

Owner Protocols: attending racing behind closed doors during national restrictions

November 2020

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Section A: General guidance

1. Overview

From **Thursday 5 November**, the UK Government will introduce [new national restrictions](#) for England, which are due to apply until 2 December.

The Government has confirmed that, as an elite sport, racing can continue behind closed doors, provided that attendees continue to adhere to the government-approved infection control measures in place to reduce the spread of the virus.

Following consultation with government, owners **will be permitted** to attend race meeting during this period, with revised measures introduced in line with the restrictions due to be imposed.

The following will **apply from 5 November until 2 December**:

- A maximum of two owners (or representatives) per horse, complying with the restriction that limits social mixing between households. Owners must not pass their unused badges to owners without horses competing that day or to other racegoers
- Owners' time on course will be limited, as was the case when they returned to the racecourse in July. Owners are requested to arrive at the racecourse no more than 45 minutes before their first horse is due to run and leave the racecourse as soon as they can after the last race in which they have a confirmed runner.
- Racecourses will not be able to provide hospitality or alcohol, in line with the government's decision to close hospitality settings including restaurants, cafes and bars.
- Pre-registration is essential. This process will be administered by the RCA's Privilege Access Swipe System (PASS) [or via direct contact for racecourses without PASS] and only confirmed attendees will be granted access to the racecourse. Owners will be **emailed automatically** with details of how to register once their horse is entered to run.
- All owners attending a fixture are required to complete the Owner health screening process. This includes an [online learning module](#) and personally administered health assessment to be completed in advance of raceday, followed by health questions and a temperature check on arrival at the racecourse.
- Owners should travel directly to and from the venue without stopping where possible, and must not car share with anyone outside their own household or support bubble, or with anyone who will be in the Green Zone during the meeting.
- All owners will be asked to provide their contact details on arrival at the racecourse, to support NHS Test and Trace requirements and British racing's contact tracing system.
- Owners have access to dedicated 'Owner Zones', which are physically separated from the 'Green Zone' used by raceday workers (trainers, stable staff, jockeys, officials, media etc.) by at least two metres. For infection control purposes, crossing between the zones is restricted to **essential racecourse (e.g. medical) staff only in very limited circumstances**. Owners must remain in the Owner Zone, but briefing areas enable owners to speak to trainers and jockeys in line with the protocols.
- Face coverings must be worn **at all times**, unless specific exemptions apply.

The owner protocols for the period of national restriction have been developed in line with government guidance and reflect the tighter controls that will apply around gatherings, hospitality, and travel. They have been designed to safeguard attendees by minimising the risk of infection and protect the integrity of behind closed doors racing.

All owners attending a race meeting must ensure that they have read and understood this document, together with the relevant sections of the British Horseracing Authority's (BHA) [guidelines and operating procedures](#) for behind closed doors racing. Owners are also requested to familiarise themselves with current government advice on COVID-19 (see 2, below).

This owner-specific document falls under the BHA [guidelines and operating procedures](#) for behind closed doors racing. Unless otherwise stated below, the wider industry protocols take precedence.

This document will be updated periodically, in line with changes to government guidance around COVID-19 and the return of sport.

- For information on the return of owners, please contact the ROA on 01183 385680 or via: info@roa.co.uk. The ROA is contactable 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.
- For specific questions about the RCA's PASS please contact the PASS Helpdesk on 01933 270333 or via pass@weatherbys.co.uk. The PASS helpdesk is contactable 9am-5pm Monday to Friday and 11am-2pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

2. Government guidance

a) General guidance

Please note that from 5 November to 2 December, [new national restrictions](#) apply across England. Different rules are in place in Scotland and Wales, and owners should check the position with the relevant racecourse.

All owners must ensure they have read and are familiar with the latest government guidance and public health advice on COVID-19 before attending the racecourse.

- UK Government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Scottish Government guidance: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>
- Welsh Government guidance: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

All racecourses remain subject to local authority clearance and if a racecourse is unable to accommodate owners, you will be notified in advance.

b) Guidance for behind closed doors sport

The UK Government has also published specific guidance around the return of [elite domestic sporting competition behind closed doors](#), which sets the minimum standards that sport is required to meet to resume competition.

During competition, racecourses are classed as elite sport venues (as distinct from other hospitality businesses) and must adhere to strict guidelines around entry requirements, such as health screening and restricting access to personnel with essential functional roles.

