

A light brown horse with a white blaze on its face is looking out from a stable doorway. The horse is wearing a dark purple blanket. The stable door is made of metal and wood. The background is dark, suggesting the interior of the stable.

The
British
Horse
Society

Approved Centre Criteria

Trekking Centre

Approved Trekking Centre Criteria Introduction

Welcome to the assessment criteria for becoming a BHS Approved Trekking Centre

The purpose of this document is to share the assessment criteria and inspection process that underpin the quality standards that are integral to the recognition and success of the BHS Approved Centre scheme.

It provides examples of how to meet the assessment criteria and explains how to prepare for an inspection. We are here to help. There is lots of support and advice available to you, whether you are a current or a potential member of the scheme. Please don't hesitate to get in touch. When a Trekking Centre also operates as a Riding School or a Livery Yard, then these aspects of their provision are also assessed under the relevant BHS Approved Centre criteria for such Centres.

What to expect at an inspection

All Centres are different. All have unique aspects and differing offers that not only retain current clients, but also attract new ones to their door. We are keen to recognise such aspects when an initial assessment is made. Our Inspector will use the visit to your Centre to meet with you, view your Centre facilities and gain an overview of the general everyday working practice and activities. All of this helps them to understand how your Centre operates. Throughout the visit, informal discussions allow plenty of time for equal sharing of questions and understanding whilst reviewing the scheme criteria.

Centre assessment

An overview is provided for each assessment area. Each area is assessed through a Centre confirming that they meet the relevant criteria. The evidence will be a combination of the required documentation and the practical observations and recommendations of the Centre Inspector. Where possible, elements of the required documentation can be submitted online, and some will be able to be self-declared. Where elements are self-declared a selection will be subject to review at inspection. The following criteria for each assessment area provide further explanation, together with examples of what is required.

Grading levels

There are two grading levels within each inspection area. The first level is Approved which means a Centre has met all elements of the assessment criteria. A Centre may progress to the higher level by meeting additional criteria to achieve the accolade of Highly Commended. Achievement of the Safeguarding assessment is awarded as Fully Compliant.

How we can help

Our dedicated Approved Centres Business Support team can help Centres in preparation for inspections. This may be support for an initial assessment, or preparation for the regular announced inspection, which takes place every other year. Whether you are in need of 'written regimes' to help you with Local Authority Licensing requirements, a risk assessment template, rider registration forms or advice on how to meet the Safeguarding requirements, you will have access to all of our templates and data sheets. Our friendly team is always happy to help so if you aren't sure about any aspect, simply contact BHS Approved Centre Operations at approvedcentres@bhs.org.uk or call 02476 840509

Trekking Centre - Horse Care

Overall Expectation:

The well-being of the horse is the most important reputational aspect for any successful equestrian establishment. Meeting the daily and routine health care, exercise and welfare needs of all horses and ponies should always be the highest priority. Centres will need to have sufficient knowledge and experienced staff to ensure acceptable horse care standards are maintained throughout the seasons.

Providing suitable shelter/accommodation, minimising risk of disease through an effective isolation procedure/facility and protocols and a preventative fire risk assessment being in place, are some of the required measures involved in helping to keep horses and ponies safe.

All horses should be in a healthy condition and those in work should have fitness levels appropriate to their workload. In addition to onsite assessment sampling undertaken by a BHS Approved Centre Inspector, the evidencing of horses being in a healthy condition, will be supported by the Centre maintaining proactive plans for all routine aspects such as grooming, feeding, exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, worming, veterinary, dentistry and shoeing/trimming.

