

First Incorporated in 1923 as The Northern Bookmakers & Backers Protection Association

The British Racecourse Bookmakers' Association

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BRBA

Supporting On-course Bookmakers

During the period of the Covid-19 lockdown the BRBA has been active by engaging with a number of organisations and individuals in an attempt to promote the cause of on-course bookmakers. Action taken by the BRBA includes:

- ❖ Highlighting the fact that some on-course bookmakers feel they are being discriminated against by banks. The BRBA has received a number of letters from concerned members reporting that their request to open a business account has been refused by a bank. In an attempt to get a fair deal for on-course bookmakers regarding this discrimination the BRBA has written to:
 - The Financial Ombudsman
 - The Gambling Commission
 - The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fair Business Banking

- ❖ Challenging the decision by the Gambling Commission to collect operating licence fees from on-course bookmakers regardless of the fact that bookmakers have been unable to operate on-course since mid-March 2020. The BRBA has written to the following regarding licence fees:
 - Neil McArthur CEO of the Gambling Commission

- ❖ Questioning the allocation of direct grant aid by the Government on the basis that to date direct grant aid has been specifically targeted at those businesses in the hospitality, catering and leisure sector operating from business premises with a rateable value and fixed property costs. A number of letters have been written over several months regarding the lack of targeted financial support for on-course bookmakers. The BRBA has communicated directly with, or via some of its members who have lobbied their MP's, the following regarding the subject of financial support:

- Richard Holden Member of Parliament for the North West Durham constituency. Richard Holden has recently joined the All-Party Parliamentary Group Racing and Bloodstock
- Rishi Sunak Member of Parliament for Richmond and Chancellor of the Exchequer
- Alok Sharma Member of Parliament for Reading West and Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Steve Barclay Member of Parliament for North East Cambridgeshire and Chief Secretary to the Treasury
- Kevin Foster Member of Parliament for Torquay

Although disappointed by the fact that there has been little or no change in the eligibility criteria for targeted grant aid, the BRBA would like to think that the efforts it has made in writing to Government Ministers has helped in influencing the Government's decision to continue with the furlough scheme and self-employment income support scheme.

- ❖ Objecting to the decision by the Starting Price Regulatory Commission (SPRC) to change the formula on which starting prices are calculated which may, if enforced, impact on bookmaker data payments. The BRBA has corresponded with the following regarding this issue:
 - SPRC
 - Competition and Markets Authority
- ❖ Negotiating a generous deal with TRP who have agreed to pay BRBA bookmaker members an amount equivalent to 20% of the amount paid to them for data in the quarter 1st July to 30th September 2019. TRP have indicated that this arrangement will be on-going until further notice. The BRBA wishes to remind members that we pass on 100% of the data monies we collect on their behalf i.e. monies collected are passed on without deduction.
- ❖ Reducing annual membership fees for the current financial year to a level of 50% of the fees charged last year.

In addition to the action referred to above the BRBA has also contributed during the period of the enforced lockdown to articles appearing in national newspapers and the sporting press. The President of the BRBA has on several occasions been quoted in a number of newspaper articles on topics ranging from financial support for on-course bookmakers to the change in the SP system.