



Racing Together

Phase Three Report Summary

June – December 2023

Introduction

Autism in Racing sought to raise awareness of autism, educate racing's workforce and customers about autism and host autism-friendly sensory spaces on racecourses.

To date:

- 34 autism-friendly racedays have been hosted
- One autism awareness workshop at Oaksey House in Lambourn
- One stable yard visit and a stud visit for an autism group
- Collaborations and connections with over 10 autism groups
- Racing2Learn eLearning module "Autism Awareness in British Horseracing" completed by over 450 people in total, with 231 users accessing the module in 2023
- Connected with Racing Welfare to enable signposting for additional support • Since the pilot began, two racecourses have implemented permanent sensory rooms (Cheltenham and Aintree), with one more set to follow at Ascot in March 2024.
- Work undertaken by other industry bodies and organisations shows the growing movement to support autism awareness and acceptance, such as Go Racing in Yorkshire's Sunflower Benches now available on all nine racecourses, Great British Racing publishing autism awareness blogs and content online and an increase in yards visits for those with hidden disabilities, such as Go Racing Green at Richard Phillips yard, and others. This organic growth is something we are keen to support where possible so that the wider industry takes more ownership and action.

Programme Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are at the heart of the programme, and their feedback is used to develop the concept beyond pilot stage, alongside autism and community groups, such as Autism Berkshire, for example.

Industry Alignment

Industry support and co-funding has been key to the development of Autism in Racing to-date. Racecourses co-fund autism-friendly racedays and other stakeholders have offered strong support, for example through the autism awareness workshop at Oaksey House. Additional funding via the Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust, and smaller donations from the Horserace Writers and Photographers Association and a racehorse owner have also supported ongoing development. The phase two grant from the Racing Foundation was extremely important as it allowed Racing Together, through the host charity Racing to School to recruit dedicated staff resource to coordinate this activity, including each raceday and event, as part of the wider programme. The team member is part of the Racing Together team and was employed on a



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fixed-term basis. The HBLB is also a co-funder of this programme as it funds Racing Together's core costs, which enable it to deliver the Autism in Racing programme efficiently and effectively.

Output, Outcomes and Impact

A community grant was provided to support the programme at a similar level as previously and has been utilised to maintain the growth of autism-friendly racedays and workshops throughout the summer months until December 2023.

Promoting the benefits to more racecourses of taking on this concept within their own raceday offering and through their own resources has been an ongoing goal of this programme, with sustainability in mind. The pilot programme has encouraged Ascot to establish a permanent autism-friendly area at the racecourse, which will assure neurodiverse racegoers that there is a comfortable, supportive space for them to spend #me away from the track should they feel the need to.

The key priority has been, conscious that no other plans were being made by any other entity, to keep progressing this impactful and unique programme in the short to medium-term to meet growing beneficiary and industry expectations generated from the first two phases of this work.

The evaluation highlights that output and outcomes have been consistently high. While ongoing impact is more difficult to measure, the evaluation records that impact is high across the families with several return visits logged, proving that racing is now a viable and popular day out for the families supported by this programme.

Phase Three Executive Summary:

- Total funding received for phase three was **£18,500** from the Racing Foundation. Racing to School manages the funds, delivers the programme and provides management oversight, which is funded by the HBLB as part of Racing Together's core costs.
- **£5,800** received from host racecourses to co-fund autism-friendly racedays.
- Following Aintree and Cheltenham Racecourses, Ascot are launching their own permanent sensory room in March 2024.
- **13** autism-friendly days held across **9** racecourses and 1 stud.
- Two days abandoned at Pontefract and Chepstow due to poor weather.

Phase Three - Performance Against KPIs:

The following KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) are linked to the five programme outcomes, agreed at the inception of the pilot -



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Improve awareness of autism amongst British Horseracing. Offer those connected to the sport increased education around autism.

KPI	Progress
<p>What: maintain social media platform (Twitter) with specific Autism in Racing content, promoting the project and the Condition</p>	
<p>Measure: achieve 2,000 followers. As of 18/04/23 Autism in Racing has 1,610 followers and maintains an active online presence.</p>	<p><i>The X profile now has 1,700 followers, plus 194 followers on Facebook. Add to this the significant social media support provided by Racing Together channels with its cumulative 5,000+ followers across TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and X.</i></p>

KPI	Progress
<p>What: host educational events for industry professionals and interested related parties.</p>	
<p>Measure: welcome 50 industry people to workshop-style events in year two. Measure: survey racing industry personnel to assess autism awareness after autism workshops and events <i>One workshop has been hosted at Oaksey House on 31 January 2023, hosted by Bobby Beevers and Carly Jones MBE, attended by 23 guests. The presentation and event coordination were done by Racing Together. For a full evaluation and recommendations for future workshops please see evaluation annex.</i></p>	<p><i>This event has not been completed during this timeframe but the budget allocation was diverted to hosting additional autism-friendly racedays.</i></p>

KPI	Notes
<p>What: further embed eLearning module</p>	
<p>Measure: 450 have currently completed the module – aim to grow this number to 600. Measure: incentivise racing staff to complete Racing2Learn module (more below)</p>	<p>As noted in the summary 231 users have accessed the programme in 2023, and well over 450 in total.</p>

Grow autism-friendly events at more racecourses building upon pilots, asking for small financial contribution.

