



**Protecting our People and
Our Greyhounds**

COVID-19 OPERATIONAL POLICY

29TH MARCH 2021

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1 Introduction

- i. In allowing for a return to racing, it is essential that the welfare of the greyhounds, the integrity of the sport and the health and safety of all those working in it continue to be prioritised.
- ii. As the sport's regulator, GBGB, through an industry-led working group, has developed this COVID-19 Operational Policy. All consideration has been made to ensure this would deliver a responsible but effective return to racing during the coronavirus pandemic.
- iii. GBGB will continue to respond swiftly and appropriately to any update from the government and its chief medical officers and, where necessary, amend the strict controls as set out in this document.
- iv. The safe and responsible resumption of racing is entirely dependent on the cooperation, conscientiousness, and compliance of all those involved in the sport.
- v. Racecourses will therefore be closely monitored by GBGB through its Stipendiary field force to ensure compliance with all elements of this COVID-19 Operational Policy.
- vi. All licensed staff – racecourse officials, trainers, kennel hands and veterinary practitioners – shall likewise comply with these operating procedures. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

2 Guidance on Symptoms and Self-Isolation

2.1 Self-Isolation

- i. As per up-to-date NHS advice, anyone who meets one of the following criteria should self-isolate at home and must not travel to the racecourse:
 - Has a high temperature or a new persistent cough – please follow the guidance on self-isolation (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms/>);
 - Is living with someone who is self-isolating.
- ii. Trainers required to self-isolate should also inform their Stipendiary Steward at the earliest possible opportunity and make alternative arrangements, where necessary, for the care of their greyhounds.

2.2 Procedure if Someone Falls Ill at a Racecourse

- i. Trainers and kennel staff due to travel to a racecourse for a race or trial meeting MUST take due care that they are not experiencing symptoms before setting out. They must not set out if they are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19 or anyone in their household is experiencing symptoms.
- ii. However, if anyone does develop a high temperature or a persistent cough while at the racecourse, they should:
 - Return to their vehicle immediately, alerting racecourse staff safely from a distance on the way to their vehicle, or alerting the racecourse by telephone/email as soon as possible;
 - Avoid touching anything;
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or, if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.
- iii. A Local Official will arrange for the greyhounds that have been brought to the racecourse by the affected person to be withdrawn, where necessary, and to be loaded onto the vehicle whilst maintaining social distancing and with the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The affected person should leave the site as soon as possible.

- iv. They must then follow the guidance on self-isolation and will not be permitted to return to the racecourse until their period of self-isolation has been completed.

- v. Again, trainers self-isolating should inform the relevant Stipendiary Steward as soon as possible so that they are aware of arrangements for the greyhounds in their care.

3 Resumption of Racing

- i. The phases for a resumption of greyhound racing are as follows:
 - **Phase 1** – *Trial meetings only behind closed doors* – strictly controlled in accordance with this Operational Policy and government guidance.
 - **Phase 2** – *Resumption of racing behind closed doors* – a maximum of ten races at a minimum of 30 minutes' gap between races, strictly controlled in accordance with this Operational Policy and government guidance.
 - **Phase 3** – *Racing behind closed doors* – a maximum of twelve races at a minimum of 25 minutes' gap between races, strictly controlled in accordance with this Operational Policy and government guidance.
 - **Phase 4** – *Racing behind closed doors* – no limit on the number of races but a minimum of 20 minutes' gap between races, strictly controlled in accordance with this Operational Policy and government guidance.
 - **Phase 5** – *Racing behind closed doors* – no limit on the number of races and no minimum gap between races, strictly controlled in accordance with this Operational Policy and government guidance.
 - **Phase 6** – *Allowing Spectators* – strictly controlled in accordance with this Operational Policy and subject to government guidance on social distancing and public gatherings.
- ii. Racecourses must demonstrate to GBGB their compliance with general government guidance for businesses (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>), sector-specific workplace advice on social distancing (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance>) and this Operational Policy. Evidence of compliance will be taken from regular Attendance & Audit reports and the Stipendiary Steward's surveillance reports.
- iii. GBGB will continue to respond swiftly and appropriately to any update from the government and its chief medical officers and, where necessary, amend the strict controls and Phases as set out in this document.

