



Trustee Welcome Pack



WELCOME TO RDA

As a trustee the decisions you make will help your group to make a real difference to the lives of children and adults with disabilities.

At RDA, our objectives are to develop and support opportunities for therapy, achievement and fun for our riders, carriage drivers and vaulters. By becoming part of the management team at one of our 500 groups you play a key role in helping us achieve this aim.

We know that your group will make you very welcome and, on behalf of RDA UK we would like to add our appreciation and thanks to you for joining us in this important role.

If you can't find what you are looking for, or would like further information, please don't hesitate to contact the team at National Office.

Throughout the year RDA National Office staff and trustees make many visits to groups and attend as many events and Regional meetings as possible, and we do hope that we shall have an opportunity of meeting you. Alternatively, if you would like to visit National Office, we should be delighted to hear from you and you are assured of a warm welcome.

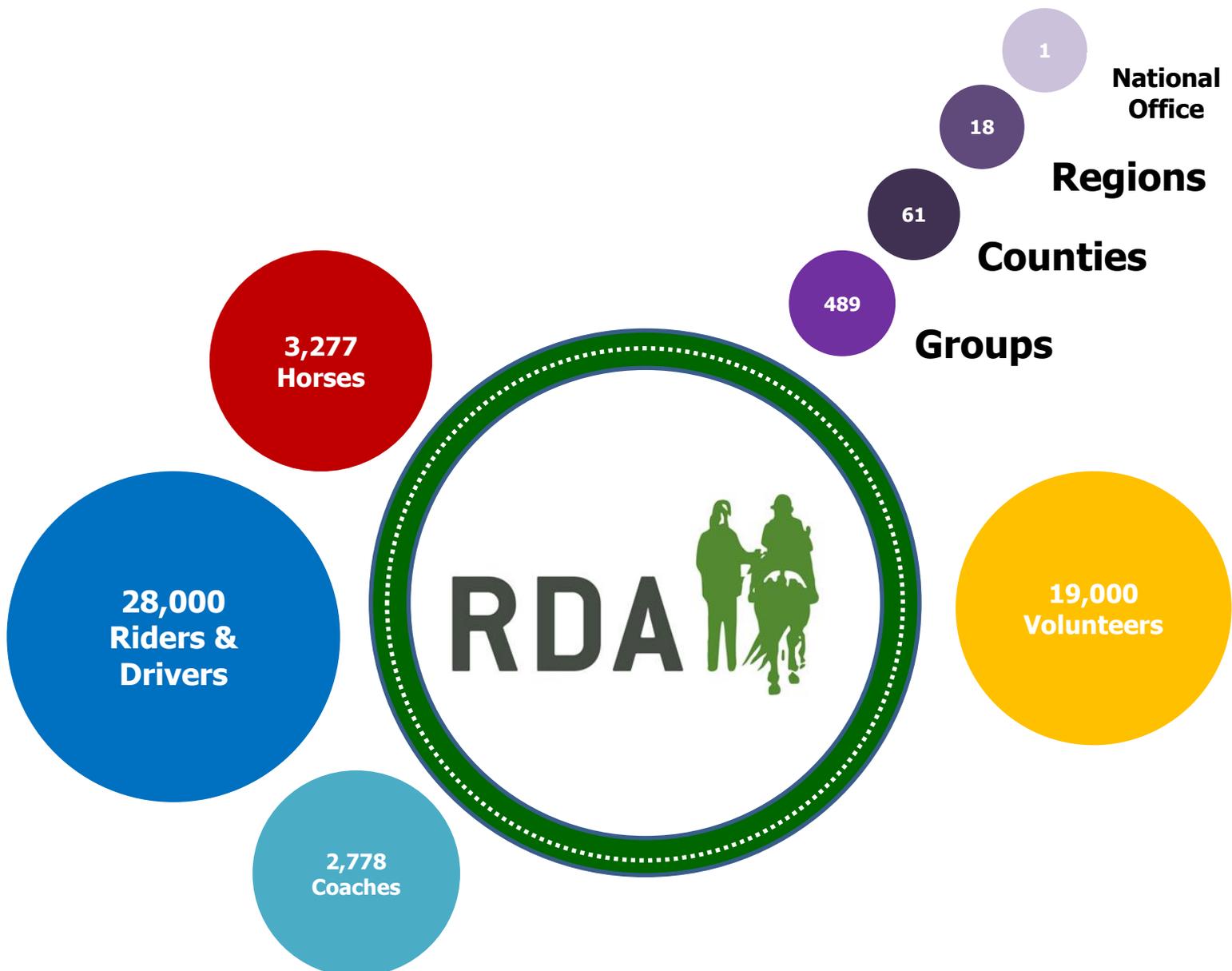
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ed Bracher', with a small dot at the end.

Ed Bracher,
Chief Executive, RDA UK

THE BIG PICTURE

RDA UK is a nationwide organisation with over 45 years' experience in delivering world class therapeutic riding and carriage driving to people with disabilities. We are recognised both nationally and internationally for the expertise of our coaches, our progressive "can do" attitude and the skill and accomplishments of our riders and drivers. We are part of the British Equestrian Federation.

RDA UK represents and supports the 489 member Groups of RDA. Together these Groups with the help of 19,000 volunteers RDA enables enable 28,000 people to take part in riding, carriage driving and vaulting with a focus on ensuring that each individual has the chance to derive a direct therapeutic benefit and the opportunity to achieve their personal goal.



