

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Member Q&A

Update: 20 March 2020



British Dressage – General

Can BD still function as an organisation if everything goes into lock down?

The health and welfare of our staff has to remain a top priority at all times. Following the government advice earlier this week, the decision was taken to close the office on Friday 20 March – and as of Monday 23 March the majority of employees will be working from home. There will be a skeleton staff at Meriden in the short term to deal with post, shop orders, printed correspondence, accessing documents, filing and any other activities which can only be done in the office.

Everything else will be managed remotely, using the technologies available. Fortunately we have invested a significant amount in our IT over the past three years, so our new BD Online portal allows us to have remote access to our sport operations and membership systems. We are also connected through file sharing and team communication applications, while our telephony system is also a digital platform and can operate remotely. So, it will be 'business as usual' throughout any shutdown period and you will still be able to [contact us by email and phone](#) as normal.

Why didn't BD act immediately on the government advice?

We had been working on a number of contingency plans, based on various different scenarios, but the government position changed dramatically on Monday 16 March. Until this point it was not possible to make any definitive decisions or statement, as the situation was continuing to evolve. Within 24 hours of the government advice, we had held an emergency session with the BD Board Directors and issued a joint statement with British Showjumping suspending all national affiliated dressage activity with immediate effect.

We had to allow a further 48 hours for scheduled regional training, coach education and judge examinations to complete, but all BD activity ceased from close of business on Thursday 19 March. We have been communicating with all of our stakeholder groups this week to keep members informed throughout the process. The situation changes daily at the moment, but we wanted to take a considered, co-ordinated and consistent approach to provide more clarity for all of the sport's participants and avoid any unnecessary confusion.

Is BD in danger of going bankrupt if there is a prolonged period of inactivity?

We are fortunate that our prudent financial planning and fiscal responsibility has put us in a reasonably secure position. Our reserves currently stand at around £2.2million which should provide us with some stability through these uncertain times, but this is an unprecedented situation. We hope that members will continue to support us through this crisis so collectively we can ensure that there is a strong and viable sport to return to when we are able to resume.

National Competition and Events

What BD events have been cancelled so far?

We have sadly had to cancel the following national events that were due to take place over the next four weeks in March and April:

- British Dressage Young Horse Forum at Myerscough, 27 March
- NAF Five Star Winter Dressage Championships incorporating the Petplan Equine Area Festival Championships at Hartpury College, 8 – 12 April
- National Judges Convention at Addington, 14 April

Regional competitions (normal BD competitions) and training is also suspended. The situation will be reviewed on a weekly basis and further announcements will be made in due course once the medium to long term impact becomes clearer.

How long are BD competitions going to be suspended for?

The situation is continuously changing and there is no certainty around timeframes at the present time. We have currently suspended all activity until 16 April and will review this weekly in line with the government advice and updates. We'll post any updates on our website and social channels as and when they are available.

However, based upon the latest information it is unlikely that affiliated dressage competitions will be able to resume fully within the next two to three month period. As with all other sport governing bodies we will be working on various contingency plans, but will only restart when it is safe to do so.

Will the Winter Championships be rescheduled?

We will continue to explore alternative solutions that may enable the Winter Championships to be run in some form at a later date, or for qualifications to count towards future competitions, but with uncertainty surrounding the duration of the current shutdown period it is difficult for all sporting bodies and organisations to plan ahead effectively at present. Once it becomes clearer when the sport may be able to resume we can assess the overall impact on the dressage event calendar.

It is our preference to reschedule the Winter Championships if at all possible and we will continue to investigate viable options. We will aim to keep everyone informed as we closely monitor the situation over the course of the next four weeks during the shutdown period and provide further updates as soon as they are available.

Will I get a refund for my entries and stabling from the Winter Championships?

These are currently being processed by the show organisers and will be completed in the coming weeks. Full refunds will be provided to all competitors that have entered, including entry, stable and hook-up fees. Refunds will be made to the payee, minus the booking and administration fees. Full refunds will also be issued for all Gala Performance admission tickets and hospitality tickets. Please be aware that it may take some time to process these due to the volume of refunds required, but we aim for all payments to be made within 28 days.

Am I entitled to a refund for entries due to the shutdown of all BD events?

Any shows you have entered which fall in the current cancellation period will provide refunds as per rule 62 of the 2020 Members Handbook. The venue will be able to advise you on the status of your refund.

What will happen with qualifications or partial qualification gained for Regionals if regular shows are cancelled?

Work has started within the Sports Operations team to review various different scenarios with regards to qualifications, to facilitate a transitional period when the sport is able to resume.

Will BD consider shortened seasons?

All options will remain on the table for the time being, but it is impossible to be prescriptive about what this might look like while there is such uncertainty around how long the shutdown period will last.

What happens if Premier Leagues are postponed for direct qualifications?

