



Consultation into the use of the whip in British racing

LAUNCH

Q&A

1. How do I make a submission?

The first stage of the consultation is an online questionnaire. The survey is open from 1 July for just under 10 weeks until 6 September. Links to the survey can be found here: <https://consultation.britishhorseracing.com/whip-review/use-of-the-whip-in-british-horseracing/>.

It will take approximately 20mins to complete the questionnaire, depending on how much information you would like to submit. As well as a range of set questions there are opportunities as part of the questionnaire to offer your views on any aspect of the issue.

2. How do I find more information about the whip and the whip rules?

More information about the whip, its design, the definition of acceptable use, and the rules and penalties can be found here: <https://www.britishhorseracing.com/regulation/the-whip/>

You can also view two explanatory videos about the whip:

- About the whip – its design and function <https://vimeo.com/566627070/c05f143be3>
- How the whip is used in British racing <https://vimeo.com/566294506/651809275a>

3. What will the consultation process be?

View an explanatory video about the consultation process:

- How the consultation process will work: <https://vimeo.com/565744788/ba3a790e08>

The first part of the consultation takes the form of an online questionnaire, which can be accessed via <https://consultation.britishhorseracing.com/whip-review/use-of-the-whip-in-british-horseracing/> and will run for 10 weeks until 6 September.

The second part of the consultation will include detailed discussions with relevant parties and focus groups with volunteers who put themselves forward (see Q4 below).

Following the conclusion of the full consultation process, the data, views and suggestions from all parts of the consultation will be considered by the [Whip Consultation Steering Group](#), which contains representation and expertise from across the racing industry and wider sectors including politics, horse welfare and the media.

Recommendations will then be determined by the Steering Group in conjunction with the BHA Project group.

Any resulting recommendations will then be taken out to the racing industry once again for further engagement, prior to undergoing formal approval by the BHA Board, which is currently planned to take place in early 2022.

Should there be any changes to the rules or penalties there would then follow an extensive bedding in and training period.

4. How do I join the focus groups?

The online questionnaire provides you with the option to put your name forward to volunteer for the focus groups.

5. How will my submission be assessed?

The questionnaire allows anyone with an interest in the subject to provide responses to a number of set questions relating to the whip rules and penalties, as well as the opportunity to provide more detailed, freeform suggestions or comments.

Respondents will have the opportunity to respond either as individuals and/or to submit the views of collective groups, organisations or bodies.

This will provide both quantitative and qualitative data, representing a broad spectrum of views.

Following the conclusion of the full consultation process, the data, views and suggestions from all parts of the consultation will be considered by the [Whip Consultation Steering Group](#), which contains representation and expertise from across the racing industry and wider sectors including politics, horse welfare and the media.

An expert, independent data analyst will help the Steering Group to interpret this data.

The data from the survey will be considered in conjunction with the feedback from the focus groups and detailed discussions with relevant individuals/groups (e.g. racing participants/stakeholders, welfare organisations etc) and be used as a guide for any resulting recommendations.

6. Who sits on the Whip Consultation Steering Group?

The group is chaired by former racecourse Stewards' Panel Chair, racecourse committee member and racehorse owner David Jones, who is also an Independent Regulatory Director on the Board of the BHA.

The group draws on individuals from a wide range of backgrounds across the racing industry including trainers, jockeys, owners, breeders, racecourses and stable staff. It also includes representation from wider sectors including politics, horse welfare and the media.

