



## CORONAVIRUS – ADVICE FOR TRAINERS

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 (9.00am)

New daily content flagged in red

The NTF has created this document to support trainers (NTF members and non-members) dealing with the impact of coronavirus on their business, themselves and their staff, and on the racing industry.

As no one has been through a situation like this before, the NTF won't have all the answers to your questions. Our strategy is to provide a means for sharing information and ideas so racing yards can keep operating sustainably until the virus and its effects subside.

This is therefore a living document, which we will modify as we receive new information and ideas from across the sport and from the wider community. Let us know how you and your staff are coping with the unprecedented challenges caused by coronavirus; we will include these in the next edition of this document. The date below the heading above will indicate when the document was last updated. This will be done daily.

Each of the sections below are available as separate posts on the [ntfmuse website](#). They can be found under the categories searchable at the top of the left-hand column of the *ntfmuse* home page. Go to Coronavirus and then each subcategory. **Communication from the BHA** to racing participants is being done via representative bodies like the NTF. We are posting these on a [dedicated page](#) on ntfmuse.

### 1. General

Racing's plan for supporting people, businesses and horses is [here](#) on ntfmuse.

Read the [British Government's Coronavirus Action Plan](#). This sets out some context about the virus and the different phases of the planned response. Reading this will make it much easier to understand and follow the specific advice within this document.

Public Health England has published advice on personal health and individual behaviour and the [NHS website](#) has more information about how coronavirus is spread and answers [common questions about the virus](#). See [Appendix 1](#) for personal hygiene advice.

On 30<sup>th</sup> March the BHA published its [Operational Plan for Racing](#). This plan aims to protect the health of British racing's people, horses and businesses during the pandemic and plan for the earliest possible resumption of racing and a strong recovery.

It provides an overview of the wide and comprehensive range of activity, led by the Industry's COVID 19 Group, to meet the challenges to the racing industry presented by the pandemic.

## 2. Yard management

### Travelling to work

From Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March, the Government's strict controls mean "workers should minimise all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace." You will have to find a way to organise your staff to comply as far as possible with these instructions. See this link to the [Government instructions](#).

The guidance stipulates that people can leave home to travel to and from work "***only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.***"

On this basis, and provided that travel is strictly limited to the express purposes outlined by Government, travel directly to work to care for horses may continue.

Staff who are essential to the care of horses in respect of the above, and who absolutely cannot work from home, should continue to travel to work during the period of these restrictions.

Staff at yards MUST follow Government advice relating to social distancing when outside – remaining at least two metres apart and avoiding gatherings of more than two people, apart from members of their own household, at any time.

To assist you and your staff to travel to work without hindrance, adapt this [template letter](#) for your staff to produce if challenged by the authorities. Some trainers have handed out racecourse stable passes to their staff who live away from the yard as evidence that they work with racehorses.

### In the workplace

Assess your business's infection prevention and control. THIS IS ESSENTIAL. In particular consider:

- Staff training in hand hygiene and environmental cleaning. [Show them this video of Professor Hugh Montgomery explaining the vital importance of following handwashing and social distancing advice.](#)
- Supply requirements of detergent, disinfectant and personal protective equipment
- Hand hygiene readiness e.g. ensuring hand washing in washrooms with soap and water, alcohol-based hand-rub if available and the use of disposable paper towels rather than hand-blowers and towel rolls.
- Hand hygiene signs in washrooms.
- **Social distancing:** limit the number of staff occupying enclosed spaces (e.g. tack room, canteen) at any one time. Could you divide the staff into shifts with each shift working at different times?
- Assess risk to staff who stay in **live-in accommodation** – proximity to infected people is a major risk factor.

We know some staff are not taking the advice seriously and in some yards essential protocols are not in place.

Tell your staff that failure to observe the rules is a disciplinary offence. Lead by example and ensure that all the necessary equipment and advice is available in the yard for them to wash and dry hands, clean surfaces, and keep at least 2 metres apart.

NARS and the NTF have produced a poster to encourage the right behaviour.

Discuss with all your staff if they have any individual, family or carer responsibilities, concerns or vulnerabilities that would affect their being at work.