The government guidance underpins the protocols, entry requirements and screening processes defined in this document and British racing's [guidelines and operating procedures](#) for behind closed doors racing.

3. Medical explanatory note – entry screening, social distancing, and face coverings

As part of British racing's commitment to return safely to racing behind closed doors in line with the government guidance outlined above, a health screening process is in place for all racecourse attendees to safeguard their health and wellbeing. This process has been developed in consultation with government and public health officials.

Racing is a predominantly rural sport, which takes place in outdoor locations where the risk of virus transmission is recognised to be lower. It is also a non-contact sport, which enables social distancing at two metres to be delivered more consistently than other sports.

During this period of national restrictions, the number of attendees at the racecourse will be kept to an absolute minimum, with attendance restricted to two owners per horse, in line with government guidance that limits social mixing between households.

To further reduce the potential of an interruption to racing because of a case of Covid-19 causing 14-day quarantine of racecourse contacts, the decision has been made to:

- physically separate owners coming onto a racecourse from other raceday workers by using a [zoning approach](#)
- require all owners attending race meetings to undergo a two-step health screening process, which comprises an online learning module and [personal health assessment](#) prior to raceday, and [entry screening](#) (health questions and temperature checks) on arrival at the racecourse.
- require all owners to wear face coverings **at all times** while at the racecourse. This is an additional layer of protection, which must be followed alongside other infection control measures like social distancing and frequent handwashing (see 16 below)

This approach, supported by government, also means that there would be currently no need to revise other elements of the screening program such as by introducing laboratory testing for all racecourse attendees.

4. Owners' responsibilities

Owners should be aware the BHA has made a number of changes to the Rules of Racing to cover the new and revised protocols in place following resumption. All owners entering a racecourse should be aware of the Covid-19 specific requirements that sit within the Rules of Racing and which are outlined [here](#).

Please also be aware that by attending a racecourse, owners acknowledge and agree that notwithstanding the risk mitigation strategies employed by the BHA and other industry bodies in accordance with Government guidance, it is impossible to eliminate all risk and there remains the potential for unintended transmission of COVID-19 between attendees.

All attendees must play their part in minimising the risk to themselves and others by complying with these guidelines, racecourse terms and conditions of entry, and the COVID-19 requirements as set out in the Rules of Racing.

Section B: Prior to arrival at the racecourse

5. Registering to attend a race meeting

Access to the racecourse will be strictly limited to a maximum of two owners (or representatives) per horse. An owner with multiple runners at a meeting is therefore permitted one badge for themselves, plus one guest badge per horse.

Pre-registration is essential, and anyone not registered to attend **will not** be granted access.

Only owners with horses racing that day – either individually owned or through a syndicate – are permitted to attend. Owners must not pass their unused badges to owners without horses competing that day or to other racegoers. This is a breach of the current restriction imposed by the UK, Wales and Scottish governments on spectators attending all sport events behind closed doors (see Government guidance, above).

Owners planning to attend to watch their horse(s) run **must** register their attendance using the RCA's Privilege Access Swipe System (PASS) – an existing system which manages the complimentary access into racecourses for owners.

This should be completed as early as possible in advance of the race meeting. The deadline to register to attend is **4pm the day before the fixture**.

Once a horse is entered to run, registered owners (or Syndicators/Club Managers) will receive a confirmation email inviting them to register those who will be attending the race meeting.

To register your attendees, please log into PASS (<https://www.rcapass.com/>) and submit the names of the individuals who will attend the racecourse. As explained above, all names must be submitted by 4pm the day before the fixture. Changes after that time will not be possible.

- Owners with a runner at **Cheltenham, Kelso or Hexham** will be **contacted directly** regarding their arrangements as these courses do not use PASS and badges cannot be requested through the system.

For the avoidance of doubt, for Syndicates and Racing Clubs, it will be the responsibility of the Syndicator/Club Manager to submit the names of those individuals attending the fixture. In all other instances it will be the responsibility of the owner, and any requests for badges by a third party (e.g. your trainer) will not be accepted.

Internationally based owners who are not registered in the UK, should contact the racecourse directly to register attendance. This should be completed **4pm the day before the fixture**. For Racing Managers who require assistance registering attendance on behalf of owners please contact the PASS helpdesk.

Children can attend as one of the owners/representatives if pre-registered. All children attending will undergo the entry screening process as standard.

