

A light brown horse with a white blaze on its face is looking out from a stable stall. The stall has a metal door and a yellow wall. The horse is wearing a dark blue blanket. The background is dark, suggesting the interior of the stable.

The
British
Horse
Society

Approved Centre Criteria

Riding Schools

Approved Centre Criteria Introduction

Welcome to the assessment criteria for becoming a BHS Approved 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.

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 yard and facilities, observe the horses and ponies in your care 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.

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 be able to progress to the higher level by meeting additional criteria to achieve the accolade of Highly Commended. 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

Riding School - 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 few 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 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 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	✓				
A17 Where stables are used for a short period, for example during the day between lessons, 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>	

Riding School - Client Experience

Overall Expectation:

Visual evidence of high standards of horse care, being suitably matched with a happy healthy horse or pony combined with a safe well delivered session and a genuine ethos of good customer care, all contribute to a positive experience for clients.

From clear signage and directions about where to go on initial arrival at a Centre or any restricted areas, combined with friendly and welcoming staff, all serve to enhance the first impression into being a positive and welcome experience.

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? Eg 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, tidy and accommodating with suitable lighting provided in all areas	✓				
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>	
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>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A6 Rider registration forms are completed with regular updates, for example rider emergency information and contacts			✓		
A7 An initial assessment upon riding ability should be undertaken and recorded for all new riders			✓		
A8 All riders should wear hats that meet current British safety standards. Where a Centre provides hats they must be fit for use with documented safety checks. Poster display recommended			✓	<p><i>A8 Hats should be clean and meet BHS standards with a schedule for replacement</i> https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/tack-and-equipment/what-to-wear/headwear</p>	
A9 Where used, Centre website and any social media platforms, such as FB, are accurate and up to date	✓		✓	<p><i>A9 Does the website accurately represent what the centre currently offers clients eg. up-to-date prices and event details</i></p>	
A10 The Centres price list is current and supported with a clear cancellation policy/statement	✓		✓		
A11 Clear contracts are in place for loan/ lease/working livery clients			✓	<p><i>A11 Evidencing this links with A5 requirements in the Horse Care assessment criteria</i></p>	
A12 Clearly visible, legible Fire Procedures are in place	✓			<p><i>A12 For example, emergency signage and meeting points etc</i></p>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 Clients have access to optional loyalty or engagement schemes			✓	<i>H1 For example, multiple session discounts/club opportunities, British Riding Clubs or similar 'in-house' training or social events that help progression</i>	
H2 Clients have progression opportunities through in house activities, such as own a pony day/BHS Challenge Awards, Pony Stars or the Centres' own competitions	✓				
H3 Refreshments are available	✓			<i>H3 Any such provision to be hygienically managed and to meet food and hygiene regulations, e.g. if operating as a Café</i>	
H4 There is a designated office/reception area	✓				
H5 Supporting information for clients is available in either paper or digital format			✓	<i>H5 For example, informing clients about the centre, accessibility, guidance issued prior to lessons</i>	
H6 There is a proactive system in place for receipt and measurement of client feedback	✓			<i>H6 - H8 How do you measure client satisfaction? Is response to client suggestions or requests prompt and timely? Are processes in place eg a suggestions box/ feedback forms/adaptations to lesson timings to evidence 'best practice' and positive reviews</i>	
H7 Response to client requests are dealt with promptly	✓				
H8 Constructive feedback or ideas from clients has resulted in positive change	✓				

Riding School - Coaching Standards

Overall Expectation:

Centres that can provide riding lessons that offer clients quality coaching and tuition on well cared for horses or ponies in a safe and inclusive learning environment, are pivotal to the longevity and success of a riding school. Horses and ponies should be schooled, experienced, fit and able to meet the needs of their intended range of riders. Supported by appropriately experienced Coaches, the format of the session, whether group, semi or a private lesson, should maintain and develop the riding experience for all clients in an enjoyable, informative and safe environment. Lessons should have access to secure (fenced) arenas that are a minimum of 20x40m in dimension with a surface that is level and well maintained to limit dust.

During an Approved Centre inspection visit, the Approved Centre Inspector will observe regular client lesson(s) and provide feedback on session(s) seen.

