

# Guidelines for Performance Coach BHSI

The Performance Coach BHSI certificate endorses you as an ambassador for the BHS at home and overseas, showing commitment to the continued development and leading standards of equitation and coaching with the welfare of the horse central to your coaching philosophy. You will be skilled in coaching riders and training horses to a competitive standard.

A Performance Coach BHSI will have a broad knowledge in all aspects of business management and horse care, including maintaining horse health, care of competition horses and the breeding and management of young horses.

Offering a natural aptitude and empathy in your riding and coaching, you will utilise your strength as a good communicator to impart knowledge with enthusiasm, clarity and impact. This career certificate will endorse you as a leading coach, who is able to train and supervise staff and students and give sound career advice around the extensive career pathways available in the industry.

The Performance Coach BHSI qualification is awarded upon achievement of four sections:

Section 1: Care and Welfare

Section 2: Business Management

Section 3: Training Horses (Lunge and Ride)

Section 4: Coaching

Generally, sections 1 and 2 are assessed in one day and sections 3 and 4 are assessed in one day (these will not be the same days).

## Discipline Specific Pathway

You can choose to be assessed on the Complete Pathway (Eventing), a Dressage Pathway or a Show Jumping Pathway at Performance Coach BHSI level.

In all pathways section 1 and 2 remain the same, however there are adaptations in the requirements for sections 3 and 4 to make them specific to the discipline.

This document contains the information for the Complete Pathway (Eventing), go to our website for more information on our [Dressage Pathway](#) and [Show Jumping Pathway](#).

## What are the entry requirements?

Age: 18

Qualifications: BHS Level 4 Senior Eventing Coach (Stage 4), or equivalent. If you hold other equestrian industry qualifications and/or significant industry experience, please contact the Education Team or visit our website for further guidance on our [Direct Entry procedure](#). We would like to highlight that Direct Entry is especially encouraged for competition riders and professionals who have significant experience of working in the industry, especially working in large yards.

Other: BHS Accredited Professional or BHS Gold Member

## What is the cost for assessment?

Assessment fees can be found on our [website](#) or contact our Education team.

We are delighted to offer Accredited Professionals a 25% discount on assessment fees (UK and Ireland only).

## Section 1: Care and Welfare

Within this section you will demonstrate your competence and comprehensive knowledge for managing the care and welfare of horses and ponies in a range of situations. You will be expected to handle all types and ages of horses safely and confidently, showing respect and consideration for all horses and any additional handlers. The assessment will be a combination of practical tasks and discussion and you will have opportunities to discuss your broad working knowledge of the equine industry. You will also deliver a training session to show your ability to impart your knowledge to others to support their development.

Within this section you will be assessed in the following areas:

### 1. Static and dynamic assessment of conformation

For this assessment you will analyse static and dynamic conformation, including limb conformation and foot balance. You will then discuss your analysis, the horse's potential use and market value.

You will analyse two horses, one at a time. You will not be given any information about the horses. The horses may be of any age, type, breed, size and conformation. An assistant will be available to hold and trot up the horse as per your instructions which should be clear and polite. There will be a suitable outside area to observe the horses.

You will be expected to observe each horse from all angles, up close and from a distance. You will be required to age the horses. Possible areas for discussion include conformational strengths and weaknesses, condition, muscle development, straightness of movement, soundness, injuries and blemishes, and potential performance capability. Following your observations, you will discuss each horse's possible use, conformational suitability for various disciplines and any factors that may affect this. You will make recommendations for the horse's management and workload with the view to promote good health, welfare, fitness and longevity.

Finally, you will discuss the buying and selling of horses, vetting procedures and factors that contribute to the horse's market value.

The assessment should last approximately 30 minutes.

### 2. Management and health of competition horses and evaluation of saddlery

This is a discussion-based assessment. You will discuss the management of a range of horses that you are likely to encounter during your professional career. You will then focus your discussion to competition horses and their management during long distance travel, including international travel. You will discuss the current legal requirements and considerations for travelling horses internationally, including biosecurity to prevent the spread of disease before, during and after travel and competition.