KPI	Progress
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<p>What: host racecourse events with mobile sensory units to build upon the pilot initiative and continue to evaluate impact.</p>	
<p>Measure: host 10 events at a minimum of six racecourses in phase two. Measure: welcome a minimum of ten families per event Measure: achieve a score of at least 80% in impact assessment from participating families. Measure: following success of the pilot yard visit in 2021, option to extend Autism in Racing days to racing yard environments too, particularly to align with industry events for example National Racehorse Week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 racedays (Pontefract and Chepstow would have been 15 but abandoned) • 1 stud visit • 9 individual racecourses • 145 families (so far) • Average 14.5 families per raceday • Additional/ unusual events include Ascot Christmas in July and Chelmsford who took a leading role in their raceday – they invited 157 local families. <p>Three new racecourses Chepstow, Huntingdon and Pontefract.</p>

Promote Autism in Racing within and outside of the sport. The programme and goodwill generated has the potential to improve the sport’s reputation, as well as support and include those living with autism.

KPI	Progress
<p>What: Promote Autism in Racing within and outside of the sport</p>	
<p>Measure: promote the programme and events within racing and wider media, including ITV racing. Source at least one specific third-party editorial promotional pieces in addition to Autism in Racing’s own PR Measure: host one workshop for racing industry professionals to learn more about autism awareness. <i>One workshop hosted in phase two – please find evaluation attached as an annex.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third party media and promotion includes: • Samantha interview on Ascot TV and Sky Sports Racing at Ascot. • Ascot racecard inclusion with dedicated editorial piece. • Every racecourse host has shown CCTV and racecard adverts to grow awareness of Autism in Racing.

Signpost a support system for autistic racing staff, their families, and employers.

KPI	Progress
<p>What: Signpost a support system for autistic racing staff, their families and employers.</p>	



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Measure: continue to develop the hub of information and signposting on the Racing Together Autism in Racing webpage, working alongside third-party experts.

Measure: work with Racing Welfare to communicate inclusion of autism within the Racing Support Line. Monitor usage and anecdotal feedback anonymously if available.

Support Hub page can be found [here](#).

Completed – you can find the [Support Hub here](#)



Sustainability: expand the reach and impact of Autism in Racing while working towards a sustainable programme model and build the initiative for long-term impact and resilience. Ensure programme is aligned with wider, relevant industry strategies.

KPI	Progress
<p>What: Explore opportunities for fixed sensory rooms at some racecourses, supported by Autism in Racing.</p>	
<p>Measure: continue work with racecourses to support set up of permanent sensory rooms: feasibility, operational logistics and ongoing management of a permanent sensory room.</p> <p>Current permanent sensory rooms include Cheltenham and Aintree. Autism in Racing is working with one other racecourse currently to support them to create their own room. They have expressed an interest in ongoing support from Autism in Racing’s executive to deliver this.</p>	<p><i>We have developed a secondary sensory room supplier – Rhino UK which has been used on four racedays and is well-received by customers and racecourses alike.</i></p> <p><i>We are also supporting Ascot racecourse to open their permanent sensory room in early 2024. This includes advice and guidance on setting up and managing the facility, offering staff handover/ support and training and use of our resources, i.e. visual story created for Ascot to help ensure a smooth transition to using their new facility.</i></p>

It is worth noting that the consistent and positive feedback of the programme led to Racing Together nominating colleague Samantha Luton-Hughes for the community award for the 2024 TIEAs.

Recommendations

A collaborative approach is recommended, which aims to consolidate and build upon the success of the programme so far and ensures a high-quality delivery framework remains and improves. Progress is shaped by the evaluation and is dependent on funding and industry and racecourse support. Key priorities are as follows:

- Further development and expansion of autism-friendly racedays and events. Increase number of families per raceday, ensure therapy-type pony available at more fixtures, develop yearly schedule of autism-friendly racedays spread nationwide and an even wider network of local groups and charities. Form links with a network of third-party sensory room suppliers delivering a high-quality service to reduce reliance on Immersive.
- The pilot was developed to prove the concept was viable and racecourses should be encouraged to adopt their own autism-friendly plans such as permanent sensory rooms. Racing Together would continue to offer liaison and communication support.



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- Further embed autism awareness: racecourse and racing staff, horsemen, etc.
- Collaborate on industry initiatives such as National Racehorse Week to build events and awareness.
- Expand age range for autism events and facilities to ensure inclusivity.
- Once initial awareness workshops have taken place, evaluate and further develop as appropriate.
- Communicate and showcase the work and impact across Racing Together and partner channels.
- Seek support from a national autism charity to run the programme, allowing for cost efficiencies within a going concern; access to potential beneficiaries; and endorsements/expert input from specialists.

These recommendations were built into the above KPIs for this application.

Grant Summary

The Trustees of the Racing Foundation kindly granted £18,500.

As mentioned above, racedays are co-funded by individual racecourses and the main additional cost is to maintain dedicated staff support to coordinate and evaluate activity and provide a central, joined-up resource for the programme, supported by and reporting to the wider Racing Together team, which is HBLB-funded March 2023-2024.

Racing Together, as part of the charity Racing to School committed to supporting the programme and provided executive support, accountability and oversight of project management, reporting requirements, and logistical support and back-office services as an internal cost.

List of racedays and events completed thanks to this grant:

1. 12th June - Pontefract
2. 15th July – Ascot Family Raceday
3. 16th July – Ascot Christmas in July
4. 8th August – Chelmsford Autism Raceday
5. 19th August - Newmarket - July Course Family Day
6. 28th August – Southwell Family Raceday
7. 29th August - Newbury Community Raceday
8. 10th September – York Family Raceday
9. 21st October – Ascot British Champions Day
10. 4th November – Ascot Fireworks Night
11. 5th November – Huntingdon Community Raceday

