



Introduction

The National Survey for Wales (2017) showed that 3% of Wales’s population participated in horse riding activities during 2016/17. Horse riding is known to benefit physical fitness and mental wellbeing, and contribute to the economy. We want to encourage equestrian activities on Natural Resources Wales (NRW) managed land and have outlined here how we can achieve this.

Definition

‘Equestrian access’ is the term we use for all types of access with a horse – described in the following categories:

Individuals on horseback	Individuals carriage driving	Informal groups and clubs	Events or commercial activities
Horse riding	Carriage driving	Clubs and informal gatherings	Commercial schools, guided rides and trekking, cross country, competitive

Please note: This statement excludes hunting on horseback and horse grazing on our land.

Where you can go without needing our permission

Individuals on horseback are legally allowed to use Public Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) and on some Common Land. Individuals carriage driving have a right to be on Restricted Byways, BOATs. You can identify these routes on the maps held by the Local Authority.

We also give individuals on horseback open access to much of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate. This means you don’t need to ask permission to use forest tracks and roads, so long as they’re not closed for public safety, management or environmental reasons. You can find out where these areas are by contacting your local forest manager.

When you'll need permission from us

- Individuals on horseback and informal groups and clubs need our permission to access routes that aren't Public Bridleways, Restricted Byways and BOATs on National Nature Reserves and some of our woodland estate and common land.
- If you're an informal group or club of more than 10 horse riders, you'll need our permission to use any part our estate.
- All carriage driving activities need our permission to access any routes on NRW managed land, unless it's a Restricted Byway, BOAT, or part of an existing formal agreement (such as in Dyfnant and Crychan).
- Events or commercial activities always need our permission to use land that we manage.

Please note: If you need access to areas that are secured by barriers, you'll need our permission to obtain a key.

How we support equestrian access

- We will follow our [Guiding Principles](#) for community involvement with land that we manage.
- In addition to this we will manage access for equestrian activity in line with our [concordat with the British Horse Society Cymru](#)
- We frequently allow additional permissive equestrian access; this can apply to a all access on a piece of land, a waymarked route or it can be explicit personal permission.
- We allow equestrian events or commercial activities when we consider the site can sustain the event, socially and environmentally, and are happy it will be managed to the right standard of quality and safety.
- We deal with unauthorised built features in line with our organisational procedures.

What you'll need to do

- Follow the [Countryside Code](#), the [Trail Users Code](#) and the British Horse Society [Code of Conduct for Horse Riders and Cyclists](#)
- Respect other users on our land. Any irresponsible or antisocial behaviour on shared routes can cause conflict with other users and could potentially be a risk to public safety.
- Adhere to all our signs. NRW managed land is often a working environment and failure to follow safety signs can be dangerous for both riders, drivers and land managers.
- Follow our '[Keep It Clean](#)' guidelines to protect against the spread of invasive species and biosecurity threats. This is especially important where routes go through waterbodies or muddy areas.
- Refrain from building anything unless you have our permission. self-build features can impact access routes and boundaries, and may be hazardous to other users.
- Take care not to cause erosion or to damage vegetation, particularly in sensitive areas such as ancient semi-natural woodland, sand dunes and marsh habitats. Intensive use can also damage trail surfaces, making them impassable to other people.

- Avoid leaving horse manure in areas used by other members of the public. This can affect their enjoyment; parking areas and gateways, especially, should be kept clean and tidy.
- Always be careful not to disturb birds or animals. They are particularly vulnerable during the breeding season and in winter.
- Avoid using trails set aside for other user groups e.g. walking or mountain bike trails

How you can apply for permission

To apply for permission to use NRW managed land for equestrian access, please contact the regional team in your area. Their contact details can be found in the following document:

[NRW managed land permissions contact sheet](#)

Who you can contact for more information

If you'd like further information, you can find out more using the following links:

- The British Horse Society: www.bhs.org.uk
- British Driving Society: www.britishdrivingsociety.co.uk
- Association of British Riding schools: www.abrs-info.org