



OUR PEOPLE, RACING'S FUTURE

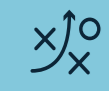
A Workforce Strategy for the British Horseracing Industry



Horseracing Industry
People Board

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CHAIR Foreword



Julia Tyson
Chair
Horseracing Industry
People Board

“There are many significant contributors to the racing industry, but our sport is nothing without the passion and dedication of the people who work in it”

This strategy is for them and for the future of our sport. Quite simply, this document is an opportunity to bring the industry together and set a direction to showcase why people should choose to join and remain working in the sport.

This strategy has been developed, on behalf of the industry, by the Horseracing Industry People Board (HIPB), a skills based operational board with a remit to approach this subject independently. HIPB comprises respected industry insiders alongside independent specialists in people practices creating a healthy mix of perspectives, ideas and experiences. We have worked together, alongside representatives of the industry, and have consulted widely to identify opportunities, building our recommendations to gain acceptance and adoption. We realise this is a vastly complex, and often emotive subject, in which everyone has a legitimate view. Navigating our way through has been formative.

HIPB was created to formulate, develop and oversee the implementation of an industry people strategy. Funders and stakeholders expect HIPB to ensure the people projects they fund are aligned with the strategy and represent value for the industry’s money. We have addressed both responsibilities thoughtfully and seriously and taken time, in building this strategy, to research and evaluate the current landscape, challenges and opportunities.

We have built an industry wide data analysis platform and learnt from other sectors facing similar challenges on relevant and workable solutions for the way forward. We are grateful to everyone who has shared their perspective, challenged our ambitions, supported and funded its development.

The production of this strategy represents a landmark for the sport. It is ambitious, far reaching and challenging to achieve. It will initiate foundational activity on which future impactful changes can be built and is relentlessly focussed on evolving the front-line experience as a priority. There is something for everyone, but more is targeted where the need is most critical. We have had to prioritise and it will take several years for the cumulative impact to be felt.

All the more reason for all to engage now with the planned programme and work together to achieve change. The merit of the strategy will be the extent to which it can orientate and align the many disparate providers and stakeholders into action by building collaborative delivery partnerships that adopt the ambitions of the strategy into their own work and that can be measured in their impact. 2025 represents our first year of implementation having set the foundations.

My sincere thanks to HIPB colleagues who brought their passion for racing and a different future to this project. They have worked tirelessly to develop this strategy, identify solutions and build connections. My thanks to Neil Hayward, my predecessor as Chair for initiating the strategy review process and to Lucy Attwood who as Programme Director has led the work to create this document and set the foundations for our future success.

This strategy represents an opportunity for the industry to grab with both hands. We are confident that if we all work towards its achievement, we can make a tangible difference for our people and to our industry.

OVERVIEW

Executive Summary



Horseracing employs tens of thousands of people across the country, particularly in rural areas. The industry contributes £4 billion to the British economy every year. We are a strong and vibrant community of skilled professionals doing valuable and fulfilling work.

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the themes and recommended activities identified within the Industry Workforce Strategy. It is not intended as a substitute for the detailed analysis in the full version of the document.

But there's a problem. Horseracing is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit enough sufficiently skilled people into the industry to meet the needs of the fixture list. Retaining people throughout their careers is proving equally challenging. If we can't find - and keep - the right people, we risk the future health of our sport.

The plans outlined in this document are significant and wide ranging. They can't all be achieved quickly. We need to prioritise by addressing the horse-facing and critically skilled areas first. Without change here, the industry will be unable to support the current breeding programme and fixture list.



Horseracing Industry People Board

The Horseracing Industry People Board was created in May 2023 by the British Horseracing Authority, with support from the Horserace Betting Levy Board, the Racing Foundation, and reporting to the Industry Programme Group, to create a Workforce Strategy to coordinate and develop a long-term approach to our people.

The People Board is independently chaired. It is made up of individuals with a balance of knowledge and experience from within and beyond the racing industry. The People Board's vision is that horseracing's workforce should become an enabler of the sport's strategic aims and a unique selling point for British racing.



The Need for Change

A vast amount of activity has already been conducted to reduce horseracing's well recognised people-related challenges. Current programmes of activity play a critical role in racing's ability to provide a high quality and compelling product. The industry workforce is doing the best it can to operate within a complex and changing landscape.

Not all the identified challenges are unique to British racing. They are, in many respects, the result of economic, political, demographic and cultural changes that impact other sports and businesses, both in Britain and abroad. The UK's working age population is forecast to fall by 1.2 million by 2034, and the country is becoming increasingly urbanised. Mental health challenges are not restricted to the racing industry - one in four people experience mental health issues each year. Workforce challenges are also prevalent in other racing jurisdictions.

However, there is much that is within our capacity to control; and that will enable us to adapt to the external changes we can't necessarily influence.

The demands of a fixture list that operates almost every day of the year contribute to an 'always on' mentality for the whole of the workforce. The changes in mindset of 'Generation Z' require close attention to enable us to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

Concerns around equine welfare present challenges at many levels. More people are now joining the industry at an older age, and retention rates within the training yard sector are on a downward trajectory. We miss key skilled workers; over half of training yard staff are dissatisfied with pay and benefits; bullying and harassment are a critical concern.

We must continually reflect on our position and continue to evolve to meet the needs of our current and future workforce.

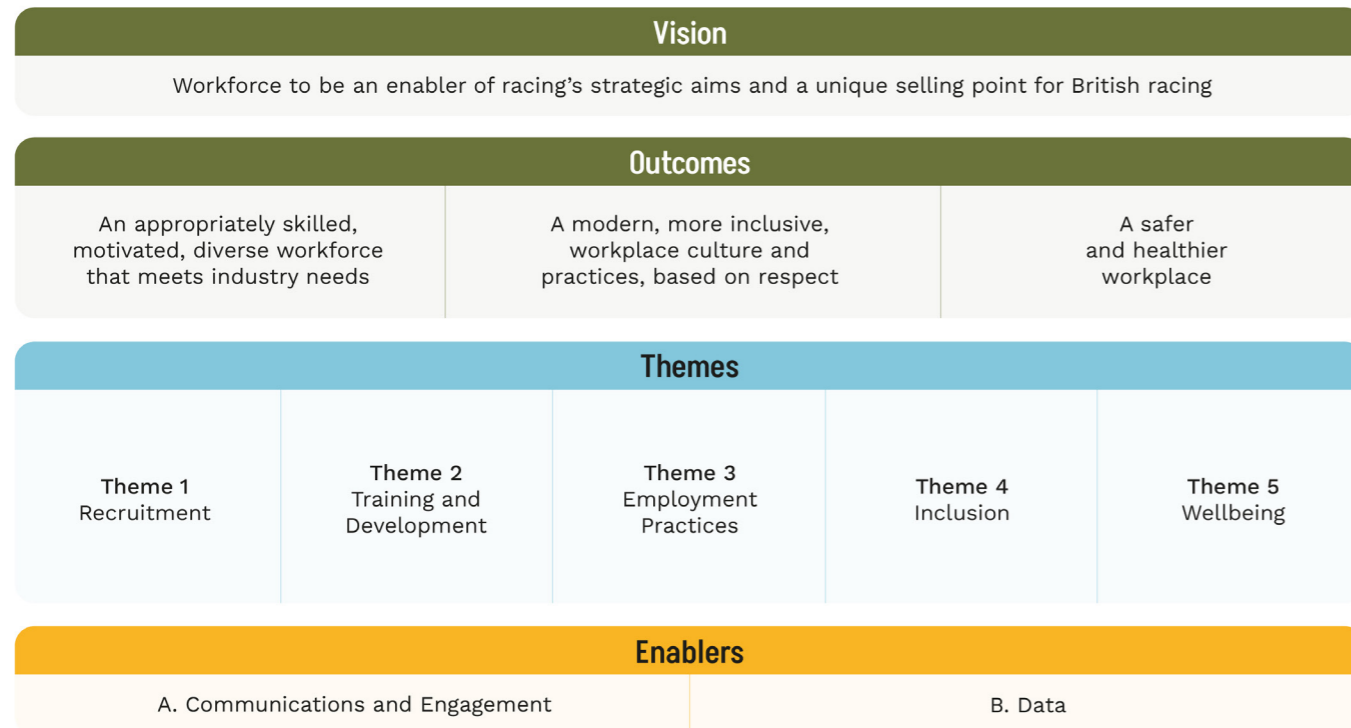
Challenges Across the Sport

Our four-month consultation across the breadth of the racing industry identified several key themes. These included the relentless nature of the industry; long and unsociable hours; high work demand; workplace mental and physical health impacts. Alongside these the consultation identified a resounding passion for the work and for the racing industry, strong community spirit and a shared admiration for the horse.

The impact these themes present varies across different occupational groups. The pressures are most keenly felt in training yards and breeding operations, referenced throughout this document as 'horse-facing' roles.



