

British Dressage Coronavirus Operational Plan

7 May 2020



Introduction

The Board of Directors and Senior Management Team at British Dressage have been working in close collaboration and consultation with the British Equestrian Federation and its member bodies to provide a co-ordinated response to the current coronavirus crisis.

The impact of this crisis is unprecedented and will have wide-reaching ramifications for the sport of dressage and all of its participants. Our over-riding priority is to safeguard the future of the sport, representing the interests of all our members and stakeholder groups, while protecting the security and stability of British Dressage as an organisation.

During the initial suspension period our main concern has been to protect the health and well-being of everyone involved in our sport, while taking a socially responsible position to comply with all lockdown restrictions imposed by the government. We recognise that this has had a significant impact on individual livelihoods and businesses that rely on dressage for their main source of income. We are working collectively on behalf of riders, coaches, organisers, venues and officials to develop our contingency plans for the resumption of training and competition activity at the earliest opportunity, in line with whatever government restrictions remain in place.

In order to deal with the short, medium and long term implications of this crisis, we have produced this operational plan to provide an overview of how we intend to manage the process at each stage. This is split into three distinct phases; Response, Resumption and Recovery, to summarise how BD aims to meet the challenges presented by the pandemic as the situation continues to evolve.

This includes a four step approach for our members to follow when the government give the green light for sport to resume; Ride – Train – Compete – Qualify, as we appreciate that it may take some time after the initial lockdown restrictions are lifted before full competition activity may begin again. While it is not possible to predict specific timescales for when these different stages can be implemented, we want to be ready to start riding and training as soon as it is safe to do so.

With considerable uncertainty as to how long this crisis will last, future planning for British Dressage competitions remains extremely challenging. A large number of ideas have been discussed and put forward over the past three weeks by the Board, Sport Operations Committee and task force groups. However, social distancing restrictions that are likely to remain in place post-lockdown will limit our opportunities to run a 'normal' calendar of events, even when sport is able to resume.

Flexibility will be the key, with a gradual return to action, which will inevitably be low key and small scale to begin with, as it remains unclear when larger gatherings at shows and championships will be permitted. This is certainly looking unlikely in the short to medium term. Our focus will therefore be on getting activity up and running at local level initially, building up to regional level, within any limits on capacity or travel and fully compliant with all social distancing measures.

Phase I – Response

The British Dressage senior management team started to closely monitor the outbreak in late February, when the first UK cases become known, with impact assessments initially limited to regional competition according to the proximity of identified individuals who had contracted coronavirus. Within two weeks it was clear that the UK would be moving swiftly from the containment phase into a suppression phase in April / May, which triggered contingency planning at national level in preparation for a potential period of managed activity and / or suspension.

Timeline Summary

- The government launched its Coronavirus Action Plan on 3 March. At this stage large scale public gatherings at sporting events were still permitted and deemed to be low risk.
- BD CEO attended a meeting at the Sport & Recreation Alliance on 6 March, when the response to the coronavirus outbreak was one of the main points of discussion.
- Contingency planning for BD major events and championships to be run 'behind closed doors' with capacity limits were developed during week commencing 9 March 2020.
- The World Health Organisation declared the outbreak an international pandemic on 11 March 2020 meetings; at this point other sporting events were still continuing as normal.
- By Monday 16 March it was clear that even running smaller scale events behind closed doors would not be possible, as the government strategy moved into its suppression phase.
- On Tuesday 17 March, following an emergency Board session, it was agreed to suspend all affiliated dressage competition and training activity from Thursday 19 March onwards.
- This included cancellation of the Winter Championships and Area Festival Championships at Hartpury on 8-12 April 2020, as well as the Judges Convention at Addington on 14 April 2020.
- The government announced the national lockdown restrictions on Monday 23 March, and the British Dressage offices in Meriden were closed with immediate effect.
- A further statement was issued in conjunction with British Showjumping on Wednesday 25 March cancelling further major national and international events in April, May and June.
- On 1 April 2020, it was confirmed that the BD Board agreed that the suspension of all affiliated dressage training and competition activity should be extended until 31 May 2020.
- Also from this date, over half of BD employees were put on furlough leave until 31 May 2020, in line with the provisions of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
- Individual communications were sent to all British Dressage stakeholder groups, including senior, U21 and Para riders, coaches, judges, stewards, organisers, venues and sponsors.
- The remaining senior management team and staff then started to work on more detailed contingency planning for the resumption of sport, based on various different scenarios.
- Two Sport Operations task force groups were set up to review and evaluate options for the competition calendar, including Directors and representatives from technical committees.
- The government extended the initial lockdown period from 16 April through to 7 May 2020 inclusive, with advice and guidance for BD members updated on Friday 17 April.
- Consultation throughout this period has been ongoing with the British Equestrian Federation and other member bodies to co-ordinate our response to this crisis.
- Collectively the BEF has been liaising on behalf of MBs with the Sports & Recreation Alliance and Horse Council to ensure that there is regular communication with DCMS.
- This has also included regular consultation with our funding partners at UK Sport and Sport England, representing the interests of the equestrian sector on various working groups.

