



## Information & Support Pack



accessibility mark   
RDA in partnership with hoof



## What is Accessibility Mark?

Accessibility Mark is a Sport England funded project launched by Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) in partnership with Hoof, the British Equestrian Federation's (BEF) participation programme. The aim is to provide training, assistance and accreditation to riding centres, schools and clubs to enable more disabled people to participate in horse riding activities.

Centres successfully completing the training and assessment will be given a recognised accreditation from RDA – Accessibility Mark – to demonstrate their ability to safely and competently accommodate those with a range of disabilities into their programmes. The scheme will be underpinned by RDA, drawing on their extensive expertise in this area in order to provide riding schools with the training and support.

Hoof is the British Equestrian Federation's (BEF) participation programme, working to increase participation in equine based activities in England. In order to achieve this, Hoof has developed a number of mechanisms to support and sustain growth of the industry;

- Develop riding products to suit specific target markets based on extensive market research
- Provide equestrian business support and training and give opportunities for development of partnerships and cohesion through the industry
- Provide and raise awareness of funding opportunities both through the BEF and via external sources
- National promotion of equestrianism and Hoof products including the use of celebrity ambassadors
- Development of coaching pathways to ensure all equestrian participants are offered a high standard of learning

The Accessibility Mark accreditation is aimed at centres approved by the British Horse Society (BHS), the Association of British Riding School (ABRS) and The Pony Club Centres (TPC). It will be up to each individual centre's circumstances, staffing and facilities to decide on the level of support they will be able to offer potential participants and therefore the specific types of disabilities they are able to accommodate will vary depending on the centre.



## What are the benefits?

The project has been designed to encourage RDA groups and equestrian centres to work together.

- Increase revenue by attracting new clients.
- Marketing pack and access to online Accessibility Mark and Hoof marketing materials including an arena banner and leaflets.
- Contact with marketing company including initial press release and ongoing support with coverage and articles.
- Ongoing support from Accessibility Support Officers and RDA nationally.
- Increased profile for your centre locally and nationally - providing the opportunity to win new business and retain existing clients.
- Invitations to take part in additional training opportunities such as a customer care, business development, funding applications and marketing workshops to enhance your business and contribute to personal development of your staff members.
- Access to RDA proficiency test system, RDA tracker and other educational programmes – a series of tests aimed at providing a progressive and structured approach to developing skills and knowledge. A resource pack is available at an additional cost per centre.
- An annual Accessibility Mark plaque to promote your accreditation.
- Advice on specialist equipment from your Accessibility Support Officer.



## What requirements does my centre need?

- Hold a valid riding school licence
- Accreditation to the British Horse Society (BHS), Association of British Riding Schools (ABRS) or The Pony Club (TPC).
- To meet mandatory health and safety and insurance requirements.
- To ensure \*qualified staff can coach participants through the programme.
- To ensure qualified volunteers can assist participants in sessions.
- To follow guidelines for delivery, and respond to feedback from clients during the programme.

\* All Coaches wishing to teach Accessibility Mark lessons will need to be qualified to at least UKCC Level 2 or equivalent. (Please enquire with RDA National regarding alternative acceptable qualifications). Training will then be given to Coaches by their Accessibility Support Officer at a training day held at the centre. Any new Coaches joining the centre will need to organise a training day with an ASO to be able to take part in the scheme. As the training is centre specific, if an Accessibility Mark Coach moves to a new centre, they will need to re-apply for Coach accreditation. The new centre will also need to apply for centre accreditation if not already Accessibility Marked.

During the initial assessment, a centre will be asked to provide copies of the following documentation:

- Centre's insurance certificate
- Council riding school licence
- List of first aiders and certificates
- Equine profiles and records
- Confirmation of Coaches' qualifications and certificates
- Risk assessment and fire policies
- Safeguarding policy
- Confirmation of external accreditation, for example BHS, ABRS.



## What training will we receive?

Following registration and payment of your initial £95 non-refundable deposit, your centre will be visited by an Accessible Support Officer (ASO) where an initial assessment will take place. This visit will include assessment of the facilities, potential horses, Coaches and volunteers during which the ASO will guide centres through the necessary requirements to become an Accessibility Mark accredited centre. Once the ASO is confident that the centre meets the necessary requirements, a training day will be arranged.