The Strategy Structure



The strategy is broken down into five core themes and two enablers:

- 1. Recruitment.** What is the current recruitment picture? How do we attract the right number of well-skilled people from a range of backgrounds?
 - 2. Training and Development.** How are we training our people? How can we improve the skills of new entrants and the existing workforce?
 - 3. Employment Practices.** How flexible are our workplaces? How can we adapt to modern expectations on work / life balance? What is our industry's current workplace standards? What should they be?
 - 4. Inclusion.** Does our industry have a respectful, inclusive culture? How can we improve this to make our sport a more attractive and welcoming career option?
 - 5. Wellbeing.** What are the current health, safety and wellbeing practices? Are we doing enough to protect and support our workforce, and how can we improve?
- A. Communications and Engagement.** How effectively do we communicate with our people, and beyond the industry, to promote horseracing as an employer? How can we better understand and respond to the needs of our workforce and ensure they have awareness of and access to development opportunities and support services?
- B. Data.** How can we best collect and analyse data to understand our workforce better, inform decision-making, demonstrate impact and measure value for money?



Theme 1 - Recruitment

Getting the right people, in the right numbers at the right time in the right place.

Racing has many well-established pathways into the industry. These either raise the profile of racing among a younger generation; develop pathways for new entrants; or enable the retention of current staff.

Approximately 1,000 people join training yards every year. Around 50% of these people come from a formal training pathway developed by the British Racing School, National Horseracing College or Scottish Racing Academy. The National Stud provides a pathway into the Breeding sector.

Recruitment success can be defined as an increased supply of suitably skilled and diverse people; racing being considered as an attractive career option by young people; clearer, better communicated access routes into racing; and employers reporting no critical skills gaps.

The activity required includes:

1. Publishing a workforce analysis, forecast and plan
2. Piloting new entry routes into racing
3. Reviewing and building on existing pathways
4. Ensuring new entrants have the required qualities to succeed
5. Widening the appeal of the sport
6. Establishing links with employers, educators, governmental and other partners
7. Evaluating the impact of current activity

Theme 2 - Training and Development

Recognising and developing specialist skills in critical roles through innovating our industry training provision.

We currently have a huge range of industry-specific qualifications. 58% of racing employers believe the training provided by our providers is either good or very good. We develop our workforce through innovative practices including specialist coaching and development and have several organisations supporting this.

Our employers find it challenging to release staff for training due to the current skill shortage. This results in fewer members of the workforce taking up ongoing training and development. We must continue to develop skill levels.

Success within training and development includes clear skill development pathways; increased employer involvement; a clear understanding of industry demand; and increased continuous learning and development underpinned by a simplified funding model.

The activity required includes:

1. Improving the employer and training provider relationship
2. Promoting and expanding apprenticeship take up
3. Simplifying funding model to ensure transparency
4. Introducing more flexible and work-based training
5. Redesigning the trainer training licence regime
6. Introducing minimum training requirements in licensing
7. Improving learning opportunities for Work Riders and Stud Grooms
8. Introducing skills passport into personal registration
9. Expanding mentoring



Theme 3 - Employment Practices

Creating workplaces that people can stay and thrive in.

Working in racing can be tough. Long, unsociable hours are exacerbated by staff shortages which challenge work-life balance. Many people find it hard to stay: 31% of stable staff and 22% of stud staff report planning to leave the industry within the next two years.

Employers find it difficult to recruit. Our research indicates there is a strong likelihood this will get tougher. The BHA's Safeguarding and Human Welfare strategy has begun to lay the foundations for change, but more needs to be done to ensure employers are supported to make the most appropriate decisions for the workforce.

Success within employment practices includes a reduction in excessive working hours; employers becoming better equipped with the relevant skills to manage the workforce; a motivated, productive and diverse workforce; and a zero tolerance of harassment, bullying or discrimination.

The activity required includes:

1. Introducing an Employer Quality Standard
2. Expanding the scope of licensing
3. Supporting employers to adopt new policies and practises that meet expected standards
4. Promoting and incentivising new work patterns and flexible working

Theme 4 - Inclusion

Creating friendlier and welcoming workplaces for all, where everyone has equal opportunity to thrive.

There has recently been some concerning research about the lack of diversity in horseracing. This is limiting our industry's attractiveness. Action plans have been developed to make racing more inclusive. The Industry Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion has helped racing make progress in this area. Activity is delivered by organisations including Racing with Pride and Women in Racing. However, there is a critical need for more activity to ensure that workplaces are welcoming, and inclusive to all.

Success within inclusion includes tangible and visible positive action that leads to friendlier and more welcoming workplaces; increased confidence in reporting mechanisms resulting in a long-term reduction in the number of incidents of bullying and sexual harassment; higher employment retention rates for women; and an overall positive perception that racing is an inclusive employer.

The activity required includes:

1. Developing an action plan to increase inclusion
2. Prioritising gender equality
3. Expanding the Industry Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion
4. Developing and delivering an ethnically diverse communities action plan
5. Ensuring the industry Code of Conduct promotes positive behaviours and values



Theme 5 - Wellbeing

Providing a safe and healthy working environment that recognises the unique challenges of working in racing.

There is a lot of research on racing's mental and physical demands. Over 70% of each occupation group is reported to have experienced stress, anxiety or depression.

Every year over £10m is spent on workforce support from organisations including Racing Welfare and The Injured Jockeys Fund. However, the medium, small and micro-sized nature of many racing businesses means some struggle to provide adequate employee assistance or wellbeing programmes. There is broad awareness, across the industry, of the Workforce Wellbeing Programme, however utilisation is limited. Drug and alcohol misuse is a critical concern.

Success within wellbeing can be defined as including a strategic approach to safety, health and wellbeing; an increase in the level of health and safety data that sets an industry wide direction and increases the knowledge of root causes; and improved and simple access routes into support services.

The activity required includes:

1. Reviewing health and safety measures and developing a refreshed approach
2. Developing funding model with appropriate balance of industry contribution
3. Designing and commissioning effective services against an agreed set of criteria
4. Extending drug and alcohol policies, including testing and support
5. Developing and embedding a safety and wellbeing culture
6. Conducting and coordinating regular surveys to assess quality of life





Enabler A - Communications and Engagement

Proactive communications, collaboration and industry wide engagement as the foundation stone for effective and impactful change.

Although there is an array of workforce training and support opportunities, awareness of and engagement with these activities is limited. Resources and lack of member engagement prove challenging for representative bodies. The fact there is no one single organisation wholly focussed on communicating with the workforce results in duplication and contributes to a lack of cross-industry collaboration.

Success within communications and engagement includes the workforce being presented and promoted as an asset; people issues being included as part of decision-making processes that relate to the future evolution of the sport; increased awareness and uptake of relevant services such that racing's people feeling valued and respected, leading to an increased level of workforce satisfaction.

The activity required includes:

1. Reviewing mechanisms for representation and accountability for people issues
2. Publishing annually updated workforce plan and impact report
3. Creating a digital workforce hub
4. Delivering a communications and engagement plan
5. Utilising regional hubs as a vehicle for delivery

Enabler B - Data

A repository for people-related data across the industry enabling data-led decision-making, planning and evaluation of the impact of funding.

Robust data is crucial to safeguarding racing's future. The Stable Employees Register collects key staffing data, and a dataset also exists for jockeys and trainers. Valuable research is also regularly conducted. However, there are large data gaps in non-regulated areas of racing, including breeding and pre-training, which are compounded by the micro and small-business nature of businesses in these areas.

Success within data includes having a clear understanding of the size and skill level of racing's workforce, creating a data-led approach to people issues, underpinned by a system which allows prompt and reliable answers to important questions.

The activity required includes:

1. Developing an agile data plan and securing investment into the longer-term ambition
2. Expanding datasets to include recruitment, skills and diversity
3. Continuing to run regular and coordinated employee surveys
4. Producing research, insights and annual reports to drive continuous improvement



Bringing the Strategy to Life

To achieve success in these areas, the People Board has designed a prioritised list of activities by which the initial actions under the five themes and two enablers can be progressed over the next three years.

These are:

1. **Training Provision Review and Action Plan** - review current training to support in the further development of delivery approach and curriculum design.
2. **Workforce Wellbeing Review and Action Plan** - support the development of provision ensuring quality, impact and value for money.
3. **Targeted Recruitment Campaigns** - develop targeted campaigns to recruit riders and stud staff with the potential skill level to fulfil short-term needs.
4. **Review and Redesign of Trainers Licence Course** - better prepare potential Trainers for the role through developing current training.
5. **Review of Talent Pipeline Activity** - evaluate current activities designed to produce a pipeline of potential workforce recruits.
6. **Drug and Alcohol Testing in the Workplace** - support employers to implement drug and alcohol testing within their businesses.
7. **Gender Equality Activity** - encourage and support our female workforce by removing barriers to remaining in the sport.
8. **Anti-Sexual Misconduct Campaign** - deliver a visual awareness campaign to increase the knowledge of sexual misconduct issues and how to address them.
9. **Rider Competency Matrix** - develop and implement a matrix that outlines the level of skill required at each stage of a rider's career.
10. **Workforce Analysis and Forecast** - analyse the current workforce and identify and quantify current gaps.
11. **Employer Quality Standard** - introduce an employer accreditation/quality standard scheme.
12. **Industry Commitment Impact Review** - review the impact of the commitment and deliver a further programme of activity.
13. **Ethnically Diverse Action Plan** - develop an action plan to create a more inclusive sport for people from ethnically diverse communities.
14. **Workforce Survey** - gather data and insights into the working lives of the workforce.
15. **Mentoring Qualification and Training** - standardise industry mentoring by introducing a mentoring qualification and training.

The extended document contains details of future change initiatives to build on these foundational activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

If this strategy is enacted in full - and is given appropriate support and funding - we believe the following ambitions are achievable over the next three years.

1. The average vacancy rate across breeding and training yards will be reduced from 24% to 10%
2. Industry retention rates in the role of Work Rider will increase by 10%
3. The average skill shortage of 19% across the industry will be halved
4. The average number of people expressing an intention to leave the industry within the next two years will reduce from 27% to 20%
5. Over 50% of our workforce will be engaged in continuous development experiences (currently 15%)



Strategy Programme Delivery

December 2025

- Identified, quantified and forecasted activities that build the workforce pipeline into racing. Targeted recruitment campaigns focusing on recruiting from a pool of experienced equestrians are underway
- Trainer's licensing course has been redesigned to include more training and education around people practices. Rider Competency Matrix has been developed to identify the skills required at each level of a rider's career
- Framework has been developed to form the basis of an Employer Quality Standard across Training and Breeding sectors
- Review of the Industry Wellbeing Strategy has been conducted and an action plan has been developed. Drug and alcohol policies in place and a pilot testing programme has commenced
- People related activities advocated in BHA led centrally delivered activity funding review
- An industry-wide action plan has been expanded to increase inclusion across the sport

December 2026

- Flexible working patterns are reviewed and promoted to share good practice. Views relating to the expansion of licensing across occupations are made to the BHA to align with its review
- Root causes of mental and physical wellbeing challenges are identified and are able to be mitigated through services that meet industry need
- Workforce engagement increasingly evident
- Key recommendations of the Vocational Training Review are implemented and a redesigned training regime for Trainers is being delivered
- Increased insights are developed and understood through the enhancement of data collected throughout the industry

December 2027

- Recruitment services are designed and commissioned in line with other industry strategy initiatives to create a consistent pool of suitably capable entrants
- The Data Proof of Concept and extended data capture enables the development of a people data platform in Racing Digital
- An Employer Quality Standard is being delivered that supports employers and raises employment standards across the sport
- D&I as an enabler to the sustainability of the sport is understood and embraced through a proactive and impactful programme of activities

Themes/Enabler

- 1. Recruitment
- 2. Training & Development
- 3. Employment Standards
- 4. Inclusion
- 5. Wellbeing
- A. Communications and Engagement
- B. Data



End of Executive Summary

01

The People Board

The People Board's ongoing responsibility is to both facilitate and directly drive the delivery of the strategy



Horseracing Industry People Board



The Horseracing Industry People Board consists of individuals who provide a strong balance of knowledge, experience from within and beyond the racing industry.

The Horseracing Industry People Board was formed in May 2023 by the British Horseracing Authority, with support from the Horserace Betting Levy Board and the Racing Foundation, reporting to the Industry Programme Group. Our task is to create a Workforce Strategy for racing based on the recognition that there is a need for a coordinated, long-term approach to our people that will help future-proof racing by ensuring it is an attractive, fulfilling, safe and enjoyable place to work.

Initial work focussed on collating and distilling the best of the available academic and industry research into the human resource challenges facing racing. Over 62 individual pieces of research were reviewed to identify key themes and critical assumptions.

A blueprint strategy was then taken out to the industry during a four-month long consultation process, which involved interviewing 46 key stakeholder groups across 40 workshops, amounting to over 300 individual attendees.

This Workforce Strategy is the culmination of the People Board's work thus far and the collective views and aspirations of the industry. It identifies the problems faced by our industry, and diagnoses solutions with a proposed implementation list of activities of three to five years, starting in early 2025.



Julia Tyson
Chair
Horseracing Industry
People Board



Daniel Kübler
Racehorse Trainer
Kübler Racing



George McGrath
Chief Executive
National Association
of Racing Staff (NARS)



Helene Sharrock
Chief People Officer
The Jockey Club



Neil Robertson
Chief Executive
National Skills
Academy for Rail



Rob Hezel
CEO and Consultant
Sport and Charity



Tallulah Wilson
Head of International
Partnerships
UK Tote Group, Former
Chair of Women in Racing



Tom Scudamore
Former Professional
Jump Jockey
ITV Racing

02

The Need For Change

There is a need for a coordinated and long-term approach to our people, one that will help future-proof racing



The Need for Change

British horseracing has already taken action to try to address its workforce challenges.

The industry can boast a range of people-related programmes of which we can be proud. Delivered and funded by dedicated organisations and individuals, these cover safeguarding, training, health and wellbeing, workforce pipelining and diversity and inclusion.¹

These efforts have borne fruit. We have the benefit of dedicated racing schools with specialist facilities; pathways into racing which are widely acknowledged as a success; and wellbeing support that has literally saved lives. At the same time, industry stakeholders large and small have developed innovative new ways to attract and keep the high-quality staff they need.

Horseracing holds a unique place in British society and whilst resistance to change can be a blocker to progress, it has proven its ability to adapt to new circumstances through the many challenges it has faced and overcome over the years.

But evolve we must. According to the 2023 Stable Employees Register:²

New industry entrants are joining at an older age and thus missing key development stages. In 2024 the average joining age to racing was 28, in 2014 it was 23.

Employees are increasingly likely to leave.

80% In 2023, there was an 80% retention rate. In 2015 it was 86%

At the same time, the Racing Industry Employee Survey³, commissioned by The Racing Foundation shows:

- We miss key, skilled workers. 18% of racehorse trainers and 19% of stud employers report having skills gaps.
- Many stable staff are dissatisfied with their pay and benefits. In 2023, 52% of stable staff reported being satisfied. In 2018 it was 60%.

- Nearly half of all stable and stud staff consider bullying and harassment to be a problem. In 2023, 44% of stable staff and 47% of stud staff identified this as an issue in the industry.
- There has been significant decrease in life satisfaction levels from 2016 to 2023 with only 63% of racing staff reporting that they are happy with their lives.
- 45% of training yard employees plan to leave their job within two years. This is up from 36% in 2016.

45% Of training yard employees plan to leave their job within two years

- 31% of stable staff and 22% of stud staff plan to leave racing within two years. Stable staff say this is due to “a lack of progress in improving working conditions and low pay” while stud staff cite “job satisfaction, work-life balance and working conditions”.
- There are currently 500 critical vacancies across training yards.

Other research shows that stress, anxiety and depression are widespread. 70% of trainers, stable staff, jockeys and stud employees reported these as problems.⁴

This is likely to be related to the fact that racing is a lifestyle rather than a job. Racing staff have a unique role in comparison to other industries. They act as care givers, athletes, equine experts, and are subject to high emotional and physical stressors, and an elevated incidence of occupational injury.⁵



¹This investment was provided by The Horserace Betting Levy Board; the Racing Foundation; the Government's Education and Skills Funding

²Stable Employees Register

³Racing Industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention Research 2024, Public Perspectives. Thoroughbred breeding industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention survey 2024, Public Perspectives

⁴A Lifestyle Rather than a Job, Will McConn-Palfreyman, Racing Welfare, 2019.

⁵Injury in Horseracing Staff, Emma Davies, Hartpury University, 2024



External Causes

British horseracing is not alone in facing these challenges. The UK is experiencing a nationwide labour shortage, exacerbated by demographic trends, which is predicted to worsen.

1.2M The UK's working-age population is forecast to fall by 2034

The UK's working-age population is forecast to fall by 1.2 million by 2034.⁶ This is likely to lead to increased levels of competition across the economy, especially for new generations of the workforce that racing needs to attract and retain. In addition, there is a wider range of employment opportunities for rural workers than in previous generations.

⁶National Population Projections, Office for National Statistics

⁷World Bank collection of development indicators

⁸Mental Health, NHS England

⁹ONS November 2024

¹⁰Benchmarking employee turnover, CIPD, 2024

¹¹High of individuals by gender, Statista

¹²Savanta National Reputation polling, 2024

¹³What workforce diversity means for Gen Z, Monster poll

¹⁴Where did all the girls go? Gender, Education and Work in the Horseracing Industry. Dr Eleanor Boden, 2021

¹⁵Sexual minority prevalence and attitudes within the British horseracing industry. Dr David Letts, 2021

At the same time, the country is becoming increasingly urbanised. In 2022, 84% of the UK population lived in towns and cities.⁷ The fact that horseracing operates in mainly rural locations means our industry is disproportionately affected.

Mental health concerns also play a role. There is a growing awareness in society of the importance of maintaining good mental health. With one in four people experiencing mental health issues each year (and 1.2 million people on waiting lists for treatment) it is incumbent on industries to provide the right support.⁸ 552,000 young people are currently economically inactive with mental ill health being proportionally a bigger cause than in older groups.⁹

Professional horseracing is not only under pressure in Britain. Racing in Australia recognises significant headwinds in relation to its federal government skills shortage visa review which may impede its ability to close its growing skill shortages. Negotiations in relation to salary and working hours triggered a strike by racing staff in Japan in May 2024.

Employment legislation is also making an impact. The new Employment Bill, which gives Day One rights of flexibility and unfair dismissal along with extensions to the Equality Act will challenge employers who fail to adopt modern employment practices. Recent changes to Employers' National Insurance rates add to business challenges.

Internal Causes

We can also identify contributory factors which are specific to horseracing.

The 80% retention rate of the training sector - significantly greater than comparable industries including Agriculture (64%) and Accommodation and Food services (59%)¹⁰ - is likely a result of the workforce's passion and the contribution of current initiatives. However, restrictive, inflexible work practices (or, at worst: old fashioned discriminatory or harassing behaviours) are reported key problems that impact our ability to retain the valued workforce.