4 Racecourse Management, Cleaning and Hygiene

4.1 Preparation of Racecourse

- i. Prior to the arrival of any external personnel at the stadium (e.g. trainers, kennel hands etc.), designated members of racecourse staff must clean and disinfect all hard surfaces.
- ii. Racecourses should also ensure that their steward's box/racing office, hare drive and camera operator positions can be operated whilst maintaining the 2m social distancing rule.
- iii. Where the 2m social distancing rule cannot be observed, appropriate provision must be put in place in accordance with government advice (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance>). This states that if a 2m distance cannot be maintained, staff should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face if possible. Where face-to-face contact is essential, this should be kept to 15 minutes or less wherever possible. Face coverings must be worn in enclosed areas of the racecourse such as the kennels and paddock.
- iv. There may be instances where appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, will be required. Racecourses advised to refer to the government's [PPE Advice Hub](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>) for further guidance on this.

4.2 Cleaning Procedures

- i. Enhanced cleaning procedures should be in place across all areas of the racecourse, in line with the principles of the government's decontamination advice (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>), including but not limited to:
 - Taps and washing facilities;
 - Toilet flush and seats;
 - Door handles and push plates;
 - Handrails;
 - Racing office equipment;
 - Racing and kennelling equipment e.g. jackets, cleaning buckets, water bowls, microchip scanner etc.;

- Telephone and keypad equipment;
 - Scanners and IT equipment.
- ii. Rubbish collection and storage points should also be increased and emptied regularly and safely throughout and at the end of each race/trial meeting.
 - iii. The appropriate cleaning products should be used within the racecourse and Anigene HLD4V, or other suitable DEFRA-approved disinfectant, within the kennel area.

4.3 Additional Equipment and Facilities

- i. Racecourses should ensure that they have carried out full and in-depth risk assessments. This includes maintaining sufficient supplies of personnel protective equipment (PPE) for use by any personnel that are required to wear it for each trial/race meeting. See further guidance on the government's [PPE Advice Hub](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>).
- ii. Racecourses should also provide, and ensure they have appropriate supplies of, the following:
 - Soap for Handwashing and Sanitiser Stations, set up in close proximity to personnel working areas and at entrance/exit points;
 - Disposal bins for masks, gloves, paper towels, tissues etc.;
 - Appropriate hand sanitiser;
 - Appropriate disinfectant in spray devices;
 - Anigene HLD4V disinfectant, or other suitable DEFRA-approved disinfectant, for use in the kennel area.

4.4 Canteens and Sustenance Arrangements

- i. Where possible, trainers, kennel hands and racecourse staff should be encouraged to bring their own food. They should also be required to stay on site following arrival at the racecourses and to avoid using local shops.
- ii. Where a racecourse offers facilities, workplace government guidance must be strictly followed to maintain hygiene and social distancing protocols (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during->

[coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance](#)). If necessary, trainers and kennel hands are advised to return to their vehicle to consume food.

4.5 Signage

Racecourses must display instruction and reminder signage in the racecourse, paddock and kennel area clearly reminding attendees of the hygiene, handwashing and social distancing protocols in place.

5 GBGB Racing Protocol

5.1 Rules of Racing

In order to facilitate social distancing controls, some temporary dispensations to the Rules of Racing (<https://www.gbgb.org.uk/rules-regulation/rules-of-racing/>) need to be observed. These include the process for qualification, to ensure greyhounds are fit to race whilst maintaining the highest levels of integrity, and procedures during any trial or race meeting. The changes are as follows in this section.

5.2 Racing/Trialling

- i. All existing Rules and procedures remain applicable for the conduct of trial and race meetings except for the following:
 - Kennelling times will be managed locally to reduce the number of trainers and kennel staff in the paddock at any one time. Greyhounds must be kennelled for a minimum of 45 minutes prior to their trial/race and must also remain under the surveillance of the paddock stewards for a minimum period of 15 minutes after their trial/race. After wash down, greyhounds should be returned to their allocated kennel under the instruction of the paddock steward.
 - Where pre and post-race trials take place, kennels can only be used once (inclusive of the race meeting).
- ii. Greyhounds must not be kept in vehicles any longer than necessary to facilitate the kennelling arrangements.