THE ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN RDA GROUP TRUSTEE

a) **Protecting the assets of the group**

It is the trustees' role to protect the assets of the charity - in most cases this means money, but it would also apply to other assets (horses, buildings, etc.) - and to ensure that they are properly used for the charity's best interests.

b) **Strategy**

The trustees decide what the charity should do – it is their role to define the longer-term plans and aspirations for the group.

c) **Responsibility to meet legal and operational needs**

The trustees must meet the legal and operational needs of the charity – these include issues defined by the government and appropriate governing bodies.

DELEGATION

Whilst Trustees cannot delegate responsibility, they do not have to do everything themselves - but they are responsible for making sure that things get done. While in most RDA Groups, Trustees will also be actively involved in the delivery of RDA sessions, this does not have to be the case.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Trustees are **collectively** responsible for strategic decisions – i.e. all Trustees are equally responsible for all aspects and cannot simply delegate the responsibility to another Trustee.



BEING A TRUSTEE – THE BASICS

Becoming a Trustee

Trustees are voted in by the group's members through a resolution at a Group AGM or EGM.

As these meetings occur on an infrequent basis trustees may join the committee prior to this as a co-opted member after being voted in by the existing trustees. Co-opting is simply a mechanism for bringing someone on to the committee at any time. As a Co-opted member you still have full voting rights.



Trustees' Meetings

Trustees carry out their role through attending and participating in trustee or committee meetings. It is at these meetings that the main strategic decisions for the group are made.

Meetings should be held a minimum of 4 times per year with the addition of the Annual General Meeting. If your group is incorporated you must have a minimum of 1 meeting every six months.



Governing Documents

RDA trustees should be aware of the framework under which they will be required to carry out their responsibilities.

The **Mem & Arts** (for incorporated groups), the **Group Constitution** (for unincorporated groups) and the **CIO Constitution** (for CIOs) set out the framework for the constitutional management of the group including Election of Trustees, Conduct of Meetings, Voting Members and Voting, Powers and Duties.



If you have been approached to become a trustee you should ask the group to see a copy of this document along with the most recent accounts so you have a clear idea of your responsibilities.



INSURANCE & PROTECTION FOR GROUP TRUSTEES

Many trustees are concerned about the extent of their liability in the event of a claim of negligence or mal-practice against the group. There is protection in place but like all insurance it does depend on the trustees being able to show that they have acted in good faith and appropriately.

RDA Groups can take different legal forms which offer different levels of protection.

Unincorporated

In an unincorporated group the elected trustees are recognised as legal identities with personal liability for debts and other liabilities.

Incorporated

In an Incorporated Group the group becomes a limited company and so has its own legal personality distinct from its members which means the liability of the trustees is limited.

Incorporation gives the trustees security that insurance alone cannot provide and is essential to ensure the best protection for groups who own property, have a lease or large contract or employ staff.

Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs)

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation is a slightly simpler legal form, which carries the same protection as incorporation but only requires the charity to report to the Charity Commission or OSCR and not Companies House.



As an elected Trustee, you are covered by the RDA Trustee Indemnity Insurance for up to £7.5 million as well as public liability insurance for £20 million.

GETTING STARTED

Getting started as an RDA Trustee is a simple process, however there are some key steps to take before you begin volunteering. To get started you will need to complete the following...

Volunteer Application Form

If you are a new volunteer you will need to complete an application form which will include providing two referees. All information provided to the group is confidential and will be used for RDA purposes only.

Trustee Acceptance Form

You will need to sign a trustee acceptance form to demonstrate you understand the role and responsibilities of being an RDA Trustee.

Conflict of Interest Form

As a trustee you have a legal duty to act in the charity's best interest when making decisions. It may be that a decision needs to be made where you have a personal or other interest which may affect your ability to make a decision in the interest of the charity. This is a conflict of interest.

Having a conflict of interest does not mean you have done anything wrong however it is important to declare this conflict of interest and withdraw from discussions and voting on matters where this applies.

In order to help manage a conflict of interest an important first step is to complete a conflict of interest form upon becoming a trustee.

Disclosure Check

If your role means you are actively involved in delivering an RDA session you will be asked to complete an enhanced disclosure check. The Group Safeguarding Officer will be able to support you with this.



SUPPORT FOR RDA TRUSTEES

Being a trustee of a charity may appear daunting but with the right support and information the role can be both exciting and satisfying.

RDA Lawline

Tel: 0121 2143681
Ask for Shivaji

Call us for Advice

For support on matters relating to governance.

Julie Elliston
T: 01926 405 962
E: jelliston@rda.org.uk

Claire Milican
T: 01926 405 969
E: cmilican@rda.org.uk



The Essentials of RDA Membership

This document provides all the essential information about running an RDA group and is an invaluable document for RDA trustees. You can order a copy for free by using the RDA Group Order Form.



RDA Website – www.rda.org.uk

The RDA website lists all important news updates as well as all of our resources for groups on the Governance pages of the Running Your Group section.



Training for Trustees

RDA provides a variety of training opportunities for Trustees including a half day Governance workshop and an e-learning course which provides a great introduction for new trustees.

<http://www.rda.org.uk/runningyourgroup/volunteer-training/>

