



**RIDING FOR THE DISABLED
ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATING CARRIAGE DRIVING**

A UK Company Limited by Guarantee No: 5010395
A Charity Registered in England & Wales (No: 244108)
and Scotland (No: SC039473)

**WELCOME PACK
& VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK
FOR GROUP VOLUNTEERS**

A VOLUNTEER'S REWARD

Breakthrough

I am side walking for an autistic teenager.

Though I have accompanied him many times, he doesn't acknowledge me. He avoids looking directly at any of the helpers.

He is tense and stiff as he starts his ride and pulls at the pony's mane. I attempt to release his hold on the pony – and he grabs my thumb in a vice-like grip.

Gradually, he absorbs the pony's rhythmic gait and begins to relax. He lets go of my hand.

I talk to him, encourage and praise him. But I still don't exist.

I am in my world. And he is in his.

I continue to look up at him – and smile.

Quite suddenly, he looks at me - eye to eye. Though his expression does not change, he slowly raises his hand and gives me a thumbs-up.

For just a few seconds we share the same world.

I wish my rider knew the sheer joy that moment gave to me.

Perhaps he did know.

V. Ernest Cox, Volunteer
Gaddesden Park RDA Group



President: HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL KG KT GCVO QSO

WELCOME TO RDA

Dear RDA Group Volunteer,

As a new volunteer, we know that your RDA Group will make you very welcome and, on behalf of RDA National, we would like to add our appreciation and thanks to you for joining us and helping to create opportunities for therapy, achievement and fun for our riders, carriage drivers and vaulters. We hope that you will enjoy working with us in your chosen role and being a member of the wider RDA Family.

We have designed this Welcome Pack to give you a flavour of how RDA is structured and how it operates. As you will see, RDA National is the central body, which provides support, advice and training to volunteers and Groups across the country. Apart from 12 professional staff employed at National Office to support the trustees and deliver these programmes (and a small number of paid staff in some Groups), RDA is entirely managed and operated by more than 18,000 volunteers. We are extremely proud of this and you are joining an amazing community of committed and highly valued volunteers.

As a volunteer, your input and feedback will always be welcome and I hope that you will not hesitate to communicate with us at Group, County, Regional or National level if you would like more information or clarification, or have any comments or suggestions for developing and enhancing the very special therapy that RDA offers.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Orde
Chairman
RDA National

Ed Bracher
Chief Executive
RDA National

Riding for the Disabled Association Incorporating Carriage Driving

Norfolk House, 1a Tournament Court, Edgehill Drive, Warwick CV34 6LG

Tel 0845 658 1082 Fax 0845 658 1083 Email info@rda.org.uk Web www.rda.org.uk

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THIS WELCOME PACK IS IN LOOSE-LEAF FORMAT YOU CAN INCLUDE OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY YOUR GROUP

HOW RDA WORKS

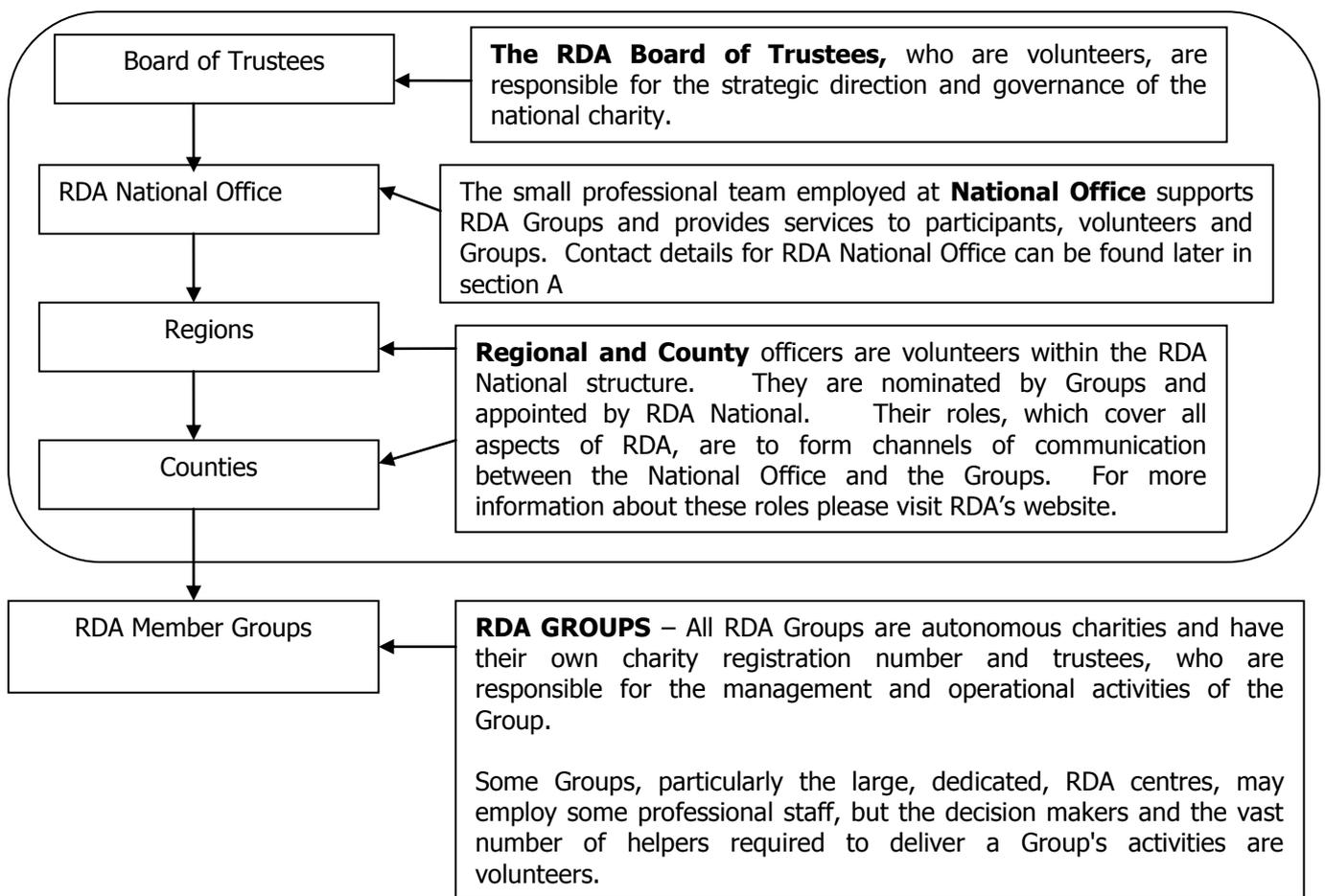
RDA is a national voluntary organisation dedicated to making a real and lasting difference to the lives of disabled people, enabling them to ride or carriage drive to benefit their health and wellbeing. RDA brings together horses and people to create a unique environment combining learning, therapy and fun. Achievement and progress are encouraged, recognised and rewarded at every level – from young riders learning basic skills to Paralympic champions realising their dreams.

