**RDA UK Update 11 May**

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**Response to government announcement**

Sunday’s announcement by Boris Johnson has given some indication of a move towards ending lockdown, however it has not brought in any new measures that could have an impact on RDA’s ability to restart most activities. In addition, devolved governments are clearly maintaining the lockdown stance for the immediate future. Our advice, therefore, is that groups should remain closed at least for the next three weeks, with some very specific exceptions, as below. As always, as and when new information or guidance is issued, we will update our position accordingly.

We are aware that some equestrian organisations are taking steps to restart activity in England and we have discussed and explained our position with them. RDA is in a different situation, as so many of our activities require close contact between riders or drivers and volunteers and therefore maintaining social distancing is not usually possible. This is exacerbated by the fact that many participants and volunteers are in vulnerable categories.

Our priority is the safety of participants, volunteers and staff; in most cases, we judge this to be at risk and therefore advise no resumption of activity. There may be a very small number of cases where RDA riders can resume, if they are not clinically vulnerable and social distancing can be maintained. Note – if they need to be supported, this must only happen by someone they have been living with through isolation and that person must be suitably trained and qualified according to RDA’s rules.

For those groups that operate from third-party venues, please be aware that some centres, schools or livery yards may be re-opening to some extent. It is important that you follow RDA advice for your activity and you should not feel the need to react to pressure from other people. We recognise that many people may be frustrated that they can’t re-start, but we must maintain our position and protect both the participants and the volunteers. If you need support to explain our position, please feel free to contact us at info@rda.org.uk.

**MyRDA page for getting started after lockdown**

Our working party has produced a range of planning tools to help you consider what you need to do and have in place to get started again, for when the time comes. It may be useful to familiarise yourself with these, so your group can understand what measures may need to be in place - and so you don’t have to start from scratch producing your own plans and resources. Some of the planning and action can be started now, in preparation for when you are able and feel ready to start.

From Wednesday, a new page on MyRDA.org.uk will contain all these resources, and will always contain the most up to date version of any guidance we produce specific to re-starting activities. The resources will be under ongoing review and will be updated in accordance with changes from the UK and devolved governments.

**Exercising horses**

Our advice on exercising and schooling horses (that it is OK to do this provided it is safe and the government restrictions are met) remains the same as before the lockdown. We appreciate that the government is encouraging us to take more exercise, but please remember that the exercising of RDA ponies is for their welfare – not for the exercise of people.

As always, if you are exercising horses outside your usual RDA location you need to let us know so that you are insured. You can find the form here, under insurance, which should be completed and returned to Peter Dean pdean@rda.org.uk: [www.myrda.org.uk/runningyourgroup/policies/](http://www.myrda.org.uk/runningyourgroup/policies/)

As a reminder, you will also find there the policy on riding/driving horses for training and schooling within your usual RDA venue.

**Survey reminder – and big thank you!**

Over half of you completed the survey in record time! Thank you so much. If you haven’t had a chance to complete it yet, there’s still time. Your insight will be hugely valuable in the coming weeks: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/C192020survey>