

Please note this is a living document, which will be continuously updated as new information and questions emerge. Where sections have been updated, this is highlighted in the section headings below

Section 1 – Returning safely (updated 10.8.20)

Why did racing resume before other sports?

Following publication of [Government guidance on elite sport](#) behind closed doors on 30 May, horseracing was confirmed as one of the first sports to resume, beginning with a fixture behind closed doors Newcastle Racecourse on Monday 1 June. This was welcomed in a [BHA statement](#) issued on the same day.

We are a non-contact sport taking place outdoors where the risk of virus transmissions are recognized to be lower. Most of those due to attend racing fixtures live in rural areas where incidence of coronavirus is lower.

We have the right experience of managing complex health and safety risks, controlling infectious diseases in horses, and keeping jockeys safe in 10,000 races a year.

Additionally, other sports have had to stop their athletes from training, meaning there is a period of time where they have to return to match fitness before their sport can resume. Racehorses have remained in training for the entire period of lockdown, with staff subject to social distancing, and as such racing can return more quickly once approval is given.

Was it safe to return on 1 June?

Racing will only resume when it is considered safe to do so. [Detailed protocols](#) for racing behind closed doors have been created to minimise all avoidable risk in relation to spreading the coronavirus, in consultation with both the Government and Public Health England. These protocols cover everyone attending a race meeting from the point they leave their home to the point they return to it and are extremely detailed in order to ensure that racing behind closed doors is as safe as it possibly can be.

Didn't you put people at risk by returning?

Through its resumption plans, British racing continues to ensure that:

- It will act in line with government policy **to protect those coming back to work and minimise the risk of spreading the virus** whilst reassuring the wider community that racing is returning safely
- For those working at an event, including officials, racecourse staff and participants, the implementation of these guidelines ensures that **racing will take place in a more controlled environment than most day-to-day activities**
- This will be achieved through a combination of:
 - Efficient, targeted and comprehensive medical screening to ensure that **everyone who is on a racecourse is safe to be on that racecourse**

- **Detailed guidance and protocols around managing a race day safely** and mitigating any risk of the transmission of corona virus
- **Behaviour changes will be supported through education**, alongside sanctions if appropriate and necessary
- Racing will ensure that it **reduces the use of any medical or NHS services to a minimum**, acting responsibly by using other healthcare resources – private ambulances, hospitals and medics – to protect the NHS.

Attendance at behind closed doors fixtures will be limited to the minimum possible number of people required to run a race meeting. There will be rigorous hygiene and social distancing measures in place, in an outdoor environment, and entry will only be granted on the basis of strict conditions being met, including mandatory health screening. Anyone who does not pass these steps may not be able to participate in a BCD meeting.

How can you be sure there will be no further coronavirus cases from the return of racing?

It is not possible for any organisation or workplace to make guarantees, but we are confident that the stringent health screening, hygiene and social distancing measures we have in place will minimise the risk of spreading the coronavirus. These measures have been developed with both the Government and Public Health authorities and have been designed to safeguard everyone's health and wellbeing during the current and continuing coronavirus situation, to ensure that racing can continue in a safe and appropriate manner.

For those working at an event, including officials, racecourse staff and participants, the implementation of these guidelines ensures that racing will take place in a more controlled environment than most day-to-day activities.

Are you sure that the participants who will be required to run BCD fixtures all want to return?

The key groups that have been involved throughout the suspension of racing and planning for resumption, whether that is the Covid-19 Steering Group, the Resumption of Racing Group or indeed the sport's Members and Executive Committee all have one thing in common – they are cross-industry and have representation from a widespread of sectors within the sport.

This is to ensure that any decision we have made has involved the sport as a whole. The feedback that we have received is that overall, there is a desire for racing return providing sufficient risk mitigation is in place.

However, one of the recurring themes in the general dialogue around the return to sport is the importance that individuals have the option not to participate if the preparations made do not mitigate the risk of infection.

The National Trainers Federation and National Association of Racing Staff have agreed that members of staff will not be required to go racing if they have concerns about their safety. It is generally accepted that the requirement to take horses racing is by mutual agreement under the Memorandum between the two parties.

There may be individuals who for personal or family reasons cannot participate but the message generally has been very much in support of as return to racing.

What effect will the resumption of racing have?

The money generated by a resumption of racing helps to pay for the wonderful care we give our racehorses and thousands of staff who look after them. If we don't get back racing, those jobs will go, the countryside will be hit particularly hard and the rural economy will suffer long-term damage.

Racing is worth £4.1 billion to the economy and supports 20,000 jobs. Getting the wheels turning again means more people back at work, more money generated for all the people who support us like the farriers, the vets and the horsebox drivers and the taxes we pay will fund our public services.

