

The  
British  
Horse  
Society

# Pony Stars

Junior Challenge Awards

## Welshie Wizzers

### Syllabus for coaches

March 2021

Don't forget to also refer to the Activity Plans and Activity Sheets for delivery ideas and further resources



## GOLDEN GROOM

### RUGS

Find out about the types of rug available and why ponies may or may not need one

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Identify a stable rug
- Identify a turnout rug
- Outline the purpose of a rug
- Outline why some ponies will not need to wear a rug
- Tell you a negative consequence of over rugging a pony
- Put on and take off rug with assistance

#### Coach guidance

- This topic can be delivered on a basic level or with more details (particularly reasons for rugging/not rugging) depending on the age and ability of the group. Not all of the detail below needs to be covered – adapt to suit the ability of your group – they should still be able to fulfil the minimum criteria in the key points
- The stable rug and turnout rug can be any weight, with or without a neck – whatever is available at the centre
- Purpose: to provide shelter against extreme cold or wet. Try not to encourage language such as ‘keep a pony dry or keep a pony warm’ as most ponies can do this quite well without needing a rug. Explain that just because we may want to wear a coat if it’s raining or cold, it doesn’t mean ponies need to wear a rug. Generally most healthy ponies may not need a rug but ponies that are elderly, ill, underweight, finer type ponies or those with a thin coat, or those that are clipped may need a rug (you may want to leave out clipped if this has not been covered or the group may not understand this)
- Discuss that most (native type) ponies (can link/re-cap Breeds topic within Shetland Striders) will grow a thick, long coat for the winter. Their skin produces natural oils which acts as a waterproof barrier and the rain will run off a pony’s coat, keeping skin layers close to the body dry and warm (unlike if we get caught in the rain our skin soaks up the water so we begin to feel cold). The thick coat will stand on end which helps to trap a layer of air and helps to keep the pony warm. Also when ponies eat, the digestion process produces heat which helps to keep them warm (you could describe this as like having a hot water bottle in their belly). Explain that this is usually why in the winter, you may see ponies unrugged, but with hay or access to grass as if they are eating they are generally keeping themselves warm. Ponies will also naturally walk around as they graze which is another way to keep warm (demonstrate this by going for a walk around the yard and they should feel a bit warm!). You could also discuss that ponies are prone to easily becoming overweight, and that it’s ok for ponies to lose weight in the winter (this would happen naturally in the wild) so they are not overweight when coming into spring when there is more good quality grass available. Depending on age and ability of group you could introduce conditions such as laminitis here.
- Negative consequence of over-rugging: Pony too warm, pony overheats – this could lead to the pony sweating in the rug which could lead to rug rubs/sores or skin infections from increased bacteria (wet/warm environment is perfect for bacteria), pony doesn’t lose weight

over winter like it would do naturally and is at risk of health conditions in the spring, when not following a natural cycle of weight gain and loss this could lead to hormone imbalance and risk of metabolic disorders, over-rugging can lead to difficulty in managing weight

- Put on and take off a rug: child can be assisted to put the rug on/take off. Safe procedure followed (folding rug in half so it is easier to lift, putting on gently). Should be able to recognise how to fasten the buckles and surcingles so the rug is not too tight or loose

### **\*\*Two star challenges**

- Learn about other types of rug and when are they used.
  - For example a cooler, exercise sheet and fly sheet (although fly sheet will also be covered in the 'Summer Care' topic)
- Know the sizes pony rugs come in and how to measure a pony for a rug
  - Discuss how a rug is measured and measure ponies to find their correct size. Further considerations like build of pony could be discussed as this sometimes can affect the size of rug required. Can they begin to correctly guess the size of rug required?
- Design your own rug for any animal you want! It doesn't have to be a normal everyday rug it could be one that has hidden superpowers or is trendy enough to be on the catwalk! Be as creative as you can!

## GOLDEN GROOM

### MANE AND TAIL

Help to get rid of dirt and knots by washing your pony's mane and tail

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Describe suitable and unsuitable conditions to consider for washing a mane and tail
- Identify equipment required to brush and wash a pony's mane and tail
- Describe the process of washing a pony's mane and tail and areas that may be sensitive
- Prepare a suitable area for washing
- Brush a pony's mane and tail
- Wash a pony's mane and tail with shampoo
- Rinse a pony's mane and tail
- Work around the pony safely
- Give appropriate aftercare to the pony
- Tidy the wash area after use

#### Coach guidance

- Children can have assistance at all times
- Conditions: considerations include the weather (ideally wouldn't want to wash a pony's mane and tail in cold/wet weather, it's not a pleasant experience and take a long time to dry. In winter a pony would use its mane to help keep neck area warm and dry, washing would strip the mane and neck area of any oils which will affect its waterproof properties)
- Equipment may include mane brush or comb, hose, bucket, sponge, shampoo, sweat scraper, cooler rug (may be required for aftercare depending on weather or if pony is clipped), mane and tail spray. This list is not comprehensive, please advise depending on the facilities available and process followed at your centre/yard
- Process: Children should be aware they can use bucket and sponge or hose and be aware that a pony may be sensitive to water near their head and bottom and how the method they choose could help to reduce risk of an incident
- Preparation: sweep/tidy area, getting equipment ready close by, haynet – if allowed at centre
- Wash a mane and tail: children should follow a safe procedure and work around the pony safely. They should be aware to be gentle when near the head and react appropriately to the pony's behaviour. They should be aware of the pressure of the water if using a hose and where the hose is, trailing etc when in use. They should be able to recognise when the shampoo is fully rinsed
- Aftercare: sweat scrape the pony, add any conditioning spray and apply a cooler if required, put pony in stable or other suitable area to dry off according to centre procedure

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Wash a pony's legs. Consider where you will position yourself, how you will move around your pony safely and where you will put your equipment
- Plaiting a mane after being washed to keep it tidy whilst it dries
- Spot clean any stable stains or dirt off your pony before a lesson

## GOLDEN GROOM

### HOOF CARE

This topic introduces the importance of looking after your pony's feet and how to do this

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Outline how to care for their pony's feet
- State why it is important to care for their pony's feet
- Identify the points of the hoof
- Pick out a pony's hooves and apply hoof oil

#### Coach guidance

- Hoof care points: why horse's hooves are important to look after, picking out, conditioning with hoof oil, they can only be trimmed by a qualified person, regularity of trimming
- Points of the hoof; bulb of heel, frog, bars, sole, bars, white line, wall
- Children can have assistance to lift up and hold the hoof for picking out. Children should be able to demonstrate how to pick out a hoof – correct direction of hoof pick and avoiding the frog
- Hoof oil applied to inside and outside of hoof with assistance from coach. Children should be aware of the benefits of applying hoof oil/dressing

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Learn the names of the bones inside your pony's hoof
- Hoof conditions such as an abscess or thrush. What they are, what causes them and the treatment that may be needed.
  - Basic knowledge of what abscess or thrush might look like, the cause and the treatment.
  - This can be researched at home, or taught on the yard

## GOLDEN GROOM

### FARRIERY

Explore hoofcare in further detail; why do some ponies need shoes? What are they made from, how do they wear them and how often do they need new ones?

