



British Dressage

Your Guide
to Para equestrian dressage



Key contacts:

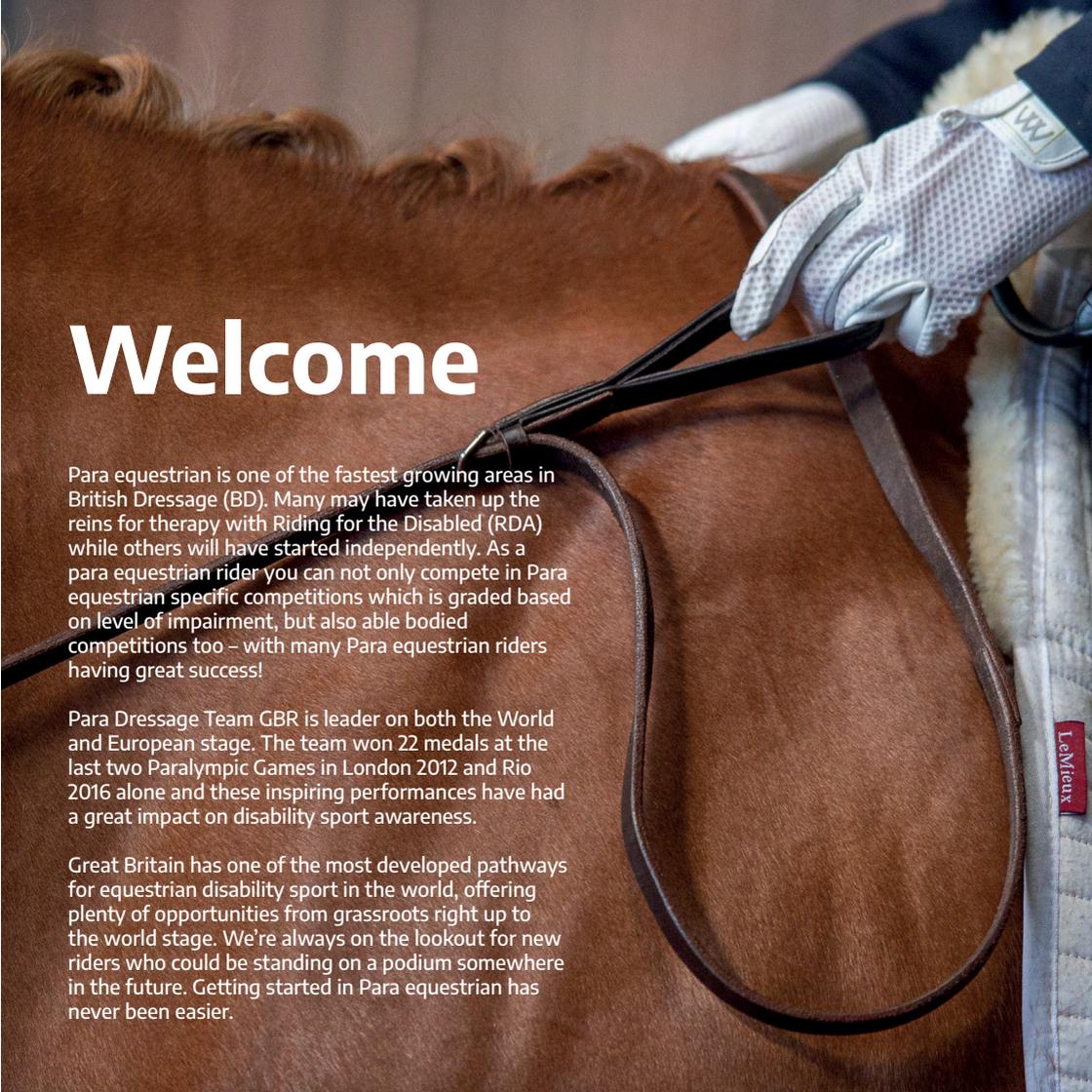
BD Membership team

Membership, upgrades,
registrations and results:
membership@britishdressage.co.uk

BD Sports Operations team

Quest, Associated Championships,
Para Dressage and all other
British Dressage championships:
operations@britishdressage.co.uk

To contact your Development
Officer, visit your region online:
www.britishdressage.co.uk



Welcome

Para equestrian is one of the fastest growing areas in British Dressage (BD). Many may have taken up the reins for therapy with Riding for the Disabled (RDA) while others will have started independently. As a para equestrian rider you can not only compete in Para equestrian specific competitions which is graded based on level of impairment, but also able bodied competitions too – with many Para equestrian riders having great success!