Major Events Cancelled

The following major national and international dressage events and competitions that were due to take place during the spring and early summer period have all had to be cancelled:

- British Dressage Young Horse Forum, Myerscough, 27 March
- Petplan Equine Area Festival Championships, Hartpury College, 8 – 12 April
- NAF Five Star Winter Dressage Championships, Hartpury College, 9 – 12 April
- British Dressage National Judges Convention, Addington, 14 April
- Keysoe Premier League, 24 – 26 April
- Senior Inter Regionals & Para Home International, Keysoe, 2 – 3 May
- Addington Premier League, 8 – 10 May
- Royal Windsor Horse Show, 13 – 17 May
- Somerford Park Premier League, 22 – 24 May
- Wellington Premier League, 3 – 7 June
- Para Festival of Dressage & Gold Semi Finals, Wellington, 3 – 5 June
- Equerry Bolesworth International Horse Show, 9 – 14 June
- Sheepgate Premier League, 19 – 21 June
- Hickstead International, 24 – 27 June
- Hartpury Festival of Dressage & Premier League, 1 – 5 July
- Hickstead Premier League, 8 – 11 July

Major impacts

- A significant loss of income for British Dressage from membership, horse registrations, starter levies, sponsorship and other commercial activity during the suspension period.
- Loss of competition fixtures during this period has also removed the opportunity to complete qualification for Summer Regionals, Summer Area Festivals and National Championships.
- Members have been unable to ride and train during the lockdown, which will necessitate a phased resumption of activity before members can compete and qualify for championships.
- International riders have been unable to gain key scores for qualification and future selection, with competition calendar decimated and championships cancelled.

Key areas for consideration

- Social distancing will be a fundamental consideration for the resumption of training and competition activity. This will be dependent on government restrictions that remain in place.
- Dressage is a safe, individual non-contact sport and provides a naturally social distanced activity, so in theory it should be easier than team sports to manage restrictions effectively.
- BD will need to work closely with venues to establish regulated and controlled environments that will enable training and competition to recommence as soon as it is permitted.
- A phased approach to the resumption of activity is likely, which will need to be managed in stages to allow people to ride and train, before physical competition activity can restart.
- Online training and competition activity may help to enable members to get back riding sooner, meeting any government restrictions on social distancing and travel.
- If travel restrictions remain in place, any training or competition activity may have to be within limited distances initially, potentially building up to regional level in due course.
- There will have to be an equal spread of training and competition provision around the regions, in order to avoid promoting travel during the early stages of resumption.

- The dressage calendar will have to be flexible, based on a phased resumption of sport, including the need to control or limit the number of fixtures and competitions.
- Revised competition calendar needs to be simple to deliver, utilising existing IT systems and structures, as well as easy to understand so members have clear aims for the rest of the year.
- Judges, stewards and writers will need to be considered carefully, to ensure that their safety is not compromised, in compliance with social distancing measures.
- Any organisers, officials and participants who fall into the 'at risk' category, whether through age or health issues, must still be shielded in the short to medium term.
- Welfare of the horse is of paramount importance and there needs to be an acceptable lead in time to ensure horses are competition fit.