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Give a reason why a pony may need shoes
- Know who can trim and/or shoe a pony
- Outline the shoeing process
- State how often a pony requires new shoes
- Identify if a horse is shod or unshod
- Outline how to recognise when a pony needs trimming or shoeing

#### Coach guidance

- How shoes are put on: basic understanding that they are put on by a qualified and registered farrier by nailing on. You could outline that this can either be hot or cold shoeing, although hot shoeing is more common. Explain this process doesn't hurt the pony as they may be worried about this (you could link this to the 'Hoofcare' topic – points of the hoof – and what the hoof wall is made from). You could ask them to try to 'pinch' their own nail and explain that they can't feel the pressure and this is similar to ponies
- General BHS guidance is that a pony requires trimming or shoeing every 4-6 weeks, but individuals may differ depending on farrier's recommendation

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- The names of the tools the farrier uses.
- Weather conditions. The effect very dry and very wet conditions can have on pony's feet.
- Learn the names of three different types of horseshoe and why they are used
  - e.g. fullered shoe – can be called an everyday shoe, heartbar shoe – to give more support to structures of hoof, racing plate – lightweight used for racehorses.

## PET PROTECTOR

### HAPPY PONIES

Learn more about recognising what your pony's body language and behaviour are telling you in this topic.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Recognise behaviour and body language signs that show a pony is happy and relaxed
- Know what a pony needs to be happy (5 freedoms met) and ways of doing this
- Outline why a pony may become stressed or unhappy
- Outline why it is important to reduce stress in ponies
- Describe the behaviour a stressed or unhappy pony may show
- Describe ways to reduce stress in ponies in the field and in the stable

#### Coach guidance

- This is a very good topic for the children to reflect on their own feelings and emotions when talking about stress. You can discuss why they may become stressed which may be different to why a pony could become stressed, link to how they feel to how a pony may feel – lots to explore and talk about. It is also important to discuss that not every pony will react to stress in the same way, or be stressed about the same things, just like people. It is important to understand that what they might consider a normal task, their friend might be worried about it and so to treat everyone with kindness to reduce worry and help to reassure
- A definition of stress that children can understand: when you feel worried or uncomfortable about something and this worry can make you feel bad. As people, we may feel angry or frustrated, scared or afraid or we can feel pain from a headache or stomach ache. A pony cannot tell us if they feel worried or they are in pain, so we need to look out for small signs that may indicate stress. Stress can be short term (pony spooks at a plastic bag) or long-term behaviour or physical change (if a problem persists that they cannot control, for example their environment)
- Why a pony may become stressed: link this back to the 'Five Freedoms' topic, usually if one of those freedoms are not met, this usually results in stress.
- Why stress should be reduced: long term stress can lead to health concerns such as weight loss, ulcers, colic, appearing depressed (not interested in surroundings), bad behaviour, dangerous behaviour, diarrhoea, reduced immune response (more likely to become ill)
- Ways to reduce stress: link back to 'Five Freedoms' topic and discuss how to meet these. Link to Shetland Striders and Dartmoor Dazzlers behaviour topics – if a pony cannot express their natural instincts this usually results in stress. Forage ideas to make food last longer or keeping a pony occupied: small holed haynets, dividing into more than one haynet, treat balls, lickits. Sticking to a routine, allowing as much turnout as possible, ensuring company, regular routine checks (farrier, saddle fitter, equine dental technician, etc) to ensure no pain in these areas

#### \*\*Two star challenges



- Stereotypical behaviour in horses. What does it mean? Describe two common stereotypical behaviours seen in ponies and horses, such as:
  - Crib biting
  - Wind sucking
  - Box walking
  - Weaving
- Choose another animal to research. Can you find some pictures of your chosen animal looking relaxed and happy?



# PET PROTECTOR

## PONY HEALTH

This topic introduces the signs of good and ill health in ponies

**Key points: children will be able to:**

### \*One star challenges

- State why it is important to check ponies at least twice a day
- Recognise some signs of good health
- Recognise some signs of ill health
- Describe what you check in the pony's environment which may indicate signs of good or ill health
- Speak to an appropriate adult if they suspect a horse looks ill

### Guidance for coaches

- Basic signs of good health to be identified: bright eyes, healthy coat, alert, ears forward, walking without pain, no obvious wounds, interested in surroundings
- Basic signs of ill health to be identified: dull coat, lame or limping when walking, unable to walk, not interested in surroundings, head droopy, obvious wounds or lumps/swellings
- Pony's environment: this generally means have a check of the pony's surroundings as this may also tell you if the pony is well or unwell. In the stable – are there marks on the wall (cast), has the food been eaten, how much water drunk (normal amount for pony), are there droppings? In the field – has the pony been pacing, can you see it move freely, are they grazing?

### \*\*Two star challenges

- Find out what the normal temperature, pulse and respiration rates are for a pony. How can these be used to check your pony's health?
- You might have had vaccinations to protect you from various illnesses. What vaccinations does your pony need and who can give them?
- Research two common health conditions that can affect ponies. Make an information leaflet about what you have found.

# PET PROTECTOR

## SUMMER CARE

Learn how to care for your pony in the summer months.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

### \*One star challenges

- List factors to consider in the summer that may cause discomfort to a pony
- List ways to reduce discomfort in a pony during the summer
- List other factors that would be of concern to a pony's health in the summer
- Describe how you may have to alter the management of a pony in the summer
- List additional factors to consider for pony and rider when riding in the summer
- Apply fly protection

### Coach guidance

- Additional factors in the summer: flies, sun, heat, humidity, lack of shade, dry weather (cracked hooves), dust and pollen
- Ways to reduce discomfort: fly protection (fly spray, fly mask or rug), sun protection (pink nose), shelter from sun (trees/hedges/wall or manmade), maintain good footcare and regular trims, may need to add an oil or hoof butter to provide moisture, increase turnout (if dust allergy)
- Other factors: increase sugar in grass (weight gain), dehydration (lack of water)
- Alter management, such as: ensure water levels are checked/topped up regularly, may need to stable in day and turn out at night (reduce irritation from heat, pollen and flies), reduce grass intake by smaller paddocks, grazing muzzle or reduced turnout (if reduced turnout link to 'Happy Ponies' topic and explain how you would reduce stress by providing forage (soaked to reduce calorie intake), company etc.).
- When riding: try to ride during cooler hours if possible, may need to sponge/hose pony off to cool down, offer pony water after riding or ensure it's available, light work if strong heat/humidity/hard ground (if riding on grass). For the rider: drink plenty of water, wear sun cream, wear a cap (when not riding), tell an adult if they do not feel well
- Apply fly protection (spray or gel), a fly mask or rug (or all three if available at the centre)

### \*\*Two star challenges

- Sponge your pony off after riding to cool him down.
- Learn how to put a fly rug and mask on your pony.
- Sweet itch and laminitis are two conditions that can affect ponies during the summer. Do some research to find out what they are, the cause and symptoms of them. Present your findings creatively.

