

HETI Ethics

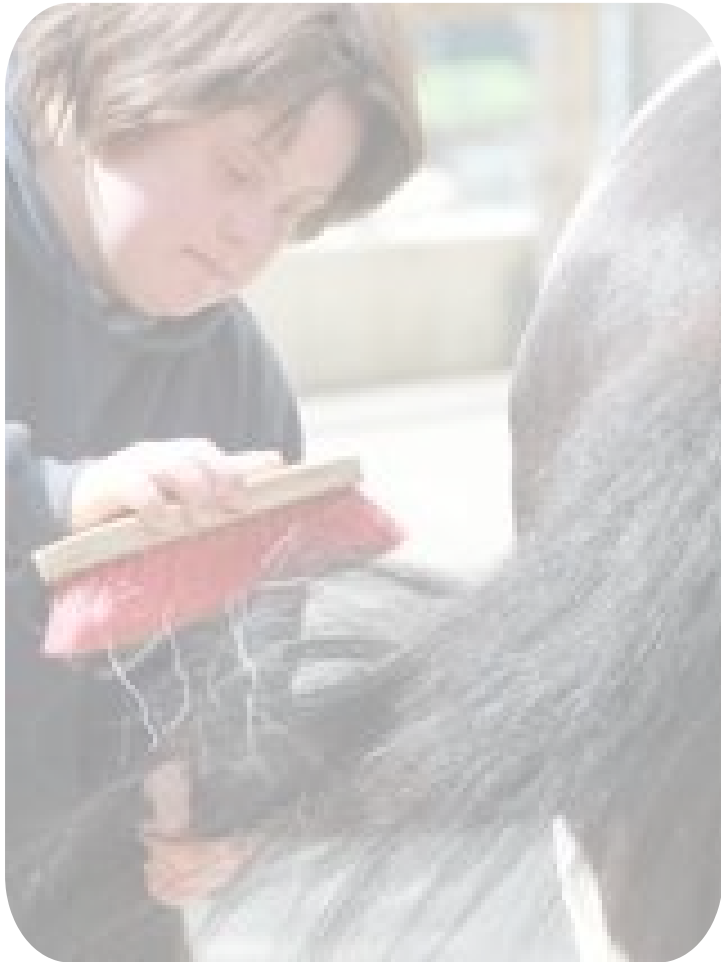
Service Provider Ethical Guidelines & Equine Welfare Ethical Guidelines



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Introduction

Following the positive feedback received regarding the initial Ethical Guidelines for Service Providers and Equine Welfare published in 2020, the HETI Ethical task force took on the challenge to review the document to ensure the information remained accurate. The HETI Ethics task force consists of the following dedicated, experienced and knowledgeable members;

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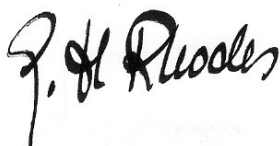
Heta Rautiainen (Finland)

Roisin Brennan (Ireland)

Since the first publishing of the Ethical Guidelines, the task force has worked voluntarily to review the initial document and provide an updated benchmark of ethical practice for those offering Equine Assisted Services. HETI believe it is essential to provide our members and service providers globally with a science-based guideline to assist with their service provision and to ensure the welfare of their equine partners.

It is our hope that this document will be used to complement existing National Association standards of best practice and provide an overarching ethical guideline. As stated in the previous edition of the guidelines, this document is not static and will evolve and grow with regular evaluation and application of feedback received from members.

On behalf of the HETI Executive Committee, we wish to give our heartfelt thanks to the HETI Ethical task force who continue to commit themselves to provide HETI members and the Equine Assisted Services community with this fantastic resource.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "G. Heimsath-Rhodes".

Gisela Heimsath-Rhodes
HETI President



1. Overview

The Federation of Horses in Education and Therapy International AISBL (HETI) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1974, with members in over 45 countries worldwide. This document is not static and will be revised regularly in response to feedback received from members and other stakeholders.

1.1 Purpose of this document

This International statement of ethical guidelines provides a moral compass, a sense of what is right or wrong for professional practice and for the welfare of equines and to ensure that HETI's Mission Statement and Core Values are met within the profession. It sets out the responsibilities of Service Providers working alongside equines, within the fields of, for instance:

- Mental health
- Physical health
- Social Care
- Education
- Personal development
- Wellbeing
- Social Inclusion

This list is not exhaustive and simply aims to differentiate the services within HETI's remit from equine activities which are recreational or sports-related in their focus. In this document all practitioners, facilitators, instructors, teachers and therapists will be covered under the term "Service Provider".