Measures to facilitate resumption

A number of measures are under consideration that will help to facilitate the resumption of training and competition activity, dependent upon any future social distancing restrictions and potential limitations on public gatherings. These measures will enable British Dressage and affiliated venues to control and regulate competition environments within set capacity limits, if necessary.

- Limits to the number of competitors on site at any one time and in any warm up areas. Exact numbers would depend on government advice and other restrictions that remain in place.
- Increased time between competitors, to allow adequate provision for social distancing, with riders required to attend within fixed time slots only and leave after they have competed.
- This will also provide sufficient time for judges to complete test sheet scores and comments, if working alone without writers, or allow two-way communication if operating at distance.
- Strict limits on the number of people per horse allowed to attend the competition on a 2:1 ratio; to include the rider, plus owner, trainer or groom.
- No spectators to be allowed to attend competitions to control capacity, including friends or family, unless they qualify as the one person permitted in addition to the rider.
- One extra parent, guardian or carer will be allowed to attend to support Para and U16 riders.
- Changes in processes to ensure that all competitors, officials and operational personnel remain the required social distance apart through all phases of competition.
- Specific consideration will need to be given as to how marks and comments will be recorded, in order to facilitate social distancing between judges and writers.
- Utilisation of technology where required to minimise unnecessary physical interaction with officials and operational personnel on the day.
- Briefings to be conducted online in advance for all officials and operating personnel.
- All government and public health COVID-19 restrictions to be clearly displayed on site.
- Site maps, including a layout of the venue, arenas, warm up areas, parking and toilets will be made available to competitors in advance and on-site.
- All on-site facilities to be managed within social distancing parameters and fully compliant with all public health, safety and hygiene regulations, including provision of hand sanitation.
- Parking, stabling and toilets would need to meet minimum regulatory spacing conditions.
- Catering facilities, on-site cafes and restaurants to be closed or operate as takeaway only.
- No overnight stabling or camping in short to medium term, to comply with likely restrictions.
- Any officials or participants who fall into the 'at risk' categories would continue to be shielded and not permitted to attend competition events for the foreseeable future.
- Larger spectator shows or events would not be scheduled in the short to medium term until the government indicates it is safe for these to return.

Phase II – Resumption

British Dressage has developed various contingency options for the resumption of riding, training and competition activity, once the lockdown restrictions have been eased. These will be in accordance with government guidelines and only implemented when it is deemed safe and appropriate to do so. Careful consideration will need to be given to the welfare of horses, as well as the health and safety of our members and all participants. There will need to be a gradual and phased approach when the sport restarts, taking into account all social distancing, travel and hygiene requirements.

With the above in mind, we have set out our plans for the resumption of activity based on four distinct stages: Ride, Train, Compete and Qualify. This is intended to help provide a guide to our members as to what type of activity is likely to be permitted as lockdown restrictions are eased, as well as provide a clear structure for the resumption of the dressage competition calendar.

Ride

We are keen to get people back riding as soon as possible, not just in preparation for the resumption of sport, but also for the proven benefits it has for mental health and physical well-being. It is also an important aspect of equine welfare, to ensure that all horses and ponies can be cared for effectively and manage lameness or other conditions such as laminitis. With the spring grass arriving exercise may be required for weight control, while older horses may have age associated conditions and others need rehabilitation from injury. It is vital therefore that members are able to care for their horses effectively.

Conditions of this phase will rely upon government restrictions on non-essential travel being relaxed to allow people to exercise and ride horses that are located elsewhere, not just those based at home. With reduced pressure on the NHS, as the number of coronavirus cases and hospital admissions fall, dressage can be promoted as one of the safest riding activities, allowing people to get back into the saddle. At this stage we anticipate that livery yards will be able to re-open, with social distancing measures put in place, enabling horses and ponies to be ridden and exercised.

As with the Response phase, we would still recommend that members only ride where it is safe to do so and within their personal capabilities, to avoid taking unnecessary risks. This would include wearing up-to-standard safety equipment and ideally remaining within the boundaries of a familiar or controlled environment where possible.

