



NEWWC
NATIONAL EQUINE
WELFARE COUNCIL

ESTABLISHED 1977

Spring 2021 Newsletter

NEWWC Update

Website launch - The NEWWC website is currently undergoing redevelopment with Le Grand Solutions and will be launched at the Spring AGM on April 20th.

The new site will be fully optimised for mobile devices and will benefit from a clean, intuitive design featuring streamlined information and advice.

It will also enable better engagement with our membership through the implementation of a secure 'members' area where they can upload news of their events, employment opportunities and horses available for rehoming directly onto the site.

The Happy Equine Athlete Workshop - NEWWC in collaboration with The Horse Trust, World Horse Welfare and the University of Liverpool is holding a **virtual workshop** on Tuesday 30th March 2021 to discuss the concept of the happy equine athlete and how we can tell if the horses we are working with are indeed 'happy athletes'.

Registration for the event is now closed but we will make



The Petplan Charitable Trust (PPCT) Equine Emergency Covid 19 Fund - PPCT together with support from NEWC members World Horse Welfare, RSPCA, Redwings, BHS and The Donkey Sanctuary **awarded emergency grants to 27 equine charities** throughout 2020 and early 2021 to help them through these challenging times.

The grants meant that core equine care work could continue while fundraising activities remain difficult.

Horse Fairs/Markets

The pandemic created a topsy turvy year of movement restrictions for trading horses in markets and sales. Thoroughbred sales aside, most were either cancelled or moved to on-line and private sales.

However, prices and demand for equines have risen and we are experiencing an apparently buoyant market in UK and ROI as many people have more time at home and seem to be choosing to spend the money

Online sales reveal a positive outcome for horses from the pandemic as they avoid unnecessary journeys of equines to sale venues, confined most of the day in unfamiliar surroundings and then a further journey to their new home or return journey if unsold.

Of course, there is a risk associated with buying an equine unseen and we would recommend vetting any

saved from not going on purchase to ensure it is well holiday or commuting on their and fit to travel. hobby.

Appleby Horse Fair has been cancelled in 2021 although local councils and organisers are working to find a date for later in the year when it may be possible to go ahead.

BHS Health Care Clinics

Unfortunately, all planned clinics for Spring 2021 have had to be postponed due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic.



This difficult decision was made in conjunction with The BEVA Trust and it is hoped that there will be an opportunity to resume them in the Autumn.

Any suggestions for areas of need for clinics can be sent to nicola.foster@bhs.org.uk for consideration.

Covid-19

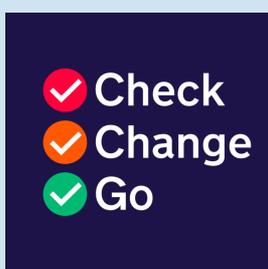
The UK Government and devolved administrations have continued to primarily focus their attention on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, meaning that other legislative proposals and consultations have largely fallen off the parliamentary agenda – with a few key exceptions, particularly in Scotland.

The reintroduction of restrictions imposed across the country saw many equine businesses significantly impacted. The equine sector has continued to engage with the UK Government and devolved administrations via British Horse Council (BHC) and NEWC, alongside other representative bodies, to highlight these challenges.

This includes submitting a report outlining the key findings from the second NEWC survey on the impact of Covid-19 on animal rescue centres to the UK, Welsh and Scottish Governments. Parliamentary questions were also tabled on the impact of Covid-19 on equine rescue centres and the impact of Covid-19 on the equine sector was also discussed at the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Horse.

NEWC has also continued to produce updated Covid-19 operational guidance for equine rescue and rehoming centres in response to the changing movement restrictions throughout the pandemic. These are due to be updated again as we start to prepare to exit lockdown. Up to date guidance can be found on the NEWC website.

UK's Relationship with EU



The transition period ended on the 31st December 2020. The equine sector was advised not to transport equines in the first few weeks of January due to concerns over potential delays at Dover, and many followed this advice.

Exports from Great Britain: Equines moving into the European Union and Northern Ireland from Great Britain now have to go through border control posts (BCPs), meaning that documentation, identity and physical checks are carried out and equines must have an export health certificate.

There are 4 BCPs in Ireland (two in Northern Ireland and two in the South) and currently only two in France that appear to be operational (Channel Tunnel and Calais). It is understood that a further four are approved in France and it is expected that one will soon be approved in Rotterdam, which will hopefully give people transporting equines to Europe more options.