You should understand and be able to explain current Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) rules and recommendations with regards to drugs and medication for competition horses. You will also discuss the use of common over the counter and veterinary prescribed drugs and preparations for common ailments including the uses, costs, storage, administration, and contra-indications of such medications. There will be a range of drug packaging available to promote the discussion.

You will evaluate a range of diagnostic tests for the investigation of injuries and health concerns in horses. You should be able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the tests, when they are used and their reliability in diagnosis.

The saddlery section will assess your ability to evaluate the use of a wide variety of tack for different horses in commercial and competitive environments.

There will be a range of saddles, bridles, bridle work and training aids available for discussion. Discussion may include saddlery for all disciplines or the commercial environment, condition, age, value, replacement costs, quality, uses, availability and popularity.

The assessment should last approximately one hour, conducted individually or in pairs.

## 3. Horse condition, feeding and management

For this assessment you will showcase your ability to analyse a horse's health, condition and muscle development in order to plan a horse's management.

You will assess one horse in the stable. You will not be given any information about the horse. You will be required to carry out a static assessment only. The horse may be of any type, size and age and of any level of fitness and development.

Your analysis will cover such topics such as health, condition and fitness. You will be required to age the horse. From a static analysis you will be expected to estimate the level of fitness and assess the development of main muscular groups. You will not be required to discuss in detail the horse's conformation strengths or weaknesses, unless you think it is directly affecting the horse's health, condition or muscle development. Your evaluation will progress to the management of different types of horses with a specific focus on feeding and fitness.

Discussions surrounding the management of the horse and its fitness work will include; from out of work to participating across all disciplines to include planning and implementation of programmes to maintain and to develop fitness, problem solving, biomechanics, health issues, practical considerations and knowledge of performance requirements.

Discussions surrounding the management of the horse and its feeding will include; from out of work to participation across all disciplines to include planning and implementation of feeding regimes to maintain health and performance, nutritional requirements, health issues, breeding stock and practical application in yards and riding of different sizes and disciplines.

The assessment should last approximately one hour, conducted individually or in pairs.

## 4. Breeding

For this assessment you will confirm your understanding and knowledge surrounding the breeding of horses, their management and young horse handling. Although you may not choose to breed horses within your career, you should have a working knowledge of breeding processes and requirements for breeding stock.

You will assess one mare in the stable. You will not be given any information about the mare. The mare may be of any type, size, age and condition. You will be required to carry out a static assessment only. You will also age the mare.

You will assess the mare for its suitability for breeding and will discuss such topics such as its shape, weight, udder, conformation and behaviour, age and purpose of use of the mare and possible foal. You will evaluate the practicalities of putting the mare in foal, as well as a range of different types of horses and breeding programmes. Discussions will continue surrounding the ethics of breeding horses in different situations, different breeding processes and methods of handling young horses including their effect on development and behaviour.

The assessment should last approximately 40 minutes, conducted individually or in pairs.

## 5. Deliver training

For this assessment you will showcase your ability to deliver training to others on a Stage 4 care topic. The topic you will be asked to deliver will be chosen at random by your assessor, on the day of your assessment. The topic for your training session will be one of the following:

- How to assess a horse's conformation
- How to apply a knee or hock bandage
- How to fit a double bridle
- The use and fitting of a training aid (may include, Market Harborough, bungees, draw reins, harbridge, De Gogue)
- How to check a dressage saddle for comfort
- Methods of restraint

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You will not be required to bring a lesson plan to your assessment; however, we recommend you are prepared to deliver any of the topics listed above. Your training session should be suitable for a learner working towards BHS Stage 4. Your training session should last no more than 10 minutes. You may be asked to deliver to a fellow candidate or staff/volunteer at the centre.

