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# BRITISH EQUESTRIAN – RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION ACCESSIBILITY MARK REVIEW

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July 2022



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**Project Title:** Accessibility Mark Review and Development Project

**Invitation to tender:** The British Equestrian (BEF) is seeking to conduct a review of Riding for the Disabled Association's Accessibility Mark (RDA AM) project. This requires a suitably experienced organisation to undertake research services to carry out this review and conduct desk and primary research. It is anticipated that the contract will commence in September 2022 and be completed by late November 2022.

**Aim:** To understand how to enhance the accessibility mark (AM) so it becomes a 'must-have' disability kitemark for customer excellence across the equestrian sector and is financially sustainable.

**Date:** 02/08/22

## Background

### BEF Introduction

British Equestrian is the national governing body for horse sports in the UK, affiliated to the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), the international governing body of equestrian sports. We exist to provide leadership, vision and purpose in steering the direction of equestrianism.

British Equestrian is an umbrella organisation representing the interests of three million riders, vaulters and carriage drivers in Great Britain via 18 independent member bodies (14 members and four associates). Established in 1972, we are the largest representative body within the equestrian industry.

As a national governing body, British Equestrian works on policy issues with the FEI. We coordinate the British calendar of international events, disciplinary procedures, doping control and oversees the training of British international judges, stewards, vets and course designers. In the UK, we play an active role in representing the common interests of its member bodies to organisations such as the British Olympic Association, British Paralympic Association, SportsAid, the Sport and Recreation Alliance, DCMS and Defra.

British Equestrian is responsible for distributing government funding to the equestrian sports. Funding from UK Sport and Sport England supports British Equestrian's work, from developing elite riders aiming to win medals for Great Britain to encouraging complete beginners from a range of backgrounds to get involved. Funding support is also provided by sportscotland for horsescotland, aligned to British Equestrian while support in Wales and Northern Ireland is currently provided through our member bodies.

British Equestrian continues to drive participation in equestrian sport as a result of the Olympic and Paralympic legacy, aiming to encourage more people from all backgrounds to take up horse riding, driving, vaulting and volunteering. By connecting people to riding centres, schools, clubs and equestrian sporting organisations, British Equestrian is helping more people to discover horses, get fit and improve their wellbeing whilst looking at the diversification of equestrianism.

### Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) Introduction

RDA's vision is enriching lives through horses, with a mission that strives to ensure anyone with a disability can benefit from the unique bond between humans and horses. They are



driven by the ambition to support an extra 10,000 people by 2025 and more detail is available in the RDA's strategy here: <https://www.rda.org.uk/strategy/>

The work of the RDA benefits the lives of over 25,000 disabled children and adults. With fun activities like riding and carriage driving, they provide therapy, fitness, skills development, and opportunities for achievement, all supported by 18,000 amazing volunteers and qualified coaches at nearly 500 RDA centres or centres who are home to RDA groups all over the UK.

RDA is an inclusive and diverse organisation, welcoming clients with physical and learning disabilities and autism, and there are no age restrictions. Through their network of member groups, RDA is at work in every corner of the UK, in cities and remote rural areas, bringing the therapy, achievement and fun of horses to as many people as possible.

RDA is a charity and can only carry out its life-changing activities thanks to the generosity of donors, the dedication of volunteers and the good nature of their fantastic horses.

### **The Accessibility Mark (AM)**

RDA launched the AM in partnership the BEF in 2013, as a way of driving participation into equestrianism for disabled adults and children as part of the equestrian legacy of the 2012 London Games. The aim of AM continues to be to encourage more disabled people into the world of horse riding and its therapeutic benefits.

Fifty-seven equestrian centres currently have accessibility mark accreditation. By applying for an accessibility mark, the centre will be able to gain training and advice from RDA (in return for a commercial fee) and once RDA are satisfied that the standards are met, the centre will be awarded their endorsement and will become a centre with AM.

There are an estimated 1,750 centres in the UK who are not RDA AM centres, but might be affiliated to other organisations, e.g. The Pony Club, British Horse Society or Association of British Riding Schools or just licensed through the council. For these centres, the AM will not only will help riding schools to cater better for disabled participants but also build closer links with local RDA Groups and encourage a synergistic relationship between the centre and the group.