There have been significant concerns raised about the additional bureaucracy and costs facing those exporting equines. This includes the onerous and confusing export health certificates which official veterinarians are finding difficult to complete, often with little or conflicting guidance. This has caused delays (sometimes for days), with some equines turned back as the documentation has not been completed correctly. Furthermore, it is understood that officials at Calais are inspecting these approx. 40-page documents in detail and this is causing average delays of 4-5 hours, with some facing waits of up to 10 hours.

To find out more about export requirements, visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/export-horses-and-ponies-special-rules>

Imports to Great Britain: Equines moving into Great Britain from the EU are subject to checks on documentation, however, there is no change for movements from Northern Ireland. In addition, equines moving from the South to the North of Ireland are not subject to any additional requirements.

From July, it is expected there will be BCPs at specific ports in Great Britain (meaning any equine entering Great Britain will have

to enter via a BCP).

It is currently unclear which ports will become BCPs, whether there is adequate funding for lairage etc and if the deadline can be met. Given the sensitive nature of Northern Ireland, it is expected that a BCP will not initially be constructed at Cairnryan in Scotland, to conduct physical and identity checks on equines, instead this will continue to be conducted on high-risk equines at point of destination. There is a concern that this could encourage non-compliant transporters to enter via this route, as there will be fewer checks in place.

To find out more about import requirements visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/import-or-move-horses-and-ponies#importing-equines-from-the-eu-to-ni>

The equine sector is engaging with the UK Government via various channels, including the BHC, to express its concern with the unnecessary and confusing bureaucracy and the long delays that equines are facing at BCPs.

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee are also currently seeking evidence on moving animals across borders, with a deadline of the 17th March:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/957/moving-animals-across-borders/>

**RSPCA - Covid
Impact on Equine
Welfare**



2020 proved to be an unprecedented year for the RSPCA's Prosecutions work.

As part of the interim CPS Case Review Guidance as prosecutors, they were required to consider whether it remained in the interest of justice to prosecute cases given the expanding pipeline of cases waiting to be heard in the courts and the delays being experienced in the progression of pending cases.

The RSPCA found many of their cases placed into a holding system until they could eventually be heard.

Nevertheless a multitude of cases involving serious offences against animals continued to be submitted from the RSPCA's Inspectorate and is expected to increase as the financial and psychological consequences of the pandemic continue to impact on people's ability to look after their animals.

The RSPCA secured 629 convictions in 2020 involving 319 defendants and the prosecution success rate remained high at 90.36%. The majority of these convictions (376) were for causing unnecessary suffering to animals, demonstrating the prevalence of extreme animal cruelty that sadly still remains.

96 of the 629 convictions were under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 relating to equines. A reflection perhaps of the continued impact on people's ability to look after their animals properly as the financial impacts of the pandemic continue.

Scottish SPCA Covid Impact

The 17 March 2020 saw the closure of all nine Scottish SPCA animal rescue and rehoming centres across Scotland which meant animals were still arriving at centres without the prospect of being rehomed. This put immense



pressure on all of the teams and their resources including the inspectorate who continued to need space for welfare animals.

A new project was quickly implemented to relieve the number of animals in the centres by way of an emergency foster scheme. This saw over 260 animals who were ready, or almost ready, to be rehomed go out on foster to staff from across the Society, their families, friends and volunteers.

A large number of these animals were permanently rehomed by fosterers, one of which is now lady of the manor in Scottish SPCA chief executive, Kirsteen Campbell's, home.

Due to the great success of this fostering programme, a working group is underway to develop and improve this service moving forward.

The two equine rehoming centres in Aberdeenshire and Edinburgh admitted 44 equines throughout 2020. The main reasons for this influx were due to welfare cases where suffering was experienced through inadequate care. They have also seen an increase in people giving horses away for free which could be down to the financial strain of the pandemic.

Rehoming equines throughout lockdown has been difficult as both equine centres were located in Tier 4 area so since December 2020 they have been unable to rehome any horses.

Legislation

Equine ID: There continue to be challenges around ensuring data held by the Passport Issuing Organisation, the Central Equine Database and in the passport is all the same.

The microchipping deadline has now passed in Wales (12th February) and the Scottish deadline is fast approaching (28th March).

In England, it is expected that the government will open up the Equine ID legislation to address some gaps that have been identified, including around allowing owners to update their PIO via the digital stable, which will hopefully ensure records held on the CED are up to date.

The updated legislation is not expected to be in place until next year and it is currently unclear whether Wales intends to follow suit. However, as Scotland does not recognise the digital stable - they have ScotEquine instead - this will not be open to those with an equine registered with a Scottish PIO. Currently, the Scottish Government does not intend to revise its Equine ID legislation.

