



EQUINE ASSISTED SERVICES

The Association for Animals, Horticultural & Equine Practitioners CIC ("AAHEP") is a not for profit community interest company located in West Kent, UK. **Athena** is AAHEP's separate and independent education and training brand. Athena offers the best possible learning and development experience in unique global locations alongside special people and animals that are at the heart of what we do.

Trainers are:

- at least on the first and currently only UK National Register (or international equivalent) regulating practice in this field under an independent Governmental Body (accredited register under the Professional Standards Authority);
- trauma informed;
- actively working with a broad and inclusive client base;
- trained at least to the Level they are training with most trainers having trained to a UK Level 5 Diploma (Irish Level 7) and 7 PG Cert (Irish Level 9);

We believe that those that train under the Athena education and training brand should be able to go on and work with their clients of choice (always staying within their scope of practice). Whether individuals or groups, children, vulnerable adults, or corporate and leadership clients. We are proud to say that many do and are very successful.

The Athena brand is rapidly evolving into one of the largest leading global accredited training providers recognised in this field for its high standards with an ever-growing authentic community and is a pioneering national and international specialist:

Level 2 externally accredited Foundation Certificate in Equine Assisted Services. Externally Accredited by AAHEP and the ACCPH for both CPDs and CEUs as well as recognised for CPD by the IACP.

This externally accredited Level 2 qualification can be taken as a standalone Foundation Certificate recognised by insurers or as a pre-requisite for the externally accredited Level 4 and Level 5 Equine Assisted Services Diploma training programmes (providing eligibility for application to be on the first and currently only UK National Accredited Practitioner Register regulated in the UK by an independent governmental body, the Professional Standards Authority (or the non-UK equivalent).

Donkeys: This Level 2 qualification can also be undertaken with a donkey extension and dual certificate awarded for Donkey Assisted Services.



What is the time commitment?

- **ONSITE** *four full days of onsite experiential group learning and personal reflective practice;* or
- **ONLINE** *a minimum of 42 hours over seven consecutive weeks interactive, experiential, distance learning (access to horses is required between the sessions)*

You will be able to really start to understand, develop and deliver work as an independent practitioner and build on the practical skills of the work with the support of the Athena training team and community (depending on your background and qualifications this can either be referred to as Equine Facilitated/Assisted Learning or Therapy (*i.e. Occupational Therapy, Counselling and, if appropriate, Psychotherapy*), provided you have the appropriate supporting qualifications). Material and a set of Equine Insights (cards) is provided to you to support you on your journey.

- **On completion of the Foundation Certificate, YOU are eligible to:**

- be a **lifetime Member** of Athena's national and international community at **no extra cost** which includes a private facebook community group within which referrals for work are made, knowledge is shared, CPD and CEU events as well as free annual networking events are shared;
- access to your unique log-in area with client and waiver form templates for your use (with more templates provided as your journey progresses);
- include your details on the Athena Members map on the athenaherd.org website;
- display your unique Member logo on your own website and link back to the Athena website (Athena can provide website/brand support as an addition);
- apply to join AAHEP international professional membership as a Student Member;
- apply to join the international professional membership through the ACCPH: see accph.org.uk;
- apply for insurance to cover your work for example through Balens, Holistic and for wider requirements do take a look at Westminster Indemnity insurance policies through athenaherd.org.

Athena also has international relationships with insurers in different jurisdictions that recognise its programmes including for example Equisure and Westminster Global both in the USA.

Continuation to the externally accredited Level 4 Equine Assisted Services Diploma (a further 158 hours so a minimum total of 200 hours) Externally Accredited by AAHEP and the ACCPH also for both CPDs and CEUs as well as recognised for CPD by the iacp (Irish Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists).



On successful completion of the externally accredited Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Equine Assisted Services, you can continue your journey and build on your specialism whether that be working with individuals and/or groups, children and/or adults, looking to garner funding for the work, work with children, vulnerable adults, and/or corporates and move on to complete the **externally accredited Level 4 and Level 5 Equine Assisted Services Diploma as follows:**

- (i) **Level 4 (ONLINE):** three practical case-studies involving a minimum of twelve sessions overall supported with supervision, delivery of a case study and mentoring plus two facilitated online group action learning sets and personal research. The goal is to really develop and build both on your practice from one session with a client(s) to supporting multiple client(s) sessions along with enhancing those questioning and clean language skills with of focus on being trauma informed; **and**
- (ii) **Level 4 (BLEND OF ONLINE AND ONSITE):** interactive online topic learning and sessions to further develop and build on your practice (mindfulness and grounding, embodiment and somatic practices, empathy and social intelligence ensuring a trauma informed practice) supported also by the business and risk mitigation aspects including the provision of further appropriate templates (incorporating your business and considerations around data and insurance, risk assessments, policies and procedures, garnering funding and much much more).

