

# Riding Centre Criteria

## **A1. Horse Welfare**

Horse welfare is of paramount importance for any equestrian business and the daily needs of all horses and ponies at a BHS Approved Centre must be the first priority. Where clarification may be needed reference should be made to the British Horse Council Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and their Hybrids or The Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equidae (Scotland). Scheme requirements for documentation support evidencing of compliance with current legislative requirements for Riding School licensing.

- A1.1** Isolation and biosecurity procedures or facility arrangements are in place to include accommodation of new arrivals.
- A1.2** Fire prevention policy and evacuation procedure
- A1.3** All horses to have a structured management and care programme including exercise, foot care, tooth care, worming and veterinary care. Either provided by the owner or with support from the centre. Details of the care provided by the Centre should be included in the livery contract, for example working liveries
- A1.4** Access to suitable clean and appropriate quality foodstuffs/water and records of each horses diet plan must be kept
- A1.5** Access to safe shelter appropriate for seasonal conditions
- A1.6** Basic equine first aid kit
- A1.7** All horses on premises to have a valid equine passport (in accordance with Defra guidance)
- A1.8** Current list of all horses on the property
- A1.9** Current list of all horses used for the purpose of the riding school business, including those which may be on trial, along with records of each horses working hours.
- A1.10** Condition of horses (body score) is appropriate to type/workload/age and visually monitored.
- A1.11** Horses to have safe and correctly fitting tack
- A1.12** Appropriately experienced personnel to actively oversee daily horse care and welfare is in place for all horses

## **To be Commended**

- C1.1** Where the centre is responsible for the daily care of the horse, there is evidence of a high standard of care
- C1.2** Where clients are responsible for the care of their own horse they are supported and guided regarding a suitable care programme
- C1.3** For horses kept at working, part or full livery records are available to evidence adherence to meeting routine health needs as detailed in livery agreements
- C1.4** Routine daily 'Out of hours' checks are carried out
- C1.5** All horses to have regular dental checks and records to be kept detailing when checks have taken place

- C1.6** Shoeing and trimming records to be kept including dates and detail of the procedure
- C1.7** Veterinary/Health Records kept for each horse
- C1.8** Records of any additional care programmes e.g. physiotherapy
- C1.9** Records of horse medication and treatments including Prescription Only Medicines (POM)
- C1.10** All horses to be a suitable match to the client, lesson type and responsive to the aids

### **To be Highly Commended**

- HC1.1** Equine First Aid Kit (including a content list) with designated person responsible for security and stock management, Prescription Only Medicines (POM) and currency of stock
- HC 1.2** Records to demonstrate that each horse workload/ regime is balanced to meet the needs of each individual horse
- HC1.3** Evidence of a programme of schooling to maintain and develop the horses' way of going
- HC1.4** On site 24 hour horse supervision

### **A2. Safeguarding**

The safety and wellbeing of all groups at a BHS Approved Centre is of paramount importance. All centres which have children at the centre are expected to comply with the BHS Safeguarding Policy in order to become BHS Approved. Achievement of this area is a pre-requisite for Centre Approval at Approved level. Therefore grade can only be awarded at Approved for this section.

- A2.1** The Centre Proprietor, or delegated person, is responsible for ensuring that all required Criminal Record checks have taken place on staff and volunteers. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland checks are legally required on all individuals who work or volunteer in 'regulated activity'. In Scotland they are required on all individuals who are in 'regulated work'. The organisations for each country are as follows; England and Wales, Disclosure and Barring Service, Scotland, Disclosure Scotland (the PVG scheme), Northern Ireland, Access NI and Republic of Ireland, Garda Vetting.
- A2.2** At least one trained staff member responsible for child welfare who has attended a BHS Safeguarding and Protecting Children Workshop or Sports Coach UK Safeguarding and Protecting Workshop and has updated every three years
- A2.3** At least one trained staff member to be appointed as the Centre Welfare Officer (CWO) for the centre. Details of the CWO to be displayed at a central point accessible to all staff and clients.
- A2.4** BHS Safeguarding policy in place
- A2.5** Clear policy regarding the care and supervision of Under 18's when at the centre. If there are no Under 18's permitted at the Centre a declaration confirming this is required.