Train

While current government advice allows coaches to travel to train their clients, as this work cannot be conducted from home, we recognise that a significant proportion of our membership will not necessarily have had access to their horses during the lockdown period. Some livery yards have been closed to the public, while others have had strict rotas, buddying systems or fixed time slots in place for members to visit and care for the welfare of their horse only, with no riding allowed.

Once the restrictions on 'non-essential travel' have been relaxed, we anticipate that members will once again be permitted to travel with their horse for lessons locally, providing that training activity can be managed in a regulated environment in adherence with social distancing requirements. Those who have facilities at home will be able to continue training in order to get their horses fit and 'competition ready' in preparation for when the dressage calendar can resume.

As we move into this phase, again dependent upon government advice, we will look to support and encourage virtual training and competitions, using licensed providers to manage the integrity of this activity. While these are no substitute for physical competitions, as they do not offer a level playing field in a regulated environment, they will provide additional opportunities for BD members. Once venues are able to re-open, there will be potential to restart some limited regional activity including test riding days, training shows, private clinics and flexi training. At this point we also hope to announce plans for future fixtures and competitions to give members clear targets to aim for.

Compete

It may take a number of weeks in the Ride and Train phase before physical competition activity can resume. While it is not possible to specify exactly when this restart date will be, there are likely to be a number of restrictions and social distancing measures still in place (as outlined above). However, with the right controls implemented, our venues can provide the safe and regulated environments that enable dressage activity to begin as soon as government gives the green light to proceed.

At this stage we would envisage that competitions will resume at local level only initially, building up to regional activity, to minimise unnecessary travel across the country. This could include mini day camps, test riding and training shows, as well as regular BD competitions. Venues will need some time to adapt in order to accommodate new regulatory restrictions, which may include some restructuring to the format of competition, such as limits to the number of people on site, the number of competitors allowed in the arena and warm-up and time allowed between competitors.

Attendance at competition will be primarily restricted to riders, officials and venue personnel at this stage, with a strict ratio for additional support allowed from owners, trainers, grooms and parents. No spectators will be in attendance in the short to medium term, so larger shows and championships will not be possible while these restrictions remain in place.

Online entries will be compulsory and members will be required to carry passports to competition for verification purposes. Technology will need to be utilised wherever possible to facilitate more advance checking processes and provision of information between venues and competitors, in order to minimise contact on the day. Venues will need to complete risk assessments and verify that they can adhere to all additional health and safety regulations. Officials and venues will be issued with additional guidance with regards to judging, scoring and results protocols.

Qualify

The final phase will see the dressage competition calendar restored, as much as possible, when we hope to be able to commence the winter season for Area Festivals, Winter Regionals and combined training. This will include an amended timetable for the remainder of the year to include regular BD competitions, additional High Profile shows, regional championships and Quest competitions. At this stage we would expect travel restrictions to have been lifted and restored to normal levels.

We will look to carry forward qualifications to conclude the 2019/20 winter season if at all possible, but this will very much be dependent on what restrictions remain in place with regards to the number of competitors permitted on site at a venue and whether championships, even in a stripped back basic format, are going to be feasible within social distancing parameters. In the short to medium term, it is unlikely that sports will be permitted to host larger scale events, due to the numbers of spectators and competitors normally in attendance.

2020 Major Fixtures

Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus outbreak it will no longer be possible to reschedule and complete the vast majority of competitions due to take place during the summer season. This includes the Premier League series, summer Regionals and summer Area Festivals.

Inevitably, the loss of competition opportunities during the suspension period has had a significant impact on qualification for the rest of the summer season. As a consequence, we have had to take the difficult decision to cancel our National Championships and our new Area Festival Summer Championships, both of which were due to take place in September.

The BD Board, senior management team and Sport Operations task force groups have been working on alternative options for a full resumption of the sport and have reviewed all major fixtures for 2020 to determine how we can best provide a clear competition structure for members. The central consideration during these discussions has been to ensure that competition pathways are provided for all riders, at all levels.