For a more tailored approach to your learning, You can swap out the business-related sessions on the externally accredited Level 4 Equine Assisted Services Practitioner Diploma for **one alternative topic as follows:**

- Working with young people
- Understand the nature of horses (Equine ethology) and the implications for Equine Assisted/Facilitated work
- Mental Health awareness and support, and wellbeing benefits
- Capturing and recording the benefit of your work
- Working with Mindfulness
- Working with Corporate Clients

Please note that the externally accredited Level 4 Equine Assisted Services qualification can be taken as a full distance learning option with the submission of one extra online practice client session or you can opt to spend two days onsite.

- (iii) **Level 5 Equine Assisted Services Diploma (a further 100 hours so a minimum total of 300 hours gets you to the Level 5):** in addition to completing the Level 2



Foundation Certificate and the Level 4 Equine Assisted Services Diploma you can elect further topics from the above selection of alternative topics, self-guided research and an extended written case study with the option of one extra online practice client session or two days onsite.

The provision of full support, mentoring and supervision is included throughout your training experience.

Timing:

- **externally accredited Level 4 (Irish Level 6) Equine Assisted Services Diploma:** inclusive of the Level 2 Foundation Certificate to be completed over a period of around nine to ten months;
- **externally accredited Level 5 (Irish Level 7) Equine Assisted Services Diploma:** will take an additional three to six months on completion of the Level 4 Equine Assisted Services Diploma.

Please note that the Athena team will consider requests to defer continuing your studies and to re-join the pathway to complete for example the externally accredited Level 4 Equine Assisted Services Diploma at a later stage after completion of the Level 2 Foundation Certificate and/or Level 5 Equine Assisted Services Diploma on a case by case basis to.

- **externally accredited Level 7 (Irish Level 9) PG Cert. in Equine Assisted Services** (includes for example Equine Assisted/Facilitated Learning, Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychotherapy depending on qualifications).

This can be taken as a standalone post-graduate qualification, provided that applicants have a Bachelors (UK Level 6) degree and a recognised qualification in Equine Facilitated Interactions (including Equine Facilitated/Assisted Learning, Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychotherapy etc).

This is a year-long qualification which focusses on a supervised independent action research project based around the practitioner's existing business.

The qualification is comprised of two short taught modules, and an extended research-based third, as follows:

- i) the skills required to develop your own research project, and engaging effective and appropriate tools to assess and analyse the impact of the project undertaken;
- ii) the different practices and approaches undertaken in the wider market of Equine Facilitated and Assisted Services and an objective reflective assignment based on these; and



- iii) the third module, which makes up the principal commitment of the qualification, is based the creation and execution of an extended programme of professional practice and research.

Association for Animals, Horticultural & Equine Practitioners (“AAHEP”)

Jennifer and Brent Geach established Athena in 2014 developing a unique, interactive learning and development centre based at their 16th century farmhouse in West Kent. Bringing the concept of the horses’ health and wellbeing being at the heart of everything they do with the horses living as naturally as possible on a barefoot track system and do have access to grass and grazing. It is a special place for both humans and animals with many UK and international visitors enjoying the unique blend of professionally delivered learning and development in the most tranquil of settings. Limited accommodation is available on site to further enhance the experience.

The horses onsite in Kent are an established mixed herd, living as naturally as possible on a barefoot track system with access to grazing. We believe that this environment supports their optimum physical and emotional health and wellbeing and enables us to provide you with the best possible learning and development experience. Having said this, we fully acknowledge that a track system may not work for all horses and humans so in terms of the offering Athena embraces an open and inclusive approach to your set-up in this space placing the focus on a commitment to the Ethical treatment of Horses, through standards of equine care building on the Friends, Freedom and Forage approach as published in the Horses Manifesto (2012) by the International Association of Animal Behaviour Consultants (IAABC) and the Five Domains model (2015).

AAHEP is a Full Member of and also recognises and incorporates the important work undertaken by the International Association of Human-Animal Interactions Organisations (IAHAIO) in establishing a framework that *“provides best practice guidance for meeting the care, training and welfare requirements for equines involved in delivering equine-assisted services”*.