Qualified voluntary instructors work with voluntary physiotherapists, other health professionals and teachers to ensure maximum benefit. The therapeutic and educational values of RDA's activities are increasingly recognised across the UK.

RDA has approximately 500 Groups throughout the UK delivering our service. These 500 Groups are supported by a county team and in turn these counties are supported by 18 Regional teams.

RDA Structure

RDA National : Charity Number 244108



RDA's MISSION Through the commitment of volunteers RDA enables people with disabilities to ride or carriage drive to benefit their health and wellbeing and to achieve their goals.

RDA NATIONAL'S AIMS FOR THE FUTURE

It's important that everyone understands what we are trying to achieve and how we are going about this, and this summary should give you an insight into this – as always there is more information on the website.

RDA National works to support Member Groups and their volunteers, while always recognising that any development, activity or support must benefit the participants. As the chart on the previous page shows, RDA National includes volunteers at County, Regional and National level, working alongside staff at National office.

WHAT WE DO

RDA has three principal objectives:

1. Developing and supporting opportunities for therapy
2. Developing and supporting opportunities for achievement
3. Enabling physical activity and enjoyment

All our activities are focussed on delivering these objectives and in order to achieve them we are working towards the following:

For Therapy...	For Achievement...	For Enjoyment...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the resources we need to deliver meaningful and lasting therapy – including people and places • Producing research and information to demonstrate the impact of our work and inform both our supporters and volunteers • Providing education and training to our volunteers to maximise the therapeutic impact of our work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the number of opportunities for achievement that are available to participants through RDA • Expanding our highly successful education programme to reach more people • Being the UK's leading organisation for specialist training in equestrian activities for people with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the opportunities for involvement in RDA activities • Ensuring that every participant has the opportunity for personal enjoyment and physical activity • Strengthening the range of programmes that focus on enjoyment, including the holidays programme

HOW WE DO IT

Although these represent the core objectives for the whole association, RDA National focuses on specific areas of activity in order to enable Member Groups to benefit and deliver these objectives. Below our charitable activities are defined:

- **Resources** We develop the necessary places, horses and equipment to deliver RDA's work and enabling the expansion of these resources, so that we can deliver services to a greater number of people
- **People** We support the recruitment, training and retention of volunteers, to ensure that we have sufficient people to deliver our services and expand them
- **Training** We set standards – for participants, Groups and volunteers – and deliver the support and training to help people reach these standards

Main Services provided by RDA National

RDA National Office provides a number of services to Groups, participants and volunteers. If you would like to find out more about any of the services listed below, please contact the relevant person at National Office overleaf:-

Group Support

- Guidance and help to create RDA Member Groups
- Quality assurance of Member Groups
- Information and quality assurance in equine welfare
- Guidance and support on legal issues and governance
- Specific support for Trustees
- Access to BEF supported schemes i.e. participation and volunteering
- Guidance on basic training of volunteers
- Guidance and information on a range of disciplines with specific relevance to disabled riders
- Guidance and documentation on a range of management issues (e.g. child protection, Health & Safety)
- CRB checks
- Access and support with contact to ACPTR Physios
- Support with volunteer recruitment and management
- Access to contact with/visit by HRH Princess Royal
- Access to one-off improvement schemes
- Help/advice with fundraising
- Access to National/Regional conferences
- Comprehensive manual
- Good value and comprehensive insurance
- Advice on a range of issues relating to the running of a member Group

Volunteer Support

- Provision of basic training
- Access to education-related programmes for validation of volunteering
- Access to National/Regional conferences

Riders/Drivers/Vaulters

- Support and advice in locating Groups
- Proficiency tests
- Access to Championships programme
- Access to recognised pathway to World Class programmes
- Access to Education programmes
- Access to National/Regional conferences
- Access to and financial support for holidays programme

Coach Support

- Provision of training systems and progression
- Delivery of training
- Access to coaching aids (e.g. Instructor's Resource)
- Quality assurance of coaches
- Access to BEF UKCC system

General

- Support of Regional structure
- Liaison with BEF
- Liaison with international bodies
- Promotion of RDA generally
- Finance Management
- IT development
- Events
- Fundraising

GETTING IN TOUCH – Telling us your news

Group, County and Regional Officers

Your Group will provide you with their own contact details and those of your County and Regional Chairman, or you will find the information on the RDA website – see below for details. They are there to support and advise you and your Group.

RDA National Office

Postal Address:

Riding for the Disabled Association,
Norfolk House,
1a Tournament Court,
Edgehill Drive,
Warwick, CV34 6LG

Telephone: 0845 658 1082

General e-mail: info@rda.org.uk

Individual staff roles and contact details are overleaf.

RDA WEB SITE – www.rda.org.uk

The web site is a great source of up-to-date and detailed information about RDA; including what's going on and how to get involved.

You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook. Link our tweets to your mobile and you will never lose touch with RDA again. Or you could visit our website and sign up to our e-newsletter.

RDA GROUP WEB SITES

Many Groups have their own web sites, which are accessible from www.rda.org.uk if you do not have a direct address.

