

## Horse Explorers Coach Handbook

Welcome to the Horse Explorers Awards! We hope you will enjoy delivering the Explorer awards and use them as a supportive and progressive learning tool for your participants.

### Overview of Explorer awards

The Horse Explorer Awards are the latest edition to the Challenge Award series and have a guided age range of 13-17 years old.

There are 18 Core Awards, focusing on horse care and riding skills, and we are extremely excited to bring you the brand-new Leadership Awards which have been specifically created for Horse Explorers.

All of the Explorer Awards can be delivered and signed off by [BHS Accredited Professional Coaches](#) or [BHS Approved Centre](#) coaches.

This handbook will guide you through all you need to know to deliver both the core and leadership awards, from buying resources to certification. Once you have read this guide, if you have any further questions or queries, please contact the BHS Education Team at [challengeawards@bhs.org.uk](mailto:challengeawards@bhs.org.uk)

## Horse Explorer Core Awards

The core awards are split into two sections - About the Horse and About the Rider, each made up of four separate awards. All awards are available at Introduction, Bronze and Silver level. The titles and syllabi are the same as the existing Challenge Awards but the booklets have been redesigned to suit the 13-17 year old market.

Awards available:

### About the Horse

Introduction to Horse Care

Knowing your Horse (Bronze and Silver)

Handling your Horse (Bronze and Silver)

Caring for your Horse (Bronze and Silver)

Lungeing your Horse (Bronze and Silver)

### About the Rider

Introduction to Riding

Ride Flat (Bronze and Silver)

Ride Jump (Bronze and Silver)

Ride Fit (Bronze and Silver)

Ride Safe (Bronze and Silver)

You can see some examples of the book design on the next page.



**HORSE  
EXPLORERS**

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INTRODUCTION TO  
**RIDING**

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BRONZE:  
**RIDING FIT**

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SILVER:  
**HANDLING YOUR HORSE**

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## Taking the Core Awards

How many awards your participant completes, or the order they complete the awards, are flexible depending on your participant's current experience, knowledge, skills and what they want to achieve. It is not compulsory to begin at Introduction level, you can choose to start your participants at Bronze or Silver.

You could work across the topics at each level (for example, complete all the About the Horse bronze awards before progressing through the silver topics). Alternatively, your participant can pick and mix the awards they would like to complete and tailor their course specific to the topics they have an interest in.

## Silver Ride Safe Explorer Award

The Silver Ride Safe Explorer Award can be delivered at any BHS Approved Riding School or at the participant's own yard with their horse with an Accredited Professional Coach. The riding school or coach must have gone through the Silver Ride Safe training with a BHS Ride Safe Advisor before they can deliver the Silver Ride Safe to their candidates. Once you have received this training, you will then be able to deliver the training and complete the assessment with the participant\*

To become a Ride Safe Trainer, you must meet the following criteria:

- Hold the Ride Safe Award (or BHS Riding and Road Safety)
- Attendance at a Ride Safe training session.
- Minimum coaching qualifications of 'BHS Stage 3 Coach' and a 'BHS Accredited Professional Coach' membership (your coaching status must remain current for your Ride Safe Trainer status to be valid).
- Minimum coaching qualifications of 'BHS Stage 3 Coach' and a 'BHS Approved Centre Coach' membership (your coaching status must remain current for your Ride Safe Trainer status to be valid).

**\*TRAINING IS NOT REQUIRED TO DELIVER ANY OF THE OTHER EXPLORER AWARDS.**

### **Award information booklets for participants**

An information booklet is provided for all awards. These are not available to download but are available to buy from the link on the BHS Accredited Professional Hub. Each booklet has an information section including top tips and helpful advice for the participant to read through and activities for the participant to complete as they work through the course. The booklets have been designed to be engaging for the participants and we encourage you to integrate them within your sessions.

### **Rewards**

Certificates are issued for completion of a single award (for example, *lungeing your horse* bronze) and an enamel pin badge is awarded when a participant has completed all four topics within a level (for example, *About the Horse* bronze); so, all your participants will receive recognition of their achievement; whether they complete all challenge awards or pick and mix individual awards.

All books, certificates and badges are available to buy from the [Accredited Professional Hub Shop](#)

An example of the certificates is shown on the next page.

