

A 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 halter. The background is dark, suggesting the interior of the stable.

The
British
Horse
Society

Approved Centre Criteria

Facility Centre

Approved Facility Centre Criteria Introduction

Welcome to the assessment criteria for becoming a BHS Approved Facility 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 Facility 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 provides 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 regular announced inspections, which take place every other year. Whether you need policy templates, risk assessment guidance or advice on how to meet the Safeguarding requirements, you will have access to all of our templates and data sheets.

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

Facility Centre - Client Experience

Overall Expectation:

All Centres are busy and those with a tidy appearance, professionalism and good working practices enhance their success. Friendly and welcoming staff all serve to enhance the first and lasting impression. Clients visit specifically to benefit from the facilities provided by a Centre. Visual demonstration that a Centre is making a substantial commitment to the safety and enjoyment of visitors and clients supports a genuine ethos of good customer care and a positive client 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 A first impression is often lasting. Unnecessary clutter or an untidy Centre may negatively influence</i>	
A2 Clients and visitors are greeted in a friendly and approachable manner	✓				
A3 There are clean toilets with handwashing facilities	✓			<i>A3 Are regular checks in place to ensure access and fit for purpose?</i>	
A4 There is a clear system for all communication relating to a. available facilities b. hire charges and refunds c. availability of the facilities d. booking confirmations e. access to parking e.g. available space f. postponement or cancellation of bookings g. insurance regarding liability requirements	✓			<i>A4 Is it clear what is available and what is on offer e.g. is the price list up to date and is help available?</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 information? If not, we can help with templates</i>	
A6 Where used, Centre website and any social media platforms, such as FB, are accurate and up to date			✓	<i>A6 Does information accurately represent what the centre offers clients? Is it proactively managed e.g. are price lists up to date with information upon any events?</i>	
A7 All riders should wear hats that meet current British safety standards. Poster display recommended			✓	<i>A7 You can access information here https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/tack-and-equipment/what-to-wear/headwear</i>	
A8 Clearly visible, legible Fire Procedures are in place	✓			<i>A8 For example, emergency signage and meeting points etc</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
Highly Commended					
<p>H1 A clean and comfortable meeting/ rest area is provided for clients with refreshments available</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>H1 Any such provision to be hygienically managed and to meet food and hygiene regulations, e.g. if operating as a Café</i></p>	
<p>H2 The Centre website is up to date and provides information upon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Centre team (employees) b. Available facilities c. Event Calendar d. Online Booking system e. Communications (as per A4) f. Over-night visits (where applicable) g. Accident/incident procedures 	✓		✓	<p><i>H2 Information should be current, with outline information in each area to inform and guide client expectations</i></p>	
<p>H3 The Centre website enables clients to view/download the following Centre Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Safeguarding b. Covid security c. Biosecurity d. Horse Vaccinations e. Over-night stabling (where applicable) f. Equality/Inclusivity/Diversity g. Complaints 	✓		✓	<p><i>H3 These would be specific to each Centre. Templates are available for adaptation</i></p>	
<p>H4 There is a proactive system in place for receipt and measurement of client feedback</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>H4 How do you measure client satisfaction? Is there a suggestions box or evidence 'best practice' and positive reviews?</i></p>	
<p>H5 Response to client requests are dealt with promptly</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>H5 Are responses given in line with the timeframes specified in the centres complaints policy</i></p>	

Facility Centre - Facilities

Overall Expectation:

A BHS Approved Facility Centre is able to provide safe and well-maintained facilities for hire. Although not a pre-requisite to become a BHS Approved Facility Centre, many operate as competition venues with affiliation to competitive disciplines or other more diverse non equine provision and events. Each Facility Centre will differ according to their catchment area, customer base and particular equestrian specialism(s) that they may offer, for example, a venue specialising in the provision of cross country may have no requirement to supply use of an arena.

This assessment samples the facilities available for hire to customers as a competition venue and for other users, many of whom may range from individual horse owners visiting with their horse, external coaches facilitating clinics/lessons and riding clubs holding competitions and events. Alongside being clean, tidy and well maintained, any facilities provided should enhance the experience for clients and their horse. All facilities should be constructed and utilised with safety and practicality being of the foremost importance.

For a Centre to attain the higher standards within this assessment area, the centre should meet a minimum of 50% of the criteria within the higher standards assessment.