Specifically consider:

- Maintaining hand washing and other hygiene protocols away from the workplace
- Personal health issues, as some of these increase the risk to individuals (e.g., respiratory disease, immune deficiency)
- Carer responsibilities for elderly people or vulnerable children
- Problems with childcare now schools are closed

### **When a member of staff becomes infected**

Our solicitors have advised that if an employee is off with a suspected case of Coronavirus, the current Government guidance is that there is no need to close the workplace or send other staff home as most cases turn out to be negative. However, where a case of Coronavirus has been confirmed, the workplace would be contacted by the local Public Health England health protection team (HPT) to:

- Discuss the case;
- Identify people who have been in contact with the affected person;
- Carry out a risk assessment;
- Advise on any actions or precautions to take.

A risk assessment of each setting will be undertaken by the HPT with the lead responsible person. Advice on the management of staff will be based on this assessment. The HPT will also be in contact with the employee diagnosed directly to advise on isolation and identifying other contacts and will be in touch with any contacts of the case to provide them with appropriate advice. Advice on cleaning of communal areas such as offices or toilets will also be given by the HPT.

### **Self-isolating in shared properties**

It is important that anyone self-isolating follows the Government's advice to minimise the risk of infecting others. This is particularly important in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) where individuals share amenities.

It's also important that staff in shared properties (residential let property and hostels) let the trainer and their fellow occupants know if they have symptoms, as the Government advises that the whole household should now self-isolate for 14 days.

### **Taking care of yourself and your family:**

Trainers self-isolating: How will you adapt management systems if you have to self-isolate? You should appoint a "Second in Command" to take charge of the yard.

This will be a testing time for many trainers. You will have to cope with challenges in the numerous relationships connected to your business on top of usual pressures. Find time for a break; talk to your friends and family; share experiences with your colleagues.

**Racing Welfare** offers support for everyone in racing. Should you or any members of staff need them at any point, their welfare team can be contacted during office hours via the numbers listed below.

**Malton:** 01653 696 869

**Middleham:** 01969 624 123

**Lambourn:** 01488 670 034

**Newmarket:** 01638 560 763

These office numbers can be used from 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

For 24 hour assistance call Racing's Support Line 0800 6300 443 or get in touch with online at [www.racingwelfare.co.uk](http://www.racingwelfare.co.uk). There is also a full range of self-help information available at [www.support.racingwelfare.co.uk](http://www.support.racingwelfare.co.uk).

Racing Welfare has announced a **streamlined application process for the provision of Covid-19 hardship grants** for anyone working in the British horseracing and breeding industry. The grants are designed to help those in need of immediate financial assistance due to the outbreak.

The new application process has been designed to make obtaining a hardship grant as simple and efficient as possible. The grants have been calculated into fortnightly amounts for a single applicant (£150) and that of a family (£210). The payments are intended to cover immediate basic needs, such as food, electricity and heating. See [this page](#) on ntfmuse for more details.

**Michael Caulfield**, a sports psychologist with a strong understanding and experience of racing, is available for one to one conversations with trainers to help them deal with the crisis facing them and their families. If you would like to speak to Michael, who will travel to your yard if you would like a meeting in person, please contact Rupert Arnold in the first instance. Racing Welfare may also refer you to Michael if you approach them first.

### Exercising horses

Defra has endorsed our advice to you to continue getting horses out on the gallops and other exercise areas, while observing the distancing rules with the utmost discipline. Our position is that the safety of staff and the welfare of horses is best protected when horses keep exercising.

To ensure there is a consistent message across the sport, the industry Covid Group has updated its initial guidance and has confirmed that the care horses must receive at all times includes continuing to exercise them as usual, provided guidance on social distancing and hygiene is strictly adhered to.

Our colleagues in the European Trainers Federation tell us that in all European racing jurisdictions where severe restrictions on movement have already been implemented, racehorses are continuing to be exercised.

### Horse welfare

Sadly, we are hearing about owners who have stopped paying training fees and are abandoning their horses into the care of the trainer. A plan is being developed for emergency relief for these cases

and we will update trainers as soon as possible. We will need you to complete a survey so we get an accurate picture of the scale and location of the problem.