1.1.1 HETI Mission Statement

HETI's mission is to facilitate worldwide collaboration between organisations and individuals whose objectives are philanthropic, scientific, therapeutic and educational in the field of Equine Assisted Services (EAS) by providing:

- A. Research into all questions related to this field.
- B. Study and dissemination of the results on the techniques related to this field.
- C. Facilitation and encouragement of organisations or federations to practice Equine Assisted Services (EAS) and to adopt recommended standards of practice.
- D. Encouragement for all those involved in Equine Assisted Services (EAS) to specialise in such techniques while remaining within the domain of their legal competence.
- E. Development of statements of practice for the delivery of Equine Assisted Services (EAS).
- F. Written ethical standards and protocols for training that enunciate core values using a shared vocabulary[1].

1.1.2 HETI Vision

HETI strives to be the leading International resource for all those involved in Equine Assisted Services (EAS).

1.1.3. HETI Core Values

HETI is committed to a culture of collaboration and engagement between individual HETI members as well as HETI organisations working in the field. This commitment ensures excellence, ethics and dignity, diversity, focus and opportunities for meaningful research.

1.2 HETI Membership Compliance

HETI Members are expected to comply with the overarching principles above and, where relevant to their role, to follow:

- HETI Service Provider Ethical Guidelines
- HETI Equine Welfare Ethical Guidelines
- Local laws and regulations

1.3 Overview of HETI Service Provider Ethical Guidelines

Service Providers, regardless of their own ethical and moral background, must have a cohesive sense of direction for professional practice. Whether paid or not, their primary focus must be service users, families, equines and co-workers.

HETI has adopted five fundamental principles to direct Service Providers, with each one containing several specific ethical standards outlined below.

1. Do no Harm
2. Respect
3. Integrity
4. Competence
5. Accountability

Each of these principles is outlined on the following pages to indicate how members should conduct themselves in their day-to-day practice.

1.3.1 Principle 1: Do no Harm

Avoid doing harm and act to prevent harm caused by others. Harms can include, but are not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, reputational, or material abuse (e.g. stealing/defrauding).

Service Providers are obliged to:

1. Take care not to harm others and to provide meaningful oversight and prevention of potential harms which may be caused by the service, staff, volunteers, other service users, visitors, researchers, animals or others to any person, animal, or organisation.
2. Act immediately to prevent harm, resolve problems and report wrongdoing to the appropriate authority.
3. Provide services which support service users to achieve optimum health and personal growth.

1.3.2 Principle 2: Respect

Respect is defined as the belief that humans and animals have intrinsic and unconditional moral worth and should always be treated with due regard for their feelings, wishes, rights and customs.

Service Providers are obliged to:

1. Respect the rights, dignity and intrinsic worth of all service users, staff, peers, volunteers, visitors and equines in their care.
2. Act in a manner free of bias; e.g., with regard to religion, ethnicity, gender, age, race, disability, or sexual orientation.[2]

3. Respect service users' right to self-determination and choice.
4. Obtain informed consent^[3] from service users, guardians or caregivers, to ensure they understand and consent to whatever activities are proposed. Topics covered within the request for consent should include:
 - a. Risks
 - b. Limits to privacy and confidentiality
 - c. Right to withdraw at any time
 - d. Photographic, audio or video recordings
 - e. Third party observations
 - f. Purpose, duration and cost of service to service users, guardians or caregivers.
 - g. Physical contact
5. Respect and work in accordance with people's rights to confidentiality and privacy.
 - a. Offer appropriate levels of privacy according to the service/activity.
 - b. Maintain a written confidentiality and privacy policy which is open to inspection.
 - c. Inform service users about any limits to confidentiality and privacy.
6. Maintain a workplace culture of kindness and consideration.

1.3.3 Principle 3: Integrity

Integrity is defined as the practice of being honest, trustworthy and showing an uncompromising adherence to strong ethical principles and values.

Service Providers are obliged to:

1. Conduct themselves in a way that does not discredit themselves, their profession or the sector at large.
2. Be honest and accurate about the effectiveness of the services which they offer, and relevant research findings. Avoid misleading service users or overstating the benefits of a service.
3. Treat others in a fair and transparent manner, and honour professional commitments.
4. Avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment.
5. Avoid dual relationships[4] or using their professional relationships to exploit service users.
 - a. In instances when dual relationships are unavoidable, Service Providers should take steps to protect service users and set clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.[5]

1.3.4 Principle 4: Competence

Competence is defined as a cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person (or an organisation) to act effectively in a job or situation[6].