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A1 Where a Centre has arena (s) they should be positioned in a secure area to minimise risk of straying should a horse become loose	✓			A1 - A2 Any restrictions upon horse/rider numbers in arenas should be clearly signposted	
A2 Any riding arena or area to be relevant in size and type to the activities, for example suitable in size for warm up if used in a competition situation	✓				

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>A3 Where a Centre has arena(s) they 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>A4 Where fenced in, the perimeter fencing on an outdoor arena should be safely constructed</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>A4 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>A5 Where a covered arena is fitted with kicking boards, these should have a smooth surface, be free from sharp edges/holes</p>	✓			<p><i>A5 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>A6 Any spectator viewing areas with a glass frontage should feature safety glass in their construction.</p>	✓		✓		
<p>A7 Any arena equipment, such as jump wings, poles etc when not in use are safely stored</p>	✓		✓	<p><i>A7 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>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
<p>A8 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>A8 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>	
<p>A9 Where grass areas are utilised for training or competition, they must be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. well maintained b. securely fenced and gated 	✓		✓	<p><i>A9 There should be a maintenance programme in place to enable and support seasonal use</i></p>	
<p>A10 For Centres that only offer Cross Country as their provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. there is a selection of well-maintained cross-country schooling fences that offer variety such as height range and complexity suitable for training b. fences are flagged c. route maps indicating access points for emergency use d. designated emergency signage 	✓		✓	<p><i>A10 All fences must be securely fixed to the ground with take -off and landing areas free from poaching and rough or stony areas. Use of portable fences compliant with British Eventing guidance</i></p> <p><i>A10d – signage should include location coverage for emergency access, e.g. O/S Grid ref/What3Words etc</i></p>	
<p>A11 There is secure, well maintained and accessible parking for trailers and lorries</p>	✓			<p><i>A11 Risk of horses escaping on to roads should be prevented, e.g. gated entrance/exits and alternative contingency plan if use is limited</i></p>	
<p>A12 Arena dimensions are a minimum 20x40m</p>	✓		✓		
<p>A13 Lighting should enable safe access between arenas from parking and stabling</p>			✓		

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 An additional arena with minimum dimensions of 20x60m	✓		✓		
H2 There is an indoor/covered arena with dimensions of a minimum of 20x40m	✓		✓		
H3 Training mirrors are correctly positioned in an arena			✓	<i>H3 Safety mirror materials to be used and fastened securely</i>	
H4 There is a PA system (providing coverage to the arena and lorry park)	✓		✓		
H5 Timing equipment is provided for use	✓		✓	<i>H5 This can be in situ or a mobile system</i>	
H6 Arena lighting is provided for ridden use in the dark, with a system for emergency lighting provision	✓		✓	<i>H6 For competition use, this should apply for both warm up and competition arenas, e.g. use of generator or other</i>	
H7 There is a seated area that provides viewing over the arena	✓		✓	<i>H7 If seating is level with the arena, this should be partitioned off to minimise risk</i>	
H8 The viewing area is covered/ sheltered from adverse weather	✓		✓		
H9 A suitably placed judges box	✓		✓	<i>H9 Judges box adjacent to or inside arenas</i>	
H10 There are dressage arena boards and arena markers up to 20x60m requirements	✓		✓	<i>H10 - H12 All equipment should meet the needs for facilitating affiliated competitions</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H11 There are show jumps including a range of fillers to enable construction of a SJ course to minimum RC/BS competition standards	✓		✓		
H12 There are arena event jumps including range of styles to enable construction of a simulated arena cross country XC course	✓		✓		
H13 There is covered storage for arena equipment with easy access to the arena	✓		✓	<i>H13 This could be a container or a lean-to construction</i>	
H14 There is a full XC course that offers variety such as height range and complexity suitable for training and competition. Fences are flagged with route maps indicating access points for emergency use.	✓		✓	<i>H14 All fences must be securely fixed to the ground with take -off and landing areas free from poaching and rough or stony areas. Use of portable fences compliant with British Eventing guidance</i>	
H15 Stable yards and surrounding areas should be kept free from risk of excessive equipment/storage that could compromise entrance/exit routes	✓		✓	<i>H15 Stable yard, muckheaps and surrounding areas should be safe, accessible and well maintained with minimal potential for hazards</i>	
H16 Stables must be clean, well ventilated, safe in construction. Height and size sufficient to allow comfort and movement for the horse, thus encouraging those stabled over night to lie down	✓		✓	<i>H16 All stabling should have secure fixtures and fittings, be free from hazards or leaks, doors at suitable height/width which open/close freely</i>	
H17 Siting of the muck heap, storage and removal should not contaminate waterways, and if required be sited on a concrete base	✓		✓	<i>H17 Environmental legislation may differ within each nation, regarding construction and siting</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H18 There is permissible CCTV and/or other security system in place with stabling	✓		✓	<i>H18 - H19 The Centres' data protection policy would need to inform clients regarding CCTV use and client remote viewing facility</i>	
H19 Clients can utilise a wifi enabled system (or other) to view their horse when stabled	✓		✓		
H20 There is a safe area for washing down horses	✓		✓	<i>H20 A safe designated area with sufficient space for washing horses e.g. avoiding risk of slip on drains or kicking each other</i>	
H21 There is access to water	✓		✓		
H22 There is access to electrical hook up facility for lorries	✓		✓		
H23 There is provision of other facility that is specialist to the Centre, for example, treadmill, hydro pool or other	✓		✓		

Facility 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?
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		✓	✓		
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>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</p> <p><i>*Accredited prior learning is considered – please contact safeguarding@bhs.org.uk for further information</i></p>	
A4 The Centre should implement a Centre Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed regularly and shared with staff and volunteers.		✓	✓	<p>A4 For Centres that do not have their own, a template BHS Safeguarding Policy is available for Centres to use</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>A5 Where no Under 18's attend the Centre, we can supply a Centre Safeguarding Declaration form</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>A6 Follow the below link to access https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/corporate-information/working-with-the-law/safeguarding-children/resources</p>	

Facility Centre - Working Practice

Overall Expectation:




This assessment area requires Centres to be registered as either a Sole Trader, Partnership, a Ltd Company or Charity. 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, 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 that they and their horses needs are of paramount importance.

