

# DIVERSITY IN RACING ANNUAL UPDATE 2021

Produced by the Diversity in Racing Steering Group

# OUR VISION FOR BRITISH RACING:

We want British racing to be a diverse and inclusive sport in which everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential and where fans from all communities feel welcome.

## Introduction

Once again, positive progress has been made in 2021 to improve the diversity and inclusivity of British racing, despite the Covid-19 pandemic still having a considerable effect on "normal" activity. Racing participants have proved incredibly resilient, which in itself should be a source of pride for us all.

One milestone in 2021 was the launch of British racing's [Industry Commitment](#), a unified promise to improve diversity and inclusion across the sport made by the key stakeholders. However, as expected the highest-profile story was on the track, with Rachael Blackmore becoming the first woman to ride the winner of the

Grand National. This was a genuine milestone for British racing and, indeed, British sport. It was a magnificent moment in history that should not be underestimated.

The Diversity in Racing Steering Group (DiRSG) has continued to progress its own work to promote greater diversity and inclusion across British racing, and supports the work being led by others across the sport. As the third Annual Update from the DiRSG, this publication aims to review the progress made over the last year and importantly, set the priorities for the year ahead.



## About the Diversity in Racing Steering Group

Formed in August 2017, it is a forum for the discussion of ideas and activities, and provides strategic direction, advice and support to the industry in delivering upon set objectives. It aims to have diverse membership and operates as an independent voluntary body, whose work is reviewed and supported by the industry's Members' Committee, which comprises leaders from racecourses, participants and the British Horseracing Authority (BHA).

British racing is one sport, and it is imperative that if it is to become more inclusive and diverse, everyone within the sport must strive for one clear goal. A shared responsibility will accelerate progress.

## An opportunity for British Racing

The work of improving diversity and inclusion, and ensuring equality for all across British racing, has never been more important. Global events and high profile incidents in other sports allow everyone in racing to see the tangible benefits of taking this subject seriously, and the often very public fall out if we do not. We hope this will encourage more people across the sport to play an active role in supporting and growing existing work streams and helping to achieve our vision for British racing.

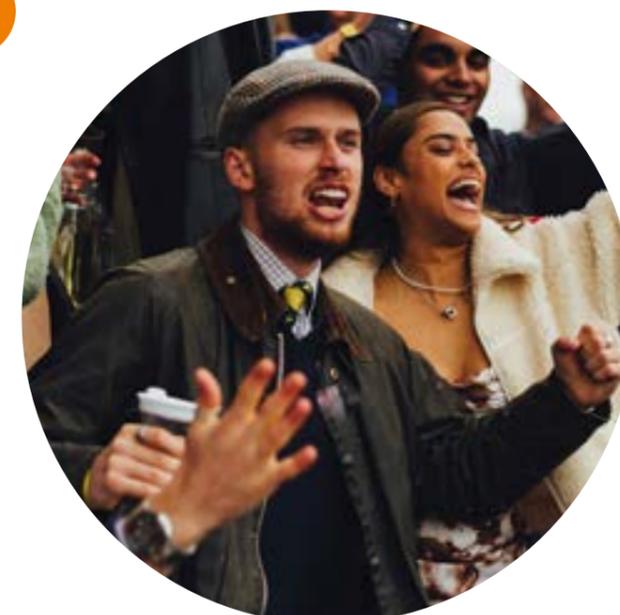
Together, we want to continue to create a sport for all - a sport enjoyed by millions across the UK, with diverse crowds cheering side-by-side and all genders and backgrounds competing together.

The DiRSG is working to ensure British racing is even more inclusive, one that provides support, opportunities and help to create an environment in which there is respect for all. Only by doing that can we attract the best talent, attract the biggest audiences and deliver the bravest ideas in the boardroom.

We want to ensure that British racing reflects modern Britain and that we keep moving forward to become even greater, together.

## 2021 Review and Priorities

The DiRSG is taking a phased approach to progressing diversity and inclusion with key objectives, each underpinned by a set of actions to focus and to deliver in collaboration with the industry. Over the last year, the focus of the DiRSG's activity has evolved as we respond to the changes in wider society and sport. We have updated our objectives to reflect this. These objectives are highlighted below, alongside a review of the progress that has been made, as well as our priorities for 2022.