The demands of fulfilling a fixture list that operates almost every day of the year is a factor. The 50% increase in evening meetings over the last 10 years extends the working day and contributes to an 'always on' mentality with long and unsociable hours. We are a seven day a week, labour intensive industry that is heavily dependent on our workforce.

There is also the fact that over a third of our roles require people to ride horses. From 1998 to 2021, the average height of a male has increased by 1.5cm and of a female by 1.4cm.¹¹ This trajectory is projected to continue, leading to a reduced pool of people able to carry out rider-specific roles because of their weight.

At the same time, reports show that between 37-40% of the British public say concerns about the welfare of horses in racing are barriers to engagement with the sport.¹²

A perceived or actual lack of diversity in our industry could also be negatively impacting our ability to recruit and hold onto staff. 83% of "Generation Z" (people currently aged between 13 and 28) consider an employer's commitment to diversity and inclusion to be an important factor when deciding where to work.¹³

83% Consider diversity and inclusion to be an important factor

The future workforce, or 'Generation Alpha' are 'digital natives', and the industry requires transformation to remain an attractive proposition. Industry-specific research indicates women and others who don't conform to the 'racing identity' can feel excluded.^{14,15}

On top of this, the horseracing industry's response to staffing challenges has lacked sufficient scale and cohesion to make the necessary difference. There has been a lack of strategic leadership and prioritisation of the people agenda at an industry level.

The nature of the work in our industry: outdoors and working with our equine athletes, can have a positive influence on mental health. This is a potential selling point for careers in our industry as it may help attract people looking for an alternative to a 9-to-5 office life. However, we need to ensure these advantages are not undermined by excessive working hours and an unsupportive workplace culture.



This Workforce Strategy has significant implications for everyone in horseracing. Here, we highlight some of the key issues raised during our research and consultation process.



Common Themes

Almost without exception, the following themes emerged across all occupational groups during our research, review and consultation process.

- Relentless nature of the work - 365/24/7 - lack of down time
- Workforce levels currently unable to sustain fixture list requirements
- Long and unsociable working hours leading to poor work-life balance (family and leisure time negatively impacted)
- Coping with high work demands, attending fixtures, foaling and sales and carrying out multiple roles
- Passion for the work, and the sport
- Team spirit and camaraderie
- Love of the horse
- Negative impact of work on physical and mental health

The following are themes which appeared as more specific to occupations or parts of the industry.

Racecourses

- A requirement to increase pipeline to reduce pressures on existing ground staff
- Requirement of career progression pathways with specific reference to highly skilled roles associated with the operation of a race day



In the Workplace (Training Yards and Studs)

- At risk due to industry viability
- Inconsistent pay/reward and working conditions
- Limited career progression pathways
- Inappropriate workplace behaviours and culture
- A need to increase workforce pipeline to reduce pressure on existing workforce
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- No standardised understanding of skill requirements for occupations
- Management of workforce performance to promote retention

Owners

- Impact of staff shortages on horse welfare and owner experience

Governance and Administration, Charities, Product and Service Providers

- Insecure funding/finance
- Concerns over industry sustainability
- Changes in job role and purpose
- Career/Professional development

03

The Strategy Structure

The workforce strategy structure breaks down into five core themes and two enablers, addressing key areas for change



The Strategy

This Workforce Strategy breaks down our work into five core themes

01

Recruitment

What is the current recruitment picture?
How do we attract the right number of well-skilled people from a range of backgrounds?

02

Training & Development

How are we training our people? How can we improve the skills of new entrants and the existing workforce?

03

Employment Practices

How flexible are our workplaces? How can we adapt to modern expectations on work-life balance? What are our industry’s current workplace standards? What should they be?

04

Inclusion

Does our industry have a respectful, inclusive culture? How can we improve this to make our sport a more attractive and welcoming career option?

05

Wellbeing

What are the current health, safety and wellbeing practices? Are we doing enough to protect and support our workforce, and how can it be improved?



Vision

Workforce to be an enabler of racing’s strategic aims and a unique selling point for British racing

Outcomes

An appropriately skilled, motivated, diverse workforce that meets industry needs

A modern, more inclusive, workplace culture and practices, based on respect

A safer and healthier workplace

Themes

Theme 1
Recruitment

Theme 2
Training and
Development

Theme 3
Employment
Practices

Theme 4
Inclusion

Theme 5
Wellbeing

Enablers

A. Communications and Engagement

B. Data

We have also identified two distinct “enablers”. These are industry characteristics which cut across all the above five themes. If an enabler functions well, it will improve the people situation.

Our two enablers are:

A

Communications & Engagement

How effectively do we communicate with our people, and beyond the industry, to promote the sport as an employer? How can we better understand and respond to the needs of our workforce and ensure they have awareness of and access to development opportunities and support services?

B

Data

How can we best collect and analyse data to understand our workforce better; inform decision-making, demonstrate impact and measure value for money?

THEME 1

Recruitment

Getting the right people, in the right numbers at the right time in the right place.

Current Situation

British horseracing can be proud of the many well-established pathways into the industry (see Case Study 1 in Appendix 1). Our specialist racing schools, Pony Racing, Riding a Dream Academy, Careers in Racing platform are, among others, unique assets. Racing to School operates outreach programmes. Some employers offer work experience and open days to raise awareness.

Approximately 1,000 (mainly younger) people join racehorse training yards every year, according to our analysis of the Stable Employees Register. Around 50% of these new entrants have had some form of formal training from the British Racing School, National Horseracing College, Scottish Racing Academy, or other equine college training.

According to our analysis of employment data, there are currently 7,500 people in racehorse training yard roles. It is estimated that the sector needs a total of 8,000. That’s a shortfall of 500 people. We have also received anecdotal evidence of Trainers reporting challenges in finding new entrants with the skills they need.

Similarly, consultation and research highlight that the recruitment challenges in the breeding sector are much the same, however a lack of data prevents precise quantification. The commercial expansion of our sport and fulfilling the requirements of the fixture list and breeding programme is dependent upon significant growth of a suitably skilled workforce.

What Success Looks Like

- Increasing the supply of suitably skilled and diverse people to carry out horseracing roles to meet the industry’s need
- Young people (and their parents/carers) consider racing as an attractive career option
- Clear, well-communicated access routes to training and employment opportunities
- No critical skills gaps
- A pipeline of future employees from less traditional local communities
- Improved staff retention rate during the early years of employment



Actions

To achieve this, we propose:

- Publishing a workforce analysis, forecast and plan to help the industry to remain sustainable
- Piloting new entry routes into racing which target existing riders, alumni and other sports, whilst offering a flexible working and learning proposition to address immediate shortfalls
- Taking positive action by building on existing pathways into racing to make it an accessible career option for all communities
- Making sure we have the quality of new entrants to industry-funded training with the ability to succeed
- Widening the appeal of the sport and its exciting, varied and long-term career opportunities
- Establishing strong links with employers, educators, governmental and other partners to deliver activities such as work experience programmes, to create a workforce pipeline that meets our future needs, building on activity already underway
- Evaluating the extent to which current activities are sufficient and appropriate to supply a diverse and talented future workforce



THEME 2

Training & Development

Recognising and developing specialist skills in critical roles through innovating our industry training provision.

Current Situation

Horseracing boasts a range of qualifications, specialist schools, facilities and organisations, coaches and educators dedicated to the delivery of training, both for new recruits and existing employees.

Foundation training is provided by the British Racing School, National Horseracing College, Scottish Racing Academy and The National Stud, with 58% of employers rating this training as ‘good’ or ‘very good’.¹⁶

Workplace coaches are managed and developed by the Jockey Coaching and Racing Staff Development programmes with links to both the British Racing School and the National Horseracing College.

There is a well-established career development scheme for jockeys delivered by the Jockeys Education & Training Scheme (JETS). The National Stud provides a range of entry routes into the Breeding industry. Online learning is provided through Racing2Learn and the Thoroughbred Breeders’ Association’s Thoroughbred Education programme (TB-Ed) - **see Case Study 2 in Appendix 1.**

However, once foundation training is delivered, the industry reports that only a limited number of people continue to develop and hone their skills, building their knowledge and expertise through ongoing training and learning.¹⁷

¹⁶Racing Industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention Research 2024. Thoroughbred Breeding Industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention Survey 2024, Public Perspectives.

¹⁷Consultation conducted by HIPB with industry stakeholders, 2024

Many employers say they need more support with business and people management issues. Employers find it difficult to release staff for training for fear of exacerbating staff shortages.

There is also a reported lack of appropriate governance. There is no single accountable point of oversight of vocational training.

What Success Looks Like

- A clear and equitable skill development pathway for work critical roles, enhancing the attractiveness of these roles as careers
- Increased employer involvement and ownership in the quality of training and the way it is delivered
- A system which better understands industry demands to provide coordinated guidance, oversight and planning on industry needs
- A simplified and transparent funding model which delivers value for money
- Sufficient qualified coaches to further enhance the skills of the existing workforce
- An increase in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) with individual skills records and accessible learning opportunities



Actions

To achieve this, we propose:

- Improving the ways employers and training providers work together to make sure training activity meets industry needs
- Promoting and expanding apprenticeship take-up to generate more government funding
- Simplifying training’s funding model to ensure transparency and value for money
- Introducing more flexible and work-based training which is more accessible and inclusive to all employees
- Redesigning the Trainer training licence regime to increase emphasis on people management and business leadership modules
- Introducing minimum training requirements (CPD) in licensing (voluntary access for non-regulated sectors)
- Defining skills levels and improving learning opportunities for Work Riders and Stud Grooms
- Introducing a skills passport for personal registration
- Expanding the use of mentoring for skills and career development



THEME 3

Employment Practices

Creating workplaces that people can stay and thrive in.