## 6. Care and welfare topic discussion

Throughout your career you will be aware of new information, guidance and research that may influence your care and management of horses as ideas and technology advances. In this assessment you will demonstrate your knowledge in a chosen topic, demonstrating current industry thinking and awareness of a range of sources of information that has influenced your views. You will also demonstrate your presentation and communication skills to ensure you are confident communicating in the workplace; preparing you to be able to advise clients or deliver training and demonstrations.

For this assessment you will explore a topic of your choice relating to Stage 4 Care. For example, topics could come from within areas such as:

- Care and management of mares and youngstock
- Specialist tack for competition
- Nutrition
- Maintaining health and wellbeing in horses
- Health, management and fitness of competition horses
- Quality of life and euthanasia
- Equine learning theory
- Young horse handling

You will review a minimum of three sources that relate to your topic. Sources of evidence can be in the form of books, journals, magazines (for example, *Equine Health*), websites, expert testimony (expert opinion of an industry leading professional) or research articles. Only one expert testimony is permitted. The expert testimony should be recorded, and a recording brought to the assessment, for review from the panel if required.

You will present to a small group of up to three industry professionals (for example, BHS Assessor, veterinarian, farrier or proprietor).

Your presentation should last between 15-20 minutes. You have the option to present using software such as Microsoft PowerPoint, although this is not compulsory.

Following your presentation, the panel will have an opportunity to ask questions.

Please bring with you any supporting evidence and literature for possible review from the panel.

The assessment should last approximately 30 minutes and is assessed as a standalone assessment

*Please note that due to Covid this assessment is being run virtually and not on the Care & Welfare and Business Management Assessment Day.*

## Section 2: Business Management

This section covers essential knowledge and skills required of a manager to run a successful equestrian business with confidence and competence.

### 1. Business management skills

You will cover the range of policies, procedures and good working practice you would implement within a business for it to comply with employment law and legislation. You will explore the policies an equestrian business would follow, how you would implement the range of procedures that underpin the policies, the training that may be required and how you will ensure all staff follow good working practice.

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You will also look at the responsibilities and requirements of a manager to promote business success.

This section is assessed through discussion.

The range of topics for discussion will include how to promote staff wellbeing, employment regulations, financial requirements, risk management and strategic and business planning.

The assessment should last approximately one hour, conducted individually or in pairs and is assessed as a standalone assessment

*Please note that due to Covid this assessment is being run virtually and not on the Care & Welfare and Business Management Assessment Day.*

## 2. Management scenario discussion

A successful manager or business owner will be observant to risks that may affect their business and will have risk management plans in place. Unfortunately, there will be occasions when incidents happen that cannot be foreseen, and it will be the manager's responsibility to respond accordingly to minimise impact and protect further risk to the business. This assessment will prepare you for such eventualities and will enable you to react to an incident appropriately and confidently.

On the day of your assessment you will be given a pre-defined case study. The case study will detail an example of an equestrian business and outline an incident that has occurred. The business will be a riding school, equestrian centre or yard of any size and location. You will be provided with these details within the case study.

The incident you will be asked to respond to will be one of the following:

- Outbreak of an infectious / contagious disease
- Repercussions following a riding fatality on site
- Serious welfare concern
- Celebrity / media visit
- Social media fake news
- Break in / burglary
- Flooding or fire
- IT failure / GDPR breach / power cut
- Serious safeguarding concern

Once you have been given your case study, you will have at least 60 minutes to prepare a response to the incident which analyses the risk, impact to the business, potential repercussions and considers the management of staff, horses, clients and other stakeholders. You will assume you have full responsibility for the management of the incident. After your preparation time you will present your plan to a BHS Assessor. You may be asked questions to confirm understanding.

The assessment should last approximately 30 minutes and is assessed as a standalone assessment

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## Section 3: Training Horses (Lunge and Ride)

This section covers essential knowledge and skills required to train horses

### 1. Working the horse from the ground

Lungeing or long reining using two reins is an essential exercise to train and develop a horse's way of going. As a groom, rider or trainer you will be expected to carry out non ridden exercise and training. This assessment demonstrates your advancing skills in lungeing with one rein to two, and long reining horses.