### 3. Employment

#### Acting responsibly

Discuss with your whole team how important it is for all to act responsibly. Everyone will need to support each other. Self-isolation is **essential** where indicated but is **selfish** where not indicated. Maintaining enough staff to ensure the welfare of the horses in the yard is a joint responsibility.

Consider how to deal with staff that are advised to [self-isolate](#), even if not unwell.

Everyone with flu-like symptoms - defined as a temperature above 37.8C or a persistent cough - is being asked to stay at home for at least seven days.

Anyone who has travelled to an affected area, or who has been in close contact with an infected person, has already been asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

Close contact is defined as “spending 15 minutes within 2m (6ft) of someone with the virus, or having face-to-face contact.” **How can you manage your staff so that close contact is kept to an absolute minimum? (see Social distancing in section 2 above.)**

The [Government Coronavirus website](#) is a useful place to look for a wide range of advice on protecting yourself and other, employment and financial support, business support, school closures and childcare, travel and public services.

#### **Links to detailed advice on employment issues on *ntfmuse* website**

[Advice from ACAS about managing absences and sick pay entitlement.](#)

[New rules on Statutory Sick Pay \(SSP.\)](#)

[NTF NARS agreement on sick pay provisions.](#)

[Employees caring for children and parental leave.](#) Some trainers have paid full wages to staff who have been suspended on H&S grounds where they have concerns about the person returning from abroad.

[Managing staff numbers or reducing hours.](#) We have updated this with initial information and comment about the wage support (“furlough”) announced by the Chancellor. New Furlough [Frequently Asked Questions](#) post on *ntfmuse*. Use this [template letter](#) to record your agreement with staff who have agreed to be furloughed.

[Shielding workers: vulnerable and pregnant employees.](#)

#### Staff availability

With schools closing from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March, some racing staff will have to stay at home to look after their children. We are asking the BHA to lobby the Government to recognise racing groomers as “key

workers” on the basis that they care for horses, whose welfare is at risk if insufficient numbers of staff are available. We will keep you updated.

Other efforts are being made to ensure you have enough staff to look after horses:

- Depending on the severity of the situation in the coming weeks, consideration could be given to yards in training centres sharing staff
- Please post your vacancies on the Careers in Racing [Job Board](#)
- Subscribers to RacingGroom.com hub who are laid off are being asked to check out the Trainer Profiles for vacancies advertised by those trainers.
- Other laid off staff should check for vacancies on the Careers in Racing the Jobs Board and subscribe to the [RacingGroom.com](#) hub to view Trainer Profiles.
- If you would like a Trainer Profile page, please contact Shelley Perham on 07753 982052.
- The breeding industry could offer jobs to staff being laid off from trainers’ yards.
- Jockeys who are not facing their own commitments to family care, may be available to help out in yards.

If a yard becomes unable to operate normally due to lack of staff, caring for horses will become the priority and feed adjusted accordingly. Please let us know if it is likely that you will face this situation.

#### **4. Visitors to your yard including professional services and suppliers**

Now there is a lockdown around the nation, you should not invite or allow any visitors to your yard except suppliers of essential products and services, e.g. feed, bedding, vet, farrier, much removal.

##### **Feed, bedding and other supplies**

We understand that suppliers of feed, bedding and appropriate veterinary medicines will remain open for business under similar Government [advice](#) that allows pet shops to remain open for access to animal supplies.

Some restrictions or staffing/supply chain issues may apply in relation to individual businesses, so check directly with your suppliers.

Any business encountering disruptions in supply should contact the NTF as soon as possible because the industry is in daily contact with Defra on this type of issue.

##### **Vets and farrier visits**

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons has advised its members to reduce face-to-face veterinary consultations to focus on **emergency appointments, fulfilment of urgent prescriptions and maintaining the food supply chain**. Vets visiting the yard will want to maintain social distancing practices.

The RCVS has advised its members that vaccinations are not an essential service. The NTF and BHA are discussing the possibility of amendments to the rules of racing in case current stipulations reduce the number of horses qualified to race when racing resumes.

