



Risk Assessment

Organisation / Practitioner Name: Dr Kristina Grant trading Pony Wisdom

Venue / Location: all venues

Date of Assessment: 01/09/2025

Assessor Name: Kristina Grant

Next Review Date: 01/09/2026 and "Before Each Session"

Activity Overview

Type of Activity: Non-ridden horsemanship exercises, e.g. grooming, leading, groundwork, observation, pony agility, equines assisted learning

Participants: Children, young people, adults, including those with additional needs

Animals Involved: Black Beauty, 12 ys old miniature Shetland gelding, Sandy, 12 ys old miniature Shetland mare, Oreo, 2.5 ys old miniature Shetland gelding, Indy, 2.5 ys old miniature Shetland colt, Dolly 12 years old cob mare

Hazard: anything that has a potential to cause harm. In the context of horsemanship/equine assisted learning exercises, hazards can include

- Physical hazards – like uneven ground, horse kicks, or falling grooming tools
- Biological hazards – such as zoonotic diseases or allergens
- Environmental hazards – like extreme weather or slippery surfaces
- Psychological hazards – including emotional triggers or trauma responses in clients
- Equipment hazards – like faulty tack, loose fencing, or unsanitised helmets
- Human factors – like lack of fitness, attention or experience/knowledge of staff or participant

All new staff, work experience students, volunteers and livery clients should be taken through the risk assessment on arrival.

All staff should give training to riding school clients where applicable.

Reassessments are carried out periodically. Bimonthly H&S meetings held with staff.

ALL should sign a document to confirm they have read the risk assessments.

Risk: Risk score is calculated by multiplying Likelihood (how likely is it to happen: 1 -rare, 2- unlikely, 3- possible, 4- likely,5- very likely) and Severity (how serious would it be if it did happen: 1-negligible, 2-minor, 3-moderate, 4- major, 5- critical) of each hazard.

Interpretation of risk score:

Risk score (=Likelihood x Severity)	Risk level	Action required
1-5	Low (Unlikely that harm will arise)	Acceptable/ monitor
6-10	Medium (Possible harm might occur, outcome could be serious, action required to manage the risk)	Review and manage with precautions
11-15	High (Likely injury will arise, could be severe, action required before task commences)	Requires action and close supervision
16-25	Critical (stop session or don't start)	Unacceptable, session must be redesigned or postponed

Identified Hazards and Risk Management

Hazard	Who is at Risk?	Potential Harm	Control Measures	Risk Level (L/M/H)
Is the participant suitable for the horse activities?	Participants, staff, volunteers, horses	Injury, anxiety or emotional overload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial consultation with participant and parents/carers - Client risk profile assessed - Coachability assessed - Intake process completed (application form, parental consent, agreement, filled in, signed, policies and procedures read/agreed) - Safety debrief prior each session - Coach checks prior to start and remains observant during session 	M
Access and use of venue, arrival	Participants, staff, visitors	Anxiety, missing the session (not getting the beneficial effects of the session), car accidents, injury, infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Add what 3 words location and signage for ease of finding -Closing the main gate -Ensure people arrive at allocated time -All areas to be thoroughly cleaned and checked prior to arrival of participants and throughout the day 	L

Hazard	Who is at Risk?	Potential Harm	Control Measures	Risk Level (L/M/H)
			-Cars parked in car park -Visitors to wait in the waiting/viewing areas only	
Privacy of the client	Participants, staff, visitors	Anxiety, GDPR rights	-Only essential people to attend -Safety and Consent forms completed and stored securely -Clients can opt out of photos/sessions	L
Payments	Participants, staff, business	Lack of payment, or stolen cash	-Payments made in advance by card or transfer, avoiding cash handling -Cancellation policy	L/M
Environmental hazards (extreme weather, loose fencing, tractors, cars, bike riders)	All	Heatstroke, cold, horse getting startled, injury	- Environment assessed prior to start and monitored throughout -Car drivers and bike riders asked to slow down -Sessions postponed or relocated in unsafe weather - Provide shade, water, warm clothing as needed - Emergency evacuation	M
Slips, trips and falls (due to poor mobility, sensory difficulties or frailty)	All	Injury	-Put away equipment after use -Maintain roads/paddock -Proper clothing -Weather conditions, ground surface to be checked and considered	M

