Riding Centre Criteria

The British Horse Society

A1. Horse Welfare

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

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

To be Commended

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

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

To be Highly Commended

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

A2. Safeguarding

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

A2.1 All BHS Approved Centres and BRC Centres are legally required to request Enhanced DBS checks on all individuals who work or volunteer in regulated activity, unsupervised and on a regular, frequent or overnight basis. In Scotland this is governed by the PVG scheme. In Ireland individuals need Garda Clearance and in Northern Ireland individuals need Access NI criminal records checks. The Centre proprietor, or delegated person, is responsible for ensuring that all required checks have taken place.
A2.2 At least one trained staff member responsible for child welfare who has attended a BHS Safeguarding and Protecting Children Workshop or Sports Coach UK Safeguarding and Protecting Workshop and has updated every three years
A2.3 At least one trained staff member to be appointed as the Centre Welfare Officer (CWO) for the centre. Details of the CWO to be displayed at a central point accessible to all staff and clients.
A2.4 BHS Safeguarding policy in place
A2.5 Clear policy regarding the care and supervision of Under 18's when at the centre. If there are no Under 18's permitted at the Centre a declaration confirming this is required.

A3. Customer Care

The customers' experience is paramount to the success of any business. An excellent first impression and welcoming staff will serve the centre well. Even a busy working yard can have the appearance of order and professionalism which will enhance the reputation of the centre.
A3.1 Positive overall first impression
A3.2 Welcoming and friendly staff
A3.3 Correct signage (for directions and information and health and safety)
A3.4 All working liveries to have a current livery contract

A3.5 Support for liveries and their horses
A3.6 Evidence of clear system of communication e.g. a diary booking system, arena booking system

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

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

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

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

A4. Teaching, Coaching and Riding Out

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

Teaching/Coaching

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

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

For all Centres offering Riding Out/Hacking

A4.4 All centres to have documentary evidence that all riding out activities and routes are risk assessed and this information is provided to Ride Escorts/Leaders in advance
A4.5 All escort staff must hold The British Horse Society Ride Safe or Riding & Road Safety Test Certificate
A4.6 All escort staff must be first aid qualified
A4.7 Must carry a portable Ride Leader First Aid kit
A4.8 Must carry a mobile phone for use in emergencies
A4.9 The use of Hi-Viz equipment is mandatory when riding out
A4.10 All riders to wear correctly fitted riding hat to current standard and footwear designed for riding which is deemed safe

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

A4.11 BHS Stage 2 or Pony Club B Test or ETQ Ride Leader Level 2 or appropriate professional experience
A4.12 Centres to undertake Centre Specific Training (supported by a training log book) and assessment by a Stage Three Coach in Complete Horsemanship or a BHSAI upon Ride Leader/Escort competence. The training and assessment must include as a minimum, ride supervision, riding ability, age and incident management, such as riding and leading.

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

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

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

The BHS Inspector will undertake a minimum of one lesson observation during the inspection and this will be graded using the lesson observation criteria. To achieve a grading of Commended or Highly
Commended both the lesson observation and the criteria must achieve the same rating. The lesson observation will form the basis of the grading for teaching in addition to the criteria below.

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

To be Commended

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

To become Highly Commended

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

A5. Facilities

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

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

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

To become Commended

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

To become Highly Commended

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

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

A6. Tack and Tack Rooms

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

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

To be Commended

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

To become Highly Commended

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

A7. Grassland Management & Turnout

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

A7.1 Well maintained pasture with management of droppings

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

To be Commended

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

To become Highly Commended

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

A8. Legislative Compliance

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

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

A8.15 Riders to wear the correct PPE for the activity e.g. hats, boots, gloves and body protectors as required. Riding hat to the current standard must be worn at all times when mounted. Where riding hats are provided they must meet current standards, be safely stored, clean and fit for purpose with clearly documented records of regular safety checks

A8.16 Rider registration forms completed and in place. Rider emergency contact details should be regularly updated.

A8.17 Rider assessments to be carried out for all new clients and recorded on rider registration form

A8.18 Be able to demonstrate suitable and sufficient staff training practices to include records of induction, a written training policy and appraisal.

A8.19 Contact details of the veterinary surgeon and out of hours provision to be displayed prominently next to an accessible telephone

A8.20 Documented Standard Operating Procedures in place as per licensing requirements.

A8.21 A documented complaints procedure, with records of all complaints received and any actions taken

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

C8.1 A clear management structure and system of communication

C8.2 Job descriptions and responsibilities provided for all employed staff

C8.3 Contracts for trainees/work based learning apprentices

C8.4 An induction procedure for other work contractors

C8.5 Staff handbook in place

C8.6 CPD and on-going training provided for all staff

C8.7 Staff rest area / staff room to be warm, clean and tidy

C8.8 Routine regular and documented reviews occur of Health and Safety

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

HC8.1 A written induction procedure for other work contractors

HC8.2 Evidence of a Fire Evacuation procedure drill undertaken on routine basis with a record of the time and date when the fire drill took place and any outcomes or actions

HC8.3 Documented effective Health and Safety audits are undertaken as routine practice