To achieve the higher standard grade in this assessment area, lesson observation(s) and the below assessment criteria must both achieve compatible grades. Centres who have the minimum of a BHS Stage 3 Complete Coach at all times teaching takes place can access the higher standards.

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A1 At all times teaching is taking place, as a minimum requirement, there should be a member of staff on site who has both of the following qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BHS Stg 3 Care and Lunge BHS Stg 2 Teach 		✓	✓	A1 This can be evidenced through submission (and regular updating) of the Staffing List and certificate copies if required	
A2 At all times teaching is taking place, there should be a First Aid qualified member of staff on site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSE First Aid at Work or BHS Equine Specific First Aid Certificate 		✓	✓	A2 This can be evidenced through submission (and regular updating) of the Staffing List and certificate copies if required Relevant certificates will be required (as per Accredited Professional Coach guidelines) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSE First aid at work or BHS Equine Specific First Aid Certificates 	
A3 Only horses/ponies listed for use on the Local Authority License are used for sessions			✓	A3 Supported by the Riding School License List and the Centre's own list	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A4 The quality of instruction meets the standard for BHS Approval using the 'Lesson Assessment' criteria	✓			A4 A copy of the lesson assessment criteria is available as an appendix Session(s) will be assessed at the Centre inspection	
A5 Sessions are inclusive and structured to encourage progression throughout the lesson	✓				
A6 The range of horses and ponies are risk assessed and suitable for use in sessions and are compatible for their riders	✓			A6 - A8 Written risk assessments are required as part of the Working Practice assessment and should be available should the inspector request to view them	
A7 The centre has (generic) written risk assessments for their lessons that are shared with coaches	✓				
A8 Where sessions occur outside of the arena(s), for example in a field or onsite such as farm tracks, a generic written risk assessment will be needed	✓				
A9 Arenas should be a minimum of 20mx40m	✓				
A10 There must be one arena (20m x 40m) with safely constructed perimeter fencing	✓				

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>A11 Arena(s) should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A gateway/entrance wide enough for safe entry and exit of horses, that allows vehicle access for both maintenance and in case of emergency b. a level arena surface, with equipment in place to ensure regular maintenance of the surface occurs c. working drainage to support the surface and enable use throughout the year d. a surface free from excessive dust or an effective watering system to minimise dust 	✓		✓		
<p>A12 Where fenced in, the perimeter fencing on an outdoor arena should be safely constructed</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>A12 Smooth surfaced materials, such as wooden rails or arena walls at height compatible to use, as a guide minimum 4ft 6/1.4m</i></p>	
<p>A13 Where a covered arena is fitted with kicking boards, these should have a smooth surface, be free from sharp edges/holes</p>	✓			<p><i>A13 Ideally there should be no protrusions inside or into an arena, any unavoidable (non-removable) protrusions should be padded to minimise risk of injury</i></p>	
<p>A14 Any spectator viewing areas with a glass frontage should feature safety glass in their construction</p>			✓		
<p>A15 Any arena equipment, such as jump wings, poles etc when not in use are safely stored</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>A15 This would be an agreed location, adhered to by all to minimise risk from clutter etc and to enable full use of arena by other users</i></p>	
<p>A16 Where a Centre provides equipment for client use, there are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. arena letter/markers b. mounting block(s) c. safe jump poles/stands d. safety cups 	✓		✓	<p><i>A16 This would be relevant to the Centre, but where jumps are used with back rails on jump stands, then safety cups should be provided for use</i></p>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 At all times teaching is taking place, as a minimum requirement, there is a member of staff on site who has either of the following qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHSAI • BHS Stage Three Complete Coach 		✓	✓	<i>H1 This can be evidenced through submission (and regular updating) of the Staffing List and certificate copies if required</i>	
H2 All teaching staff hold either of the below First Aid qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSE First Aid at Work or • BHS Equine Specific First Aid Certificate 		✓	✓	<i>H2 This can be evidenced through submission (and regular updating) of the Staffing List and certificate copies if required</i>	
H3 There is a Centre based protocol for accident/incident management	✓			<i>H3 This should inform coaches upon procedures to follow, for example, allowance of remounting, communications and reporting procedures</i>	
H4 There is a planned in house or external mentoring system for trainee coaches	✓			<i>H4 For example, nominated coach mentors and records of CPD opportunities</i>	
H5 Clients have regular access to coaches with qualifications greater than a Stage Three Coach in Complete Horsemanship or BHSAI qualification e.g. BHSII or BHSI	✓	✓		<i>H5 This would be provided within the Centre Staffing list</i>	
H6 The Centre has affiliation to either a British Riding Club, Pony Club, RDA Accessibility Mark or can evidence affiliation to other equestrian participation schemes			✓		
H7 There is a study or lecture area that can provide a conducive learning environment	✓		✓	<i>H7 When in use, this area would need to be free from interruptions</i>	