The subsequent proposals are detailed below, which summarise the approach we intend to take with each competition, if possible. Please note that these plans are likely to change and evolve as the situation progresses over coming weeks and months, so should not be viewed as definitive at this stage. These conclusions have been based on evidential data, taking into account the resources available, the implications for our various stakeholder groups and assumptions on the restrictions that may remain in place during the current crisis.

Winter Championships 2020

- Aim to complete the Winter Championship by splitting it into three smaller competitions; Winter National, Winter Music and Area Festival championships, if numbers permit.
- These would have to be staged before the end of 2020 and are dependent upon the level of restrictions that remain in place, capacity limits and availability of suitable venues / dates.
- This would enable the 2019/20 winter competition season to be brought to conclusion satisfactorily, allow members who had qualified for the Championships to compete at their respective final and provide full recognition for winter sponsors.
- Rosettes, rugs, plaques and prizes have already been produced, so additional costs and resources required to deliver these mini championships would be minimal.

Summer Regionals and Area Festivals

- Carry forward already qualified combinations (full and part) for both the summer Regional, National and Area Festival championships over to the winter season, starting on 1 July 2020.
- These qualifications would remain valid up until the end of the winter qualifying period on 31 December 2020, but would not be rolled into a new calendar year in 2021.

Premier Leagues

- If possible, we aim to host smaller High Profile Shows or Premier League equivalent competitions for small, middle and big tour riders between August and the end of 2020.
- These will provide additional opportunities to gain selection scores for those international riders who have been unable to travel abroad, as they prepare and campaign for 2021.

National Championships

It is vitally important for everyone involved in the sport that British Dressage is able to stage a strong National Championships in its first year at a new home in Somerford. We were already forecasting substantially increased operational overheads in 2020 as part of our exciting plans to develop the show, therefore the decision has reluctantly been taken to cancel this event for this year and postpone until September 2021 instead, to give the championships the best possible chance of success when spectators will be able to attend.

- The National Championships is a spectator show and is not financially viable without the income from ticket sales, trade stands, hospitality, private boxes and sponsorship.
- With the cancellation of the Premier Leagues and Summer Regionals the opportunity to qualify for this event has already been lost, with rescheduling unrealistic in the timeframe.
- Due to the temporary infrastructure required and number of combinations involved it would not be feasible to run this as a stripped back 'competitor only' show at Somerford.
- Alternative options will continue to be explored as to whether it will be feasible to break down elements of these championships into smaller, more manageable one-off shows, staged as competitor only events and live streamed for members.

International Competition

Due to the ongoing uncertainty over any international events taking place anywhere in Europe before the end of August, important opportunities to gain scores for selection will inevitably be lost for both able bodied and Para riders. Therefore, we are examining the feasibility of staging the following competitions:

- Limited High Profile Shows or Premier League equivalent for small, middle and big tour riders, between August and the end of 2020. This would provide opportunities to gain selection scores for those International riders campaigning into 2021.
- Fixtures will need to be co-ordinated with rescheduled FEI international programme to avoid clashes where possible, as the autumn period could potentially be congested.
- A British National U21 Championship for Ponies, Juniors, Young Riders and Children on Horses, incorporating an Under 25 Grand Prix, to allow those riders at the end of their age category an opportunity to compete alongside their peers.

Quest & Associated Championships 2020

As with all other championships it will be difficult to run these safely within any social distancing restrictions due to the volume of competitors attending. We have therefore reluctantly had to take the decision to cancel the Quest Championships and Associated Championships scheduled for 2020. However, with smaller numbers attending the Quest Regional competitions it may still be possible to accommodate these shows and run them as individual championship finals instead.

- Quest qualification does not end until 31 August 2020, which provides more time for this to conclude. This will be dependent on whether there are adequate opportunities during the summer to achieve qualification on leader boards and/or if qualification can be extended.
- Providing qualification can be completed satisfactorily, the proposal would be to stage the scheduled eight Quest Regional competitions and crown a champion from each region.

