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# Professional Standards Authority awards Quality Mark to Athena Herd Foundation

25 Jan 2024

Today, the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) has accredited the Athena Herd Foundation. The PSA is an independent statutory body, accountable to Parliament.

The Athena Herd Foundation (Athena) is a provider of equine facilitated interactions and a leading training provider for equine practitioners in the UK. It is the first Register accredited by the PSA that involves the direct use of animals to deliver therapeutic and wellbeing services.

Under the Accredited Registers programme, practitioners registered with Athena will now be able to display the Accredited Registers Quality Mark, a clear sign that the Register meets the PSA's [Standards for Accredited Registers](#).

Registration with an Accredited Register gives employers and patients, service users and the public confidence that practitioners have signed up to robust professional and ethical codes. All Registers accredited by the PSA must have transparent complaints processes so poor performance can be addressed. Where serious wrongdoing occurs, the practitioner will be removed from the Register.

The Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care, Andrew Stephenson MP, said:

“Many health and social care roles can be undertaken without statutory regulation. The Accredited Registers programme, run by the Professional Standards Authority, ensures that people receiving care from professionals working in unregulated roles are better protected. Accreditation demonstrates a Register’s commitment to their area of work. When a Register displays the PSA Quality Mark, employers and individuals can be assured of its commitment to high standards of care, professional standards and ethical behaviours.”

Alan Clamp, Chief Executive of the Professional Standards Authority, said:

“We are very pleased to accredit Athena. Bringing these practitioners into a broad framework of assurance is good for employers and the public and is the best way to promote quality. The Accredited Registers programme offers a layer of protection for people receiving health and care services and gives the practitioners on Athena’s Register the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to good practice.”

## Background information

Accreditation does not imply that the PSA has assessed the merits of individuals on the Register. This remains the responsibility of Athena. Accreditation means that Athena meets the PSA's high standards in governance, standard-setting, education and training, management of the Register, complaints handling and information.

Accredited Registers encompass a growing range of occupations and organisations and the PSA may accredit more than one Register in any particular occupation. Further information about Accredited Registers is available at [www.professionalstandards.org.uk/what-we-do/accredited-registers](http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/what-we-do/accredited-registers)

## ENDS

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## Notes to the Editor

1. The Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care oversees 10 statutory bodies that regulate health and social care professionals in the UK.
2. We assess their performance and report to Parliament. We also conduct audits and investigations and can appeal fitness to practise cases to the courts if we consider that sanctions are insufficient to protect the public and it is in the public interest.
3. We also set standards for organisations holding voluntary registers for health and social care occupations and accredit those that meet them.
4. We share good practice and knowledge, conduct research and introduce new ideas to our sector. We monitor policy developments in the UK and internationally and provide advice on issues relating to professional standards in health and social care.
5. We do this to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of users of health and social care services and the public. We are an independent body, accountable to the UK Parliament.
6. Our values are – integrity, transparency, respect, fairness and teamwork – and we strive to ensure that they are at the core of our work.
7. More information about our work and the approach we take is available at [www.professionalstandards.org.uk](http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk)

 [Athena Herd Foundation CIC Initial Accreditation Report](#)

 [Accredited Registers Equality Impact Assessment Athena Herd](#)

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