**INTRO**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO** \_\_\_\_\_

**ON ACHIEVING** \_\_\_\_\_  
(AWARD TITLE)

**ON** \_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

APC NUMBER OR APPROVED CENTRE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

COACH NAME \_\_\_\_\_

  
 ALEX COPELAND  
 DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

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**BRONZE**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO** \_\_\_\_\_

**ON ACHIEVING** \_\_\_\_\_  
(AWARD TITLE)

**ON** \_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

APC NUMBER OR APPROVED CENTRE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

COACH NAME \_\_\_\_\_

  
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**SILVER**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO** \_\_\_\_\_


**ON ACHIEVING** \_\_\_\_\_  
(AWARD TITLE)

**ON** \_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

APC NUMBER OR APPROVED CENTRE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

COACH NAME \_\_\_\_\_

  
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### Award Checklist sign off

Each information booklet will include an award checklist which lists the skills and knowledge required to complete an award; think of it as a checklist of what the participant needs to do. Within the checklist will be space for you to date and sign when the participant has demonstrated competence for a practical task, or able to discuss a topic confidently.

There is no time limit for a participant to complete an award so they can work through at a pace which suits them. We do not require you to set up formal assessments with the participants and the award checklist should be signed off on a continuous basis, as each task is completed.

- ✓ We recommend that any knowledge based topics take place in a practical setting with participants able to discuss the subject, or what is in front of them, in a relaxed environment
- ✓ Throughout each practical task, the participant should be observed carrying out safe procedures when working around or near the horse. If a safe procedure is not observed the participant would be deemed not yet competent and further training and guidance is required before you can sign off the checklist
- ✓ Where possible, participants should work with a variety of suitable horses. This will help them to build up their experience and confidence, and to recognise that every horse is different.

Once all the award checklist has been signed off, we encourage you to give feedback to the learner in the box provided. **Be positive;** highlight areas they did really well and they should be proud of, to encourage them to challenge themselves for the next award. Of course you will be giving verbal feedback throughout the course, but written feedback that can be filed and referred back to by the learner is always appreciated and will go a long way.

## Support materials for you

All the below support materials are available to download from the [BHS Accredited Professional Hub](#).

### 1. Session plans

We are here to support you as much as we can and we have produced a series of session plans for each award, to provide suggestions and ideas for the content to include in your sessions. Following a session plan is not compulsory, and we encourage you to adapt them to suit your participants, the facilities, time of year and horses available to you. You should expect and plan to spend more time on some areas, or repeat sessions, to build participant confidence and allow them time to achieve the skills required for the task – remember there are no time restraints or time limits.

Within the riding plans there are several suggestions for suitable exercises to help develop and progress your riders over several sessions. Emphasis in the riding awards should be on maintaining the rider's confidence and developing an independent seat. Correcting rider position should be the key focus in each lesson and developing the rider's awareness of their own positional strengths and weaknesses is crucial to helping them improve and achieve.

The session plans we have included can be delivered as a group or on a one to one basis. There are no minimum or maximum group sizes for the awards. This is left to your discretion and the facilities and equipment available to you.

### 2. Group exercises for Core Awards

We have included a list of possible group exercises for each award. These are a mixture of practical group tasks that can be completed on the yard to facilitate your participants to work together and be part of a team, or discussions and debates to explore topics and scenarios in further detail. The ethos surrounding the challenge awards is of a community spirit, to



encourage friendships and working together. It is essential to encourage collaboration as some of your participants may go on to own horses of their own and it is so important that they are encouraged to seek advice and work with professionals to care for their horse. We hope that by developing this mind-set during the Challenge Awards, it will stay with them as a best practice approach for the future.

### 3. Feedback exercises

We have also included a few different types of feedback sheet for your participants to use as and when you see fit. Not every session will require a self-evaluation or peer review, so again this is a resource you can pick up and use at your discretion.

The first document is a self-evaluation form; titled '*How am I doing?*' This is a resource that will encourage discussion between yourself and the participant and is an ideal opportunity for you both to reflect on the progress made, discuss what they are doing well, and to collaboratively set targets for future sessions.

The second form is designed to encourage members of your group to give feedback on each other, titled '*Team mate feedback*'. You could use this for a practical activity where the participants work in pairs and can provide feedback to each other, or perhaps when it is only safe for one or two participants to carry out a certain task (for example, lungeing a horse) so this gives the other participants a role to play and to still be actively involved in the session.