## Objective 1

### Raising awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion across the whole sport

The DiRSG has always acknowledged that if racing is to become more inclusive and diverse, it is imperative that everyone within the sport strives for one clear goal, as a shared responsibility will help accelerate progress.

#### Diversity and Inclusion Industry Commitment

In 2021, British racing's leading organisations came together to improve diversity and inclusion across the sport under a unified [Industry Commitment](#). This sets out to ensure racing truly is a sport for everyone and thereby helps the sport grow and thrive in the future.

The *Industry Commitment* aims to formalise the sport's approach to diversity and inclusion and builds on the extensive existing activity already taking place. It represents part of British racing's Covid-19 'Recovery Plan for British racing', which includes putting in place foundations for a longer-term sustainable recovery for the sport through engaging new and diverse audiences in all aspects of the racing industry.

The *Industry Commitment* was initially undertaken by eight organisations - British Horseracing Authority (BHA), Racecourse Association (RCA), Racehorse Owners Association (ROA), Thoroughbred Breeders' Association (TBA), National Trainers Federation (NTF), Professional Jockeys Association (PJA), National Association of Racing Staff (NARS) and Great British Racing (GBR) in May 2021 who are collectively responsible for the operational running and promotion of British racing.

With thanks to the Racing Foundation, each organisation is being supported and advised by diversity and inclusion consultants Chris Gibbons, from Inside Inclusion, and Louise Tideswell, from Plan4Sport. The stakeholders are identifying their own priorities and activities mapped out in their individual Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans under five areas:

1. Leadership and Accountability
2. Good Governance
3. Education and Awareness Raising
4. Celebrating Racing's Diversity
5. Engaging New Audiences

These plans are published on each organisation's websites and will be reported against annually.

In December 2021, a further nine organisations signed up to this *Industry Commitment* and will develop and publish their Action Plans in the year ahead. The updated [Industry Commitment](#), with new signatories, is published alongside this Annual Update.

#### Raising Awareness and Education

In early 2022 the DiRSG will be launching a bespoke Diversity and Inclusion e-learning course, which will be available to everyone working in the industry on the [Racing2Learn](#) platform. It is hoped that this will become part of the mandatory licensing courses for jockeys and trainers at the British Racing School and National Horseracing College. This will complement the existing LGBT+ Awareness and Inclusion module, which continues to be the most popular voluntary e-learning package on the platform, with over 800 learners completing the module.

The DiRSG has also been working with the sport's stakeholders, developing a communication and engagement campaign. This will be launched in early 2022, raising awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion and providing a platform for the sport to celebrate their progress in this area.

Everyone across the sport will be encouraged and supported to share the campaign brand, film and materials, which will be available on the dedicated [Diversity in Racing webpage](#) on Racing Together, where you will also find several other Diversity in Racing resources.

#### Objective 1: 2022 Priorities

- Continue to support organisations who have signed up to the *Industry Commitment* in developing and publishing their Action Plans and reporting on progress.
- Roll out the Diversity and Inclusion E-learning module to be used by organisations and individuals across the whole sport; develop and launch a secondary module to give people the additional skills to become Diversity Champions.
- Launch and roll out the sport's communication and engagement campaign.
- Annually publish a review to recognise progress and best practice across the sport, including recognising people and organisations standing up against discriminatory behaviours.

## Objective 2

### Better understanding British racing's landscape

To truly affect change in diversity and inclusion, we need to understand the true and accurate make up of our workforce, participants and fans, and monitor how this develops over time. Without this insight, the sport will rely on guesswork and assumptions in developing strategies and it will make more challenging the measurement of success and impact.

In 2020, the DiRSG worked with Oxford Brookes University to evaluate the best practice of monitoring diversity and inclusion in other sports and industries, alongside completing an audit of what and how equalities data is currently collected across racing. The DiRSG has started to implement the recommendations by working closely with the Horseracing Betting Levy Board (HBLB) and others to establish three metrics to initially start measuring key elements of diversity and inclusion across the sport. These are:

- Board Diversity – measure diversity metrics across the British Horseracing Authority, Racecourse Association, Racehorse Owners Association, Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, National Trainers Federation, Professional Jockeys Association, National Association of Racing Staff, and HBLB boards.
- Entry points into the industry – measure diversity metrics on those who pass the foundation courses at the British Racing School and National Horseracing College.
- Gender and ethnicity across jockeys, trainers (and in due course owners) - for jockeys we will also measure the gender and ethnicity of jockeys riding in Group 1-3/Grade 1-3 races.