# PET PROTECTOR

## WINTER CARE

Wet, cold, ice and snow can cause seasonal concerns to factor into your daily care routine for you and your pony

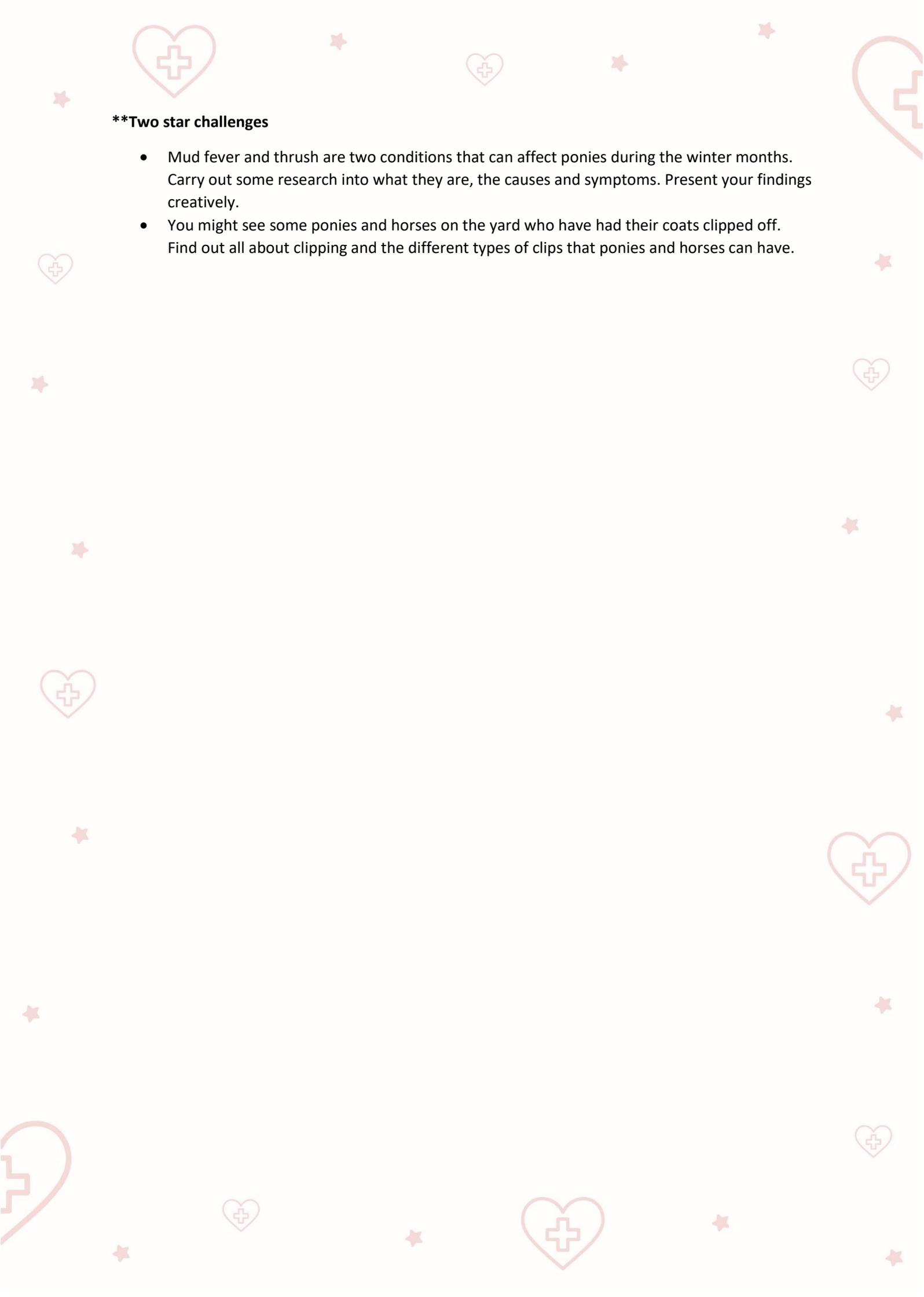
**Key points: children will be able to:**

### \*One star challenges

- List factors to consider in the winter that may cause discomfort to a pony
- List ways to reduce discomfort in a pony during the winter
- List other factors that would be of concern to a pony's health in the winter
- Describe how you may have to alter the management of a pony in the winter
- List additional factors to consider for pony and rider when riding in the winter
- Outline how winter conditions can be used to benefit a pony's weight management

### Coach guidance

- Factors in the winter: cold, wet weather, poached/muddy ground conditions (hoof and leg health), lack of grazing, snow and ice
- Ways to reduce discomfort: Provide shelter (hedges, trees, wall or manmade), put on a rug (only if necessary), provide additional forage, try to rotate, rest paddocks if poached, reduce turnout (but discuss ways to reduce stress in stabled ponies), pick out hooves regularly (ice balls), trim tail so cannot get snow balls in tail
- Other factors: reduction in nutritional quality of grazing (lead to weight loss combined with colder conditions as pony works harder and uses energy to keep warm), ice in water trough,
- Alter management: ensure water levels are checked regularly for ice, may need to provide additional forage, put on mud boots/leg wraps, may reduce turnout to allow grazing to rest or not become poached which may lead to additional forage, skipping or mucking out more frequently, increase in bedding costs. Could also discuss an unclipped pony – should groom less to encourage the production of natural oils in coat
- When riding: will require a longer warm up, an unclipped horse (unrugged) will require a quick brush where the tack will go to not strip coat of oils, if sweated allow complete cool down before rugging or being turned out to prevent chill, may even need grease on inside of hooves if riding in the snow, try not to ride in an arena or grass if frozen. For the rider: warm clothes, waterproofs, gloves, (scarf and woolly hat when not riding) appropriate footwear, tell an adult if feeling too cold
- Weight management: Discuss that naturally, in the wild a pony would lose weight in the winter as nutritional content of grass reduces. This means that when sugar content begins to rise again in spring, the pony has lost weight or is not overweight. If a pony is overweight, colder conditions can be used to our advantage to as the pony will work harder to stay warm. The pony (if a hardy type) can be left unrugged, or clipped with a thin rug put on. Some ponies who have a very small clip on the underside of their neck and front of chest, and are a good doer, can often cope without a rug

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### **\*\*Two star challenges**

- Mud fever and thrush are two conditions that can affect ponies during the winter months. Carry out some research into what they are, the causes and symptoms. Present your findings creatively.
- You might see some ponies and horses on the yard who have had their coats clipped off. Find out all about clipping and the different types of clips that ponies and horses can have.

