



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2020

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the welfare of racehorses.

The British Horseracing Authority (BHA) is the independent body responsible for regulating the sport of horseracing. It works closely with animal charities such as the RSPCA and World Horse Welfare to ensure that the highest of standards are upheld. As a consequence, Britain is regarded as having one of the best regulated racing environments across the world.

Ministers have been in regular contact with the BHA about racehorse safety. Most recently in May, the then-Minister for Animal Welfare, David Rutley, met with the British Horseracing Authority CEO, its Director of Equine Health and Welfare, and the independent chair of the new Horse Welfare Board to discuss animal welfare and the future of the sport in England. In a constructive meeting, it was recognised that the fatality rate in racing rose in 2018 for the first time in recent years and the Grand National in 2019 experienced its first fatality in seven years.

At this meeting, both sides agreed that further action is required to make the sport safer and to improve animal welfare standards across the industry. David Rutley also stressed the need for the BHA, in conjunction with the Horse Welfare Board, to develop a robust action plan that will deliver tangible results.

The Government will stay in regular contact with the industry and continue to press for improvements on welfare. While there is an element of risk with any sport, I agree that it is critical the industry does all it can to make the sport safer.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY