

ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT for Suzanne Adamthwaite BHSAI INT.T – HORSE ASSISTED THERAPY

Location: The Stables, Gravenhurst Road, Lower Gravenhurst, Bedfordshire, MK45 4HL

Introduction and general arrangements:

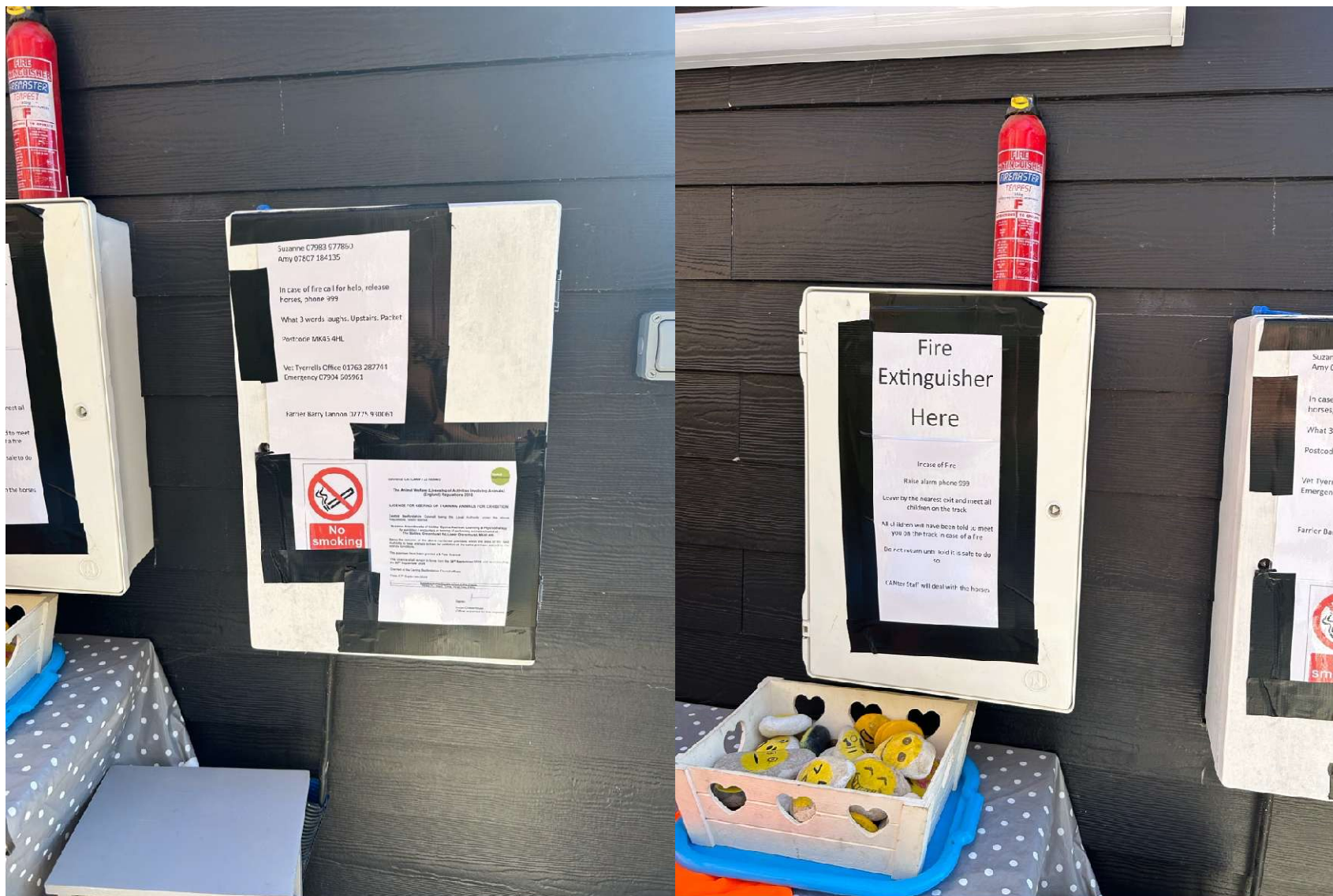
I carried out a formal Activity Risk Assessment of the equestrian facilities at The Stables as preparation for the planned delivery of Equine Assisted Therapy sessions to the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA) model.

The proprietor, Suzanne Adamthwaite, is registered as an Intermediate Instructor with the British Horse Society and is a Certified EAGALA Equine Specialist. With continuous equine experience since childhood, and with over forty years regular and current practice as an Instructor, Suzanne has a massive reservoir of experience to call on in leading Horse Assisted Therapy sessions. She is also a trained First Aider and keeps a well-stocked First Aid kit and Accident Book on site.

Situated in open countryside with views to the nearby Chiltern Hills and with parking facilities, The Stables equine facilities comprise a fully fenced outdoor school with soft riding surface and a stable block which provides covered areas for sheltered dialogue and a kitchen/staff room area for classroom work and an outside toilet.

Suzanne's clients will include individuals with learning difficulties, behavioural/addiction issues and other mental health concerns. Clients will always be accompanied by an EAGALA Certified Mental Health Professional (therapist). Client family member(s) may also be present.

Whilst Equine Assisted Therapy sessions are taking place, Suzanne Adamthwaite will focus on the horse(s) in her role as Equine Specialist. An EAGALA Certified Mental Health Professional will always be present during client sessions and will focus on the clients.



