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ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY HANDBOOK



WELCOME

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horsescotland, the governing body for equestrianism, represents the interests of the horse community and the wider equestrian industry. A key focus of our mission is to grow participation across all levels, encouraging involvement from grassroots to elite competition. We aim to inspire everyone—whether as riders, grooms, owners, enthusiasts, or professionals—to be part of the equestrian world.

Our Athlete Development Pathway offers a clear development journey for riders, starting with talent identification and progressing to the British Equestrian World Class Pathway. Dedicated Talent Advisors in each Olympic discipline will expand **horsescotland's** grassroots reach, allowing us to identify and support promising talent earlier in their development. Alongside riding, we emphasise off-the-horse education through an online platform that provides training in rider and equine fitness, business management, and communication. This well-rounded approach helps athletes establish a sustainable career path.

By supporting riders to excel on the international stage, we keep equestrian sports in the spotlight, inspiring newcomers and ensuring a sustainable future for the industry.

John Burns
Chairman
horsescotland Board of Directors.



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ABOUT US

horsescotland is the national governing body for all equestrian sports and activity in Scotland. We work collectively with our Member Bodies to ensure future development by striving to increase the level of sustainable resources, investment and support.

horsescotland is committed to increasing accessibility to equestrian activity and widening the opportunities for greater participation.

Our Vision

We aspire to empower Scotland to be a leading, inclusive nation for horse sports and activities.

Our Mission

To connect the Scottish equestrian community.

To collaborate with partner organisations and government.

To enable people, horses and places to prosper.

Our Values

Equality and Inclusion

Widening access for participation

Respect for the environment

Securing pathways for progression at all levels

Enthusiasm, fun, pleasure from equine activity

Teamwork and collaborative development at all levels

Celebrate success

Financial Sustainability



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SELECTION PANEL

Comdt John Ledingham

John started coaching for horsescotland when he took over from Paul Darragh over 10 years ago, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to the team. His coaching discipline is showjumping and he is a Level 3 Horse Sport Ireland coach. Looking back over John's career, he has competed in sixty five Nation Cups for Ireland and has been on many of the winning teams competing in Aachen, Dublin (5 times), Hickstead, La Baule, Calgary Athens, Lintz, Chaudfontaine, to name but a few. He has had Grand Prix wins on Four Continents. John has also been selected for four Olympic Games.

Harry Payne

Harry is a highly qualified UKCC Level 4 coach with an MSc in Professional Practice in Sports Coaching who has competed internationally. He coaches riders across all levels, from Pony Club to International Grand Prix dressage, 5* eventing, and international show jumping in the UK and Ireland. As a List 1 Grand Prix BD judge, Harry frequently officiates at National Championships and elite shows, and has served as a FEI Eventing judge for 15 years, including at prestigious events like Bramham, Blenheim, and Burghley.

Mike Whippey

Mike is a qualified BHSI and UKCC level 4 coach with a keen interest in developing the younger generation of professionals. Throughout his career he has worked with riders from all disciplines and backgrounds developing them to go on to various different roles within the industry. His passion lies within developing talent for the future and working horse and rider combinations to ensure they reach their full potential



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SELECTION PROCESS

Pathway objectives

The horsescotland Athlete Development Pathway is supported by National Lottery funding from sportscotland, with the aims of supporting athletes and equines to:

- Secure places on GB teams

And/or

- British Equestrian World Class Podium Programmes

Duration of Pathway

Formal selection takes place every two years. Selected athletes can remain on the pathway subject to successful re-selection. Athletes are expected to reach their set goals based on their annual plan.

Athlete Development Pathway Values

The horsescotland pathway values follow those set out by the British Equestrian World Class Programme to allow us to instil these values from an early stage in the athlete's day to behaviours

Honesty

Openness

Courage

Team work

Care

Inclusion

Professionalism

Pride

Passion

Selection Panel

The Selection Panel will be made up of the horsescotland Pathway Coordinator, Pathway Dressage Coach and Pathway Showjumping Coach.