VOLUNTEERS' VIEWS AND COMMENTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU

RDA NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF ROLES AND CONTACT DETAILS – AT NOVEMBER 2012

Name	Job Title	Main areas of responsibility	Contact details	Comments
Ed Bracher	Chief Executive	Strategy, policy, sponsorship/fundraising Governance Regional Development External Links	01926 405 961 ebracher@rda.org.uk	Monday-Thursday 9-5 Friday 9-4
Claire Milican	Director of Activities	Operational planning and development Activities co-ordination Group and Volunteer services development Performance management	01926 405 969 cmilican@rda.org.uk	Monday-Thursday 9-5 Friday 9-4
Julie Dargie	Executive Officer	Chief Executive Support New Group Support Group constitutional changes Royal visits International	01926 405 962 jdargie@rda.org.uk	Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 9-5
Rebecca Kemp	Volunteer Development Manager	Volunteer Development Programme Volunteer development and support Volunteer Awards	01926 405 966 rkemp@rda.org.uk volunteer@rda.org.uk	Monday-Thursday 9-5 Friday 9-4
Matthew Cobble	Youth Co-ordinator	BEF Young Equestrian Leaders Award BEF Youth Action Group	01926 405 977 yela@rda.org.uk	Tuesday & Thursday 9-5
Peter Tacon	Finance Manager	Finance: Accounts format & content; Charity Commission requirements; legacies; advice re. investments, VAT, grants from National Office Insurance: Claims; extent of cover; premiums Data Protection Officer	01926 405 963 ptacon@rda.org.uk	Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9-5
Lynn Taylor	Financial Controller	Finance: core finance operations; payments of expenses; VAT; Payroll RDA (Trading) Ltd; Christmas Cards and sponsorship	01926 405 965 ltaylor@rda.org.uk	Monday-Thursday 8.30-4.30 Friday 8.30-3.30
Sally Atkinson	Individual Giving Manager	General Donations/Fundraising; Gift Aid; President's Club	01926 405 975 satkinson@rda.org.uk	Monday-Thursday 9-5 Friday 9-4
Verity Malcom	Dressage & Championships Secretary	Championships Dressage Vaulting Sidesaddle	01926 405 967 vmalcolm@rda.org.uk	Monday-Thursday 9-5 Friday 9-4
Holly Timbrell	Coach Support Manager	Coaching other than UKCC Equine Welfare	01926 405 970 -Mon 0845 241 5337 – Tues + Thurs htimbrell@rda.org.uk training@rda.org.uk	In office Mondays Works from home Tues + Thurs 9am-3pm

Lizzie Parsons	UKCC Co-ordinator	Coaching - UKCC Clubmark	01926 405 970 lparkers@rda.org.uk	Monday 8-4 & Friday 8-3
Fiona Kendrick	Coaching Support Administrator	Instructor Reviews Green cards admin Instructor Registration Support for all Coaching work	01926 405 971 fkendrick@rda.org.uk	Monday-Thursday 9-5 Friday 9-4
Marisa Bretherton - MacKay	CRB, Education & Showjumping Coordinator	Education Show Jumping Safeguarding and CRB	01926 405 973 marisa@rda.org.uk	Monday-Thursday 9-5 Friday 9-4
Matthew Cobble	Activities Co- ordinator	Holidays Committee Participation Involvement	01926 405 972 mcobble@rda.org.uk	Monday, Wednesday 9-5 & Friday 9-4
Ruth Parker	Operations Assistant	Group orders General enquiries 25 Year Certificates Horse & Pony Database Census Forms	01926 405 974 rparker@rda.org.uk	Mon – Friday 10-4
Caroline Ward	Communications Consultant	Communications Publicity	01926 405 968 cward@rda.org.uk	Monday- Wednesday 10:30- 16:00
Vaughan Pearson	Corporate Fundraising and Professional Relations	Corporate fundraising and professional relations	01926 405 964 vpearson@rda.org.uk	Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9-5
Duncan Arrow	Systems Developer	IT Development and Support	0845 658 1082 darrow@rda.org.uk	Variable, please contact National Office
Denise Robertson	Head of Therapy	Therapy through horses plan Therapeutic advice, training and research	01926 405976 drobotson@rda.org.uk	Mon – Thursday 9-5 Friday 9-4

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?

The range of volunteer roles within RDA is huge; there is something for everybody, and everybody's contribution is valued.

As a new volunteer you may have decided what you want to do, but there may be something that you can do that you have not considered. If you have a skill to offer or would like to develop a new one, please do not hesitate to discuss it with your Group, County, Region or RDA National. The list below illustrates some of the different roles on offer:

- Accountant/Treasurer
- Arena party
- Caterer
- County/Regional Volunteer – Instructor, Chairman
- Dresser and Kit Fitter
- Equine Health Practitioner
- Fundraiser
- Handy Man
- Helper for riders, drivers & vaulters
- Holiday Organiser and Helper
- Horse Care Instructor
- Horse Carer
- Instructor
- Medical Professional – Physiotherapist, Doctor, Nurse
- National Volunteer
- Publicity/Press Officer
- RDA Whip for Carriage Driving Groups
- Regional Volunteer
- Secretary
- Session Organiser
- Social Organiser
- Stable Hand
- Tack Cleaner
- Trailer Driver
- Trustee
- Volunteer Co-ordinator



For more information about these roles and more please visit www.rda.org.uk

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE HEART OF RDA

GETTING STARTED

RDA's enrolment procedures may appear rigorous, particularly if the time that a volunteer can give is likely to be limited, but it is an essential element of RDA's Duty of Care to participants and to volunteers.

Before completing an Application Form, it is recommended that all potential Group volunteers visit the group to see how they operate and to meet and talk to some of the key volunteers with whom you will be working.

Enrolment as a Volunteer – Safeguarding Checks

All new volunteers, whatever their role, must complete an Application Form. Applicants must agree to an enhanced CRB check and when the scheme is introduced, an ISA registration (if not already registered).

The completed form is submitted to the Group's appointed officer, who will initiate checks on references and with the CRB and ISA.

The Group Trustees are responsible for the enrolment process in their Group. In the event of any issues that arise concerning a potential volunteer's suitability for their role, the Group Chairman will take appropriate action.