As part of our contingency planning the Sport Operations team will be looking at alternative methods of qualifying for championships, should the Premier League shows have to be cancelled.

Will there be provision to reduce points to qualify for future Championships?

This could potentially be part of the solution required to facilitate championship qualification when the sport can resume, but at this stage it is not possible to determine exactly what will be required.

Can the Quest finals go ahead off the current placings on the leader board?

Again, this will be one of the options that will be considered. With our IT system we have the ability to produce leader boards or set alternative qualification criteria, depending on the most suitable and practical solution, but we will certainly work hard to ensure that the championships scheduled for later in the calendar year can still take place.

What will happen to Para qualification for the summer championships?

As with all of our competitions, it is not possible to have a definitive response at this stage, but the Sport Operations team will be working on a number of potential solutions for qualification in readiness for the point at which the sport is able to resume.

Can I still be classified for Para competition?

Currently, all para classification evaluations have been suspended until further notice. Applications will continue to be accepted to start the process as and when future classification sessions can be scheduled. Further details are available in a [BEF news item](#).

International Competition

Will I still be able to compete internationally?

Current FEI advice is for all international competitions to cease for the next four weeks. A number of competitions have already postponed, with others decisions pending. However, given the current situation and government advice on travelling to and from European countries, riders would be unable to travel abroad to compete regardless.

Have any British based internationals been cancelled?

Due to the ongoing crisis, the [Royal International Horse Show at Windsor](#) in May and the [Bolesworth International](#) in June have already announced that they have cancelled their events for this year.

How will riders aiming for selection for international championships be selected/qualify?

We're monitoring this closely with a number of options if and when competition resumes. Inevitably with international shows being cancelled over the next two to three months selection policies will need to be reviewed and updated in due course. At present riders should continue to train at home with selection in mind, so that they are competition ready when the sport is able to resume. This situation could evolve, but we will keep riders updated.

Will I still be able to get an FEI passport?

Yes you will. If you require an FEI passport or would like to change any details, please contact our Senior International Office, Lianne Martin, [via email](#) or by phone on 02476 698835 and she will be able to provide assistance. Passports will be processed on Tuesdays or Thursdays, based on demand, during the shutdown period. We appreciate your patience and understanding while the office in Meriden remains closed.

Regional Activity

Will training and camps be affected in the regions?

All regional activity has now ceased will not be permitted resume again for the next four weeks, up to and including 16 April. Full refunds will be given for any regional training or participation activity already booked in that time period. Further announcements will be able in due course.

How will cancellation of regional training impact on my ability to meet eligibility criteria for selection for the regional team competitions later in the year?

Currently the RDOs and HQ team are considering the impact on timeframes for qualification and selection for the regional team competitions. We will closely monitor and review the situation on a weekly basis, based on the latest information and government advice, and any decisions will be communicated to members at the earliest opportunity.

General Questions

Can I still travel to my yard to do my horse?

Yes. However, we'd strongly advise you follow the [current Public Health England guidance on hygiene and social distancing](#). Make your visit as brief as possible and minimise social contact.

Are there any restrictions on riding my own horse?

It is more important than ever that we stay active, fit and healthy during this period. Being active in a way that is right for you and your horse, can improve your physical health, help manage stress and anxiety and just generally make you feel better.

So you can still ride your horse – or any other way you normally get active outside – provided you are doing so in a way that meets the latest guidance on social distancing and advice on unnecessary social contact. Again, please follow the [Public Health England guidance](#).

Remaining active, keeping you and your horse fit and healthy is vital, so schooling or hacking at home is an ideal way of doing this.

Can I still go for lessons or have my coach come to the yard?

This is down to individual choice and responsibility, but we would strongly advise you to consider the government advice on social distancing and avoiding non-essential travel.

With the technology that is now available for 'virtual' or remote training, we would recommend that you investigate alternative options for getting help, support and advice to progress your training during the shutdown period.

Is there any other activity we can do?

For riders there are some online dressage competitions, offered by organisations such as Dressage Anywhere [<https://www.dressageanywhere.com/>], which you can continue to take part in if you can ride your tests at home.

Sport England is encouraging us to keep active during this period, as it's vital for mental health and physical wellbeing – follow [#StayInWorkOut](#) on social media for ideas and content to help you feel well while staying safe. There's more information on the [Sport England website](#).

Membership & Horse Registration

What are the benefits of having a membership when I can't compete?

At this time, your continued support for British Dressage is valued and welcome, as it will help to safeguard our organisation during this crisis period and ensure we all have a healthy sport to return to. Even though you might not be able to compete, there are still plenty of other benefits you will continue to enjoy.

Most importantly, as a member you have public liability insurance that covers all horses you own, as well as personal accident cover for a variety of equestrian pursuits from Shearwater. The insurance cover alone is worth £80-£100, so it's a great benefit to have. There's also the free legal helpline available to members via Harrison Clark Rickerbys, which will be extremely beneficial during these times of uncertainty.

