

Pathway Ponies Equine Welfare Policy

At Pathway Ponies, the welfare of our ponies is at the heart of everything we do. We understand that in order for our ponies to live full, happy and healthy lives they must be physical and mental healthy. We are fully committed to ensuring their physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing is prioritised at all times, and we take every step to create an environment that supports the ponies natural behaviours, health, and happiness.

1. Pony Care and Management

Our ponies' physical health is paramount. They are provided with the best possible care, including regular veterinary check-ups, vaccinations, farrier care, dental care, and parasite control. Their diet is carefully managed to meet their individual nutritional needs, and they are provided with fresh water, clean bedding, suitable grazing, turn out and ample space to move freely. We ensure that their living environment is safe, secure, and comfortable, allowing them to fully engage in natural behaviours such as grazing, resting, and socialising.

2. Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

We recognise that the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our ponies are just as important as their physical care. We are committed to providing an environment where they feel safe, relaxed, and free from stress. Our ponies are regularly monitored for signs of anxiety, fear, or distress, and we take immediate action to address any concerns. We understand the impact of the work they do and ensure that their interactions are always positive, supportive, and respectful of their individual personalities and needs.

3. Workload, Location, and Type of Work

At Pathway Ponies, we take great care in managing each pony's workload to ensure they are never overstretched or stressed. We recognise that each pony is unique, and their physical and emotional capacity to work varies. As such, we carefully consider the type of work, the frequency, and the location of each pony's involvement in therapeutic sessions on a daily basis.

Pony workload is tailored based on their individual temperament, age, and health status. We ensure they have adequate rest periods between activities and that no pony is required to work beyond their comfort zone. Additionally, the location of our work sessions is carefully selected to ensure a calm and familiar environment, which may include private homes, schools, care homes, and community spaces. We also take into account the intensity of work, ensuring that lighter, non-demanding interactions are scheduled regularly to give the ponies time to relax and enjoy their environment.

4. Socialisation and Relationships

Ponies are social animals, and we ensure that they have plenty of opportunities to interact with other ponies in a peaceful and comfortable setting. We recognise the importance of strong social bonds, both with each other and with their handlers. We take great care in ensuring that our ponies have positive, nurturing relationships that support their emotional health.

5. Positive Training and Handling

All training and handling are carried out with the utmost respect for the ponies' wellbeing. We use positive reinforcement techniques, ensuring that our ponies are not subjected to stress or discomfort. Training is always gentle and aimed at building trust and cooperation, not just with their handlers but also in their interactions with people they support. Our approach focuses on the ponies' comfort and confidence, making sure that every interaction is calm and positive.

6. Enrichment and Natural Behaviour

We believe that ponies thrive when they are allowed to express their natural behaviours. We provide regular exercise and turnout, offering our ponies the chance to engage with their environment, interact with other ponies, and experience freedom. Additionally, we provide mental stimulation through various enrichment activities, including exploring new environments and engaging in tasks that promote curiosity and problem-solving.

7. Monitoring and Welfare Support

We continuously monitor the health and wellbeing of our ponies, both physically and mentally. Each pony has a tailored welfare plan and personal risk assessments, with regular assessments to check their condition, behaviour, and emotional state. If we observe any signs of stress, discomfort, or ill health, we take immediate action, consulting with veterinary professionals and equine behaviourists when required to ensure the best possible care is provided. We believe in a holistic approach to their care, addressing all aspects of their health and happiness.

8. Retirement and End of Service Care

When our ponies reach the end of their active service, we ensure they are transitioned into retirement with the same level of care and respect they received during their working lives. We provide a peaceful and comfortable retirement, where they can live out their days in a relaxed environment, free from the demands of their therapeutic work. Their comfort and happiness remain a priority throughout their retirement.

9. Ethical Treatment and Respect

At Pathway Ponies, we treat each pony as an individual, recognising their unique needs and personalities. We operate with the utmost respect for their welfare, ensuring that all activities are suited to their physical and emotional capabilities. The bond between our ponies and the people they support is based on mutual respect and trust, and we continually ensure that our ponies are not exploited or overstressed in any way.

10. Continuous Improvement

We are committed to continuously reviewing and improving our practices to ensure the highest standard of care for our ponies. We stay up to date with the latest research on equine welfare, mental health, and training techniques, and adapt our approach to reflect best practices. This ensures our ponies remain happy, healthy, and ready to provide the best possible therapeutic support to those who need it.

11. Policy Review

This Equine Welfare Policy will be reviewed annually or as required to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and compliant with current regulations.

Last Review Date: 8th November 2024

Next Review Date: 8th November 2024

12. Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about our equine welfare practices, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are always happy to share information and ensure that everyone involved in our services understands how we care for our ponies.

Pathway Ponies Founder : Carly Flower 07984 417772 or email pathwayponies@gmail.com

Approval and Implementation

This policy is approved by Carly Flower, Owner and is effective as of 8th November 2022