**New Rider Assessment – things to consider**

The new rider assessment form is a basic form that RDA UK have put together for riders to have some sort of assessment before they start riding.

This will help you as a coach decide whether you have the facilities, knowledge, equines to help the rider. Here are some examples of things to bear in mind when asking the participant or their carer/parent about a certain condition.

**Epilepsy**

Gathering information about the type of seizures and what happens when a seizure occurs helps you prepare your helpers. Every rider is an individual and each group needs to assess and manage the risk in their own riding situation. Obviously, an adult with frequent seizure activity, on a big horse, will have greater risks than a small child on a small pony. It is quite common for seizures in children to occur during sleep to wake times (i.e. early morning or evening times) which is less of a risk when riding than if they have random seizures at any time without warning, with loss of consciousness. Making sure there is regular communication about any changes in medication or seizures with parents, carers and riders is very important. There may be situations when riding is not safe but this should be approached on an individual basis. It may be helpful if a diary of seizure activity is kept and shared by parents or carers. Things to bear in mind:

* 1. What type of epilepsy does the participant have or what happens when seizures occur?
* 2. How long does the seizure usually last?
* 3. How frequently do the seizures occur?
* 4. Is there a warning of a pending seizure (i.e. headache, aura)?
* 5. Do the seizures occur (or more likely to occur) at certain times of the day i.e. sleep/ awake times?
* 6. What medication do they take?
* 7. Does the rider lose postural control (i.e. likely to fall down) during a seizure i.e. drop seizure or tonic-clonic?
* 8. Is there likely to be an after effect (i.e. drowsiness, lack of personal awareness, confusion, loss of bladder control)?
* Epilepsy Policy. Make sure people are aware of it. it is listed in Policies on the MyRDA website as RDA Epilepsy Policy.

**Autism –** It is a good idea to get a background on participants with Autism. Each participant may present with very different strategies to cope with world around them and new environments. As well as learning whether the participant has met horses before the following considerations will help build a picture about how they will cope within a session.

* 1. Are there any “triggers” to cause behaviours that maybe challenging?
* 2. Is there anything that definitely needs avoiding?
* 3. Does the rider show any repetitive behaviour (“stimming”) which may affect / upset the horse, e.g. sudden shouting /noise, clapping, hitting, rocking.
* 4. Indicate the rider’s tolerance to touch / handling which may be unavoidable when getting on or off the horse (including putting a hat on).
* 5. How does the rider cope with transitions / change of activity / change of horse or helper?