



## **Drivers with Disabilities: Approval to use Compensating aids or Other Reasonable Adjustments (“the Protocol”) – Updated October 2024**

### **1. Objective**

- 1.1 British Carriagedriving (“BC”) endorses the principle of sports equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in horse driving trials has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities.
- 1.2 This Protocol aims to provide a pathway for Drivers with Disabilities to participate and enjoy the sport at all levels. This Protocol should be read in conjunction with the BC Rule Book. The Protocol applies at BC training events and competitions for Drivers with Disabilities. It is recommended to affiliated clubs.

### **2. Eligibility**

- 2.1 Drivers with Disabilities fall into two categories
  - i Para Driver (or “Classified”)
  - ii Non-classified Driver with Disabilities (“Non-classified”)
- 2.2 The terms “Para Driver” and “Classified” have a distinct meaning within this Protocol and only apply to those drivers who have been assessed and classified by BE National or FEI International assessors. Specific rules concerning classification can be found on the BE and FEI websites.
- 2.3 Non-classified Drivers are any other drivers who has been assessed and approved under this protocol. They may include drivers waiting to be classified as a Para Driver, drivers whose condition is not eligible for classification or who do not wish to be considered for Para Driver classification and drivers who have a temporary disability. Non-classified Drivers may participate under the rules of this protocol at the Organisers’ discretion.
- 2.4 Non-classified Drivers are not eligible for Para Driver rankings or Para Driver Championships. Non-classified Drivers with a temporary disability may not compete in classes specifically designated for Drivers with Disabilities.
- 2.5 Every driver attending a British Carriagedriving affiliated training camp or competition for/as a Driver with Disabilities for the first time must be assessed for competence and safety, with the horse/pony to be driven, before being allowed to participate. An assessment can be carried out only by a person or organisation approved by British Carriagedriving.

### **3. Application**

- 3.1 Drivers with Disabilities who wish to participate with Compensating aids or Other Reasonable Adjustments must apply to BC using the Application Form which can be found on the BC website [Microsoft Word - Approval application form.docx](#)
- 3.2 The Application will be considered by a Review Panel.

- 3.3 Para Drivers are governed by specific BE National and FEI rules for classification and compensating aids. However, Para Drivers are required to submit an Application Form to have their approved Compensating aids registered on the BC master list.

#### **4. The Review Panel**

- 4.1 The Review Panel will consist of a minimum of three panellists selected from a list of BC approved panellists. The Chair of the Panel will be a designated by BC.
- 4.2 Each Panel should include at least one person who has experience of training or coaching Drivers with Disabilities and, if considered appropriate by BC, one person who is professionally qualified to understand the impairment presented by the physical or neurological disability.
- 4.3 The Review Panel will always seek to operate in an independent and unbiased manner. It will treat all personal data as confidential and will be guided by the BC data protection policies. The outcome of its decisions and the reasons for any refusals will be communicated to the Driver. On completion of the assessment a Driver Approval Certificate will be issued.
- 4.4 The Review Panel will seek to uphold the principle that Compensating aids or Other Reasonable Adjustments are designed to facilitate participation, but not provide an unfair advantage over other competitors.
- 4.5 In granting Compensating aids or Other Reasonable Adjustments the Panel will always consider the safety of the driver and welfare of the horse.