Service Providers are obliged to:

1. Be honest and accurate about their qualifications and scope of practice.

2. Recognise the limits of their knowledge and expertise and capacity for work and take care not to exceed these limits. Act to clarify any confusion about their role or responsibilities.
3. Have qualifications, training or demonstrable experience appropriate to provide the services they are offering.
4. Know what procedures, actions and processes they are competent to perform and be transparent about this with service users.
5. Maintain and update their professional skills and ethical awareness in order to be competent when engaging with service users, colleagues and equines.
6. Provide sufficient induction (e.g., site specific procedures and policies), training, regular team meetings and continued professional development opportunities (CPD) when managing a team of employees and/or volunteers.

1.3.5 Principle 5: Accountability

Accountability is defined as taking responsibility for one's actions, decisions and their consequences[7]. It includes and goes beyond being law-abiding.

Service Providers are obliged to:

1. Ensure that there are written policies available for inspection describing the means by which Service Providers are accountable for their actions to service users, people they work with, their professional associations; and compliant with local, national, and international laws and conventions. Topics should include the following areas:

- a. Health and Safety – including risk assessments and emergency procedures.
 - b. Safeguarding or Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection
 - c. Equality and Diversity
 - d. Confidentiality/Privacy including Data Protection
 - e. Animal Welfare
 - f. Environmental Impact
 - g. Complaints
 - h. Lone Working
2. Ensure that all service users, volunteers, employees and visitors adhere to these policies and any updates or changes made to these. Policies must be reviewed and updated regularly.
3. Maintain insurance cover for all services, activities and the workplace
4. Maintain written attendance records and case notes, evaluation reports, accident reports, safeguarding reports and details of service termination.
5. Create conditions in the workplace where ethical principles are discussed and upheld, including an ethical feedback loop that reviews and challenges all policies and practices on a regular basis.



2. HETI Equine Welfare Ethical Guidelines

2.1 Ethical Guidelines for Service Providers

It is the ethical responsibility of all Service Providers to manage the welfare of all equines.

Service Providers are obliged to:

1. Ensure that equines are never subjected to any form of abuse or neglect, either physical or mental/emotional. Actual or potential abuse of equines is never permissible - the welfare of equines must be protected.
2. Treat equines with care and respect, going beyond the avoidance of neglect and abuse; seeking to provide positive experiences both during and outside of therapeutic work.
3. Demonstrate sufficient knowledge and experience to ensure that they understand the differences between equine abuse, neglect, basic care, positive welfare and excellent welfare - and seek to provide excellent welfare for the equines in their care
4. Access support to meet national and international standards.
5. Seek to continuously improve their knowledge and understanding in order to establish the highest welfare standards for the equines in our sector, both during and outside of therapeutic work.

6. Properly supervise and structure all interactions with equines for the benefit of both the equines and service users.
7. Ensure that all those interacting with equines do so within their competencies, in a manner which upholds the welfare of the equine.
8. Maintain a culture of care in which values and decision-making are reviewed and challenged openly.



2.2 The Five Provisions/Welfare Aims Paradigm

HETI Equine Welfare Ethical Guidelines are influenced by national and local laws, customs, cultures and regulatory environments. In addition, HETI advocates the Five Provisions/Welfare Aims Paradigm (Mellor, 2016). These provisions address both positive and negative experiences and states of animals, in this case equines.

The Updated Five Provisions and Aligned Animal Welfare Aims^[9]

Provisions^[10]

Animal Welfare Aims^[11]

1. **Good nutrition:** Provide ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

Minimise thirst and hunger and enable eating to be a pleasurable experience.

2. **Good environment:** Provide shade/shelter or suitable housing, good air quality and comfortable resting areas.

Minimise discomfort and exposure and promote thermal, physical and other comforts.

3. **Good health:** Prevent or rapidly diagnose and treat disease and injury, and foster good muscle tone, posture and cardiorespiratory function.

Minimise breathlessness, nausea, pain and other aversive experiences and promote the pleasures of robustness, vigour, strength and well-coordinated physical activity

4. **Appropriate behaviour:** Provide sufficient space, proper facilities, congenial company and appropriately varied conditions.

Minimise threats and unpleasant restrictions on behaviour and promote engagement in rewarding activities.

[Minimise stressful interactions.¹²]

5. **Positive mental experience:** Provide safe congenial and species-appropriate opportunities to have pleasurable experiences.

Promote various forms of comfort, pleasure, interest, confidence and a sense of control

[Promote effective and humane equine training methods that are based on the processes underlying equine behaviour and cognition.¹³]

2.3 Ethical Statement

It is the ethical responsibility of all HETI members to adhere to the guidelines stated in this document, to safeguard the wellbeing of all humans and equine in our sector.



