



# CLWYD SPECIAL RIDING CENTRE RE-OPENING FAQS – AUGUST 2021

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## ABOUT THE CENTRE

### When will CSRC be open again?

The Centre has begun a phased re-opening having been temporarily closed since March 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The requirements for social distancing mean that we cannot reintroduce RDA lessons as we ran them before the pandemic. The majority of our riders need some close contact during mounting and dismounting as well as during lessons. Our sessions are run solely by volunteers, many of whom are not ready to return just yet. For these reasons, we are having to take small steps to re-opening but are hopeful that we can open more fully after the summer holidays.

### Are there any changes to the CSRC staff?

In March 2020, CSRC staff were placed on furlough with the exception of our Head Coach who lives on site and together with her family, cared for our wonderful horses over the majority of lockdown. Our staff have now returned on reduced hours to support the re-opening of the Centre.

Sadly, our Centre Manager, Volunteer Coordinator and two grooms departed, taking redundancy.

Our CELT team, Sally and Casey, took the opportunity to set up their own business '*Partners in Equine*' and continue to support the running of the CELT Centre offering mechanical horse and equine therapy sessions.

CSRC is in the process of reviewing the resourcing requirements for its new operating model.

### What have the ponies and horses been doing since lock down?

Eating a lot of grass and enjoying the view! Fourteen of our horses/ponies remained on site over lockdown and have now restarted a programme to bring them back up to the fitness required for RDA sessions. We are extremely grateful to the owners and some volunteers who took the remaining horses offsite to care for them over the lockdown period.

## VOLUNTEERING

### Can I volunteer at the Centre?

New volunteers are very welcome! The Centre cannot run without volunteers. We can offer a variety of volunteering opportunities for people aged 14 and over. Please contact the CSRC office for more information.



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### **I applied to volunteer prior to lockdown, is my application still valid?**

Yes. We have a number of new applications that were put on hold because of lockdown. We are contacting people to see if they are still in a position to volunteer.

### **I am an existing volunteer, when can I come back?**

If you haven't already been contacted, we will be in touch soon to ask if you are still in a position to volunteer.

## **RDA SESSIONS**

### **When can I start back with mechanical horse and CELT sessions?**

Our Mechanical Horse sessions are up and running. Our former CSRC team members, Sally and Casey, are now offering sessions through their own company – *Partners in Equine*. Anyone interested in mechanical horse sessions should contact CSRC's main office. We hope to have ground based, equine therapy sessions running soon.

### **When can I start back carriage driving?**

Carriage driving will hopefully start again after September. When we are ready to do so, we will be in touch to offer participants their place back and to discuss next steps.

### **When can I start back with hippotherapy?**

We are not able to re-start Hippotherapy sessions yet. Sadly, our hippotherapist, Lynne, has stepped down due to personal circumstances and we are currently looking for a replacement to run the sessions.

### **When can I start back with vaulting?**

Vaulting will not start again this year.

### **When can I come back riding?**

The CSRC RDA Group has re-started some very small sessions with our more able riders that don't require close contact support. These sessions are going well. Unfortunately, not all our volunteers feel comfortable to return just yet, so we are limited to the places we can offer.

### **When will Hope Mountain RDA sessions be starting again?**

Hope Mountain RDA, The Tuesday Team, plans to resume riding towards the end of September or early October, subject to any government restrictions at the time.

They anticipate starting on a smaller basis, whilst they all get used to a new way of working together. Owing to the age of many of their volunteers, many of them will be wearing masks and they will need to see how this works with their participants.

### **How much notice will you give me before I can restart?**

We will aim to keep in touch regularly with all our RDA riders once lessons start again, whether they are in a position to return or not. However, if an opportunity arises for a lesson, you might be offered a chance to ride at quite short notice.

### **Will there be any additional paperwork to complete before I can return?**

Yes. Given the time that has passed since lockdown, all participants returning will need to complete a new application form and come into the Centre for a re-assessment before attending their first session. This does not mean you start again on our waiting list; it is to ensure we have the correct information about you. When we are ready to do so, we will be in touch with participants to offer them their place back and discuss next steps.



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You will also be asked to sign a consent form accepting RDA Covid 19 requirements designed to help avoid the spread of the virus and that you are not clinically extremely vulnerable or needing to self-isolate. Our volunteers will also need to sign a similar form.

