



## The BHS's campaign to Keep Britain Riding

May 2023

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### Introduction:

**Social license** is a growing conversation across the equestrian industry, with the topic continuing to be discussed in the press, on social media and at events.

As an antidote to this, The British Horse Society (BHS) are striving to remind the wider equestrian community why the horse human relationship is so valuable and share the work we're doing to, critically, safeguard the long-term prospects of the equestrian industry.

To do this, the BHS are launching a new integrated campaign which aims to:

1. Make more equestrians, and the wider community, aware of the great loss in riding schools
2. Help them to understand the breadth of work the BHS does to protect and optimise the horse/human bond

### Key messages:

Our bond with horses has been built over thousands of years. Working for each other, caring for each other, bringing the best out of each other and helping us to be our best selves.

But, across the UK, our collective bond with horses is under threat. Through a study carried out by the BHS to better understand the recreational riding landscape, the equine charity have found that over 250 riding schools have closed since 2018. That is a 15% reduction, leaving us with just 1497 riding schools.

That's an approximate loss of more than 1.5 million riding lessons per year - 1.5 million fewer opportunities for children and adults to build a love of horses and experience the benefits of riding!

As the lifeblood of equestrian participation, riding schools are an essential part of the future of equestrianism. Without them, the professional sport and recreational riding could both be severely impacted.

We need to address this decline for a number of reasons:

- Firstly, so more people from more backgrounds can experience the benefits of riding
- Secondly, most recreational and professional riders will start their journey as a child in a riding school

- Thirdly, we know that good horse care and welfare is reliant on a thriving, knowledgeable and experience workforce

This is all clearly evident through schemes like Changing Lives through Horses: an alternative education programme which reconnects disadvantaged and disengaged people back into communities through the magic of horses.

This initiative shows how horses really are there for people from all backgrounds and truly can change people's lives.

It provides example after example of individuals whose situation has been turned round through a horse-human relationship. More importantly, it emphasises why it's so important that we work collectively to save riding schools for future generations to come.

### **We can keep our collective bond with horses thriving.**

Through our 'Keep Britain Riding' campaign we are aiming to reverse this declining trend to keep Britain's equestrianism thriving.

To celebrate the unique horse/human relationship and all the benefits it brings, we are encouraging anyone who has experienced the true wonder of horses to share their photos and videos of what horses have meant to them across social media, by using the hashtag #horsehumanbond.

Donations are also being encouraged to support our Changing Lives through Horses programme, so that more people can thrive from the #horsehumanbond relationship. So far, we've helped over 2,000 children and young adults. And now we have 85 Approved Centres ready to change lives.

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### **Planned marketing & communications activities:**

- **PR activity**

We have distributed press releases to targeted media, including equine press, national and broadcast media, as well as regional publications.

- **Website**

Our website has been updated to reflect this new campaign. This includes the introduction of new pages about the campaign and how people can donate.

- **British Horse**

When you receive your next issue of British Horse, you will see the inclusion of an article all about our 'Keep Britain Riding' campaign and how you can get involved.

- **Social media**

Our social media platforms will play a big role in this campaign. We will be sharing our own creatives, rider stories, case studies, user generated content and working with influencers to spread our core campaign messages.

Through this activity, we aim to get as many people as possible from across the equine world to share images and video of what horses mean to them, and most importantly to use the hashtag **#horsehumanbond**.

- **Marketing**

We have created social media adverts, solus emails (via Horse and Hound and Horse & Rider) and digital audio ads (for example Spotify). We are also sponsoring an upcoming edition of the Horse & Hound podcast, with our CEO James Hick featuring as a key interviewee.

### **So, how you can you support the BHS and get involved?**

We encourage you to join us in shouting out about the incredible bond we all share with horses, and to keep Britain riding. We're asking you to share a photo or video of the horse(s) in your life with the hashtag **#horsehumanbond**.

We'd love to see you, our volunteers, share the horsey love by posting your own pictures across your social media pages, using the hashtag and tagging your friends.

With your support, we can encourage as many people as possible within the equestrian community to get involved with this campaign and, in turn, spread awareness of the wonderful work we do to protect and optimise the horse human relationship.

To help more young people gain key life skills, improve their wellbeing and continue their path to education, we're also asking for **donations** to our Changing Lives through Horses programme.

You can give online at [www.bhs.org.uk/clth](http://www.bhs.org.uk/clth) or text CHANGE5 to give £5 or CHANGE10 to give £10 to 70507. Please encourage your friends and family to give what they can today and to help us change more lives.

**We thrive, with horses.** And we need your help to make sure that more people are able to enjoy horses for generations to come.

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### **Any questions?**

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the BHS team. You can get hold of us from 8:35am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 8:35am – 3pm on Friday 02476 6840521 or [pressenquiry@bhs.org.uk](mailto:pressenquiry@bhs.org.uk)

If you need to reach us out of hours, please find our out of hours contact information here: [www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/press-enquiries](http://www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/press-enquiries)