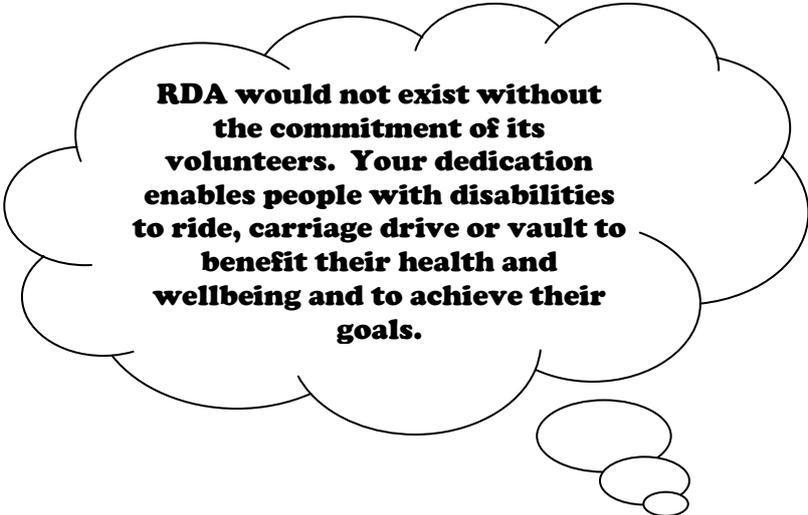
Before you Start

New volunteers may not help at RDA in any capacity until the enrolment procedures and the initial signature on a Training Record Card (known as a Green Card – see Training), are complete. This is a requirement for activating the RDA's insurance cover. Please note that a volunteer's own insurance (e.g. British Horse Society insurance or personal liability included in another insurance policy) is not an acceptable substitute.

Following positive completion of the enrolment procedures, Groups should have their own induction process. These may include many of the topics in this Welcome Pack and will give you the opportunity of asking any questions that you may have.

Volunteers' Personal Information

All enrolment, CRB and ISA information is confidential and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Any information that a volunteer supplies will be used for RDA purposes only.



RDA would not exist without the commitment of its volunteers. Your dedication enables people with disabilities to ride, carriage drive or vault to benefit their health and wellbeing and to achieve their goals.

THE BORING BUT IMPORTANT INFORMATION

RDA has many policies and strategies designed to support and protect volunteers. The following notes demonstrate RDA's commitment to this and more detailed information is available from your Group or the RDA web site (www.rda.org.uk).

THE ESSENTIALS OF RDA MEMBERSHIP

The Essentials of RDA Membership provides Member Groups with a complete reference on how to run their Group. Certain parts of The Essentials are also applicable to volunteers and participants. Your Group will hold a copy which you can access if you wish to find out more. Alternatively you can visit the 'Running your Group' section of the website for further information.

HEALTH & SAFETY

All RDA Groups must display and adhere to the Health & Safety Guidelines and all volunteers should support their Groups by making themselves familiar with them. Group volunteers should be particularly aware of:

- Identity of the Group Health & Safety Officer
- Emergency Procedure in the event of an accident or incident
- Fire Drill
- Identity of trained First Aiders
- Emergency telephone numbers
- Location of the First Aid Kit
- Location of the Accident Book and Reporting procedures

If this information is not given in the Group induction procedures, please ask.

Volunteers are the eyes and ears of a Group, and they should report to the Group Health & Safety Officer or Organiser ANYTHING that could pose a danger.

INSURANCE

RDA National arranges Trustee Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance for Groups and Personal Accident Insurance for all RDA Volunteers. The Group's Certificate of Insurance should be displayed. As an RDA volunteer once you have enrolled you will be covered by RDA Insurance when carrying out any RDA activity.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

As a volunteer you may be given personal information about riders, carriage drivers or vaulters on a "need to know" basis.

Please note that this information must not be passed on or discussed with anybody other than a Group official.

TRAINING and EDUCATION

TRAINING

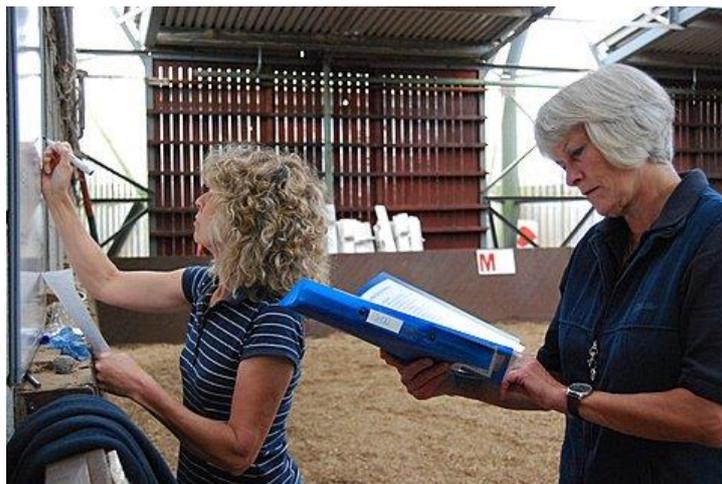
Training is an important part of RDA, whether you are an RDA Instructor/Coach or volunteering on a session, there is a training programme for you.

It is RDA's policy that volunteers should not undertake any RDA activity for which they have not received the appropriate training or about which they do not feel confident. To support this we provide extensive training for all our volunteers.

For example: horses are particularly sensitive to a human's feelings of nervousness or uncertainty and they may react badly if a leader does not feel confident in their own ability. Please do not feel embarrassed or inhibited in telling the Instructor/Coach if asked to do anything that you do not feel able or competent – it is better to be safe than sorry and it is something that most volunteers do at some time. If the Instructor/Coach knows your feelings, they will ensure that you either receive the appropriate training or you will be diverted to other tasks – it is no problem at all.

Appropriate training for all volunteer roles within RDA is essential for the health and welfare of participants, equines and other volunteers. Training opportunities are available at all levels of the organisation.

Groups may have their own Training to cover their specific needs and the following notes are a brief outline of what is available.



Many of our volunteers wish to become RDA Instructors/Coaches, this is not a necessity, but, if interested, the chart overleaf shows the RDA Coaching pathway. For further information about RDA qualifications, please contact the Training Department at RDA National Office.