## JUNIOR JOCKEY

### RIDING SKILLS 3

This topic will progress basic riding skills. There are three sets of challenges within this topic.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Rise to the trot
- Carry out exercises in halt with no stirrups
- Walk without stirrups and put feet back in without looking
- Ride 20m circle at A and C
- Know at least 4 ways to change the rein
- Know where to ask and the aids for canter
- Ride a few steps of canter with leader

#### Guidance for coaches

- Junior riders can be assisted, on lead rein, hold saddle or neck strap whilst riding if needed
- Rising trot; child does not need to be completely in time but should be able to show the motions of going up and down
- 5 laps of a suitable size space
- Walk without stirrups; sit in balance and perform simple changes of rein
- 20m circle and school figures can be marked out with cones or markers
- Canter with a leader assisting, can be up to 10 strides of canter or as many/few as rider can safely manage.

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Junior riders will be able to rise to the trot in time and on correct diagonal.
- Know how to cross stirrups over
- Junior riders will be able to walk without stirrups without holding on and in balanced position making changes of rein with minimal help
- Junior riders to ride a figure of eight by joining two circles together in walk and trot (can be marked out)
- Ride straight line down centre line to change the rein
- Know how many beats the canter has
- Can for longer – can be the short side of arena or a half circle or other suitable area, whatever is suitable for the pony. Can be led.

#### \*\*\*Three star challenges

- Work to improve balance and security in trot
- Standing up balance in stirrups in trot including changes of rein and school figures
- Trot without stirrups on both reins and changes of rein

- Ride a tear drop shape and a three loop serpentine. Can include 4 or 5 loop serpentines. Can be marked out.
- Know how pony moves legs in canter and what it means to be on the right/wrong lead (don't have to be able to recognise if they are the correct/incorrect lead)
- Canter a lap or suitable sized area on each rein. Can include circles etc if required.

## JUNIOR JOCKEY

### WARM UP, COOL DOWN

This topic introduces the importance of the warm up and cool down both pony and rider in a riding session.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- State why it is important to warm up (both themselves and the pony) before working
- State why it is important to cool down (both themselves and the pony) after work
- Recognise when a pony has cooled down after work
- Follow a warm up and cool down for their pony
- Follow a warm up and cool down suitable for themselves

#### Guidance for coaches

- Most children should be familiar with warming up at the start of a PE lesson or sports.
- Recognise when a pony has cooled down could include looking at their breathing and noticing if it has slowed down and not blowing
- Children can follow instructions at all times with regards to warming up and cooling down – they do not have to do this independently

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- If the weather was very hot or cold would you change your warm up and cool down plans? Why?
- Can you think of any non-ridden activities that you can do with your pony as a warm up before riding or to cool down after?
  - Carry these out in sessions

## JUNIOR JOCKEY

### LIVE WELL

This topic introduces fitness and nutrition for riders

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- State what it means to follow a healthy lifestyle with regards to food and exercise
- List types of exercise and a benefit of being active
- List examples of fruit and vegetables
- State why it is important to drink water throughout the day
- State how being active and eating a healthy diet will benefit their riding

#### Guidance for coaches

- Healthy lifestyle; eating a healthy diet which includes fruit and vegetables; unhealthy snacks such as chocolate and sweets are small portions and as a treat. 5 portions a day.
- Types of exercise; anything that increases heart rate such as walking or running, playing in the park, horse riding, PE at school, any participation in sport.
- Benefits of being active; Improves behaviours, self-confidence and social skills, improves attention, develops co-ordination, strengthens muscles and bones, improves health and fitness, maintains healthy weight, helps to sleep better, improves mood and that feel-good feeling
- Hydrated: The human body is made up of about 60% water. ([www.herefordshireccg.nhs.uk](http://www.herefordshireccg.nhs.uk)). It is important for all body functions.

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Find out about the different food groups and why each of them is important. Give some examples of food in each group.
  - Carbohydrate, Protein, Dairy, Vitamins and minerals, Fruit and vegetables, Fats and sugars
- Try to think of some healthy snacks you can swap into your diet. What kind of ingredients would be in a healthy snack? Even better, can you have a go at making any to share with your family?
- What foods from your rainbow list can be shared with your pony? Are there any on there that ponies can't eat?

## JUNIOR JOCKEY

### BRIDLE AND BITS

This topic will introduce the parts of the bridle and some common bits

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Identify some parts of the bridle
- Identify a snaffle bit
- Identify parts of a bit
- Outline the action of a snaffle bit
- Check the fit of the bridle for comfort

#### Guidance for coaches

- Parts of the bridle; headpiece, browband, throatlash, cheekpiece, noseband, bit, reins
- Parts of a bit: mouthpiece, bit rings
- Basic action of snaffle bit: When the reins are used, the bit rings apply pressure to the corner of the mouth and lips and the mouthpiece applies pressure to the tongue and the bars of the mouth (the area of the gums with no teeth). Can include the action of single and double joint.
- Fit of bridle: should be able to recognise one wrinkle at corners of mouth and how to check noseband for comfort (two fingers at front of horse's nose). Discuss the importance of the noseband not being too tight.

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Find out about the other bit families and create a short guide to each of them. Include the family name, its special features and pictures of the bits.
- Find out more about nosebands. What other types are there and what makes them different from each other?