Full membership of the Whip Consultation Steering Group is as follows:

- David Jones (Chair), BHA Independent Regulatory Non-Executive Director
- Tom Blain, Managing Director, Barton Stud
- Henry Daly, Racehorse trainer
- Celia Djivanovic, Racehorse owner
- Tom Goff, founding partner, Blandford Bloodstock
- John Gosden OBE, Racehorse trainer
- Baroness Hayman of Ullock, Member of the House of Lords
- Dr Neil Hudson MP FRCVS, Member of Parliament, academic & veterinary surgeon
- Nick Luck, Broadcaster and journalist
- P.J. McDonald, Professional jockey
- Roly Owers MRCVS, Chief Executive Officer, World Horse Welfare, & veterinary surgeon
- James Savage, Head Lad/Assistant to Sir Michael Stoute
- Tom Scudamore, Professional jockey
- Nick Smith, Director of Racing and Public Affairs, Ascot Racecourse
- Sulekha Varma, North West Head of Racing, Jockey Club Racecourses, Clerk of the Course (Aintree Racecourse)

7. Are members of the Steering Group there to represent their various vested interests?

No. It was part of the Terms and Conditions that the Group signed up to that they are there to bring their expertise to bear, but not to be a representative for their particular sector, either of the racing or non-racing world.

The Group includes expertise from within the Racing world as well as the wider worlds of equine welfare, politics and the media.

Everyone will have a chance to express their views via the consultation.

8. Why aren't the betting public represented on the Steering Group?

Firstly, this is not true – the group includes a number of people who bet on racing and understand how the betting industry works – but it is also critical to note that it is the consultation through which representations from the betting industry and those who understand betting should be represented.

The Steering Group is not the consultation itself, it is through the consultation process that the views of all relevant sectors of the sport/industry/wider public should be represented. Everyone will have a chance to express their views via the consultation and we encourage anyone with an interest in the subject to respond.

9. Is the outcome of the consultation already determined?

Absolutely not, the Steering Group will gather information from a number of sources – including the questionnaire, focus groups and detailed discussions with relevant bodies – prior

to forming recommendations. No proposed outcome currently exists and nor will any recommendations or decisions be made until the consultation is concluded.

Everyone will have a chance to express their views via the consultation.

10. What are the possible outcomes?

The Steering Group will gather information from a number of sources – including the questionnaire, focus groups and detailed discussions with relevant bodies – prior to forming recommendations.

The Horse Welfare Board were clear that, in their view, the only explicit recommendation for immediate action relates to the need for increased penalties for whip offences and for the industry to take greater control of conversations relating to the use of the whip for encouragement, initially expressing views via an open, managed consultation process.

However, ultimately any decisions are for the Steering Group to make, and there are no restrictions on what their recommendations can entail.

No proposed outcome currently exists and no recommendations or decisions will be made until the consultation is concluded.

11. Could this consultation mean the end of the whip?

It is important to note that the whip is widely recognised as an aid to safety and correction and whips are carried in most equine sports for this purpose. It is for this reason that the Horse Welfare Board recommended that the consultation should look at the rules under which the padded whips are used – which is currently for encouragement, correction and safety – and the penalties for breaches of those rules, rather than recommending a debate on whether the whip should be banned outright.

However, the outcome of this process is not pre-determined and ultimately the Steering Group may make whatever recommendations they believe are appropriate.

One factor that will be considered as part of the consultation is whether the use of the whip for encouragement should remain in its current form. People will have the opportunity to submit their views on this issue as part of the consultation and the Steering Group will form a view on this as part of their analysis of the consultation.

12. Does the whip hurt horses?

View two explanatory videos about the whip:

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There is only one design of whip currently approved for use in British racing. It is very light, with an energy-absorbing, foam-padded design which was developed by experts from the industry in collaboration with the RSPCA. There are strict controls on its use.



The 2011 BHA whip review surmised that when used properly, “the whip stimulates a horse and should not cause pain. Inappropriate use of the whip during a race may be counterproductive and may not produce a positive response from a horse. A horse in pain will not perform at its best and is likely to underperform.”

The stated position of the BHA since the 2011 review has been that, with the appropriate controls in place, and using a specially designed padded whip, there are no indications that the whip is a welfare concern to horses. This is illustrated by that fact horses do not display visible signs of pain from use of the whip during a race.

The view of the Horse Welfare Board is that, in the time since the publication of the Whip Review, while there have been some further studies involving the whip, the science remains inconclusive.

The consultation process will provide the opportunity for further views on this question to be put forward.