5.3 Temporary Conditions for Operating Trials and Race Meetings

- i. Racecourses shall ensure that their trainers are fully briefed on the requirements for operating trial and race meetings prior to attending the racecourse.
- ii. Across the whole racecourse, there will be a limit of 50 licenced people able to attend any trial or graded race meeting including racecourse staff. For race meetings that include open races the limit is 75 people (please see Section 6 'Operating Protocol for Race and Trial Meetings' for more specific paddock restrictions).
- iii. Each racecourse must have measures in place to ensure that all employees and trainers/kennel staff are observing the 2m social distancing rule. Face coverings must be worn in enclosed areas of the racecourse such as the

kennels and paddock. Where the 2m social distancing rule cannot be observed appropriate provision must be put in place, in accordance with government advice (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance>). This may include screens or appropriate PPE – please refer to the government's PPE Advice Hub (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>) for further details on this.

- iv. The minimum racecourse personnel requirements as per Rule 7 remain in place as normal. In addition, the Authorised Representative of each racecourse shall nominate a senior Local Official in attendance as a Compliance Management Officer (CMO) who will supervise and observe compliance with operational procedures and provide an Attendance & Audit report to the GBGB at the end of each trial/race meeting.
- v. The Authorised Representative of each racecourse shall also nominate a minimum of two Local Officials as Distancing Control Officers (DCOs). These DCOs must be in attendance at trial and race meetings and their responsibility shall be to ensure that social distancing takes place in line with workplace government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance>) and this Operational Policy across all licensed areas of the racecourse.
- vi. Trainers must notify the racecourse in advance of the names of any licensed kennel staff due to be in attendance at a trial/race meeting. The racecourse should approve those attending. For Open Races, only one person is permitted per four greyhounds unless there is more than one runner in a race for that trainer.
- vii. Trainers/kennel hands should only be permitted to assist other trainers in the event of an emergency or where a trainer has a minimum of two greyhounds in a race and they do not have enough staff to parade both greyhounds. Trainers/kennelhands are only permitted to parade another trainer's greyhound if they wear disposable gloves and they wash their hands before and after handling the greyhound. Coating up and washing down of greyhounds for another trainer is not permitted.

6 Operating Protocol for Race and Trial Meetings

6.1 General Principles

All racecourse personnel, trainers and kennel hands must:

- Wash hands/sanitise hands regularly – where gloves are worn, hands should be washed with gloves on;
- Observe the 2m distancing rule in accordance with government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance>) or use appropriate PPE or screening – please see the government's PPE Advice Hub (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>);
- Avoid directly facing others;
- Always carry tissues to catch coughs or sneezes and dispose of tissues in the bins provided – Catch it, Kill it, Bin it;
- Where PPE is required this should be fitted in accordance with training and guidance and always taken off following the correct procedure and disposed of in the designated bins;
- Be safe and considerate to others;
- Report any issues immediately to the racecourse's designated Compliance Management Officer (CMO).

6.2 Racecourse Personnel

- i. Racecourse personnel should follow government advice when travelling to and from work (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-transport-and-travel-advice>).
- ii. Racecourse personnel must park in the designated parking area and must park at least 2m from the next vehicle.
- iii. Racecourse personnel should arrive at work in clean clothing and must wash/sanitise their hands upon arrival.

6.3 Transportation of Greyhounds to and from the Racecourse

- i. Where greyhounds are cared for by individuals living in the same household, those individuals may travel together in the same greyhound transport vehicle, but only where more than one person is required to travel.
- ii. Trainers and kennel hands that are not living in the same household should follow government advice when travelling to and from the racecourse (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-transport-and-travel-advice>).
- iii. Trainers should also consider how they would manage the transportation of their greyhounds, if one of them was taken ill during a visit.
- iv. Transportation vehicles and travel cages should be thoroughly cleaned prior to travel.
- v. Trainers and kennel hands should arrive at the racecourse in clean clothing. Any items of clothing not being worn should be left in the vehicles and not brought into the racecourse in order to support hygiene protocols.

6.4 Arrival

- i. Kennelling times may be staggered to reduce the number of people in the kennels at any one time.
- ii. Greyhound transportation vehicles must be parked in the designated car parking area and all vehicles must be parked at least 2m apart. A Distancing Control Officer (DCO) or Local Official will allocate parking spaces on arrival.
- iii. Greyhounds should only be unloaded when instructed by a DCO and should wait in the designated greyhound exercise area whilst awaiting being called for kennelling. Social distancing of 2m must be maintained by all personnel in the exercise area.
- iv. Handwash/sanitiser should be provided close to the exercise area and trainers and kennel hands must wash/sanitise their hands prior to entry to the kennel area.
- v. The number of people in the kennels at any one time must be kept to a minimum.