Recommended for All Volunteers

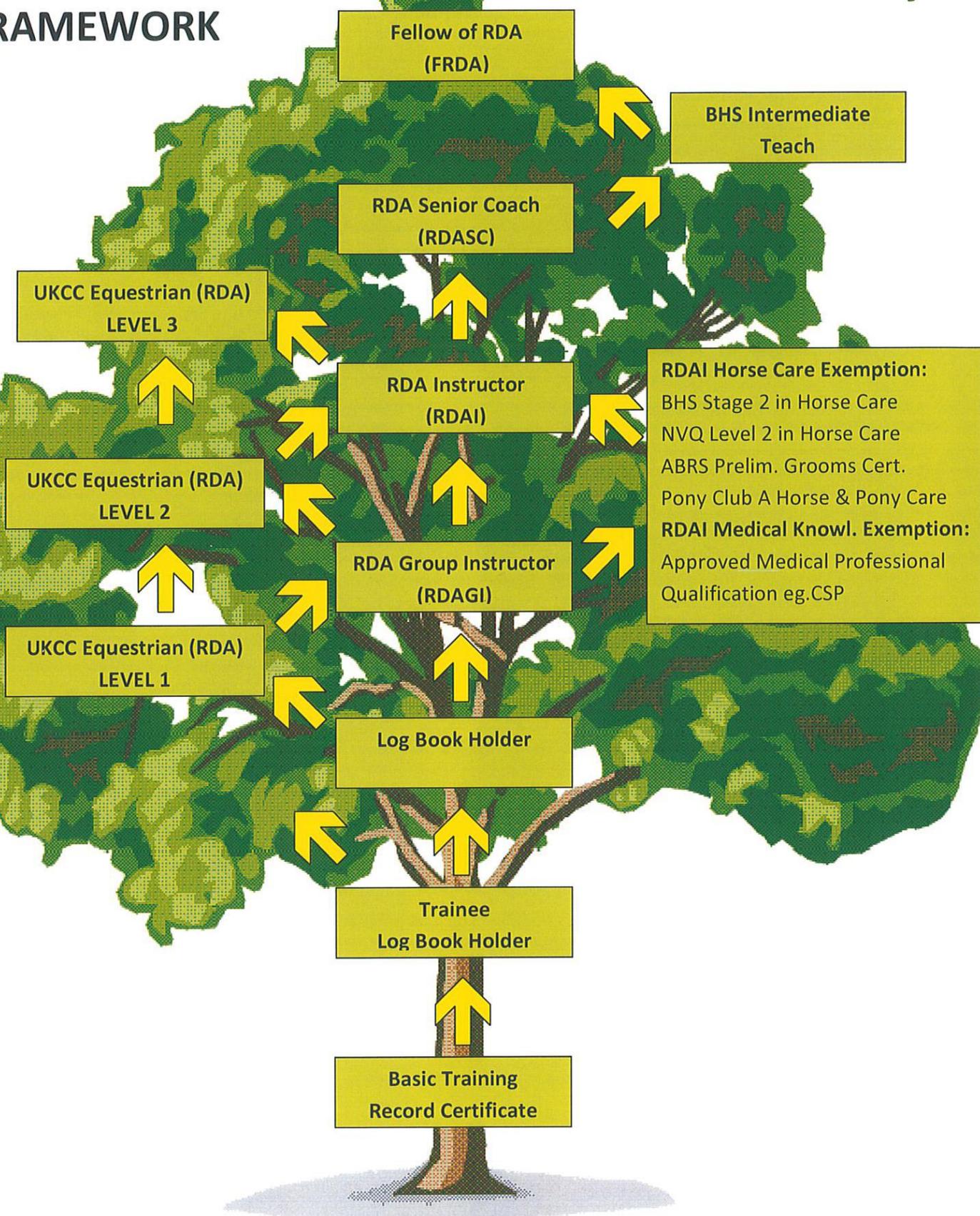
- First Aid - the initial assistance or treatment given to a casualty for any injury or sudden illness before the arrival of an ambulance, doctor or other qualified person. Groups will arrange attendance at courses to the RDA-approved standard.

Group, Regional and National Training Schemes

- The Instructors and Physiotherapists¹ run group training sessions, with the assistance of volunteers who have completed their Green Card training and have received a Certificate of RDA Volunteer Training.
- Most Regional and National training is aimed at Group Instructor (RDAGI) level and above

¹ Physiotherapists The qualification for RDA Physiotherapists is the ACPTR – The Horse in Rehabilitation, Parts 1 – The Horse , Part 2 – The Disabled Rider and Part 3 – Hippotherapy. If you are interested in becoming a physiotherapist please contact your Regional Physiotherapist or the Head of Therapy at RDA National Office

COACHING QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK



In-house Group Training

This is an opportunity for volunteers to learn more about a Group's activities and therapies and the techniques required to enhance the help given to riders/drivers. It is also an excellent opportunity to get to know other volunteers and discuss mutual matters of interest. Speak to your volunteer co-ordinator to find out about courses in your own Group.

- Visits to other RDA Groups - All Groups are different and if you or your Group would like to see how another RDA Group operates, you could visit to watch a session and talk to their volunteers. Please note that all visits should be pre-arranged with the host Group.
- Safeguarding (see GETTING STARTED, Duty of Care) - Every Group will have a Vulnerable Persons Protection Officer and all volunteers are required to have an up to date CRB check and be registered with ISA.
- County, Region and Supra Region Meetings and the National AGM - These meetings are important elements of the RDA training package. They provide an opportunity to meet representatives from other Groups and to hear a range of speakers on RDA related topics. Space may be limited at these meetings so places may not be available every year.

Non-RDA training courses for specialist topics

Groups may take advantage of very good courses on, for example, management, safeguarding, being a charity trustee, volunteer recruitment and management and horse matters. These are run by the Council for Voluntary Service, British Horse Society, World Horse Welfare, Local Authorities, etc.

QUALIFICATIONS

RDA activities have a strong learning element and can be used as a powerful educational tool by schools and colleges for both participants and volunteers.

RDA and ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) have worked together to develop tailor-made programmes to ensure that RDA activities can be used and measured for educational gains. The comprehensive package of awards and qualifications recognises, rewards and celebrates individual achievement by participants with a wide range of disabilities, as well as providing accreditation and progression routes for volunteers (for example. points for University entrance, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme).

Volunteers

Community Volunteering Qualification (CVQ)

CVQ is intended for volunteers seeking accreditation and progression routes e.g. new volunteers, riders/drivers who might wish to switch from client to volunteer; students involved in volunteering e.g. through the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme or established volunteers seeking to develop or enhance their role. This qualification also attracts points for University entrance.

Employability Qualification

This qualification offers a range of opportunities for learners to develop their personal and employability skills whilst gaining a qualification in an RDA context.

Employability can be undertaken at several levels some of which are intended for young people and adults who are not ready for employment but for whom a job is a realistic aim within a reasonable timescale. While others aim to help learners develop employability skills within vocational settings, allowing them to build on their employability skills and acquire transferable skills that will help them progress in their current situation and in the wider world of work.