Young Horse & Pony Championship 2020

- Reschedule the Young Horse & Pony qualifiers in the autumn period, if this is a viable option, to ensure that they don't miss the vital opportunity within their recognised age group.
- In addition, there could be an opportunity to include a seven year old Championship class, which was due to be held at the Premier Leagues and National Championships this year.
- The aim will be to host a semi-final and final as a standalone mini-championship, if possible, subject to complying with any restrictions on numbers that remain in place.

Regional Activity and Team Events

The very nature of team events, where members are encouraged to gather socially within a team environment, make them challenging to organise for 2020. In view of the timeframes for the Youth Inter Regional (4 & 5 July) and Youth Home International (3 & 4 August), the decision has unfortunately been made to cancel these competitions.

The Senior Home International will remain on the calendar for the time being, and we are hopeful that this could still go ahead at this stage, but a review of the current format will be required if there are restrictions in place, limiting the numbers that are allowed to participate. Selection criteria will be amended and made available once we reach the Train phase of our resumption plan.

Some regions already host a regional mini championship for fun, with no formal qualification required. Opportunities for all regions to host shows with a similar format, to encourage friendly competition and participation to be investigated further. Online competition options will also be considered as an alternative, if physical shows are not possible and have to be cancelled.

Para Competition

There is still an opportunity to continue with a Summer Championship for Para riders at the end of August, even if under an amended format, providing it is safe to do so. The number of competitors attending Para competitions make it easier to comply with any capacity restrictions and social distancing measures, but additional risks need for this group will need to be taken into account.

The majority of Grade 1 – 3 riders cannot compete without support, so an additional number of supporters per rider will be required compared to able bodied competition.

The loss of all Premier League fixtures has also resulted in the Para Festival of Dressage and Para Gold Semi Final being cancelled for 2020. In addition, the RDA has already cancelled their Summer Championship, which removed any qualification opportunity for the RDA Intellectual Disability Championship, due to run concurrently with the Bronze & Silver Championship at the end of August.

- Current intention is to still host the Bronze & Silver summer championship at Solihull (29 & 30 August), which could potentially incorporate an additional Gold Championship class.
- It is unlikely that the Bishop Burton CPEDI (10–14 August) will be able to go ahead, so Keysoe CPEDI in October would then be the next available international opportunity for Para riders.

Fixture Planning

With considerable uncertainty as to how long this current crisis will last, future planning for British Dressage competitions remains extremely challenging. Many ideas have been discussed and put forward over the past few weeks by the Board, Sport Operations Committee and task force groups. However, social distancing measures that are likely to remain in place post-lockdown will limit our opportunities to run a 'normal' calendar of events, even when the sport is able to resume.

As the government strategy and wider societal impact becomes clearer, BD will continue to review and evolve our competition structure and programme, within the limitations imposed. We remain committed to taking a flexible approach to ensure that opportunities are provided for all riders, at all levels, between the resumption of competition and the end of the year. This may require innovative 'one-off' solutions for 2020, utilising existing IT systems and infrastructure, which will be implemented in full consultation with the relevant stakeholder groups.

Phase III – Recovery

The ambition has to be to get the sport back on track at the earliest opportunity, although again it is difficult to be prescriptive at this stage as to exactly when that will be. Certainly our main objective would be to start the new calendar year on 1 January 2021 as normal, proceeding through to the culmination of our winter season at the Winter Championships in April 2021 and the summer season qualification period leading up to the National Championships in September 2021, as well as the first full year of the new two season structure for our Area Festival Championships.

However, we are mindful that many of the social distancing restrictions may remain in place until a vaccine for the virus is found, in which case we will need to adjust to a 'new normal' for the foreseeable future. There is a clear risk that there could be a second or third wave of the virus over the next 12 months, which would necessitate a further lockdown period. It is vital therefore that we retain a high degree of flexibility within our plans in order to adapt to changing circumstances over the weeks and months ahead.

There is unlikely to be a quick fix or a 'flick of the switch' moment that enables normal competition and qualifying for championships to return to the same operational model that applied before the outbreak. We will therefore work closely with all of our stakeholder groups to determine how we can best support a phased return to action and remain in regular communication throughout in order to respond to events as they happen.