## JUNIOR JOCKEY

### PONY FITNESS

The health and fitness of a pony is as important as the health and fitness of the rider.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Describe why it is important to consider a pony's fitness
- State signs to observe that may indicate a pony is unfit
- Outline the benefits of improving fitness
- Identify activities that require a low, medium and high level of fitness
- Outline how to improve a horse's fitness

#### Guidance for coaches

- Why: an unfit pony is likely to tire quicker and therefore increases the risk of injury, ensure your pony is comfortable carrying out activities, an unfit pony may not enjoy being ridden and try to avoid riding activities by bad behaviour, a fit pony is likely to recover quicker (normal breathing) after riding
- Signs to observe: struggling or reluctance to go forward, moving slower (lethargic), stumbling or tripping, losing balance, breathing rate may increase quicker, taking a long time to recover to normal breathing rate, knocking down jumps or stopping
- Benefits of improving fitness: reduces risk of injury through tiredness, a happier, more comfortable pony when being ridden, pony recovers quicker after riding
- Low: hacking or walk and trot schooling for short periods, medium: long distance hacking or general schooling, pony club games, show jumping activities, high: cross country, eventing, high level competitions
- Basic suggestions to improve a pony's fitness are required, such as: increase work gradually over a period of time (about 6 weeks), try to add hill work if possible. A fitness 'plan' is not required here, just a general understanding that a gradual increase in work (type and duration) is required. Longer hacks (up to 2 hours) are very good to improve strength, stamina and basic fitness

#### \*\*Two star challenges

"Is it important for the rider to be fit?"

- Do you think this statement is right or wrong? Find some evidence to support your choice.
- What can you do to improve your fitness? Produce a plan to improve your fitness over the next month. Remember to show how you are building the steps up gradually. Have a look at a programme suitable for children your age for some inspiration. Check with an adult before you start any fitness program.
  - This can be simple ideas such as e.g.: walk 10000 steps each day, walk up and down stairs, go for a walk with family at weekends, find some suitable exercise videos online to follow at home, do some stretches daily
- Pictures or video clips of horses competing in different disciplines and activities. Talk about the requirements and fitness levels required. Compare to human athletes.

## EQUINE EXPLORER

### ROAD AWARENESS

Road signs and markings give instructions and guidance to all road users, so it's important you know their meaning for when you ride out.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Identify common road signs
- Identify common road markings
- State why road signs and markings are used
- Identify different hazards when riding on road
- Know why they should be aware of them
- Practice riding past simulated hazards in an arena

#### Guidance for coaches

- Common road signs to identify; Stop, Give Way, Roadworks, Roundabout, National Speed Limit. This can be from photos or other images
- Children will need to know what each sign might mean to do, or what it may be warning of. For example, if you come across a 'Stop' sign the rider must stop and observe surroundings, checking it is safe to continue
- Common road markings; Stop, Give Way. This can be from photos or other images
- Children will need to know what each road marking means to do. For example, a dashed line means 'Give Way' to traffic before proceeding, it is important to check for oncoming traffic and wait should a car be oncoming
- Build a simple road route with 'hazards' in an arena or suitable space. Junior riders to walk the route on foot, thinking about positioning, negotiating simple hazards and signalling. Progress to riding the route on horseback.

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- What side of the road should you ride on? Is this same in all countries?
- Think about all the road signs you have seen so far and then have some fun creating your own. Think about the shape, colour and size of your sign. Is it going to give information to people or warn them about something? It's entirely up to you! Show your sign to your friends and see if they can guess what it means.

## EQUINE EXPLORER

### EXPLORING OFF ROAD

Exploring off road is important for both horse and rider, so it's important to know how to do so safely.

#### Key points: children will be able to:

##### \*One star challenges

- Describe where you can legally explore off road
- Describe how to prepare to go out riding and what to take with you
- Describe the benefits of riding your pony off road
- Describe what type of ground you may ride across and key considerations for riding
- Describe how to ride your pony up and down hills
- Identify some hazards you may come across on an off road ride

##### Guidance for coaches

- Where:
  - Not to ride: Footpaths - for walking, running, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
  - Can ride: Bridleways - for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
  - Can ride: Restricted byways - for any transport, including riding and carriage driving without a motor and mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
  - Can ride: Byways open to all traffic - for any kind of transport, including cars (but they're mainly used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders and carriage drivers)
- Preparing to ride out: Hi-Viz, leadrope attached to saddle, a phone if you have one, letting someone know where you're going and how long you intend to be, downloading the what3words app, identifying a route before you go, wearing long sleeves (to avoid being scratched by branches if through woodland), sun protection, fly protection
- Benefits: Schooling ideas for off road: Walk, trot & canter in straight lines, practising aids (keeping pony to one side of the track/going through gates/standing still), confidence riding through water and varied surfaces, turn on the forehand, building fitness levels. Riding off road can be quieter with less risk of accidents from vehicles
- Type of ground: include discussions on muddy ground, deep/boggy, hilly, uneven, hard, stony. The children may think of lots of different types of word for the same type of ground. Key considerations mean what do you need to think about. Muddy – could be slippery, so walk. Deep/boggy – walk to reduce risk of injury, go round edge where possible. Hilly/uneven ground, again walk to avoid trips and to help pony feel secure underfoot. If a steep slope or one that goes on for a distance pony may begin to trot to gain impulsion to get up
- How to ride up/down hills: up hill, lean forward, Down hill, lean back, likely to walk only.
- Hazards: include boggy/uneven ground, hanging branches, fallen branches, holes in ground, narrow walk ways, gates, bridges, water.

##### \*\*Two star challenges

- Do you know what to do if something goes wrong on your hack? Your pony might lose a shoe or you might get lost. Plan who you would call for help and what information you would need to give them.
- Sometimes landowners open a route or area of their private land for people to ride over. This is known as a permissive route and isn't generally shown on a map. Ask your coach if there are any permissive routes near your yard.
  - Permissive route: a route or area on private land that the landowner has given permission for people to use. Permissive access routes are not generally shown on maps because they are not permanent and there might not be a formal agreement in place. They might also only be temporary (for example during an organised pleasure ride only).
- Imagine a landowner has opened a permissive route near a haunted castle or through some exciting woodland. Write a story, draw a cartoon strip or put on a play about what adventures you and your pony get up to on your ride.

## EQUINE EXPLORER

### NAVIGATION 2

Further map reading skills for beginners (2)

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Tell you what the Key means on a map
- Identify symbols on a map from the Key
- Identify the scale on a map
- Identify a grid reference
- Identify an off-road route on a map

Last point suitable for those riding and accessing routes in England and Wales only:

- Identify where there are errors on a map. For example where a route has been incorrectly recorded, perhaps as a footpath or not recorded on the map at all. Identify some of these routes where they change status along a route, for example a dead end. Routes in England and Wales require research so they can be recorded correctly for future use. Reference to the BHS Project 2026.

