

EQUALITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP

JESS COOK
Chair



Jess is a Non-Executive Director of the BEF and BEF Equality and Diversity Champion. She has over 14 years' experience of working in disability sport. She started her career in Cornwall as the Disability County Sports Development Officer. She then joined English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) as a Regional Development Manager in the South East and East regions, supporting the County Sports Partnerships with inclusion and development of activities for disabled people in the regions.

Jess has progressed with EFDS to work with national governing bodies of sport on a wide variety of strategic outcomes, from support and guidance to the development of national strategies and organisational changes for a more inclusive approach. She also works with national disability charities to support a better link between sport, physical activity and disabled people.

Jess has always been very passionate about sport and inclusion for disabled people, having had first-hand experience when she competed over several years as an international swimmer. She attended both World and European championships until 2000, when she retired due to injury.

SUZANNA ANSLOW



Suzanna is the lead safeguarding officer for British Carriagedriving.

She is also a competitor, steward, helper and sponsor in horse driving trials, plus a volunteer with the Riding for the Disabled Association. In professional life she operates a small management and employment law consultancy and is a published author in the field. She transitioned to live as a woman in early 2019.

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IMRAN ATCHA



Imran was born and bred in inner city Gloucester but with roots in India and Mauritius. He started riding regularly in 2007 as an adult, when he bought a horse with help from friends without any real understanding of how to ride or even how to put a head collar on. He now runs St James City Farm Riding School, an inner-city riding school which was founded in 2015 by himself and friends and various funders. It is part of a registered charity (“The Friendship Café”) and is run by staff and volunteers giving rides and lessons from as little as £2.50, to 50-70 children a week.

The BHS and Hartpury College supported him to get his basic teaching qualifications, so he does some teaching too. He is a very keen rider and want to help others have a chance to learn, so they also introduce their children and families to other places such Hartpury College Equine, and any horsey events, but has a particular focus on complete beginners and pony racing.

PAUL FITZGERALD



Paul is the Equality and Inclusion Lead for the East Midlands Ambulance Service and the East of England Ambulance Service and has been in post since October 2015. He has developed several new initiatives including the Equality Crib Sheet to capture equality data in a more meaningful way. He works across a large geographical area covering 11 different counties on behalf of EMAS and EEAS. He has provided equality and diversity support to the BEF since 2017 and is a keen dressage rider.

He has a significant range of experience, working in the NHS as the HIV coordinator and needle exchange development officer, then working in community hospital as a dual diagnosis officer (substance use and mental health). He has also developed a range of services for the LGB and T communities.

On taking a break from the NHS he travelled across the UK and Europe specialising in equality and diversity training and latterly investigating issues of discrimination within the public and private sector. This gave him a unique perspective on the different cultures within organisations

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KEITH HACKETT



Keith is currently a community activist, trade unionist, and social and commercial entrepreneur, he is part of a network of people in Liverpool who run commercial social enterprise projects. Formerly local politician on Liverpool City Council (1987-95). He learnt to ride aged 52 in 2005.

Keith was given the BHS Access Award in 2013 for the BHS Member who had done most for equestrian access. He is the currently salaried Director of Blundell Street Works Ltd, and volunteer Chair of Park Palace Ponies Starter Riding School. Life bonds with Mary (partner), Bridget (daughter) and Miranda (horse).

NAOMI HOWGATE



Naomi grew up riding in North Yorkshire competing in Pony Club and regional events until the age of around 18. She then went to university in Liverpool and after graduating spent several years between travelling and working in the charity sector both working with young people and focussing on the funding sector.

She moved to London in 2013 and started volunteering at Ebony Horse Club almost straight away. Whilst a volunteer she completed her BHS exams up to stage 2 teach and took part in several competitions as well as working directly with the young people. She started working full time at Ebony Horse Club in 2017 and is responsible for the overall managing of the centre along with her co-manager but she also teaches and takes part in trips and events.

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NATALIE O'ROURKE



Originally from the West Midlands, Natalie gave up her career as a Dental Hygienist in order to follow her dream: she moved to London in 2008 and became the Proprietor of Park Lane Stables; situated in a residential street in Teddington and famed for having no facilities.

In 2010 Natalie set up a Pony Club group and in 2014 she set up the Park Lane RDA (Riding for the Disabled Association) group which has grown from strength-to-strength and now has a national reputation for good practice with around 300 members who take part in thousands of sessions every year. Natalie works with a diverse group of children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and receives referrals from Social Services: Natalie re-engages them through stable yard activities and puts them back on track.

As well as being a qualified coach – UKCC Level 3 and a senior RDA Coach, Natalie is on the National Pony Club Committee acting as a voice for disadvantaged members and those who do not own their own pony.

Natalie won the 2018 RDA Coaching Award for 'Going the Extra Mile'. Natalie has been shortlisted for the 2019 London Borough of Richmond 'Community Hero Award' (to be announced on 19/9/19) and Park Lane RDA has been shortlisted for the 2019 Carriage Driving Awards 2019 (to be announced 1/11/19).

DOUG SMITH



Doug has been a volunteer with Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) for 30 years. He is currently National Equine Lead for the RDA and has held several voluntary posts including running the RDA National Championships for 10 years from 2003 which resulted in a transformation of the Championships to the flagship event we see today, as well as being Head Judge at the equestrian events at the Special Olympics in Sheffield in 2017. Internationally he has been involved with three World Championships and three Paralympics (he was yard manager at the Sydney games in 2000).

He was born and bred in Handsworth in Birmingham and went on to join Birmingham City Police in 1969 and West Midlands mounted police in 1973. His career covered many different aspects of Police work, Public Liaison and equestrian competition.

Doug broke his back when he was thrown from a horse being trained on the roads in November 1995 horse. He was in a full body cast and then spent four months in a metal cage. So, at the age of 45 he was unemployable, uninsurable; not realising he was going into clinical depression. RDA transformed his life. He started coaching and that was it. He has never looked back since.

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ALEX VAN RANDWYCK



Alex started riding age 10 at her local riding school. From there she progressed to Pony Club with her own pony where she took part in most of the disciplines on offer including Endurance, Quiz and Horse and Pony Care. She progressed through her efficiency tests to the A Test and she now coaches within the Pony Clubs in her area.

She took a gap year before going to university and spent it working at an RDA centre which she had previously volunteered at for Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Young Equestrian Leaders Award. During her time at university she was involved in student riding, both nationally and internationally and was on the squad that went to the World University Riding Championships in 2016. For the last two years she has been a working pupil for Nick Gauntlett and she currently competes at BE Intermediate. She is working towards her BHS Stage 4 teach

FREEDOM ZAMPALADUS



Freedom is the founder of The Urban Equestrian Academy. He is a respected member of the community, public speaker, published author and experienced equestrian specialist in the UK and the Caribbean. Freedom has vast experience in Youth & Community work.

Formerly a fully qualified Racehorse Trainer, Stallion Man and Breeder. Freedom was formerly employed by the largest Arabian Stud Farm in the UK (at the time) "Umm Qarn Farms", which belonged to the ruler of Qatar (at the time) HRH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Introduced to the world of equestrianism through his uncle in Antigua at the age of 14, after his parents left the UK (Leicester) to relocate. Year of 17 qualified as a professional racehorse trainer which led him to oversee and manage all duties at his uncle's race yard. This is where he was introduced to the equine world.