The final evaluation form is the '*End of award feedback*' to be given to the learner once they have completed an award. This is the only evaluation form that we ask you to send the Equine Excellence Team after completion so that we can work towards constantly improving the awards and the resources provided. The learner can either pass the form to you to return to us, or they can send it direct to us.

Of course, if you would like to provide us with any feedback about the awards and resources, you are welcome to contact us at any time.

#### 4. Checklist guidance notes for Core Awards

At the end of each booklet there is an award checklist that identifies a combination of knowledge and skills the participants are required to demonstrate. There are guidance documents that will give you an indication of the level required for sign off, to avoid over assessing.

##### About the Horse

The checklist criteria should be carried out adopting a safe technique, using suitable horses and ponies. Appropriate PPE should be always worn. Participants should be encouraged to work efficiently (although bear in mind these are not professional awards and as such, the participants do not need to work to industry speed) and to make sure their work space is clean and tidy e.g. skipping out before working in the stable.

##### About the Rider

The focus is on the position and balance of the rider with the emphasis on working towards developing an independent seat. Participants are not expected to work their horse in an outline or to be able to improve the horse's way of going; if they are not detrimental to the horse, they are able to pass the awards.

## Horse Explorer Leadership Awards

The Leadership awards are designed to bring groups of teenagers together in an equine environment, where they can work as a team to build and develop key life and work skills. The focus of these awards is not only to help participants develop these transferable skills that will benefit them in their future education and/or employment but also to help their personal development as an individual and socially.

There are four levels of award Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Each award has four topics for participants to complete. Together these four topics make up the overall Leadership Award.



### Explorer Challenge

There are four Explorer Challenges at each level that participants must complete to achieve each Award. The Explorer Challenges provide an opportunity for participants to demonstrate what they have learnt during the topic and should be led by the participants, with Coach guidance and support where required. Challenges can be done either individually or as a group depending on the task. There is guidance given in the booklets as to what is required and lots of space for participants to record the tasks or activities completed.

Once an Explorer Challenge has been signed off, we encourage you to give feedback to the participant in the box provided. Be positive; highlight areas they did well, and they should be proud of, to encourage them to challenge themselves for the next award.

## Rewards

Completion of a topic is recognised by a topic certificate, that coaches can access and print out. When all four topics have been completed, participants will receive a Leadership certificate in recognition of achieving the whole award.

The topic certificates are available for you to download from the Print Portal



The Leadership certificates will be sent out with the book.



## Delivering the Leadership Awards

The four levels are progressive and have been designed to follow on from each other. However you can start at whichever level you decide is most suitable for your participants.

The Leadership awards are aimed at bringing participants together at the centre to create their own Explorers Team. Working together and supporting each other is very much the ethos of the awards along with self-development through a range of classroom and practical activities. The awards aren't based around horse care or riding (although these can be incorporated) which open them up to non-riders or potentially even a non- equine audience.

All the information required for each topic is in the Explorer book. You can choose to read through the content of the book with the participants and then complete the Explorer Challenge at the end or follow the session plans to make a structured course. We would recommend participants complete at least one Coach led session covering health and safety and safeguarding before helping in any sessions involving others.

Topics can be delivered in any order (there is no need to follow the order in the book) and, as with the core awards, the delivery is flexible which means you can design your course to suit your participants and centre. You can choose to deliver the topics at the same time, or one after the other. Some Explorer Challenges require a certain number of hours or sessions to be completed so make sure you factor this into your delivery time.

NB: The Riding Centre Assistant Award can be delivered alongside the Silver Future Leader topic. This award is exclusive to BHS Approved centres and can be taken by anyone aged 13 or above, where they are working for a centre, or aged 14 and above if they are volunteering. Booklets and certificates are available to purchase in packs of five for £25. If you would like more information, please contact [approvedcentres@bhs.org.uk](mailto:approvedcentres@bhs.org.uk).

### Participant information book

Participants will receive a Leadership book at each level, which has all the information in that they need to take part. The books have a journal feel to them with lots of space for making notes and short structured activities for participants to complete.



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## Support Materials for you

All the below support materials are available to download from the [BHS Accredited Professional Hub](#).

### 1. Session plans

To support you with the delivery of the Leadership Awards we have created a series of session plans to accompany each topic at each level. They follow the content of the book and refer to pages where relevant information or activities can be found. Each plan has an introduction and wrap up suggestion as well as several main activity ideas which expand on the content of the book. We have also provided links to other resources including video clips, articles and/or webpages that you might find useful.