### **Who decides who can restart riding?**

All our RDA coaches who know their participants well will be making these decisions with added support from the CSRC Head Coach. Until we are fully open, the availability of our volunteers, horses and ponies will also influence who and how many participants we can support.

### **I am not ready to return yet, will you hold my place?**

We would reserve the right to offer the place to those who are ready to return. However, we would certainly look for suitable options once you are in a position to come back.

### **I need lots of help when I ride, when can I come back?**

This will all depend on how and when the social distancing rules are relaxed. We also need to ensure we have the right level of volunteers required to support each session.

### **I need some help and support to mount/dismount, will that be possible?**

We use our hydraulic platform to aid mounting and our volunteers will assist with dismounting, adjusting girths and stirrups and side walking – in line with social distancing guidance.

### **When will special school groups be able to return to riding?**

We will work with schools to agree when they would like to return.

### **I am anxious about riding again, can you help?**

It would probably be helpful to attend an unmounted session first and get used to the environment again.

### **Will I be able to ride at the same time and day as before?**

Where possible we will try to place participants back into their previous sessions, however this may not be possible in the short term so it will be necessary to be as flexible as possible on when you can ride again.

### **Will I be able to ride with my usual team (coach and volunteers)?**

We recognise participants will want to return to their regular session and see the familiar faces of their friends and volunteers, however this may not be possible for the short term whilst we start up again.

### **Is there a new riding weight limit?**

No. Our current weight limit is 12½ stone / 79.4kgs.

### **What if I am too heavy?**

Anyone who has put on weight during lockdown, and exceeds our maximum limit, will be encouraged to lose weight sensibly before being able to ride again. If considered suitable, we may be able to offer mechanical horse sessions as an alternative and part of a plan to return to riding.

### **My horse/pony has been retired, who will I ride?**

We will select a suitable horse/pony of similar type for you to ride.

### **I have not been very active during lock down and would benefit from a gentle start to riding, will that be possible?**

All our riders will need to build up their fitness gradually after such a long time so lessons will be designed to reflect this.



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### **Why do I have to go back to basic riding exercises, when I could do much more before lockdown?**

Just like our horses, riders at all levels will need to gradually build up their fitness again.

### **Are there any alternatives to riding that I can consider?**

Our Mechanical Horse sessions are up and running. Our former CSRC team members, Sally and Casey, are now offering sessions through their own company – *Partners in Equine*. Anyone interested in mechanical horse sessions should contact the CSRC main office. (See answers below on CELT and Mechanical Horse)

### **Where will we be able to ride?**

For the time being and while we slowly re-open, our sessions will take place in the indoor school.

### **Can my family, carer and friends watch me ride?**

Providing social distancing is maintained, one or two people could watch, keeping correct social distancing and wearing face coverings.

## NEW PARTICIPANTS

### **Are you accepting new participants?**

Yes, we are happy to accept new applications. Please contact the office for more information.

### **I have been on the waiting list for a long time; how much longer will I have to wait for a place?**

A lot will depend on the take up of places by our existing riders. However, there may be potential, for some people on the waiting list who require very little help, to be offered an opportunity before long.

## CENTRE FOR EQUINE LEARNING AND THERAPY (CELT)

### **Are you running ground-based/horse care sessions through CELT?**

We will be running ground-based sessions again once we have a full equine team and volunteers back in place. When we are ready to do so, *Partners in Equine* will be in touch to offer participants a place and to discuss next steps.

## MECHANICAL HORSE SESSIONS

### **Are there any alternatives to riding that I can consider?**

Our Mechanical Horse sessions are up and running. Our former CSRC team members, Sally and Casey, are now offering sessions through their own company – *Partners in Equine*. Anyone interested in mechanical horse sessions should contact CSRC's main office.

### **I would like to try riding on the simulator before a live horse, will that be possible?**

Yes. Our Mechanical Horse sessions are up and running. Anyone interested should contact CSRC's main office.

## COVID MEASURES

### **Why do I need to sign in when I come to the Centre?**

In case someone tests positive for Covid 19 after attending a lesson at the Centre, in which case we will need to contact everyone there at the time. The Centre has a QR Code that allows you to book into the Centre as part of the NHS Track and Trace app.