Hazard	Who is at Risk?	Potential Harm	Control Measures	Risk Level (L/M/H)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Session may be cancelled if unsafe- Warn participants- Ensure appropriate footwear	

<p>Horse behaviour (startled, kicking, biting)</p>	<p>Participants, staff, volunteers, especially those with limited mobility</p>	<p>Injury from sudden movement or defensive behaviour. Serious physical injury (e.g. broken bones, concussion)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only use suitable horses (trained, sound, fit, well-behaved horses only, reassess regularly) - Clear safety boundaries - Always supervised by trained facilitator- -Limit group size - Body language awareness -Horses removed if showing signs of distress or allowed to disengage - Keeping horse record, monitor it - Protective equipment, like boots, gloves and helmet if needed. Check if they fit. - Grounding activities at the start to lower energy levels -Explanation of Code of Conduct, client to sign them -Horse handlers are experienced/trained and know the horse -Allow settling time for the horse prior to session -Horse to wear correctly fitted halter/tack 	<p>M</p>
<p>Participant behaviour (shouting, running, overstimulation, inappropriate behaviour (e.g. in parent-child settings or group work)</p>	<p>Horses, other participants, (especially minors)</p>	<p>Horse startled, unsafe environment, emotional harm, safeguarding concerns, client may put themselves in potential danger (deliberately or inadvertently)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear rules at start - ensure client understands safety aspects of the horse - Visual reminders - Trained staff intervention - Supervision at all times - Code of conduct signed - Safeguarding policy enforced - Adults removed from session if breach occurs 	<p>L/M</p>

Participant: lacks sufficient experience or fitness for session	Participants, Horse, Spectators, Coach	Injury, horse gets loose	Coach checks prior to start and remains observant during session.	L/M
Inappropriate clothing (open-toed shoes etc.)	Participants, Staff	Foot injuries, discomfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remind/check participants before session - Provide spare boots if needed - Wear PPE 	L/M
Safeguarding issues	Children, vulnerable adults	Abuse, neglect, unsafe contact, suicidal thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguarding policy in place - Consent forms and confidentiality - DSL contact available - DBS-checked staff only - Staff have safeguarding training - Clear safeguarding procedure - Immediate reporting to authorities when required - Confidential but not secretive approach - Parents/carers present during the session 	M
Emergency Procedures	All	Risk of increased injury if procedures are not followed. First aid kit lacking access in emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency procedures discussed and reviewed regularly - First aid and emergency information displayed - Qualified first aider present - First Aid kit checked, clearly labelled, ensured it is stocked at right level, meeting requirements, and is visible/ accessible - Take with you if leaving premises (forest path, home visit) 	M

Horse welfare	Horse	Injury to other horses, to himself or people around him.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure horse has a comfortable and fitted halter/tack -Ensure horse has access to water throughout the session and have a companion horse in the vicinity -Ensure HETI 5 provisions, Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids, Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 and Animal Welfare Act 2006 are adhered to for all horses -Ensure horse has the right to withdraw at any time 	M
Use of tools/tack/equipment (grooming brushes, wheelbarrows, mounting block, bucket, jumps, cones, incorrectly fitted tack or in poor repair)	Participants, horses	Minor injury, trip hazard, pinch, scratch, cut, tripping, object fall on feet, horse knocks them over, get entangled, rope burn, sudden jerking, fright to horse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervision during use -Ensure premises is tidy -Mobility or health issues were not declared by the client -Equipment correctly stored - Demonstration safe technique before use - Use age-appropriate tools - Safe storage, regular inspection 	L/M
Manual handling (moving equipment, gates)	Staff, participants	Strains, pinching, back injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train participants in safe methods - Adults supervise equipment use - Minimal heavy lifting by participants 	L/M