Disability and Sports Awareness (DaSA)

The ASDAN DaSA Award, developed in consultation with RDA and the English Federation Of Disability Sport, accredits up to 60 hours of activity in which candidates think about disability and raises awareness of the achievements of disabled sports men, women and young people, appreciating that disability does not mean inability.

Offering a flexible multi-level programme aimed primarily at 13-19 year olds this Award provides a stand alone certificate of achievement as well as progression into nationally recognised Awards and Qualifications.

Participants

Transition Challenge

RDA sessions consist of many activities which easily fit into the Transition Challenge Award. Riders can gain certification which is closely linked to National Curriculum subjects.

Towards Independence

This award enables riders to gain certification for demonstrating riding skills, horse care, knowing parts of the tack, listening to instructions and much more.

For further information, please contact your Regional Education Co-ordinator or RDA National Office for their contact details.

RDA RECOGNISES, REWARDS AND CELEBRATES ACHIEVEMENT

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

RDA values and appreciates every volunteer's contribution and welcomes the opportunity of expressing that gratitude in the form of a certificate or award.

Awards for Group volunteers are:

Nominated Awards

- **Over & Above** Individual volunteers and Groups may nominate a volunteer from within their Group at any time during the year for the award of a Certificate for special service.
- **Volunteer of the Year** Any volunteer can nominate another volunteer for a **Regional Volunteer of the Year Award**, the winner of the RDA Volunteer of the Year award is chosen from the Regional winners. The award is presented at the RDA National AGM.



Nomination forms for all of RDA's nominated awards can be downloaded from the RDA website, or can be obtained by contacting the Volunteer Development Manager

- **25 Years of Service** Groups advise RDA National when a volunteer has served the organisation for 25 years, and a special certificate signed by the RDA Chairman together with a badge is presented at a National or Regional event.
- **1, 5, 10, 15 & 20 Year Service Certificates** Certificates signed by the Regional and Group Chairmen are presented by Groups at their discretion.

FOR MANY VOLUNTEERS, WORKING IN AN RDA GROUP BRINGS ITS OWN REWARDS - IT MAY BE A SMILE OR A GOAL THAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

HINTS FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH ALL PARTICIPANTS

The Volunteer (Helper) is one of the most important members of the RDA Team. Without people like you RDA would not exist.

Throughout the country more than 26,000 riders and carriage drivers look forward to their riding/carriage driving sessions and in order to do this they are relying on people like you to make it happen. Did you know that each year RDA's volunteers contribute more than 3½ million hours of their time to make a real and lasting difference to the lives of riders and carriage drivers?

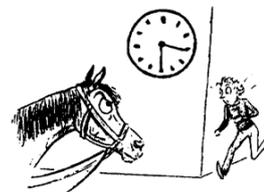
You are joining something amazing – thank you!

This section has been designed to help you get the most out of RDA and to help you make sure the riders, driver and vaulters get the most out of it. It is not an exhaustive guide, but will reinforce what you learn first hand at the Group. There are lots of things to get to grips with at RDA – so don't be afraid to ask – your Group Instructor, Group Organiser and the other volunteers will be pleased to help.

The section also outlines some of the qualities of the ideal RDA Volunteer. Again, this is far from exhaustive, but we hope that it will help you become a confident member of the team and that you will enjoy coming to RDA as much as the riders and carriage drivers and that you will share their excitement and achievements.

REMEMBER

- Sympathy without sentimentality
- Alertness without anxiety
- Unlimited patience
- Interest in the rider as a person
- Allow independence
- You are an important member of the team



Don't be late!

THE IDEAL HELPER...

- Is always on time, at least ten minutes before the session begins, and finds a suitably trained replacement if unable to attend.
- Is armed with 100% concentration, forgetting all everyday problems and is suitably dressed.
- Is prepared to do ANY job that they are capable of from tacking up ponies, unloading riders from the bus, taking to the loo, chatting to a nervous rider or welcoming a new helper.
- Is always alert when mounting riders, ready to give a helping hand if needed but never too much. Most riders prefer to struggle and achieve rather than be manhandled into position. Help, if needed, should be given with kindness, humour and dignity.
- Is always aware of the rider's abilities, temperament and mood. Someone who has a hard time coping with a new drug, treatment or the pressures of exams will appreciate an understanding approach.
- Is aware of what the Instructor wishes to achieve for the rider, always concentrating on the Instructor's words and quietly reinforcing the message.

**WHATEVER YOUR ROLE, YOUR HELP IS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED.
IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ARE ALWAYS HAPPY TO HELP**

See also:

Medical Conditions, Hints for Helpers with Riders, Hints for Helpers and RDA Whips for Carriage Drivers

HINTS FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH RIDERS

1. First make sure that you have completed your RDA New Volunteer's Form and have been issued with, and have signed, your Basic RDA Training Record Card and undertaken the appropriate training.
2. To lead the pony, lead from the pony's shoulder, one hand as close to the head-collar as necessary, the other hand taking up the looped length of rope. Do not wrap the rope round your hand.
3. Hold the pony while your rider is mounting - stand directly in front of the pony's head holding the reins from either side.
4. Check the girth before and after mounting. Adjust the stirrups to the right length.
5. Listen to the Instructor at all times and make sure your rider and helper are ready for any change of pace or direction.
6. Keep the pony's movements smooth.
7. Keep a safe distance from the tail of the pony in front of you.
8. Remember games are for the riders. Keep to a suitable speed with no sudden turns or stops.
9. Be prepared to stop if your rider becomes unbalanced or has a problem. Any adjustments should be made off the track to allow the ride to continue.
10. If there is one helper, plus leader, it is easier to walk on the opposite side to the leader. If there are two helpers - one either side.
11. You are there to prevent your rider falling off. Don't hang on although you may have to help them maintain balance by placing a hand on their thigh or lower leg, or as directed by the Instructor - particularly when trotting. In the case of a rider falling off it is your responsible to move the pony away from the rider to minimise the risk of a further accident.
12. Help your rider obey the Instructor and make sure commands are understood.
13. When it is time to dismount, check your rider has both feet out of the stirrups and do not allow dismounting until you are ready to help.
14. Find out about your rider's problems so you will know how best to help.
15. Try to keep track of what your rider does each week so you can help them to make progress.
16. You are there to give confidence and prevent accidents. Allow riders as much independence as possible intervening only when necessary so that they gain the maximum benefit from each session.

