The King's Award for Voluntary Service

Newbury RDA
Newbury Riding for the Disabled
Charity Number: 1121113

Newbury RDA Equine Welfare Policy Statement

Introduction

Our horses and ponies are the lifeblood of the RDA family. Demand for our services has never been greater, and having enough of the right sort of equine to support the varied needs of our participants is critical to achieving our charitable objectives. The health and wellbeing of all our equines is vital to the delivery of a positive experience for all our participants and volunteers. Newbury RDA (NRDA) has adopted the FEI Code of Conduct and the Five Freedoms from the Animal Welfare Act which can be found in full via the links below:

Code_of_Conduct_Welfare_Horse_1Jan2013.pdf (fei.org)

Five Freedoms for Horse Health and Welfare | MSD Animal Health HUB (msd-animal-health-hub.co.uk)

Due to the unique nature of RDAUK activities, this policy statement further outlines RDAUK's, and thereby NRDA's, commitment to equine welfare.

Background

This policy statement, in conjunction with the FEI Code of Conduct, Animal Welfare Act and other RDA policies and procedures, has been adopted as a Code of Practice at NRDA to safeguard the health and welfare of all our equines. RDAUK resources on the selection, training, welfare, and use of horses in RDAUK activities are for guidance in setting standards and highlighting vital points - they are not intended to take the place of professional advice.

Policy Principles

- Equines should not be used for any RDA activity until they have been fully assessed by the Regional Coach, Carriage Driving Assessor or someone deemed appropriate to complete this assessment. Equines should be sound, in appropriate body condition and should not display any signs of stress during their introduction to RDA work. Veterinary advice must be sought where there is any doubt.

- They must be a minimum of 5 years old.

- There is no maximum age limit for RDA equines however, the horses' fitness, body condition, age, height and the presence of any medical or orthopedic conditions must be taken into consideration when allocating work and carrying weights to older horses.

- Stallions must not be used.

- All equines owned by or under a long-term loan agreement with RDA are to have a minimum of a two stage pre-purchase examination.

- All equines owned by or under a long-term loan agreement with RDA are to receive an annual health check to remain eligible for use. Any other horse used in RDA activities, including commercially and privately owned animals, must also comply with this requirement. You can find an annual health check form and policy guidelines on the Policies page of www.myrda.org.uk

- All tack/harness and special equipment will be inspected on a regular basis to ensure that it is being maintained in good condition and that it fits the equine on which it is used. Group Coaches/Carriage Driving Coaches or designated person to check the condition and fit before every RDA session.

- Any detrimental use of equipment or inappropriate equine/rider combination will be reported to the Regional Equine Advisor.

- RDA equine/rider combination guidance is freely available and must be followed. Combinations must reflect the horse's body condition, height, age, fitness levels and the presence of any known medical or

orthopedic conditions. Rider values should be modified according to their ability, balance, and stability. During RDA activities rider/equine combination limits must be continually monitored. Newbury RDA issues a Maximum Rider Weight Chart regularly to Coaches stipulating the weights that each equine can carry.

- The RDA has a zero-blood policy. Should blood be seen anywhere on a horse, the animal must be removed from work or competition and veterinary advice sought immediately.

- All horses owned and long term loaned or deemed to qualify for the free vaccine scheme will be vaccinated against Equine Flu on an annual basis with an advisory of six monthly. We have a free vaccine scheme available for equines who spend a significant amount of their time doing RDA activities. It is our aim that 100% of owned and long-term loaned equines are vaccinated.

- RDA Medication Control Policy differs to that of the FEI in some instances. Whilst illicit use of medication constitutes a serious welfare issue and will not be tolerated, withholding permitted medication may be just as detrimental. Persons responsible for the veterinary care of RDA horses are advised to familiarise themselves with RDA Medication Control Policy. When attending RDA National Championships, a National Championships Medical Declaration form should be presented on arrival to the Stables team. Any queries about this beforehand should be sent to the Equine team at RDA National Office who will liaise with RDA Vets.

- Whilst RDA recognises the value of a good working relationship with a veterinary surgeon, free confidential and impartial veterinary advice is available to all RDA groups and participants. We have appointed Regional Vets for every region within RDA.