## **Are Farriers considered essential and will they be able to visit?**

The Farriers Registration Council (FRC)'s interpretation of the Government guidance is that Registered Farriers can continue to provide essential services to equines, and they should continue to attend to equines using their judgement as to matters of priority and/or urgency, with provisos around hygiene and social distancing. This advice is subject to change.

### **Other controls**

Businesses are deploying 'Stop' signs on entrances to buildings and yards to encourage people to consider their health status, travel history, and exposure to infected people before they enter your premises. Posters are available to use in [public areas](#) and [staff areas](#)

Maintain a log of personnel on site at all times. This will facilitate public health contact tracing, for as long as this is in place.

Ensure all staff are aware what they should do if a potentially infected person makes themselves known whilst on the premises.

Ensure that an [isolation area](#) is identified for your staff and is suitably equipped to support a person in temporary isolation. When choosing the location(s) try to avoid using areas that if occupied would impact the smooth functioning of your premises.

## **5. Racing [TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED]**

Racing had created an operational plan for racing behind closed doors and has announced that an industry group is working on a plan to resume racing from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 when these provisions will be revisited.

Only essential raceday staff will be permitted. The operating principle is "This is not a day at the races", i.e. entertainment – we are just trying to keep the business of racing going.

**Trainers** have been advised to consider what **staff levels** are required to race, ensuring horse welfare is not compromised whilst keeping the risks of transmission to a minimum. The current plan is:

**Trainers:** 1 Trainer/trainer representative and 1 senior groom per yard represented.

**Stable Staff:** 1 groom per runner allocation.

**Box drivers** will not be allowed in the racecourse unless they are performing one of the above roles. Arrangements will be put in place to ensure horsebox drivers have access to key amenities including toilets and hot/cold refreshments.

**Catering:** each racecourse may decide its policy. Check in each case on the Going page on the Racing Admin website. If catering is not available, advise your staff to bring their own food and drink. They could purchase these at services on the way to the races.

**Overnights:** each racecourse may decide its policy. Check in each case on the Going page on the Racing Admin website. Overnight catering may not be available. If accommodation is provided it must be booked in advance before the deadline and with full details of all staff attending.

**Owners** will be permitted to attend provided any attendance limits imposed by Government are not exceeded. They are limited to 2 badges, with medically most vulnerable asked to consider whether they should attend. Restrictions may be placed on numbers and no catering or refreshments would be provided.

## 6. Your business

Here are some suggestions of action you can take to reduce pressure on your business. Some of them are suggestions from trainers who have been in touch with us.

### Owners

Keep in touch with your owners, explaining racing's policy aimed at keeping the business going. They may have suggestions to support you.

Find out if their sources of income are at risk. You will need to plan now if some owners are likely to face financial distress and have to scale back their ownership. As always, be vigilant about credit management and cash flow.

You will no doubt be having discussions with your owners about plans and arrangements for the training and care of horses – whilst everything is in a huge period of uncertainty, it is possibly even more important to record any temporary variations to arrangements in writing – for example that the horses are moving on to a reduced charging structure if turned away. Your training agreement may already cover this but even so remember to discuss what other costs will continue (such as if horses are due shoeing or worming) to avoid any misunderstanding when invoices are due for payment.

The ROA has sent an open letter to its members including the message,

“Trainers are especially reliant on Owners at the moment, in order to maintain their businesses and to ensure continued care of our horses. I know we all take our responsibilities seriously in this respect. During this period, we are therefore actively encouraging Owners and Trainers to maintain strong mutual communication channels, and further support can be provided by the ROA or the NTF in relation to these areas.”

### Business rates

The Chancellor extended the retail discount for small businesses in the budget. Christopher Marriott, our rating adviser, has been working with the BHA Public Affairs team to lobby for confirmation that training racehorses qualifies in the leisure category.

In the first instance you should contact your local authority and claim relief as a leisure business. We know trainers in some areas including Newmarket, have been granted the relevant reliefs as leisure businesses, and West Berkshire Council is cancelling rate demands from 1<sup>st</sup> April for all businesses.