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A1 There is a suitably experienced person with the knowledge and competence to ensure horse care and welfare needs are being met		✓		A1 A list of Centre staff, including their qualifications and job role in the Centre	
A2 Evidenced by their appearance and condition, all horses to have a regular care programme that includes exercise/ grooming/time out of stable	✓				
A3 All horses should be in a healthy condition and those in work, have a fitness level that compliments and enhances their workload	✓			A3 There should be a 'bookings' diary or similar exercise records for horse workload hours and type to inform any required adjustments	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A4 A list of all horses/ponies at the Centre		✓		<i>A4 The list should include the names of all horses/ponies that are on the premises, indicating if on the RS License, kept at livery, retired or other</i>	
A5 A written contract or loan agreement for horses not in Centre ownership, for example, working liveries or loans		✓		<i>A5 An agreement for working livery/loans or other that details how healthcare, welfare and exercise needs are to be met, including planning for emergency situations</i>	
A6 Each horse to have constant access to clean water, appropriate shelter with their dietary needs being correctly met	✓				
A7 Each horse is attended to regularly by a. A registered farrier to ensure feet are well maintained b. Either a veterinarian or qualified equine dentist to ensure teeth are maintained			✓	<i>A7 Shoeing and dentistry records will help support visual observation</i>	
A8 A worm prevention plan is in place		✓		<i>A8 Including all horses on site, this would be an explanation of how a worm burden is minimised</i>	
A9 Records of bodyweight/health care/ treatments and administration of Prescription Only Medication are kept for each horse			✓	<i>A9 For all horses, a routine or seasonal recording system of bodyweight or condition scoring and a system for individual horses' health treatments inc POM's</i>	
A10 An isolation area, either stabling or a separate, sheltered and separately supplied paddock	✓			<i>A10 This would need to include option for new arrivals</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A11 A written isolation / biosecurity plan is in place and adhered to		✓		<i>A11 A statement upon how the Centre minimises risk or spread of disease and any requirements to implement isolation procedures</i>	
A12 A written preventative fire risk assessment and evacuation procedure		✓		<i>A12 What's being done to minimise risk of fire, communication plan and evacuation procedures</i>	
A13 All horses should be microchipped and have a valid equine passport			✓		
A14 Stable yards and surrounding areas should be kept free from risk of excessive equipment/storage that could compromise entrance/exit routes	✓			<i>A14 Stables, yard and surrounding areas should be safe, accessible and well maintained with minimal potential for hazards that can lead to avoidable incidents for both horses and humans</i>	
A15 Shelters/Stables and corrals must be well ventilated, safe in construction with height and size sufficient to allow comfort and movement for the horse, thus encouraging those permanently stabled to lie down	✓			<i>A15 - A17 All accommodation should have secure fixtures and fittings, be free from hazards or leaks, doors at suitable height/width which open/close freely and light to allow for suitable inspection of a horses' health</i>	
A16 Stables, including those with rubber matting, should have sufficient clean bedding to ensure comfort of the horse	✓			<i>A16 -17. Rubber matting should be secure and cover the flooring area with no gaps between the edges. Bedding provided must be clean and positioned to encourage lying down and enabling the horses to stale. The bedding area should be large enough that should the horse need to roll, the entire body should be able to remain on the bedding. For example, only positioning bedding in a corner of a stable may restrict access to staling (urinating) and limit 'soak-up' of urine. https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/horse-care/bedding/bedding-types</i>	
A17 Where stables are used for a short period, for example during the day between rides, there needs to be sufficient bedding to encourage the horse to stale	✓				

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A18 The feed room and storage areas need to be dry, clean and tidy with vermin proof storage and a legible up to date feed chart	✓			<i>A18 A tidy feed room/area (restricted from horse access) with clean feed bowls, a feed chart detailing individual diets supports the visual observations of a correctly managed yard</i>	
A19 An equine first aid kit that only contains up to date items	✓			<i>A19 Minimum requirement for emergency cover, e.g. bandages, sterile dressings, thermometer</i>	
A20 Prescription Only Meds (POM's) should be kept in a restricted area or lockable provision with a nominated person responsible for administration	✓			<i>A20 For example, if kept in feed room for convenience, they should be in a lockable cupboard/draw and clearly labeled re which horse</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 For each horse, there needs to be legible, detailed individual care plans that record dietary requirements and any healthcare needs such as preventative or additional veterinary/physiotherapy recommended care programmes in place to enhance horse welfare	✓			<i>H1 This requires being able to demonstrate a proactive approach (in the planning stages) that the care and health needs for all horses (as individuals) are being met through a combination of preventive measures and/or treatments such as massage etc</i>	
H2 Records held need to show there is a planned schedule for vaccinations to aid biosecurity and minimise risk of disease			✓		
H3 There is provision of additional working equipment to enhance horse welfare e.g. massage pads, solarium, horse walker	✓			<i>H3 Where equipment is available, it should be well maintained and serviceable, with an induction upon use to ensure safe and correct application/use, e.g. duration/frequency of use etc</i>	
H4 A separate Isolation/Quarantine facility and/or a detailed written plan/procedure	✓	✓		<i>H4 Such facility would be supported by a plan that includes staff induction, disease prevention, outbreak management and communication planning</i>	
H5 There is either 24-hour on-site supervision or a procedure for late night duties/out of hours checks upon both horse welfare and security			✓		
H6 All stables are positioned/designed to enhance horse welfare and allow sight of other horses	✓			<i>H6 For example, stables exceed minimum size requirements, they have overhanging shelter or their positioning avoids weather ingress, or there are additional windows to improve airflow/ventilation</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H7 The feed room is a well-lit, lockable designated area with safe accessible storage for supplements	✓			<i>H7 Only accessible by nominated staff combined with stock control and a system for storage/use of supplements that is safe, thus minimizing risk of error</i>	
H8 There is a separate well-lit, safe and contained area to enhance opportunity for effective inspection of horse's health	✓			<i>H8 This would be an area that is designated for such use, therefore accessible and ready for use in the event of an emergency e.g. checking injuries</i>	
H9 There is an effective targeted worm prevention plan for individual horses		✓		<i>H9 The plan needs to evidence individual horse needs being met, for example use of faecal egg worm counts/saliva testing</i>	

Trekking Centre - Client Experience

Overall Expectation:

For each Centre, trekking and trail riding experiences will vary based upon their location and variety in their terrain with such opportunities requiring specific planning in terms of supervision and management for both horses and riders. Riders being accompanied by an informative guide assists in creating an opportunity to explore nature and areas of interest, such as historical routes specific to the area.