Riding School - Hacking and Riding Out

Overall Expectation:

The offer of hacking and riding outside of the arena environment should be an enjoyable and safe experience for both clients and horses. Centres should be able to evidence the safe practices they have in place to make this a supervised and enjoyable experience. This should be achieved through ensuring their provision is well organised, with appropriate matching of horses and riders, advance knowledge and understanding of proposed routes and supervision by competent and experienced staff throughout.

Access to safe and enjoyable off-road hacking is considered a premium and a high priority for many riders. Where a centre can offer direct access (with minimal roadwork) to quality hacking routes then the allocated grade for this area will be considered to be higher standard providing the below criteria for approval can be met.

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A1 Prior to riding out, for new clients, an initial assessment of rider ability is undertaken by the Centre coach to ensure compatibility of both horse and rider			✓	<i>A1 Where riders regularly ride at a Centre, their riding ability is already known, hence only a requirement for new clients</i>	
A2 The member of staff nominated as the 'Ride Leader' must have sufficient authority and hold The British Horse Society Ride Safe or Riding & Road Safety Test Certificate	✓	✓	✓	<i>A2 This information would be provided on the previously submitted staffing List</i>	
A3 The Ride Leader must have a first aid qualification and carry with them a portable First Aid kit	✓	✓	✓	<i>A3 This information would be provided on the previously submitted staffing list</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A4 For staff undertaking a supervisory role as either Ride Leader or Ride Support, there should be a Centre specific induction training and assessment by a Coach who is, as a minimum, a BHS Stage Three Coach in Complete Horsemanship, BHSAI, a holder of the Equine Tourism (ETQ) Level 3, or an Equine Tourism Manager (ETM)	✓	✓	✓	A4 This information would be provided on the previously submitted staffing List . Assessment of competence should be supported by a training logbook, a template is available	
A5 Centres provide risk assessments upon routes to Ride Leaders in advance	✓		✓	A5 This area is covered in the assessment of Working Practices	
A6 The Ride Leader and/or Ride Support should carry with them a mobile phone (with good signal access) for use in emergencies	✓		✓	A6 It is recommended that use of 'What3Words' is considered to help with identifying location of the ride	
A7 The use of Hi-Viz equipment is mandatory when hacking out	✓		✓	A7 It is recommended that where possible, Hi Viz is also placed on horses, should one become loose	
A8 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	✓		✓	A8 Information upon the correct current Hat Standards is available in Working Practices assessment https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/tack-and-equipment/what-to-wear/headwear	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 When hacking or riding out there is a variety of terrain for example, accessible roads, tracks and/or fields to suit all paces with circular routes of varying lengths	✓		✓	<i>H1 - H3 This would be evidenced by documents such as the route maps (H4) and supporting information that is provided to the Ride Leaders</i>	
H2 The routes offer variety such as access to a combination of any of the following: beach rides, woodland, coastal, riverside, mountain or farmland	✓		✓		
H3 There is access to off-road routes via minor roads within half a mile of the centre	✓		✓		
H4 There is a detailed, legible Emergency Plan in place for accidents/incidents when riding out	✓	✓			