We believe it will continue to lift the spirits of racing and sports fans across the country with our top races available free to air on ITV.

Section 2 – Racing behind closed doors (BCD) (updated 10.8.20)

Who will be allowed to attend these meetings?

Attendance will be extremely limited and only for those who have passed the mandatory health screening and who are absolutely required to run a fixture:

- BHA officials and staff (as required to service the race meeting, as per BHA guidance)
- Essential racecourse staff and contractors (as required to service the race meeting, as per RCA guidance)
- Medical/ambulance personnel (as required to service the race meeting)
- Valets working at the race meeting (as per RCA guidance)
- Racecourse Vets
- Farriers (as required to service the race meeting)
- RaceTech staff (as required to provide core broadcast and integrity services. This will include, for example, one race commentator)
- Technical staff (as required to service the race meeting, as per RCA guidance)
- One Trainer (or their representative) per yard
- One senior groom per yard represented
- Stable staff of horses running in the race meeting (maximum of one groom per runner)
- Commercial horsebox drivers/transporters, where applicable
- Jockeys riding in the race meeting
- One broadcaster/presenter (to be arranged via RaceTech/RCA)
- Two written media journalists (One Press Association, one Racing Post - accredited journalists will be provided with more information by the RCA)
- Two photographers (one racecourse photographer, one racing photographer), to be determined by each racecourse

(Note: from 4 July 2020, additional media and photographers will be permitted to attend festival and significant weekend fixtures ONLY and subject to additional protocols. See Section J below for more information)

A maximum of two owners (or their representatives) per horse running in the race meeting will be permitted to attend meetings in England and Scotland, subject to specific protocols, which can be viewed here. Owners are NOT currently permitted to attend meetings in Wales.

- Please note racecourses will be able to accommodate owners immediately. Some remain subject to local authority clearance and operational restrictions. If a racecourse is unable to accommodate owners, owners will be notified in advance.

All attendance restrictions will be regularly reviewed and we will continue to increase the number of attendees as soon as it is appropriate to do so.

I'm an owner wanting to attend, where can I find more information?

More information for owners looking to attend a BCD meeting is available via the [ROA website](#).

Can social distancing be maintained during a BCD meeting?

Racing is an outdoor activity taking place across an extensive site. The vast majority of a race meeting can be run whilst maintaining social distancing guidelines, and dedicated social distancing officers will be at every fixture to ensure these guidelines are maintained at all times, with sanctions possible for those who breach social distancing unnecessarily. There are a small number of situations where social distancing will not be able to be maintained, albeit very briefly, such as legging up or loading horses into the stalls. Strict PPE and disinfection guidelines have been developed in order to ensure the risk in these encounters is as low as it can be, as published on page 11 of the [published protocols](#).

If a horse usually requires extra assistance at the start, such as from horse behavioural specialists, will this be permitted?

Yes. The person providing extra assistance has to be listed as one of the trainer's 'registered persons' for the day. It also does not preclude this person for working with other trainers' horses on the day if required.

Will stalls blankets be allowed?

Yes. Getting this equipment to and from the start will be the responsibility of those connected with the horse, and stalls blankets are subject of the preparation of racing equipment section on page 19 of the [published protocols](#).

Can you make sure no one will try to get into the meetings?

Each of the racecourses selected for BCD racing is required to have a strictly enforced and secure site, with only a small number of dedicated exit and entry points and extra security in place to ensure the site as a whole remains secure.

How are you protecting the communities around the racecourses where there will be fixtures from unnecessary risk?

Racing behind closed doors will be in secure, controlled locations. Those attending will be required to travel directly to and from the fixtures, with the vast majority able to do this via car and without using public transport. Guidance is also to minimize stopping en route to or from the fixture unless absolutely necessary, such as to get fuel.

Does it matter which part of the country the race meeting is happening in?

In general, the main issue in behind-closed-doors events is managing the risk to the people attending and keeping them safe. Our guidelines require attendees to have little or no contact with the local community. Attendees are expected to go straight to and from the venue. Those people attending who do live locally are going back to work after medical screening and into a controlled environment.

That is not the case with nearly every other local place of work. Ultimately, the Government will weigh all these issues up. There are no geographically based restrictions in England at present.

How can you make sure you won't put unnecessary pressure on the NHS?

Private medical services have been procured wherever possible to ensure that only in the most extreme circumstances will the use of NHS resources be required. Further measures, such as focus on Flat racing and the initial limiting of field sizes to 12 as well as individual analysis of race types have been undertaken to ensure that we do as much as we can to limit the risk of injury to participants and thus the need to use valuable NHS resources.

