

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Member Q&A

Update: 03 April 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 from Tuesday 24 March, employees have been working from home. Our online shop service has been suspended until further notice.

Everything can be managed effectively 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.

On 1 April, we furloughed around half our staff under the government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. We are working with skeleton staffing levels, so please be patient if it takes slightly longer than normal to respond to your query.

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.

What measures is BD putting in place to cut costs?

BD has already taken direct action to minimise costs and limit operational overheads. This includes reducing staffing levels significantly, in accordance with the furloughing provisions of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. A skeleton team will remain in place across all departments, with employees continuing to work remotely to maintain service and support levels to members.

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:

- 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
- Keysoe Premier League, 24 – 26 April
Senior Inter Regionals and Para Home International at Keysoe, 2 – 3 May
- Addington Premier League, 8 – 10 May

- Royal Windsor Horse Show, 13 – 17 May
- Somerford Park Premier League, 22 – 24 May
- Equerry Bolesworth International Horse Show, 9 – 14 June
- Hickstead International, 24 – 27 June

Regional competitions (normal BD competitions) and training is also suspended up to and including 31 May. The situation will be reviewed on a regular 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 up to and including 31 May and will review this regularly in line with the government advice and updates. We will 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 8-10 week 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 and within any parameters or restrictions imposed by the government in terms of social distancing measures.

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. With a truncated window during mid-to-late summer / early autumn and some social distancing measures expected to remain in place, it is likely that many of our major events will now have to be postponed until 2021. We will do what we can to salvage the season when competition activity can resume, although we also recognise that there will inevitably be some fixture congestion.

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 remaining Premier League shows in June and July 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?

FEI previously advised National Federations to suspend all international competitions until 10 April, which we expect to be extended further. A number of competitions between April and July have already cancelled and 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.

A link to the current FEI dressage calendar can be found here, which is being updated regularly: <https://www.fei.org/dressage/events/>

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](#) and [Hickstead CDI](#) in June have already announced that they have cancelled their events for this year. Hickstead is aiming to potentially hold a rescheduled show in September 2020, subject to FEI approval.

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

We now know that the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics have been postponed for a full 12 months and will now take place in July / August 2021. The FEI Pony European Championships at Strezgom have also been cancelled. For the other u21 Championships, we're monitoring this closely and considering a number of options if and when competition resumes and the Championships can be run. Inevitably with a large number of international shows being cancelled over the next two to three months, selection policies will need to be reviewed and updated in due course.

Will I still be able to get an FEI passport?

The BD office in Meriden is currently closed so we're unable to process FEI passports.

Regional Activity

Will training and camps be affected in the regions?

All regional activity has now ceased in line with the suspension of competitions up to and including 31 May. Full refunds will be given for any regional training or participation activity already booked in that time period.

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 remaining 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.

Q: When can I expect a refund for my cancelled regional activity?

A: We're working to process all refunds. The RDOs have submitted all refunds, but please note they have to be processed individually, so members should allow up to 28 days for the payment to be returned to their account. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

General Questions

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

At present, 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.

The [British Equestrian Federation has issued some guidance](#) in line with the current restrictions.

Are there any restrictions on riding?

While there is currently no specific Government guidance in relation to riding, our recommendation is that members only ride their horses where it is absolutely necessary and safe to do so. We should all respect the Government's message of 'stay safe, stay home, save lives' and carefully consider the risks associated with riding. As a community, we need to be socially responsible and avoid putting any additional pressure on our NHS and emergency services.

Personal circumstances will vary and we understand that individual livelihoods and businesses are being adversely affected in this current situation, but we all still be mindful of the potential impact of our choices on society as a whole. Our strong advice is to adhere to government restrictions and only leave home once a day to care for your horse's welfare.

We would ask all riders to make an informed decision on whether to ride or not. If you do make that choice, we urge you to please ride within your means, wear up-to-standard safety equipment, avoid any high-risk activity and stay within the boundaries of your own yard environment.

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

The address by the Prime Minister on 23 March effectively put the country in lockdown so travelling for lessons would not be considered as essential. The government guidance is that workers who cannot carry out their jobs from home may still work, where it is safe to do so and in accordance with social distancing measures. While there is no specific advice around coaches travelling to yards to undertake lessons, we would ask members to carefully consider our guidance on riding before booking any lessons and ensure that any such activity adheres to PHE advice and restrictions.

My coach is offering virtual training – is this okay?

During the current suspension period it is vitally important that we all follow government advice and guidelines wherever possible, if it is practical to do so. While in theory this might seem that 'virtual' or remote activity is a perfect solution for members in isolation, this still actively encourages people to ride, when the government message is clear. We have recommended that BD coaches and judges do not undertake any training, whether in person or remotely.

There will hopefully come a time in the not too distant future where we can responsibly promote this type of virtual and remote riding activity, in accordance with social distancing measures, but this is likely to be a number of weeks away.