The following messages were used as part of the sales collateral when launched:

#### ***Details of AM Benefits to Riding Centres***

- *The project has been designed to encourage RDA groups and equestrian centres to work together.*
- *Increase revenue by attracting new clients.*
- *Marketing pack and access to online AM marketing materials including leaflets.*
- *Contact with marketing company including initial press release and ongoing support with coverage and articles (TBC for future way of delivering and this area need to be analysed as part of the research)*
- *Ongoing support from Accessibility Support Officers and RDA nationally.*
- *Increased profile for your centre locally and nationally - providing the opportunity to win new business and retain existing clients.*
- *Invitations to take part in additional training opportunities such as a customer care, business development, funding applications and marketing workshops to enhance your business and contribute to personal development of your staff members.*

- *Access to RDA proficiency test system and other educational programmes – a series of tests aimed at providing a progressive and structured approach to developing skills and knowledge. A resource pack is available at an additional cost per centre.*
- *An annual AM plaque to promote your accreditation.*
- *Advice on specialist equipment from your Accessibility Support Officer.*

### **Centre requirements for AM accreditation**

- Hold a valid riding school licence.
- To meet mandatory health and safety and insurance requirements.
- To ensure qualified\* staff can coach participants through the programme.
- To ensure qualified volunteers can assist participants in sessions.
- To follow guidelines for delivery and respond to feedback from clients during the programme.

\* All Coaches wishing to teach AM lessons will need to be qualified to at least UKCC Level 2 or equivalent. (Please enquire with RDA National regarding alternative acceptable qualifications). Training will then be given to coaches by their Accessibility Support Officer (ASO) at a training day held at the centre. Any new coaches joining the centre will need to organise a training day with an ASO to be able to take part in the scheme.

As the training is centre specific, if an Accessibility Mark Coach moves to a new centre, they will need to re-apply for coach accreditation. The new centre will also need to apply for centre accreditation if not already accessibility marked. During the initial assessment, a centre will be asked to provide copies of the following documentation:

- Centre's insurance certificate
- Council riding school licence
- List of first aiders and certificates
- Equine profiles and records
- Confirmation of Coaches' qualifications and certificates
- Risk assessment and fire policies
- Safeguarding policy
- Confirmation of external accreditation, for example BHS, ABRS

### **Benefits to Riders and Potential Participants**

- *The AM offers a pathway into horse riding for disabled riders.*
- *Horse riding has indisputable positive effects on physical and mental wellbeing.*
- *The warmth and three-dimensional movement of the horse is transmitted through the rider's body, gradually making it more relaxed and supple, strengthening core stability, reducing spasms and improving balance, posture and co-ordination.*
- *Gaining confidence, building relationships, receiving life-enhancing therapy or achieving individual goals are all proven benefits of participating in horse riding activities.*
- *The project draws upon the extensive experience of RDA to ensure that horse riding is fun and safe for everyone.*

For further information on the AM toolkit to support centres, please [click here](#).

### **The challenge**

With the new phase of investment from Sport England linked to [Uniting the Movement](#) strategy, the BEF is reviewing projects in receipt of investment in the previous cycle.

AM is one of the projects who has received a significant amount of funding from Sport England to sustain it since inception. Currently we have 57 equestrian centres across the UK who have achieved an RDA AM and there is anecdotal evidence that growing latent demand is not being fulfilled from disabled riders.

The aim of this project is to establish why a bigger proportion of riding schools are not AM accredited and how we can increase the take up. In addition, we wish to know:

- a) What existing AM centres think of the product and how it's valued?
- b) How it helps enhance centres' equestrian services for disabled people within their communities?
- c) What could be improved to develop the AM value proposition and make it more financially sustainable?
- d) How we can develop a sustainable model where developing a relationship with RDA centres, or home to RDA groups is at the heart of AM riders to assist in transitioning riders?
- e) Why centres don't seek this accreditation, especially if they are already delivering experiences for disabled riders?

