October 2025

HBLB Newsletter

Welcome to the Horserace Betting Levy Board newsletter. HBLB's website www.hblb.org.uk has significant additional information about the organisation.

HBLB 2025-2028 Business Plan

HBLB published its 2025-2028 three-year Business Plan in June. This outlines priorities through to 2028 aligning these with HBLB's goals and "Racing Outcomes" that guide funding decisions. There are 29 externally focused key activities and 15 internally focused projects to keep improving effectiveness and efficiency.

The plan details HBLB's approach to main activities, strategic risk management, and compliance with public sector requirements, as Levy funds are classed as public money.

For more information regarding the business plan, click here.

Chair Appointment

Roger Devlin was appointed Chair of HBLB for a four-year term starting 1 July 2025.

For additional information, click here.

Champions Full Gallop Season 2

Season Two of Champions Full Gallop will premiere on **Friday 17 October at 10.45pm on ITV1.**

The behind-the-scenes docuseries offers viewers a unique window into the 2024-25 jumps season, following the people and stories that define British Racing. With its mix of drama, passion and sporting excellence, Champions Full Gallop continues its mission to bring the thrill of racing to new audiences.

Watch the season 2 trailer here.

HBLB has provided **£1.115m** in funding towards the production costs and promotion of the second series, alongside support from Flutter and Racecourse Media Group.

HBLB treatment of replacement races and additional fixtures

As we head into the autumn and winter months, abandonments, mostly caused by frost or waterlogging, are a much more frequent occurrence, reducing both opportunities for participants and content for spectators, viewers and bettors. In these circumstances, Racing and HBLB take a dynamic and flexible approach to mitigation via the re-scheduling of key races and the staging of additional fixtures.

When a key race – typically a Group / Graded race or Series Final - is abandoned, the BHA Race Planning team consults with participants and assesses whether an equivalent race within a suitable timeframe is already programmed. If there is no equivalent, re-scheduling and funding of the abandoned race will be considered in a collaborative process between the BHA, original host racecourse, HBLB and if applicable, the potential new host racecourse. Though race re-scheduling can impact broadcast coverage and sponsorship, often the biggest financial impact is from the loss of the original fixture; as such, HBLB is frequently asked to provide additional support over and above the Ratecard Plus mechanism that applies to all other races. Earlier this year, HBLB provided additional support for the Veterans' Chase Series Final staged at Market Rasen, while in 2024 extra support was given to the Clarence House Chase (moved from Ascot to Cheltenham).

Additional fixtures are staged when a material number of fixtures either have been or are expected to be lost and the current horse population indicates demand for races. The aim is to align additional fixtures with both the code and geographical region where abandonments have caused gaps in the programme, though often the same conditions that have caused the abandonments will act as a brake on this aim. This aside, when an additional fixture opportunity is found, the BHA offers out the fixture via an auction process with a stipulated minimum total prize fund; as part of this, HBLB offers additional support of up to £15,000 for a Flat fixture and up to £35,000 for a Jump fixture. In 2024 there were 14 additional fixtures and, in 2023, 29 additional fixtures.

Weighing Room Loans

The British Horseracing Authority (BHA) has confirmed final deadlines for racecourses to complete weighing room redevelopment projects.

- **Main upgrades** – The majority of racecourses must complete works by **31 December 2026**, with at least 80% expected to be finished by then. Non-compliance may lead to sanctions.
- **Final deadline** – The remaining twelve racecourses have until **31 December 2027** to finish, though they are urged to aim for **July 2027**. Those still incomplete by the end of 2027 will not be permitted to host fixtures.

Upgrades aim to improve access to valet services, rest areas, catering, warm-up zones, and gender-neutral facilities. Thus far, fourteen racecourses have already completed works, with another fourteen expected to finish during 2025.

To support racecourses, HBLB is offering loans of up to **£400,000 per racecourse** for weighing room redevelopments, with applications required by **31 March 2026** and encouraged well in advance.

So far, **HBLB has lent £1.6m** to four racecourses, which represents approval of all applications received. Several more are currently proceeding through the approval process.

HBLB Impact Assessments

The Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB) partnered with Benesys Impact Consultancy to review the scope and outcomes of its grant funding across racing, veterinary science, and breeding. Two major funding initiatives were highlighted:

- **Racing to School** – A nationwide educational charity inspiring young people through free, curriculum-based activities at racecourses. In 2024, it delivered **456 events** to over **17,000 participants** (+32% above target), with strong engagement from deprived areas and SEND schools. Outcomes included improved maths confidence, greater awareness of careers in racing, and an overall increased interest in the sport.

- **The Foal Project (Royal Veterinary College)** – A pioneering research study investigating reasons why some young thoroughbreds fail to go into race training. The study analyses stud management and early exercise practices to identify links with musculoskeletal health, aiming to improve welfare, reduce economic losses, and boost industry sustainability. Findings have been widely shared through academic publications, industry presentations, and global forums, influencing best practices in breeding and training. The work now supports Dr.

Rebecca Mouncey's further research, studying economic analysis of breeding profitability.

The report highlights how HBLB funding delivers measurable benefits for young people, equine welfare, and the long-term sustainability of the racing industry. To read the full report, please click here.

HBLB Funds 15 Veterinary Science and Education Projects to Commence in 2025/26

The Horserace Betting Levy Board has approved investment in equine health and welfare research for 2025/26, by supporting 15 veterinary science and education projects following a rigorous peer-review process conducted by the Veterinary Advisory Committee. The new activity includes:

3 Major Research Projects, 7 Small Research Projects, 2 Research Scholarships, 1 Clinical Scholarships and 2 Post-Doctorate Scholarships. The projects cover a wide range of themes, from infectious disease control and injury prevention to age-related conditions and equine performance. The HBLB is pleased to fund a programme that supports both cutting-edge research and emerging veterinary scientists.

The full list of awards and further information can be found here.

HBLB Increases Prize Money Contribution in 2026

The Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB) will contribute **£77.13m to prize money in 2026**, a **6% rise** from 2025 (£72.72m), funded by increased Levy income of £109m.

The increase includes **£4.11m for new targeted initiatives**, focusing on:

- **Developmental Races** – £2.5m to boost Novice / Maiden Flat and Jump race prize money, to match nearby jurisdictions and incentivise ownership in Britain.
- **Elite Global Group 1 Strategy** – £0.4m extra (£100k each) for four major Flat Group 1 races to help grow their appeal to both domestic and international participants.
- **Point-to-Point Bonus Scheme** – £0.25m in bonuses for horses that subsequently win a developmental Hurdle or Chase race under Rules.
- **Flat Black Type Races** – £0.2m towards uplifts in minimum prize values.
- **Jump Racing Initiatives** – £0.76m (details to follow).

Existing schemes will receive an extra **£300k**, including £260k to the Great British Bonus Scheme and £40k to the Winter Jump Fund.

The funding split will be **61% Flat / 39% Jump**, reflecting betting turnover, with much of the prize money allocated via the Ratecard Plus mechanism, linking HBLB support to racecourse contributions.

HBLB and the BHA will set performance targets to measure the impact of the new investments. For more detail information, click here.

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https://www.hblb.org.uk/ @LevyBoard