#### Guidance for coaches

- Use the key relative to the map you are using. We recommend Ordnance Survey 1:25k maps
- Grid reference: depending on the age and ability of children you can make this as easy or difficult as you like. For example, OS maps often use a four, six or eight figure grid reference.
- Sometimes Rights of way are recorded incorrectly (where they change status along a route e.g a dead end) these require research so they can be recorded correctly for future use. Reference to the BHS Project 2026.
- Contours: Contours are the orange or brown lines on a map that tell you how high and steep a gradient is. The more lines you see, the higher the hills. If the lines are close together, the sides of the hill are very steep. If there are big gaps between the lines, the slope is gentle

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- It's not only maps that can help you find your way around, the stars can also help lead the way. Find out about the North star and how it can help travellers.
- Draw your own map, complete with symbols, a scale and a key. It could be somewhere you know well like the yard or you can invent somewhere new if you want to.

## EQUINE EXPLORER

### BEACH RIDING

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### **\*One star challenges**

- Identify the benefits to riding on beaches
- Know where to find out if a beach allows horse riders
- Tell you the kind of restrictions that may be in place for horse riding on a beach and why
- Describe tide patterns and how they can be dangerous
- Describe how to care for your pony and tack after beach riding
- Describe how to safely ride on a beach with relation to other users, wildlife or conservation areas
- Describe hazards that could be found on a beach

#### **Guidance for coaches**

- **Benefits:** Riding on beaches can build up fitness levels and encourage muscle tone and strength in your pony, change of scenery and fun for horse and rider, great way to see areas of beauty
- **How to find out if you can ride on a beach.** Visit the website or local authority website. It must be stressed that you should always check before taking your horse to a beach, and many beaches do not allow horse riders, or riding is only between restricted times or seasons.
- **Restrictions:** Some beaches may restrict horse riders to certain stretches, or only allow horse riders on at certain times of the year. If horse riding is allowed throughout the year there may be restrictions to the time allowed for horse riders. This is usually for the rider's benefit so the beach will be quieter
- **Tides:** Tides refer to the rise and fall of (most commonly) the sea/oceans, caused by the interaction between the Moon, Sun and Earth. As the Earth, Sun and Moon change and move this creates gravitational forces that act on the seas, causing changes in the height of the sea. This is seen by a tide coming into the beach (high tide), or going away from the beach (low tide). It is important to be aware of tide times for the beach you want to ride on to avoid the risk of being trapped by an incoming high tide which could result in a small, reduced or sectioned off beach to ride on. Different parts of the world experience different tide patterns
- **Caring for your pony:** After a ride on the beach it is advised to sponge/wash down your pony to remove any sand and salt water. Ensure your pony is cool before travelling. Offer water
- **Tack:** Salt water can dry out and crack leather so it's very important to clean your tack after riding on a beach
- **Safe riding on a beach:** Wear hi-vis so you are easily visible. Ride with respect for other users and maintain control of your pony. Do not ride through groups of people and try to get as far away from others before having a canter. Understand that horses and dogs can become more excitable on a beach and may not react how they usually do at home. Look out for signs that warn of areas where riding may not be permitted and follow the instructions. Always avoid disturbing wildlife and plants, paying particular attention to dunes, salt marshes and estuaries. Keep to designated paths. Sand dunes and salt marshes are fragile

environments and riding through or over them should be avoided for conservation reasons, even if riding is not specifically prohibited. If riding in a group always ensure that all riders are happy to go at a faster pace and be aware that some ponies may try to race each other. If you want to take your pony to the sea, approach slowly from the side so they can get used to the water coming towards them. Never take them out to sea to swim it is extremely dangerous – horses find it difficult to turn around in water and the strength of the waves can easily carry them further than you think. Before you ride on a beach note the coastguards number in case you need to call for assistance. If you want to have a canter we would recommend walking the track first to check for any hazards

- Hazards: generally coastlines can be quite windy which can unsettle a pony. You may see more people or dogs than you would hacking out and you may see things you have not come across before such as kites, wind breaks, sail boats etc. Look out for things your pony could trip or stumble on such as sandcastles or holes dug in the sand. When the tide is low and going away from the beach this can leave deep stream-like effects which could cause uneven ground

### **\*\*Two star challenges**

- Identify the wildlife you might find and how to ride responsibly to not disturb or damage their habitat
- How would you introduce your pony to paddling in the sea? Why is it dangerous to swim your pony in the sea?
- Share information with other riders about how to stay safe when riding on the beach.

## STABLE STAR

### FIRE SAFETY

This topic will help you identify fire hazards and what you can do to help reduce the risk of fire on the yard and keep yourself safe

#### Key points: children will be able to:

##### \*One star challenges

- Identify potential fire hazards and risks on a yard
- Outline basic fire prevention methods
- Know how to raise an alarm if they see smoke or fire on the yard
- Describe how to keep themselves safe during a fire

##### Guidance for coaches

- Causes of fire; people smoking, electric appliances – discuss how – short circuit, faulty, near water etc, machinery, fuel, fertilisers etc
- Basic points to prevent fire; hay/straw/bedding stacked reasonably and away from stables, muck heap situated away from stables, fuels stored in secure areas, walkways and gangways kept tidy, switch off lights and heaters when not in use, firefighting equipment and evacuation procedures. Discuss what the part the children can play – keep areas tidy, put equipment, tack and rugs back in appropriate storage place, report anything unusual seen. May need to reassure young children to not be worried about coming to the yard. Explain what the yard does as part of their fire prevention
- Raise an alarm: If they see smoke or fire; shout FIRE FIRE FIRE, ring the alarm/bell and walk away from fire but continue to shout until an adult hears them. Walk or follow an adult (or fire marshal if one appointed) to the designated fire assembly point
- Keeping themselves safe refers to not trying to put out a fire, not trying to rescue horses. To go to the fire assembly point and remain there until told otherwise.
- If they are on fire the procedure is to STOP, DROP, ROLL until the flames are out

##### \*\*Two star challenges

- Make a fire evacuation plan for your home.
- Design a fire safety poster for your yard

## STABLE STAR

### LEADERSHIP

Discover the role of the yard manager and develop your skills to carry out this role.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Outline the role of the yard manager
- List tasks a yard manager may carry out on a daily basis
- Assist the yard manager to plan a day's work
- Assist the yard manager to delegate tasks to staff
- Communicate to yard staff appropriately
- Take on team leader role to complete a task with their group

#### Guidance for coaches

- This topic should give the opportunity for the child to shadow the yard manager/staff member and help them with daily tasks. They should have an awareness of the day to day tasks that are completed for the everyday running of a yard. Tasks should be appropriate to the centre/yard the child is at.
- The daily chores could be appropriate to the general yard duties, or preparing for riding school lessons and activities
- The child should be encouraged to delegate and assist with communicating the daily chores to staff to develop communication skills and confidence speaking to others. Be aware not all children will have the confidence to speak in front of groups of adults so use your judgement here.
- The recommended minimum time required to complete this topic is half a day (shadowing/helping/taking the role of yard manager) but the centre can lengthen this if they feel this will provide a greater benefit to the child

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Research how to become a yard manager. What qualifications and experience do you need? Write a job advert for a yard manager
- Ask for feedback from your team after part three and see what skills you were good at and which skills you can work to improve. Was there anything you would do differently if you did the task again?