What makes our training programmes unique

Jennifer and Brent are passionate not only about providing a genuine and authentic learning experience but also about the quality and transparency of the training programmes on offer. AAHEP is a not for profit organisation and its focus under the Athena training and education brand is on supporting and encouraging individual learning and development with training programmes designed specifically for you who is, with our herd, at the heart of everything we do.

Can you train with us: we are very much focussed on supporting you to develop your own unique practice or business no matter your background. We welcome applications from



learners whether in a people supporting profession such as Coaching/Leadership, Mental Health Professionals, Counselling, Psychotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Teachers, Social Workers, Support Workers, or therapeutic space or already working with horses or plain and simply you would like to learn more about Equine Assisted Services.

At the outset, we made a conscious decision to deliver training programmes of a very high standard at affordable prices. As far as we are aware, unlike other training providers in this field, there is no continuing annual membership fee or subscription to be part of the authentic community. There is no obligation on participants to continue CPD/CEUs, mentoring and/or supervision with us, unless you would like to. We are also passionate about you choosing whether you want to work on your own or with other professionals. We are truly passionate about building a lifetime support network and opportunities that extend beyond the completion of the Athena training programmes. Fabulous people from our ever growing national and international community have been supported to actively become Athena trainers, running CPD and CEU events also for our community, acting as Mentors, supervisors as well as clinical supervisors and much more.

We regularly review and update our memberships, training programmes in line with market practice and standards. We also consider national and international external accreditations. In all of this we look to keep training and education as affordable as we can recognising there is a lot of work that goes into the offering and we are very generous with our time. We have a passion to inspire growth and development of your own skills and brand bringing the benefits to your own clients and networks. We run free online networking, an annual free onsite event and look to offer low cost externally accredited CPD and CEU events.

The Athena Training Team

Jennifer and Brent are passionate about building a unique long-term supportive global community comprising people with diverse yet complementary global expertise but very importantly that share the same authentic ethos. The growing Athena training team has many years of combined extensive horse, training, coaching, advisory, business, legal, equitation, therapeutic, counselling and much more experience which ensures that course participants gain a wide range of new and complementary skills and tools to help everyone develop as successful Practitioners.

We have a growing world class trauma informed team with significant collective expertise in delivering meaningful and insightful learning and therapeutic support around horses which makes us well placed to deliver quality training. This, in addition to the way the Athena externally accredited training has been developed and herd of horses are kept is why we believe our training programmes are unique - providing participants with an amazing 360-degree learning and development opportunity with so much more also in terms of future potential collaborations and friendships.



External validation/certification of training programmes: it is not just us at the Athena that think our workshops, certificates and diploma courses are fantastic! As you would expect of professionally delivered training, the Foundation Certificate, Diploma courses and UK Level 7 PG Cert. in our portfolio have been externally accredited by AAHEP, the ACCPH and those who successfully complete our courses become eligible to join AAHEP and the ACCPH as a member in their own right subject to background experience and qualifications.

Athena's courses are validated for CPD and CEUs.

The Level 2 Foundation Certificate and Level 4 Equine Assisted Services Diploma are also accredited for CPD in the Republic of Ireland by the IACP (Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy). The Level 2 Foundation Certificate is certified for 42 hours, and the Level 4 Equine Assisted Services Diploma for 158 hours.

AAHEP is a Chartered Organisational Member of the ACCPH, an Organisational Member of BACP (British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapy). It is also a Full Organisational Member of IAHAIO (International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organisations).

International insurance providers recognise our Training Programmes and we have contacts across the World.

Passionate about standards and regulation:

IQA: Jennifer Geach and Graeme Green are Independent Quality Assurers of assessment processes and practice.

Professional Standards Authority (“PSA”): AAHEP, formerly the Athena Herd Foundation, has been liaising with the Professional Standards Authority since 2021 and is the first and currently only animal focussed UK National Accredited Practitioner Register (PSA) to have met the Service User test in 2022 to hold an Accredited Register regulated in the UK by the PSA (this is the same government-backed scheme aimed at protecting the public by helping them choose health and care professionals who are competent and trustworthy held by, for example, the bacp for Counsellors and Psychotherapists).

The AAHEP applies the same standards to non-UK residents who will have a Practitioner logo without the PSA Kite mark.