As such, this project is a wonderful opportunity to review the AM, in context of sector-wide feedback from centres, riding groups, customers and target audiences alike.

### Agency Expertise

Further information relating to the financial profile of AM will be provided to the winning agency at the project kick off meeting. This will highlight the current situation re: funding support and cost base for the project. One of the strategic aims of the project is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the AM in the sector. In addition to having strong research expertise with the target audiences, agencies should also demonstrate their track record in helping organisations develop high quality, commercially sustainable memberships or accreditations in the sport, leisure, or disability sectors.

### What we currently know?

There is evidence from Sport England's Active Lives and Active Lives Children and Young People Surveys that demonstrate levels of representation in equestrianism/horse riding in by different demographics.

- 1) From **Sport England's Active Lives** data (16+), the latest information relating to the May 2020-May 2021 time period shows that:
  - A total of 264,800 adult participants in England (for at least two times in the past 28 days)
  - 87% (230,200) of participants are women, representing 1% of the female adult population. The equivalent is 0.2% for men.
  - Participant numbers have dropped from previous years, potentially because of covid-19 impact, however, the gender balance has remained consistent.

The table below also uses older Active Lives data from 2017/18, but demonstrates the strong representation that equestrianism has for disabled adults in England. It shows that there is a powerful story for equestrianism to tell of accessibility and inclusion for disabled adults in England.

If we look at those adults participating twice a month, then the percentage of disabled participants that enjoy equestrianism is 21%, remarkably close to the average for the population and significantly higher than many other high profile, large-scale participant sports.

SPORT	FREQUENCY	APPROX PARTICIPANTS WITH LIMITING DISABILITY	ALL PARTICIPANTS	% DISABLED PARTICIPANTS
ALL ENGLAND POPULATION		9,895,698	44,980,446	22.0%
ALL SPORT	TWICE PER MONTH	6,155,125	34,856,200	17.7%
EQUESTRIAN		59,374	282,900	21.0%
FOOTBALL		138,540	2,036,600	6.8%
BADMINTON		59,374	835,900	7.1%
CRICKET		19,791	292,900	6.8%
SWIMMING		722,386	4,717,600	15.3%
CYCLING		722,386	6,096,100	11.8%
NETBALL		19,791	274,600	7.2%
ALL SPORT	AT LEAST ONCE IN THE LAST YEAR	8,173,848	42,326,600	19.3%
EQUESTRIAN		158,331	936,900	16.9%
FOOTBALL		395,828	4,522,100	8.7%
BADMINTON		286,975	3,024,500	9.5%
CRICKET		118,748	1,193,800	9.9%
SWIMMING		2,097,888	14,072,900	13.4%
CYCLING		2,256,220	16,788,900	13.4%
NETBALL		98,957	969,600	10.2%

Please note: the BEF is seeking to establish equivalent statistics for equestrianism in Scotland and Wales and will supply these statistics in due course, if they are available to help support this project.

Capacity Centres research: the BEF have recently conducted some research into the capacity across riding centres in the UK (further information about this research could be available to the successful agency). This research highlighted that:

- many centres provide some sessions for disabled participants
  - 77% of centres out of 311 who responded to the research said they offer disability sessions
- on average, 24% of delivery within these 311 centres is with disabled people
- some centres are struggling to attract enough participants, whilst others (two thirds) have waiting lists
- centres on average are at 75% capacity of delivery due to high demand and limits on supply due to workforce, horse availability and affordability
- in this context, some people haven't been able to rekindle their passion for equestrian activity in the post-lockdown world, but what we don't know is whether these are more likely to be disabled participants
- the full research slide deck can be shared with the winning agency

#### Strategic rationale

The BEF is committed to making the sport of equestrianism more inclusive and accessible to current and potential disabled riders and drivers. The AM is seen as a way of achieving this and positively impacting on more people's lives.

The strategic rationale for this piece of work is to:

- explore how to make AM a financially sustainable, kitemark standard accreditation for excellence in customer service for disabled riders
- define the current levels of visibility, awareness and understanding of the 'value proposition' for AM across UK equestrian centres, in terms of business support, training of workforce and volunteers and creating wonderful experiences for disabled participants
- provide recommendations on how we can grow the number of centres with AM from the current 57 to a much larger proportion of the 1,750+ riding establishments across the UK
- create recommendations on how to grow visibility, awareness, and relevance of the AM brand amongst a) centres and b) disabled audiences.