## STABLE STAR

### RECORD MAINTENANCE

All yards and riding schools will keep records to help with the smooth running of the business. Find out what these are and the responsibility to keep the records safe and up to date

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- List records that may be kept within a riding centre
- Outline why it is important for a riding centre to keep and maintain records
- Outline a basic filing system for keeping records
- Update a record
- Outline their responsibility when handling records and information
- Outline the centre's responsibility when keeping and filing records

#### Guidance for coaches

- Records you could discuss include: for horses and ponies – health records (worming test or wormer given, teeth, saddle fitter, farrier, vaccinations), riding centre records (pony name, age, weight limit, activities they can do), client records, staff records, booking diary
- Basic filing system: they can describe the filing system used at the centre, paper or electronic. Basic understanding that they are usually alphabetical so a pony's record can be found easily
- Update a record: This doesn't have to be a current/working record – they can use a template provided by yourself to 'update' a record. Could be a simple farrier mock record, and update with date, name of farrier and work done, date of next appointment
- Their responsibility: update accurately, file back correctly. Never leave out records, always put them back where you found them
- Centre's responsibility: Personal data for clients and staff should be locked away, records should be accurately maintained, records should be kept only for as long as necessary

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Help out in the office or at home with simple tasks like filing or printing
- Think of a system to organise something at home It could be your books, socks, toys or anything else you can think of. You could sort them by colour, alphabetically, size or shape or whatever way you want. Take a picture and show your group your organising skills. What was your favourite system?

## STABLE STAR

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Be a Stable Star and be welcoming to all guests at a riding school that you may meet.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Outline what customer service means
- Describe an example of good customer service
- Describe an example of poor customer service
- Outline why a riding centre should aim for good customer service at all times
- Demonstrate good customer service to those they meet at the centre
- Assist to meet and greet a client before their riding lesson
- Assist with a yard tour or induction for a new client

#### Guidance for coaches

- Explain that when they are at the centre, they represent that centre and should be kind and polite to all on the yard
- When describing good and poor customer service ask the group for examples that they have experienced themselves (if any), doesn't have to be within a horsey environment
- Child should be aware to meet a client with a smile, say hello, follow centre procedure with regards to sign in, take them to the arena or yard area to meet their horse, let them know the horse's name etc.
- Yard tour – follow standard yard procedure for a yard tour or induction that a new client would get
- Both the 'meet and greet' and 'yard tour' can be acted out within the group (ie one member of the group pretends to be the client) if a real-life scenario cannot be given

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Lead your own tour of the yard. Show off your pony knowledge by showing a small group of friends or family around your yard.



## HELPING HERO

### RECYCLING



Promote the need for recycling and reusing packaging and other materials to limit waste

**Key points: children will be able to:**

**\*One star challenges**

- State what recycling means
- Identify products that can be recycled
- Encourage thinking up ideas for “re-use” of products that are not conventionally recyclable

**Guidance for coaches**

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- Children should be able to list three items found on a stable yard that may be recycled, such as; paper feed bags, plastic supplement tubs, horse shoes, wooden pallets, muck, unused hay/straw, some shavings bags/wrappers can be recycled at larger supermarkets (with carrier bags)
  - Be able to understand the difference between recycling items for a new use (as above) and reusing items- eg. outgrown clothes or unwanted horse items- can be swapped, given away or sold
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**\*\*Two star challenges**

- How could you make use of the muck on the muck heap?
    - Composting, fertiliser
  - What items on the yard could be re-used? With your coach see what you can find and get inventive!
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## HELPING HERO

### CAMPAIGNING

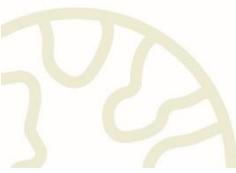
Create your own campaign for a topic close to your heart

**Key points: children will be able to:**

**\*One star challenges**

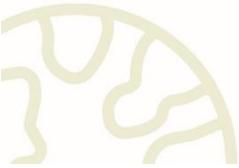
- Describe what campaigning means
- Describe how a campaign can help to make a positive change
- Outline how to support a campaign
- Tell you about a campaign they know about
- Plan a campaign

**Guidance for coaches**

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- Campaigning: this is generally a series of actions or events that are meant to achieve a particular result. A campaign can be for a political purpose (vote for x), for a charitable purpose (raise money for a charity or spread an awareness/educational message), a community purpose (improve local street lighting) or commercial (persuade you to buy x product). Great opportunity to ask the children for campaigns they know about, have seen on TV or posters. On an individual scale, a person can campaign by using their voice and speaking out for what they think is right
  - Generally charitable campaigns seek to make a positive change. This could be a positive change with consumers (e.g. “a dog is for life, not just for Christmas” (Dog’s Trust)) or they will campaign for the Government or companies to change their actions (for example, many environmental charities (e.g. Greenpeace) are campaigning UK supermarkets to remove single-use plastics in their stores
  - How to support a campaign: Some campaigns may begin with a petition to sign so the topic can be discussed by MPs in parliament, some campaigns may supply a template letter to use to write to your local MP (the aim is to raise awareness with them so they discuss and support the topic in Parliament. Explain it is quite hard to contact the Prime Minister directly, but your local MPs represent the things you care about in government), some campaigns may ask for donations to support promotion of the campaign. You could also support a campaign by volunteering to hand out flyers, march to raise awareness or even support a peaceful protest. Ensure when discussing these suggestions that you emphasise this is generally for adults; although 2019/2020 (pre-Covid) saw many peaceful marches across the UK by children who were concerned about climate change and the environment, however these children were supervised by adults. Young children can talk to their parents or carers about topics they feel passionately about and ask them to support a campaign on their behalf. Or, simply by talking to an adult and spreading awareness will help to support a campaign without signing a petition, donating or protesting. Link to Shetland Strider *Be Nice, Say Hi* topic. The BHS campaigns to educate all road users to respect each other, and to educate other road users to pass horses safely, and why this is important. The child could support this campaign by talking to adults they know, to help spread the message, educate drivers how to pass a horse and to raise awareness. Just by using your voice and speaking out for what you think is right will help to support a campaign
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- Tell you about a campaign: this could be any campaign they might have seen or heard about; it could be one of the examples that are talked about during your session/s. Older children could be encouraged to research a topic they are passionate about (environment, animal welfare, child welfare etc) and report back to the group in the next session, or you could suggest some charities that you know and ask the group to research the charity and find out about a current campaign they are promoting
  - Plan a campaign: this could be a campaign they have made up, or a current campaign from a charity of their choice. A campaign can be on a local level – something they want to change or support at the riding centre, their school or within their community or something on a larger, national level. Steps used to generally plan a campaign:
    - Identify the problem
    - What is the solution
    - How will you make this happen?