<p>Lone Working (while out exercising horses, or walking the horses to a venue, or working with a client in a one-to-one setting)</p>	<p>Staff, Horse handlers, horses, people around, cars</p>	<p>Being at risk should they have an accident, injury, horse running loose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making sure other people are around (horse handler, coach) when working with clients (especially if vulnerable) - Staff and volunteers must carry mobile phones when on duty. - Lone workers to send whatsapp message of departure and date and regular communication is agreed with yard owners/livery contacts. - Pony care team to have up to date ICE details in folder of filing cabinet. - All pony care team to wear Hi-Viz when leading/holding ponies in traffic 	<p>M</p>
<p>Horse Loose or Escaped from Field or during horse activities</p>	<p>Participants, staff, people around, other horses, cars</p>	<p>Chaos, injury to public, horse harmed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure fencing and gates - Lead ropes and head collars nearby - Staff trained in safe horse recovery - Area cleared quickly if horse loose 	<p>L/M</p>
<p>Allergic reactions (hay, dust, horse hair, food)</p>	<p>Participants, staff, visitors</p>	<p>Breathing issues, rash, seizure, anaphylaxis, asthma attack</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medical forms completed before first session - ask about allergies - Keep antihistamines or inhalers available - Avoid unnecessary contact with allergens - Bring own snack. If served, double check allergens - First aider present - Emergency protocol in place - Emergency services contact details and hospital info readily available 	<p>L/M</p>

Fire	All	Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -See separate fire risk assessment -No smoking signs in place Fire and emergency procedure accessible and understood. 	L/M
Biosecurity, Infection risks	All horses, participants, staff	Infection (flu), disease, zoonosis (e.g. strangles, salmonella, ringworm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Biosecurity policy -Isolation of sick horses -All attendees reminded of importance of hygiene -Hygiene signage; sanitiser station available -Regular vet check -Be aware if any equine or human disease in the local area, and implement infection control measures if needed - Grooming tools/ shared equipment kept clean and disinfect between users - Regular mucking out, water troughs and feed containers kept clean 	M/H
Fear or emotional distress around horses/ post activity effects	Participants	Anxiety or emotional overload during session or post activity effects (tiredness, emotion, confusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductory sessions - Opt-out available - Use of "safe space" away from horses - Pre-session discussion of needs - Holding space for the participant - Ensure a warm, secure place to relax in after session -Tend to physical comfort needs - Keep the activity to an appropriate time - Safety and stabilisation strategies to be used if needed 	M

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -First aid for mental health protocols -Grounding techniques (e.g breathing) to support emotional safety and regulation - Follow up in the days after the session 	
Trailers	Horses and handlers	Horses and handlers may be injured during loading or transporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the event that horses are transported to a venue clients are not involved with loading or unloading. Only trained staff and volunteers allowed to tow horse trailer. - Handlers must wear protective headgear and gloves for loading and unloading horses. 	M
Electricity	All staff, volunteers, visitors	Accident, injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All equipment is PAT tested annually. Circuit breaker used for clipping. - No work experience candidates permitted to use any electrical equipment. + - Only trained staff & volunteers carry out work involving clipping work and pressure washer. - Extension cables must be used with care. No cables to be run from yard to arena. 	L
Muck management / bedding down / Handling straw/hay bales	Participants, horses, staff, volunteers	Back strain, sprains, slips, trips, cuts from forks, dust inhalation, rushing injuries from falling bales, allergic reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only trained staff/volunteers to muck out - Correct manual handling techniques taught (lift with knees, avoid twisting) - Use mechanical aids where possible (wheelbarrows, muck forks, mucking machines) - PPE mandatory: gloves, boots, dust masks if needed 	M

