers-recreational-awards/continuing-professional-development/first-aid-courses/

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5	<p>A generic risk assessment is required to include as a minimum those listed below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pony suitability including duration and frequency of sessions • Group sizes and supervision ratios • PPE requirements (as appropriate to activities) • Activities involved, e.g. grooming, leading etc • Zoonosis (prevention of disease spread horse to human, e.g. ringworm) <p>Any generic risk assessment would need updating to site-specific for any 'off-site' activity.</p>	✓		✓	<p>If you're unfamiliar with risk assessments, we can help you with this through provision of templates for you to adapt to ensure they are specific to your business and the activities undertaken at your parties.</p>
6	<p>All client communications are compliant with data protection requirements</p>			✓	<p>Have you got a data or privacy policy that tells clients what you will do with their data?</p>
7	<p>A written complaints procedure is either on display or on the Centre website</p>			✓	<p>Should a client be dissatisfied, is there a clear process to follow, for example, who should they raise it with etc. Templates are available if needed</p>

Pony Party - Safeguarding

Number	Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Guidance Notes
1	The Proprietor, or a delegated person, is responsible for ensuring that all required Criminal Record checks have taken place on staff and volunteers.			✓	<p>Guidance for this section will be replicated from standard Safeguarding advice as per criteria for the other schemes</p> <p>For further information please visit our website at https://www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/how-we-operate/our-policies/criminal-records-checks/</p>
2	There should be at least one trained staff member responsible for child and adult welfare who has attended either a BHS Safeguarding Workshop, BEF Member Body Safeguarding Workshop or UK Coaching Safeguarding Workshop and has updated every three years			✓	
3	There should be at least one trained staff member/volunteer (see 2) appointed as the Safeguarding Officer (SO). Details of the SO to be displayed at a central point accessible to all staff and clients. Provider to inform BHS Approved Centres should the nominated SO change	✓		✓	<p>Here is the link to provide you with further information upon how to access courses throughout the UK and Ireland https://www.bhs.org.uk/careers-recreational-awards/continuing-professional-development/safeguarding-courses/ *Accredited prior learning is considered - please contact safeguarding@bhs.org.uk for further information</p>




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4	The Provider should implement a Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed regularly and shared with staff and volunteers.			✓	For Providers that do not have their own, a template BHS Safeguarding policy is available for Centres to use
5	The Provider must agree to report any safeguarding concerns to the necessary organisations as detailed in the BHS reporting booklet and threshold document			✓	Follow the below link to access https://www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/how-we-operate/our-policies/safeguarding/

Pony Party - Pony Care

Number	Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Guidance Notes
1	To ensure ponies are kept and cared for in a suitable and safe environment, the management, responsibility and supervision of ponies must be overseen by person(s) with suitable equestrian experience			✓	This can be evidenced either through a combination of CV, equestrian qualifications and professional discussion
2	Companionship of other equines must be available to the ponies with positioning of their accommodation or turnout areas allowing them to be as a minimum, in sight and sound of others	✓		✓	
3	Accommodation, whether field shelter, stable or stall arrangement must be large enough to allow freedom to move around and have deep bedding to encourage a pony to safely lie down or even have a roll. It should be well ventilated, and the construction should be safe with no protrusions, gaps or other hazards that could risk injury to the pony.	✓		✓	Where rubber matting might be used a sufficient layer of bedding is still advised. It's important that the pony has view of others so it's worth lowering the height of the stable door if necessary to avoid risk of them straining their necks trying to peep over the top!
4	A4 Each horse in use must have an Annual Horse Health check, completed by an RCVS Equine vet to declare their suitability for use in declared activities.		✓		A4 This form is available as an appendix at the rear of this document. It can be completed by the Centres' regular RCVS qualified equine veterinarian and must be submitted on an annual basis to approvedcentres@bhs.org.uk . It is the Centres responsibility to ensure this is completed prior to a horse being used for sessions.

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5	<p>Grazing and turnout must be available, ideally in a small herd situation, with a grassland management plan in place to ensure there is minimal risk to health or behaviour problems associated with too much grass in their diet.</p>	✓		✓	<p>Fencing materials must be horse safe and well maintained. There must be a suitable clean water supply with shelter provided from inclement weather</p> <p>https://www.bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/health-care-management/pasture-management/</p>
6	<p>Routine health care checks and preventative care plans are in place to include the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily observational (visual) health checks that include behaviour, appetite etc • Hoof and Tooth care • Dietary needs • Body Condition 	✓		✓	<p>All ponies need a balanced diet that enhances keeping them healthy. However, it's important to remember they're all individual and their breed, type or age are just a few of the factors to consider. Whilst they should have continual access to clean drinking water, they often need a controlled approach rather than continual access to food! Regular monitoring of their weight through body condition scoring will be important and help you in adjusting their diet through the differing seasons.</p> <p>bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/health-care-management/</p> <p>Visits from a qualified and registered farrier for hoof trimming or shoeing and veterinary visits for scheduled vaccination alongside checks upon teeth from either the veterinarian or a qualified equine dental technician should all be part of ensuring your pony's health needs are being met.</p>