### **\*\*Two star challenges**

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- Make up slogans and a poster to support your campaign.
  - Write a letter to your MP about a cause you feel passionate about. If you are not sure about a topic have a look online for some ideas. The British Horse Society often has campaigns to support horse welfare or safety, have a look at their website to see how you can help support an animal you love.
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## HELPING HERO

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Giving your time to help a friend, family member or your riding centre is an act of kindness that has benefits for all involved!

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Outline what volunteering means
- List suggestions for helping a friend or family member
- Outline what fundraising means
- Outline why charities rely on volunteers and fundraising to support their charitable aims
- Outline how volunteers support the work of the BHS
- Outline how a riding centre would benefit from volunteering or fundraising
- Describe some benefits of volunteering or helping out
- List some fundraising ideas

#### Guidance for coaches

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- General advice: Those under 14 cannot work for a profit-making organisation, even if they are not getting paid, but check with local authority regarding their own byelaws. Depending on the age of your children they may not be allowed to volunteer at the riding centre; but they can still discuss this, and how organisations rely on volunteers. The younger children can offer to help a family member or friend with a kind gesture.
  - Volunteering: a voluntary act of freely giving up time to support a person, group, charity or community
  - Helping a friend or family member: there are no right or wrong answers to this! Suggestions to discuss might be; visiting an elderly relative or a friend or relative that lives on their own (providing company), baking some treats for someone, helping with the shopping, tidying their (own) room or other chores in the house
  - Fundraising: raising money to support a charity, cause or business
  - Why: Charities can reduce their spending with the help of volunteers, which means they have more money to spend on their charitable aims. Most charities would not be able to operate without the contribution of volunteers – they are very important! Volunteers help a national charity promote their work on a regional or local level and help to reach more people. Volunteers can also help to increase the quality or services of a charity by having specialist knowledge or skills. The charity will then reduce their costs as they would not have to hire a specialist in this area of work. For example, a community centre might need redecorating and a volunteer skilled in this area could give up their time and labour costs for free, to save the charity money. Volunteers would cover many different roles or needs, for example, painting a community centre, clearing a bridleway, organising or promoting an event or delivering a talk to promote a campaign or charity. Fundraising is essential for charities so they can support the charitable aims they have. Have a think about some of the charities you have discussed in topics so far: do they need money to deliver their aims? The answer is yes
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- Volunteers and the BHS: The BHS has over 900 volunteers (Aug, 2020). Look at the [infographic](#) on our website to discuss how volunteers support the charity and the roles that they do. Volunteers are invaluable to the BHS!
- Help out at a riding centre: Discuss how volunteers can help at your riding centre and what jobs could be done. For example, fixing or painting a fence, poo picking, helping out in riding lessons, whatever you can think of! Discuss how fundraising can help with the costs to look after all the ponies at the centre, or helping to fix or maintain facilities
- Benefits of helping out: Child should be able to list two: It's really important that the children understand the feel-good factor that helping out will bring. It can also be a great way to make friends or improve your skills and confidence. Volunteers can make a valuable contribution to their community and can also improve their own health and well-being
- Fundraising ideas: Child should be able to list two: Get creative! This can be anything! Examples include, sponsored silence, danceathon, bake sale, second hand shop, tack clean

### **\*\*Two star Challenges**

- As a group organise a fundraising event for your riding centre (if not part of riding centre could raise money for a local centre or another charity). Decide what you want to raise money for, what type of event you would like to hold and what you will need to do it successfully.



## HELPING HERO

### CLIMATE CAMPAIGNER

Discover charities that work towards improving the world we live in and inspiring us to make small changes that make a big difference

**Key points: children will be able to:**

**\*One star challenges**

- Tell you an example of an environment charity
- Outline what an environment charity works to improve
- Outline why it is important to work towards improving the environment
- Tell you one thing they could do or change to help improve the environment or to be more 'green'



### Guidance for coaches

- Environment charity examples: Greenpeace, Woodland Trust, WWF, The Climate Change Organisation, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Green Alliance, Energy Saving Trust, Friends of the Earth, The Wildlife Trusts (usually have a local 'Wildlife Trust'), Keep Britain Tidy. This list is not exhaustive, you can also go over any other charities you know about, national or local
- An environment charity usually works to protect the environment and works to raise awareness, or improve, the environment, climate, nature. They aim to have a positive impact on the health of the world. The child could explain their chosen charity (from the first bullet point) in more detail here
- When discussing the environment some children will want to discuss or ask about climate change as they may have learnt about this in school or be aware of it as it features heavily in the news. We would recommend avoiding terms such as 'climate emergency' 'urgent action' 'irreversible damage' etc as this could worry young children and make them anxious. They may also feel that this is such a big problem that they feel overwhelmed to deal with it and it can be scary for a child. Encourage that a small change will make a big impact and these small things can be very easy and simple to do, it will also empower them to feel like they're making a difference
- Why it is important to work towards improving the environment: If small changes are not made with how we live, then this could lead to negative impacts on our planet, such as rising sea levels, changes in weather (get unusually hot or rainy for longer periods), stronger storms or more wildfires. Generally it would be bad for Earth and wildlife. A big contribution to these things is the burning of fossil fuels which releases gases such as carbon dioxide, which creates a 'blanket' around the planet and thus causing it to heat up – this change is very gradual and we can all do small things to use less power every day which in turn add up to a big difference
- Things to do: turning off lights when not needed, unplugging chargers when not using them, walk or cycle to places if possible, turning electronic devices such as the TV/lamps when not in use off by the mains (not left on standby), encourage adults in their family to recycle and compost food waste, swapping toys, games and books with friends and family or donating to charity helps to reduce waste, not littering, using a reusable water bottle for drinks, requesting 'no plastic straws' with drinks if they're out – or any other suggestion you can



come up with! Even just talking to another adult and sharing ideas can help to pass on these important messages

**\*\*Two star challenges**

- Research a climate campaigner and how they influenced governments to act
    - Most children might have heard of Greta Thunberg or David Attenborough
    - You could also discuss these young activists:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/49676291>
  - Find out about Earth Hour and pledge to take part.
    - Earth Hour is usually at the end of March each year. <https://www.earthhour.org/>
  - What did you enjoy most about the Helping Hero topics? Is there anything you are going to do differently now? Share your ideas with the group.
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