The Pathway Coordinator will liaise with the equestrian Olympic disciplines in relation to the athlete development pathway and the selection process.



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Process of Selection

This will be managed by the horsescotland Pathway Coordinator and by liaising with the respective Olympic disciplines. These disciplines must be members of horsescotland.

Stages of Selection

- **Stage 1: Application**

Applicants are required to complete a horsescotland application form. It is the applicant's responsibility to record electronic submission of application. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

- **Stage 2: Shortlisting from Applications**

Athletes are expected to reach the minimum criteria for their discipline (and age group) as outlined in this document. Whilst an athlete may meet the minimum criteria, they are not assured a place on the pathway. An offer of a place on the pathway will be based on the strength of the application and ridden assessment

- **Stage 3: Ridden Assessment Day**

Shortlisted athletes will attend an Assessment Day and will be required to undertake a practical ridden assessment for their identified discipline. Athletes will also take part in a formal interview and off the horse assessment. While there is no fee to attend the ridden assessment day all expenses incurred will be the responsibility of the athlete.

- **Stage 4 Feedback from Ridden Assessment Day**

All athletes will be informed as soon as possible following the Ridden Assessment Day whether or not they have been successful. The selectors' reasoning for their selections is not discussed with athletes, owners or agents.

- **Stage 5: Induction Day and Formal Offer**

Selected athletes will attend an Induction Day and will work with coaches and support staff to agree identified goals and confirm their commitment to the Athlete Development Pathway by signing the formal contract.



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ELIGIBILITY / AVAILABILITY FOR CONSIDERATION

AGE

Minimum age on first application will normally be 16 years. An athlete's age will be based on F.E.I. ruling, which is the age the athlete becomes in a given year. The calendar age is taken from the beginning of a calendar year that an athlete's age is reached until the end of a calendar year that an athlete's age is reached. Please visit the FEI website for further details <http://www.fei.org/>

MINIMUM CRITERIA

For all disciplines outlined, the competition results must have been obtained in the 12 months prior to the horsescotland selection process unless specifically stated otherwise. All results/ scores should be able to be verified by the appropriate Member Body database. If scores cannot be verified, then the athlete will be responsible for supplying the evidence of the scores.

Please note any other requirements can be found under each discipline specific minimum criteria in Appendices A – D.

Confidentiality

It is vitally important for the integrity of the selection process, and those involved in its application, both as athletes, owners, selectors or other officials, that there is at all times a high degree of confidentiality relating to information that may have a bearing on selection. Subsequently, the panel will keep all information relating to individual applicants confidential.



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ATHLETE OBLIGATIONS ONCE SELECTED

- Read and adhere to the Pathway Contract and Code of Conduct
- Attend all training dates, unless otherwise agreed, and to fully engage with all aspects of training sessions
- Be proactive in their skill development and personal growth
- Commit to setting and achieving agreed goals based upon annual plan and action points
- Identify themselves as ambassadors for horsescotland, their member body and equestrianism as a whole
- Ensure that the highest possible animal welfare standards are maintained both in equine care and training methods
- Comply with anti-doping control rules, regulations and procedures as outlined in the WADA Code. The Prohibited List identifies which substances and methods are prohibited at all times, in competition only and within specific equestrian disciplines.

Changes in Policy

The Pathway Coordinator in consultation with other members of horsescotland personnel will have the right to amend or change selection procedures where necessary at any time, as long as these changes and amendments are clearly communicated to all parties.

Force Majeure

For reasons beyond horsescotland's control (e.g. disease outbreak in equines or humans, war or terrorism) the Pathway Coordinator reserves the right to make the decision to change the selection procedure, which might include cancellation of the selection process or pathway. This decision will be made in consultation with the Olympic Discipline Member Body and the horsescotland Board.

Pathway Funding

Athlete Development Pathways are supported by funding from The National Lottery through sportscotland. Changes to funding may result in adjustment/cancellation of the pathway.