### **A3. Customer Care**

The customers' experience is paramount to the success of any business. An excellent first impression and welcoming staff will serve the centre well. Even a busy working yard can have the appearance of order and professionalism which will enhance the reputation of the centre.

- A3.1** Positive overall first impression
- A3.2** Welcoming and friendly staff
- A3.3** Correct signage (for directions and information and health and safety)

- A3.4** All working liveries to have a current livery contract
- A3.5** Support for liveries and their horses
- A3.6** Evidence of clear system of communication e.g. a diary booking system, arena booking system

**To be Commended** This section is graded depending upon the individual business and client needs

- C3.1** Activities and training available for clients eg BHS Participation Project, one to one support
- C3.2** Client waiting and rest areas are clean, inviting and accommodating
- C3.3** Refreshments available
- C3.4** Dedicated office
- C3.5** There is a client information pack in either paper or digital format
- C3.6** Current and up to date Livery contracts in place
- C3.7** An accurate and up to date website or active social media providing information on activities and events
- C3.8** Support for clients including rider development
- C3.9** System in place and evidence of actions taken as a result of constructive feedback from clients
- C3.10** Written complaints procedure detailing how a client can raise any concerns

**To be Highly Commended** This section is graded depending upon the individual business and client needs

- HC3.1** An accurate and up to date website or social media presence?
- HC3.2** Dedicated clean client changing facilities
- HC3.3** Hygienic, well maintained showers. Showers are NOT necessarily required in order to be graded HC
- HC3.4** Dedicated client lockers and storage facility to include for livery clients
- HC3.5** Dedicated rest room, café or hospitality area
- HC3.6** Training/coaching available by qualified or accredited Instructors or trainers on the premises available to all clients
- HC3.7** Designated First Aid room which is available for permanent use
- HC3.8** Additional First Aiders above the minimum requirement of one first aider on site when riding is taking place
- HC3.9** Additional services for clients available e.g. rug washing, rider fitness sessions

#### **A4. Teaching, Coaching and Riding Out**

Quality teaching, coaching and riding lessons are the core functions of a riding school and are the focus of the BHS Approved Centre Scheme, after the safety and welfare of both horses and riders.

##### **Teaching/Coaching**

- A4.1** Stage Three Coach in Complete Horsemanship or BHSAI qualified member of staff to be on site at all times tuition is taking place
- A4.2** A First Aid qualified member of staff to be on site when teaching is taking place. Either First Aid at Work or BHS Equine Specific First Aid Certificate (as per APC guidelines)

**A4.3** The quality of instruction meets the standard for BHS Approval using the lesson inspection criteria

#### **For all Centres offering Riding Out/Hacking**

**A4.4** All centres to have documentary evidence that all riding out activities and routes are risk assessed and this information is provided to Ride Escorts/Leaders in advance

**A4.5** All escort staff must hold The British Horse Society Ride Safe or Riding & Road Safety Test Certificate

**A4.6** All escort staff must be first aid qualified

**A4.7** Must carry a portable Ride Leader First Aid kit

**A4.8** Must carry a mobile phone for use in emergencies

**A4.9** The use of Hi-Viz equipment is mandatory when riding out

**A4.10** All riders to wear correctly fitted riding hat to current standard and footwear designed for riding which is deemed safe

**Riding Out** - For **Riding Schools** who offer hacks within their provision. Hacks are rides of short duration, around local fields and access routes.

**A4.11** BHS Stage 2 or Pony Club B Test or ETQ Ride Leader Level 2 or appropriate professional experience

**A4.12** Centres to undertake Centre Specific Training (supported by a training log book) and assessment by a Stage Three Coach in Complete Horsemanship or a BHSAI upon Ride Leader/Escort competence. The training and assessment must include as a minimum, ride supervision, riding ability, age and incident management, such as riding and leading.

**Riding out** - For **Trekking Centres** and **Riding Schools** offering treks within their provision. A trek is defined as rides of longer duration, covering further distances from the yard location, and may be more adventurous in nature e.g. pub rides, beach rides.

**A4.13** Stage Three Coach in Complete Horsemanship or BHSAI or ETQ Ride Leader Level 2 or 3

**A4.14** For Escorts/Ride Leaders that do not hold Equestrian Tourism qualifications, during the first six months of employment a Centre must undertake Centre Specific Training (supported by a training log book) and assessment by an Equestrian Tourism Centre Manager (ETCM) upon Ride Leader/Escort competence. The training and assessment must include as a minimum, ride supervision, riding ability, age and incident management. In such situations a formal ETQ qualification must be obtained during the following 6 months.

The BHS Inspector will undertake a minimum of one lesson observation during the inspection and this will be graded using the lesson observation criteria. To achieve a grading of Commended or Highly

Commended both the lesson observation and the criteria must achieve the same rating. The lesson observation will form the basis of the grading for teaching in addition to the criteria below.

Access to safe and enjoyable off road hacking is a high priority for many riders. Where a centre is able to offer direct access to quality hacking with very little road work the riding out will be considered to be highly commended providing the approval criteria are met.

#### **To be Commended**

- C4.1** All teaching staff hold a HSE First Aid at Work or BHS first aid certificate
- C4.2** Clients to have access to an instructor with qualifications greater than a Stage Three Coach in Complete Horsemanship or BHSAI qualification e.g. BHSII or BHSI
- C4.3** Graded lessons that relate to the ability of the rider and encourage progression
- C4.4** Provide opportunities or participation schemes to clients to enhance their experience eg BHS Participation Project, Take Back the Reins, in house competitions
- C4.5** Graded and progressive riding out routes to be identified and risk assessed. To be displayed at a central point accessible to all staff and clients
- C4.6** When hacking out a variety of terrain e.g. roads, tracks and fields, to suit all paces with circular routes of varying lengths
- C4.7** Recording system for client whereabouts whilst out hacking that adheres to centre hacking Code of Conduct, and stipulated within the livery contract.

### **To become Highly Commended**

- HC4.1** Evidence of planned in house mentoring system for trainee instructors and coaches
- HC4.2** Evidence of CPD for all teaching/staff escorting rides, in house or external that includes Incident management procedures
- HC4.3** Clubmark status or affiliated to British Riding Clubs or Pony Club, RDA Accessibility Mark (where applicable)
- HC4.4** Dedicated lecture area conducive to a learning environment
- HC4.5** Direct access to off-road routes within half a mile of the centre and on minor roads
- HC4.6** Variety of trails e.g. Beach rides, woodland, farm rides, coastal, riverside, mountain or farmland

### **A5. Facilities**

The BHS Inspector will be assessing the facilities and their management. An old but well maintained centre, showing best practice, can be graded as highly as a newly built facility. All facilities at the centre will be inspected. Not all facilities referred to below e.g. arenas and show jumps, will be applicable to the business and are therefore not all are required.

- A5.1** Positive overall first impression of the centre and facilities
- A5.2** Toilets well maintained, clean and hygienic. To include hot and cold water and soap for hand washing and drying facilities.
- A5.3** Safe and well maintained stables and surrounding areas to allow for suitable inspection of horse health.
- A5.4** Stables to be adequate size for occupant to ensure room for movement, comfort and ventilation. Doorways that are a suitable width and height to allow safe entry and exit of the horse which is occupying the stable
- A5.5** Stables are kept clean with suitable bedding/cover to ensure comfort, and a documented procedure for stable daily cleaning routines and cleaning stables between periods of occupation is in place.
- A5.6** Where rubber matting only is used the stable must be kept free from excessive urine and droppings. The BHS does not condone the use of rubber matting without bedding for stable kept horses
- A5.7** Arena minimum size 20m x 40m with well-maintained access and egress
- A5.8** Well maintained and level riding surface including management systems to maintain the surface and control levels of dust
- A5.9** An enclosed area minimum size 20m x 40m with well-maintained access and egress. A safe suitable area must be provided to carry out rider assessments in a trekking centre

- A5.10** Human First Aid kit easy accessible
- A5.11** Indoor arena – safe walls or kicking boards at safe height and well maintained. Safety glass used in viewing areas (if applicable to the business).
- A5.12** Outdoor arena is securely fenced and gated. An arena in a riding school must be fully fenced (if applicable to the business)
- A5.13** Any storage of jumps and other equipment in an arena has been risk assessed as safe
- A5.14** Show jumps well maintained and appropriately stored (if applicable to the needs of the business)
- A5.15** Spring loaded safety cups to be used on the back rail of any spread fences and advice provided to clients advising use of safety cups (where applicable to the business)
- A5.16** Cross country courses to be well maintained including ground and the removal of old and dilapidated jumps. BE guidance re the securing of portable fences should be adhered to. Code of Conduct and Risk Assessment in place for the use of cross country course (where applicable to the business)
- A5.17** Appropriate storage areas provided to accommodate all clients' feed, forage and bedding with evidence of vermin control.
- A5.18** Any accommodation offered should be certified to meet requirements stipulated by local authorities e.g. (HMO) Houses of Multiple Occupancy

#### **To become Commended**

- C5.1** Well maintained and presented car parking area
- C5.2** Stables are well bedded
- C5.3** Where rubber matting is used in stables an ample supply of bedding is provided
- C5.4** Stables are well drained, ventilated and dry with adequate natural light
- C5.5** Set of school rules clearly displayed in an appropriate location where they can be seen by all users and are enforced
- C5.6** Arenas are well lit to enable usage when dark
- C5.7** Where there is a seated viewing area, to be clean and free from rubbish
- C5.8** Additional specialist equipment available e.g. dressage boards, driving cones
- C5.9** Separate jump store in easy access of the arena
- C5.10** Variety of show jumps including fillers. Well maintained and lightweight for ease of handling
- C5.11** The Cross Country fences include a variety of jumps including steps, ditches with a progressive route plan
- C5.12** Horsebox parking if appropriate
- C5.13** Designated wash down area
- C5.14** Horse walker or other e.g. Lunge pen
- C5.15** Secure, well lit veterinary inspection area
- C5.16** Additional, appropriate, feed storage
- C5.17** Dedicated rug storage area

#### **To become Highly Commended**

- HC5.1** Spacious purpose built or converted facility with a layout which enhances safe working practices
- HC5.2** Positioning of stables enhances horse welfare in terms of view, fresh air, seeing other horses and companionship
- HC5.3** Size of stable meets or exceeds minimum requirements
- HC5.4** Arena mirrors, made from safety glass or protected

- HC5.5** Indoor arena, minimum size 20 x 40m OR additional arena
- HC5.6** Outdoor arena minimum 20m x 60m
- HC5.7** Covered, seated and heated viewing area
- HC5.8** Additional arenas if applicable to the business
- HC5.9** BS or SJI standard set of show jumps to facilitate building of a BS standard course
- HC5.10** If applicable to the business, Cross country course is professionally constructed, up to BE or EI standard in design and construction with a wide range of variety and complexity of obstacles. Course is of standard to be able to facilitate training/clinics in preparation for BE standard events or exams.
- HC5.11** CCTV or other security system
- HC5.12** If applicable to the business, dedicated gallops or canter tracks with a regular maintenance programme.
- HC5.13** Horse solarium or other equipment of similar horse benefit available for use
- HC5.14** Designated Wash Box/Inspection Area
- HC5.15** Well lit, lockable, purpose built feed room with water, and additional storage for supplements

## **A6. Tack and Tack Rooms**

Tack rooms should be secure and tidy. There should be adequate space, saddle racks and bridle hooks to safely store all tack. There must be a regular process for inspecting, cleaning and repairing all tack and associated equipment e.g. numnahs and girths

- A6.1** Secure and sufficient tack/equipment storage with safe saddle and bridle racks
- A6.2** Tack clean, safe and fit for purpose
- A6.3** Tack identification or labelling to ensure the correct tack and horse are matched
- A6.4** Documentary evidence of regular tack safety inspections which should be kept for future reference should it be required in the case of an accident investigation

### **To be Commended**

- C6.1** Tack well maintained through regular cleaning (if applicable to the business)
- C6.2** Washing and drying facilities for equipment
- C6.3** Tack room to be heated with access to hot water
- C6.4** Tack room to be alarmed

### **To become Highly Commended**

- HC6.1** Tack is routinely cleaned to a high standard
- HC6.2** Hot water access is in situ
- HC6.3** Associated equipment is routinely cleaned and maintained
- HC6.4** Separate rug store or individual rug storage
- HC6.5** Rug driers available for use

## **A7. Grassland Management & Turnout**

Good quality grazing is a premium at many equestrian centres where access to regular turn out can be restricted due to the land available or the prevailing weather conditions. A suitable grassland management programme, safe and secure fencing and adequate water supply forms the basis of BHS Approval

- A7.1** Well maintained pasture with management of droppings

- A7.2** Paddocks to be relevant to requirement e.g. grazing or turn-out
- A7.3** Safe and secure fencing, boundaries and gates. Where stock fencing is used as dividing fences, it is recommended that off-set electric fencing should also be in place. All fencing must be well maintained
- A7.4** Availability of clean water
- A7.5** Free from dangerous objects and poisonous plants and weeds e.g. ragwort
- A7.6** Access to shelter appropriate to seasonal conditions
- A7.7** Safe design of grazing areas e.g. clear access to gateways and walkways

### **To be Commended**

- C7.1** Separate Summer/Winter grazing provision
- C7.2** Facility to enable individual turn out (if required)
- C7.3** Horse safe fencing made of good quality material and professionally erected and maintained (does not include Barbed Wire, Plain Wire or Stock Fence)
- C7.4** Individual turn out pen/corral facility

### **To become Highly Commended**

- HC7.1** Hard standing in required field gateways
- HC7.2** All year turnout with suitable drainage
- HC7.3** Optional permanent individual turnout paddocks, if applicable
- HC7.4** Provision of field shelters where no natural shelter is available
- HC7.5** Good quality grazing, appropriate to the situation

### **A8. Legislative Compliance**

There are a number of documents and procedures which must be in place before BHS Approval can be granted.

- A8.1** Horse Passports to be kept in accordance with Defra guidelines
- A8.2** Current Liability/Employers Insurance Schedule to be visibly displayed
- A8.3** Current Council Riding Establishment License to be visibly displayed
- A8.4** For businesses that have a website, the name of the licence holder and the licence number must be displayed on the centre website
- A8.5** List of qualified First Aiders to be visibly displayed
- A8.6** Up to date and easily accessible First Aid Kit available
- A8.7** Centre Health & Safety Policy, a written policy is required where there are five or more employees; however the number of volunteers and stable helpers must be taken into consideration
- A8.8** H&S at Work Act 1974 Poster to be displayed, if more than 5 employees
- A8.9** Accident reporting procedure including RIDDOR
- A8.10** COSHH assessment
- A8.11** Muck heap siting, storage and removal must comply with environmental legislations, e.g. non contamination of waterways
- A8.12** Risk Assessment linked to each activity must be completed for all areas of the business, and all relevant staff/volunteers to have access to these
- A8.13** Preventative Fire Risk Assessment and emergency plan for staff, volunteers, clients and horses and regular fire drills to be undertaken
- A8.14** All employees to have a current contract of employment



- A8.15** Riders to wear the correct PPE for the activity e.g. hats, boots, gloves and body protectors as required. Riding hat to the current standard must be worn at all times when mounted. Where riding hats are provided they must meet current standards, be safely stored, clean and fit for purpose with clearly documented records of regular safety checks
- A8.16** Rider registration forms completed and in place. Rider emergency contact details should be regularly updated.
- A8.17** Rider assessments to be carried out for all new clients and recorded on rider registration form
- A8.18** Be able to demonstrate suitable and sufficient staff training practices to include records of induction, a written training policy and appraisal.
- A8.19** Contact details of the veterinary surgeon and out of hours provision to be displayed prominently next to an accessible telephone
- A8.20** Documented Standard Operating Procedures in place as per licensing requirements.
- A8.21** A documented complaints procedure, with records of all complaints received and any actions taken

**To be Commended** This section is graded depending upon the individual business and client needs

- C8.1** A clear management structure and system of communication
- C8.2** Job descriptions and responsibilities provided for all employed staff
- C8.3** Contracts for trainees/work based learning apprentices
- C8.4** An induction procedure for other work contractors
- C8.5** Staff handbook in place
- C8.6** CPD and on-going training provided for all staff
- C8.7** Staff rest area / staff room to be warm, clean and tidy
- C8.8** Routine regular and documented reviews occur of Health and Safety

**To be Highly Commended** This section is graded upon the individual business and client needs

- HC8.1** A written induction procedure for other work contractors
- HC8.2** Evidence of a Fire Evacuation procedure drill undertaken on routine basis with a record of the time and date when the fire drill took place and any outcomes or actions
- HC8.3** Documented effective Health and Safety audits are undertaken as routine practice