If you have reduced mobility or a disability of any kind and require additional assistance on raceday, please notify the racecourse directly once you have registered your attendance through PASS, and they will assist you further.

Please note that if a horse is declared a non-runner, the owner should **not** attend the fixture.

For assistance with the PASS system, please contact the PASS helpdesk on 01933 270333 or by email: pass@weatherbys.co.uk.

6. Online COVID-19 learning module

All owners (and guests) must complete an owner-specific [online COVID-19 learning module](#) prior to raceday.

This will ensure owners have a baseline understanding of COVID-19, social distancing, and hand and respiratory hygiene, to help keep you and other safe on the racecourse.

The online learning can be accessed [here](#). Please watch the videos and complete the online form, confirming that you have understood the information provided.

The online module only needs to be completed **once** (before your first racecourse attendance) and owners do not need to produce proof of completion on arrival at the racecourse.

Please note that owners who have already taken the Racing2Learn education module do not need to complete this online COVID-19 learning module.

For support, please contact the ROA on 01183 385680 or via: info@roa.co.uk. The ROA is contactable 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.

7. Personal health assessment

Unlike participants and raceday workers, owners will not be required to complete a mandatory health screening questionnaire prior to attending the racecourse. This reflects the fact that owners will not interact with other raceday attendees and are more able to maintain social distancing at all times.

However, to minimise risk for yourself and other owners, we ask that all owners assess their own health ahead of attending every fixture. To do this, owners should ask themselves five questions:

- i. Are you in a vulnerable person category, as [defined by NHS guidance](#)?

If yes, please consider carefully whether you should attend a race-meeting. If you need further advice, please contact your GP.

- ii. Do you have a fever, cough, and/or a loss of sense of smell or taste? These are symptoms of Covid-19 infection.

If yes, you cannot attend a racecourse until you have contacted NHS 111 and completed any testing or quarantine period.

- iii. Have you been contacted by NHS Test and Treat within the last 7 days and advised to self-isolate?

If yes, you cannot attend a racecourse.

- iv. Have you travelled from a country not on the [UK Government exempt list](#) in the last 14 days?

If yes, you cannot attend a racecourse until you have completed 14 days quarantine from the date of your return to the UK unless in a [specified exempt job](#).

- v. In the past 7 days have you had contact with any laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 patients when you were NOT wearing the appropriate PPE or in the past 14 days has any member of your household had symptoms of Covid-19?

If yes, you cannot attend a racecourse until you have contacted NHS 111 and completed any testing or quarantine period.

Owners are not required to submit their responses but must answer the questions truthfully and stay away from all racecourses if required.

8. What to bring

Please make sure you arrive at the racecourse with your:

- A face covering (See 17 below)
- Photographic ID (a copy on your phone is acceptable) – you will require this to gain entry to the racecourse.
- Your RCA PASS card - if you have been allocated one as a registered owner.

You may also wish to consider bringing your own alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

9. Travelling to the racecourse

Owners should travel directly to and from the venue without stopping where possible, and avoid car sharing with anyone outside their own household or support bubble, in line with [government guidance](#). If, on arrival, one person does not pass the required screening checks, everyone in the vehicle will be requested to leave the site. This is to help protect the health and wellbeing of other raceday attendees.

We also ask that owners and trainers **do not** travel to the racecourse in the same vehicle, as they will be entering different infection control zones on arrival at the racecourse. We know that the more interactions between different people from different households (and particularly from different areas of the country), the greater the risk of transmitting the virus.

Section C: Arrival at the racecourse

10. Attendance list

Only owners who have registered their attendance using the RCA's PASS should travel to the racecourse. The deadline to register to attend is **4pm the day before the fixture**.

Owners who are not registered to attend will not be granted access to the racecourse and should not attend the fixture. If a horse is declared a non-runner the attached owners should also not attend the fixture.

Please note that all owners badge schemes are suspended at present and all attendees must be attached to a runner.

11. Entry screening

Owners are asked to make their way to the owner's entrance, which will be clearly signposted. This will be staffed from one hour before the first race, so no entry will be permitted before this time.

On arrival, owners will be asked to provide photo ID as proof of identity, before answering three further questions about their current health. This will be followed by a temperature check. Your temperature will be taken twice in quick succession. If on both occasions this temperature exceeds 37.8°C, owners will not be granted access to the racecourse and will be advised to travel home.