We have a template letter [here](#) for you to adapt and send to your MP asking him/her to confirm that racing stables qualify for the 12-month business rates holiday and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme.

We know that the Welsh Government has decided racing stables do not qualify as leisure and the BHA is making separate representation to devolved governments.



## Small Business Grant Scheme

The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant is one of the grants available to small businesses. It is worth £10,000 or £25,000 depending on the rateable value of your business premises up to £51,000. The other grant is the Small Business Grant Fund, which provides a grant of £10,000 for eligible small businesses. Go to [this page](#) on ntfmuse for more details. These grants are paid by Local Authorities so contact them for information about how to access the funding.

## Financial support from the Government

Racing has developed a request to the Government for specific measures to support businesses in British racing including trainers. The BHA has put out details [here](#) of the industry's plan to lobby the Government for support.

Senior executives from the racing industry are considering all the options for financial support after the suspension of racing. A submission **has been** made this week to the UK government, taking into account the enhanced measures announced by the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak MP, to assist British businesses and the economy.

The racing industry team has been working urgently to understand how employers and businesses in racing can access financial assistance from the government package. See our advice about the wage support under the "furlough" scheme on the [Managing staff numbers](#) and [Furlough FAQ](#) pages.

Your business cash flow may come under pressure. You can apply for [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans](#) via the British Business Bank 40+ accredited lenders.

This is a Fee free, 0% fixed rate for 12months, Max term 6 years. No more than 25% 2019 turnover. CIBL can be offered to fund ongoing payment of expenses, overheads & ongoing creditor payments for a short term period of disruption arising directly from COVID-19 in the UK. Businesses applying must demonstrate affordability, viability and the purpose. Lenders will require most recent accounts and a basic forecast. This is not a grant and will need to be paid back hence the need to show serviceability.

## Self-employed trainers

On 26<sup>th</sup> March, the Chancellor announced a support package for the self-employed. There will be self-employed trainers who may access the [Self-employment Income Support Scheme](#).

This scheme will allow you to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of your trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next 3 months. This may be extended if needed.

You can apply if you're a self-employed individual or a member of a partnership and you:

- have submitted your Income Tax Self Assessment tax return for the tax year 2018-19
- traded in the tax year 2019-20
- are trading when you apply, or would be except for COVID-19
- intend to continue to trade in the tax year 2020-21
- have lost trading/partnership trading profits due to COVID-19

Your self-employed trading profits must also be less than £50,000 and more than half of your income come from self-employment. You won't have to make a claim as HMRC will calculate the amount of benefit and contact the beneficiaries directly and pay it in June

The industry is working on a scheme to provide cash flow to support the retention of horses in yards using available reserves and charitable funding. It is too early to say how this will work but we have communicated the specific problems trainers are facing to the planning group.

#### Finance agreements and mortgages

Negotiate a repayment holiday on finance agreements for horse box/ tractor etc for at least three months. Apply for a holiday from capital repayment from your mortgage lender. We understand finance companies and banks are being extremely helpful. Negotiate a rent reduction from your landlord.

#### Insurance

We have been asked about the implications for insurance if trainers move horses to unlicensed premises. You must discuss this with your insurer but after discussing with the BHA and Lycetts, we believe your liabilities are unchanged.

Except in extraordinary circumstances and usually for big commercial coverages, your policies in common with most other insurers, **will not provide cover for interruption of business** due to COVID-19 nor any infectious diseases. Whilst there is a Prevention of Access clause under the Business Interruption section for the cover to operate, access has to be denied following physical loss or damage (caused by for example fire, storm, explosion) and as this is not the case, there is no cover for loss of trade.

In respect of Employers' Liability if a claim was to be brought by an employee who alleges you have been negligent in allowing them to contract the illness in the workplace then your Employers' Liability cover should respond to protect you provided you can show you have taken reasonable precautions to prevent such illness or injury.

#### RIABS contributions

Annual employer and first quarter employee RIABS contributions **and Death in Service benefit** will be charged as usual in April. We discussed with the RIABS trustees and the NTF Council the potential for phasing the annual employer payments over the year to alleviate trainers' cash flow. However, it was clear that the unpredictability of changes to employment rates created too much risk for the funding of the charity, which is run on a mutual basis.

