Welcome to Barrow Farm

Thank you for considering to volunteer your time to Barrow Farm.
The purpose of this letter is to tell you about us, what you can expect to get out of being a Barrow Farm Volunteer and what we will ask of you.

About Barrow Farm

Barrow Farm is a purpose built riding centre situated between Chelmsford and Brentwood. We have been operating since 1976, providing riding and more recently carriage driving, to over 130 people with special needs, each week. We have fully qualified and experienced coaches and there are lessons six days a week. Our facilities are among the best in the county. There is an indoor arena for wet days, a very large outdoor arena for fine days and a leafy lane and woodland path for rides off the premises. We have a selection of fully trained horses and ponies, who are gentle and quiet but who all have personalities and characters of their own.

Being a Barrow Farm Volunteer

We hope you will get a great deal of satisfaction from helping our riders and seeing them progress. Some riders come for leisure but many come as part of their education, learning important life skills through the medium of riding. Others are able to achieve a good level of riding skill and develop a life enhancing interest and hobby.
As a Barrow Farm Volunteer you will get to know those riders you work with and develop a real sense of wanting to see them achieve their potential – at whatever level that happens to be. We hope that together with our instructors and the other volunteer helpers on the ride, you will feel that you are a valued member of the team and really making a difference.

What Barrow Farm Asks of You

We want our volunteers to have a positive attitude towards our riders and to recognise that whatever the disability, there is also **ability** and we are all there to work to bring it to the fore.
We also need please, a regular commitment, even if it is for only one hour a week. You could possibly sometimes get grubby, a bit chilly and occasionally caught in a shower, so please wear comfortable, appropriate clothing. We may ask you to lead a horse, or act as a side-walker giving the rider physical or verbal support. You will of course, at no time be asked or expected to do any lifting or do anything you are not happy to do, but you do need to be fit enough to keep up a reasonably energetic walk for an hour.

As everyone's health and safety including yours, is vital – you will be asked to attend training sessions to enable you to help your riders in the safest and most effective way and perhaps learn to handle the horses. All riding lessons are given by an instructor who needs to interact with the riders and direct the volunteers, therefore an alert and attentive manner is necessary at all times.

As you can see, we ask a lot of our volunteers and although this letter is formal, it is not intended to put you off. Indeed, on a fine day, in a lovely country setting – with a gentle horse and enthusiastic rider, there's no better way to volunteer your time! Once you get to know the riders you work with, your coach and fellow volunteers, we are sure you will feel an essential and valued member of the team and stay with us for as long as you are able.

Please do not hesitate to speak out if you are not happy with the support given by us, we are always trying to improve – and welcome constructive feedback.

We look forward to you joining us.
Please email volunteers@barrowfarmrda.org.uk or call the number below.