



EQUESTRIAN SAFEGUARDING OFFICER (ESO)

Case Study 1: Lara

Facts of the case

Part 1

- You are the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO). One of your coaches, Diana, reports to you that she saw one of the riders crying (Lara, 14).
- Lara told Diana that her boyfriend (Harry, 15) has broken up with her and posted a picture on TikTok that she had sent him. She is nude from the waist up in the photo.

Q1: What do you do next? How should you respond to Diana?

Part 2

- A parent of another rider rings you and says they have seen the photo and have informed the police. They have given the police your contact details.

Q2: How should you respond?

Recognise: What sort of abuse is involved? Know what to look out for.

Respond: Use active listening and open questions. Remain calm and do not share personal opinions.

Report: Consider confidentiality at all times. Pass relevant information to the relevant people.

Record: Record the facts, your concerns, and any action taken in writing.

Questions to consider

- How did Diana respond to Lara's disclosure?
- Have you got all the information and facts required? What else may be needed?
- Has Lara got appropriate support in place?
- What referrals need to take place? How does confidentiality play a role here?



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Case Study 2: Michael

Facts of the case

Part 1

- You are the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO). One of your competitors (Michael, 64) is behaving increasingly erratically at events. He is normally joined by his daughter (Alexis, 17). His behaviour is often aggressive and unpleasant. At other times, he is good company, but those occasions are becoming less common.
- Today, a steward has reported that he has treated his horse harshly and has sworn at two other stewards. On arriving at his horsebox, only Alexis is there. She tells you she feels trapped as the only family member still speaking to Michael, and she cannot cope with him.

Q1: What do you do next?

Part 2

- A few days later, another rider rings you and says they have spoken to Michael on the phone, and he seems incoherent. They tell you they know Michael is intending to compete at one of your events the coming weekend.

Q2: How should you respond?

Recognise: Identify the risks for Michael and Alexis.

Respond: Use active listening and open questions to gather the facts. Do not make assumptions.

Report: Consider confidentiality at all times. Pass relevant information only to relevant people.

Record: Record the facts, your concerns, and any action taken in writing

Questions to consider

- What was witnessed of Michael's behaviour? Did it breach any codes?
- What referrals need to take place to support both Alexis and Michael?
- What processes need to be followed if there was unacceptable behaviour/a breach?



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Case Study 3: Megan

Facts of the case

- You are the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO). You are contacted by the parents of a young rider (Megan, 15). They say they want to discuss a delicate safeguarding matter. An in-person meeting is arranged with you and your club Chair.
- The parents explain that they have been trying to persuade one of your coaches (Sheila) to move Megan to a more advanced group. They say Sheila was rude and dismissive to them, and demeaning to Megan. Megan has not been included in the more advanced group.
- They say how badly this has affected Megan's mental health, and they worry she will self-harm. They have noticed her scratching her arm. They say you should suspend Sheila while you investigate.

Q: What should you do next?

Recognise: Be clear on the boundaries of safeguarding cases. Do not make assumptions.

Respond: Use active listening and open questions to gather the facts. Ensure the child's voice is heard.

Report: Follow due process, and signpost to support services.

Record: Record the facts, your concerns, and any action taken in writing.

Questions to consider

- What were the facts around the interactions with Sheila? Did any of the behaviour breach any codes?
- What referrals need to take place to support Megan and her parents?
- What processes need to be followed if there was unacceptable behaviour/a breach?



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Case Study 4: Calvin

Facts of the case

- You are the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO). You receive an email from a parent who attended a show on the England/Wales border. The email describes how another parent (Freya) was watching their child compete (Taylor), accompanied by their son (Calvin).
- Calvin was behaving very badly and causing a disturbance among the crowd, disobeying every request from Freya. Freya was holding Taylor's crop and, seemingly exasperated, hit Calvin across the back of the legs with it. Calvin burst into tears and started to hit Freya.

Q: What should you do next?

Recognise: What sort of abuse is involved? Know what to look out for.

Respond: Use active listening and open questions to gather the facts. Do not make assumptions.

Report: Consider confidentiality at all times. Pass relevant information only to relevant people.

Record: Record the facts, your concerns, and any action taken in writing.

Questions to consider

- What are the facts, what evidence needs to be gathered? Where did the events take place?
- What obligations do you have in terms of reporting the incident?
- What do you need to consider in terms of Taylor?



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Case Study 5: Joanne

Facts of the case

Part 1

- You are the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO). You receive a call from an individual who explains she is the local LADO (Lenka). She asks for personal information about a senior coach (Joanne). Lenka cannot tell you why she wants the information, she says it is confidential.

Q1: What should you do next?

Part 2

- During your second conversation, Lenka explains that Joanne and her husband (Ray) have been arrested. The concern relates to possession of child pornography. There is also an allegation Joanne caused injury to an adult during a coaching session. Joanne is harsh when coaching but you are surprised by the allegation. Everyone knows Ray, he is very helpful and has been around for years. They are both on bail while the police investigate.
- You have known both individuals for many years, and would never have thought them capable of this. Lenka suggests you implement your organisation procedure while the investigation is ongoing.

Q2: What should you do next?

Recognise: What sort of abuse is involved? What process is there to follow?

Respond: Do not make assumptions. Gather the facts.

Report: Consider confidentiality at all times. Pass relevant information only to relevant people.

Record: Record the facts, your concerns, and any action taken in writing.

Questions to consider

- What are the connections between the people involved and your organisation?
- Who should lead this case?
- What communications should be considered?
- What support needs to be made available?