Controlling Live Exports for Slaughter and Improving Transport: Two consultations on welfare during transport were open for responses from December 2020 to February 2021.

Scotland chose to consult separately from Wales and England (who had a joint consultation) and the sector has expressed concern that the scope of the consultations was different.

The worry is that this could potentially result in misalignment between the administrations and transporters having to comply with different requirements depending on which country they are in.

British Horse Council did not submit a response, as there was not complete consensus on the issue, but various equine organisations submitted responses separately and there was general alignment among the welfare organisations.

Licensing of Rescue and Rehoming Centres in Scotland: The Scottish Government has proposed legislation that will require equine rescue and rehoming centres in Scotland to be licensed from September 2021:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/sdsi/2021/9780111048474/content_s

Guidance is currently being developed to underpin this legislation, which as currently written appears to be small animal-focused.

Licensing of Rescue and Rehoming Centres in England: Defra has indicated that they are keen to progress with this legislation in 2021.

Sentencing (England & Wales): The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill, which - if passed - will increase maximum sentences for the worst animal cruelty offences from 6 months to 5 years, passed its remaining stages in the House of Commons on the 12th of March and has entered the House of Lords.

It is hoped that it will pass before the Parliamentary session closes, at which point it would fall if it has not come into force, but this is by no means guaranteed.

Disease Alerts/Prevention Awareness

Animal Health Trust - Following the AHT liquidation in July 2020 a stakeholder group has been established to look at the most promising way forward.

The group employed a project leader, Stephen Atkin, who coordinated invitations to tender for the provision of key

laboratory and other services.

There has also been a scientific review of the future of disease surveillance chaired by David Rendle. The outcome will ideally be a national infectious diseases unit led by Richard Newton and supported by the TB sector and the broader equine community, paying what it should to ensure a fit and health national herd.

It is hoped that key areas of research that were carried out at the AHT can be continued at one or more centres across the UK.

EHV Outbreak – Spain An outbreak of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1) in its neurological form which is not a notifiable disease, was confirmed at an FEI show jumping event in Valencia. The venue was locked down swiftly once the disease was confirmed and an FEI contingency plan implemented, meaning that support was brought in from all over Europe.

It has been reported that this is an extremely aggressive and contagious strain that affects each horse differently and has to date led to 17 deaths.

The FEI and BSJ have placed restrictions on horses who competed at the Spanish venue, requiring a quarantine period and blood test before being able to compete again.

Unfortunately, as some horses had left the event before the outbreak was confirmed, this has led to confirmed cases in France, Belgium and Germany. The FEI has now cancelled all FEI International events until 28th March at the earliest.

The BHA (British Horse Racing Authority) and the Irish equivalent have also urged extra vigilance to all those involved in racing who may also have links to showjumping.

Industry News

RSPCA Launch New 2021-2030 Strategy exploring the possibility of stepping back from prosecuting animal welfare offences and instead handing evidence over to the Crown Prosecution Service, along with aiming to gain statutory powers for the inspectors, as is the case in Scotland and Ireland.

It's important to emphasise that this is something being explored as part of the new strategy, and is dependent upon the Crown Prosecution Service having the commitment, resources and expertise required to provide the service.

As this is a significant development we have invited Chris Sherwood to speak at our upcoming AGM on the subject and SSPCA Mike Flynn to share his experiences of how prosecutions are run in Scotland. This should enable an interesting discussion about the pros and cons with some time for a Q & A afterwards.

Further information on the new strategy can be found on the RSPCA website via this link:

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/strategy> and this video clip explaining the potential changes to prosecution activity and plans for statutory powers:

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/strategy/prosecution>

BEVA are sharing 2 short videos in response to new research, from leading equine parasitologist, Dr Martin Nielsen, who has provided more evidence to show that **reducing de-worming intensity**, does not have any adverse health risks to horses.

The work confirms that the traditional approach of frequent routine de-worming at pre-determined intervals, without the

use of diagnostic testing is unnecessary.

To help share the results of this significant study Dr Nielsen has produced two short explanatory videos, one for [vets](#) and one for [horse owners](#) which can be accessed via these links.

Republic of Ireland:

Unsanctioned sulky racing on Irish roads could be banned as a new bill comes before the Dáil.

The primary purpose of the bill is to address the growing health, safety and welfare concerns, not only for the public but also for the horses and young passengers, and could see fines of up to 5000 Euros and 6 months in prison for offenders.

The sanctions hope to relocate it off the roads as is commonplace in France, the US and Australia.

