

For immediate release – 21 May 2020

BEF statement: current position on resumption of equestrian activity

Further to the guidance released by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on 13 May and British Equestrian's subsequent statement on Friday 15 May, equestrian activity may resume in an outdoor environment only in England. Current lockdown restrictions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland restrict riding for exercise and preferably within the boundaries of where the horse is kept.

The current government position in England is as follows:

'The government has announced that people can go outside more than once a day for exercise, alone, with members of their household, or with one person from outside of their household as long as they are following social distancing guidelines. You must still only exercise in groups of no more than two people, unless you are exercising exclusively with members of your household.'

'Outdoor sports courts and other outdoor sporting activities are permitted to reopen if those responsible for them are ready to do so and they can do so safely, following public health guidance. Indoor facilities such as clubhouses should be kept closed, apart from toilets and throughways. Clubhouse bars and restaurants can also offer take-away services.'

Indoor schools do not fall under outdoor facilities and as such should remain closed to the public and clients at present. An outdoor arena with a roof (but no sides/walls of any construction) is permissible. If access to an outdoor facility and/or toilets is via an indoor arena, this is permissible solely for access and two metre social distancing must be maintained.

Clients should visit as an individual, with members of their household, or meet with one individual from another house (fellow client or coach) with social distancing at all times. Any coaching activity must be on a one-to-one basis, just a coach and pupil. This means no group lessons, clinics or coaching sessions are permitted, even if the pupils are from the same household.

Malcolm Wharton, British Equestrian Chairman commented; "In any dialogue with Sport England and the Sport & Recreation Alliance, the position of outdoor activity only has been made very clear. We understand that this may be a source of frustration for some, but we have to conform to the advice given by government and implement the guidance to the letter. This is the first stage in moving us out of lockdown and, for some, it will take longer to be in a position to open their facilities, but I would ask them to show patience. We all have a part to play and if we continue to support the guidance and the numbers around the coronavirus continue on a downward trend, then equestrian facilities can fully open for business."

Outdoor venues should reopen only when they are confident they can fulfil the requirements, and are in a position to reduce any risk of transmission for their staff and clients. This includes:

- Any activity should fully align with government guidance regarding public health, social distancing and hygiene
- All attendees can maintain the social distancing standard of two metres
- Good hygiene practice is implemented throughout opening, including hand-washing facilities and/or hand sanitiser stations, and regular cleaning

- Anyone involved who is symptomatic or suspects they have been exposed to the virus does not take part and remains at home.
- Participants should be individuals, members of the same household, or two people from different households with social distancing at all times. Any coaching activity must be on a one-to-one basis.
- Organisations/venues should publish an action plan detailing their plans to re-open safely and how they're managing risk
- Organisations/venues should be flexible and able to quickly adapt to any changes in government guidelines

Helpful links for operators:

[GOV.UK – guidance to the public on returning to outdoor sport and recreation](#)

[GOV.UK – guidance for providers of outdoor facilities](#)

[Sport & Recreation Alliance facilities guidance](#)

[Sport England facilities guidance](#)

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