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Case Study 6: Group of Friends

Facts of the case

- You are the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO). A tight group of friends ride together inside and outside the club, as well as socialising and going to school together (Zara, Tiffany, Sheba, Harrison; all 14/15).
- A new family move to the area with three children (Minal 16, Gopa 14, Kumar 7). The two older children join the riding club, and the organiser asks Zara and the others to help them settle in.
- After a few weeks, the children fall out and split into two camps. Zara, Gopa, and Harrison on the one side, and Tiffany, Sheba, and Minal on the other. The row affects school and social media, with nasty posts. The parents ask you to sort it out.

Q: What should you do next?

Recognise: What sort of abuse is involved? What process is there to follow?

Respond: Ensure the children's voices are heard.

Report: Consider confidentiality at all times. Pass relevant information only to relevant people.

Record: Record the facts, your concerns, and any action taken in writing.

Questions to consider

- Who should be involved in helping manage the concern?
- How can you ensure the child's voice is heard throughout?
- What standards may be available for you to rely on?
- How can you support the children to stay safe moving forward?



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Case Study 7: Bella

Facts of the case

Part 1

- You are the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO). Another safeguarding officer in your region sends you an email reporting a concern about one of your liveryies (Bella, 7) who attends sessions at different sites.
- Bella's mother bought a 4-year-old pony, so the two could grow up together. Bella has only been riding for six months and is not capable of bringing on a young pony. The email reports Bella seems very afraid of the pony and avoids riding him.
- You observe Bella's mother screaming at her if she falls off (which happens regularly). Bella's mother has hit her in the past for crying, and yesterday you found Bella locked in her trailer. She had been put there by her mother until she was 'ready to be sensible'.

Q1: What should you do next?

Part 2

- Speaking to social care services, they say you must inform Bella's mother of your concerns and tell her about the referral before they can take any action.

Q2: What should you do next?

Recognise: What sort of abuse is involved?

Respond: Consider what process there is to follow. Remain calm and do not share personal opinion.

Report: Pass relevant information only to relevant people. Seek support where needed.

Record: Record the facts, your concerns, and any action taken in writing.

Questions to consider:

- Who should be involved in leading the case?
- How do you manage risk for the child? What questions should you ask?
- How could you have reduced risk of escalation?



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Case Study 8: Elizabeth

Facts of the case

- You are the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO). You were unable to attend the club committee meeting recently, and the minutes have been emailed to you.
- They explain how the grandmother (Elizabeth) of one of your riders (Sophie) has suggested the community centre be used for a two-day camp-style event. Elizabeth is the chair of the committee for the community centre.
- The plan is for a marquee to act as a meeting hub during the day and sleeping space at night. Under 11s and their parents could use the hall as a dormitory if they wanted. Horseboxes and trailers would park just off the road to avoid grass damage.

Q: What should you do next?

Recognise: Consider what the risk areas are and who may be affected.

Respond: Ensure safeguarding is a clear presence during planning and execution.

Report: Refer to all relevant guidance and support.

Record: Record all advice and document how you follow it.

Questions to consider:

- What guidance is available?
- How can you build in consent and awareness?
- What relevant information should you be sharing, and to whom?
- What should happen if something goes wrong?



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Case Study 9: Bethany and Oscar

Facts of the case

Part 1

- You are the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO). Two at risk adults attend your centre, loving their time at the centre and benefitting greatly from the experience. Bethany (20) has Prader-Willi Syndrome and Oscar (18) has Angelman Syndrome.
- Last week, the regular volunteers and staff assigned to the siblings were unavailable, and a new couple volunteered to take their place. On the way home, Bethany chattered happily about her session, but Oscar was very quiet and was not smiling. He has very little speech but does normally communicate via Makaton and signs about his time with his favourite horse.
- When pressed, Oscar would not say why he was quiet and went to his room, slamming the door behind him. The next time they are due to come riding Oscar refused to get dressed and had a temper tantrum signing 'Bad man! Hurt!'. His mother has rung you, asking what happened last time.

Q1: What should you do next?

Part 2

- Speaking to the volunteers, it seems Bethany was her usual self, trying to eat the pony's apple, but no problems to report. The replacement volunteer (Mandy) was very good with her and pretended to be disappointed if Bethany ate the apple, which made her laugh.
- Mandy's husband (Rick) was with Oscar and the usual group of volunteers. At the start Oscar was his normal self, but was unusually grumpy towards the end of the session; he would not even stay to stroke the pony, which was highly unusual for him. The other volunteers report Rick seemed fine with Oscar but did tell him off for scaring the pony by flapping his arms around.

Q2: What should you do next?

continued



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Case Study 9: Bethany and Oscar continued

Additional Information related to:

Prader-Willi Syndrome

A rare genetic condition that causes a wide range of physical symptoms, learning difficulties, behavioural and health challenges, which can impact the individual's ability to live independently. Symptoms can include; excessive appetite, weak muscles, restricted growth, and emotional outbursts.

Angelman Syndrome

A rare genetic condition that affects the nervous system and causes severe physical and learning disabilities. Support throughout life is required. Symptoms can include: delayed development, limited speech, difficulty with balance and coordination, jerky movements, walking with arms in the air, hyperactivity, and short attention span.

Recognise: Consider the facts and do not make assumptions.

Respond: Consider all those who need to be informed and supported.

Report: Who needs to be made aware? Have thresholds been met?

Record: Record the facts, your concerns, and any action taken.

Questions to consider

- What information do you need to gather?
- Who do you need to communicate with?
- What will you need to do in response to Rick's behaviour?
- How can you support Oscar moving forwards?