Any individual that fails the on-course screening will be required to **either**:

- provide evidence of a negative Covid-19 test, which can be booked on the [NHS website](#).

- **or** complete a minimum of 10 days of isolation depending on advice received from NHS Test and Trace before re-admittance to a racecourse. For more information please contact the ROA on 01183 385680 or via: info@roa.co.uk.

Owners are reminded that if any member of the same vehicle fails to clear the entry screening process all those travelling together will be denied entry onto the racecourse. Individuals will be re-admitted to the racecourse once the individual with the raised temperature has either had a negative test or if positive all contacts have followed the advice received from NHS Test and Trace.

On successful completion of the entry screening process, owners will be able to gain access to the racecourse and will be provided with a wristband identifying that they have undergone the required screening. As with the rest of the racecourse, the entrance will be monitored throughout the day by a Social Distancing Officer to help maintain social distancing and all COVID-19 protocols.

All owners and their guests will be asked to provide their contact details on arrival at the racecourse, to support NHS Test and Trace requirements and British racing's reporting and contact tracing system.

For more information about the PASS data protection policy and how your information will be managed, please visit <https://www.rcapass.com>

Section D: On the racecourse

12. The Owner Zones

To mitigate the risk of the transmitting COVID-19, owners on course will have access to a dedicated owner zones, which will be separated from raceday workers (trainers, stable staff, jockeys, officials, media etc.). For infection control purposes, crossing between the zones is restricted to **essential racecourse (e.g. medical) staff only**.

The owner zones will include access to toilets. It will **not** allow access to the parade ring, the Winners' Enclosure, or winning connections.

At all points on the racecourse, owners should ensure they adhere to government guidance and strict social distancing measures.

13. Social Distancing Officer

A Social Distancing Officer will be located in the owner zones to help maintain social distancing and all COVID-19 protocols. The SDOs are appointed by the BHA to ensure all measures are implemented and strictly adhered to at all racedays.

The SDOs will act with the full authority of the BHA and Racecourse Managing Executive to ensure that protocols are appropriately followed and enforced.

- Multiple racecourse personnel will also be deployed across the racecourse site in order to support this role and will report to the SDO and to a senior member of the racecourse team, as appropriate.
- The role of the SDO is designed to be constructive and assist individuals in understanding the requirements and measures in place to ensure these can be met.
- However, the SDO will also report any breaches of social distancing requirements to the BHA Stewards, who will take regulatory action in line with the powers available to them.

14. Briefing areas

Where possible, racecourses have established briefing areas, where owners will have the opportunity to speak to their trainers and / or jockeys before and after the race, while continuing to maintain social distancing and adhering to other infection control measures.

Provision may vary depending on the racecourse, and owners will be advised as to how the briefing area will operate on arrival at the fixture.

15. Catering

Racecourses will not be able to provide hospitality, in line with the government's decision to close hospitality settings, including restaurants, cafes and bars. No alcohol will be served.

16. Face coverings

Face coverings (i.e. "non-medical" face coverings) should be worn at all times, other than when specific exemptions apply (see below)

The mandatory use of face coverings adds an additional layer of protection for everyone on the racecourse – further reducing the risk of transmitting COVID-19. Used alongside other essential measures like frequent handwashing and strict social distancing, face coverings can help racing reduce our risk of transmission and safeguard our industry from the virus.

Face coverings should be worn in all indoor and outdoor areas of the Owner Zone, from the point of arrival at the racecourse and throughout the day until departure, apart from where specific exemptions apply.

When you don't need to wear a face covering

For most people, face coverings can be worn throughout the day and only removed in certain scenarios. Situations where face coverings do not need to be worn include:

- Eating or drinking
- Taking medication
- If asked to remove your face covering for ID checks or to receive medical treatment

There may also be circumstances where attendees are not able to wear a face covering and are exempt from doing so e.g. due to physical or mental health reasons or disability.

17. Betting facilities

Owners will have access betting facilities, via pool operators and on course bookmakers.

Section E: Leaving the racecourse

18. Departure process

Owners are asked to leave the racecourse as soon as they can after the last race in which they have a confirmed runner. Most racecourses will have one-way systems will be in place, so owners can return to their vehicle without crossing paths with others and hand hygiene stations will be provided on exit.

Upon leaving the racecourse, wristbands for the raceday should be removed by the owner and disposed of by racecourse staff. Wristbands cannot be retained for future use.