



PONY PARTNERSHIPS



Risk Assessment - 2025-2026

Name of Organisation: Pony Partnerships CIC

Venue/Address: All venues

Date of Review: 1 September 2025

Date of Next Review: 31 August 2026

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Introduction

Pony Partnerships CIC is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all clients, staff, volunteers, visitors, and animals. This risk assessment identifies potential hazards associated with our activities and premises, evaluates the likelihood and severity of harm, and details control measures in line with:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) 2002
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Best practice guidance from the HSE, Derbyshire Safeguarding Boards, and relevant animal welfare legislation.

All staff, volunteers, and visitors must follow this policy and report hazards, incidents, or near misses immediately.

Purpose and Scope

This Risk Assessment identifies potential hazards associated with Pony Partnerships CIC activities and venues. It evaluates who might be harmed, how, and what control measures are in place to ensure risks are managed *as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP)*.

All assessments follow the *Health and Safety Executive's Five Steps to Risk Assessment (2025)*:

1. Identify hazards.
2. Decide who might be harmed and how.

3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions.
4. Record findings and implement them.
5. Review and update regularly.

This overarching risk assessment should be read alongside individual participant risk assessments, behaviour plans, individual animal risk assessments, COSHH assessments, and dynamic risk assessments for visits or changing activities.

Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk Rating	Definition	Action required
Low	Unlikely to occur, minimal harm, adequate controls in place.	Maintain current precautions.
Medium	Possible occurrence, could cause harm, additional precautions may be needed.	Review and implement further actions to reduce risk.
High	Likely or severe impact, urgent action required to reduce risk.	Immediate action required before the activity proceeds.

Section 1 – General Organisational Risk Assessment

Activity/Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Initial risk (L/M/H)	Existing controls/precautions	Further action needed (to reduce risk)	Residual risk (L/M/H)	Action by who/when
Handling ponies and equines	Learners and staff – bites, kicks, trampling	Medium	Only calm, trained animals used; constant supervision; PPE (boots, gloves)	Ongoing refresher training for animal handling	Low	Danielle Mills – Termly
Working in outdoor areas (slips, trips, uneven ground)	All site users – falls, minor injuries	Medium	Surfaces maintained; clear walkways; signage; first aid kit on site	Review site condition weekly and after bad weather	Low	Site Lead – Weekly
Allergic reactions (animal fur, hay, etc.)	Learners with allergies – rash, respiratory issues	Medium	Medical information collected in advance; emergency medication available; first aiders on	Update medical plans termly and check medication expiry dates	Low	First Aid Lead – Termly

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			site			
Working alone (lone working)	Staff – accident or incident without assistance	Medium	Confirm lone working check-in arrangements and emergency contact procedures are in place before session; check-in/check-out system; mobile phones carried	Reinforce policy during induction; review lone working risk plan	Low	Danielle Mills – Induction & Annual
Behavioural incidents (aggressive behaviour, flight risk)	Learners and staff – injury, distress	High	Staff trained in de-escalation; clear behaviour plans; 2:1 support when required	Review behaviour plans termly; ensure staff trained in physical intervention (if applicable)	Medium	DSL – Ongoing
Medication administration errors	Learners – incorrect dose or timing	Medium	Written parental consent; only trained staff administer; double-check system	Annual refresher training for medication management	Low	First Aid Lead – Annually
Fire in stable or barn area	All persons on site – burns, smoke inhalation	High	Fire extinguishers serviced; no smoking; clear evacuation plan; annual fire drill; Fire Risk Assessment in place; see Critical Incident Policy and evacuation arrangements for full fire safety procedures; risk assessment before any fires	Increase signage; review emergency lighting	Low	Fire Marshal – Annually
Infection control (zoonotic or communicable diseases)	All participants – illness from contact or poor hygiene	Medium	Handwashing stations; no eating near animals; disinfect equipment	Review cleaning schedules; update COSHH training annually	Low	H&S Lead – Annually
Manual handling	Staff and	Medium	Training on correct lifting;	Refresher training	Low	Site Lead – Annual