#### **5. Process and Governance**

- 5.1 A Review Panel can be convened by BC at any time. It can meet virtually or in person. The Panel will decide on a case-by-case basis whether it requires to see the Applicant and if it does, that may be in person or by video conference.
- 5.2 The Application Form must be accompanied with medical documentation from a GMC registered Medical Practitioner or Chartered Physiotherapist confirming the nature of the functional need and degree of impairment. BC reserves the right to request additional medical information during the assessment process.
- 5.3 BC will where appropriate consider expert information that has been developed by other organisations, such as within Para Equestrian, RDA or other sports.
- 5.4 Approval to use Compensating aids or Other Reasonable Adjustments may be open ended where the condition is deemed permanent, or approved for a given period. Any time restrictions will be noted in the Driver Approval Certificate. This is to ensure approvals remain compatible with any change in the specific impairment. If a Driver wishes to use them beyond the period approved, they will have to re-apply.
- 5.5 BC will retain the right to withdraw a Driver Approval Certificate if it considers the Approval is no longer appropriate on the grounds of safety or fairness.
- 5.6 Any Driver who wishes to challenge the outcome of any Application or the withdrawal of a Driver Approval Certificate may request one separate Review Panel, but must pay a separate Re-application fee.

## 6. Compensating aids and Other Reasonable Adjustments

- 6.1 The purpose of Compensating aids and Other Reasonable Adjustments are to assist Drivers with Disabilities to compete in able-bodied competitions or other designated competitions without providing an advantage over other drivers in able-bodied classes or drivers with the same degree of disability. The extent of any Compensating aid or Other Reasonable Adjustment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. There is no definitive list. They may include, but are not limited to
- i. Lap belt held by groom or with quick release mechanism
  - ii. Approved harness with quick release mechanism
  - iii. Handbrake or Brake operated by groom
  - iv. No or adapted gloves
  - v. Connecting rein bar
  - vi. Whip held/used by groom
  - vii. Finger loop held by groom
  - viii. Performing a one handed movement with two hands
  - ix. Second reins
  - x. Approved headphones or Dressage caller
  - xi. Second groom provided it does not compromise horse welfare
  - xii. Mobility vehicle to walk the course
- 6.2 A master list of approvals given under the Protocol will be maintained by British Carriagedriving.
- 6.3 As referenced in 3.3 above compensating aids for Para Drivers are not approved through this protocol but Para Drivers must apply for a Driver Approval Certificate so that their compensating aids can be noted on it and added to the BC master list. There may be limited circumstances where a Classified Driver wishes to use an additional Compensating aid in able-bodied events. In such instances the driver must apply for approval under this protocol.
- 6.4 All Drivers with Disabilities must submit a copy of their Driver Approval Certificate every time they enter an event. Any aid or Other Reasonable Adjustment noted on the Driver Approval Certificate may be used in any phase of the event, but is not required to be used unless that requirement is noted on the Driver Approval Certificate.
- 6.5 Where approval is given for a driver to be secured to their carriage by a lap belt or an approved harness it must incorporate a quick release mechanism which (in the opinion of the Driver) is suitable, taking into account the risks inherent in Horse Driving Trials and the characteristics of their turnout including size, shape and experience.
- 6.6 Drivers must be able to fall free from the carriage. Any event official can at any time request drivers or their grooms to demonstrate the quick release mechanism of any belt or harness worn.
- 6.7 Driving with a second set of reins or divided reins is not allowed in any National competition. At the discretion of the event organiser or Technical Delegate a second set of reins may be used at club events. If used the reins to the competent driver must be clearly identifiable from a distance by, for example colour or ribbons.
- 6.8 Additional guidance on Compensating aids and Other reasonable Adjustments is available on the BC Website

## **7. Competition classes and progression**

- 7.1 Health and safety are paramount. Drivers with Disabilities wishing to compete in any class under this protocol must be assessed for competence and safety, with the horse/pony to be driven and their competent groom, before being allowed to compete. The principles set out in BC "Introductory Safety/Competence Assessment for Clubs" will be applied. There is a version of the assessment form specific for initial assessment of Drivers with Disabilities on the BC Website. The groom may carry out actions that the driver may be unable to perform to due to the nature of their disability such as harnessing up and putting to.
- 7.2 To progress from club to national events, Drivers with Disabilities will be subject to the same Competency assessment as any able-bodied competitor.
- 7.3 Clubs will be encouraged to run a Novice section within any dedicated class for Drivers with Disabilities. It is recommended that the pace in these classes is restricted to walk and trot.
- 7.4 Para Drivers and Non-classified drivers may participate in any event at the Organisers discretion. Organisers must inform Judges and Officials of any Compensating aids or Other Reasonable Adjustments that each driver has notified they will be using. Organisers are not required to access the BC master list.