The session plans are optional so you can choose to follow them all or pick and choose the most relevant ideas to create your own unique course. You should expect and plan to spend more time on some areas (for example team building skills if the group don't know each other), or repeat some sessions or activities, to build participant confidence and allow them time to achieve and understand the skills required.

Session plans have also been provided for every Explorer Challenge. These include a checklist for achievement, a list of possible activities and things to consider. Some challenges require a certain number of hours or sessions to be completed and the suggested number of sessions allow for this.

### 2. Explorer Challenge Sheet

These helpful information sheets give you all the details you need for each Explorer Challenge including a checklist for achievement, list of possible activities and considerations to think about before starting.

This gives you the option of designing your own course based around the Explorer Challenge as an alternative to following the session plans.



For each challenge we have provided examples of the types of challenge activities that could be completed but you are free to choose your own activities. Please be aware that some potential activities may require additional insurance to be taken out (for example taking participants on a day trip) and we recommend contacting your insurance company if you have any queries.

### 3. Feedback exercises

The booklets have reflection activities interspersed throughout but we have included extra feedback handouts that you might find useful during your course. These allow you to collect feedback to keep for your own records as opposed to the participants writing it in the books.

*'How am I doing?'* is a resource that will encourage discussion between yourself and the participant and is an ideal opportunity for you both to reflect on the progress made, discuss what they are doing well, and to collaboratively set targets for future sessions.

The second form is designed to encourage members of your group to give feedback on each other, titled *'Team mate feedback'*. You could use this for activities such as giving a presentation where participants are asked to give constructive feedback to each other.

We have included an 'End of Award' feedback form that can be given to participants on completion of an award. This is the only evaluation form that we ask you to send the Education Team after completion so that we can work towards constantly improving the awards and the resources provided. The learner can either pass the form to you to return to us, or they can email it direct to us. [Challengeawards@bhs.org.uk](mailto:Challengeawards@bhs.org.uk)

Of course, if you would like to provide us with any feedback about any of the awards and resources, you are welcome to contact us at any time.

## General information for all Horse Explorer Awards

### Where can I deliver the Explorer awards?

You can deliver the Explorer awards within a BHS Approved Riding Centre or on a freelance basis. If you are freelance, the awards can be delivered at the participant's livery yard on the participants own horses (the livery yard does not have to be a BHS Approved Livery Yard), or at a British Riding Club grounds if delivering a course for a BRC group. However, if the participants do not have their own horses, or their horses are not suitable, the awards must only be delivered at a BHS Approved Riding Centre. You cannot deliver Challenge Awards within non-Approved riding centres with horses on the riding school licence. This includes clients with horses on a working livery or loan agreement with the riding school. If you are in doubt, please contact us before you begin your course, and we will be happy to advise further.

Please note if any Accredited Professional Coach is training participants towards the challenge awards at a non- approved Riding Centre, the coach will be in breach of their BHS professional contract.

### Eligibility for Awards

All the Explorer Awards are open to anyone who wants to take part, they are not required to be BHS members.

For any participants that are not already members of the BHS and would like to become a member, they can join online ([www.bhs.org.uk/membership](http://www.bhs.org.uk/membership)) or by calling the Membership team on 02476 840506.

### How to register participants for the Horse Explorers

Packs are available from our online shop. Please note, this is a hidden web page with exclusive prices and discounts specifically for the use of Accredited Professional Coaches and Approved Centres. Please do not forward the link to anyone else for them to buy packs.



You don't have to provide any registration details for your participants, and they don't need to be members of the BHS to take part in the Explorer Awards. You, the coach, or a centre representative, can buy the packs for your participants on the BHS Accredited Professional Hub. There are no restrictions on the number of packs you can buy with bulk buy discounts available for the Core Awards. You will be asked to fill in your Accredited Professional Coach or Approved Centre details and these will be checked against our records before the order is dispatched.

### Health and Safety

Time should be taken at the start of each session to cover health and safety rules and procedures and what to do in the event of an emergency. General housekeeping should be included in each session, especially if the participants are not familiar with the yard. Throughout each session participants should wear appropriate and correctly fitting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) relevant to the task they are undertaking. Horses and ponies used for the course should be accustomed to novice people working around them and suitable for the tasks for which they are used. Equipment used should be in a good state of repair and safe to use.