HINTS FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CARRIAGE DRIVERS

1. **ACCIDENT PREVENTION – VEHICLES.** To maintain high standards of SAFETY always observe the following:
 - a. **Before each Session:**
 - (1) Check shaft clamp bolts.
 - (2) Check tyre pressures on inflatable tyres to recommended psi.
 - (3) Check all bolts with spanners.
 - (4) Check wheels and adjust and repair as required.
 - (5) Visually check the vehicle body, bolts, etc.
 - b. **Regularly:**
 - (1) Grease wheel bearings.
 - (2) Check metal shafts – they can bend out of shape. Repair or replace as required.
 - (3) Check ramp fastenings.
 - (4) Paint and varnish the woodwork.
2. Keep your vehicle under cover. Do not use any vehicle that is mechanically unsound.
3. **HARNESS** – Check harness for wear and clean regularly.
4. **SAFETY CODE – AN RDA WHIP** must:
 - a. Check that everyone is wearing the appropriate headgear.
 - b. Be seated in the vehicle controlling the pony or donkey with both sets of reins and the whip before the driver gets into the vehicle.
 - c. Remain seated until the driver has safely left the vehicle.
 - d. Always carry a whip. If the driver is unable to do so, this must be carried by the RDA Whip.
 - Your aids are:
 - Reins
 - Voice
 - Whip
 - e. Maintain concentration.
 - f. Avoid sharp turns.
 - g. Keep distances
 - h. Be relaxed and confident; this encourages the driver to be relaxed and confident.
 - i. Never be over confident; always pay attention.
 - j. Watch out for signs of fatigue in the driver, and be prepared to stop.
5. **A HELPER** must:
 - a. Hold the pony or donkey's head while the whip (whether in a wheelchair or ambulant) is mounting or dismounting.
 - b. Remember the RDA whip is in charge of the turnout, and will only release the Helper when he/she is satisfied that all is in order before moving off.
 - c. Be able to cope with the unexpected.
 - d. Remember they are responsible for the Driver's safety.
6. If there is more than one vehicle in a drive, the Carriage Driving Organiser or appointed person (preferably an RDA Whip) should be in charge of watching the ponies, drivers and helpers, at all times.
7. Sufficient escorts on bicycles are essential when on the road, or out on a drive, and they must be wearing luminous/reflective tabards and preferably protective headgear.

8. **ACCIDENT PREVENTION (VEHICLES)**

- a. Accidents can happen when rules are broken. At all times abide by the RDA Carriage Driving Safety Code and the Health and Safety Guidelines which can both be found on the RDA website.
- b. AT NO TIME while a driver is in the vehicle may the RDA Whip leave the vehicle.

9. **REMEMBER** – If you acquire new ponies, donkeys, vehicles or items of harness, they must be inspected before they are used in Group sessions.

10. For further information please refer to the Carriage Driving Section of the Website or contact the Carriage Driving Co-Ordinator at National Office.

HINTS FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH VAULTERS

The ideal Vaulting Horse will be:-

- Calm, obedient and trustworthy
- Over 14hh
- Able to make smooth transitions between paces and direct transitions walk/canter
- Able to maintain a calm & steady rhythm in all paces on a 13/15m circle
- Able to accept the 'bareback' feel of vaulting

Main Equipment required for a Vaulting Session

- A barrel horse
- Voltige roller plus girth and side reins
- Back pad
- Thick foam covered with cotton (to pad length of roller and girth)
- Lunge rein & whip
- Bridle
- Boots and gel pads for the horse are optional although good practice

Preparing for a Lungeing Lesson

- Any lungeing will be carried out by an experienced and qualified RDA Vaulting Coach
- Make sure you warm up and warm down before and after each session

Team Discipline

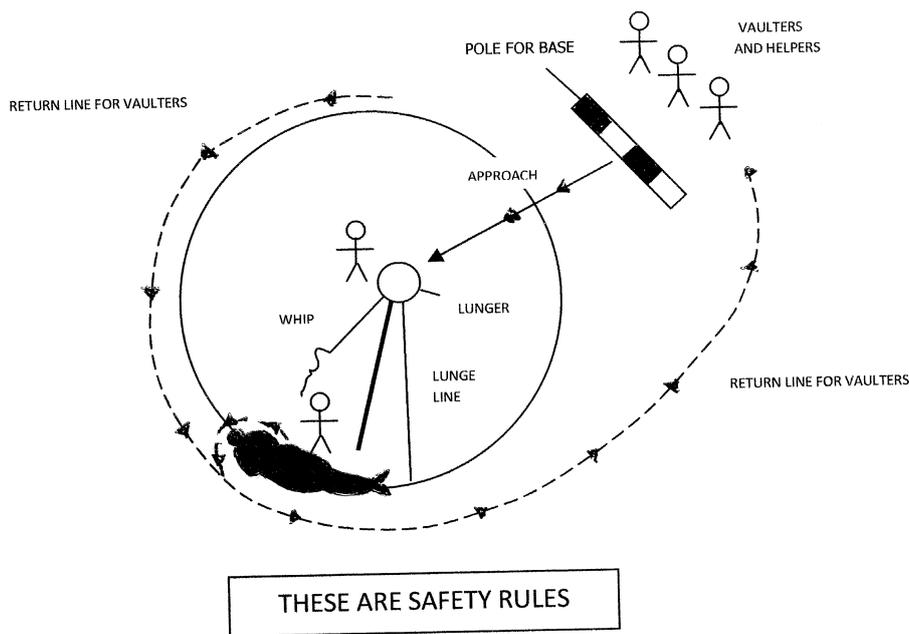
- Always travel in the same direction as the horse on the circle
- DO NOT run in if the horse is facing you on the circle
- Travel clearly on the outside of the circle when leaving the horse
- RDA volunteers should encourage and reinforce team discipline and move with the vaulter

The Barrel Horse

- Must be strongly built, with a stable base
- Must be suitably padded
- Grips must be padded
- Should, ideally, have gym mats on each side
- Must never be placed, and used, on a hard surface without mats
- It is recommended that all volunteers should have a go at working on the barrel to have a feel for the sport and to appreciate what vaulters will encounter and experience

The Approach to the Vaulting Horse

- Both the vaulter and volunteer must go to the whip hand side of the lunger and await the invitation from the lunger to go to the horse
- As a volunteer you should be slightly behind and to the side of the vaulter (right hand side when the horse is working on the right rein and left hand side on the left rein)
- Do not touch the lunge line or side reins
- RDA volunteers need to be able to demonstrate and position themselves correctly in order to assist the vaulter. This practice develops judgement of speed and pace developing awareness of the movement of the horse. Start in walk and progress to trot and canter when confident.
- Volunteers should form a team 1/1 with beginners and stand directly behind in the line up. Each partnership vaulter/volunteer work together, with the volunteer moving and staying close to the vaulter but only intervening when necessary.
- It is beneficial if the volunteer learns the skill of waiting and watching from a position $\frac{3}{4}$ down the line, whilst being at the ready to move in and help



Team run-in

RDA volunteers run in as a team, paired alongside RDA vaulters, then stand directly behind in the RDA line-up.