## **8. Vehicles and Equipment**

- 8.1 Carriages must be suitable for the disabled driver. Carriages for Singles may be 2 or 4-wheeled in every phase.
- 8.2 The Organising Committee or Technical Delegate may refuse the use of a carriage, but must give the reason for the refusal.
- 8.3 If a Driver with Disabilities wishes to drive in a wheelchair, the wheelchair must be secured in an appropriately designed carriage. The driver must be able to fall free in the event of an incident. Electric wheelchairs are not permitted.

## **9. Grooms and Outside Assistance**

- 9.1 Grooms must be aged 18 or over. All grooms should have knowledge and experience of driving and be physically fit to perform the role. They must have confirmed that they accept the risks associated with back stepping for a Driver with Disabilities by confirming the following statement. They are only required to confirm this once and it will remain valid for any disabled turnout.

*I, [name of groom], understand and accept the inherent risks associated with horse driving trials and I confirm that I have agreed to backstep for a driver with disabilities. I further confirm that the driver's compensating aids/reasonable adjustments have been explained to me by the driver and I will test the quick release mechanisms of the driver's harness prior to the start of any competition.*

- 9.2 Grooms must be positioned on the carriage so that they can help in case of need. The Event Organiser or Technical Delegate has the right to disapprove the position of the groom on the vehicle if different from what is advised at entry from the Driver Approval Certificate.
- 9.3 In all cases in which the turnout is in danger, the groom must take appropriate steps to assist the driver to regain control including, in cases where a second set of reins is in use, taking up the reins. No penalties will be incurred as a result of action taken under this rule unless the groom is required to dismount.

- 9.4 A driver may designate a second groom. The second groom may be on the carriage, provided it does not hinder equine welfare, or on the ground. The second groom can provide permitted assistance to enable the first groom to remain on the carriage in the interests of safety. In the event a second groom provides assistance, penalties will be awarded as if the first groom had dismounted.

## **10. Inspection of the course**

- 10.1 Drivers with Disabilities who wish to use any type of motorised vehicles to inspect any arena or part the course must request approval through the Protocol. Their vehicles must be clearly identified. Identification can be obtained from the British Carriagedriving office.
- 10.2 Vehicles must be driven at no more than 5kph (walking pace) within the confines of an obstacle or cones course. Any Driver contravening this will be subject to BCs initial warning and yellow card protocols.
- 10.3 Anyone riding or driving a motorised vehicle within the Event Location must hold an appropriate driving licence and insurance unless exempt under the Government rules for Disability equipment and Transport.

## **11. Judging**

- 11.1 Event organisers must ensure that Judges are aware of the approved Compensation aids and Other Reasonable Adjustments for any Drivers with Disabilities competing in able-bodied competitions or those designated for drivers with disabilities. The use of those aids will not incur any penalty, including where permission has been given on their Driver Approval Certificate to performing a one-handed movement with two hands.
- 11.2 Drivers with Disabilities are not allowed to use any compensating aid or other reasonable adjustment which has not been specifically approved and recorded on their Driver Approval Certificate. If they do, they will incur 20 penalties on the first occasion and elimination thereafter. While they are awaiting approval they may, with the Organiser's permission, compete hors concours subject to the provisions of 7.1 above.

## **12. Insurance**

- 12.1 All drivers attending British Carriagedriving training events or competitions for Drivers with Disabilities must have third party liability insurance.

## **13. Notes**

- 13.1 Event organisers may make specific modifications to the BC rules set out elsewhere to accommodate Drivers with Disabilities. By way of example Organisers may allow Drivers to drive a vehicle of non-standard track width in all three phases and adjust cones widths appropriately. Any such modifications must be published in the event schedule.