SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

The Showing Council (TSC) provides advice and guidance to member bodies on a range of issues. TSC does not mandate, it remains each societies/ associations board of directors/trustees responsibility and accountability to determine how to manage and address key issues and risks, and the course of action to take in accordance with their own articles, policies and procedures.

It is recommended that directors or trustees fully understand their legal responsibilities for their role and ensure that compliance can be evidenced and supported by clear policies and procedures that are regularly audited and updated. Equestrianism remains a high-risk activity, therefore, consultation with the societies'/associations' legal advisors and insurance brokers is essential to ensure appropriate advice is sought and insurance cover is in place, alongside risk assessments and mitigation to cover all known or perceived risks.

Duty of Care.

Societies/associations have a legal obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of members to a standard of "reasonable care" when running events that could foreseeably harm others. Harm must be reasonably foreseeable; therefore, societies/ associations must consider future claims that might be brought against them. This will be determined by what was known at the time, for which they must have taken reasonable measures to a standard that would be considered "fair and reasonable by a reasonable person" judged against the proximity/distance of time the event took place. The first element of a lack of duty of care must be established to proceed with an action of negligence.

Risks and mitigation.

There are several areas that need to be considered, not all of which are covered here. This advice while not exhaustive focuses on 5 specific areas of risk that equestrian and other sports governing bodies and event organisers see as highest on "risk registers". Societies and associations are advised to take their own legal, insurance brokers and other professional advice.

- Health and Safety.
- Rider Safety
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Animal Welfare and Social Licence to Operate
- Inclusion
- General Data Protection Regulations. (GDPR)

1. Health and Safety.

TSC advise that all societies/associations should have a comprehensive Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment in place that should be updated and reviewed regularly. Where possible a dedicated Health and Safety person should be appointed.

The Health and Safety Executive will provide free advice to those who require support: hse.gov.uk

Many shows and events are now held at purpose built equestrian centres or show grounds. As part of the hire agreement, it should be clearly understood who is responsible for key areas of health and safety and risk assessments, including any trade-stands that are on site. However, all parties have a responsibility to work collaboratively to ensure requirements are met.

All accidents and near misses should be recorded if known and records kept. Information on Health and Safety should be communicated to competitors either in the schedule or competitor information.

2. Rider Safety.

TSC advise that all societies/associations should review rider safety rules and protocols annually. Some sporting bodies are reviewing retrospective claims for injuries occurred in previous decades, where the result of the injury is allegedly now manifesting into a serious medical condition, which it is claimed, was known at the time or could have been foreseen by the governing body. Such protocols should include the societies/associations requirements for suitable head protection, guidance on concussion and body protection.

3. Safeguarding and Child Protection

TSC advise that all societies/associations should have appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

Children have the right to be protected from harm. This is defined in the Children Act 1989 and 2004. Legislation is in place to protect children from significant harm, abuse (physical/emotional/sexual) neglect and exploitation. Response to safeguarding concerns must be in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026): Statutory Guidance.

Each member body's policy and procedure should set out their commitment to protecting children and keeping them safe at events and shows they run.

Policies and procedures should be tailored to each organisation based on a risk assessment. Risks are increased at championship shows where large groups of competitors stay at a venue

overnight/s. This needs to be risk assessed, including measures to be in place should a child go missing.

Children (as a guide under 16 years of age) who compete at member bodies shows must be accompanied by a parent or someone with designated parental responsibility for the child. Parents or those with parental responsibility remain accountable and responsible for their own children, their own actions and behaviour towards their own and other people's children.

Competitions take place in the public domain and relationships between children and officials is different to those of an instructor/coach/trainer relationship. In these circumstances the BHS Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedure should be followed.

When member bodies undertake other activities, where children may be left with officials/volunteers without parents being present, these officials must have a clear Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme certificate, preferably, on the "live update system". Safeguarding training by a recognised body must also be undertaken and updated regularly.

All member bodies paid employees, directors, trustees, officials who are listed in rule books or official information, and volunteers are in a position of trust. Children will view them as "safe" people to talk to or view them has having "power and authority" over them. Everyone must "act curiously" and report any concerns if they believe an inappropriate relationship is developing.

Member bodies should insist that all officials voluntarily disclose whether they have any convictions, cautions, outstanding matters, have any disciplinary outcomes, are on the Sex Offender Register, and/or have been barred from working with children or vulnerable adults. This includes criminal convictions that would otherwise be classed as "spent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This declaration will enable to societies/associations to request an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme Certificate and refuse membership if this highlights a risk to children.

What to do if you are worried a child/vulnerable adult is being abused:

Everyone has a responsibility to report any situation if they are concerned a child/vulnerable adult is being subjected to abuse or are worried they may be subject to abuse. If they are in immediate danger, call 999 immediately. Where possible, without putting yourself or the child/vulnerable adult in danger, make them as safe and report to the show organisers as soon as possible.

In all circumstances concerns should be reported to the show organiser, but all safeguarding concerns in particular, must reported immediately.

A separate policy and procedures should be in place to protect show organisers; this must include how to respond to an allegation of abuse. Whilst not exhaustive this should include;

Recording:

Only record basic information, contact details and who, what and when. The child or witnesses should not be interviewed as this could prejudice an investigation. Remember that all records will be disclosable to the police and local authority child protection teams.

Confidentiality:

Do not agree to keep any information confidential, any safeguarding must be immediate. Ensure the person reporting the concern and or the alleged victim of abuse fully understands that safeguarding concerns can remain confidential and will only be shared on a need-to-know basis; such as with police and statutory agencies.

Reporting:

Except in emergency situations as detailed above, report all concerns immediately by calling the police on 101 and the local authority child protection team, when the event/show is being held. It is sensible to have the local authority child protection team, including out of hours team, (Emergency Duty Team) phone numbers to hand in a key information pack.

4. Animal Welfare and Social Licence to Operate.

Equestrian sport is in the spotlight re horse welfare and social licence to operate. Member bodies need to ensure this remains an important area for continuous improvement and education of members.

TSC advise, that all societies/associations, adhere to TSC Equine Welfare and General Best Practice Guidance. Where possible a Welfare Officer should be appointed. Showing is in the public domain, including at shows, through live streaming, photography, videos or on social media.

5. Inclusion.

TSC advise societies/associations to keep policies and procedures on inclusion updated and responsive to their membership.

6. General Data Protection Regulations. (GDPR)

Member bodies process a lot of personal data and should be aware of the responsibilities under GDPR. Policies, privacy notices and procedures are reviewed annually, and staff members and directors/trustees have refresher training annually regarding their roles and responsibilities.

Sharing of members information with key stakeholders for normal business activities or with other member bodies, must be undertaken in accordance with regulations, and members should be clearly informed how their data will be used. Appropriate information sharing protocols should be in place with other member bodies where required, and to include the sharing of information regarding the outcome of any disciplinary hearings.