Para Dressage Team GBR is leader on both the World and European stage. The team won 22 medals at the last two Paralympic Games in London 2012 and Rio 2016 alone and these inspiring performances have had a great impact on disability sport awareness.

Great Britain has one of the most developed pathways for equestrian disability sport in the world, offering plenty of opportunities from grassroots right up to the world stage. We're always on the lookout for new riders who could be standing on a podium somewhere in the future. Getting started in Para equestrian has never been easier.



This is Para Dressage

To enable you to access all of the support and competitions that we offer, the first place to start is to become a British Dressage member. You and your horse need to be a minimum of a Club member to get started and competing in the Bronze Rider group tests. If you then wish to attend a para championship and/or move up to the Silver/Gold Rider Group tests, you and your horse would then need to upgrade to a Full membership.

Here's what you need to know at a glance:

- As a Para dressage rider, you compete at a certain grade, based on your level of impairment, or against able bodied riders if you choose.
- We have a range of regional and national level training for you to get involved in.
- Bursaries are available to help those living in remote areas.
- We have close links with Riding for the Disabled Association as well as the Para Dressage Training Trust, which owns horses that are loaned to up and coming riders.
- Great Britain won team gold at every Olympic, World and European Championship from when the sport began until 2018, with London 2012 the most medalled Paralympic games to date.

Your key contacts

BD Para Dressage Officer
02477 097803
operations@britishdressage.co.uk

Begin your Para journey

Become a member and complete your classification. Once you've followed this process, the rider will then receive a letter, which details their grade, profile and any compensating aids that can be used.

Riders with visual impairment are assessed by a British Blind Sport ophthalmologist.

Visually impaired riders interested in being classified need to contact British Blind Sport.

Intellectual disability doesn't currently fall into the current FEI classification guidelines.

For more information on classification, view the BEF's National Classification Policy online, you can find this at www.britishdressage.co.uk.

Understanding dressage classification

To compete in national competitions, all para riders have to be physically classified. Conducted through British Equestrian (BEF), classification is completed by a physiotherapist who assesses mobility, strength and range of movement of the athlete. This allows any permanent physical impairment to be measured objectively. Riders are awarded with a profile that will place them into one of five grades:

grade I

Mainly wheelchair users with impairment of all four limbs, may be able to walk with an unsteady gait, however trunk and balance are severely impaired.

grade II

Mainly wheelchair users with poor trunk balance and/or impairment function in all four limbs, or no trunk balance and good upper limb function, or moderate trunk balance with severe impairment of all four limbs.

grade III

Mainly wheelchair users, or those with severe locomotor impairment involving trunk with good to mild upper limb function, or severe unilateral impairment.

grade IV

Riders are usually able to walk without support, with moderate unilateral impairment, or moderate impairment in four limbs, or severe arm impairment. Grade IV also includes riders with total loss of sight in both eyes.

grade V

Riders generally have impairment in one or two limbs, or some visual impairment.

BEF Classification

Felicity Towers | 02476 698 871
felicity.towers@bef.co.uk

Training

Getting involved



Go regional

Once you've become a member, you'll be part of a British Dressage region based on where you live.

Each region conducts regular para training, such as test riding, social evenings and camps. The training is informal, friendly and you don't need to have been classified to take part, offering an excellent opportunity to have a taste of being a BD member and giving Para equestrian riders access to training conducted by top BD Para coaches.

Once you're involved with regular regional activities and competing at BD shows, you could be in the running to be selected to represent your region at the annual Para Home International!

