

CHARITIES COMBINE FORCES ON 'EXCELLENT' WELFARE TRAINING DAY

Redwings Horse Sanctuary and The Horse Trust have combined efforts to host a specialist equine welfare training course for Trading Standards officers and charity welfare inspectors.

The 'Introduction to Horse Handling and Welfare Assessment' day was held at Redwings' Oxhill Rescue Centre in Warwickshire on Friday 15th October, and delegates included representatives from the British Horse Society and RSPCA as well as from the local authorities.

The course was a joint initiative led by Nicolas de Brauwere, Head of Welfare and Senior Vet at Redwings Horse Sanctuary, and Liane Crowther, Welfare and Education Officer at The Horse Trust.

This course is part of a wider training initiative that arose from the Equine Health and Welfare Strategy which aims to cater to the needs of individual inspectors and field officers so that they can feel safe and confident in their assessment of equine welfare cases and to ensure consistency amongst welfare professionals. Delegates varied in terms of their experience with horses so the content was wide ranging, from how to approach and assess the horse in safety and correctly assess body condition score to more complicated aspects of equine welfare such as applying the new Animal Welfare legislation to typical welfare scenarios.

Lisa Draper, welfare representative from the BHS, who attended the course, said: "It was excellent, an excellent day, the speakers were very approachable, I could have listened for weeks! It was a privilege to learn from such dedicated professionals."

Liane Crowther, said: "This course represents a first step towards developing a standardised training curriculum for all those that investigate equine welfare concerns. The Horse Trust is delighted to be working in partnership with Redwings Horse Sanctuary to deliver this vital training to inspectors who are at the front line of horse welfare."

The charities have already put on three one-day courses in Wales funded by the Welsh Assembly Government's Companion Animal Welfare Enhancement Scheme for local authority inspectors and hope to put on more similar courses across the UK in future.