Current Situation

The People Board has been presented clear evidence that working in British horseracing can be tough and is getting tougher. Long and unsociable working hours required to meet the demands of the fixture list, exacerbated by staff shortages, mean that maintaining a healthy work-life balance, raising a family, and keeping mentally and physically in good shape can come second.¹⁸ Racing can appear fond of its traditional ways of working but these are increasingly hard to sell to new generations of workers, who prioritise their wellbeing in a jobs marketplace where they have a high degree of choice.¹⁹

The root cause of many of our workforce challenges is that too many skilled people are leaving. The most recent Employment Survey indicated 31% of Stable Staff (up from 21% in 2016) and 22% of Stud Staff plan to leave within two years.²⁰ We must invest resources (and change some mindsets) to help people to stay happily in British horseracing for longer. The current data indicates that this is a particular problem in ‘front line’ horse-facing roles.

Employers are having to face into some of the most challenging aspects of how we employ people and what we expect from them; such as working hours and patterns, and the physical and psychological safety of staff.

Some action is being taken. The BHA launched a safeguarding and human welfare strategy to promote the safety and wellbeing of racing’s workforce and meet the requirements of any modern workplace.

Flexible working is operating successfully in some workplaces – **see case study 3 in Appendix 1**, but opportunities are limited for those unable to work traditional working patterns and hours.

The level of regulation, above the statutory minimums, around people, practice and standards is light touch in training yards, and unregulated across a large proportion of the industry. There is no current standard of best employment practices enabling an informed choice for employees. Some employers lack specialist Human Resources (HR) advisory support in managing their workforce. Some advice and support is available through the NTF and TBA, for their members – **see case study 4 in Appendix 1**.

What Success Looks Like

- A reduction in excessive working hours as skills shortages diminish
- Trainers/breeders better equipped with skills to manage their workforce and positively influence a respectful workplace culture
- A positive, productive, motivated and diverse workforce who intend to stay in racing
- Zero tolerance of harassment, bullying, and discrimination supported by trusted, prompt and effective regulation
- Flexible working arrangements become common practice
- A fixture list and race programme that supports both commercial and workforce growth

¹⁸Consultation conducted by HIPB with industry stakeholders, 2024

¹⁹Waworuntu, E. C., Kainde, S. J. R., & Mandagi, D. W. (2022). Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction and Performance Among Millennial and Gen Z Employees: A Systematic Review. Society, 10(2), 384-398.

²⁰Racing Industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention Research 2024. Thoroughbred Breeding Industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention Survey 2024, Public Perspectives.

Actions

To achieve this, we propose:

- Introducing an employer quality standard (using the Lycetts Team Champion Award model as a basis) and employer accreditation
- Expanding the scope of licensing for employers and licensing stable staff to support further improvement in employment standards
- Supporting employers to adopt new policies and practises that meet expected standards
- Promoting and incentivising the adoption of new work patterns and flexible working



THEME 4

Inclusion

Creating friendlier and welcoming workplaces where everyone has equal opportunity to thrive.

Current Situation

The lack of diversity in our industry is reported to be limiting sector attractiveness, representation and social licence.²¹ There has also been some concerning research and high-profile cases relating to the experiences of women and girls.²² All this suggests the industry is not yet as inclusive as it needs to be to attract and retain its future and current workforce.

There is a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of racing's current industry-wide reporting mechanisms, and we will work with the BHA to review and streamline where appropriate. Challenges in reporting are amplified by the micro-sized nature of many of racing's businesses often resulting in an inability to maintain a complainant's confidentiality, which is impacting the number of reports that are made.²³

The racing industry has made some progress on diversity and inclusion issues in recent years.

The industry's commitment to inclusion was recently renewed by 32 organisations. There is also strong activity by employee support groups including Women in Racing and Racing with Pride.

There has been proactive outreach to people from ethnically diverse communities through ongoing research to gain insight into their experiences of working in the industry.

There is a broad sense, however, that there is a need for British horseracing to do more in this area. With the UK population becoming rapidly more diverse, without creating a workplace that is welcoming and inclusive to all we will not meet the objectives of this strategy in attracting and retaining the best talent in the sport. Other sports have approached this topic with confidence and proactivity, making inclusion integral to the sustainability and growth of their sports.

What Success Looks Like

- The critical importance of inclusivity to our social licence and reputation as an employer is demonstrated through positive action and shows up in the data and research gathered in the sport
- A reduction in the number of incidents of bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace
- Increased confidence in reporting mechanisms
- Higher employment retention rates for women
- A positive perception of those within and outside racing that it is an inclusive sport and employer

²¹HIPB consultation with industry participants, 2024.

²²Where did all the girls go? Gender, Education and Work in the Horseracing Industry' Eleanor Boden, 2021

²³HIPB consultation with industry participants, 2024.



Actions

To achieve this, we propose:

- Developing and investing in a transformative action plan to increase inclusion in the sport as a key part of the sport's sustainability strategy
- Prioritising gender equality everywhere in the sport through a continued programme of education, awareness, support and regulation
- Expanding the current Diversity and Inclusion Industry Commitment to act as a lever for change
- Developing and delivering an ethnically diverse communities action plan in response to research findings
- Ensuring the industry Code of Conduct promotes positive behaviours and values that represent racing's aspirational culture



THEME 5

Wellbeing

Providing a safe and healthy working environment that recognises the unique challenges of working in racing.

Current Situation

The required level of mental and physical demands of our sport - especially for those in horse-facing roles - is well researched. The ability of those working on our sport's front line to remain fit enough to conduct a demanding role is critical to the sustainability of their careers and the sport.

Staff report high levels of concern about the mental and physical toll of working in racing. Excessive drug and alcohol misuse is sometimes tolerated and is having a devastating impact on individuals and contributing to an unhealthy and unattractive workplace culture.²⁴ See case study 5 in Appendix 1 on the Newmarket Substance Misuse Support Network.

Research from 2019 revealed how 86% of jockeys reported experiencing stress, anxiety or depression within a 12-month period.²⁵ This figure was 79% for stud staff; 74% for trainers and 71% for stable staff. There are also widespread concerns about physical dangers.

The risk of physical injury to racing staff is reported to be 84% higher than in other comparable working environments due to the unpredictability of the horse, manual labour and long working hours.²⁶

In 2023, over £10m was spent on wellbeing provision from a variety of sources including the Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB), the Racing Foundation and the fundraising efforts of The Injured Jockeys Fund and Racing Welfare.

Support is available to racing's workforce via several routes including the Industry Workforce Wellbeing Programme, mental wellbeing support from the Professional Jockeys Association, the Racing Home portal, and provision from our two dedicated mental and physical wellbeing support charities in Racing Welfare and the Injured Jockeys Fund. Additional initiatives operating outside of the industry are also readily available.

However, these wellbeing services are often underused. There is high awareness, but low uptake of online advisory services. In 2023, 74% of the workforce surveyed said they were aware of Racing's Occupational Health Service yet only 16% said they had used it.²⁷ Occupational health too often facilitates a quick return to work rather than treating root causes.

What Success Looks Like

- An industry-wide strategic approach to safety, health and wellbeing that addresses the root causes of ill health
- Safe working practices and culture
- Increased regulation relating to inspecting and health and safety reporting
- Increased knowledge, skills and awareness of root causes
- Well-funded and sustainable funding for services, from appropriate sources
- Improved awareness of the services available with simple and timely access routes

²⁴HIPB Consultation with industry participants, 2024

²⁵A Lifestyle Rather Than a Job, Will McConnell-Palfreyman, Racing Welfare

²⁶Injury in Horseracing Staff, Hartpury University, 2024.

²⁷Racing Industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention Research 2024. Thoroughbred Breeding Industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention Survey 2024, Public Perspectives.



Actions

To achieve this, we propose:

- Reviewing racing's current health and safety measures and developing a refreshed approach to the management of health, safety and wellbeing across the sport
- Developing a new funding model with an appropriate balance of employer, employee and industry central funding, including the redesign/expansion of insured benefits where possible
- Designing and commissioning effective wellbeing services against an agreed set of quality, value for money and impact criteria, including a national occupation health service
- Extending drug and alcohol policies, including its testing and support regime
- Developing and embedding a safety and wellbeing culture through the introduction of relevant training and a network of health and wellbeing ambassadors
- Conducting and coordinating regular surveys to assess quality of life and wellbeing measures across the range of occupation groups and demographics



ENABLER A

Communication & Engagement

Proactive communications, collaboration and industry wide engagement as the foundation for effective change.

Current Situation

Having conducted an extensive consultation process for this Workforce Strategy, the People Board is acutely aware of the challenges involved in engaging with those working in horseracing. Many of our people are ‘time poor’ and perhaps also a little cynical about yet another survey or discussion group.