Appendices and Endnotes

Appendix 1: Five Freedoms for Animals^[14]

The Five Freedoms are internationally accepted standards of care that affirm every living being's right to humane treatment. These standards were developed by Britain's Farm Animal Welfare Council in 1965 and adapted by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians for companion animals in shelters. The Five Freedoms ensure that we meet the mental and physical needs of animals in our care:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst by ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain health and vigour. This must be specific to the animal. For example, puppies, adult dogs, pregnant cats, and senior cats all need different types of food provided on different schedules.
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area. This means you should provide soft bedding and an area with appropriate temperature, noise levels, and access to natural light. If an animal is outside, it must have shelter from the elements as well as appropriate food and water bowls that will not freeze or tip over.
3. Freedom from pain, injury, or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment. This includes vaccinating animals, monitoring animals, physical health, treating any injuries and providing appropriate medications.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind. Animals need to be able to interact with — or avoid — others of their own kind as desired. They must be able to stretch every part of their body (from nose to tail), and run, jump, and play. This can be particularly challenging when animals are housed in individual kennels.
5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering. The mental health of an animal is just as important as its physical health — as psychological stress can quickly transition into physical illness. These conditions can be achieved by preventing overcrowding and providing sufficient enrichment and safe hiding spaces.

Embracing the Five Freedoms supports the health and welfare of the animals in our care and provides adopters with the best possible insight into their personalities.

Endnotes and References

[1] HETI (2014) Articles of Association of The Federation of Horses in Education and Therapy International AISBL, September 2014.

[2] CBEIP <https://www.cbeip.org/code-of-ethics> (accessed 10th August 2019).

[3] Informed Consent is defined as an agreement or permission to do something from someone who has been given full information about the possible effects or results.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/informed-consent>
accessed 19th August 2019

[4] Dual relationships are defined as those in which “[a] professional . . . assumes a second role with a client, becoming . . . friend, employer, teacher, business associate, family member, or sexual partner.” Professional Boundaries Guided by Respect Amy Haddad PhD, RN, ... Ruth Purtilo PhD, FAPTA, in Health Professional and Patient Interaction (Ninth Edition), 2019

[5] <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/>

[6] <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/competence.html>

[7] Code of Ethics and professional conduct

<https://www.who.int/about/ethics/ethical-principles>

[8] According to Mellor (2016) Provisions, as opposed to the five Freedoms, have probably been more influential in improving animal welfare by providing practical advice on the minimisation of negative experiences and states ; second, most of the negative experiences referred to in the Five Freedoms paradigm can only be minimised, not eliminated, because when the internal or external conditions that give rise to them could eventually become life-threatening they are essential for motivating animals to engage in very specific behaviours that are critical for securing their survival ; and third, the earlier primary aim of animal welfare management, i.e., to minimise negative experiences and states, must now be broadened to also include the recognition and promotion of positive experience or states Mellor DJ. (2016).

[9] Moving beyond the “Five Freedoms” by Updating the “Five Provisions” and Introducing Aligned “Animal Welfare Aims”, David J Mellor, Animals, 2016
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5082305/>

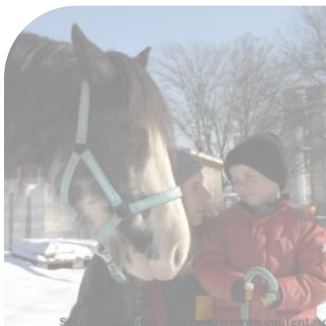
[10] The names of the Five Provisions(1) parallel those of the Five Domains Model(2) for animal welfare assessment, and the names of numbers 1–4 are the same as the five European Welfare Quality (WQ®) principles; Five freedoms for animals (1965 Report of the Technical Committee to Enquire into the Welfare of Animals kept under Intensive Livestock Husbandry Systems, the Brambell Report,) (Annex 1p.) Discussion paper Guide to good animal welfare practice for the keeping, care, training and use of horses (2016) Discussion paper - European Commission

[11] Note that the first four Animal Welfare Aims refer both to minimising negative experiences or situations and to promoting positive ones, and the fifth one is entirely directed at promoting positive experiences. This is in keeping with the now accepted objective of giving greater attention to the promotion of positive welfare states. Guide to good animal welfare practices for the keeping, care, training (2016, p.9) WSAVA Animal Welfare Guideline (2018)

[12] HETI Ethics Task force addition to Mellor's (2016) aims

[13] Task force addition

[14] <https://www.animalhumanesociety.org/health/five-freedoms-animals>





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