The training day will take place at the centre, and all Coaches who wish to participate in coaching Accessibility Mark riders must attend. Centres are also encouraged to invite as many other staff and volunteers to attend as well. The day will focus on the theory and practical elements of delivering riding opportunities to disabled participants and the following will be demonstrated and discussed:

- Theoretical sessions to discuss different disabilities.
- Therapeutic benefits of riding
- Methods of communicating with riders of different disabilities
- Initial rider assessments – discussion and observations
- Developing a suitable and safe environment for riders with disabilities
- Advice on horse/pony selection and suitable training of equines
- Guidance on accessibility of your facility
- Learning and understanding coaching techniques for different levels and types of disability
- Development of appropriate rider coaching programmes tailored to the individual's capabilities
- Guidance and practical demonstration of assisted mounting and dismounting
- Particular practical training and guidance will be given on the following three key areas – Correct leading, assisting with mounting and dismounting and acting as a side helper.
- Demonstrations on the use of specialist equipment

The ASO will tailor the timing and structure of the day to accommodate your centre.

## How much will the accreditation cost?

Prior to the initial assessment day a non-refundable fee of £95 is required to cover the cost of the ASO's travel and time spent carrying out the Assessment. Once this has been successfully completed a training day will be organised at a cost of £190. The Accessibility Mark accreditation works on an annual basis therefore each centre will be required to pay an annual subscription fee of £190.

If you feel that your centre requires more training or assistance then an additional training day can be arranged at a fee of £190. It is important that the centre completes all recommendations made by the ASO prior to the training day to seek to prevent additional visits and therefore subsequent additional costs.

## Volunteers

Volunteers may come from any background, equestrian or non-equestrian. A willingness to get involved and help others is key. All volunteers must agree to work under the riding school's health and safety and safeguarding policies. Volunteers are encouraged to attend the training day held by an ASO for Coaches in order to gain their volunteer training. Once the centre has Accessibility Mark trained Coaches, these Coaches can then train volunteers without the support of an ASO.

A record system based on the RDA 'Green card' will be used to keep track of training. This creates a record of training signed off by both Coach and volunteer. A sample of these will be supplied to the centre by the ASO. It is the centres responsibility to check their insurance policy regarding volunteers.

## Horses

Think carefully when choosing suitable horses to make available to your new clients, considering the following points:

- Different disabilities will have different needs. For example someone in a wheelchair will need a horse that isn't frightened of the equipment; someone with a vocal learning disability will require a horse that is not fazed by noise.
- Horses need to have a sound forward pace and be responsive to aids
- Sometimes the ability to stand at a mounting block for 10-15 minutes may be required without the horse getting frustrated or unhappy; the rider's disability can affect how long it takes them to get on the horse.
- Horses will need to be able to cope with being led.
- Some riders will require the horse to be surrounded by two side walkers and a leader.



Each centre will need to take responsibility for training their horses as demonstrated by the ASO on the training day. The ASO will be able to help and support the centre when selecting suitable horses.

## Rider Data

Feedback is an essential part of this initiative as Hoof and RDA need to report regularly to the project funders, Sport England, on the successes and challenges of increasing participation. This is vital for us to continue to receive investment for initiatives such as the Accessibility Mark.

Centre feedback will be gathered by the BEF Hoof team. We will send a quarterly email with a simple form requesting your rider numbers. When you receive the email requesting your data please fill in your details at your very earliest convenience as this will help us in our quarterly reporting to Sport England.

## Media support

A separate media pack is available from RDA National Office. Please contact the Accessibility Co-ordinator for information about media support.

## Accessibility Support Officers

RDA National Office, who is co-ordinating the training and accreditation for the Accessibility Mark, will be able to answer any specific questions relating to the project itself and queries regarding riding lessons for disabled people. Please find the Accessibility Mark Co-ordinators details below:

- RDA National - Accessibility Mark Coordinator – Jo Hayward  
E: [jhayward@rda.org.uk](mailto:jhayward@rda.org.uk)  
T: 01926 476300

Your assigned Accessibility Support Office (ASO) will be there to support you and help you wherever possible once you have completed the training day. They can provide help and guidance (or point you in the right direction) with any RDA issues including rider specific questions, specialist equipment, horse selection and training etc. They can also offer additional training if requested - this will be for a fee.

## Following Accreditation

Once accredited, centres will be able to purchase the RDA Centre resource pack which will include the RDA proficiency test syllabus and certificates. Please see the resource pack price list at the back of this document.

Each centre will also receive marketing materials to help promote Accessibility Mark at their centre through leaflets, posters, a centre support pack and a banner to be displayed at the centre.

## Reassessment

### Reaccreditation

will need to be sought one year after accreditation and on an annual basis thereafter

### Contact

RDA will contact you when your accreditation period is nearing its end to organise a reassessment day

### Cost

the reassessment and additional training day will cost £190 and includes the updated fixture for your plaque

