



# BD Youth

British Dressage Under 25s



## Your Guide to young rider development





## Key contacts:

### BD Membership team

Membership, upgrades,  
registrations and results:  
[membership@britishdressage.co.uk](mailto:membership@britishdressage.co.uk)

### BD Youth team

Hannah James for BD Youth training  
[hannah.james@britishdressage.co.uk](mailto:hannah.james@britishdressage.co.uk) | 02477 087801

Sharon Weir for BD Youth international  
[sharon.weir@britishdressage.co.uk](mailto:sharon.weir@britishdressage.co.uk) | 02476 698834

To contact your Development Officer or  
BD Youth rep, visit your region online:  
[www.britishdressage.co.uk](http://www.britishdressage.co.uk)



# Welcome

BD Youth offers riders between six and 25 years old dressage training, competition and support to step onto the centre line and shine.

Our programmes are designed to educate and inspire young people on their journeys to becoming well rounded professionals, both in and out of the saddle.





**Start  
now with us**

We support young riders from the age of six and beyond, through a range of training, education and competition pathways. Having the knowledge to support your child on their British Dressage journey starts here.

## Membership

We have two main membership options for Youth riders, which depend on their competition aspirations and goals. Club membership is perfect for those at entry level, competing in Intro to Prelim tests, aiming for Quest competitions and Regional training. Full membership offers unrestricted access to all competition and training opportunities, from Novice to Grand Prix. Horses and ponies will also need a registration with us, whether Club or Full.

For information on membership options, including Trial, Winter and Associate with class tickets, visit [www.britishdressage.co.uk](http://www.britishdressage.co.uk).

## BD Online

Our online platform for creating and renewing memberships and horse registrations. Visit the BD website home page to login.

Parents/Guardians will need to be linked to all U16 accounts to be contactable and accountable for minors.

## Handbook

Download the BD Members' Handbook, incorporating all rules, on the BD website under 'competition rules'.

## Website

For fixtures, news, advice and results, it's all here: [britishdressage.co.uk](http://britishdressage.co.uk)

## Safeguarding and safety

British Dressage, as part of British Equestrian (BEF), takes Safeguarding very seriously and together with the other member bodies forms a Safeguarding Action Team (SAT). SAT works together in collaboration to share best practice, produce policy and procedures to ensure the safety of all participants, as well as actively promoting safeguarding through education.

## Parent's Charter

Supporting your child within competition

- 1 Have fun — it's why we are all here!
- 2 Place the emotional and physical wellbeing of young athletes above any desire to win.
- 3 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every athlete, coach and volunteer and encourage all members to do the same.
- 4 Promote the positive values and spirit of BD Youth and never condone violations of rules or the use of prohibited or restricted substances.
- 5 Take an active interest in your child/young person's participation.
- 6 Be willing to challenge/report inappropriate behaviour and/or language by others.
- 7 Never place any undue pressure on young athletes or their horses to perform, participate, train or compete.
- 8 Avoid the use of abusive language, swearing and irresponsible behaviour.

By following the BD code of conduct parents, guardians and other supporters can improve the experience of BD Youth activities and competitions for our young members and ensure that British Dressage is fun for all!





# Define their starting point...

# ...to inspire their BD Youth goals



## Getting started

Your child is with a local riding club, riding school, the Pony Club or on their own pony as a beginner. Dressage with us starts at introductory level, walk and trot off the lead rein, it's never too early to have a go. Riders can experience BD with a Club membership or as an Associate on a class ticket.

## Grassroots rider

Your child competes in unaffiliated dressage or Pony Club dressage/eventing. They may be riding tests equal to BD Intro, Prelim and Novice with walk, trot and canter. Your child is looking to try more competition and training in a fun, inspiring environment with like minded riders.

## Keen learners

Your child is looking to grow their knowledge and skills in caring for horses on the ground and away from the competition arena. They may also be looking for school activities in relation to horses for GCSE PE, Duke of Edinburgh award or other extra curricular work.

## Affiliated steps

Your child competes regularly in dressage, including Affiliated, Pony Club or Riding Club competitions from Novice/Elementary level. They're looking to progress quickly, aim for various championships and meet their competition goals to continue through the levels in dressage.

## Dressage focus

Your child is affiliated with BD and enjoying regular competition and training. They are committed to dressage, improving their skills and looking to take the next steps to become winning riders and knowledgeable young professionals.

## Fly the flag

Your child is a seasoned BD competitor with aspirations to represent their country in FEI international competitions. Aim to gather experience and scores in the relevant classes at the shows in our calendar that offer FEI sections. Please visit selection policies on the BD website.