A typical trek or trail ride will include scenic views in a variety of settings providing riders the experience of enjoying the wonderful idyll of nature when riding a horse.

From clear signage and directions about where to go with friendly and welcoming staff, all serve to enhance the first impression into being a positive experience. All Centres are busy but those with a tidy appearance, professionalism and good working practices enhance their own reputational success.

Visual evidence of high horse care standards, being suitably matched with a happy healthy horse/pony during an enjoyable outdoor scenic trek/trail riding experience, combined with a genuine ethos of good customer care all contribute to a positive experience for clients.

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A1 The centre is clean and tidy creating an overall positive first impression	✓			<i>A1 What influences a clients' first (and lasting) impression? E.g. impact of unnecessary clutter or unsightly muckheap on arrival?</i>	
A2 Friendly staff with the confidence to acknowledge and welcome clients/visitors	✓			<i>A2 Are staff welcoming to visitors and do they enquire if help is needed?</i>	
A3 Any client waiting, greeting or observation areas are clean and tidy and provide a sheltered facility for clients	✓			<i>A3 This area should allow for Centre supplied PPE checks for safety and fit to be undertaken before use, e.g. hats and footwear</i>	
A4 There are clean toilets with handwashing facilities	✓			<i>A4 Are regular checks in place to ensure such amenities remain accessible and fit for purpose?</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A5 All client communications are compliant with data protection requirements			✓	<i>A5 Do you have a privacy or data policy that explains how you manage client data or is help needed?</i>	
A6 Rider registration forms are completed, for example rider emergency information and contacts			✓	<i>A6 These should include regular updates for returning clients</i>	
A7 There should be a written process for the initial assessment of all riders prior to departure for the ride			✓	<i>A7 For example, what does the process for assessing rider and horse compatibility cover and how is it supervised?</i>	
A8 Where PPE is provided, or supplied by the client such as: a. riding hats: must meet current British safety standards, be safely stored, clean and fit for purpose with clearly documented records of regular cleaning and safety checks b. stirrup irons: should have additional safety features, such as use of toe stoppers or be of a release clip design to cater for when riders may be riding in non-equestrian footwear. Poster display recommended			✓	<i>A8 Hats should be clean and meet BHS standards with a schedule for replacement https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/tack-and-equipment/what-to-wear/headwear</i>	
A9 Where used, Centre websites and any social media platforms, such as FB, are accurate and up to date	✓		✓	<i>A9 Does the website accurately represent what the centre currently offers clients e.g. up-to-date prices and event details</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A10 Either through social media platforms, website or booking forms there is clear client induction information upon initial procedures	✓		✓	<i>A10 For example, information upon suitable clothing, equipment, guidance upon photos/filming permissions and initial procedures such as what to expect on arrival</i>	
A11 The Centres price list is current and supported with a clear cancellation policy/statement	✓		✓		
A12 Clear contracts are in place for loan/ lease/working livery clients, if applicable			✓	<i>A12 Evidencing this links with A5 requirements in the Horse Care assessment criteria</i>	
A13 Clearly visible, legible Fire Procedures are in place	✓			<i>A13 For example, emergency signage and meeting points etc</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 The Centre provides added value through use of knowledgeable experienced tour guides/leaders	✓	✓		<i>H1 This can be evidenced through the staffing list</i>	
H2 Trail routes are pre-planned with appropriate support for both client and horse needs			✓	<i>H2 For example comfort breaks, alternative provision for inclement weather or other influential factors</i>	
<p>H3 Based upon the Centres' initial assessment of riding ability, clients have access to guided and experienced support specific to tourism and trekking, such as trek/trail routes offering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. themed trek/trail routes offering habitat conservation/ cultural/ historical or other interests b. scenic value, such as those providing an aesthetic and enjoyable experience c. differentiated trek/trail routes suited to rider/group size and ability d. supervision levels based upon initial assessment of rider ability and horse/rider compatibility 			✓		
H4 Refreshments are available	✓			<i>H4 Arrangements can be informal, but any such provision should be hygienically managed, and if operating as a Café then meet any required food and hygiene regulations</i>	
H5 There is a designated office/reception area or rest/meeting point	✓				

