



**Press release**June 2020

**Report reveals impact of lockdown on disabled community**
*Widespread impact on physical and mental wellbeing*

Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) has launched a report into the impact of lockdown on its members. COVID-19 has forced the closure of all RDA groups around the UK, leaving many disabled people unable to access regular exercise and social activities. The report shows significant negative impact on physical and mental wellbeing, confidence levels and social skills.

Over 3000 members of the RDA community took part in the study, including disabled participants, family members, carers, teachers and RDA volunteers. Among participants, 80% said that being unable to access RDA has had a negative impact on their physical wellbeing, 77% say the same is true of their mental wellbeing, 59% have noticed a drop in confidence 51% say it has affected their social skills.

xxxxx rides/drives at xxxxx RDA group in xxxxx. “(*insert quote about impact of lockdown/looking forward to return and/or ways the group have supported during lockdown*).”

As well as the significant impact on physical and mental wellbeing, the report also highlights the invaluable role played by RDA groups in helping their communities through lockdown. With many RDA members – including volunteers – reliant on RDA for a socialising and friendships, groups around the UK have been adapting their activities to help members stay in touch.

Zoom quizzes and photos of the horses might seem like just a bit of fun, but the report shows that these connections make a real difference in how people are coping with the current situation. Over 70% of participants said their RDA group had been important, quite important or vital in helping them during lockdown.

The study also asked members about their concerns about returning to RDA activity when the time comes. Over a quarter of participants and their support networks *do* have some worries. These range from personal concerns about fitness and confidence levels, to the practicalities of social distancing and hygiene.

RDA UK carried out the research in order to understand how prolonged closure would affect its community, and also to help with the support and preparations for restarting activities when possible. Right now, only a handful of RDA’s 500 groups have been able to reopen, offering riding activities only to those who do not require any additional support.

With many groups struggling financially without regular income or fundraising events, RDA is launching a second phase of nationwide fundraising. The ‘Resilience’ campaign reflects the differing needs of groups around the UK: those in immediate financial risk, those adapting their services during lockdown and those planning for restart.

For more information and to donate to the campaign visit [www.rda.org.uk](http://www.rda.org.uk).

Ends

**About RDA**

Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through horse riding, carriage driving and hippotherapy. Through a network of around 500 volunteer groups throughout the UK, RDA provides opportunities for therapy, achievement and enjoyment, improving health, wellbeing and self-confidence, and benefiting mobility and co-ordination.

* RDA brings together 500 volunteer groups throughout the UK
* More than 25,000 adults and children enjoy the benefits of riding or carriage driving
* Each year more than 18,000 dedicated volunteers give a total of more than 3.5 million hours of their time

**For more information:**

(*insert contact details here)*