### Risk Assessment

We advise you carry out a risk assessment before each session and keep this on file. You can download a template risk assessment form from the BHS APC Hub.

### Insurance

We advise all centres and coaches to check with their own insurance companies if they have any queries about the type of activity they are covered for.

## Suitability of horses

The Explorer Awards are aimed at the recreational market, and as such, participants may already own a horse or pony. The Explorer Awards can be completed with the participant's own horse or with horses as part of a BHS Approved Centre. Horses should be of a suitable level and temperament for the tasks asked of them. There are no height restrictions for the type of horses or ponies used so please use your experience and discretion to match suitable horses or ponies to each participant (if the participant is not using their own). Bear in mind that no participant should be under, or over, horsed. If at any time you feel the welfare or safety of participant or horse is compromised during a session, please arrange for the horse to be swapped if possible or stop the session. If the participant is using their own horse have a friendly chat to them about why you have stopped the session and your concerns, as they may not understand what happened.

If candidates are using their own horse we do advise the horse should be over 4 years old. Don't forget to check over the equipment and tack they are using for suitability and safety before beginning a session.

Reminder: If you are an Accredited Professional Coach and have opted to include the insurance within your membership package, you are covered to coach riders on their own horses. The Care, Custody and Control cover also allows you to handle that horse during demonstrations as appropriate. Approved Centres must abide by their own riding school insurance conditions.

## Reasonable Adjustments

The BHS aims to promote equity, diversity, and equality of opportunity within the explorer awards. We recognise that due to the practical nature of the awards, adjustments may need to be made to allow access for all participants.

We recommend you find an appropriate time to discuss confidentially with each participant, their learning or physical requirements

for the course. There is no formal reasonable adjustment form required to be completed for BHS HQ; so, follow your normal procedure for recording and applying adjustments within your everyday lessons. Adjustments can be made to allow access for participants, but they must complete the Explorer Challenge to complete an award.

If you have any queries regarding adjustments, please contact the Equine Education Team on 02476 840508.

### Data Protection

The BHS complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. You should adhere to GDPR best practice. Further information regarding your responsibilities is included on the BHS Hub and found at [www.bhs.org.uk/apcdataprotection](http://www.bhs.org.uk/apcdataprotection). As a general guide, you need to have measures in place to ensure that information and data you collect from participants will be:

- Dealt with sensitively and used fairly and lawfully
- Used for limited, specifically stated purposes
- Used in a way that is adequate, relevant, and not excessive
- Kept for no longer than is absolutely necessary
- Handled according to people's data protection rights
- Kept safe and secure

If you have any queries relating to GDPR please contact the Information Commissioner's Office at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

### Office contacts

For help or guidance with delivering the challenge awards, or if you wish to provide us with any feedback, please contact: [challengeawards@bhs.org.uk](mailto:challengeawards@bhs.org.uk) or call us on 02476 840508



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## Links to the Career Pathway

We are delighted to offer entry to the BHS Career Pathway for Explorer award participants who may wish to transition to our suite of professional qualifications.

| Groom Pathway   | Groom with Riding Pathway   | Complete Horsemanship Pathway  | Ride Leader Pathway   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Completion of the following challenge awards will provide direct entry to BHS Stage 2 Care and Lunge*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>About the Horse</b><br/>Silver</li> </ul> | <p>Completion of the following challenge awards will provide direct entry to BHS Stage 2 Ride*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>About the Rider</b><br/>Silver</li> </ul> | <p>Completion of the following challenge awards will provide direct entry to BHS Stage 2 Care, Lunge and Ride*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>About the Horse</b><br/>Silver</li> <li>✓ <b>About the Rider</b><br/>Silver</li> </ul> | <p>This pathway is for those that wish to work in the equestrian tourism industry. The suite of professional qualifications range from ride leaders through to equestrian tourism centre managers. The entry level qualification within the Ride Leader pathway is Stage 2 Riding Out. The entry requirements for Stage 2 Riding Out are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Completion of the following challenge awards:<br/><i>Riding out safely</i> silver and gold</li> <li>✓ Stage 1 Care or <b>About the Horse</b> silver</li> </ul> |

*\*Please note the minimum age for a participant to sit any Stage 2 Care, Lunge or Ride assessment is 14 years old and they are required to be a BHS Gold Member.*



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