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H6 Supporting information for clients is available in either paper or digital format			✓	<i>H6 For example, informing clients about the centre, accessibility, guidance issued prior to attending</i>	
H7 There is a proactive system in place for receipt and measurement of client feedback	✓			<i>H7-9 How do you measure client satisfaction? Is the response to client suggestions or requests prompt and timely? Are processes in place, e.g. a suggestions box/ feedback forms, books or other positive review forums, such as Trip Advisor or tourism related reviews?</i>	
H8 Response to client requests are dealt with promptly	✓				
H9 Constructive feedback or ideas from clients has resulted in positive change	✓				

Trekking Centre - Trekking Standards

Overall Expectation:

Trekking differs from hacking as it involves a combination of both horsemanship and riding experience that offers a differentiated range of opportunities and challenges. These can be based upon a range of factors such as the location of the centre, terrain encountered and the duration of the ride, alongside seasonality influencing operations. The previous equestrian experience of clients may often be variable thus requiring trekking centres to have the capacity to meet a wide range of client abilities and to group them to suitable horses/ponies and appropriately organised routes for safe trekking.

Trekking may involve trail rides covering varying distances from the immediate yard location to more adventurous routes, such as involving an over-night stay, all of which require specific planning in terms of supervision and management for both horses and riders in a variety of environmentally influenced situations.

For this reason, successful assessment in the trekking standards category will only be awarded to Centres able to meet and adhere to the below higher standards

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>H1 At all times trekking is taking place, the member of staff nominated as the Ride Leader must be 18 years and hold as a minimum one of the below qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHS Stage 2 Ride Leader (or BET Assisstant Ride Leader) • BHS Stage 3 Complete Coach/BHSAI • BHS Stage 3 Trail Leader (or BET Ride Leader) • BHS Stage 4 Senior Trail Yard Manager (or BET Centre Manager) • Equine Tourism (ETQ) Level 3 • Equine Tourism (ETQ) Centre Manager 		✓	✓	<p><i>H1 - H4 This can be evidenced through submission (and regular updating) of the Staffing List and certificate copies if required (as per Accredited Professional Coach guidelines). Please contact us if you have additional qualifications, such as Expedition First Aid</i></p> <p><i>H1 In addition to qualifications, the CV for nominated Ride Leader(s) must evidence previous outdoor trekking industry experience</i></p>	
<p>H2 At all times trekking is taking place, there is a nominated competent person remaining on site to support the Ride Leader in the event of any incidents or emergencies</p>		✓	✓		

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>H3 For staff undertaking a supervisory role as either the Ride Leader or Ride Support, a centre specific induction must take place. This should be recorded in a logbook and cover specific competencies such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mounting riders • group size/ratios • ride and lead duties (as appropriate) • pre-departure procedures • trekking duration and managing the activity • trek return procedures • incident management including ride and lead 	✓	✓	✓	<p><i>H3 Induction/training to be undertaken by a holder of (as a minimum)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Equine Tourism (ETQ) Level 3</i> • <i>BHS Stg 3 Trail Leader (or BET Ride Leader)</i> • <i>BHS Stg 3 Complete/BHSAI with trekking industry experience</i> <p><i>A template Logbook is available</i></p>	
<p>H4 At all times trekking is taking place, there should be a First Aid qualified member of staff with each group of the ride/trek</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSE First Aid at Work or • BHS Equine Specific First Aid 		✓	✓	<p><i>H4 If multiple groups are out at the same time, there must be a first aider within each group</i></p>	
<p>H5 Only horses/ponies listed for use on the Local Authority License are used for trekking</p>		✓		<p><i>H5 Supported by the Riding School License List and the Centre's own list of horses/ponies in use</i></p>	
<p>H6 The range of horses and ponies are risk assessed and trained as suitable for</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. rider experience levels b. leading single/double aside other horses c. routes encountered, e.g. varying terrain d. positioning amongst other horses within the ride 	✓		✓	<p><i>H6 - H8 Written risk assessments are required as part of the Working Practice assessment and should be available should the inspector request to view them</i></p>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H7 The Centre has a safely fenced enclosed area or arena to undertake initial assessment of rider/horse compatibility	✓				
H8 Prior to trekking, undertaken by either the Ride Lead or Ride Support, the Centre induction for all riders should, as a minimum, include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. roles and responsibilities b. safety briefing c. PPE re-assessment/check d. practical initial assessment of their riding ability to ensure suitable matching to their horse/pony e. positional corrections to enhance security and balance f. required instructions e.g. adapting rein length 	✓		✓		
H9 The Ride Leader and/or Ride Support should carry with them a mobile phone (with good signal access) for use in emergencies	✓		✓	<i>H9 Advance knowledge of any poor signal areas should be known</i>	
H10 The Ride Leader/Support must carry with them an equine emergency first aid kit and a portable Human First Aid kit	✓		✓		