Work has commenced on compiling this data and developing the systems needed to collect the data where it does not exist. This will remain a priority in 2022.

The sport's online training and development platform, Racing2Learn, which was developed in 2020 and now has over 30,000 users, has provided the first snapshot of the ethnic diversity across the industry. The Racing2Learn data sample indicates that 8-10% of racing staff and 2% of jockeys are from ethnically diverse communities.

#### Objective 2: 2022 Priorities

- Work with the British Horseracing Authority to develop the systems to carry out equalities monitoring of jockeys, trainers, and then owners.
- Roll out an Equalities Monitoring Form template across the sport, so that all organisations start to collect the same data in a standardised way to feed into an industry-wide dashboard.
- Publish the equalities data where we have it, and where appropriate, to monitor progress year on year.

“BEING PROACTIVE ABOUT IMPROVING DIVERSITY IS ESSENTIAL TO THE LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF THE SPORT, BUT FIRST AND FOREMOST IT IS ABSOLUTELY THE RIGHT THING TO DO.”

Annamarie Phelps  
Chair of British Horseracing Authority

## Objective 3



### Creating an inclusive sport for all

To fulfil our ambition for racing to be a sport for all, it is important to address the unique inequalities and needs of individual groups.

#### 3.1 Disability

Progress has continued to be made in improving accessibility across the sport with [Go Racing Green](#) continuing to run stable and racecourse visits for people with hidden disabilities, while in July the Racecourse Association collaborated with Hidden Disabilities Sunflower to formally recognise the global symbol of invisible disabilities, the [Sunflower lanyard](#), at all British racecourses.

[Autism in Racing](#) was launched in May 2021 to raise awareness of autism and educate racing's workforce and customers about autism. Funded by the Racing Foundation and Sir Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust, Autism in Racing has piloted seven autism-friendly sensory spaces on British racecourses in 2021 as well as launching an [e-learning module](#) on Racing2Learn. The DiRSG will continue to work with Racing Together, British Horseracing Authority, Racecourse Association, members of the racing media and Arsenal Football Club, a recognised leader in this field within the football community.

**"IT IS VITAL THAT ALL OF US WITHIN RACING DO MORE TO INCREASE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE SPORT. THE COMMITMENT IS AN IMPORTANT STEP BUT WE NEED ACTION AS WELL AS WORDS FROM THE INDUSTRY AND IT IS INCUMBENT ON ALL OF US TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS CONTINUOUS, SUSTAINED AND TANGIBLE PROGRESS."**

Tony Langham  
Chairman of Great British Racing

#### 3.2 Ethnically diverse communities

In 2021 the sport sought to accelerate the work of raising awareness and understanding of the imbalance, barriers and issues faced by people from ethnically diverse communities, explore what racing's offer is to potential fans from all backgrounds and develop ethnically diverse talent at all levels of the sport.

Over the last year, as society and other sports have visibly and vocally shown support to end racism, racing has been criticised for being silent. The DiRSG has initially focussed on raising the sport's understanding of the complex issues of racism and racial inequalities. We have run workshops with leading charity Sporting Equals, whose aim is to promote ethnic diversity across sport and physical activity, as well as advocate for anti-racism in business and managing director of HR rewired, Shereen Daniels for the sport's senior leaders.

In early November, the first [Let's Talk About Race Webinar](#) was held, organised by the DiRSG. It opened up the conversation for the whole sport in a safe and brave space, bringing together experts and racing professionals who are interested in learning more. Hosted by HWPB Broadcaster of the Year Nick Luck, over 250 people joined the webinar to hear and learn from panellists Shereen Daniels, cricketing legend Michael Holding, Tony Langham (Non-executive chairman, Great British Racing and British Champions Series) and Royal Ascot-winning trainer Suzy Smith (National Trainers Federation Council and Diversity in Racing Steering Group member).