Para coaching

Any coach can work with Para riders. British Dressage is currently developing training and resources to help coaches to improve their knowledge and confidence of Para dressage and for those currently coaching Para riders it will help to further develop their tools to better support their riders. For more information, please stay in touch with British Dressage and British Dressage Para social media, newsletters and website for more information.

Para stewards

Stewards play an important role in ensuring fair play for all during competition and are in place to support riders, as well as look after the welfare of the horse. Stay tuned for the brand new national Para dressage steward pathway which is due to be finalised before the end of the year.

Para judges

Away from riding, coaching and competing, List 3 judges or above can now become a Para judge by following the new Para Judge Pathway!

As our Para community continues to grow, we really do need more para judges to support this growth, and following this pathway could not be simpler. The first step is to register your interest in becoming a Para Judge, by emailing our Para Officer, who will support you through the pathway.

- 1 Register your interest with our Para Officer
- 2 Book a place at an RDA Dressage Judge Training Day
- 3 Complete a practice judging session at a major para show
- 4 Take the written para exam paper
- 5 Complete a practical exam at a major para show once the written exam has been passed.

Competing

with Equissage Pulse



For more information on any Equissage Pulse Para Championship go to www.britishdressage.co.uk.

membership and more

Para dressage classes mirror the able bodied structure and are split into three sections – Bronze, Silver and Gold. The Bronze section is for those who are new to para dressage and to begin with, you and your horse can join as Club members for only £45 for a full year - ideal for your first step into Para equestrian competitions. A full membership for both horse and rider will be necessary for taking part in Silver and Gold competitions and championships.

For further detail on eligibility criteria, take a look in the BD Members' Handbook.

Intro shows

Para Intro shows are the perfect starting point to have a taste of BD competitions, you can compete at one of these as a Club member. By taking part in Para Intro shows you can also earn points towards qualification for the Bronze Championships at the Equissage Pulse Summer Festival of Para Dressage.

British Dressage has one of the most extensive competition calendars for equestrian disability sport in the world, offering competition from grassroots to Gold, supported by title sponsors Niagara Equissage Pulse.

Para Home International

Qualification

Selection through regions

Levels

All grades

Sections

Bronze, Silver and Gold

Home International

May

Winter Championships

Qualification

July to December

Levels

All grades

Sections

Bronze, Silver and Gold

Championship

February

Festival of Para Dressage

Qualification

January to June

Levels

All grades

Sections

Bronze and Silver

Championship

August

Gold Championships

Qualification

January to May

Levels

All grades

Sections

Gold

Semi-finals/Championship

June/September

BD also partners the RDA Intellectual Disability Championships. Hosted in autumn, over 60 riders are invited to take part across three levels following participation in RDA regional qualifiers.

Pathway

talent programmes



Your Para Dressage Entry Programme contact:
Georgie Wheeler | 02476 698904
georgie.wheeler@bef.co.uk

The British Equestrian (BEF) World Class Programme is second to none in offering training and education to talented riders. The development programme seeks to identify and develop riders who show potential.

Primarily focused on the rider at the early stages, but as the rider moves up the pathway, the focus then turns to the combination of horse and rider. The pinnacle of the pathway is the Podium Programme where rider and horse combinations are challenging for team positions! Many of our top Podium riders today started out with RDA and followed this same route – could you be next?

To compete in international para equestrian competitions, a combination must first meet the criteria laid out in the selection policy, be FEI classified and then be selected to compete. The international calendar can be viewed on the FEI website and for further information, contact the BD office.

Para Dressage Entry Programme

Supported by funding from Sport England, this training initiative offers up to two training days a year in five regions taken by top international coaches for budding Para equestrian riders.

The aim is to encourage young riders to make the next steps towards competing and entry onto the talent pathway leading to the BEF Podium Potential Programme. These regional training sessions take place in RDA centres.



For more information on talent programmes, visit [British Equestrian](#) or [British Dressage](#) online.



**Bringing people and horses
together in harmony**

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