## Key requirements for the project

The following are key requirements that the applicant will need to factor in:

### Research Objectives

#### Phase 1

##### AM and Non-AM Riding Centres

- What are AM accredited centres' experiences of going through the AM accreditation process? What are the positives and areas for development?
- For those who consider going through the process to become AM centres or have lapsed, why did they not continue? What would need to change for them to reconsider?
- For non-AM riding centres, have they heard of AM? Do they offer or want to provide opportunities for disabled children and adults? What would convince them that going through the AM process would make it worthwhile? (pending funding availability – would like cost breakdown for this option)
- A more comprehensive list of additional questions for AM and non-AM centres is included in Appendix 1.

#### Phase 2

##### Disabled participants/non-participants

- To understand current levels of visibility, relevance and understanding of Accessibility Mark and how these could be improved for disabled audiences
- What do disabled participants want from an accreditation above and beyond any assurances a riding centre might provide? How can it become a kitemark of quality participant experiences and what does that might mean for:
  - marketing and community engagement
  - staff and volunteer training
  - facility requirements re: access in and to the centres and
  - the actual experience itself and what opportunities are available for disabled participants at the centres



- To understand the lived experiences of riders and carriage drivers in how they participate in equestrianism and the value they place on their time at the centres (pending funding availability – would like cost breakdown for this option)
- To understand what factors are important to disabled participants and those who would like to ride when selecting riding centres – focusing on how we convert latent demand into actual engagement and participation (pending funding availability – would like cost breakdown for this option)
- A more comprehensive list of additional questions for disabled participants and non-participants is included in Appendix 2.

## Research Audience

Our key audiences for this research are split into two parts: riding centres and disabled people.

### Phase 1:

For riding centres, we would like the following categories to be included in the research:

- 1) Riding centres that are AM accredited
- 2) Riding centres that aren't AM accredited but used to be
- 3) Riding centres that aren't AM accredited but deliver to disabled audiences (pending funding availability) or are considering developing their offer for disabled audiences (pending funding availability) - itemised breakdown of costs per research audience is required for the proposals.

Within these audiences, it would be helpful to also have a mixture of those who are affiliated to another BEF member body and those that aren't. Other member body affiliations may include: The Pony Club, Association of British Riding Schools or the British Horse Society. The screener for these centres is that they must be keen on delivering opportunities for disabled participants, if they don't already.

### Phase 2:

For disabled people, we would like to include the following audiences in our research:

- a) Riders/drivers with physical disabilities who currently use RDA AM centres
- b) Riders/drivers with physical disabilities who currently use non-AM centres
- c) Riders/drivers with learning disabilities who currently use RDA AM centres
- d) Riders/drivers with learning disabilities who currently use non-AM centres
- e) Those with learning disabilities or physical disabilities who may be interested in driving or riding but don't currently do so (pending funding availability) - Itemised breakdown of costs per research audience is required for the proposals

Within our target research audience we would also like a mixture of demographics:

- UK-wide
- Gender, age, ethnicity, type of disability/health condition

## Methodology

It's recommended that this project will occur in two stages. The first will be the B2B aspect with equestrian centres; the second the B2C research with disabled audiences. Agencies should propose the most appropriate methodologies to meet the strategic and research objectives with the target audiences highlighted above.

In their proposals, agencies are asked to split out the two stages clearly in terms of timings and costs. Agencies should also include a detailed explanation of why their approach is suitable and their track record in utilising similar approaches and researching the same audiences. Innovative ideas to meet the research objectives are welcome.

## Key Deliverables

As well as weekly project updates to the project lead at BEF, it is anticipated that the key deliverables will include:

- a mid-project summary of emerging findings
- a detailed final presentation, including key insights and recommendations
- detailed qualitative quotes, depicting the sentiment and language behind the insights
- a workshop with BEF and RDA to bring to life the research to frame the insights and co-create solutions to take RDA's AM programme forwards.