**"I can't thank you enough for bringing this dynamic honest panel together. Michael was raw in his honest reflection of his experiences, a wise man we could all learn from. Suzy said something that will stick with me forever: "Our behaviours are not the same as our values that we like to believe we have."**

— Let's Talk About Race Delegate

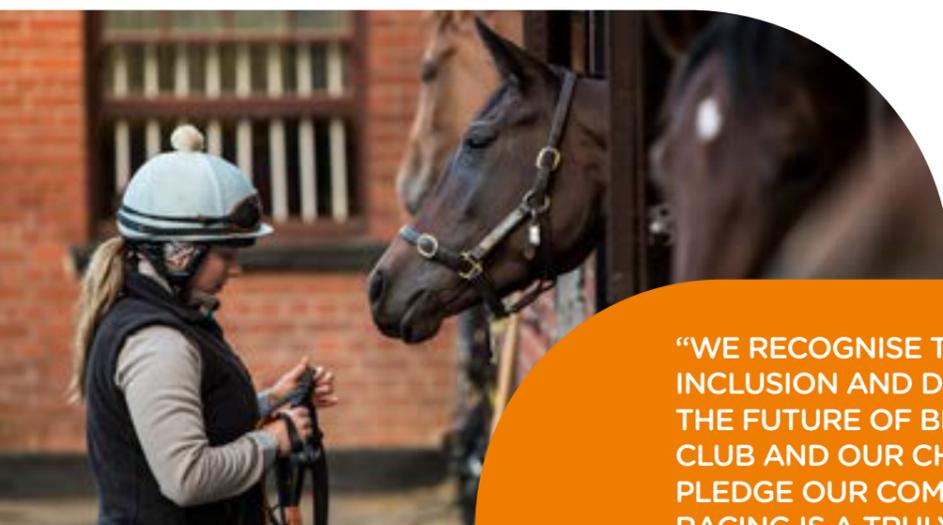


To explore racing's offer to potential fans from all backgrounds, Great British Racing and Racecourse Association carried out some research earlier this year with ethnically diverse communities to help understand their perceptions and attitudes to British racing. The evidence and recommendations from this project, which is being funded by the Racing Foundation, will help the sport, in particular racecourses, consider how we are able to reach and attract racing fans from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Furthermore, progress has been made in widening the pathway into the sport for those from underrepresented groups. To add to the existing impactful initiatives like [Take The Reins](#), Pony Racing Authority [Taster Days](#) and [CareersinRacing's Step on Track](#) - which have now been able to get back to showcasing our sport to diverse young people face-to-face - the [Riding A Dream Academy](#) and [Khadijah Mellah Scholarship](#) was launched by Naomi Lawson and Oli Bell and funded by the Racing Foundation. In addition, Josh Apiafi has continued to shine a light on diverse leading figures in the sport through the [Leading the Way](#) series on Sky Sports Racing.

**"I am a 19-year-old British Pakistani born in London, who currently studies International Relations and Politics in Manchester. Careers in Racing and the British Horseracing Authority have done an amazing job at creating an equal playing field for ethnically diverse backgrounds and have pioneered the pathway for people like myself to work in the horseracing industry. I'd like to thank the team in giving me this opportunity as I will cherish these moments forever."**

— Step On Track Participant



**“WE RECOGNISE THAT ACHIEVING GREATER INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE FUTURE OF BRITISH RACING. THE JOCKEY CLUB AND OUR CHARITY RACING WELFARE PLEDGE OUR COMMITMENT TO ENSURING RACING IS A TRULY DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING SPORT FOR ALL AND THAT WE DEMONSTRATE THIS IN EVERY WAY WE CAN.”**

**Nevin Truesdale**  
Chief Executive of The Jockey Club

### 3.3 Gender

2021 once again saw milestones being made by women in sport. Racing was very much part of that story with Rachael Blackmore becoming the first woman to ride the winner of the Grand National. There is no doubt Rachael, along with Hollie Doyle, who once again set a new record of wins achieved by a woman during a calendar year in Great Britain when riding her 152<sup>nd</sup> victory in October, are inspiring the next generation of young jockeys. However, the data makes it abundantly clear we still have a long way to go.

In 2020, the 25.92% of jockeys who are female only received 8.78% of rides and 3.67% in the top races (Grade 1-3 and Group 1-3).

The number of female jockeys overall has remained static over the last 10 years, but, positively, we continue to see a steady growth in the number of professional jockeys who are female – jumping from 11.04% in 2015 to 17.38% in 2020.