What guidance has been created for those who have to attend race meetings?

[Extensive and detailed protocols](#) have been published prior to the resumption of racing, which use Government Guidance on the return to elite sport as their framework, in sufficient time so that all those who have to attend a BCD race meeting, regardless of their involvement, have time to sufficiently familiarise themselves with the guidance and what is required of them.

There are no processes within the running of a race meeting, however small, that have not been affected in some way and as such the guidance is extremely detailed and is designed to ensure everyone in attendance understands what is required of them, from the run up to the meeting to when they have returned home after the meeting is complete.

Has there been sufficient time for everyone in racing to familiarise this guidance? Could you have communicated it sooner?

Racing, as is the case with all sports and industries, is partly dependent on Government guidance in the current situation, and as such occasionally timescales are outside of our control. We have continuously communicated with stakeholder representatives as the industry has developed plans for individuals and organizations to put in place, and we have published these protocols at the earliest available opportunity in order to try and give participants as much chance as possible to familiarise themselves with them.

Have these protocols gone far enough to convince the general public that racing is ok to return?

Since the outset of our resumption planning we have made risk assessed decisions to support a safe return to racing. The processes outlined will be subject to a continuous process of review as our knowledge and experience of BCD racing develops and we will not hesitate to make changes if the evidence suggests this will further minimize the risk of transmitting coronavirus.

Do people have to go if they are concerned there is a risk of contracting coronavirus?

If those who are required for their job to attend a race meeting do not feel comfortable in doing so, they should in the first instance speak to their employer or representative trade body. No one is able to be forced to attend a BCD meeting if they feel uncomfortable about doing so.

When will racing with crowds be back?

It is not possible to say with any certainty. The Government's guidance suggests mass gatherings such as sporting events with crowds form a later stage in the phased return from lockdown than we are currently in. As soon as there is a substantive update on this, we will communicate it to ensure there is clarity for the racing industry and public.

What's happening with stalls tests?

As referenced in the original guidance, the feasibility of conducting stalls tests on gallops, and the potential for resuming normal raceday stalls tests, has been reviewed after one week of racing. The BHA has started to arrange stalls test opportunities, around available resources and current raceday stable capacity at scheduled fixtures.

We are continue to work with other racecourses to identify further opportunities and these will be confirmed and communicated on an ongoing basis.

Stalls tests will be conducted in line with the medical protocols for race fixtures, with all pre-health screening, temperature checking and social distancing measures in place, irrespective of whether the stalls test take place on raceday, or on a non-raceday at regional gallop venue.

Section 3 – Screening, Testing & PPE (updated 10.8.20)

What are the screening requirements for behind closed doors racing?

A stringent three-stage screening process will be mandatory for all attendees of BCD racing:

1. Education module – to be completed online via the [Racing2Learn](#) site to ensure attendees have a baseline understanding of COVID-19, social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, racecourse protocols and PPE requirements. A guidance document for using Racing2Learn is available [here](#).
2. Online health questionnaire – to be completed online at least 7 days prior to any planned attendance at a racecourse on a rolling basis. Once a questionnaire is completed (providing the individual is passed clear) this remains valid for 7 days and will enable someone to travel to multiple venues throughout the 7-day period. E-mailed direct to proposed attendees once notification of their attendance has been received by the BHA.
3. Screening/temperature check - on arrival at a racecourse, individuals will be required to answer two further questions as well as having their temperature recorded. They will also be required to have adequate photo ID (Stable Pass, Driving Licence, Passport) to prove identity.

Will it be possible to complete them in time?

The online education module was published on 19 May in order to give sufficient time for participants to complete the course. The protocols were published on 23 May in order to ensure there was sufficient time for those due to attend meeting to familiarize themselves.

Other sports are testing extensively, why aren't you?

The current government policy on testing is for it to be needs-based. Where symptoms of coronavirus have been identified, people can request a test. Essential workers in the NHS and other public services can also receive a test.

We've agreed to work within government guidelines for the return of sport and those published so far do not require routine testing for athletes or staff, in line with the needs-based approach.

The approach is for each sport to manage its risks in the most appropriate way.

The background risks in racing are low – it's an outdoors, rural, non-contact sport in which social distancing is easier to maintain.

If the screening process suggests someone needs a test, they will be able to request one via the NHS as anyone with symptoms can

Our approach is flexible and may change as testing develops to become a more useful tool.

What processes will you have in place instead of widespread proactive testing?