## Timescales

The timescales for this project are to be confirmed, but illustrative timings are detailed below:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timing</b>
• Invitation to Tender process begins	10 Aug 2022
• Deadline for questions from agencies	29 Aug
• Deadline for agency proposals	5 Sep
• Shortlisting	12 Sept
• Shortlisted agencies presentation	15 Sept
• Agency appointment and kick off meeting	w/c 19 Sept
• Finalise approach	By 23 Sept
• Fieldwork period	26 Sept to 31 Oct (stage 1) 1 Nov to 3 Dec (stage 2)
• Interim summary of findings	w/c 31 Oct
• Presentation and workshop with BEF and partners	w/c 12 Dec

## Tender Requirements

The written tender proposal should include the following:

- Summary
- Introduction
- Approach to delivery of key requirements to answer the research methodology
- How they would reach the demographics we would like to engage with identified in the research audience, i.e. if they have access to them or need to go through some other agencies to access them.
- High quality deliverables that answer the strategic and research objectives
- Detailed breakdown and explanation of costs
- Company credentials and case studies
- Risk register (see below).

## Skills, Competencies and experiences

We're open to bids from individual organisations and consortiums. The successful provider(s) will need to demonstrate skills and expertise in the following areas:

- Expertise in the development of quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Experience of undertaking perception and behavioural change research
- Credibility and expertise when researching audiences that may be non-traditional for equestrianism
- Ability to turn data into valuable insight to successfully drive change and inform policy
- Excellent communication skills, including project management, presentation and workshop delivery
- Experience in delivering high quality outputs from similar projects
- Enable a partnership culture of mutual respect, trust and support.

## Budget

The current allocated budget to this work is circa £20k which includes VAT and project costs, e.g. travel expenses. However, due to the unique nature of this project, we're interested to see what sort of investment is required to complete both stages. Therefore, please submit your proposal if your costing doesn't match with the indicated budget and provide clear rationale for your proposed approach. At this stage, the BEF are committed to conducting stage one research and will review if stage two is possible once proposals have been received.

Agencies should provide a breakdown of costs for both stages of the research and to understand the per interview cost, management costs etc, as well as VAT and expenses, as appropriate.

**Please note:** in the research objectives and research audience sections, certain aspects of this project have been highlighted in italics. These are objectives/audiences that are useful to include but are less critical to the project delivery.

It may be that agencies feel adding these audiences and answering these objectives are beyond the scope of this budget – in which case, agencies are asked to provide a cost for delivering the core objectives and another cost for the italicised objectives/audiences.

Agencies are invited to include itemised costs for including these audiences and answering these objectives. It is BEF's decision on whether to include them if budgets permit.

## Risk register

Agencies responding to this ITT are encouraged to provide a risk register for this project, outlining the risks that may affect their ability to deliver the project, alongside scores for the likelihood and impact of each risk. Against the risks, a series of mitigating actions should be included in the proposal, demonstrating the ways in which the agency can reduce the impact and/or likelihood of each risk.

## Proposal Selection Criteria

For this project, agency proposals will be scored against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
Understanding of the brief, including sector context	15%
Proposed methodology and demonstrable expertise in it	15%
Evidence of researching target audiences (B2B and B2C)	10%
Project team	15%
Demonstrable expertise in providing insights aligned to membership / accreditation programmes	15%
Risk register and mitigating actions	10%
Value for money	20%

Proposals will be reviewed by the project lead, the BEF's Head of Participation, Mandana Mehran Pour, and BEF's Strategic Lead for Insight, Damian Stevenson and it will be done in collaboration with RDA's Director of Operations, Jude Palmer.

If shortlisted, the potential supplier will be invited to attend a face to face or virtual interview on above specified date. The interview will comprise a 40-minute presentation, covering the main elements of the potential supplier's response to this ITT, and 20 minutes for questions from the panel. Interviews will last no more than one hour. Potential suppliers should indicate in their tender response whether they are available to attend on this date. On appointment, the successful organisation will be expected to attend an inception meeting with the project team as early as possible in w/c 19 September.