You will be given one horse to assess and work from the ground to develop its way of going. The horse may be of any size, type, sex or age from three years upwards. The horse may be of any level of training and experience. The horse may be capable of varying quality of work and may be any level of fitness.

The horse will be tacked up with any relevant equipment. You should check equipment for comfort and safety before you begin your session. You will be expected to age the horse to aid your assessment and plan your session.

You should warm up the horse to assess its way of going. From your assessment you should continue to work the horse using appropriate techniques and exercises to develop its way of going and aid improvement. You should be prepared to utilise a combination of lungeing with two reins and long reining, unless you feel that one technique is unsuitable for the horse. You will work the horse with empathy and authority whilst developing an effective rapport with the horse.

You will be expected to use ground poles (if appropriate) to develop the way of going. An assistant will be available to help, following your instructions.

You will discuss your session with the assessor highlighting the strengths and limitations in the horse's performance, your evaluation of the exercises and techniques chosen, your performance, and how you would plan to develop this horse's training with future sessions. You will also evaluate the general training of horses and the process of working horses from the ground using two reins.

The assessment will last approximately 30 minutes, including discussions with the assessor and is assessed as a standalone assessment

### 2. Riding and training theory

This assessment will give you the opportunity to discuss your training philosophies, methods and experience training horses for dressage up to advanced medium and jump training up to 1.20m.

You will also analyse your experience of training a horse. You should have trained the horse for a minimum period of six months, so you have a suitable time frame to discuss any improvement seen and draw down from your experiences with this horse. The horse you choose to discuss can be of any age, type, level of training or discipline, for example; a young horse for backing, a riding school horse used for training others, a competition horse (any level) or retraining a horse for a different discipline.

In order to aid your discussion and support your analysis, you can complete an optional [logbook of training](#) to bring to your assessment.

You can also bring photos or videos (on your own device) as evidence to support your discussion.

The assessment should last approximately 15 minutes.

### 3. Assess a horse

You will assess a horse as if for personal or centre purchase. Firstly, with a static and dynamic assessment of conformation and then a ridden assessment over all three paces, on the flat and over fences.

The assessment will take place outdoors on grass and you may share the area with up to three other candidates.

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The horse may be of any size, type, sex or age from four years upwards. The horse may be of any level of training and experience and may be capable of varying quality of work. The horse may be of any level of fitness. The horse will be presented to you ready to ride either in schooling or competition tack. The horse may be shod, unshod, studded or not studded.

Following your ridden assessment, you will discuss your evaluation with the assessor.

The assessment should last approximately 45 minutes, including discussions with the assessor.

## 4. Dressage session

You will ride two horses during this assessment. One, or both horses will be able to work at advanced medium level and may be a competition or school horse of any type, size, sex or age. The horses may be any level of fitness and be capable of varying quality of work.

You will ride on a surface and may share the area with one other candidate.

The guidance below relates to each horse.

The horse will be presented to you ready to ride either in schooling or competition tack. You will warm up the horse and evaluate the horse's way of going and its level of training. From your evaluation you should continue to work the horse, using appropriate exercises to develop the horse.

You will evaluate the session with your assessor and plan the horse's training for development to improve and establish advanced medium level work and beyond.

Throughout your discussions you should relate the horse's way of going to the Training Scale and show a clear understanding of the dressage riding requirements for British Eventing, British Dressage and FEI competitions.

The assessment should last approximately one hour, including discussions with the assessor.

## 5. Show jumping session

You will ride one horse during this assessment. The horse will be capable of jumping up to 1.20m and may be a competition or school horse of any type, size, sex or age.

The horse may be of any level of fitness and may be capable of varying quality of work. The horse will be presented to you ready to ride either in schooling or competition tack.

You will ride in an enclosed area and may share the area with one other candidate.