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- **Midcycle applications**

- Applications may be made through a member body during a two-year cycle, and should be supported by the Talent Advisor for the appropriate discipline, where an athlete and equine meet the Pathway criteria. Horsescotland reserve the right to invite athletes to attend an interview and an assessment day with the selection panel to ensure a fair assessment prior to selection outcome, in line with Stages 2 to 5 above.

Consultation

- This Pathway Handbook is formulated in agreement and in consultation with each respective Olympic Discipline Member Body.
- Publication/ Circulation
- This Handbook will be available on the horsescotland website.

Applications for Selection

- An application form is available to download from the horsescotland website. The closing date for applications will be published on the horsescotland website. References may be included to support your application if you wish to do so but must be submitted with the application form. Applications should be submitted electronically via the Pathway Coordinator at: michael@horsescotland.org

Enquiries

- Enquiries about the selection criteria and procedures should be made in writing to the horsescotland Pathway Coordinator at: michael@horsescotland.org

Child protection and well-being

Child protection and well-being resources will be made available to all participants when joining the programme. horsescotland's welfare toolkit can be found by following this link or scanning the QR code- <https://tinyurl.com/2s7czwvu>





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De-Selection Process

The annual plan and goals as agreed with the athlete, combined with achievements, will form an on-going assessment for continued participation on the pathway. The Pathway Coordinator will record athlete and equine participation, development, and performance in conjunction with the athlete. In the event of poor participation, development and performance the Pathway Coordinator will consult with the athlete and the pathway personnel to identify any additional support required.

Reasons for De-Selection

- Continual failure to achieve agreed participation, development and performance goals as outlined in the annual plan will be considered a just reason for de-selection
- Horse / pony becoming unsuitable for any reason including loss of performance, ability, prolonged illness or lameness. Athletes will have three months, unless otherwise agreed with the Pathway Coordinator, to get the horse / pony back to its level of performance or find another horse / pony that they can achieve the performance level
- Loss of performance as an athlete through prolonged illness or injury will be discussed with the Pathway Coordinator and dealt with on a case-by-case basis dependent on medical advice.
- Failure, without full justification, to compete in any named target competitions
- Failure, without full justification to attend or participate in all aspects of the Performance Pathway
- Breach of contract / code of conduct
- Breach of rules, including anti-doping violation or other reasons that bring the sports into disrepute
- Failure to maintain high standards of equine welfare including care and training methods

De-Selection Procedure

Athletes must meet one or more of the reasons for de-selection as set out above.

In the first instance, the horsescotland Pathway Coordinator will speak to the athlete and advise of the concerns. Thereafter written confirmation of the discussion will be provided including an agreed course of action, horsescotland reserve the right to share this information with your Olympic Discipline.

De-selection will be determined by the Pathway Coordinator and Pathway team and the athlete will be notified in writing following receipt of a report being submitted to the horsescotland Board. The athlete will receive a copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedure if they wish to challenge the de-selection.

The key point of contact relating to this Selection Policy is the Pathway Coordinator

Appeals Process and Procedures

Athletes have the right to appeal against the decision regarding selection or de-selection but only on the grounds that the selectors have failed to comply with procedure. Appeals must be made in writing to the Pathway Coordinator via e-mail to Michael@horsescotland.org within 48 hours of the announcements. If the Pathway Coordinator is not able to satisfy the appellant's concerns the appeal will be forwarded to the horsescotland Board.



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Appendix A

[This appendix must be read in conjunction with the body of the Handbook]

Dressage Criteria

All athletes must be eligible to compete for Great Britain and hold a current British passport. To be eligible for the pathway they must become full competing members of British Dressage on selection and reside in Scotland. Athletes will not be eligible for this pathway if they are currently supported by the BEF World Class Programme. Athletes that are currently serving a ban from competition as a result of a doping offence (equine or human) or equine medication offence will not be eligible.

U25 years

- Qualified for the British Dressage Summer or Winter National Championships at any level in the Silver or Gold sections
- Combinations finishing within the top 6 of a Premier League FEI class
- Riders achieving the British Dressage Youth A Squad
- Combinations that have competed at CDI level within their relevant age category.