The BEF reserves the right to change the tender process including the timetable, to reject any or all the proposals received, not to invite any tenderer to proceed further and not to provide any tenderer with additional information. Each potential supplier should identify any conflict of interest that would affect their submission.

## Contact Details

The project will be managed on behalf of the BEF by Damian Stevenson, the Strategic Lead for Research and Insight at the BEF. Damian will deal with enquiries and questions as well as being the key point of liaison on this project.

Damian's contact details are:

t: 07866 362104

e: [damian.stevenson@bef.co.uk](mailto:damian.stevenson@bef.co.uk)

Questions to help prepare your tender document can be submitted via this link:

<https://m.shortstack.page/p25MCn>

You should also submit your requirements in your proposal outlined in the Tender Requirements section via the link.

## Appendix 1: Questions for Riding Centres (AM and Non-AM)

- How long have they been set up?
- How large is their centre? No of horses, volunteers, riders?
- How much of their delivery is for disabled riders?
- Are they at capacity?
  - If yes, do they have a waiting list and how big is it? Is this the same for disabled riders as well?
  - If no, how close are they to capacity?
- What do they do to promote their centre and attract new customers?
- What do they know about their riders and volunteers?
  - All demographics, including: gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic group, disability/health condition
  - What types of disability do their riders/ volunteers have?
  - Are there other types of disability/impairment /health condition that they would like to welcome to their centres? If so, who?
- What are their ambitions regarding overall growth?
  - How do disabled participants feature in their future plans?
- What are their biggest challenges in delivering to customers in 2022?
  - What are the biggest challenges in delivering to disabled customers?
- Are they aware of following organisations (explore overall awareness of member bodies)
- Specifically on RDA - what do they know about this organisation?
- Are they aware of Accessibility Mark & if so, do they have the AM?
- If they HAVE AM, how did they hear about AM originally?
  - What are their views on the AM? (general)
  - Specifically, what do they think about these aspects of AM? (need to expand this section)
    - Time to obtain the accreditation
    - Amount of work required to get AM
    - Support from RDA
    - Training provided
    - Facility / environment audit
    - Benefits of getting AM
    - Drawbacks/limitations: how could AM improve?
  - If we want this to be a sector-leading accreditation of riding centres, what would need to happen?
- Similar questions for those who USED TO HAVE AM, plus why didn't you renew AM?
  - What would need to be true for you to apply for AM accreditation again?
- If they DON'T HAVE AM, ask them what they understand it to mean and whether they are interested in it.
  - If they know what it is, ask them if they've ever had it and why they left or why they've never had it?
  - If they don't know what it is, explain what it is and then ask questions about what they think of it and potential interest
  - What would need to be true for them to consider it as a benefit to their centre?
- What other accreditations/affiliations do they have?
  - What benefits do they see from other accreditations, that AM could learn from?

## Appendix 2: Questions for Disabled Participants and Non-Participants (children and adults)

- How long have they been involved with this centre?
- What do they do when they go there?
- What's the best thing about going there?
- What are the people at the centre like? Both paid and unpaid staff.
- What are the main challenges you have with getting to the centre / getting around the centre / participating in the programmes of activity?
- What concerns did you have before going the first time? Were these borne out? If not, what did the centre do to make you feel at ease
- Would you recommend it to other people with similar disabilities? Why/not?
- Would you recommend it to people with different disabilities (e.g ....)? Why/not?
- Are they aware of RDA? Are they aware of RDA's AM?
  - If so, what do they know?
- Are they aware if the centre they use is AM accredited?
  - If so, what does it mean to them?
- If not, explain the principle of RDA AM
  - What would they expect of an AM centre?
  - Would they like their centre to be AM accredited? Why/not?
  - How could the AM accreditation help centres to become more customer focused?
- What could centres do to better promote that they are inclusive for prospective disabled participants?
- What other organisations could help to promote this to their networks of influence?
  - What could they do?
  - How would this work – e.g. through comms or broader member / supporter engagement?
- How could centres use AM to allay barriers and fears about going riding / engaging with horses to broaden the reach of these centres and make them more inclusive?