Basic Mount & Dismounts

RDA volunteers need to learn the skill of assisting mounts and dismounts in many ways including on the move. The emphasis must be on encouraging the vaulter in correct technique and maximum use of their strength and body tension. Barrel practice is essential.

Examples of some of the basic movements

Movement	Description
Basic Seat	An astride position (the vaulter sits on the horse as a rider would), with the arms held to the side and the hands raised to ear level. Hands should be held with closed fingers and palms facing downward, with the fingers arching slightly upward. Legs are wrapped around the horse's barrel, soles facing rearward, with toes down and feet arched. Vaulter holds this position for four full strides.
Flag	From the astride position, the vaulter hops to his or her knees and extends the right leg straight out behind, holding it slightly above his or her head so the leg is parallel to the horse's spine. The other leg should have pressure distributed through the shin and foot, most weight should be on the back of the ankle, to avoid digging the knee into the horse's back. The left arm is then stretched straight forward, at a height nearly that of the right leg. The hand should be held as it is in basic seat (palm down, fingers together). The right foot should be arched and the sole should face skyward. This movement should be held for four full strides after the arm and leg are raised.
Mill	From the astride position, the vaulter brings the right leg over the horse's neck. The grips must be ungrasped and retaken as the leg is brought over. The left leg is then brought in a full arc over the croup, again with a change of grips, before the right leg follows it, and the left leg moves over the neck to complete the full turn of the vaulter. The vaulter performs each leg movement in four strides each, completing the Mill movement in sixteen full strides. During the leg passes, the legs should be held perfectly straight, with the toes pointed. When the legs are on the same side of the horse, they should be pressed together.
Scissors	From the astride position, the vaulter swings into a handstand. At the apex, the vaulter's body

	<p>should be turned to the lunge and the inner leg should be crossed over the outer leg. The vaulter then comes down and lands so that she is facing backward on the horse, toward the tail. The return scissors is then performed, so that the vaulter swings up with the outside leg over the inside leg, and lands facing forward once again. If the vaulter lands hard on the horse's back, they are severely penalized. Scissors is judged on the elevation of the movement.</p>
Stand	<p>The vaulter moves from the astride position onto the shins and immediately onto both feet, and releases the grips. The vaulter then straightens up with both knees bent, the buttocks tucked forward, and the hands held as they are in basic seat. The vaulter must hold the position for four full strides.</p>
Flank	<p>From the astride position, the legs are swung forward to create momentum, before swinging backward, and rolling onto the stomach in an arch, with a full extension of the legs so that the vaulter nearly reaches a handstand. At the apex, the vaulter jackknifes her body and turns the body to the inside, before sliding down into a side seat. The vaulter moves from the side seat with a straighten of the legs, keeping the legs together, bringing her body over the horse's back, and pushes off the handgrips, landing to the outside of the circle facing forward. The vaulter is judged on form, landing, and elevation. You need to be able to eventually swing your entire body over the horse.</p>

DISABILITIES & MEDICAL CONDITIONS

All RDA participants have a completed enrolment form which provides information about their medical conditions. Groups review this information regularly to ensure that they can continue to give the best possible support and therapy to their participants.

Notes on medical conditions and disability and their relevance to riding and carriage driving

A guide to the majority of medical conditions that volunteers may encounter, with notes on their relevance to riding and carriage driving, is available from your Group or the RDA web site (www.rda.org.uk). The disabilities and medical conditions most common to RDA are:

Cerebral Palsy - www.scope.org.uk Down's Syndrome - www.downs-syndrome.org.uk Autism - www.autism.org.uk Multiple Sclerosis - www.mssociety.org.uk Muscular Dystrophy - www.muscular-dystrophy.org Stroke - www.stroke.org.uk Epilepsy - www.epilepsy.org.uk Blindness - www.rnib.org.uk Deafness - www.rnid.org.uk Absence or Deformity of Limbs	Arthritis - www.arthritiscare.org.uk Spina Bifida - www.asbah.org Spinal Cord Injuries - www.spinal.co.uk Behavioural Problems, and anyone else who would benefit from RDA (more information is available from your Group, the RDA website and from the disability organisations listed above. Please note this list is by no means exhaustive)
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Some Groups will be able to supply copies of these notes that have been edited to cover their participants.

If you are unsure about any medical issue concerning a participant, please inform the Instructor immediately. By doing this, you may help avoid discomfort, pain or distress.

WHATEVER YOUR ROLE AND HOWEVER MUCH TIME YOU CAN GIVE

RDA THANKS YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING

APPENDIX

THE ESSENTIALS OF RDA MEMBERSHIP

HOW RDA WORKS/GETTING IN TOUCH

RDA National

THE BORING BUT IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Sundry Group Information

Insurance 3q

ACRONYMS & TERMS

ACPTR - Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Therapeutic Riding

ASDAN - Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

BEF – British Equestrian Federation

BHS – British Horse Society

CC – Charity Commission

VPPO – Vulnerable Persons Protection Officer

CRB – Criminal Records Bureau

CSP – Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

GO – Group Organiser

H&S – Health & Safety

HELPER – a volunteer working with participants and equines together

ISA – Independent Safeguarding Authority

PARTICIPANTS – RDA riders, drivers and vaulters

RDA – Riding for the Disabled Association Incorporating Carriage Driving

RDAGI – RDA Group Instructor

RDAI – RDA Instructor

RDA WHIP – RDA Driving Instructor

RIDDOR – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations

UKCC – United Kingdom Coaching Certificate

WHIP – Participant Driver