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(feed, hay, water containers)	volunteers – strain or back injury		mechanical aids available	yearly; supervision for new staff		
Vehicle movement on site	Learners, visitors – collision risk	High	Designated parking; separate pedestrian paths; supervision during arrival/departure	Add speed limit signs; review traffic flow	Low	Site Lead – Termly
Electrical equipment use	All staff – electric shock, burns	Medium	PAT testing annually; damaged items removed immediately	Increase awareness in staff induction	Low	Site Lead – Annual
Emotional distress during therapy sessions	Learners – anxiety, emotional dysregulation	Medium	Qualified facilitators; wellbeing check-ins; supervision available	Continue reflective supervision and peer support	Low	Clinical Lead – Ongoing
Trips/falls inside therapy or barn area	Clients, staff, visitors – injury from clutter or uneven floors	Medium	Regular housekeeping; clear routes maintained	Monthly environment safety checks	Low	Site Lead – Monthly
Animal illness or injury	Learners or staff – distress or infection risk	Medium	Regular vet checks; isolation for sick animals	Keep animal health logs up to date	Low	Animal Care Lead – Monthly
Use of cleaning chemicals (COSHH)	Staff, learners – skin irritation or inhalation	Medium	COSHH data sheets available; PPE provided; labelled containers	Update COSHH register; retrain annually	Low	H&S Lead – Annual
Data breach / confidentiality issue	Clients – privacy violation	Medium	Secure files; password protection; GDPR policy	Annual data protection refresher	Low	Data Protection Officer – Annual

Section 2 – Site and Environment-Specific Hazards

Location	Potential Hazard	Control Measures
All areas	Reduced staffing due to illness	Small group sizes; staff from commissioning organisation where possible; bank staff; low-risk activities when staffing is reduced
Public areas	Other people on site	Induction/tour first; restricted access to equipment areas; supervised access only; activity stopped if danger seen; visitors sign in/out

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Location	Potential Hazard	Control Measures
Public areas	Building maintenance / uneven surfaces	Signage; restricted access; unsafe areas locked; induction reminders; no running; public liability insurance in place
All areas	Risk of infection	Handwashing and hand gel; sanitising before food handling; regular animal health checks
Gate, parking and roads	Injury from vehicles	Safe-area briefing; remove learners from moving vehicles area; staff supervision; hi-vis where needed
Gate and hedges	Escape / absconding	Safe boundary briefing; staff supervision; one staff member follows only where safe and remains in communication
Tool store	Injury from tools/equipment	No unsupervised access; defect checks; tool counting; equipment stored safely; minimum necessary equipment used; ongoing supervision
Stables / tack room / field	Manual handling injuries	Staff supervise carrying of tack/equipment; safe-use instruction; stop if unsafe
Stable doors/shed	Trapped fingers in wind	Doors shut or fixed open; staff supervision; safe-use instruction
Stables	Animals tied in yard	Close supervision; trained staff oversee movement; animals tied only under supervision; companion animal used if separation anxiety creates risk
Stables	Trip hazards from mucking out equipment	Equipment kept out of reach; wheelbarrows emptied and stored safely; staff supervise use
Fields and surrounding areas	Uneven ground / trip hazards	Walk not run; appropriate footwear; tidy yard; equipment put away after use
Fields	Muddy / uneven surfaces	Dynamic assessment before access; weather and participant ability considered; some fields restricted if unsafe
Fields	Injury from animals	Staff supervision; unsafe animals removed; safety briefing before entering field
Fields	Electric fencing	Learners informed which fences are live; instructed not to touch; safety briefing before activity
Outside	Sunburn / sunstroke	Sun cream available; staff model use; drinks offered regularly; shade available

Section 3 – Activity-Specific Risk Assessments

3.1 Animal Care

Nature of activity:	Routine care and management, cleaning enclosures, animal checks, food and water, observation, answering questions, poo picking.
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Potential hazards:	Bites, knocks, trips, allergic reaction, infection.
Controls:	Qualified/trained staff; health and safety information provided; tame animals only; supervision at all times; learner suitability assessed; first aider on site; hand sanitising; PPE worn; supervised equipment use; dynamic risk assessment; activity stopped if unsafe.

3.2 Groundwork in Field with Animals

Nature of activity:	Interaction with animals, simple tasks, observation, reflection/processing.
Potential hazards:	Bites, kicks, trips, allergic reaction, instinctive animal behaviour, manual handling injuries, slips/falls, cuts, fractures, emotional distress.
Controls:	Staff trained in equine facilitated activities and first aid; sensible, well-mannered animals; hand sanitising; minimum 1:3 supervision; induction and introduction to animals; learner suitability assessed; PPE; animal matched to confidence and ability; no simultaneous conflicting activities; weather/surface checks; equipment supervised; session stopped if unsafe.

3.3 Walking Out with Animals

Nature of activity:	Taking an animal on a walk in the local area.
Potential hazards:	Falls on road, being trodden on, loose dogs, cyclists, public interaction, passing riders, slips/trips/falls, cuts, fractures, emotional distress.
Controls:	Risk assessment before every walk; learner suitability assessed; steel toe cap boots where needed; staff supervision throughout; each animal has its own individual risk assessment; route planned in advance; remaining staff informed of route and return time; mobile phone carried; first aid trained staff; hi-vis worn by staff and learners; activity stopped immediately if danger seen; briefing on passing public, traffic and animals.

