

For immediate release – 10 July 2020

BEF statement

The First Ministers for Scotland and Wales have announced new lockdown measures in the past 36 hours which will allow further equestrian activity to resume in the devolved nations. Meanwhile, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has unveiled plans to help the UK recover financially from the pandemic.

Scotland

Nicola Sturgeon announced yesterday that the numbers of people who can meet increase as of 10 July, meaning that riders, vaulters and drivers can gather in larger groups, but the two-metre social distancing requirement remains in effect. In summary:

- Riders/drivers – can participate in groups of up to four households at a time, to a maximum of 15 people, in an outdoor environment. Up to two households at a time, to a maximum of eight people, can meet in an indoor setting. This limit doesn't apply to young people who are under 18 years of age, and children under the age of 11 no longer need to socially distance indoors. Young people aged 12–17 must continue to socially distance.
- Coaches – lessons of up to four households at a time, 15-person maximum including the coach, can take place in an outdoor environment. Lessons of up to two households at a time, eight-person maximum including the coach, can take place in an indoor setting. Coaches can meet with a maximum of four households per day in total.
- Centres – lessons of up to four households at a time, 15-person maximum, in an outdoor environment. Riding, vaulting and carriage-driving are being classed as outdoor sports in Scotland, even if it takes place in an indoor arena.

In Scotland, it's permissible to ride/drive in covered arenas, but the rules/numbers for indoor activity apply. The restriction in numbers make a return to competitive activity difficult, and horsescotland will continue to work closely with sportscotland on this front. Competition plans already approved for England are being modified to make any changes required for Scotland, in the hope that shows can return soon.

In addition, horsescotland are seeking clarification from sportscotland about whether equestrian coaches can hold sessions with a greater number of participants, both per session and per day, if those they are coaching are under the age of 18 years.

Further info:

[Gov.scot – phase 3 update](#)

[Gov.scot – staying safe](#)

Wales

At lunchtime today, Mark Drakeford made a number of staged lockdown relaxations, with gathering numbers being increased and a green light for competitions to resume with restricted numbers, both in the first phase, from 13 July. In summary:

- Riders/drivers – can participate in gatherings up to 30 where activity is supervised, in an outdoor setting only.
- Coaches – may instruct individuals or groups of up to 30 people, outdoors only. There is no limit on the number of sessions per day, and coaches may travel to clients or vice versa.
- Venues – may outdoor training facilities may open for people to travel to for the purposes of hire or tuition. Organised outdoor gathering numbers must be limited to 30 people at time.

All of the above points are effective as of 13 July. For updates on competitions in Wales, please visit the relevant member body website.

Further info:

[GOV.wales – coronavirus restrictions review](#)

England

Last night, the government announced that [indoor sports facilities](#) may open from 25 July. This will include activities such as the use of a mechanical horse and gym equipment for off-horse activities in enclosed spaces. The use of indoor arenas has been permissible in England since 4 July.

There is [detailed guidance on opening of these types of indoor facilities](#) to help providers.

The government has also announced that team sports may resume once plans have been approved by DCMS. We will work with our relevant member bodies, including Pony Club, British Equestrian Vaulting, Mounted Games Association of Great Britain, British Horseball Association and UK Polocrosse Association, to provide plans to DCMS for government approval.

UK government summer statement

Chancellor Rishi Sunak delivered his summer statement on 8 July, which contained several initiatives around 'plans for jobs' that could help equestrian businesses. These include:

- Employers who took advantage of the furlough scheme could benefit from a 'job retention bonus' of £1000 if they retain previously furloughed staff until the end of January 2021, provided the workers earn over £520 per month.
- Employers are being financially encouraged to take on apprentices/trainees and to create jobs for 16 – 24 year olds, with bonuses of between £1000 and £2000.

- A new 'kickstart' scheme that helps to fund work placements for 16– 24 year olds on universal credit.
- Equestrian venues with an on-site café, restaurant or bar (eat in and/or take away) may be able to take advantage of a six-month cut in VAT from 20% to 5%. The new 'eat out to help out' scheme, which offers a government subsidised 50% discount for each diner, up to £10 per head, from Monday to Wednesday throughout August, could also be implemented.

Further info:

[Gov.uk – A plan for jobs speech](#)

[Gov.uk - A plan for jobs](#)

Competition and camps

At British Equestrian, we have supported our Member Bodies their efforts to develop their own guidance around the current government regulations and advice that works for their sport. However, we have no link or responsibility for shows or camps that run outside our Member Bodies (i.e. those that are not run by an affiliated discipline, Pony Club, British Riding Club or Riding for the Disabled Association).

'Unaffiliated' shows or camps run outside our Member Bodies may take place in England, Northern Ireland and Wales (the latter from 13 July only and with restricted numbers), provided they adhere to government guidance, health and safety legislation and the requirements of their insurance company. It is therefore possible these shows may run in a slightly different way to that set out by our Member Bodies, but still meet these necessary requirements.

We would recommend you do not attend shows that you consider to be in breach any of these requirements because not following the guidance outlined above, risks the organisers' insurance being forfeited, or the event being cancelled at late notice or closed down by the police. By attending shows run by our member bodies, you can be guaranteed that are all done in a way that adheres to the current regulations and guidance.

Use of indoor equestrian facilities

The gov.uk website has now been updated to show the use of 'indoor' schools is permitted (in England) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-phased-return-of-outdoor-sport-and-recreation> (see horse riding section).

If you have any venues that are struggling with their Local Authorities, you can point them in this direction if they wish to see it 'in writing'.