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H11 All riders to wear correctly fitted PPE, for example a riding hat to current standards, footwear suitable in design for riding or adaptation to stirrups, such as the use of 'toe stoppers' to reduce risk of entrapment of a boot/shoe	✓		✓	<i>H11 Hats should be clean and meet BHS standards with a schedule for replacement https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/tack-and-equipment/what-to-wear/headwear</i>	
H12 The use of Hi-Viz equipment is mandatory	✓		✓		
H13 Legible and accessible route maps are utilised to inform rest locations and risk assessments upon safety precautions involved with incident management	✓	✓		<i>H13 For example, utilising key location indicators, What3Words or GPS tracking for notification to the emergency services</i>	
H14 There is a centre-based protocol for accident/ incident management	✓	✓		<i>H14 This should inform Ride Leaders and Support upon procedures to follow, for example, allowance of remounting, communication plans and reporting procedures</i>	

Trekking Centre - Tack and Equipment

Overall Expectation:

A tack room that is dry, secure and tidy with adequate light and space to safely clean and store tack and associated equipment, will help in maintaining equipment in a safe and useable condition.

There should be room for saddle racks and bridle hooks to enable safe storage and a regular safety inspection process for cleaning and repairing all tack and associated equipment e.g. numnahs and girths

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A1 Secure and sufficient tack/equipment storage with safe saddle and bridle racks	✓			<i>A1 - A2 Saddles and bridle should be stored on their own stands/racks with labelling to avoid risk of incorrect tack being used</i>	
A2 There is a system for identification or labelling of tack	✓				
A3 Saddlery and tack must fit correctly, be safe, clean and well maintained with recorded checks for adjustment being made as required, e.g. seasonal or other	✓		✓	<i>A3 Correct check for fit undertaken by experienced person to maintain horses' comfort. As minimum, bits rinsed between use etc. The inspector will ask to sample a range of horses tacked up</i>	
A4 A record is kept to evidence regular safety inspections upon tack			✓	<i>A4 Proactive safety checks are recorded e.g. stirrups, girths, reins etc, this could be a list or in the yard diary</i>	
A5 Associated equipment, such as boots, rugs etc are tidily stored in the dry with minimal risk of creating obstructive clutter	✓				

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 All horses/ponies have their own set of correctly fitted tack			✓	<i>H1 Saddles and bridles are not shared, but designated for use to individual horses and ponies</i>	
H2 Centres retain regular use of a qualified saddler to support where required	✓		✓	<i>H2 For example, dressage saddles/jump saddles or adaptations such as ladder reins/bucket stirrups</i>	
H3 Tack is supple and routinely cleaned to a high standard	✓			<i>H3 Do records/invoices held detail saddler visits?</i>	
H4 The tack/storage room is organised with allocated storage for additional equipment	✓			<i>H4 An organised approach that enhances access to boots, stirrups, girths, saddle bags etc</i>	
H5 A security system is in place and adhered to by all users to minimise risk of theft			✓	<i>H5 Centre specific, for example, some may be determined by insurance requirements</i>	
H6 Livery contracts stipulate liability regarding theft or damage of equipment (if applicable)			✓		

Trekking Centre - Grassland and Turnout

Overall Expectation:

Access to turnout or grazing on well-maintained grassland is often considered a premium at many equestrian centres. Such restrictions may exist due to the location and accessibility to suitable land or seasonal influences such as inclement weather and effectiveness of soil drainage. Safe and secure turnout or grassland with access to water and shelter and an effective management programme forms the basis of assessment for BHS Approval. This assessment also includes seasonal grazing, alternative grazing such as a track system, and turn out that may be off site from the Centre. Turnout areas can include use of all-weather surfaced areas that have been provided to allow for situations when access to grassland is restricted.

Utilising their knowledge upon individual horses when determining either herd/group or individual turnout situations, Centres should manage an appropriate schedule or rota system for access to their grassland and turnout.

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A1 All boundary and divisional fencing should be safe, in a good state of repair and well maintained	✓		✓	<i>A1 Fencing materials can be found as an appendix at the end of the criteria.</i>	
A2 Grazing/turnout areas should be safe and easily accessible with secure field gates allowing easy access/egress	✓		✓	<i>A2 For example, do gates easily open/close and is there provision of a 'walk through' if needed</i>	
A3 There is safe access to a continual supply of clean water	✓		✓	<i>A3 For example, ground conditions don't prohibit safe access for horses or people</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>A4 Where water supply is reliant upon natural sources, such as springs or streams, there should be checks and alternative supply arrangements in place for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. pollution risk b. low water levels c. ease of access d. ensuring horses cannot wander/ escape fields 	✓		✓		
<p>A5 The grazing/turnout area is well maintained with a system for the management of droppings</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>A5 For example, dropping removal or harrowing with rest periods for grazing areas</i></p>	
<p>A6 An effective plan for ongoing maintenance of fields with systems in place to promote pasture quality, such as removal of weeds, poisonous plants or dangerous objects</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>A6 For example, the risk of over-grazing or a 'horse-sick' appearance to fields is minimal. For information upon poisonous plants https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/horse-care/pasture-management/poisonous-plants</i></p>	
<p>A7 Paddocks/turnout area to be relevant to requirement e.g. allowing safe stocking ratios for either grazing or turn-out</p>	✓		✓		
<p>A8 Horses should have access to natural shelter appropriate to any seasonal conditions whether extreme heat or rain</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>A8 Access to shelter should consider factors such as duration of turnout and companionship</i></p>	
<p>A9 Individual horse needs are considered when determining suitability of herd/stocking ratios/available acreage and access to grazing, e.g. provision for those at risk of laminitis/ obesity and appropriate herd groupings</p>	✓		✓		