Full details of the debate in Ireland can be found via this link:

<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2020-12-10/47/>

Institute of Equine Hydrotherapists (IEH) is a new subgroup of IRVAP (Institute of Registered Veterinary and Animal Physiotherapists) which will allow vets to refer equines for hydrotherapy treatments to suitably experienced (and qualified when accredited courses start) professionals, putting in place a code of conduct and practice.

Equine Hydrotherapy accredited courses are in development but were subject to COVID delays. Any person practising equine hydrotherapy is eligible to become an IEH member if they are deemed to be appropriate by the IEH board, evidence their equine

practice and experience through a CV and portfolio, is committed to promoting the aims and agrees to abide by the IRVAP Code of Practice and has been successfully processed through the accreditation procedures.

BHS Hardship Fund Update - The BHS have provided a financial support package of nearly £1m for their Approved Centres to support the welfare of horses and ponies over the past 12 months.

The grants were spent on a combination of feed/forage, vets/POM, farriery & bedding:

Round 1 = 350 applications = £293,250 awarded

Round 2 = 260 applications = £86,250 awarded

Round 3 = 295 applications = £219,200 awarded

Round 4 = 302 Applications = £227,000 awarded

Education/Research/CPD Opportunities

World Horse Welfare Webinars

World Horse Welfare launched its Welfare Wednesdays webinars in 2020 – a series of free webinars covering a wide range of topics relevant for all horse owners.

Each webinar features an external expert, including some very well-known names so far, as well as a World Horse

These webinars are an excellent opportunity to ask experts your horse care queries.

They are held fortnightly on Wednesday evenings at 7pm. The next Webinar is **31st March** on Alternative Grazing Systems.

You can find out more, sign up for upcoming webinars and

Welfare speaker drawing on their wealth of knowledge from the welfare world.

catch up on all the previous ones at:

[Welfare Wednesdays - World Horse Welfare](#)

BHS - #BeHorseAwareCampaign

Recently, there have been increasing reports on social media & in the press, of horses being seriously injured, made extremely ill and in some cases having died because members of the public have fed the horses, or because of their direct actions, such as not closing a gate.

The BHS has produced signs for horse owners to place around their fields warning the public not to feed their horses. These are available for download or more permanent versions can be purchased from their online shop. The reach of this campaign has been over 25 million people so far in 2021 alone.

Talk Equine with The Horse Trust:

<https://horsetrust.org.uk/research/talkequine/>

Talk Equine is a platform created by The Horse Trust in January 2021. It aims to help you stay up-to-date with the latest developments in equine science research, behaviour and practice – including through a series of webinars from the evidence base generated by The Horse Trust’s funded research projects.

The current focus is on helping to promote learning about equine clinical animal behaviour through online learning resources and live webinars hosted by a variety of field experts.

The Horse Trust's website now contains a clinical animal behaviour (CAB) hub, which is designed to be a 'go to' resource for people interested in a career as an equine behaviourist or who are already practicing and registered with the Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC).

The hub contains resources designed to help people understand what the process is for becoming a registered equine behaviourist, including what the academic requirements are and the different assessment pathways available. It contains resources to help people develop their clinical skills, which may also be useful CPD for behaviourists already registered with the ABTC.

They host monthly equine behaviour case study webinars to help trainee CABs develop their clinical skills. Further info via this link: [Equine Clinical Animal Behaviour Resource Hub | Join the Conversation \(horsetrust.org.uk\)](#)

Donkey Sanctuary - Support for Veterinary Surgeons

The Donkey Sanctuary have a dedicated phone line available 24/7 for vet to vet advice: 01395 579162. Non-urgent queries can be emailed to vets@thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk.

A team of farriers and EDTs are also available to provide advice and support where needed. There is also a wealth of information for vets on their website including access to factsheets and the Clinical Companion of the Donkey:

<https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/what-we-do/for-professionals/resources/factsheets>

They have a dedicated onsite laboratory offering blood and faecal analysis service including biochemistry and haematology, ACTH and insulin testing. More information about their diagnostic services can be found using this link:

<https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/what-we-do/for-professionals/diagnostic-services>

They are able to support decisions around case management and have a range of tools to help monitor quality of life:

<https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/what-we-do/for-professionals/resources/assessing-for-quality-of-life>

<https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/sites/uk/files/2020-03/assessment-for-quality-of-life-factsheet-professionals.pdf>

Hannah Bryer now holds the Cardiff University Bond Solon Criminal Expert Certificate and can act as an expert in cases relating to donkey welfare. She can be contacted on hannah.bryer@thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk or 07896036088

NEWC VIRTUAL AGM – 20th April – Speakers include RSPCA Chief Exec Chris Sherwood, SSPCA Chief Superintendent Mike Flynn and NEWC President David Marlin.



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