6.5 Identification and Weighing-in Procedure

- i. Greyhounds will be identified by use of the scanner in the normal way.
- ii. The trainer/kennel hand should show the greyhound's ear markings at weigh-in. Where those ear markings are unable to be viewed to the satisfaction of the Local Official, the greyhound's markings should be used as secondary ID (whilst still observing the 2m rule).
- iii. Greyhounds should be presented for weighing in the normal way and social distancing in accordance with 6.1 above shall be maintained during the identification and weighing-in processes.

6.6 Pre-Kennelling Veterinary Inspection

- i. The vet should carry out their pre-racing inspection by watching the greyhound trot and observing the 2m rule in accordance with 6.1 above. If there is any cause for concern that warrants further investigation the greyhound shall be withdrawn from racing at this point. The veterinary surgeon will assess the risk of carrying out a full clinical examination taking into account their own personal safety and the welfare of the greyhound.
- ii. The trainer/kennel hand should lift the tail of a bitch so that the vet can inspect and confirm that the bitch is not in season.
- iii. The pre-kennelling veterinary inspection will be carried out in accordance with the veterinary protocol. Any greyhound that the vet does not think is fit to trial or race will be withdrawn.

6.7 Kennelling Procedure

- i. Kennels will be allocated in blocks for each trainer to assist with separation, rather than random allocation pursuant to Rule 113ii.
- ii. Trainers/kennel hands should use their own bowls for water to be placed inside the greyhound's kennel.
- iii. Normal kennelling procedure should be followed ensuring government guidance on social distancing (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance#outdoor-businesses>) is observed.
- iv. Each trainer will be allocated an area for coating up and wash down, maintaining the required social distancing. All necessary equipment that

they require for that purpose should be kept in a weatherproof lidded box or left in their vehicle until the necessary time.

- v. Once a trainer/kennel hand has kennelled all of their greyhounds, they must return to their vehicle, or designated waiting area where social distancing is maintained, until it is time to remove a greyhound from its kennel immediately prior to a race or trial.

6.8 Preparation for a Race or Trial

- i. Trainers/kennel hands will be called by the paddock steward to remove their greyhounds from their kennel in readiness for their trial or race.
- ii. Trainers/kennel hands should wash or sanitise their hands again prior to entry to the kennel area.
- iii. The paddock steward will limit the number of handlers in the kennel area at any one time in order to maintain social distancing.
- iv. The greyhound should be coated up in the designated coating-up area and then taken to the designated paddock area for scanning and their pre-race veterinary inspection.
- v. Greyhounds should only wear the trainer's own racing jackets or those designated by the racecourse for that trainer's sole use during the trial or race meeting. A dispensation to Rule 118 will be granted to permit the use of mixed types of race jackets.
- vi. Trainers/kennel hands should use their own greyhound walking-out coats where greyhound outercoats are required by weather conditions.
- vii. Trainers and kennel hands should only wear their own clothes for parading.
- viii. The handler should demonstrate the tightness of the muzzle to the paddock steward and lift any outer coats so the paddock steward can see the racing jacket. The handler should demonstrate that the racing jacket is correctly secured.
- ix. Identification by the paddock stewards will be carried out by scanning of the microchip only.
- x. The pre-trial/pre-race veterinary inspection shall be carried out in accordance with the veterinary protocol.

- xi. The handler will wait in the specified position for the trap number of the greyhound until called for the parade.

6.9 Parading the Greyhounds Prior to a Race

- i. Greyhounds should wait in their designated positions until called to go out onto parade or to exercise on the infield.
- ii. Handlers must ensure that they keep a distance of at least 2m apart at all times during the parade or when exercising on the infield.
- iii. On instruction to take the greyhounds to the starting traps, handlers should make their way to designated waiting positions, keeping 2m apart.

6.10 Loading

- i. Greyhounds must be loaded in a way that maintains social distancing (1-3-5, 2-4-6 or 1-4, 2-5, 3-6 as necessary). Handlers should wait to be called by the starter to load.
- ii. Handlers should load their own greyhound and lock the trap door before moving away to the infield and maintaining the 2m distancing.
- iii. No greyhound outer coats or equipment should be left in the loading area.
- iv. Following loading, handlers must maintain the 2m distancing whilst making their way across the middle.
- v. A dedicated marker for each trap number should be made adjacent to the pick-up area for trainers/kennel hands to stand by and wait.

