



Activity Leader FAQ

What can I do with this qualification?

The Activity Leader role enables the signed off volunteer to run horse care and interactive sessions where the horse is predominantly static such as ASDAN, Tea with a Pony and proficiency test training. Participants may be involved in leading a horse under the close direct supervision of an Activity Leader if it is a small part of the planned activity, such as leading from the stable to the arena, providing this has been risk-assessed carefully with suitable mitigations in place.

Remember that every activity within an RDA session, including those lead by an Activity Leader, should be risk assessed, taking into consideration the participant, equine and the person leading the session. If there are any doubts, then an alternative activity should be organised.

What can't I do?

- Work with the horse where it is mostly moving around
- Groundwork where a horse is moving, such as leading over poles/ through obstacles
- Loose/'liberty' work with horses and participants in an arena/pen/field

What PVG/DBS checks do I need?

Most volunteers only need the Enhanced Check. This checks for spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings plus any additional information held locally by police forces that's reasonably considered relevant to the position applied for. This is the minimum level of check required by those, aged 16 and over, involved in an RDA session and is the level required by most RDA volunteers in supervised roles.

You will require the **Enhanced Check with additional Child Barred List Checks** when you take on this role. Adult Barred List Checks are not required for any RDA volunteer.

This checks the same as above with the addition of the appropriate DBS Barred Lists. This is the level of check required by those who are in a position of regulated activity where the role is described or equivalent to: Coach, Session Leader / Organiser, Centre / Yard Manager, RDA carriage driving coach and the role requires the individual to work with children. We would only advise not getting the child barring lists for groups who do not have any children on their participant register – like some carriage driving groups for example.

Do I need to do a safeguarding course?

Yes, as you will be in charge of groups of participants. The first safeguarding workshop must be face to face either in a venue or via zoom -the e-learning is not acceptable. This can be done via RDA, Pony Club, BHS or any accredited body that covers the minimum criteria.

To view the minimum criteria for safeguarding training, please go to [myrda/safeguarding/FAQ's Frequently Asked Questions \(myrda.org.uk\)](https://myrda.org.uk/safeguarding/FAQs)

With external courses, they must be less than 3 years old, and the group must have sight of the original certificate. After that, you must undertake mandatory safeguarding training every 3 years, but you can alternate between the e-learning and in person. The only proviso is that you cannot do 2 e-learnings in a row.

For any safeguarding/DBS queries please email sbrazier@rda.org.uk



Activity Leader FAQ

Is there an age requirement?

As the Activity Leader would be in sole charge of a group of participants the minimum age is 18. They can lead a session as long as fully supervised by a Group Coach or Coach from the age of 16 which is when they can also register as a Coach in Training.

Do I need a review?

The form will need to be renewed every year, although you don't need an assessment. Safeguarding courses and PVG/DBS checks need to be kept up to date.

Can I be left in charge of a group of participants on the yard?

Yes, you can. The aim of this is to allow volunteers to run static sessions to free up coaches to run riding /driving/vaulting sessions as we know how many groups find it hard to have enough coaches but would love to expand the work they do. It also allows volunteers to develop their skills as we know many volunteers have lots to offer but don't want to be coaches.

Can I take participants on Education placements?

Yes, except riding sessions.

Can I deliver ASDAN and proficiency tests?

Yes, except riding sessions. This will allow those whose skills and experience are suited more to the educational side of things rather than coaching riding.

Can we do loose work in an arena with horses?

No, loose work is not currently allowed within RDA.

Can participants lead horses?

Whilst the Activity leader is only able to run static sessions, participants may be involved in leading a horse under the close direct supervision of an Activity Leader if it is a small part of the planned activity, such as leading from the stable to the arena, providing this has been risk-assessed carefully with suitable mitigations in place. It is not recommended that participants lead horses to or from fields as this carries a higher risk. Observation from outside the field boundary would be a safer alternative, with the Activity Leader doing the leading. There may be some limited circumstances where this might be suitable after careful written risk assessment. Groups are free to restrict Activity Leader-led sessions to completely static, with no leading by the participant involved.

Does a coach have to be on site?

No, you are covered to work with participants on the ground. For safeguarding and lone-working reasons there should always more than one adult around though. This means that if the coach is off for whatever reason, you can still run an unmounted session with participants.



Activity Leader FAQ

Can I top this up to become a coach in the future?

Yes, you can. It would be great if you enjoyed leading static sessions and felt ready to take the next steps to be a coach. You will have already done some of the required modules so will have a head start.

If I have already done the Disability Awareness and Horse Knowledge modules, do I need to do the updated ones?

No, you don't but there is some useful new information in them which directly relates to the Activity leader role so it would be advisable to if possible.

Can I do mechanical horse sessions?

No, you currently need to be a riding coach for this as you must be able to give technical input to participants.

Am I insured if a participant has an accident?

Yes, if you have been signed off by a Group Coach and Trustee and you have followed all the correct policies and procedures and considered the risk assessment done for the session. A risk assessment can be written with a Coach if you are not confident to write this yourself as they have specific training in this area.

Will I have to be First Aid trained?

There should be a first aider on site as for any RDA session and it should not be the person in charge of the session as they must look after the other participants if there is an accident.

Will I be responsible for the safety of the participants or is there a coach always in charge overall?

You are responsible for the participant(s) during your session. A risk assessment may indicate that another volunteer would make things safer. You must make clear what everyone's role is.

Will the participants always have a carer/parent with them to supervise behaviour?

This will vary from group to group and should be agreed before sessions start. It will also depend on the type of session you are running. If they need additional supervision this should be discussed with the Group Coach/ participant/carer/parent. For example, some people on alternative Education placements or supported volunteering may come with a buddy.

Will I have to do the session preparation or just deliver the session?

That will depend on your group set up. Some groups have developed Education plans so you would be delivering a prepared lesson e.g. on mucking out or feeding. Some of you will be confident at planning your own sessions to meet an agreed goal. Our volunteers have a wide range of experiences so it will look different in each group. Always ask for help if you need it though.



Activity Leader FAQ

Who is in charge of the arena in general?

If more than one static activity is happening in the arena, you need to be aware of what is happening elsewhere. For example, you may be doing grooming with a horse tied up at one end, and someone else is doing parts of the horse with a horse tied up at the other. You need to agree that you won't have one horse left on its own if they are not used to that, so need to finish at the same time.

What happens if there is an incident in the arena?

You would follow your normal group accident procedure. It would be a good idea to run over this regularly, including a practice of things like the fire drill so everyone knows their role.

Am I responsible for the person or the pony or both?

You are responsible for the session, which may include more than one participant and more than one horse/pony. You are responsible for them all, although you would usually have another volunteer to help you. You would discuss beforehand your roles; for example, the other volunteer might take the pony away if the participant became unable to cope and their behaviour was getting worse.

What if I don't feel comfortable doing it?

You need to discuss with your Group Coach what you are happy doing and not go beyond that. For example, if you would prefer to work with just one participant initially, just make that clear. We want people to have a good experience of starting to take their own sessions and develop at their own speed.

Do participants need to wear hats?

We recommend a hat where possible during static sessions, whether a barrier is in place or not. It is up to the group to risk assess and decide based on their own group set up.