The research commissioned by the DIRSG in 2020 demonstrated there are barriers in place that affect the progress of female jockeys more than their male counterparts. Earlier in the year,

the findings of the research were presented and discussed with jockey coaches to explore ways to remove these barriers. An initial action has been the pilot of a female jockey mentoring programme throughout 2021.

A cross-industry group of jockeys, racecourses and the BHA has worked since March 2021 to agree a clear programme of improvement works to modernise and future-proof weighing room facilities across all British racecourses. The objectives are aimed at meeting the current and future needs of jockeys of all ages and genders.



### 3.4 LGBT+

*Racing With Pride*, the sport’s official LGBT+ network for British racing’s participants, workforce and fans who identify as LGBT+, as well as allies of the LGBT+ community, has continued to grow. It now boasts over 200 members and has hosted events and meet-ups throughout the year.

The network has also built significant support from across the industry. In the lead-up to Pride month in June, *Racing With Pride* hosted the *Preparing for Pride Webinar* with Jon Holmes, founder of LGBT+ Sports Media, discussing top tips for racing organisations as laid out in the *Rainbow Ready* toolkit. In Pride month itself many organisations used race names to demonstrate their support, including the European Breeders Fund (EBF), which donated its sponsored race at York racecourse.

Both organisations were fully committed in their support and used every opportunity to promote *Racing With Pride* on the day, proudly flying the LGBT+ rainbow flag above the racecourse.

**“York Racecourse is a committed advocate of Racing With Pride and are determined to ensure racing on the Knavesmire is welcoming and inclusive for all. We are actively working within racing, alongside the DIRSG to ensure our diverse workforce can be confident, comfortable and be part of a fully inclusive community.”**

**– William Derby, York Racecourse Chief Executive and Clerk of the Course**



*Racing With Pride* Members at Newmarket Races



Di Farrell-Thomas, attended on the day at York as a representative of *Racing With Pride* and the Diversity in Racing Steering Group and was overwhelmed with the reception. She commented, *"The sport's engagement with Racing With Pride means a tremendous amount to me; as someone from the LGBT+ community, it makes me feel that inclusion is not only an issue that we are concerned about addressing - it is a collective effort."*

*Racing With Pride* also hosted the [How to be a good LGBT+ ally Webinar](#), which over 100 people attended. Sky Sports Racing Presenter Vanessa Ryle hosted the online seminar, which explored what it means to be a good ally and shared practical tips and advice with panellists Liz Ward from Stonewall, BHA Board D&I Lead David Jones and *Racing With Pride* member, Lee Moulson.

**"I was so surprised and impressed to see the TV ad on Racing with Pride while sitting here at Market Rasen racecourse. It's made Pride month even more special."**

In October, *Racing With Pride* announced its sponsorship of jockey Jack Duern to celebrate National Coming Out Day and to further promote the group's good work. Jack, as one of the sport's LGBT+ role models, and fellow jockey and ally Josephine Gordon, also featured in this year's [Racing is Everyone's Sport campaign](#), which runs parallel to Stonewall's national Rainbow Laces campaign, and is led by Great British Racing. Now in its second year, it is gaining greater traction and engagement.

**"As a gay man I've been involved in LGBTQ employee resource groups and events over the years. I watched banking [in which I worked], which was a very conservative industry, evolve and it's brilliant to see this happening in racing. Racing has always been a keen hobby of mine. I've always considered that being LGBTQ in and around this industry could be difficult."**

**"I hope that by talking to Josie [Gordon] about my experiences of coming out, as well as the importance of having friends and colleagues to support and speak up on your behalf, it will spark a conversation in the racing community that it is all of our responsibly to stand up for our friends and colleagues to show that discrimination has no place in racing."**