#### Racehorse Trainers Benevolent Fund (RTBF)

The RTBF is an NTF charity supporting members who face financial hardship. Although it does not have massive reserves, the Council wants us to use the money to fund mental health support for trainers who are finding it difficult to cope with this crisis. Please contact Rupert Arnold or any of the NTF executive if you need help. This will be totally confidential.

## BHA Licensing and Rules of Racing

If you think of any changes or relaxations to licensing requirements or Rules of Racing that would make it easier for your business to operate and survive through the crisis, please contact Rupert Arnold or Dawn Bacchus (details in 7 below.) We will raise these with the BHA, which has said it is open to suggestions.

**Equine flu vaccinations:** The BHA has agreed to alter the equine flu vaccination requirements as a result of vets being told by the RCVS that they should not visit yards to do annual boosters. There will be a relaxation of the current requirement for a booster within 9 months of raceday – for the remainder of 2020, all horses must have received booster vaccinations of **not more than one year apart**. See full details on ntfmuse, [here](#).

## **7. Contacts**

NTF Office **01488 71719**

We will have one person (either Dawn or George) in the NTF Lambourn office on most days during office hours. As they will be responding to many calls, please leave a message if you receive the answer message. Sometimes we may switch to the personalised Moneypenny answering service. The people who answer will take a message but will not be able to answer your questions. We will respond as soon as one of us is available.

Mobile phone numbers and emails for the team are:

Rupert Arnold **07899 797010 / r.arnold@racehorsetrainers.org**

Dawn Bacchus **07796 316268 / d.bacchus@racehorsetrainers.org**

George Noad **07467 946511 / g.noad@racehorsetrainers.org**

## **8. Useful web links**

[Professor Hugh Montgomery explains the vital importance of following hygiene and social distancing advice.](#)

[BBC News Coronavirus pages](#)

[Ntfmuse Coronavirus articles](#)

[HM Government Business Support pages](#)

[HM Government Coronavirus pages](#)

[BHA central Coronavirus information](#)

## Appendix 1 – Personal hygiene advice

This was provided by a San Diego University virologist, who has researched coronaviruses.

- 1) NO HANDSHAKING! Use a fist bump, slight bow, elbow bump, etc.
- 2) Use ONLY your knuckle to touch light switches, lift buttons, PIN payment terminals etc. Lift the vehicle fuel dispenser with a paper towel or use a disposable glove.
- 3) Open doors with your closed fist or hip – do not grasp the handle with your hand, unless there is no other way to open the door. Especially important on bathroom, office and commercial doors.
- 4) Use disinfectant wipes at the shops when they are available, including wiping the handle and child seat in trolleys.
- 5) Wash your hands with soap for 10-20 seconds and/or use a greater than 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer whenever you return home from ANY activity that involves locations where other people have been.
- 6) Keep a bottle of sanitizer available at each of your home's entrances AND in your car for use after getting fuel or touching other contaminated objects when you can't immediately wash your hands.
- 7) If possible, cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard. Use your elbow only if you have to. The clothing on your elbow will contain infectious virus that can be passed on for up to a week or more.
- 8) Use Latex or nitrile latex disposable gloves when going shopping, using the fuel pump, and all other outside activity when you come in contact with contaminated areas.

Note: This virus is spread in large droplets by coughing and sneezing. This means that the air will not infect you, but all the surfaces where these droplets land are infectious for about a week on average - everything that is associated with infected people will be contaminated and potentially infectious. The virus is on surfaces and you will not be infected unless your unprotected face is directly coughed or sneezed upon. The only way for the virus to infect you is through your nose or mouth via your hands or an infected cough or sneeze onto or into your nose or mouth.

- 9) Use disposable surgical masks to prevent you from touching your nose and/or mouth
- 10) Zinc lozenges have been proven to be effective in blocking coronavirus (and most other viruses) from multiplying in your throat and nasopharynx. Use as directed several times each day when you begin to feel ANY "cold-like" symptoms beginning.