There will be a pre-prepared jumping area. The fences will not be numbered but will allow for linking of two or more fences. The fences will be a mixture of uprights, spreads, oxers and combinations. An assistant will be available to alter fence sizes as requested. You will be expected to assess the fences available before your assessment begins, although this time is not factored into the timetable of the day, so please ensure you arrive in time to do this before your assessment briefing.

You should warm up your horse and assess its abilities over all three paces and over warm up fences. You will then plan your session and utilise exercises and the fences available to develop the horse. You will be expected to ride the horse within its capabilities jumping appropriate fences and heights. You should understand competition rules and technical requirements in order to jump a 1.20m course.

You will evaluate the session with your assessor and plan the horse's training for further development.

Throughout your discussion you should relate the horse's way of going to the Training Scale and show a clear understanding of the show jumping requirements for British Eventing, British Showjumping and FEI competitions.

The assessment should last approximately 30 minutes, including discussions with the assessor.

## 6. Cross country session

You will ride one horse during this assessment. The horse will be capable of jumping technical cross country fences up to 1.10m and may be a competition or school horse of any type, size, sex or age.

The horse may be of any level of fitness and capable of varying quality of work. The horse will be presented to you ready to ride either in schooling or competition tack.

You will ride in a cross country schooling area and may share the area with one other candidate.

There will be a pre-prepared jumping area. The fences will not be numbered but the direction of the jump will be indicated by white and red flags. You will be expected to assess the cross country area and fences available before your assessment begins, although this time is not factored into the timetable of the day. Please ensure you arrive in time to do this before your assessment briefing.

You should warm up your horse and assess its abilities over all three paces and over warm up fences. You will then plan your session and utilise exercises and the fences available to develop the horse's work and evaluate his abilities. You should understand competition rules and technical requirements in order to jump a 1.10m track.

You will evaluate the session with your assessor and plan the horse's training for further development.

Throughout your discussion you should relate the horse's way of going to the Training Scale and show a clear understanding of the requirements for British Eventing and FEI competitions.

The assessment should last approximately 30 minutes, including discussions with the assessor.

## Section 4: Coaching

This section covers essential knowledge and skills required to coach

### 1. Assess a rider

In this section you will observe two horse and rider combinations. The horse and rider combinations will not be riding at the same time. You will make a verbal assessment of the rider, their skills and the influence they have over the horse's way of going. One horse and rider will be working on the flat and one will be working over fences.

The horse or pony and rider will be any level of ability and could be an established partnership or a trainee on a school horse. The horse can be any size, type and breed and the horse, pony or rider may be capable of varying quality of work. It will be a partnership you have not coached before, but you may go on to coach them for later sessions in the assessment.

This may take place in an enclosed area or field and the horse and rider may share the area with other riders.

You will observe two horse and rider combinations for 10 minutes each; one combination following your dressage coaching session and one following your show jumping coaching session. You will then discuss your observations with the assessor.

### 2. Dressage coaching

You will coach one horse and rider combination in this session. The partnership will be capable of working at or towards advanced medium level. The quality of the work may vary. It can be an established competitive horse and rider combination or a career student riding a school horse. The horse or rider may have none, limited or significant competition experience. The horse may be of any level of fitness.

You will have sole or shared use of an enclosed arena. There will be a pre-prepared area with dressage markers.

You will assess your horse and rider and ask any relevant questions at the beginning of the session. From your assessment you should have a clear structure, plan and goal. You may choose any exercises providing the rider has a clear understanding of it and it is within the horse and rider's capabilities. The exercises should aim to improve advanced medium level work.

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This session will last approximately 50 minutes; your coaching session should last 40 minutes, and an additional 10 minutes allowed for discussion with the assessor.

## 3. Show jumping coaching

You will coach one horse and rider combination in this session. The partnership will be capable of jumping up to a 1.15m course. The quality of work may vary. It can be an established competitive horse and rider combination or a career student riding a school horse. The horse or rider may have none, limited or significant competition experience. The rider may wish to progress their jumping or want to improve at existing level. The horse may be of any level of fitness.