There will be a mandatory and stringent three-stage screening process as outlined above which all attendees at BCD fixtures will have to take to attend. A coronavirus surveillance programme will also be introduced to run alongside this, which will involve:

- Monitor the number of local cases in the Lower Tier Local Authority Area in which racing yards and racecourses are located and compare these to national rates
- Establish a reporting system to allow members of the racing industry to report if they have a laboratory proven COVID-19 infection to allow mapping of infection by partial postcode and role

If there is a significant increase in cases of COVID-19 in racing personnel in a specific area, advice will be taken from PHE in respect of interventions which might include raising local awareness, education, laboratory testing and/or isolation measures.

This approach to surveillance is an accepted method of infection control. It is the advice of the medical experts we have been consulting throughout this process that the combination of strict medical screening and a surveillance programme represent the most effective method of minimizing the risk of spreading the coronavirus for racing's specific set of circumstances. This guidance is based on detailed discussions in recent weeks with Government and public health officials.

What happens if someone fails screening?

If an individual fails the screening due to concerns over possible COVID-19 infection, they should contact NHS 111 to request a test and follow current government guidance on self-isolation. Once a negative test result has been obtained, this should be submitted to the BHA for clearance.

What will you do if a jockey, trainer, stalls handler or member of stable staff tests positive?

This would be taken on a case-by-case basis, and with any specific decisions likely to involve input from the relevant representative industry body. Initially it is likely the person would be advised to seek support from NHS 111 as well as racing-specific support services if appropriate and follow government guidance on self-isolation. They would also be expected to participate in the surveillance programme as outlined above.

What PPE requirements will there be for behind closed doors racing?

Face coverings should be worn by anyone who is not identified as needing certified/higher grade PPE (e.g. medical and cleaning staff) *and* who is anticipated to breach social distancing repeatedly as a result of their role in racing.

Face coverings are mandatory in the parade ring (and all personnel must put them on *before* entering) and should be worn whenever an individual may reasonably expect to breach social distancing. When purchasing a face covering, participants are asked to either:

- Order directly from the BHA's preferred supplier, CHB Medical, by completing this [online order form](#). When placing an order, we would ask you to order the product recommended by the BHA's Chief Medical Adviser viewed [here](#) (reusable Facemask with PM2.5 Filter);
- Or, if using an alternative supplier, choose a similar dark blue/black reusable alternative (this can also include a dark coloured plain snood/neck gaiter).

All Participants are asked to avoid using disposable coverings and ones which have a medical appearance unless there is no other alternative.

More information on face coverings is included in the [full guidelines and operating procedures for behind closed doors racing](#).

People who will potentially need to breach social distancing rules include:

- Security staff
- Jockeys (see note (c) below)
- Valets
- Stable staff
- Clerk of the Course
- Starters and Assistant Starters
- Stalls handlers
- Veterinary teams
- Trainers or representatives (e.g. when legging-up)
- Equine Welfare Integrity Officers (EWIOs)
- Other personnel as identified by local risk assessment of operational practices

All of the above are required to wear suitable face coverings/masks. Medical and nursing staff are required to wear clinical level PPE. Cleaning staff are required to wear PPE appropriate to the area that they are cleaning as per UK Government advice.

Are you confident that there will be sufficient PPE?

We are confident that there will be sufficient access to PPE and face coverings for those who require it, and between racecourses and others in the industry that there will be a sufficient reserve of PPE for the medium and longer term.

Who will provide the PPE?

In normal practice and in accordance with health and safety legislation, it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that employees are equipped with appropriate PPE.

To meet this requirement, employers sending employees to the racecourse will need to ensure that employees are equipped with appropriate face coverings.

To support trainers in the initial stages of resumption, and to allow time for trainers to procure their own supply, the BHA has obtained a central supply of reusable non-medical face coverings for use by stable staff on racecourses. In addition to providing ten face coverings to each trainer, a system of reimbursement will be established for other coverings required for their employees on racedays.

Each licensed training yard will receive 10 reusable face coverings free of charge. These will be sent directly to yards. We have prioritised distribution to trainers with an entry in the first week of racing following resumption.

If for any reason trainers do not receive or cannot procure the recommended face covering or similar, stable staff are asked to wear a dark coloured, plain snood/neck gaiter.

Further information is available on pages 12-14 of the [published protocols](#).

Section 4 – Race programme, major races and international runners (updated 11.6.20)

How has the fixture list changed?

Racing will resume in a phased way, strictly limiting the normal number of fixtures in the early stage of resumption. Race programmes and Fixture lists have been published and can be downloaded as follows:

[August race programme](#)

[Fixture List 1 June to 31 August](#)

[Fixture List 1 September to 31 December](#)

Further updates and race programme changes will be published in due course, as soon as they are finalised but the long-term desire remains for racing to ultimately revert to its pre-agreed programme and Fixture List.