The financial impact of this crisis will be significant for everyone involved in the sport, but for British Dressage specifically we are likely to experience a significant impact on our reserves, with a seven figure loss forecast for 2020. This is based on a worst case scenario, but we are mindful that it will take a number of months, and potentially not until the end of 2021, before we get back to a break-even position.

Membership and horse registrations have understandably already taken a substantial hit and it is going to take a while before numbers recover to pre-crisis levels. Even then, taking into account the wider socio-economic impact, the equestrian sector as a whole is likely to have a reduced number of participants due to the affordability of maintaining and competing horses.

Through prudent financial planning, British Dressage was fortunate to enter this crisis with a strong reserves position to provide some protection and security to deal with a force majeure event like this. Some of those reserves have already been allocated to our ongoing IT developments and our new judge education system, although we had hoped to use more to invest in exciting new projects to grow our sport. Instead we will need to use a substantial amount of those reserves to keep BD going and to support our sport when we emerge from this crisis.

Our first priority is to ensure that the organisation and the sport of dressage remains viable and sustainable long term. During the recovery phase we will be aiming to support our stakeholder groups as they deal with the impact of this crisis, whether it is our members, our accredited coaches, many of whom will be self-employed, our judges and officials, our affiliated venues and organisers, or our commercial partners and sponsors, including several small to medium sized businesses.

We will all share the financial impact of this crisis and it will be incumbent for everyone within the dressage community to work together to rebuild the sport back to a position of strength. It will no doubt take some time for the equestrian sector to fully recover, even when activity is able to resume, but BD is committed to critically assessing all costs and operational overheads to ensure that all aspects of the organisation remain efficient, effective and affordable.

As part of this process we certainly hope to be able to confirm concessions to members in due course, whether in terms of an extension to horse registrations or similar, although it is not possible to commit to substantial six figure sums while the future is so uncertain. Likewise we will do whatever we can to ensure that our venues, organisers, coaches and officials can get their income streams back to sustainable levels as soon as possible.

It may well be a long journey ahead, and with no specific timetable it is difficult to calculate what will be required at this stage or predict when revenues may return to the levels seen before the pandemic. We need to ensure that we have sufficient resources in place to manage what is likely to be a gradual return to normality, but will do whatever we can to practically support all of our stakeholders during the recovery period.

Summary

Response

- Suspension of all affiliated dressage training and competition activity until 31 May 2020
- Regular updates to guidelines and advice for members, in line with government restrictions
- Individual communications with stakeholder groups to provide support, help and advice
- Task force groups to establish general principles and framework for competition pathways
- Detailed contingency planning for the resumption of training and competition activity
- Review summer fixtures calendar and produce revised schedules for resumption of activity
- Define the social distancing measures that will be required for training and competitions
- Survey organisers and officials to understand who will be ready and available for resumption
- Approved online training and competition activity promoted in advance of physical restart
- Develop concept of training shows and test riding days to facilitate physical return to action

Resumption

- Cancellation of remaining Premier League fixtures scheduled to take place in June and July
- Remainder of summer season abandoned, including Regionals and Area Festival fixtures
- National Championships and Summer Area Festival Championships postponed until 2021
- BD Youth regional team competitions also cancelled, but Senior HI to remain in place for now
- Review options to stage a split and stripped back Winter and Area Festival Championships
- Allow summer qualifications to be carried over to the winter season, until the end of 2020
- Provide opportunities for small, medium and big tour, young horses, Para and under 21s
- Scope potential to host mini-championships on a region-by-region basis in the autumn
- Quest competitions to continue, with series of eight regional finals in place of national final

Recovery

- Intention to re-establish a full dressage training and competition calendar for 2021
- Normal qualification period and competition calendar restored from 1 January 2021
- Plan ahead for Winter Championships and Winter Area Festivals 'behind closed doors'
- Olympic, Paralympic and U21 selection deferred until 2021, with new policies required
- Aim to stage full National Championships and Summer Area Festival Championships
- Training and education programmes restored, including new judge examination system
- Critically assess all costs and operational overheads to get back to break-even level in 2021
- Membership and horse registration recovered to pre-pandemic levels by end of next year

British Dressage

May 2020