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear floor of obstacles before starting - Supervision for new staff or participants assisting - Use dust masks when handling dusty materials - Wash hands after mucking out / hay handling - Avoid eating/drinking during yard tasks - Monitor participants with known allergies or asthma 	
Horse riding (mounted activity)	Participants, horses, staff, volunteers	Falls from horse, concussion, fractures, spinal injury, horse losing balance, collision with objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Riding only permitted after assessment of participant suitability and experience level - Maximum rider weight limits established for each horse - Horses selected based on temperament, training, fitness and rider ability - Safety briefing before mounting - Riding helmets meeting approved safety standards must be worn and correctly fitted - Suitable footwear with heel required - Mounting block used to reduce strain on horse and improve rider safety whenever possible - Sessions supervised by a qualified coach/facilitator at all times - Arena or riding area checked for hazards before session - No riding during unsafe weather or unsafe ground conditions 	M

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Horses properly tacked up with correctly fitted equipment - Group size limited to ensure adequate supervision - Emergency dismount procedures explained if appropriate - First aid kit and trained first aider present 	
Mounting and dismounting	Participants, horses, staff	Falls, loss of balance, strain to horse's back, foot caught in stirrup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mounting block used where possible - Assistance provided if needed - Horse held by trained handler - Stirrup length checked before mounting - Rider instructed to mount and dismount calmly - Area around mounting point kept clear 	L/M
Leading a horse; running alongside a moving horse/	Participants, staff, volunteers, horses	Being stepped on, pulled over, rope burn, collision, falls, horse spooking, horse running off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity only undertaken after participant suitability assessment - Clear instruction and demonstration given before activity - Participants instructed on safe positioning relative to horse - Horse selected for calm temperament and appropriate training - Horse led with correctly fitted halter and lead rope - Participants instructed to walk/run beside the horse's shoulder, not in front or behind - Maintain safe distance from horse's legs and hooves 	L/M

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closed footwear required - Limit speed and intensity of activity according to participant ability - Only one participant leading at a time unless supervised - Trained facilitator present and supervising at all times - Activity stopped immediately if horse shows signs of stress or participant loses control - Area checked for hazards (holes, slippery ground, obstacles) before activity - Protective equipment worn if needed (helmet, gloves, boots) 	
<p>Obstacle work (poles, cones, small jumps, tarps, low platforms)</p>	<p>Participants, staff, volunteers, horses</p>	<p>Tripping, falling, collisions, sprains, bruises, horse stepping on participant, horse spooking, horse injury</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - Obstacles appropriate to horse and participant - Clear instructions and demonstration - Horses selected for confidence and calm temperament - Area cleared and obstacles secure - Footwear and gloves where appropriate - Staff supervise closely - Small group sizes - Gradual introduction to new obstacles - Protective equipment worn if needed - Adapt/remove obstacles if horse stressed or participant struggling 	<p>M</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency procedures in place in case of fall or spooking 	
Horse pulling a cart or carriage	Participants, horses, staff, volunteers	Falls, being thrown from cart, crushed by wheels, rope/shaft injuries, horse overexertion, collision with objects, vehicle tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only use horses suitable for pulling (trained, fit, sound, calm temperament) - Participant suitability and experience assessed before session - Maximum weight limits (rider + passengers + cart + equipment) adhered to - Cart/carriage in good condition, brakes and wheels checked before each session - Safety briefing given to all participants - Staff/volunteers positioned to observe at all times - Arena or route checked for hazards; surfaces suitable and non-slippery - Helmets and protective footwear mandatory - Harness, shafts, and tack checked for correct fit before mounting - Emergency stop and release procedures explained - No cart driving in extreme weather or unsafe ground conditions - Annual servicing of the vehicles 	M
Mounting / entering cart	Participants, staff, volunteers, horses	Falls, injury, horse spooking, cart tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistance provided if needed - Cart stable before mounting - Horses held by trained handler - Step/board provided if required 	L/M