Pony Party - All Activities

Number	Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Guidance Notes
1	Whether offering a party to an individual or a group all activities should be safely managed and always supervised.				Risk assessments should capture any adaptations for group sessions or other factors
2	At all times a kind and considerate approach should be taken when planning activities with provision for adaptations within a session				Educating participants into the correct and kind way to handle and treat all animals should feature highly in any sessions being held
3	Duration and frequency of sessions should be relatively short to ensure ponies have regular breaks, with access to water and shelter between sessions and quiet periods for them to be left in peace throughout the day.				For example, for activities off site, it will be important to fully understand all factors that may influence, for example, available space, access to water etc. Further advice is available on the below link https://www.bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/behaviour/

Pony Party - Ridden Activities

Number	Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Guidance Notes
1	All ponies being sat upon or ridden must be on the LA riding school license			✓	
2	Ponies should be used that are trained to be well behaved on the lead rein and those leading the ponies should be confident in pony handling techniques.			✓	Ponies should be used that are trained to be well behaved on the lead rein, not simply used as they are unsuitable when off the lead rein! Those leading the ponies should be confident in pony handling techniques and have had an induction in how to safely lead before they lead with a rider. It is recommended than lead rope/lines should be used by the leaders and securely attached to either the bit or the headcollar.
3	Ponies should only be handled and ridden under supervision and never be left unsupervised during the activity. There should be a clear activity plan in place			✓	For example, leading round 'the fairy trail' or embarking on an activity route, such as weaving through cones or other equipment.

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4	All tack and equipment should fit and be suitable for purpose. Any additional equipment or participant apparel, such as clothing, should not pose risk of fright or concern to the pony.	✓		✓	Safe equipment such as reins being the correct length to minimise risk of a riders' feet catching, include use of safe stirrups or toes toppers etc when children do not have suitable footwear
5	Riding hats should be worn and safely secured at all times a participant is on a pony and meet the current safety standards	✓		✓	The below links offer the current safety standards for riding hats and clothing https://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding/riding-out-hacking/what-to-wear/hats-and-helmets/ https://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding/riding-out-hacking/what-to-wear/ https://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding/riding-out-hacking/what-to-wear/footwear-and-boots/#what-to-consider-when-buying-your-boots

Pony Party - Transporting Ponies



Number	Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Guidance Notes
1	When the activity includes transporting off site, ponies must be accompanied by a competent person			✓	Links below offer further information upon safe transportation of horses and ponies https://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding/riding-out-hacking/transporting-your-horse/
2	Ponies must be fit to travel with consideration being given in the planning stages to the duration of the journey			✓	To be considered as fit to travel to an event/party, a pony would be showing its normal healthy state, for example, it would not be showing signs of ill health such as excessive nasal discharge, raise in respiratory rate or should not be fatigued or infirm or unable to move without pain or resistance Journey duration needs consideration when planning any off site activities. Ponies will still require access to water, shelter and forage, such as hay throughout their day. Being observant for signs of dehydration in hot weather is just as important as encouraging the ponies to stale, as many won't do so when travelling.

Number	Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Guidance Notes
3	Protection from risk of injury should be maintained during travel			✓	Well-fitting, correctly applied protective travelling equipment may be useful to offer protection during transport provided it is securely fastened to prevent slipping or risk of injury. The below link offers further advice https://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding/riding-out-hacking/transporting-your-horse/loading-and-unloading/
4	Vehicles used must be well maintained and fit for purpose with good ventilation and correct insurances in place			✓	https://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding/riding-out-hacking/transporting-your-horse/checks-before-you-travel/ Many drivers assume that their car insurance automatically covers them when towing a horse trailer - check that your insurance covers you for travelling ponies as part of your business
5	Correct travel documentation is available and is in transit with the ponies whilst being travelled			✓	It is a legal requirement for the Passport for each pony to be with them when they travel. Depending on the length of a journey then there may be need for additional documentation as offered in the below link https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare#animal-welfare-during-transport

Approved Pony Party Provider Annual Horse Health Inspection



The purpose of this form is to evidence suitability of the horse/pony/donkey for use at the below Venue, for the delivery of non-ridden handling and associated groundwork activities, such as being led in hand and lunged for exercise without a rider.

Venue Name:
Date of Inspection:

Venue Contact/Manager:
RCVS Veterinary Surgeon:

The below form must be completed by the Veterinary Surgeon

Name:	Colour:	Sex M/F:	Year of birth:	Height hh/cm:
UELN:		Passport No:		Microchip No:
Comments upon general condition and body score (please circle) 1-Emaciated 2-Thin 3-Good 4-Fat 5-Obese				
Please confirm that the below areas have been assessed and are within the considered normal ranges to allow use of the above horse/pony in the associated un-ridden activities.				
Condition of Feet (please circle) Good Satisfactory Need farriery attention			If shod, condition of shoes (please circle) Good Satisfactory Need farriery attention	
Heart Check Y/N	Respiratory Check Y/N		Sight Check Y/N	
Action check This is an assessment of the horse/pony that includes observation at rest, stationary and being led in hand and turned in walk and then trotted on a hard level surface Y/N				

Does the horse/pony receive any prescription only medications? Y/N (see below)

Is the horse / pony suitable for use? Y/N

Please note any advisory comments or recommendations, for example pertaining to use of POM's

In making decision upon the suitability of the above-named horse/pony, I have had regard to such matters as soundness, and the condition of the horses' eyes and heart. I confirm that the information in this form pertains to the horse/pony which I have inspected at the above-named establishment and that it is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of Veterinary Surgeon:

Dated:

Practice Stamp: