

Guidance notes - recruitment of demo horses and riders

Horse and rider welfare is at the forefront of all activities, as such the following guidelines are in place to ensure we have happy and healthy horses with suitably mounted riders taking part*.

Wherever possible, horse and rider combinations should be known to the organiser or recommended by an APC, BRC or Approved Centre.

Potential riders or handlers must be given a full explanation of what will be required of them during the demo. They will need be aware of additional factors such as large audiences or set-up of the environment in order to make an informed decision about their participation.

The coach or presenter should be asked to address any welfare or safety concerns, should they arise, before and during the demo.

Horses

- Horses must be sound and in an appropriate condition. Horses should have a healthy fat score of no less than 2.5 or higher than 3.5 (out of 5).
- All horses must be five years of age or older (exceptions may be made for specific youngstock groundwork training demos).
- All horses must be current and up to date with equine influenza vaccinations (In accordance with BRC rules).
- Will the horse be happy being alone if the demo focuses on one horse? Consider the domain of "friends" for the horse within planning.
- Consider the distance travelled and whether the horse will require stabling at the venue.

Ridden Activities

- All horse and rider combinations must be a suitable match regarding rider size and horse size.
- Horses should be of an appropriate fitness level for the activity being undertaken.
- Horses must not be known to rear, bolt or demonstrate aggressive behaviours.
- Due to the nature of our audience, we are talking to mainly grassroots riders. As such we would like to promote simple tack wherever possible, misuse of tack/ill-fitting tack will prevent the demo horse and rider from taking part.
- Tack must be suitable for the activity being undertaken, in safe condition and fit correctly. It must conform to the rules of the discipline being demonstrated.
- Whilst it is not possible for all horses to be ridden in snaffle bits, it is important to assess the appropriateness of the tack. If stronger bits or double bridles are used, the rider must be of an appropriate standard to ride in the tack.
- Riders not known to the organiser should submit a left- and right-hand side photo of their horse clearly showing the tack which they will be ridden in at the demo, prior to the event. It may be beneficial to request some video of the horse and rider working in the required discipline in advance.
- Nosebands which are cavesson in design are preferable. Other nosebands, such as flash and grackle, can often be fitted incorrectly. The coach or presenter should check the fit of the horses' tack at the beginning. All nosebands must be adjusted with sufficient laxity. A taper gauge could be used if appropriate.

- Whips and spurs must only be used in accordance with British Riding Club rules**.
- It is expected that the presenter or coach will address any problems with tack or equipment or misuse of aids. The organiser should discuss this with the presenter or coach prior to the event.

Non-ridden Activities

- Horses need to be sufficiently trained to be able to be handled safely and ideally have been in similar situations in the past, so they are comfortable and relaxed.
- Horses must not be known to demonstrate aggressive or dangerous behaviours.

Riders and Handlers

- Riders or handlers must be sufficiently experienced and confident in their own ability to manage their horse safely during the demo.
- The coach or presenter should be made aware of any lack of confidence in advance so that they are able to provide additional support where needed.
- Hats to the current standard must be worn and correctly secured when riding or handling the horse during the demonstration.
- Skull caps and body protectors must be worn if fixed fences are used during the demonstration.
- Gloves must be worn for ridden activities and groundwork.
- Clothing and footwear should be in good condition and appropriate for the activity.
- Riders or handlers must be made aware of the requirement to uphold the values and standards of the British Horse Society at all times during the demo.
- Riders under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.

Helpful References:

* [Are the horse and rider the right fit?](#)

** [BRC handbook link | The British Horse Society](#)