You will have sole or shared use of an enclosed arena or grass area. The fences will not be numbered but will allow for linking of two or more fences in a competitive context. The fences will be a mixture of uprights, spreads, oxers and combinations. You will be expected to familiarise yourself with the show jumping arena before your assessment begins. This time is not factored into the timetable of the day, so please ensure you arrive in time to do this before your assessment briefing.

You will assess your horse and rider and ask any relevant questions at the beginning of the session. From your assessment you should have a clear structure, plan and goal. You may choose any exercises providing the rider has a clear understanding of it and it is within the horse and rider's capabilities.

This session will last approximately 50 minutes; your coaching session should last 40 minutes, and an additional 10 minutes allowed for discussion with the assessor.

## 4. Arena eventing session

You will coach two horse and rider combinations for a semi-private lesson in this arena eventing session. There will be a pre-prepared jumping area. The fences may not be numbered but the direction of the jump will be indicated by white and red flags.

Each rider will be of a different skill level and you will be expected to adapt your session to accommodate each rider's ability. One rider will be at Stage 3 working towards Stage 4 and one rider will be at Stage 4 working towards Performance level. The riders will be career students working towards BHS qualifications; you should be able to advise the riders on their performance in relation to the BHS qualifications and the BHS career pathways structure.

You will walk the course or lines with the riders before the session and then assess each rider in the warm up. You will then coach the riders over single and linked fences to develop their skills and knowledge and ability to influence their horse. The fences you choose each rider to jump may be the same or different, but you must choose exercises and heights of fences that suit the different ability of each rider and the level they are working towards.

You can bring technology with you to assist your coaching (for example a headset and earpiece), but this is not compulsory. You must provide your own technology equipment should you wish to use it.

The assessment for this section should last approximately 60 minutes. 10 minutes for a course walk, your coaching session should last 35-40 minutes, and an additional 10 minutes allowed for discussion with the assessor.

## 5. Coaching presentation

This section will enable you to showcase your experience of training and developing rider and horse combinations in an area or discipline and evaluate your coaching. A Performance Coach will regularly reflect on their coaching practice and methodologies to find ways to enhance and develop their craft.

You will present your general experience coaching riders and training horses, and then focus the presentation on your experience coaching a specific rider over a minimum period of six months. Your chosen rider can either be a rider and horse combination working towards competition or a career student rider training on multiple horses. The focus should not be on the development of the horse, but instead the development of the rider's skills, confidence and influence on the horse, although the horse's improvement and development can be discussed. You should also discuss your coaching philosophy and how you adapt your coaching to meet the rider's needs. The assessor would be keen to understand your self-reflection process to ensure you continue to meet the rider's needs.

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For this assessment you will present to a BHS Assessor.

Your presentation should last between 15-30 minutes. You can bring resources/ supporting evidence such as a logbook, photos or videos (on your own device) as evidence to support your discussion.

Following your presentation, the assessor will have an opportunity to ask questions.

The assessment for this section should last approximately 45 minutes and is assessed as a standalone assessment

*Please note there is an exemption for this assessment for anyone who has passed their UKCC Level 4 assessment, evidence will need to be provided to the BHS Education Team.*

## Next steps

We recommend formal training at a BHS Approved Training Centre or with a BHS Accredited Professional Coach. You can find all these details, and any planned training events, [on our website](#). You can also find our planned [assessment dates](#) here too.

We recommend you read the full assessment criteria of the Performance Coach BHSI qualification in more detail, [available on our website](#).

Please note:

- You cannot take Performance Coach BHSI assessments at a centre you currently work in or have worked in in the last 12 months.
- You cannot take Performance Coach BHSI assessments at a centre that you have regularly trained at in the last six months- a maximum of one days trainings every two month is allowed (*please note this has been relaxed to a maximum of one days training every month during the Covid period*).

If you need any guidance or support along the way, please contact our Education team on 02476 840508.