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 The grassland management plan enables opportunity for either rotation of or separate Summer/Winter grazing provision	✓		✓	<i>H1 For example, the plan allows for grassland rest and growth periods</i>	
H2 All fencing is 'Horse safe', using good quality materials, professionally erected and well maintained (does not include Barbed Wire)	✓		✓		
H3 For welfare reasons, there is provision for permanent individual turnout paddock(s)	✓		✓	<i>H3 For example, a horse recovering from an illness or due to rehabilitation reasons</i>	
H4 There is planned management of gateways to minimise risk of injury caused by excessive winter mud	✓		✓	<i>H4 For example, this could be hardstanding or changeable sectioned access points</i>	
H5 There is access to regular all year turnout to maintain variety in exercise needs	✓		✓	<i>H5 If used as a turnout area as opposed to grazing, it should offer shelter with good drainage</i>	
H6 Where there is no natural shelter available, field shelters are available to ensure all horses have access to shelter	✓		✓	<i>H6 Such access should also recognise and service the duration of turnout period and if in a herd situation be sufficient in size/number</i>	

Trekking Centre - Safeguarding



Overall Expectation:

A key benefit of BHS Approved Centres is their understanding and support for applying best practice principles for Safeguarding in equestrianism. Not only does this offer assurance and protection for proprietors, their employees and clients alike, it also promotes an inclusive approach through promotion of safety and well-being of all groups at a BHS Approved Centre.

All BHS Approved Centres which have children attending their centre are required to comply with the BHS Safeguarding Policy and achievement of this assessment area is a pre-requisite for such Centres to join the scheme. The BHS Approved Centre Business Support team can help to advise and support Centres through the provision of all relevant guidance and information that that they may need.

The structured measures that Centre's undertake and implement involve nomination of a Centre Safeguarding Officer (CSO) who is the person within the Centre who has the competence, currency and authority to ensure adherence to their Safeguarding Policy. Maintaining compliance with BHS Safeguarding requirements through achievement of the below criteria, will be acknowledged as the Centre being fully compliant.

Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>A1 The Centre Proprietor, or a delegated person, is responsible for ensuring that all required Criminal Record checks have taken place on staff and volunteers.</p> <p>a. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland checks are legally required on all individuals who work or volunteer in 'regulated activity'</p> <p>b. In Scotland they are required on all individuals who are in 'regulated work'</p> <p>c. In Ireland Checks are required when working with children and vulnerable adults. The process in Ireland is called Garda Vetting</p>		✓	✓	<p>A1 For further information please visit our website at https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/corporate-information/working-with-the-law/criminal-record-checks</p>	

Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>A2 There should be at least one trained staff member appointed as the Centre Safeguarding Officer (CSO) responsible for child and adult welfare. Their contact details must be displayed at a central point that is accessible to all staff and clients. Centres to inform BHS Office should the nominated CSO change</p>		✓	✓		
<p>A3 The Centre Safeguarding Officer (CSO) must have attended either a BHS Safeguarding for Equestrians Workshop, or equivalent BEF Member Body Safeguarding Workshop or UK Coaching Safeguarding Workshop and has this updated every three years*</p>		✓	✓	<p><i>A3 Here is the link to provide you with further information upon how to access courses throughout the UK and Ireland https://pathways.bhs.org.uk/career-pathways/continual-professional-development</i></p> <p><i>*Accredited prior learning is considered – please contact safeguarding@bhs.org.uk for further information</i></p>	
<p>A4 The Centre should implement a Centre Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed regularly and shared with staff and volunteers.</p>		✓	✓	<p><i>A4 For Centres that do not have their own, a template BHS Safeguarding Policy is available for Centres to use</i></p>	
<p>A5 There is a 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 completion of a declaration form is required.</p>		✓	✓	<p><i>A5 Where no Under 18's attend the Centre, we can supply a Centre Safeguarding Declaration form</i></p>	
<p>A6 The Centre must agree to report any safeguarding concerns to the necessary organisations as detailed in the BHS reporting booklet and threshold document</p>			✓	<p><i>A6 Follow the below link to access https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/corporate-information/working-with-the-law/safeguarding-children/resources</i></p>	