Our industry is organised via many representative and other bodies, each of which have a key role to play in engaging with - and advocating for - their people. However, our experience has been that this important work can be hampered by various factors. Limited resources and a lack of membership engagement are a problem. Another is a lack of cross-industry collaboration.

Communications activity generally takes place at an individual organisation level. This fragmented approach can limit opportunities for feedback at a level where it can impact decision-making. There is a general sense, among racing staff, that their voices are not heard by the industry.²⁸ Our people’s busy, outdoor - and often isolated - lifestyles can mean they do not have the means, skills and confidence to effectively communicate their needs.

However, several organisations have shown innovation in the development of communication mechanisms including the introduction of Racing Welfare’s Outreach and Engagement Officer, funded by a charitable trust, to specifically focus on raising awareness and uptake of support provision to the stud and breeding community.

²⁸HIPB Consultation with industry participants, 2024

What Success Looks Like

- Racing’s workforce is presented and promoted as an asset rather than a problem to fix
- People issues are included as part of decision-making processes as the sport evolves, backed up with quality data and effectively factored into early discussion on industry strategy and regulation
- People feel valued, respected and heard by the governing body and their representative organisations
- Improved levels of job satisfaction
- The industry provides simple and clear sources of information, advice and support on people related issues



Actions

To achieve this, we propose:

- Reviewing the mechanisms for representation and accountability for people issues on decision-making bodies and boards
- Publishing an annually updated workforce plan and people impact report
- Creating a digital workforce hub to curate and signpost available services
- Devising and delivering a people communications and engagement plan
- Utilising regional hubs as a vehicle for delivery of the Workforce Strategy



ENABLER B

Data

A repository for people related data across the industry enabling data-led decision-making, planning and funding.

Current Situation

Having robust information about our people is an essential part of safeguarding horseracing’s future. The absence of reliable information means important decisions may be made based not on fact, but on opinion.

The Stable Employee Register in its current form collects key staffing data in relation to role and basic demographics. A dataset also exists for jockeys and trainers.

Valuable research has also been conducted within the people space including the bi-annual Recruitment, Skills and Retention surveys. There are, however, data gaps in non-regulated areas of racing, such as breeding and pre-training, and improvements can be made in the data collected in regulated sectors.

The horseracing industry is made up of many small businesses, not all of which are required to either collect or share staffing data. There is an opportunity to increase capacity and capability to gather and exploit data to ensure the activity we are delivering results in the greatest level of impact on our people.

The People Board collaborates with the BHA’s Data, Insight and Analytics team and Racing Digital to ensure availability of the most current and accurate employee data to facilitate informed decision-making. This work will continue to inform the Workforce Strategy.

What Success Looks Like

- Having a clear understanding of the size and skill level of racing’s workforce and being able to track changes to it on an ongoing basis.
- Taking a data and evidence-led approach to people issues. Setting up systems which allow prompt and reliable ways for us to identify, ask and answer important people questions
- Making more detailed and comprehensive demographic information available about our people.



Actions

To achieve this, we propose:

- Developing an agile people data action plan and securing investment into the longer-term ambition of a data platform that analyses racing’s people challenges, giving early identification of problems or opportunities through trend analysis and predictive modelling
- Expanding datasets to include recruitment, skills and diversity and linking all datasets for better analysis, and extending people data capture across all areas of racing
- Continuing to run regular, coordinated employee surveys to increase understanding and measure the impact of investments
- Producing research, insights and annual reports from available resources and embed in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that drive continuous improvement



04

Bringing The Strategy To Life

Our ambition is that the workforce becomes an enabler of racing's strategic aims and a unique selling point for British Racing



Bringing The Strategy To Life

Implementation

Having conducted the above analysis of horseracing’s workforce situation, the People Board believes that our industry can – if it undertakes all the appropriate measures – create a new future for our workforce.



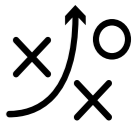
The ambition for our people and racing’s future may be characterised as:

- A well-resourced, appropriately skilled, highly motivated and diverse workforce
- Modern workplaces based on respect and inclusivity
- A regulatory framework that sets and enforces minimum employment standards
- Proactive health, safety and wellbeing practices and services that improve and sustain the mental and physical condition of the workforce
- A repositioning of the industry’s workforce as an asset and selling point for British horseracing

To achieve this the People Board has developed a list of priority activities by which the actions under the five ‘themes’ and two ‘enablers’ build on shorter term foundational activity.

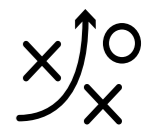
A summary of the projects identified as priorities that link to each of the themes is provided in the table opposite.

Shorter Term Activity



Project		Theme/Enabler
1	Training Provision Review and Action Plan Review the current training provision within the sector to support in the further development of their approach and curriculum design. This will involve developing an effective framework unique to the sector that builds on existing good practice and aligns to the wider needs of the end users: in this case employers and the workforce.	Training & Development
2	Workforce Wellbeing Review and Action Plan Support the development of wellbeing provision by reviewing and updating the Industry Wellbeing Strategy, developing a new funding model for provision and designing and commissioning effective services against an agreed set of quality, value for money and impact criteria.	Wellbeing
3	Targeted Recruitment Campaigns Working with employers to shape some key vacancies and develop targeted recruitment campaigns to recruit riders and stud staff with the potential skill level to fulfil the short-term needs of the industry. Campaigns will target experienced riders, currently focussed on other equestrian disciplines that could convert to racing and with some development become Racing/Stud Grooms or Work Riders and in addition target those who may have left racing but would like to return to roles with flexible working opportunities.	Recruitment
4	Review and Redesign of Trainers Licence Course Redesign the delivery and content of training provision for licensed Trainers to better prepare potential Trainers for the role and to introduce the principle of continuous professional development (CPD) as a means of maintaining and raising standards of conduct, performance and business success.	Training & Development
5	Review of Talent Pipeline Activity An evaluation of the current activities designed to produce a pipeline of potential workforce recruits, to understand the current level of impact that the activity is having on the industry’s ability to recruit. Findings will combine with the Workforce Forecast and Analysis to identify any gaps in the pipeline.	Recruitment

Shorter Term Activity

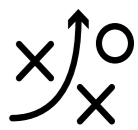


Project		Theme/Enabler
6	Drug and Alcohol Testing in the Workplace Build on the work conducted by the Newmarket Substance Misuse Network, where policies, procedures and support measures have been developed to support employers to implement drug and alcohol testing within their businesses.	Wellbeing
7	Gender Equality Activity Take meaningful steps to retain female talent in the horseracing industry. Identify how to actively encourage and support our female workforce, and remove the barriers to them remaining in the sport, making the racing industry a supportive and inclusive place for everyone to work in.	Inclusion
8	Anti-Sexual Misconduct Campaign Develop a visual awareness campaign to increase knowledge of sexual misconduct, providing individuals with an understanding of what behaviours constitute misogyny, sexism and sexual misconduct whilst offering clear, practical advice for victims and witnesses.	Inclusion
9	Rider Competency Matrix Develop and implement a matrix that outlines the level of skill required at each stage of a rider's career, giving riders clear understanding of the skills necessary to progress through their careers. The matrix will help the industry identify skill gaps and develop appropriate training to fill them.	Training & Development
10	Workforce Analysis and Forecast Analyse the current workforce to identify and quantify current gaps and produce a workforce forecasting model that is used to predict future levels of resource across the range of sectors within the industry, with an initial focus on training yards before the stud and breeding sector as data is collected.	Data

Project		Theme/Enabler
11	Employer Quality Standard Raise standards of employment practices on studs and training yards by introducing an employer accreditation scheme linked to licensing where possible, utilising the National Trainers Federation's Lycetts Award model.	Employment Practices
12	Industry Commitment Impact Review Conduct a review of the impact of the Industry Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion, delivering a programme of activity offering engagement and knowledge sharing opportunities, which aims to increase the level of industry-wide skill and understanding of Diversity and Inclusion.	Inclusion
13	Ethnically Diverse Action Plan Develop an action plan to create a more inclusive sport for people from ethnically diverse communities, ensuring they feel welcome across the whole sport, are free from discrimination and have equal access to opportunities.	Inclusion
14	Workforce Survey Gather data and insights into the working lives of the workforce, including employees and employers, with a focus on key areas including recruitment, skills and retention. The survey will enable evaluation of the impact of current activity to inform ongoing development and assessment of value for money.	Data
15	Mentoring Qualification and Training Introduction of a mentoring qualification to support and introduce an industry-recognised standard across the array of mentoring programmes currently operating including a roll out of mentoring training to enable and encourage peer-to-peer support.	Training & Development

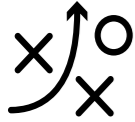
Longer Term Activity

Dependent on completion of earlier work summarised in the table above.