Centres will differ in the provision they offer and depending upon Centre size, may require employment of staff.

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A1 Centre will need to have a. Commercial Public Liability Insurance b. Employers Insurance		✓		<i>A1 If a Centre employs staff or works with volunteers, then Employers Insurance cover should be in place</i>	
A2 Centres will need to have and implement the following policies / plans: a. Health and Safety policy b. Data Protection / Privacy policy c. Covid security plan d. Use of Social Media e. Safeguarding Policy (Centre based or BHS) f. Biosecurity Plan g. Horse Welfare Policy h. An emergency plan that includes coverage for the the evacuation for staff, volunteers, clients and horses		✓		<i>A2a-e Where a Centre may not have such policies, A BHS template can be provided for Centres to adapt for their use</i> <i>A2f This details how a Centre minimises risk, for example, compliance with guidance provided by competitive diciplines upon visiting horses, ensuring all used stabling is cleaned between use for day and overnight occupancy</i> <i>A2g This outlines the procedures a Centre would follow if they recieved concerns upon welfare standards</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 relevant to Centre activities b. First Aid kit(s) to be available at all times c. An accident reporting procedure, including how and when to report to RIDDOR d. A process for the review and assessment of incident/accidents 	✓		✓	<p><i>A3 Provision to be relevant to the centre, e.g. if the Centre organised competitions or external hire. To include provision of an accessible first aid kit, a process for reporting of accidents that should include any visiting coaches</i></p>	
<p>A4 Centres will need to have written risk assessments for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preventative Fire Risk Assessment, supported with recorded evidence of a Fire Evacuation procedure drill being undertaken on a routine basis and any resulting outcomes and actions b. A COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health) risk assessment c. Manual handling (where applicable) d. Areas of the business that are accessed by staff / clients, for example arenas, parking and reception / office areas e. Staff use of machinery or equipment (if appropriate) f. Any Facilities provided by the centre for internal/ external client use, such as arenas, show jumps and XC fences are risk assessed for suitability for use, in good repair and safely maintained 	✓	✓ <i>(A4 a)</i>	✓	<p><i>A4a Consider all areas of the Centre that are accessible to visitors/ staff/ volunteers or used by them, such as arenas</i></p> <p><i>A4c For example moving of arena equipment, fences etc</i></p> <p><i>A4e For example using arena levels/quad bike etc</i></p> <p><i>Supporting information and risk assessment templates are available if needed</i></p>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Approved	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
A5 Booking and hire agreements/codes of conduct are in use		✓		<i>A5 Should include use of PPE, where required, any stipulations upon sole rider/hirer situations, use of the arenas. Coach agreements upon insurance. Templates for Coach agreements are available</i>	
<p>A6 Where staff are employed, the centre should</p> <p>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</p> <p>b. Supply contracts for trainees/work-based apprentices</p> <p>c. Have an induction procedure for staff, including a Staff Handbook</p> <p>d. Ensure that any staff rest area/room is warm, clean and tidy</p> <p>e. Documented appraisal system for employed staff</p> <p>f. CPD and on-going training available for all staff</p>	✓ (A6 d)		✓	<i>A6 Only applies where staff are employed at the centre. Support in this area is available through scheme membership for Centres who employ or contract freelance staff. Contact your Business Support Manager for further guidance if needed Templates are available for use</i>	
A7 For Centres offering residential accommodation for staff/students or residential camps, they should adhere to local authority requirements			✓	<i>A7 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>	
A8 There is an induction procedure for when contractors are working on site	✓			<i>A8 This would be how you ensure their activity has minimal risk to safety for clients e.g. when arenas are in use</i>	
A9 A written complaints procedure is either on display or on the Centre website		✓		<i>A9 Is there a clear process for a client to follow, for example, who should they raise a concern with? A template is available if needed</i>	

Criteria for BHS Approval Highly Commended	Inspection Visit	Submit Online	Self Declaration	Preparation Notes	Done?
H1 The Centre's biosecurity plan includes a system for horse traceability, for example, knowledge of horses stabling overnight				<i>H1 This could be records of horse to stable allocations, communications plan, to horse owners to contact etc</i>	
H2 There is a current and completed Risk register for business				<i>H2 - H3 Specific to each centre, to consider any threat to business, prioritise actions and communications for any priority risks. For example, communication plan regarding biosecurity threat, unplanned loss of arena use (flooding), notifiable diseases - if you need help, templates and further information is available</i>	
H3 The Centre has a Crisis management plan (informed by the Risk register)	