Trekking Centre - Working Practice

Overall Expectation:

This assessment area requires Centres to have been operational for a minimum of 12 months and to be registered as either a Sole Trader, Partnership, a Ltd Company, Charity, or Community Interest Company (CIC). Compliance with legislative requirements to operate a business and applying best practice principles within any equestrian setting, offer assurance and protection for proprietors, their employees, volunteers, visitors and clients alike. Centres will need to meet a combination of legislative requirements with requests for documentary evidence of policies (statements) where needed. Where shortfall in any policy requirements may exist, such as for a new Centre applying for approval, then BHS guidance and templates can be provided through the Approved Centres Business Support team. A registered business with a clear management and communications structure for all involved will not only enhance further opportunities for the business, but importantly provide assurance to their clients.

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A1 Centre will need to have a. a current Local Authority Riding School License b. current Liability/Employers Insurance		✓			
A2 Centres will need to have and implement the following policies/plans: a. Health & Safety policy b. Data Protection/Privacy policy c. Covid Security Plan d. Use of Social Media e. Safeguarding Policy (Centre based or BHS) f. An emergency plan that includes coverage for the evacuation for staff, volunteers, clients and horses both onsite and for offsite trekking activity g. Transport plan that includes incident coverage such as access points/area, vehicle suitability and nominated drivers		✓		<i>A2 Where a Centre may not have such policies, BHS templates can be provided for Centres to adapt for their use</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>A3 Centres will need to have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. First Aid coverage (qualified staff) b. First Aid Kit(s) to be available at all times www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid c. An accident reporting procedure, including how and when to report to RIDDOR 	✓		✓	<p><i>A3 Coverage for FA needs to include reporting of accidents and be relevant to the size of a Centre and its activities, such as portable FA kits for treks/trail rides</i></p>	
<p>A4 There is a clear process for the review and assessment of incident/accident statistics with recorded outcomes</p>	✓			<p><i>A4 An initial review of any incident/accidents should be done automatically, the assessment would be how a centre records and communicates any changes to minimise repetition</i></p>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>A5 Centres will need to have written risk assessments for:</p> <p>A. Preventative Fire Risk Assessment, including records of Fire Evacuation procedure drills being undertaken on a routine basis and any resulting outcomes and actions</p> <p>B. A COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health) risk assessment</p> <p>C. Manual handling and horse care duties (including non-routine)</p> <p>D. Areas of the business that are accessed by staff/clients, for example stable yard, rider assessment area/arena, reception/office areas</p> <p>E. Horse/pony suitability for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use as an assessment horse • appropriateness of tack related to range of rider experience information upon • where to go in the ride, for example leading <p>F. Staff use of equipment, e.g. clippers, arena leveller (if applicable)</p> <p>G. All trail rides and trekking activities should provide detail such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of client initial ride assessment linked to ratio of Leaders/Clients for safe supervision • Route information that includes alternatives for any incident management, such as meeting points or blocked access of original route • Equipment (horse and human) linked to comfort, ride duration, such as spare lead ropes, saddle bags, horse and human first aid provision. • Emergency situations, such as effective communications and accessibility to intended base (over night), emergency services • Movement and the replacement of horse/pony if required, for example unsoundness or to meet client needs • Staff induction/experience in transporting horses, lone working allowances, loading/unloading, for example re-joining treks in progress or accessing off site trail/beach rides 		 (A5 a,c,d)		<p><i>A5 Consider all areas of the Centre that are accessible to staff / volunteers or used by them. Supporting information and risk assessment templates are available if needed. Inspector may choose to sample these documents during the visit</i></p>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A6 Siting of the muck heap, storage and removal should not contaminate waterways, and if required be sited on a concrete base	✓			<i>A6 Environmental legislation may differ within each nation, regarding construction and siting</i>	
A7 The centre should A. Adhere to all legal requirements for employment of staff, such as supply of job descriptions/employment contracts and meet minimum/living wage obligations for all employed staff B. Supply contracts for trainees/work-based apprentices C. Have an induction procedure for staff, including a Staff Handbook D. Ensure that any staff rest area/room is warm, clean and tidy	✓ (A7 d)		✓ (A7 a,b,c)	<i>A7 Support in this area is available through scheme membership, contact your Business Support Manager for further guidance if needed</i>	
A8 A documented appraisal system for employed staff			✓	<i>A8 - A9 This supports LA licensing requirements. Templates are available for use</i>	
A9 CPD and on-going training available for all staff			✓		
A10 For Centres offering residential accommodation for staff/students or residential camps, they should adhere to local authority requirements			✓	<i>A10 If in doubt, then check with your LA regarding any additional licensing requirements, for example, food hygiene certifications or HMO (Houses of Multiple Occupancy)</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A11 There is an induction procedure for when contractors are working on site			✓	<i>A11 This would be how you ensure their activity has minimal risk to, or disruption of activities</i>	
A12 A written complaints procedure is either on display or on the Centre website	✓		✓	<i>A12 Should a client be dissatisfied, is there a clear process to follow, for example, who should they raise it with. Templates are available if needed</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 There is a structured mentoring system for the Centre staff and volunteers	✓		✓	<i>H1 for example, how are new staff or volunteers supported?</i>	
H2 To enhance staff development, the Centre provides externally sourced CPD for staff. This includes non-equine provision.	✓		✓	<i>H2- H3 Such as attendance at training events, including on-line, or shadowing industry experts</i>	
H3. There are clear career development and progression opportunities for existing Centre staff	✓		✓		
H4 The Centre funds or partially funds APC/BHS assessments/other assessments to encourage staff development.	✓		✓	<i>H4 For example, have other opportunities been provided to staff to help maintain their currency, such as further outdoor expedition training</i>	
H5 There is a current and completed Risk register for business			✓	<i>H5 - H6 Specific to each Centre, these enable businesses to consider any threats to their business, prioritise actions and communications to inform a Crisis management plan for any priority risks – if you need help, templates and further information is available</i>	
H6 The Centre has a Crisis management plan (informed by the Risk register)			✓		