6.11 Pick-Up

- i. To ensure social distancing is maintained handlers must wear a face covering and should wait at their marker until they are called by racecourse personnel to collect their greyhound.
- ii. Slip leads may be used for ease.
- iii. Where a racecourse has a curtain, the curtain should be used where possible.
- iv. A suitable cover should be used to cover the hare at the pick-up.

- v. A dummy lure may be thrown down when the hare is covered to assist in preventing the greyhounds from running further.
- vi. On walking back to the paddock after a trial or race, the 2m distancing rules must be observed.
- vii. A wash station and/or hand sanitiser must be made available at the pick-up.

6.12 Veterinary Inspection After a Race or Trial

The post-trial/post-race veterinary inspection should be carried out in accordance with the veterinary protocol.

6.13 Return to the Kennels Post Race or Trial

- i. Greyhounds should be washed down in the specific area allocated to each trainer. Handlers should wait to be directed by the paddock stewards to return their greyhound to its kennel.
- ii. Once a trainer/kennel hand has finished washing the greyhound down they should wait to be called by the paddock steward before placing their greyhound back in the allocated kennel.
- iii. Handlers should wash/sanitise their hands and must then return to their vehicle, or designated waiting area where social distancing is maintained, unless they have a runner in the next race/trial.

6.14 Leaving the Racecourse

- i. Trainers must leave the racecourse as soon as practicable after their last runner at that meeting. Loading of greyhounds onto the vehicle must only take place once the trainer's last runner has been placed back in their kennel.
- ii. Any racing jackets designated for that trainer's use and provided by the racecourse should be placed in the designated receptacle for washing by the racecourse.
- iii. Loading will only take place on the instruction of the paddock steward.

- iv. When all greyhounds for each trainer have been loaded into the greyhound transport vehicle, the trainer and handler must leave the racecourse.
- v. All licensed visitors and personnel should ensure their hands are washed/sanitised upon leaving the racecourse.

6.15 Race and Trial Emergency Procedures

i. Greyhound Turning in the Trap

In the event that a greyhound turns in the traps, the handlers should return to the designated waiting position for their trap number and wait to be called by the starter in loading order in accordance with 6.10.i above to unload their greyhounds. The 2m distancing should be observed, and the handlers should wait with their greyhound at their designated mark or walk in the infield, observing the 2m distancing.

The vet should make their way to the starting traps and inspect the greyhounds (in accordance with the veterinary protocol) and the greyhounds should then be re-loaded in accordance with the loading protocol at 6.10.i above.

ii. Traps not Opening

In the event that the traps do not open, the handlers should return to the designated waiting position for their trap number and wait to be called by the starter in loading order in accordance with 6.10.i above to unload their greyhounds.

The handlers should return the greyhound to the paddock, observing the 2m distancing, until the mechanical issue is resolved and a further veterinary inspection (in accordance with the veterinary protocol) has been carried out.

iii. Hare Stopped in Interest of Safety

In an emergency, once the hare has stopped, handlers must only enter the running surface to collect their greyhound where the- distancing rule can be safely followed.

6.16 Compliance Management

- i. The racecourse's designated Compliance Management Officer (CMO) will supervise and observe compliance with operational procedures.
- ii. The CMO will be required to submit an Attendance & Audit report to their GBGB Stipendiary Steward, by email, within 24 hours of the end of a trial/race meeting. This must list all personnel attending and confirm that compliance with all operational procedures (to their knowledge and belief) has been completed at the trial/race meeting.

7 Further Support, Questions and Concerns

- i. Everyone is urged to read and keep abreast of the government's latest medical advice on coronavirus (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>), so that they are able to safeguard their own health and that of others.
- ii. If in doubt about your risk level, or that of someone in your household, stay home where possible before getting further guidance. Racecourse personnel should speak to their line manager at the earliest opportunity.
- iii. Trainers and kennel staff should continue to contact their GBGB Area Stipendiary Steward, in the first instance, in relation to greyhound care.
- iv. GBGB's confidential Welfare Hotline is also available 24/7 on 020 7822 0917 for any urgent concerns about the welfare of greyhounds. Please leave a message giving as many details as possible and staff will investigate.
- v. For veterinary questions, please call the dedicated GBGB Veterinary Advice Line on 020 7822 0913.