Project	Theme/Enabler	
16	Flexible Working Review Following on from the Employer Quality Standard, a base level of data should be available to set the ground work for this longer-term project that will explore the current flexible working patterns available within the industry, and support employers to align with working practices expected of the 21st century workforce.	Employment Practices
17	Increase industry Diversity and Inclusion Knowledge and Expertise Through the Industry Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion impact review, an understanding of the current level of skill and expertise on the topic will be defined. This project will focus on increasing the knowledge and experience held within the industry to ensure there are relevant resources to implement sustainable change.	Inclusion
18	Digital Workforce Hub The introduction of the Workforce Plan and Activity will feed into this long-term project to introduce a Digital Workforce Hub to centralise and allow two-way communication with the workforce.	Community & Engagement
19	Increase data captured on the Stable Employees Register (SER) In line with the work conducted by Racing Digital, the data captured on the SER will be increased to enable growth in the awareness and understanding of the training sector workforce to allow for increased analysis.	Data

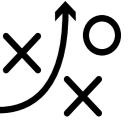
Project	Theme/Enabler	
20	Expansion of the Scope of Licencing Working together with the British Horseracing Authority, support the expansion of the scope of licensing as deemed appropriate by the regulator, aiding in the capture of workforce data from across the breadth of the industry.	Employment Practices/Data
21	Wellbeing Ambassador Network Following the review and development of an industry wellbeing action plan, introduce peer-support to aid in the development of workplace culture through a Wellbeing Ambassador Network.	Wellbeing
22	Introduce Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Employers The review of the Trainers licence training will identify the appropriate CPD required for racehorse Trainers. This longer-term activity will focus on developing and supporting employers from across the breadth of the industry, including the Breeding sector, with regular and appropriate CPD.	Training & Development
23	Recruitment Initiatives Additional longer term recruitment activity will be introduced to support employers in developing relationships with communities and organisations to support the expansion of localised recruitment.	Recruitment
24	Industry People Database Ongoing data collection from across all industry sectors and an increase in the data capture of the Stable Employees Register will enable the development of a minimum viable product to develop the scope of an industry-wide People Database.	Data



How the strategy will be delivered

The People Board will continue to collaborate with both new and existing suppliers to deliver services, rather than directly providing them. This approach aims to reduce duplication and fragmentation, and ensure the delivery of sustainable, relevant, high-quality, impactful, and cost-effective services. Delivery partners should anticipate challenge, but also substantial support.

The People Board will champion these partners, promote their services, and assist them in securing funding. This collaborative model emphasises the strengths of external providers, ensuring that the services are delivered by those who are best positioned to do so, while also providing the necessary support to be successful. This strategy seeks to create a dynamic and efficient system where the Board and delivery partners work together to achieve common goals.



Investment

British horseracing spent £11.8m on people-related programmes in 2023 as well as an additional £10m on wellbeing activity. This funding was not part of a comprehensive strategy with clearly defined overarching outcomes and an evaluation mechanism. The current funding system is complex with lots of potential for overlap and inefficiency.

By adopting this Workforce Strategy, racing would reduce duplication, create efficiencies, and ensure funding within the people space is impactful and transactions are transparent. Coordination maximises the efficiency of every pound spent. It will also enable overall progress to be measured and reported on.

The People Board does not have the mandate nor resources to implement this strategy. We require the support of a range of sponsors and partnerships including the Racing Foundation, Horserace Betting Levy Board, and the British Horseracing Authority in delivering any implementation plans. Industry funding is limited with many legitimate demands aimed at securing a sustainable future for the sport.

The People Board has therefore prioritised work under three main themes:

1. Investing in measures designed to ease the short-term challenges facing employers, such as centrally supported recruitment campaigns.
2. Ensuring existing funding is delivering the highest level of impact.
3. Investing in further work that is essential in helping us better understand the issues and enable the delivery of effective solutions, for example a professionally produced workforce analysis and forecast for the industry.



05

Monitoring and Evaluation

Establishing benchmarks and targets to track success
in tackling the workforce challenges in British Racing



Monitoring and Evaluation

We have established benchmarks to track success in tackling racing’s workforce challenges.

The People Board’s ongoing responsibility is to facilitate and drive the delivery of this strategy by overseeing centrally funded projects; reporting on progress; identifying and removing blockers where possible; and by continuing to provide independent expert guidance and support on workforce issues.



If the above list of activities is enacted in full and given appropriate support within three years, the ambition is to achieve the following overarching targets:

- 1. Average vacancy rate across breeding and training yards reduced from 24% to 10%
- 2. Industry retention rates in the role of Work Rider increased by 10%
- 3. Average skill shortage of 19% across the industry halved
- 4. The average number of people with a stated intention to leave the industry within the next two years reduced from 27% to 20%
- 5. Engagement of over 50% of our workforce in continuous development experiences (currently 15%)

Specific targets for each theme have been broken down opposite.

The Longer Term

The pace of change will be determined by the resources available to deliver the ambitions laid out in this strategy. The strategy has a three-year horizon, but some elements may still be in progress or not fully achieved beyond that time.

During 2026 the People Board will conduct a review of its progress and set out options for an appropriate organisation and governance structure for a return to ‘business as usual’ where projects have reached maturity and the development of mechanisms to continue the change process where required.

Targets



Themes

- 1. Recruitment**

 - Average vacancy rate across breeding and training yards reduced from 24% to 10%
 - A greater number of foundation training attendees remaining in the industry for at least one year
 - Average skill shortage of 19% across the industry halved
- 2. Training and Development**

 - Over 50% of racing’s workforce engaged in skills development (currently 15%)
 - All licensed employers engaging in an agreed minimum number of industry recognised learning activities
 - Average skill shortage of 19% across the industry halved to 10%
 - 70% of employers rating industry provider training to be good or very good across breeding and training yards (current average 58%)
- 3. Employment Practices**

 - Increased use of regulation and inspection to set and raise minimum standards
 - Employers adopting a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment that is evident and wide-spread resulting in the number of people working across training yards and studs who believe it to be an issue is halved from 47%
- 4. Inclusion**

 - Drug and alcohol policies and support in place and being practiced across the industry
 - Traditional racing yard and stud work patterns and hours replaced with more flexible working and improved work-life balance.
 - Key stakeholder boards becoming more diverse (positions occupied by women increased from current 28% towards a long-term target of 40%, while positions occupied by people from ethnically diverse communities increases from 3%)
 - Increased confidence in harassment and discrimination reporting mechanisms, measured through an increase in reporting
 - An increase to 90% (from current 67%) of staff who agree their employer respects diversity and promotes inclusion.
- 5. Wellbeing**

 - Proportion of staff reporting an intention to leave the industry within the next two years reduced from 27% to 20%
 - Levels of usage/uptake of support services become more closely aligned with reported awareness levels
 - Significant improvements in workforce survey feedback on self-reported physical and mental wellbeing.

Enablers

- A. Communication and Engagement**

 - Survey feedback indicates that the racing workforce feels its voice is being heard and understood when key decisions on the future of the sport are made
 - The mechanisms for representation and accountability on people issues by decision-making bodies and boards are in place.
 - A hub to curate and signpost available services is available, accessible and well-utilised
 - Face-to-face contact and support activities have measurably increased
- B. Data**

 - All British horseracing industry workforce data sources are identified
 - A simple data set is in place for 75% of the total workforce
 - Quarterly publishing of key workforce metrics
 - A full specification is developed – and funding secured – for the development of an industry-wide people data platform
 - A clearly defined process and agreements are in place for the collection, storage and utilisation of people-related data

06

Conclusion

The People Board believes that if this workforce strategy is adopted, it will lead to a more impactful, healthier workforce



Conclusion



There is no doubt horseracing has a huge task ahead of it: attracting and keeping new generations of staff requires significant investment; changed mindsets and culture; and a new perspective on how some things get done.

Having obtained, in late October 2024, British Horseracing Authority Board approval of this Workforce Strategy, we have already started putting plans in place and securing funding with a short-term focus on the priority of making a difference to the urgent issues identified at the front line of the sport: those working with our horses. We will then track progress over a 3–5-year time frame using the themes and enablers as building blocks.

The People Board has been presented with a unique opportunity to try a different approach to address some long-standing people issues our sport has faced. The strategy is written for, and belongs to, the entire industry and will require its wholehearted involvement to bear fruit.

Some things will likely prove harder to achieve than we anticipate right now, and it is almost certain that other unanticipated workforce issues and priorities will emerge. We will need to maintain flexibility and adjust our flight path as and when necessary. Our commitment is to be transparent throughout by reporting progress against clear outcomes and timelines wherever we can.

The People Board believes that if this Workforce Strategy is adopted and funded, British horseracing will achieve a more than 200% return on this investment through more efficient use of industry funding, reduced wage inflation, more impactful and higher quality services and a better skilled, motivated and healthier workforce.





Appendix

APPENDIX

Case Studies



Case Study 1 - Pathways into Racing

Caitlin

Caitlin, 14, took part in the Pathway into Racing Through Pony Racing programme. The programme aims to implement a formal pathway into the horseracing industry, increasing, coordinating and maximising the impact of activities delivered with young people to expose them to horseracing. Speaking after her recent Academy Race Day, Caitlin said:

‘I’ve learned so much and gained so much knowledge and experience. I’m feeling much more confident now, not just around horses, but also at school and socially. I’m really looking forward to a career in racing now and planning to apply to Hartpury or the Royal Agricultural College when the time comes. I also plan to attend as many training courses as possible at the British Racing School.’

‘I’ve already been offered the chance to work part-time at the yard of a licensed Trainer. I’m so glad I found out about the PRA programme.’



Ruth

Ruth, 15, started out pony racing with the Pony Racing Authority before joining the Riding a Dream Academy course in the autumn of 2023. Speaking after racing at Lingfield on in October 2023, she said:

‘My biggest dream is to become a flat jockey and being given the opportunity to be in the Pony Racing Academy and take part in a race was an incredible experience and I have learnt so much.’