— LGBT+ Racegoer at Market Rasen

— Jack Duern, Jockey



### Objective 3: 2022 Priorities

- Support industry stakeholders, including the British Horseracing Authority, on the roll out of the sport's Code of Conduct, establishing a set of standards that everyone involved in horseracing is expected to uphold.
- Continue to develop and publish useful best practice toolkits and case studies for the industry, for example around recruitment.
- Continue to develop the sport's education, awareness and understanding of racism and racial inequalities and work to build and demonstrate a no-tolerance approach across the sport.
- Continue to
  - support research on female jockeys' performance undertaken by Vanessa Cashmore, using the results to influence changes across the sport.
  - work with Jockey Coaching and Development team to explore improvements to the programme of support around female jockeys.
  - advise and drive progress through the sport's Weighing Room Facilities Working Group to ensure equality of facilities for all.
- Support Dr Eleanor Boden's recommendations following her PhD research findings on sexual harassment in British racing.
- Continue to drive the sport's progress on LGBT+ inclusion through *Racing With Pride*, including developing greater awareness and policy around trans inclusion.
- Publish initial findings of David Letts' PhD investigating the organisational culture and existent masculinities within the British horseracing industry following a survey released in October 2021.
- Work across the sport to develop ideas for an industry-wide mentoring scheme.



### Andrew Balding wins Inclusive Recruitment Excellence Award in Lycetts Team Champions Award 2021

Aiming to be an equal opportunities employer, the Balding team boasts a diverse mix of genders, nationalities and sexualities with team members aged from seventeen to eighty-two.

The team go out of their way to encourage a broad range of people to think about a career in the racing industry by regularly hosting groups from a range of educational establishments and clubs and taking students from different backgrounds on work experience throughout the year.

They have taken several steps to ensure employees are fully valued and supported including providing English lessons and assisting members of the team with weaker literacy skills where required. What's more, they provide a halal diet in the hostel for Muslim employees and adjust work duties to accommodate fasting during Ramadan.

**“OUR MEMBERS ARE THE HEART OF BRITISH RACING IN THEIR ROLES OF BREEDING, OWNING, TRAINING, RIDING AND CARING FOR OUR RACEHORSES. WE WANT THEM AND FUTURE GENERATIONS TO FEEL RACING IS A SPORT FOR THEM.”**

Charlie Parker  
Chairman of the Horsemen's Group



## Summary

We know improving diversity and inclusion requires long-term commitment, combined with resource and funding, along with the whole sport working to the same clear goal. The work of the DiRSG would not be possible without support from the Racing Foundation. Its grant in 2019 has enabled the delivery of the activities within this first phase of progressing diversity and inclusion, aided by the recruitment of additional resource in early 2021 in the form of the Diversity and Inclusion Project Manager, Sami Smithson.

We are grateful to all the individuals and organisations across the sport who are increasing their commitment and activity to improve diversity and inclusion in British racing, however big or small. Encouragingly, we are starting to see the difference this activity is making to individuals from minority groups.

Being diverse and inclusive in how we think and operate is not a choice. It is an absolute necessity if we are to ensure the future recovery and success of British racing. Quite clearly, it is also the right thing to do. We still have a long way to go but the sport is moving in the right direction to see effective change in the years ahead.

## Get in touch

We would love to hear your ideas, issues or about your contribution to creating a more diverse and inclusive sport. We aim to share best practice case studies to highlight and celebrate the great work being done.

Email [diversity@britishhorseracing.com](mailto:diversity@britishhorseracing.com) with your stories, plans and ideas so that we can shine a spotlight on them.

## Members of the DiRSG

**Catherine Beloff**, BHA Director of Legal and Governance

**John Berry**, Racehorse Trainer and Journalist

**Dr Eleanor Boden**, Scottish Racing Academy Manager

**Linda Bowles**, Racing Foundation Trustee

**Dr Cedric Chan**, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Veterinarian

**Guy Disney**, Walking with the Wounded and Amateur Jockey

**Zoe Elliott**, BHA Head of Careers Marketing and Recruitment

**Di Farrell-Thomas**, Hills Road Sixth Form College, Progress and Support Tutor

**Susannah Gill**, UK Tote Group Communications and Corporate Affairs Director (Chair)

**Rose Grissell**, British racing's Head of Diversity and Inclusion

**David Letts**, PhD Candidate and Self-Employed Researcher

**Lee Mottershead**, Racing Post senior writer

**Rory Palmer**, Former MEP and public policy specialist

**Rishi Persad**, Broadcaster for ITV, BBC, Racing TV

**Harriet Rochester**, Founder Rochester PR (Deputy Chair)

**Suzy Smith**, Racehorse Trainer and NTF Council Member

**Gareth Wesley**, Brand Dynamics Head of Innovation

**Laura Whyte**, BHA Independent Non-Executive Director