What are you doing for the owners of lower rated horses?

The BHA's racing department have been working hard to ensure as much as possible that there is an even spread of opportunities within the heavily reduced fixture list.

When racing resumes we know there will be a lot of horses waiting to run and at the same time we will only be staging three fixtures every day once we get through those first few days. We are very conscious that there will be some frustration that people are going to find it difficult on some occasions to get a run.

Extending the number of races at a meeting to nine or ten and changing the way some handicaps are framed had been implemented to try and cater for that demand.

When will the fixture list return to normal?

It is very difficult to answer this with certainty. The long-term aim is for the race programme to revert to its original form, but no unnecessary risks will be taken during the phased return to racing.

What is happening with nurseries?

The nursery programme began in late July.

The qualification rules for nurseries have been temporarily amended in line with the interim measures for 3yo and upwards, and are now as follows:

Nursery Handicaps

A horse trained in Great Britain shall be eligible for a Handicap Rating to run in a Nursery Handicap if the horse is a two-year-old and has run in:

11.1 three or more Flat Races under the rules of any Recognised Racing Authority, with at least two of those runs being in Great Britain and/or Ireland; or

11.2 two Flat Races in Great Britain and/or Ireland, having won its first Race and been placed in the first four in its second Race; or

11.3 two Flat Races in Great Britain, having:

(a) finished in the first six places on both starts, or

(b) won its first Race.

Why are international runners allowed?

Foreign-trained runners were only permitted to run in the three Group 1 races taking place in Britain during the first fortnight (Coronation Cup, 2000 Guineas and 1000 Guineas), in order to help facilitate a safe and smooth resumption.

International runners have not been permitted to take part in Group 2, 3 or Listed races during this period, but will be able to participate in all Pattern and Listed races taking place in Britain from 15 June 2020 onwards. This position will be reviewed again in early September.

In addition to the normal rules and [testing requirements](#) for international runners, all competitors will be subject to the BHA's [guidelines and operating procedures](#) for behind closed doors fixtures.

In particular, our pre-raceday checks require all overseas attendees to declare their date of arrival in Britain, and they may also be required to provide supporting documentary evidence to confirm this declaration.

For further logistical assistance with travelling to and from Britain, participants should contact the International Racing Bureau at <https://irbracing.com/contact/>.

Furthermore, no internationally trained horses will be permitted to take part in any races of Class 2 and below until further notice. This step has been taken to help address concerns that with a reduced fixture list in place, the number of eliminations is likely to be a significant issue when racing resumes. This position will be kept under review and revisited as soon as circumstances allow.

It is crucial for the long-term health of the breed that Group 1 Races, and thus the horses that compete in them and may go on to become stallions or broodmares, are internationally competitive.

Section 5 - Help and advice (updated 11.6.20)

Where can I go for further help and advice?

The BHA's website has a dedicated resource for the corona virus:

<https://www.britishhorseracing.com/regulation/covid-19-coronavirus-industry-guidance-and-updates/>.

Which also has specific contact details for participants as well as the latest guidance from the NHS and government.

Additionally, a resumption helpdesk has been created to assist industry participants with questions about the processes included in the [BHA's COVID-19 guidelines and operation procedures](#), particularly in relation to the race programme, pre-raceday protocols, raceday operations and medical guidelines and infection control.

Please contact the helpdesk via:

- Phone: 0207 152 0110
- Email: covidhelpdesk@britishhorseracing.com

Participants who are represented by a specific trade body are also advised to contact that organisation in the first instance for advice which is specific to them:

Owners – <https://www.roa.co.uk/>

Trainers – <https://www.racehorsetrainers.org/homepage/index.asp>

Jockeys, valets, agents – <https://www.thepja.co.uk/>

Stable staff – <https://www.naors.co.uk/>

Racecourses – <https://racecourseassociation.co.uk/>

Breeders – <https://www.thetba.co.uk/>

Transporters – <http://racehorse-transporters.org/index.php>

Otherwise the BHA can be contacted via info@britishhorseracing.com.

Racing Welfare also have a dedicated [corona virus update page](#) for those seeking support.

How will I be kept informed?

The BHA will endeavour to issue further updates as often as is feasible to keep participants and the wider racing industry informed. These will be published on the front page of the BHA's website www.britishhorseracing.com as well as its dedicated corona virus update page and the Racing Admin site.

The updates will also be published via the BHA's social media feeds on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).



Participant bodies will also cascade more direct support and guidance to their members directly and update their respective websites and social media feeds.