



Equine welfare update

British Horse Council

Friday 26 June 2026

Roly Owers

UK: NEWC sector survey

- To better understand the impact of current challenges on the UK's equine welfare sector
- In response to a range of emerging pressures
- 39 question survey was live from 30 Mar-27 Apr
- Promotion of survey mainly through NEWC network and contacts



UK survey – results

- 37 complete responses from Wales, Scotland & England (no NI responses)
- Key results reveal:
 - Current stocking densities generally match or are above ideal stocking density
 - ~ 35% of organisations extremely or moderately worried re ability to maintain current operations for next 12 months
 - Nearly 80% of organisations had seen an increase in calls from the public wishing to hand over an equine and 65%+ had seen an increase in calls about welfare concerns
 - Most organisations are concerned about the impact of current pressures

Ideal stocking density versus actual stocking density



How do you feel about the impact any current pressures are having on your organisation?



UK: Grazing commons



- Dartmoor Hill ponies in the news
- Equine Commons Ground Conference postponed until September
- Attendees: bring together people who manage, care for, regulate or work alongside equines grazed on common land
- Purpose: To share what is and is not working, strengthen collaboration, and focus on practical solutions for long-term welfare, conservation and herd management.

EU: Welfare during transport



- European Parliament
 - The file was stalled for a number of months – progress has been slow
 - Work relaunched in April, with the first technical meeting on 4 May
 - If the proposed timetable is followed, a vote in committee is expected by the end of the year, with the plenary vote in January 2027
- Council
 - Working parties continue to meet to seek a common position & the file is expected to progress during the Irish Presidency
 - Some indications may have a position by next year