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area around cart kept clear 	
Leading or guiding horse with cart	Participants, staff, volunteers, horses	Being stepped on, pulled over, rope/shaft injuries, collision, horse spooking, falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Horse led by experienced handler - Clear instructions to participants - Maintain safe distance from shafts and horse's legs - Gloves and closed footwear recommended - Only trained staff to manage horse when moving cart - Stop activity if horse stressed 	M
Obstacle or arena driving (cones, poles, gates) or driving on a forest path	Participants, staff, volunteers, horses	Collision with obstacles, tripping, horse or participant injury, cart tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obstacles suitable for horse and participant experience - Demonstration and instruction given before activity - Staff supervise closely and maintain safe distances - Obstacles secured and arena clear of hazards - Gradual introduction of obstacles for new participants - Protective equipment used (helmets, gloves) - Activity stopped if horse or participant shows stress 	M
Uneven or unsafe terrain	Participants, staff, volunteers, horses	Falls, horse injury, cart tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check route/arena prior to session - Avoid slopes, holes, slippery or soft ground 	M

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjust speed and cart load for ground conditions - Only experienced drivers permitted off flat surfaces 	
Emergency procedures (horse spooking, cart tipping, participant falls)	Participants, staff, volunteers, horses	Serious injury, horse running loose, panic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - Emergency stop and release techniques explained - First aider present - Communication plan for staff in case of accident - Area cleared of bystanders during driving - All participants briefed on behaviour near horse and cart 	M
Lack of appropriate PPE during horse activities (leading, riding, groundwork, forest/field work, or on public roads)	Participants, staff, volunteers	Head injury, hand injury, reduced visibility to traffic, foot injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All participants, staff and volunteers must wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment when working with or around horses. PPE requirements vary depending on the activity but always include suitable footwear and may include helmets, gloves and high-visibility clothing, and body protector. - Approved (correct safety standard) riding/driving helmet worn at all times when mounted, riding or driving - Sturdy footwear/boots with closed toe and heel worn at all times around horses - Protective gloves recommended when leading horses or handling reins/lines 	M

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-visibility clothing required when working or riding on public roads or in low visibility conditions - Weather-appropriate clothing to maintain safety and comfort - Staff check PPE before activities begin and ensure correct fit 	
Any newly recognised risks on the day				
			-	
			-	
			-	

Emergency Procedures

- **First Aid:** First aid kit and mobile phone available on-site; staff trained in First Aid
 - **Emergency Contact Info:** Collected in advance from participants
 - **Evacuation / Horse Release Plan:** Horses can be safely removed or tied in secure area
 - **Nearest A&E: Watford General Hospital,** Vicarage Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 0H
 - **What3words:** expand.peanut.water
 - **DSL contact:** Kristina Grant, 07309595665
 - In serious incidents, **session is halted immediately**, and support or emergency services are contacted as appropriate
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Additional Notes

- Session notes will include any near misses or incidents
 - Participants will be reminded of key rules at each session start
 - Horses monitored for signs of stress or overload
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Declaration

This risk assessment has been completed to ensure a safe, inclusive, and emotionally supportive environment for all participants and equines.

Assessor Signature: __ Dr Kristina Grant _____

Date: ____ 01/09/2025 _____

Reviewed by (if applicable): __ Dr Kristina Grant _____

Next Review Date: ____ 01/09/2026 _____

Accident / Incident Report Form

Date of Incident: _____

Time of Incident: _____

Location: _____

Person(s) Involved:

- Name: _____
- Age (if child): _____
- Contact Details: _____

Staff/Responsible Adult Present: _____

Type of Incident: (tick one)

Injury to participant Injury to staff/volunteer Pony injury Property damage

Other: _____

Description of Incident:

(What happened? Include sequence of events, pony behaviour, environmental factors)

Immediate Action Taken:

- First aid administered? Yes No
- Emergency services called? Yes No
- Pony/people removed from activity? Yes No
- Other: _____

Outcome / Injury Details:

- Nature of injury: _____
- Severity: Minor Moderate Major
- Medical attention required: None GP Hospital

Follow-Up Action / Recommendations:

(Changes to procedure, additional supervision, training, equipment checks)

Reported By: _____ (Name & Role)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Reviewed By Manager: _____

Date: _____

This form can be **printed or digital**, and **kept on file for at least 3–5 years** as evidence for councils, insurers, and safeguarding audits.