### We recommend:

Regional 'Have a Go' day  
Regional training  
Team Quest (U21)  
My Quest (U21)

### We recommend:

Regional training and teams  
Quest (Team and individual)  
Combined Training  
Area Festivals (from Prelim)

### We recommend:

BD Horse Care - available to all riders from the age of six  
AASE (criteria dependent)  
DISE (criteria dependent)

### We recommend:

Regional training and teams  
Foundation Academies  
Area Festivals  
Regional Championships

### We recommend:

Foundation Academies  
National Academies  
DISE or AASE  
All Championship routes

### We recommend:

Premier League shows  
High Profile shows  
Selection events  
Squads and test riding



# Compete

where to get started



British Dressage competition begins at Intro level and progresses to Grand Prix. Under 25 riders compete against all BD members at regular BD shows, with additional opportunities at regional team events and championship level. Club membership holders may compete in all Saracen Horse Feeds Quest competitions, Ideal Saddles Combined Training qualifiers, all regular Freestyle to Music classes and work towards Petplan Equine Area Festival qualification at Prelim Bronze level. Youth riders with a Full membership have access to all types of competition with us and can aim to qualify for the Winter and Summer Regionals, which lead to Winter Championship and National Championship qualification (starting at Prelim level).

## Regional team events

### BD Youth Inter Regionals

This event sees our regions battle it out for the honour of being the best in Great Britain. Teams are made up of three or four riders with each competitor riding the Youth Rider Skills Test for their relevant squad. Each region is allowed up to five teams, with riders competing for team and individual titles.

### BD Youth Home International

Held annually for under 25s, this competition brings together England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales as each nation vies for prestigious top honours. BD tests are used from Novice to Medium, or FEI Children on Horses to Young Riders, and contribute towards team and individual titles. The format replicates CDI competitions with horse inspection vet checks and an opening ceremony.

Selection policies are available on the British Dressage website, visit your region or [www.britishdressage.co.uk](http://www.britishdressage.co.uk).

## In focus...

### Saracen Quest

Saracen Horse Feeds Quest is the perfect starting point for young riders new to BD competition. Compete in teams or individually, from Intro to Novice, with a separate section for riders under the age of 21. Quest fixtures have their own shows, Regional Finals and Championships.

### Area Festivals

The popular Petplan Equine Area Festivals have two annual series and Championships and offer sections for youth riders up to and including Medium level. Gain points at regular BD shows to work towards having a shot at these dedicated Under 21 titles at two major Championship events.

### FEI experience

Young riders competing in FEI age classes should aim for Premier League and High Profile shows where these fixtures host dedicated classes for youth riders. These are for Children on Horses, Pony, Junior and Young Riders, and for those aiming to ride internationally are essential.



# Training

Regional activity



## Regional Training

Dressage is all about training and BD Youth aims to give young people the best possible start for a lifetime in the sport. If your child is looking to be involved, the best place to start is your local region.

Each region hosts regular training, camps and social activities throughout the year that your child can be involved with. Regional training days are open to all ages of riders, from six to 25, and feature coaching and test riding practice with national and local fully qualified coaches. Sessions and camps run during the school holidays and over weekends and are organised by each region's BD Youth Representative or Development Officer.

## Your BD Youth Representative

The BD Youth reps are the first point of contact within your region. Visit [www.britishdressage.co.uk](http://www.britishdressage.co.uk) to find your region and BD Youth rep contact details.

## BD Youth squads

- D** Entry for riders up to the end of the year of their 11th birthday
- C** Entry for riders up to the end of the year of their 14th birthday
- C+** Rider skills tests movements similar to Prelim/Novice
- B** Rider skills tests movements similar to Novice/Elementary
- B+** Rider skills tests movements similar to Elementary/Medium
- A** Rider skills tests movements similar to Medium or specific Young Horse tests for horses aged five or six

## All about Youth Squads

Regional squads open doors to many opportunities. Squads are the first step for team competitions, including the Home International, U25s Championships and Inter Regionals, and help define your child's level for training days and camps. How it works:

- 1) Attend assessment or training day within region
- 2) Allocated to Youth Squad
- 3) Train, compete and track progress
- 4) Progression through squads and selection for regional teams

Squads are aligned with their own test system, known as rider skills tests. These are used to monitor progress, upgrade riders and used at team events. Test movements are ridden but judges assess young riders on position, accuracy, skills and how much difference is made to the horse. This format allows every rider the chance to excel.



# Education

Building bright futures



Register for just £5 per level - it's simple to get started, find 'BD Youth' online at: [www.britishdressage.co.uk](http://www.britishdressage.co.uk)

## BD Horse Care

Our Horse Care programme is designed to help young riders learn all of the fundamentals in caring for horses. We believe that riders should be all-round professionals, both in and out of the saddle, so developing horsemanship and welfare is at the forefront of our training priorities.

### What is BD Horse Care?

The BD Horse Care course is a mixture of online and practical learning modules, which aims to boost the care skills of our youth and senior members, or non-members, alike. Horse Care focuses on improving skills in four key areas:

- Nutrition
- Grooming
- Wellbeing
- Tack and dress

There will be five tiers in total, starting at the Introductory Horse Care Certificate, progressing to the Advanced Horse Care Certificate, and these are linked to the BD Youth squad levels:

Introductory Horse Care Certificate (Tier 1)		D Squad
Preliminary Horse Care Certificate (Tier 2)		C Squad
Novice Horse Care Certificate (Tier 3)		C+ Squad
Intermediate Horse Care Certificate (Tier 4)		B/B+ Squad
Advanced Horse Care Certificate (Tier 5)		A Squad

All must start with the introductory certificate – riders can progress at their own rate and don't have to wait to upgrade through the squad levels to complete the relevant horse care certificate.