‘Having also had the chance to race at Ascot was unbelievable and being able to experience what it’s like in the weighing room and getting weighed out and then weighed in again after the race was a real insight of what it’s like to be a jockey. I’m very thankful to the PRA for giving me this opportunity and for the great teaching I’ve had at Ghyll Park Equestrian. I now hope to take the next step to further my dream.’

Since then, Ruth has completed the year-long Riding A Dream Academy Scholarship programme before completing the Foundation Course at the British Racing School and is now working in a racing yard.

Case Study 2 - Online Learning

TB-Ed

TB-Ed is an online learning platform designed by the Thoroughbred Breeders’ Association offering flexible, high-quality and engaging educational resources to breeding industry participants and enthusiasts on all aspects of thoroughbred breeding and stud management.

Released in 2021, it was built to fulfil the TBA’s objectives of encouraging learning and development within the British breeding industry and supporting breeders in their care of horses, participants and the environment. TB-Ed also acts as a communication tool to increase the TBA’s reach and accessibility to its membership, enabling it to engage more effectively with all sectors of the breeding industry.

Phase two of the platform, in 2023, saw improvements to the user journey and a more refined and modern identity which have resulted in a 60% increase in the number of registered users since its inception in 2021.

TB-Ed offers engaging, accessible and flexible content on a variety of topics relating to the practice and business of stud and breeding stock management. It has developed into a central repository of TBA guidance and information on topics ranging from business guidance and equine welfare to environmental sustainability. As well as courses, the platform also hosts podcasts and articles, including video recordings of filmed TBA educational events.

Content is designed to be engaging and interactive, and ranges from longer modular courses with questions to check understanding, to short micro-learning content. All content is developed in collaboration with industry experts on veterinary and stud management matters, as well as the wider racing and equestrian industry.

Development of the platform was generously funded by the Racing Foundation in conjunction with the TBA and ongoing sponsorship is provided by Weatherbys. TB-Ed acts a membership benefit for existing TBA members and is also a valuable tool to encourage new entrants to the thoroughbred breeding industry, offering selective free content for potential participants to sample before signing up as a TB-Ed subscriber.





Case Study 3 – Flexible Working in Practices

Jessica

Assistant Trainer Jessica, 42, joined the racing industry at age 17 as a trainee racing exercise groom. She has built a 25-year career in horseracing undertaking varied roles, including as an apprentice jockey, racing secretary, head groom and assistant trainer.

As a highly valued member of the senior management team, Jessica's employer did not want to lose her following the birth of her child in 2015. The directors of the business agreed a flexible and family friendly working approach with Jessica that accommodated the needs of the smooth running of the business and the changed personal circumstances of the valued employee. The directors agreed to amend the Contract of Employment and Statement of Terms to an approach based on a salary with an amended work pattern.

As the main earner in the family, Jessica needed to continue to work on a full-time basis, working part-time was not a viable option. Having previously worked a split-shift which started at 6am daily, it was agreed that Jessica would work an average of 40 hours a week each month (170 hours each calendar month) with amended hours and greater flexibility.

Jessica now starts at 8am Monday to Friday and works through, in one shift, until 2:30pm each day. Having secured appropriate weekend childcare, Jessica works the same pattern as her other full-time colleagues (6am until 12pm Saturday morning) with an additional five hours as a split-shift on Saturday and

Sunday, on her weekend to work. Jessica now has the flexibility to work from home to complete many of the administrative tasks required of her role.

All the changes in approach planned were properly communicated to every other employee. Effective communication and keeping in touch days were used whilst Jessica was on maternity leave, to ensure inclusivity in the workplace.

There have been many direct and indirect benefits from adopting flexible and family-friendly working practices. The hours of the business have been extended Monday to Friday with the visits of owners, vets and farriers easily accommodated in the early afternoon, with a highly experienced employee on site, working within their normal hours. The directors have been able to retain the existing talent and expertise of their most senior employee and not been in the difficult position of needing to recruit a new individual.



Matthew

Work Rider Matthew, 35, is an experienced work rider. He is also the primary carer for two young children, one of whom has significant additional medical needs.

Matthew made an approach to his employer to see if he could join the yard on a self-employed basis. The directors did not feel that Matthew met the strict HMRC defined criteria for being a self-employed worker so instead offered Matthew a variable hours contract.

Matthew's childcare responsibilities mean he is only able to work between the hours of 8am and 12pm Monday to Friday in term time and / or when he has appropriate childcare available. He is usually able to work every other Saturday morning, but unable to work on Sundays.

Matthew provides his available hours to work a week in advance and the directors give this valued employee as much riding as possible on the days that he is available. Paid by the hour and not the lot, Matthew's holiday pay is calculated by the hour and paid each month in arrears. Matthew's welfare is monitored, he takes an annual holiday with his family and is therefore unable to work for several weeks in each year. He is paid an equal and fair share of the yard Stable Pool Money based on the average number of hours worked over the quarter.

Matthew is an asset to the yard, experienced, positive and supportive. He is valued member of the team included in all yard communications, taking part in Open Days and Yard Events.

Melanie

Yard Based Worker Melanie, 50, was previously an experienced rider groom but an accident in the workplace and on-going medical issues meant she was unable to return to this role.

Recommended on medical grounds to work a limited number of hours on a part-time basis and to take at least one full day off every week, Melanie needed to secure a part-time contract of 24 core hours a week. Melanie joined the business working Monday to Saturday from 6am to 10am.

Melanie has all the benefits of her full-time 40 hour per week colleagues with no discrimination in the workplace. She receives her full entitlement to Yard Pool Money and Holiday Pay on a pro rata basis. Melanie enjoys taking horses racing, to protect her well-being, where possible she does this within her normal hours. Rest days are incorporated to follow a longer working day at the races. Melanie informs her line manager and the directors if she is feeling over tired or unwell so that her duties can be amended accordingly.

The contribution Melanie makes to the operation of the business is valued as she is a loyal hardworking experienced employee. Melanie offers continuity of care to the horses she looks after; with the work she undertakes and is happy in the workplace working and contributing the industry that she loves.





Case Study 4 - Employer Support through the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association

A key objective of the TBA is to help stud farm employers address pressing challenges in recruitment, skill development and retention. The TBA provides employment, business and HR guidance via its ebulletins, website and TB-Ed, but sharing experiences in-person are equally as valuable and often stimulate new ways of working. The TBA therefore organised an Employment Practices forum in Newmarket held at the British Racing School in July 2024. This was aimed at providing information on positive recruitment and retention techniques and encouraging the sharing of good practice to address workforce issues.

Sessions during the day covered the importance of a good induction and staff handbook; practical tips on staff appraisals; suggestions on benefits packages; an explanation of the activities carried out by Careers in Racing; and the new apprenticeship programme offered by the National Stud.

A presentation on the expectations of the next generation of employees was particularly illuminating, emphasising their desire for work-life balance, learning and career development opportunities and a positive workplace culture that allows employees to make a difference and take responsibility. HR and industry experts were on hand to answer questions and prompt discussion, which attendees enthusiastically participated in.

The TBA's employer support activity is generously co-funded by the Racing Foundation and the Horserace Betting Levy Board, with the TBA. The TBA gathered feedback to inform future guidance material and initiatives for breeders, and these include plans to hold more of these in-person employer forums at locations away from Newmarket in 2025.



Case Study 5 - Substance Misuse Support Network (SMSN) Newmarket

The Substance Misuse Support Network (SMSN) in Newmarket was established following a meeting of local yard managers who expressed concerns about substance misuse in their workplaces. Substance misuse is a significant issue across the country, and in tight-knit racing communities like Newmarket, anecdotally, alcohol and drug use is prevalent.

The SMSN is a new community based, peer support network, developed in close consultation with local horseracing people. The SMSN aims to address substance misuse issues by providing resources, education, and support to ensure a safe, healthy, and productive working environment. If successful in Newmarket, it is hoped that the model can be replicated in other horseracing communities around the country. The network's main aims include:

- Support staff and employers: ensure that staff are fit to perform their jobs safely and effectively, free from the influence of drugs and alcohol.
- Provide education: offer educational resources on the dangers of substance misuse tailored for horseracing workplaces and staff.
- Facilitate treatment access: create accessible routes and pathways for individuals seeking treatment for substance misuse.
- Implement workplace testing: develop guidelines and best practices for drug and alcohol testing in the workplace, assisting employers with their HR responsibilities.

The SMSN's goals are:

1. Prevent and reduce substance misuse: decrease the prevalence of drug and alcohol misuse in the horseracing industry.
2. Promote a healthy working environment: empower employers to maintain a safe workplace for both people and horses. .
3. Provide clear pathways to support: ensure all industry workers know how to access support for substance misuse issues.
4. Educate and raise awareness: inform the racing community about the risks and consequences of substance misuse.

The SMSN is committed to supporting the horseracing community by addressing substance misuse, enhancing workplace safety, and promoting overall wellbeing for all involved in the industry. The network organised a recent consultation event which was well attended by employers, with most attendees supportive of the initiative and keen to share their views, perspectives and ideas. It is hoped the SMSN will expand to become a community-led programme with support from several of racing's organisations.



**Horseracing Industry
People Board**

Horseracing Industry People Board
info@racingindustrypeople.com