Trekking Centre - Trekking Assessment Appendix



Provision of quality trekking on suitable and appropriately trained and experienced horses and ponies is the core of the BHS Approved Trekking Centre Scheme. This section is assessed through a combination of practical observation and discussions upon the procedures individual Centres have in place to ensure safe practice is followed with correct supervisions being undertaken throughout.

Consistency in high standards of horse welfare and operating a safely managed environment should apply across all provision. Centres should have pre-trekking/trail ride planning in place and this together with additional information provided to and received from clients in advance, will assist centres in their preparations and add to the success of the client experience on the day.

For many clients whether experienced or not, frequently they will be riding a horse or pony in a situation they have not previously encountered. For this reason, the clarity and detail offered in the initial client induction and the consequent initial ride assessment they receive will help to ensure a successful experience.

Horses or ponies should be matched to the rider experience levels with the initial assessment content taking in to account the age, fitness, and capability of the riders. Centres use the initial ride assessment to assess safety, horse and rider compatibility and to provide clear explanations upon equipment adjustments, staff roles, procedures and commands.

The friendly approach, ability and experience of the Ride Leader and Ride Support should enhance the experience, learning and enjoyment for all clients and be to the benefit of the horses and ponies in use.

From initial assessment through to the ride, Ride Leaders should be able to recognise a rider's ability, manage their expectations and ambitions, and to maintain safety for the duration of the ride, whether within a group or individual setting.

Criteria for BHS Approval <i>Inspector will observe criteria during visit</i>	Done?
A1 Treks/Trails are shown on a daily plan or schedule that recognises and takes account of the individual allocated workload for the horses and ponies	
A2 The nominated member of staff undertaking the initial assessment upon rider ability has an appropriate qualification and experience (as per Trekking Standards Assessment) or is supervised by someone with an appropriate qualification and experience to support such trainees	
A3 Horses and ponies are clean, groomed appropriately and well presented for the trek/trail	
A4 Horses and ponies are wearing saddlery that fits	

Criteria for BHS Approval <i>Inspector will observe criteria during visit</i>	Done?
A5 Tack and equipment include provision for trekking specific activities, such as lead lines / couplings / headcollars / saddle bags (as per Centre procedures)	
A6 There is safe supervision for the level of the rider ability and any spectators whilst horses and ponies are taken to the assessment and mounting area	
A7 Where leaders/assistants are used, they have been assessed through induction as being competent to assist with mounting, adjusting stirrups and leading (if required to do so), and to wear correct PPE for the activity	
A8 The riders are mounted on horses of a suitable height and type who are risk assessed as being suitable for the activity	
A9 Riders to wear the correct PPE for the activity e.g., hats, boots, gloves, hi-viz as required	
A10 The aims of the assessment are clearly stated and explained with rider acknowledgement and agreement	
A11 The format of the assessment is safe, relevant to the ability of the riders and shows clear understanding of the level of the horses and riders' fitness.	
A12 Where applicable, rider horse/pony allocations are adapted to ensure compatibility.	
A13 Ride Lead/Support clearly strives to aid rider experience by raising the skill level and enhancing the understanding of the riders in a safe enjoyable environment	
A14 The Ride Lead/Support uses a variety of communication skills. (voice, tone, body language, varied vocabulary), in a timely and effective manner, thus promoting rider interaction and enjoyment	
A15 The Ride Lead/Support/other staff member or proprietor are clearly able to discuss the strategies employed by the centre to maintain and develop the horses training, suitability and way of going	