**RDA UK Update 2 April 2020**

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**Resources hub for participants**

To help participants to carry on with RDA at home, we have collected some resources in this shared hub here called ‘RDA at Home’: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16Az8DbeXnH8HOUBkHcr_d0KxxhlVZCrQ>

You will find educational worksheets as well as a range of ‘just for fun’ activity sheets which can be downloaded and printed out. We will be adding to this as the weeks go on, and we are still encouraging groups to send in their own resources if they are happy to share them (email cward@rda.org.uk).

This hub is designed for anyone to be able to access, so please share the link with your network as widely as possible.

**Advice about payments to commercial partners** (including riding schools and livery yards that host RDA)

For many RDA groups, the biggest risk to their long-term health in the current climate is not their own financial situation but that of the riding school or yard they operate from. Understandably, we have had several groups ask if they are allowed to provide financial assistance. The clearest answer to that is no, strictly speaking, Groups are not able to give money to them, even when times are hard.

If, however, financial support to a landlord or riding school becomes a serious consideration, groups must be clear that their reserves are for the benefit of the charity and delivering its objects – therefore before making any payment trustees should be confident that it will leave sufficient reserves to cover their own needs.

Before making payment please consider the following.

1. It is the first duty of trustees, under Charity Law in the UK, to ensure your assets (money) are only used to deliver the objects of the charity. Therefore, a charity may not make a “grant” or “donation” to a commercial body – this would include any commercial riding school or livery yard that hosts a Group. In this context these would be payments where there is nothing expected in return by the RDA Group. Therefore, if you have no horses that require livery and an associated fee, and you are not renting space or horses from the yard, arguably, you should not be paying. Note – this may be subject to a formal lease or rental agreement in which case the group can continue to pay in line with the terms of the agreement.
2. It may be reasonable to make “pre-payment” for future use of the school and horses. In this instance the group should consider what is reasonable in terms of the length of time in advance you are willing to pay. You should also have some sense that the school/livery yard is likely to continue to exist for that long. For example, you may choose to pay £XX/ week for the next 4 weeks of service, feeling relatively confident that the school, will weather the storm. It is likely that you can justify such a payment as a way of ensuring your charity can continue to operate after the current crisis, by ensuring it has a location to operate from.
3. If you are pre-paying for a significant period, you still need to consider point 2 above, but you should also consider what the charity gets for this level of pre-payment. For example, if you pay the next six months of costs up front, would the school/livery yard give you a discount? This helps show that you are using your assets wisely by paying more up front, but less in the long term.
4. At a much more formal level, you are entitled to make a loan to the school/livery yard, but this must be done with a legally binding loan agreement and with legal advice to create this. In particular, it is important you complete due diligence to satisfy yourselves that the loan is to a viable borrower. Similarly you could enter into an agreement to purchase part of the yard from the owners. While these are legally more robust, they are more complex and time consuming.
5. Note that any decision taken to make a payment should be agreed by majority vote of the trustees and formally recorded (you can do this by email, if necessary). Make sure you follow rules around conflict of interest, so if the yard owner is a trustee s/he should be excluded from the discussion and decision.
6. It is helpful to consider how you would justify any actions in the future – if challenged (even if this is an academic exercise). Think forward 12 months, to a (happier) time, when the crisis is in the past. If your local newspaper questions your decision to use your charity’s funds to support a commercial riding school – can you justify this. Before you act, you should feel reasonably confident that the answer to this question is yes.

If you need further guidance – contact the RDA Lawline on 07788 313298

**Charities Aid Foundation – rapid-response fund**

The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) have launched a rapid-response fund to help smaller charitable organisations affected by the impact of COVID-19. Grants of up to £10,000 are available to help organisations to continue to deliver much-needed support to communities across the UK.

You can apply for unrestricted funding for core costs, staffing, volunteer costs, supplies and equipment, communications or other critical charitable areas. You must be able to describe how an emergency grant will improve the situation for your organisation and community. CAF aim to make payments to selected organisations within 14 days of application.

The fund can be used to support organisations with a charitable purpose and charitable activities, which had income of £1million or less in their last financial year. This includes:

* UK registered charities (registered with Charity Commission, Scottish Charity Regulator or Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, or as shown in the Charities Act 2010)
* Organisations registered with Companies House or the Public Mutuals Register, as a charitable or not-for-profit entity such as Community Interest Companies, Companies Limited by Guarantee and others
* Unregistered entities and social enterprises

Further information can be found from [Charities Aid Foundation](https://www.cafonline.org/charities/grantmaking/caf-coronavirus-emergency-fund?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=socialorganic&utm_campaign=GENCAMCVD1920).

**Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund**

Further details about these Government grants, originally announced last week, have now been made available and can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-grant-funding-guidance-for-businesses?utm_source=b4f9bdbf-710a-4ee2-b783-da955ee31ea5&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate).

**Wales**

**Sport Wales Emergency Relief Fund**

The Welsh Government has confirmed they are making £200,000 available to provide support to not-for-profit sports clubs, including equestrian sport. This is being match-funded with £200,000 from Sport Wales. Each club will be able to apply for a maximum of £5,000. You will be eligible only if you are a voluntary sports organisation.

The funding will be targeted at those who are already facing significant challenges after a difficult few weeks, and who are likely to need immediate financial support over the next 12 weeks.

More information is provided [here.](https://www.sport.wales/emergency-relief-fund-qa/)

**Economic Resilience Fun**

A [new £500m Economic Resilience Fund has been launched for Wales](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmedia.service.gov.wales%2Fnews%2Fnew-gbp-500m-economic-resilience-fund-launched-for-wales&data=02%7C01%7CAlyson.Pasch%40gov.wales%7Ccd6bdb22ecbb4ab4aa6708d7d49d0b07%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637211643275460690&sdata=K0ARwE7aQFAX9QyRDQXct4fYISoX02am9gok1tkmqi0%3D&reserved=0).

The fund aims to plug the gaps in the support schemes already announced by the UK Government, including the Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, which will guarantee 80% of people’s wages and income.

It will support firms of all sizes, including social enterprises, with a focus on those that have not already benefited from the COVID-19 grants already announced by the Welsh Government.

Further information can be found from the [Welsh Government](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKWALES/bulletins/283e39a?utm_source=OIA&utm_campaign=644f39e10b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_03_31_11_29&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3830c491ed-644f39e10b-457826933).

**Scotland**

Grant funding is available through your local council of up to £10,000 if you are in receipt of the Small Business Bonus Scheme. This applies to those with a rateable value of up to £18,000.

The application form will ask you for your Rates Reference Number, available [here](https://www.saa.gov.uk/), and you need to apply to your specific council

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) has announced that the [Third Sector Resilience Fund](https://scvo.org/support/coronavirus/funding/for-organisations/third-sector-resilience-fund) is open for applications from charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations working in Scotland. An initial £20m emergency fund is available to help organisations stabilise and manage cash flows.

Please check the [Scottish Government](https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/coronavirus-advice) website for information on business support.

### Northern Ireland

Businesses in Northern Ireland can access the following schemes:

* COVID Small Business Grant – Small business grants of £10,000 to be issued immediately with a cost of £267m providing support to 27,000 businesses in NI. This is for all businesses with a net asset value up to £15,000
* Hospitality, Tourism and Retail Sectors Grant Scheme – An immediate grant of £25,000 will be provided to companies in these sectors with a rateable value up to £51,000

[Information on these schemes will be made available at NI Business Info](https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-business-support-grant-schemes).

Further to this, the Department of Finance has announced a [£100m emergency rates package for businesses](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/news/covid-19-ps100m-emergency-rates-package-businesses). All NI businesses will pay zero rates for the next three months (April, May, June). This automatically reduces rates by 25%, in addition to any existing rate reliefs. This applies to all businesses and does not need to be repaid.

Invest NI have provided practical advice for businesses online [here](https://www.investni.com/).

**BEF update on equine flu vaccinations**

The British Equestrian Federation, in conjunction with the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) and the British Horseracing Association (BHA), has approved a proposal regarding the vaccination schedule for equine influenza in competition horses competing under its member bodies. The move has been made in order to help riders, owners and vets tackle the significant logistical challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and provide clarity for all.

All competitive disciplines under the BEF umbrella currently operate a requirement for an annual booster every 12 months after an initial course of two injections and the first booster injection. This will remain the case throughout 2020, which means that any horse who goes beyond their annual renewal date will be required to start again. The initial vaccination intervals for primary and booster vaccinations will also remain in place as normal.

Read the full story here: <https://www.bef.co.uk/News-Detail.aspx?news=vaccination-update>