

GETTING STARTED UPDATE 10th JULY 2020



Updates:-

1. We now have **43 groups who have re-started** and are taking sessions with RDA participants. We know groups are at different stages in their plans – some will be pushing on with their own planning and preparation, whilst others will be waiting for more easing of lockdown.

One group that has opened has provided the following message of encouragement:-

“Working through the 5 key steps of guidance meant so much planning, thinking through, reorganising the venue, contacting riders and volunteers, writing the risk assessments (and so much cleaning!) to get to those 7 questions on the Trustee checklist. Those 7 questions represented hours and hours of work but as a group that has been back in operation for over a week – believe me- all that time and hard work is worth it.

I had my heart in my mouth as the first rider arrived. Thinking and planning from a desk to ensure everything is as safe as it could possibly be is so different to actually delivering a session.

A week on and the feedback has been so positive from everyone. To see the joy in our rider’s faces as they got back in the saddle and the gratitude from the families reminded us all why we love RDA.

Our volunteers have needed reassurance that even though we are only working with a handful of riders, they are making a difference again. I am so confident that our procedures are working well and we are looking forward to building up our sessions to include some unmounted sessions. “It’s what you CAN do that counts” is ringing true now more than ever and our riders, families and volunteers need us.”

2. We have had a number of messages from groups who either need a horse/pony or have a horse/pony who would benefit from being somewhere they could be working as their group is not going to open for a while.

In an effort to support groups, we are setting up a “**horse matching**” service.

If your group has a pony that you feel could support another group during this easing of lockdown period – please complete the new [Horse Loan Form](#) on the Getting Started Page and send by email to groupsupport@rda.org.uk

If you are a group who is in need of a pony to help get started and would welcome taking on an RDA pony for a short or medium term loan, please email groupsupport@rda.org.uk to register your interest.

As and when we have details of any RDA ponies available, we will then liaise with those who have registered an interest to try to match a pony to a suitable group.

3. The UK Government has changed the guidelines around those who are **clinically extremely vulnerable**. Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, as well as clinically vulnerable, are now able to meet people outdoors, including from other households (numbers in line with devolved guidelines).

This means that volunteers and participants who fall within these criteria can now be considered for a return to RDA. However, the government says that they must take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household, so should anyone want to attend RDA this must be carefully considered on a case by case basis. The Glossary of Terms and consent forms have been updated accordingly.

FAQs.

Q: Can we take on new volunteers and participants?

A: Groups are able to take on new volunteers. If they are coming with a participant to support them in sessions they only need to complete a volunteer consent form and the Covid Basic Training Record. If a group takes on other new volunteers they will need to complete the usual safe recruitment process i.e. application form, references and disclosure checks.

New participants can only be considered at the moment for non-mounted activities e.g. Quiet Corner. This is because it is not currently possible to do a pre-riding assessment safely. The usual application form will need to be completed, along with a participant consent form.

Q: What is happening to first aid and safeguarding training?

A: The Health and Safety Executive have advised that in England outstanding refreshers should be completed by 30th September. Other parts of the UK are to be reviewed but groups should arrange training as soon as possible. We are aware both Medi-K and St Johns are now running training.

For safeguarding, any certificates due to expire are extended to the end of 2020. We will shortly be revising our RDA workshop to enable it to be completed virtually from September, if needed – this would count as a face to face workshop. Alternatively, the on-line workshop can be completed as a refresher – if you did a face to face previously this would be valid for 3 years. If you did on-line previously it would last for 12 months – BUT you would need to email groupsupport@rda.org.uk to ask them to delete your previous workshop details to enable you to do the workshop online again.

Q: Can RDA have “gatherings” of up to 30 people?

A: In N Ireland and England this is now possible, as long as the venue and group are following Covid-19 secure guidelines. If a group is located at a non-RDA venue they will need to have sight of the venue Risk Assessment to check compliance (this can be sent to Director of Operations to overview if this helps). All groups would need to get signed off as ready to start. As well as the appropriate risk assessment the group will need to take ongoing measures to mitigate the risk of transmission. If increased numbers are involved it is crucial the group revisits the need for signage, zoning and looking at pinch points (e.g. tack room/toilets) to consider everyone’s safety.

Q: Why is RDA not advocating the general wearing of face coverings to get started?

A: Both the UK government and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are currently advising that PPE should only be used as a last resort.

The evidence remains clear that the most effective way to protect yourself and others from infection is to follow social distancing rules, avoid touching surfaces and your face, and wash your hands regularly. Face coverings are not a substitute for these measures.

We continue to review the position regularly and take advice from the World Health Organisation, NHS, medical professionals and BETA. Evidence suggests:-

- There is a greater risk when people use face coverings incorrectly, so increasing the risk of infection by wearing one – by repeatedly touching it for example, removing it incorrectly, re-using it or disposing of it incorrectly.
- Wearing a face covering does not protect you. However, if you are infected it may provide some protection for others.
- Face coverings have their own risks and do not replace the need for social distancing.
- Surgical masks and respirators used by healthcare and other workers should continue to be reserved for those who need them e.g. health and care workers.
- Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 3 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly.
- Hot weather increases the risk of over-heating and becoming unwell.

One clear message is that face coverings should not be worn when exercising, or any activity requiring increased respiration, as they reduce the ability to breath comfortably and sweat can make the mask become wet more quickly which adds to the breathing issue and promotes the growth of microorganisms. **Anyone mounted on a horse, or undertaking exercise (side walking, leading etc) must not wear face coverings in RDA.**

Anyone attending (who isn't mounted or exercising) may choose to wear a face covering (masks or shields) – they must always be safely secured so that they cannot be easily dislodged or removed. Face covering may cause alarm to equines if they are unsecure, brightly coloured or in any way distract from the activity taking place. Because individuals may attend with face coverings, it is important that equines have been inducted with this in mind.

New / Updated Resources on the Getting Started Webpage (Updates shown in blue type)

- Glossary of Terms – updated to reflect the changes for clinically extremely vulnerable.
- Consent Forms – updated to reflect change in policy for clinically extremely vulnerable.
- Getting Started Guidance Notes – updated to reflect taking on new volunteers and participants; page 4.
- UK Ease of Lockdown – outlining latest government updates from all parts of the UK.
- Roadmap to Riding – Presentation kindly shared by Muirfield Riding Therapy.

Activities added to the Getting Started webpage:-

- ❖ Long-Lining
- ❖ Lungeing
- ❖ Outcome Cards

To come shortly – virtual sensory sessions