October 2025



October 2025



October 2025

Risks and controls arising from the location:

The yard area is open and uncluttered, giving a feeling of space and calm. With stables, storage and workshop areas and additional covered space alongside an outdoor schooling area and paddocks, the facility is accessed from the adjacent lane. The whole area is flat and level and the school is fully fenced being accessed through a standard self-locking gate.

Routinely kept clean, with walking surfaces swept at least daily, the location presents few risks to health and safety for those familiar with the equine environment. Suzanne Adamthwaite (SA) will always be present whilst Clients are within the facility.

WHAT IS THE HAZARD?	WHO COULD BE AFFECTED?	HOW CAN THE RISK BE CONTROLLED?	ACTIONED	NOTES
Client and Therapist unfamiliarity with equine facilities	Clients and Therapist	SA will provide/deliver a site induction to new clients on arrival and refresh relevant details with returning clients as required		
Slips, trips and falls on uneven and muddy surfaces	All	SA will ensure that walking routes/surfaces are swept clear at least daily and in advance of each client session as required		
- Rakes, shaving forks, pitchforks, hoof picks, scissors and other sharp or bladed tools - Vehicles and machinery including cars, tractors, chainsaws and strimmers - Hoses, lead ropes and baling twine	All	- SA will ensure that all sharp or bladed items will be safely stored out of sight in advance of each client session - SA will ensure that keys for all vehicles and machinery are to be removed from vehicles/machines when "parked" or otherwise not in use - SA is to prevent access to portable petrol/diesel powered equipment. Towed items, such as harrows, are to be kept away from the learning environment - Prior to each client session, SA will ensure that hoses are coiled or put away, lead ropes that are not needed are stored and that lengths of baling twine are cleared away		
Fire in stable or storage areas/yard	All	- SA will ensure that the site is at all times managed as a "No Smoking" zone - SA is to ensure that clients are kept away from dry-stored goods such as hay and straw - SA will include details on Fire Emergency procedures during site induction - SA will provide and maintain one or more Fire Extinguisher(s) in a readily accessible position		

Risks and controls arising from the clients:

It is recognised that Clients will include individuals with learning difficulties, behavioural/addiction issues and other mental health concerns and that, as a result, their behaviour may at times be unpredictable. Whilst difficulty in managing situations is not expected, behavioural issues of particular concern would include violence towards persons and/or horses, argument and confrontation towards persons and vandalism/destructiveness towards the premises and/or facilities.

WHAT IS THE HAZARD?	WHO COULD BE AFFECTED?	HOW CAN THE RISK BE CONTROLLED?	ACTIONED	NOTES
Client attends site in inappropriate footwear or clothing	Client	SA to keep available a small supply of waterproof/warm clothing and footwear to allow sessions to continue which might otherwise not		
Client "needs" to smoke	All	SA is to direct client and accompanying Therapist to a "safe" area away from yard buildings and flammable materials		
Client welfare	Client	- SA to keep available a supply of potable water and plastic cups/glasses for Client refreshment - SA to make emergency toilet arrangements available within the context of what is "reasonably practicable" for an equine facility		
Client demonstrates unacceptable behaviours before a session commences or begins unacceptable behaviours during a session	All	- SA to discuss approach with the accompanying Therapist, with options to include delaying, adjusting the content of, or abandoning the session - SA is to ensure that a mobile phone or other contact mechanism is available at all times to call for appropriate support or the emergency services - SA is to have available at all times during a session, or alternative cover by a qualified person an appropriate number of head collars and lead ropes such that the horse or horses being used can be readily separated from the client(s) - SA to have the option to refuse future attendance of individual clients as circumstances dictate		
Client attends site, or returns to site, unaccompanied by a Therapist and outside of agreed session times	Client and SA	- SA to maintain contact details for Therapists and other relevant support as a readily accessible hard-copy list within the stable yard and/or within her mobile phone - SA is to ensure that a mobile phone or other contact mechanism to call for appropriate support or emergency services is available at all times		

Risks and controls arising from the horses:

EAGALA practice requires that horses are not ridden during client sessions and all client/horse interfaces are therefore ground based. No whips are used or available during sessions and horses are generally loose, unencumbered by head collars.

WHAT IS THE HAZARD?	WHO COULD BE AFFECTED?	HOW CAN THE RISK BE CONTROLLED?	ACTIONED	NOTES
Inappropriate horse(s) selected for client sessions	All	- SA is to ensure that generally calm, well and mature horses are deployed for each client session - In the event of unavailability of suitable horses, consideration must firstly be given to abandoning a session rather than to deploying an unsuitable replacement animal - Unwell or lame horses must not be deployed		
Horse is "spooked", leading to an unpredictable response	All	- SA (or alternative cover)is to have available at all times during a session, an appropriate number of head collars and lead ropes such that the horse or horses being used can be readily separated from the client(s) and Therapist - SA is to ensure that a mobile phone or other contact mechanism is available at all times to call for appropriate support or the emergency services		

Statement

With thoughtful session planning and careful management of the identified risks in line with the detail in the above texts and tables, I am confident that Horse Assisted Therapy sessions to the EAGALA model can be safely conducted at this venue.

This Activity Risk Assessment will be reviewed from time-to-time and may be added to, or otherwise revised, should further issues be identified.

KHarrison

Kirsty Harrison Tech IOSH

Updated October 2025

October 2025