Riding School - 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, eg 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 eg stirrups, girths, reins etc, this could be a list or in 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 There is a variety of equipment for use to enhance rider progression, OR additional equipment to encourage accessibility provision	✓			<i>H2 For example, dressage saddles/jump saddles or adaptations such as ladder reins/bucket stirrups</i>	
H3 Centres retain regular use of qualified saddler to support where required	✓		✓	<i>H3 Do records/invoices held detail saddler visits?</i>	
H4 Tack is supple and routinely cleaned to a high standard	✓				
H5 The tack/storage room is organised with allocated storage for additional equipment	✓			<i>H5 An organised approach that enhances access to bandages, lungeing equipment/spare girths and stirrups etc</i>	
H6 A security system is in place and adhered to by all users to minimise risk of theft			✓	<i>H6 Centre specific, for example, some may be determined by insurance requirements</i>	
H7 Livery contracts stipulate liability regarding theft or damage of equipment			✓		

Riding School - 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 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 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, eg 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 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>	

Riding School - 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?
A2 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		✓	✓	A2 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/safeguarding/	
A3 There should be at least one trained staff member/volunteer (see A2) appointed as the Centre Safeguarding Officer (CSO). Details of the CSO to be displayed at a central point accessible to all staff and clients. Centres to inform BHS Approved Centres should the nominated CSO change.		✓	✓		
A4 The Centre should implement a Centre Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed regularly and shared with staff and volunteers.		✓	✓	A4 For Centres that do not have their own, a template BHS Safeguarding Policy is available for Centres to use	
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.		✓	✓	A5 Where no Under 18's attend the Centre, we can supply a Centre Safeguarding Declaration form	
A6 The Centre must agree to report any safeguarding concerns to the necessary organisations as detailed in the BHS reporting booklet and threshold document			✓	A6 Follow the below link to access https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/corporate-information/working-with-the-law/safeguarding-children/resources	

Riding School - 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		✓		<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 riding out</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>	
<p>A5 Centres will need to have written risk assessments for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Preventative Fire Risk Assessment, including records of Fire Evacuation procedure drills being undertaken on routine basis and any resulting outcomes and actions B. A COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health) risk assessment C. Manual handling and horse care duties (inc non-routine) D. Areas of the business that are accessed by staff/clients, for example stable yard, arena and reception/office areas E. Horse/pony suitability re handling and ridden use F. Staff use of equipment, eg clippers, solarium, horse walker, arena leveller etc G. Generic activities within the Centre, for example lesson(s)/hacking and other activities H. Facilities provided by the Centre for client use, such as the arena, show jumps and XC fences are risk assessed for suitability for use, in good repair and safely maintained 		<p>✓ (A5 a,c,d)</p>	✓	<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 concrete base	✓			<i>A6 Environmental legislation may differ within each nation, re 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 This supports LA licensing requirements. templates are available for use</i>	
A9 CPD and on-going training available for all staff			✓	<i>A9 This supports LA licensing requirements. templates are available for use</i>	
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 re 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 lessons or access to arenas etc</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 etc. Template is 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 relevant competition experience</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)			✓		

Riding School - Lesson Assessment Appendix



Overall Expectation:

Provision of quality riding lessons on appropriately schooled horses and ponies is the core of the BHS Approved Riding Centre Scheme.

The assessment of riding lessons and the quality of the teaching and coaching is a key element of the inspection process. Consistency in high standards of horse welfare, safely delivered instruction and coaching should apply to every session across all levels of a centres provision, from a child or adults first experience through to clients who are pursuing formal career or competitive achievement.

Horses or ponies should be matched to the rider attributes and experience levels, the session content in terms of experience and ability with neither horse or rider being expected to perform at levels detrimental to fitness and capability. The ability and experience of the coach should enhance the experience, learning and enjoyment for the rider and the benefit of the horses and ponies in use.

Throughout the sessions, coaches should be able to recognise rider's ability, manage expectations and ambitions to encourage progression to an agreed target (goal), whether within a group or individual setting.

Targets or goals can be many and varied, from simple engagement in an enjoyable activity such as weekly clients maintaining positional balance when learning to canter, through to an individual's ambition achievements, for example, meeting the needs of those who wish to progress through a professional career route, such as the BHS Career Pathway or towards a competitive discipline.