AAHEP Student Member: on completion of the Foundation Certificate individuals can apply to join AAHEP as a Student Member.

AAHEP Registered Practitioner (as applicable): on completion of the externally accredited Level 4 Equine Assisted Services Diploma, the application fee for joining the Register is



included in the price. Subject to then meeting the full requirements of the Accredited Practitioner Register annual membership fees (or pro rata equivalent thereof¹) are payable by practitioners.



Accredited Practitioner Member 2026

Ofqual: AAHEP has been and continues to work through the process to become an Awarding Organisation for qualifications in this space.

Recent testimonials and feedback:

“exceeded my expectations in a good way. I’ve experienced so much profound change and emotions and I didn’t expect that”

“I’ve been in love with the place since the moment I arrived”

“Thanks for everything no words seem enough. I’m just so grateful for this opportunity and for the learning experience I’ve had. Can’t wait to continue my journey with you. Thank you so much for your time and patience and for pushing me when I needed it. I will carry this with me for a long time.”

“When I signed up for the Level 4 Diploma, I had no idea what a game-changer this would be for me. Seeing how much can be achieved and how beneficial this would be for clients struggling to gel with more traditional talking therapies, was the inspiration I needed.

Athena offered an excellent learning environment for classroom-based studies, great materials, as well as the all-important safe and supportive space in which to work experientially with my peers and the herd.

Combining a passion for horses and therapy and developing my own private practice to incorporate the work became my vision for the future. Through the on-going support from Athena, their continued professional development and supervision, my vision soon became a reality.

A well-delivered and truly inspirational course, that keeps me coming back for more! Counsellor”

“After researching several online courses for Equine Facilitated Learning/Therapy I came across Athena. I was attracted by their no-nonsense approach and practical

¹ Membership of the Accredited Practitioner Register (PSA) runs 12 months from 1st March each year



course layout. Once the decision to sign up for the course was made I found that the support I got from Athena was unwavering, and whilst I reside in New Zealand and they are based in the UK this was of no concern whatsoever. Jennifer Geach & Graeme Green were easy to access via Zoom or telephone and were always encouraging. Getting to know the other participants from different parts of the globe was interesting, and extremely helpful, as we exchanged ideas and different points of view, and gave or received support at our combined Zoom meetings. We were a community with a common goal The course itself had both integrity and substance. I gained my Certificate and Equine Facilitated Practitioner Diploma through the Athena and I am thrilled to be a part of this community.

My background for many years was in the building industry as Financial Director for three substantial companies, I then re-evaluated my life and studied to become a Pain Therapist using Scenar I work on both horses and humans I find that this ties in perfectly with EFL/T.”

Find out more or reserve a place

If you are interested in signing up to any of the Athena externally accredited Training Programmes, please email us at <mailto:info@athenaherd.org>. We can arrange an opportunity for an initial chat to discuss your individual learning requirements. We would need you to complete our application form before we are able to consider you for a place. These are also available on the Athena website athenaherd.org. On offer of a place on a specific Training Programme, payment of the non-refundable deposit is required to secure your place. Payment of the balance is then required before the start of the Training Programme.

.....the small print for 2026...

Please note that the following pricing shall apply to all places booked for our Training Programmes starting 01 January 2026 until 31 December 2026:

A non-refundable deposit of GBP 350.00 is payable at the time that the AAHEP offers you a place on the Level 2 Foundation Certificate in Equine Assisted Services.

Places are limited. We limit our learning cohorts to ensure that we maximise your individual learning experience. In most circumstances there will be at least two trainers on each training programme.

Level 2 Foundation Cert. **TOTAL GBP1,899.00** (inclusive non-refundable deposit GBP350.00).

Level 4 Diploma **TOTAL GBP2,489.00** (to be clear, you must have completed the Level 2 Foundation Certificate first, inclusive of a GBP 500.00 non-refundable deposit).



Level 5 Diploma

TOTAL GBP1,989.00 (to be clear, this is in addition to the Level 2 Foundation Certificate and the Level 4 Diploma inclusive non-refundable deposit GBP350.00).

Level 7 Cert (Athena)

TOTAL GBP £1,989.00 (to be clear this is a stand-alone fee)

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF YOU DO NOT COMPLETE THE TRAINING PROGRAMME WITHIN THE ALLOCATED TIME FRAME AAHEP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO APPLY ADDITIONAL FEES CALCULATED ON AN HOURLY RATE OF £150.

Thank YOU!