The BD magazine will continue to be published every six weeks, with training content and tips, and we'll be adding more features to keep members interested, engaged and entertained during the shutdown period. We are also looking at creating more on-line content that members will be able to access exclusively on our website, so you'll still get value from your membership over coming weeks.

Most importantly, continued membership also ensures that any qualifications you've gained to date are maintained and remain valid. Once the sport is able to resume, these qualifications will still count towards any future or rescheduled competitions.

Supporting BD costs a Full member 25p per day, a Premier Club member 16p per day and Club member just 10p per day. During this time we will be continuing to work on a number of important projects, including our new judge education system, youth development pathways, online content for youth and coach education, to ensure your sport is in great shape to come back to.

Can membership and/or horse registrations be suspended if a lockdown is imposed?

We're considering a number of different options at the moment, although as members will appreciate we simply don't know how long the current uncertainty will last. Most importantly, we need to make sure that there is a viable sport to come back to when restrictions are lifted and life returns to normality. We'll keep you updated on any developments over coming weeks.

My horse's six month flu vaccination is due - what should I do?

Our advice is still to follow the current Animal Health Trust recommendation of six monthly boosters to protect your horse against the risks posed by equine influenza. BD rules state that your horse will need to have a flu vaccination/booster within six months of the date of the competition that you are looking to enter. With that in mind, as long as your horse has been vaccinated within this time frame you will be eligible to compete when normal activities resume.

Judges

Can I judge any unaffiliated competitions which are running?

While we only have jurisdiction over affiliated dressage competitions, in line with the government guidelines around social distancing and non-essential travel, we would strongly advise against it.

The most important consideration at this point in time is the health and safety of all members, including our officials, many of whom may fall into the 'at risk' category. We would therefore strongly advise that all judges adhere to the latest government advice, including self-isolating if necessary. Your health and well-being are of paramount importance at all times, so please stay safe.

What happens if my judge exams get cancelled?

We will reschedule at the earliest possible opportunity, while still providing candidates and examiners with enough notice to attend the exam. Please note that these rescheduled dates will only be available to those already booked on to any cancelled dates, not new applications.

Coaches

Should I continue my coaching work? Can I have clients visit my yard or travel to theirs?

This is down to individual choice and responsibility, but we would strongly advise you to consider the government advice on social distancing and avoiding non-essential travel, and take the necessary precautions.

With the technology that is now available for 'virtual' or remote training, we would recommend that you investigate alternative options for providing help, support and advice to riders to help them progress their training during the shutdown period.

How will my BDCC course be affected?

Any courses that were due to start over the next couple of weeks will be postponed to start on the second workshop date. We will then add an additional day on the end of the course for the assessment. As soon as rescheduled dates have been confirmed, we will circulate an updated list for remaining course dates and venues.

For courses that have already started with a workshop scheduled during the four week shutdown period, we'll be looking at trialling the use of WebEx (webinar style format) for the theory and we will ask coaches to submit a video of themselves coaching to the coach educator for feedback. Any completed portfolio work can be submitted via email, which will then be signed off when face to face workshops resume.

How will I keep up with my CPD to keep my status?

All CPD training scheduled to take place during this period, including First Aid and Safeguarding courses, have unfortunately had to be cancelled. We will look to reschedule these activities for later in the year; however, due to the ongoing uncertainty about how long any shutdown period is likely to last we are unable to confirm when this may be at present.

Any coach who needs to renew their safeguarding certificate will be able to do so online. Please contact officials@britishdressage.co.uk for further information.

What will happen if training courses / refresher days get postponed and take me over the stated deadlines to remain eligible?

In order to support all of coaches through this difficult time, we will extend the deadline for maintaining your first aid requirements until 31st December 2020. Safeguarding can be done on line at any time, please contact officials@britishdressage.co.uk for further information.

It would be advisable to check with all course providers to determine whether they can still provide you a refresher course, if your current certificate has expired, or if you need to commence another initial course. It is strongly recommended that you check with your insurance provider to ensure you are still meeting any requirements they may have regarding CPD training compliance.

Organisers

Will we be charged cancellation fees if we chose to cancel competitions ourselves?

No, this is covered under 'extreme circumstances' within the terms of your affiliation agreement.

What help can I get to help my business stay viable during the suspension?

British Dressage understands and shares the financial concerns you may have for the future of your business and our sport. We are in this together and will be working with our colleagues across the equestrian sector to support our venues, clubs, schools and yards.

We will be working closely with the British Equestrian Federation and British Horse Society to provide guidance in line with government policy. There is still some clarification required following the announcements made this week, but the following links should help to provide some guidance:

- [Information for Employers and Businesses](#)
- [Information for Employees and the Self-Employed](#)
- [Financial Support for Business](#)