

For immediate release – 12.11.20

BEF update: Defra clarification

We received an update late on Thursday from Defra and DCMS via the British Horse Council and British Horse Society following our combined request for clarification on the recent legislation concerning the National Restrictions now in force across England and how they impact on the training in the equestrian community.

The Defra Animal Welfare Team has now confirmed the following:

- Riding centres/schools cannot reopen to deliver lessons unless these form part of the core curriculum of formal education or professional/work-related training/development. This includes 1-1 training sessions.
- Employees of the riding centre may continue to visit the premises to maintain the property, and care for the animals located there, including to exercise them.
- You can continue to attend a riding centre/school to care and exercise a horse where you are the owner, loaner or carer of that horse.
- You may continue to exercise, including riding, a horse you own or care for in a public outdoor place as part of outdoor recreation. This can be within your same household or support bubble, or in a 1-1 meeting with one other person you don't live with.

This update is not what we had hoped as riding schools must close for recreational lessons and only those who provide formal education or training including training for regulated qualifications e.g. BHS stages 2 to 4 may remain open.

Those schools which are required to close are advised to contact their Local Authority for details of the business grants available where they must stop trading due to the legislation on national restrictions in England.

Thank you for your patience while this information was confirmed and we will continue to work on your behalf with our member bodies in the best interests for the industry and equine and human welfare.

Here's a few FAQs to help for those based in England:

CAN I TRAVEL TO CARE FOR MY HORSE?

You can travel to care for and exercise a horse that you're responsible for. However, you should limit the number of journeys that you make, and only undertake essential travel.

HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN I MEET WITH?

You can meet outdoors with one person from outside your household bubble or linked bubble.

WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN I DO WITH MY HORSE?

Horses may be ridden for exercise purposes only, including hacking and using a private arena at your yard. If you hack in outdoor public spaces, you may do so with members of your own household or one person from another household for exercise purposes.

CAN I TRAVEL MY HORSE FOR HACKING PURPOSES?

You may choose to travel your horse to make use of public open outdoor spaces where horses are permitted, such as common land or a beach, but should only do so if it's necessary to meeting your horse's welfare requirements.

CAN I TRAVEL MY HORSE TO A TRAINING VENUE?

Travelling to a venue and paying to ride on the premises, including farm rides, arena hire, cross-country courses and gallops, is not permitted and all venue hire should be suspended for the period of the lockdown. All competition and training activity organised under the auspices of our member bodies has been suspended until 2 December.

CAN I TRAVEL MY HORSE TO MY COACH FOR A LESSON?

At present, British Equestrian doesn't have clear guidance from government in regards to whether you're able to travel your horse to your coach's yard. Therefore, we would not encourage you to do so. If you can justify your travel within the restrictions of the legislation and feel you can reasonably answer if stopped and challenged by the authorities, you must make your own decision on taking part.

WILL MY LIVERY YARD BE ABLE TO STAY OPEN?

Livery yards can remain open for horse owners, loaners and sharers to care for and exercise their horse. However, the yard owner or manager may choose to put additional restrictions or public health measures in place for your safety.

CAN EQUINE PRACTITIONERS VISIT MY HORSE?

Farriers, vets, dentists, physiotherapists, grooms and other equine practitioners can continue to operate, provided that they have COVID protocols and risk assessments in place to maintain safe working conditions. If you're an equine practitioner and unsure about what you can and can't do during lockdown, we recommend contacting your profession's governing body.

I'M A COACH – AM I STILL ABLE TO WORK?

Coaches can continue to travel to work where they can't work from home. Coaching only may take place on a one-to-one basis in public outdoor spaces.

I OWN A RIDING CENTRE – CAN I STAY OPEN DURING LOCKDOWN?

We now have confirmation that riding centres and schools must close for recreational lessons and only those who provide formal education or training including training for regulated qualifications e.g. BHS stages 2 to 4 may remain open.

If you are the owner, loaner or carer of a horse kept on riding centre or school premises, you can continue to attend a riding centre/school to care and exercise that horse.

WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT COVID-19 LEGISLATION?

Further details about the national lockdown in England are available [here](#).