Criteria for BHS Approval <i>Inspector will observe criteria during visit</i>	Done?
A1 Lessons observed are shown on a daily plan that recognises and takes account of the individual allocated workload for the horses and ponies.	
A2 The coach delivering the lesson has an appropriate qualification and experience or is supervised by someone with an appropriate qualification to support such trainee instructors	
A3 Horses and ponies are clean, groomed appropriately and well presented for the session	
A4 Horses and ponies are wearing saddlery that fits	

Criteria for BHS Approval <i>Inspector will observe criteria during visit</i>	Done?
A5 There is safe supervision for the level of the rider ability and spectators whilst horses and ponies are taken to the school or mounting area	
A6 Where leaders/assistants are used, they have been assessed through induction as being competent to lead, and wear correct PPE for the activity	
A7 The riders are mounted on horses of a suitable height and type	
A8 Riders to wear the correct PPE for the activity eg. hats, boots, gloves and body protectors as required	
A9 The aims of the session are clearly stated and discussed and explained with rider agreement	
A10 The format of the lesson is safe, relevant to the ability of the riders and shows clear understanding of the level of the horses and riders' fitness	
A11 The horses/ponies used are suitable for the level and content of session	
A12 The content of the session is safely delivered	
A13 The coach clearly strives to aid improvement by raising the skill level and enhancing the understanding of the riders in a safe enjoyable environment	
A14 The coach 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 coach/other staff member or proprietor are clearly able to discuss the strategies employed by the centre to maintain and develop the horses training and way of going	

Criteria for BHS Approval <i>Inspector will observe criteria during visit</i> Highly Commended	Done?
H1 The lesson is based on positive outcomes with the coach showing encouragement, involvement and commitment to rider development. The coach summarises the achievement throughout the lesson and sets progression	
H2 A range of delivery styles is used. (teaching, instructing, coaching, demonstrating, facilitating)	
H3 The coach seeks evidence of learning via Q&A's, riders demonstrating skills, and group discussion (where applicable)	
H4 Lesson relates to previous sessions and/or prepares for planned future sessions (could include definable outcomes eg achievement award or competition)	
H5 The coach can discuss their own CPD including training and career aims	
H6 The coach can discuss the session objectively including horse/rider assessments, the value of self- reflection and future planning for the riders and the horses	

Riding School - Grassland and Turnout Appendix

Acceptable Types of Fencing Materials

Wooden post and rails

- a. Minimum 2 rails at height suitable to deter and minimise escape risk

Hedging

- a. Non-poisonous variety that is sufficiently established in growth to ensure all year security. Addition of other fencing to support security as required

Stock fencing

- a. if as divisional fences, it is recommended that off-set electric fencing should be used.
- b. if as boundary fence alongside hedging

Horse Safe netting

- a. Must be constructed the correct way up (smaller holes lower down) with additional supplementary fencing, such as top rail provision to enhance security and visibility

Plain wire

- a. if used as a divisional fence visibility for the horse(s) must be maintained, for example use of ribbon/visibility strips
- b. if used as an electrified divisional fence then single strand (with ribbon/visibility strips)

Barbed wire

- a. there should be evidence of mixed grazing e.g. cattle and or sheep, or the grazing land should be grazed by livestock at other times of the year which necessitates the need for such fencing
- b. where there is no mixed grazing e.g. horses only, the barbed wire should ideally be removed or an inner fence should be used to prevent horse access
- c. barbed wire should not be used in any field divisional arrangement.
- d. only be permitted in a boundary fence in conjunction with stock netting closely bordered by a hedge that provides sufficient boundary to the field or an inner fence should be used to prevent horse access.
- e. both fencing and hedge should be in good repair with no loose wire.

Electric fencing

- a. Supplied from the main electricity supply. Wooden posts providing permanency to the structure. Minimum two strands (either tape or cord or flexi construction) and differentiated in height.
- b. Temporary (battery/solar supply) electric tape/rope (with plastic posts) Recommended for use in divisional sectioning of fields, not sole boundary fencing.

Iron railings

- a. For example, situated in parkland settings where there would be a minimum of 2 horizontal rails with no upright protrusions, such as flat top parkland railings, and set at differentiated heights to deter and minimise risk of escape.

Stone Walls

- a. Well maintained at sufficient height and reinforced with safe fencing as needed