

Equine Influenza - Information from British Riding Clubs issued in May 2026

There has been an increase of confirmed equine influenza cases in parts of the UK.

To help minimise risk and maintain safe operations, we strongly recommend that all events, both at club and area level, have robust procedures in place and implement the necessary biosecurity measures.

The current BRC rules stipulate that a horse must have 12-monthly vaccination boosters to compete, while we recommend a six-monthly booster for those horses regularly attending events and mixing with other horses. Whilst the 12-month rule is still in place, we are mindful that should the spread of equine influenza continue to worsen, we may have to mandate that horses attending qualifiers and championships have a booster within six months and 21 days of an event, but not within the six days preceding entry to the competition and/or competition stables. If this rule is to change, you will be given plenty of notice and support to enforce any changes.

Potential measures to consider include:

- Checking passports on arrival to ensure all equine influenza vaccinations are up to date. Whilst this is only covered by BRC rules at area qualifiers, we would suggest that clubs try to check wherever possible during this time of increased risk.
- Sharing as much biosecurity guidance with your competitors/members as possible.
- Encourage your members to regularly check temperatures at home to establish a normal baseline for their horse.
- Advising participants not to attend events if their horse is showing any signs of being unwell, no matter how insignificant.
- Minimising horse-to-horse contact wherever possible.
- Spaced parking to maintain distance between horseboxes and trailers.
- Limiting the number of horses in arenas or warm-up areas at any one time.
- Providing hand sanitising stations for riders, owners, and support staff.
- Encouraging handlers to use their own equipment, such as buckets, grooming kits, tack, or water sources and not to share.
- Regularly disinfecting high-contact areas such as gates and communal touchpoints.
- Advise participants not to hand graze anywhere on site.
- Isolating and immediately reporting any horse showing symptoms such as coughing, nasal discharge, lethargy, or raised temperature.
- Asking attendees not to travel horses that have recently been in contact with any suspected or confirmed cases.
- Volunteers should be reminded to limit contact with horses wherever possible, to sanitise hands regularly and have a change of clothes/footwear available between attending their own horses and helping at an event.
- Ensuring your risk assessment is up-to-date and details the actions you are taking.

Useful link:

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/health-care-management/horse-health/disease-prevention/#understanding-biosecurity>