25 years and above

- Qualified for the British Dressage Summer or Winter National Championship at any level in the Gold sections.
- Combinations finishing in the top 10 of a Premier League FEI class.
- Combinations that have competed at CDI level

Young Horses:

Athletes will also be considered on younger horses at the below stages:

- Horses 4-6 years scoring 75%+ at Young Horse Classes
- Horses 7 years scoring 70%+ at 7 year old Young Horse Classes



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Appendix B

This appendix must be read in conjunction with the body of the Handbook (above)

Criteria for selection has been agreed with the relevant Olympic disciplines.

Para Equestrian Dressage Criteria

All athletes must be eligible to compete for Great Britain and hold a current British passport. To be eligible for the pathway they must become full competing members of British Dressage on selection and reside in Scotland. Athletes will not be eligible for this pathway if they are currently supported by the BEF World Class Programme. Athletes that are currently serving a ban from competition as a result of a doping offence (equine or human) or equine medication offence will not be eligible.

Athletes must have a current classification. For details regarding classification please contact the British Dressage Para Dressage Officer.

U25 year olds

- Qualified for the British Dressage Summer or Winter Para National Championship in the Silver or Gold section
- Combinations that have competed at CPEDI level at their relevant grade.

25 year old and above

- Qualified for the British Dressage Summer or Winter Para National Championships in the Gold section.
- Competed internationally at CPEDI at their relevant grade

Profile 39:

Currently under FEI Rules, an athlete with intellectual disabilities who does not have a physical classification is covered under Profile 39 of the Classification Guide (applicable to Grade III). This profile remains inactive at present so athletes in Profile 39 are not eligible to compete in Para-Equestrian Dressage competition run under FEI rules.

The horsescotland Pathway for Para-Equestrian Dressage Pathway can only select and support athletes who are currently eligible to compete for Great Britain at the Paralympic Games. This policy will be reviewed in line with any future decisions made by the FEI.



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Appendix C

[This appendix must be read in conjunction with the body of the Handbook]

Eventing Criteria

All athletes must be eligible to compete for Great Britain and hold a current British passport. To be eligible for the pathway they must become full competing members of British Eventing on selection and reside in Scotland. Athletes will not be eligible for this pathway if they are currently supported by the BEF World Class Programme. Athletes that are currently serving a ban from competition as a result of a doping offence (equine or human) or equine medication offence will not be eligible.

U25 year olds

- Finish in the top 50% of the total number of starters in a CCI2* Long/Short
- Finish In the top 20% of the total number of starters in the National U18 Championships
- Selected for the Junior or Young Rider European Championships
- Qualified for the British Eventing Youth Championships at the relevant age category

25 years and above

- Top 25% placing of the total number of starters in a CCI3* Short
- Top 30% placing of the total number of starters in a CCI3* Long
- Top 30% placing of the total number of starters U25 Championships
- Minimum Eligibility Requirements (MER) at a CCI4* Long
- Member of a Nations Cup Team

Young Horses:

Athletes will also be considered on younger horses (up to 8 years old) who demonstrate the talent to compete successfully at International (excluding CCI*) level and are already competing consistently and were placed in the top 20% of the British Eventing Young Horse 6/7 year old Championships 2024.





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Appendix D

[This appendix must be read in conjunction with the body of the Handbook]

Showjumping Criteria

All athletes must be eligible to compete for Great Britain and hold a current British passport. To be eligible for the pathway they must become full competing members of British Showjumping on selection and reside in Scotland. Athletes will not be eligible for this pathway if they are currently supported by the BEF World Class Programme. Athletes that are currently serving a ban from competition as a result of a doping offence (equine or human) or equine medication offence will not be eligible.

Applicants should include the relevant British Showjumping printouts to support their initial application.

U25 years old

- Horse/Athlete combinations to have a minimum of four double clears jumping at 1.25m on a graded horse and above and aspiring to be jumping in the Gold League in 2025
- Combinations to have achieved a minimum of four double clears jumping at their relevant age classes

25 years and above

- Horse/ Athlete combinations to been on the gold league listed 2024 and /or regularly achieving results at 1.40m



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