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### Can I wear a mask or face covering while riding?

The government advice on face coverings and guidance from RDA is constantly being reviewed. Please ask your Coach and signage around the Centre for the latest advice.

### What measures have been put in place to keep everyone safe?

- CSRC has a Covid policy in place which is displayed around the Centre. The Centre has undergone a deep clean and toilets/busy areas will be regularly cleaned.
- A one-way system will be set up.
- Everyone will be required to use the hand sanitiser provided on the way in and out of buildings.
- All tack will be cleaned between riders and all riders will be asked to wear their own hats and a clean pair of gloves on each visit. If you have to borrow one of our hats, it will be disinfected between every rider.
- Numbers of people present at any one time will be kept very low.

### Why do I need to wear clean gloves when I ride?

This is necessary to avoid any risk of the transfer of the virus from you to another rider using the same reins / tack.

### If I can't ride yet, can I come and watch?

We will not want people to come to the Centre to watch, at least in the short term because we need to keep numbers visiting as low as possible to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus.

### What happens if there is a surge in Covid cases?

It is possible that the Centre will have to cancel lessons again if this happens. We will follow government and RDA guidance should this happen.

### What should I do if I restart riding, and then get Covid symptoms?

Please do not come to the Centre if you have any symptoms. Inform us immediately and follow the Government's current guidance on what to do.

### Can family members/carers support me in my session?

Help can only be given by a family member from the same household or a carer, after undergoing training.

### Will I be able to cuddle my pony?

Yes, ponies are not susceptible to Covid 19.

### Can ponies and horses catch Covid?

No, there is no evidence that they can.

### Can ponies and horses spread Covid?

According to the [World Organisation for Animal Health \(OIE\)](#) the current spread of Covid-19 is a result of human-to-human transmission, and, to date, there is no evidence that companion animals play a significant role in spreading the disease. To date, there have been no reports involving horses.

## PAYING FOR SESSIONS

### Are prices going up?

Prices remain the same as prior to lockdown. All pricing is subject to regular review.

### Can I pay for my lessons when I come to the Centre?

No, all lessons must be pre-paid. There will also be no refunds for missed lessons.



## CLWYD SPECIAL RIDING CENTRE RE-OPENING FAQS – AUGUST 2021

### **I've been told I need to self-isolate, will I still be charged for the session I've missed?**

It is CSRC's policy that if a participant cancels, then they still need to pay for the session. If CSRC cancels the session we would deduct the amount from the following term's fees.

## **RIDING HATS**

### **Can I still borrow one of your hats?**

Whilst we can disinfect our hats between riders, this will be a difficult process to control effectively as the Centre becomes busier. Participants may prefer to buy their own hats.

### **I want to invest in my own riding hat, what should I buy, where from?**

***Please do not buy a hat off the internet without having it properly fitted! A badly fitted hat can be harmful.***

Please go to a specialist shop where a trained staff member can measure you for the correct size.

RDA guidance on acceptable riding hats can be found on their website: [Riding-For-Disabled-Association-Hat-Guidelines-2019.pdf](https://myrda.org.uk/Riding-For-Disabled-Association-Hat-Guidelines-2019.pdf) ([myrda.org.uk](https://myrda.org.uk))

## **HOLIDAYS**

### **Are you taking RDA Holiday bookings?**

Please contact the office if you are interested in booking an RDA holiday with us after September 2021. We are now taking bookings for 2022.

### **Can I hire out your holiday accommodation for a private holiday?**

Yes. Please contact the office for more information.

### **Can I bring my own horse on holiday and hire out your accommodation?**

Yes. Please contact the office for more information.

## **GENERAL**

### **Can I come and visit my favourite pony?**

We are not able to arrange visits at present but hope to organise some open days/events when it is safe to do so.

### **Can I adopt a pony?**

Yes. All our horses and ponies are available for adoption - £10 for 12 months. Please contact the office if this is something you are interested in.

### **Will there be a Christmas Fair this year?**

We have sadly made the decision not to go ahead with our usual Christmas Fair in 2021. We hope to be able to hold some smaller events in the run up to Christmas. Look out on our website and Facebook for updates.