## Wider Youth education

### DiSE

In partnership with British Eventing and British Showjumping, British Dressage run the DiSE programme, which provides riders with opportunities to improve sporting performance through a variety of training camps and home visits.

### AASE

The Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) is a Level 3 programme provided by British Dressage and Haddon Training.

The apprenticeship offers riders the support to progress on the right path to succeed and excel in their chosen equine career. The programme is designed to focus on everything an elite athlete needs to perform at the top level:

- Ridden skills
- Career planning
- Physical training
- Sport psychology
- Nutrition
- Communication and media



# Academy

Foundation to National



Application forms and information can be found online, see 'Get Involved' via [www.britishdressage.co.uk](http://www.britishdressage.co.uk).

## Aim for our academies

Run on a National scale, the BD Youth Academies are open to B – A squad riders who are active in their region. These riders are required to complete a short selection process before being offered a Foundation Academy position to receive coaching and performance development sessions, both mounted and unmounted.

The aim of the academies is to develop educated, balanced and enthusiastic equestrian athletes through active participation in two two-day camps run during each Autumn/Winter period. Camps include sessions such as:

- Performance profiling
- Horse and rider nutrition
- Rider fitness, balance and core strength
- Lecture demonstrations with industry professionals
- Inspirational talks
- Ridden coaching and test riding
- Team and social activities
- Parents talks and advice

## Academy Foundation

The aim of the Foundation Academy programme is to develop the training and education of BD Youth riders along a defined pathway towards the National Academy and Podium Potential Pathway Programmes.

**Who it's for:** B, B+ and A Squad riders

### Mandatory eligibility criteria:

- Squad assessment attendance between 1 December and May of the relevant year
- Attendance at three regional training sessions (or two camps) over a year period
- Achieving minimum scores of 66% at Elementary level
- Equivalent performance at age-appropriate levels on young horses
- Progression in BD Horse Care programme online

## Academy National

National Academy riders gain access to two further two-day camps with in-depth coaching and athlete development from top industry professionals. Funded by Sport England, the BD Youth National Academy provides riders with many more opportunities, benefits and continued support throughout the year to boost individual progression as a young athlete.

**Who it's for:** 12 athletes selected from annual Foundation intake

**Criteria:** Riders are selected on their dedication to the process, improvement shown, knowledge and ability.



# International

Representing Great Britain

Many BD Youth riders go on to reach the very top levels of international success and balance their school life with travelling across Europe to compete with the very best.

Selection days and training, along with consistent performance at Premier Leagues and High Profile shows, can lead to competing in home or overseas CDI competitions, with the selectors aiming to annually select teams at each FEI age group to represent British Dressage at the FEI European Championships for Children, Ponies, Juniors and Young Riders.

## Your Youth International contact:

Sharon Weir | 02476 698904  
international@britishdressage.co.uk



## FEI rider categories – ages and tests used

### Children on Horses / Under 14s

From the start of the calendar year of their 12th birthday to the end of the calendar year of their 14th birthday. Ponies or horses are eligible for CDI competitions but must be six years old or over. For FEI Championship events, riders must be on horses only. Tests are similar to BD Elementary.

### Pony Rider / Under 16s

From the beginning of the calendar year of their 12th birthday to the end of the calendar year of their 16th birthday. Ponies must be 148 cms or under (14.2hh) with FEI Pony Measuring Certificates in place. These tests are the equivalent of Medium and include walk pirouettes, half passes and simple changes of leg.

### Junior Rider / Under 18s

From the beginning of the calendar year of their 14th birthday to the end of the calendar year of their 18th birthday, riding horses only. Tests are the equivalent of Advanced Medium and include single flying changes.

### Young Rider / Under 21s

From the beginning of the calendar year of their 16th birthday to the end of the calendar year of their 21st birthday. The tests used here are equal to Prix St Georges level.

### Under 25s

For riders up to the age of 25. Horses must be eight years old or over for FEI competitions as the tests are Intermediate II, U25 Grand Prix and Grand Prix Freestyle.



Visit the British Dressage website for more information on FEI tests, selection days and qualification.



# Beyond the boards

Membership with British Dressage extends far beyond leaving the arena in free walk. Our website, social media and BD at Home hub offer all riders exclusive access to dressage news, training videos, Q&A sessions with professional riders and industry experts and much more. We also send a bespoke BD Youth newsletter to registered youth members, this exclusive member benefit is a must read for training and competition news, updates and advice.

## Stay social

Share your stories, show experiences and competition photos! Find BD Youth on Facebook and Instagram to keep our community buzzing with updates on qualification and achievements!

Find our BD Youth community on social media!



BritishDressageYouth



bd\_youth







Bringing people and horses  
together in harmony

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