3.4 Preparing Food and Drinks

Nature of activity:	Preparing hot drinks, simple food preparation, and supervised use of kettle and food preparation equipment.
Potential hazards:	Burns/scalds, food poisoning, food allergies, slips/trips/falls, cuts, and emotional distress.
Controls:	Staff closely supervise learners when undertaking food and drink preparation; learner capacity to follow instructions safely is assessed; learners are not permitted to use cooking facilities without a member of staff present; drinking water only is used for drinks; basic food hygiene is adhered to; surfaces are kept clean; staff complete basic food hygiene training; first aider present always; activity stopped if unsafe.

3.5 Using Open Fire

Nature of activity:	Fire pit, storm kettle, open fire use, and supervised activities involving lighting, managing, and extinguishing fire.
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Potential hazards:	Burns/scalds, smoke inhalation, burnt clothing, fire spread, contact with hot equipment, slips/trips/falls, and other physical injuries or emotional distress.
Controls:	Staff closely supervise learners at all times; learner capacity to follow instructions safely is assessed; safety briefing given when fire is lit; all fire areas clearly defined and physically marked at a safe distance before fire is lit; dynamic risk assessment undertaken before lighting, including weather/wind conditions and location of participants/animals; long hair tied back and no loose clothing; learners shown how to light fire safely; heat-proof gloves worn by staff and learners where needed; when feeding a fire, learners do not work above it and approach as instructed by the activity leader; adults monitor fire so it does not build too high; learners instructed about safe materials to put on the fire; kettle or equipment placed in a safe place to cool; nothing touched until cold; adult ensures fire is extinguished at end of activity; water available for burns and extinguishing; first aider present always; activity stopped if unsafe.

3.6 Field Maintenance

Nature of activity:	Strimming, hedge trimming, burning waste, digging, auger use, post knocker, moving waste.
Potential hazards:	Flying particles, loud noise, puncture/slicing wounds, fumes, burns, smoke inhalation, explosion risk, manual handling injuries, slips/trips/falls, fractures.
Controls:	Close supervision; learner suitability assessed; correct tool-use procedures; no tool use without training; no maintenance work without staff present; PPE including goggles, ear defenders, masks and gloves where safe to use; full face masks for powered trimmers/trimmers; tools maintained in good repair; hair tied back; steel toe cap footwear for heavy tools; gloves for waste materials; fire safety briefing; safe fire boundary; water available; first aider present.

3.7 Stable Maintenance

Nature of activity:	Drilling, sawing, hammering, lifting heavy objects, sweeping.
Potential hazards:	Flying particles, loud noise, puncture/tearing wounds, blunt force injury, manual handling injuries, fall from height, slips/trips/falls, cuts, fractures.
Controls:	Close supervision; learner suitability assessed; correct tool-use procedures; no maintenance work without staff present; PPE; tools maintained; hair tied back; no loose clothing; manual handling training where needed; steel toe cap footwear; first aider present.

3.8 Transporting Learners

Nature of activity:	Driving learners in staff car.
Potential hazards:	Car accident, injury, vehicle damage, breakdown.
Controls:	Business use insurance; MOT, tax and roadworthy vehicle; full driving licence; DBS-checked driver; learner suitability assessed; seatbelts always worn; booster seats supplied/fitted by parents where needed; speed limits followed; pre-drive safety checks;

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	breakdown plans in place; vehicles covered for recovery.
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3.9 Offsite Trips and Visits

Nature of activity:	Offsite trips and visits.
Potential hazards:	Slips, trips, falls, cuts, fractures, emotional distress, members of the public, private property, safeguarding concerns, separation from group.
Controls:	Staff briefed to supervise closely; qualified and competent staff; learner suitability assessed; venue contacted or visited in advance where possible; phones and contact details available; induction/tour on arrival; safe-area briefing; additional clothing/footwear as needed; weather checks; 1:2 supervision ratio; head counts; first aider and first aid kit present; medical needs catered for; contingency plan for incidents; dynamic risk assessment by session leader; activity stopped if unsafe; incidents and near misses reported.

Review and Monitoring

- All risk assessments are reviewed annually, or sooner if activities, staffing, participants, locations or control measures change.
- Incidents, accidents and near misses are recorded and used to review this assessment where necessary.
- Accidents are recorded in line with the First Aid Policy.
- Medium and High risks are reviewed termly until reduced to Low.
- Findings are shared in staff meetings and supervision to ensure everyone is aware of current controls.
- The DSL and H&S Lead oversee compliance with this document.

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