Can I take part in online dressage competitions?

As above, it is not appropriate to be participating in online dressage competitions at the present time, while the virus is still in the emergent (and emergency) phase. In line with our advice on riding and training, it is our collective responsibility to reduce any extra pressure on the emergency and health services at the present time. We therefore would not advocate, support or endorse any online competition activity at this time, even if it complies with social distancing measures.

Is there any other activity we can do?

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](#).

My business/livelihood has really been hit financially due to the crisis, what help is there?

The [government has set up a website with advice](#) on a range of help available. The [British Equestrian Federation has also outlined](#) some of the assistance on offer, including a [number of grants](#) for those who can't use the government initiatives.

Those who are [self-employed have a number of options available](#) to them also. The [Equine Employers Association](#) and [British Grooms Association](#) have some good guidance to help and there's no requirement for membership to access the information.

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 or extended 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. That said, we are mindful of the financial impact this is having on everyone and we will certainly look to make further concessions as and when we can afford to do so. We'll keep you updated on any developments over coming weeks.

My vets aren't currently carrying out routine vaccinations. What if my horse goes over the 12 month requirement without a vaccination?

You'll need to restart your vaccination process from the beginning, as per rule 11 in the 2020 Members' Handbook, before you are able to compete. The initial course of two injections not less than 21 days and no more than 92 days apart must be completed again before competing. Please allow seven days before arriving at the competition from your last injection.

What if I'm in the process of completing the initial course of three injections and I've missed one?

Advice to vets is to complete these injections to give a horse some immunity. However, if you're unable to get them completed, you'll need to start the process again as above when vets are able to resume their work as normal.

Which date is my 12 month booster due?

Once you've completed the initial course, each time you have a booster vaccination the 12 month period starts over again, including six month boosters. So whatever the last vaccination date shows in your horse's passport, the next injection will be due within 12 months. Please note that 12 months refers to calendar months as per usual, rather than 365 days.

What happens if my horse isn't competing – can he go over one year without having to re-start?

No, if your horse goes over a year without a vaccination then it would need to restart a programme from the beginning, whether it's currently competing or not.

What are BD doing about the six month booster requirement?

There will be some form of amnesty period when competition resumes to allow members to bring the six monthly booster requirement up to date. This will be communicated before activity recommences, but please note that the 12 month requirement will remain in place regardless.

If my horse has gone exceeded the six month booster requirement, do I need to start again?

No. Rule 11 states that horses must have had a booster injection within six calendar months +21 days of a competition. While there are no competitions, the rule does not apply, but the 12 month requirement remains in place. However, when competition returns, there will be specific guidance issued on the six monthly requirement.

Will there be a vaccination amnesty if my horse goes over the 12 month booster?

No amnesty period will be provided in such circumstances and your horse will need to restart its vaccination programme from the beginning. This is down to the efficacy of the vaccine, which has a maximum period of 12 months.

It's not my fault my horse can't be vaccinated – why should I have to pay to re-start the vaccinations?

It's an unfortunate situation but if the vaccination exceeds 12 months, there won't be appropriate levels of immunity in your horse. In order to compete with us, your horse must be compliant with BD rules which are in place to protect the horse population in the UK. This is based on expert veterinary advice.

It is important to emphasise that while horses are not currently mixing or in competition, a 12 month vaccination is necessary in order to protect against Equine Influenza. Beyond this point the efficacy of the vaccine is no longer guaranteed. We need to ensure that this requirement remains in place to prevent a resurgence in the number of EI cases again next winter.

Judges

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.

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, some 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.

Coaches

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

Our overall stance is that people should not ride their horses unless absolutely necessary, so having a lesson would not class as essential activity. We accept that this is ultimately down to individual choice and responsibility, but we would strongly advise you to adhere the government advice on social distancing and take the necessary precautions.

The government guidance is that workers who cannot carry out their jobs from home may still work, where it is safe to do so and in accordance with social distancing measures. While there is no specific advice around coaches travelling to yards to undertake lessons, we would ask coaches to carefully consider our guidance on riding before booking any lessons and ensure that any such activity adheres to PHE advice and restrictions.

What about 'virtual' or remote training activity?

During the current suspension period it is vitally important that we all follow government advice and guidelines wherever possible, if it is practical to do so. While in theory it might seem that 'virtual' or remote activity is a perfect solution for members in isolation, this still actively encourages people to ride, when the government message is clear. We recommended that BD coaches do not undertake any training, whether in person or remotely.

We will continue to closely monitor government advice and if and when the time comes where we can responsibly promote this type of virtual and remote riding activity, in accordance with social distancing measures, we will inform all our coaches.

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 and also look to utilise WebEx where social distancing measures remain in place. 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 suspension period, we'll be trialling the use of WebEx (webinar style format) for the theory and 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 the suspension 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 further advice in line with government policy. The following links should help to provide some guidance on the financial help and support packages available:

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