

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

25<sup>th</sup> August 2020

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: USE OF THE WHIP IN HORSE RACING.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding the use of the whip in horse racing; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I believe that the irresponsible use of the whip is completely unacceptable. The British Horseracing Association (BHA), the governing and regulatory body for the sport, requires that whips used in horse racing must be used responsibly, for safety reasons and only to encourage the horse.

The current BHA policy on the whip was drawn up in consultation with animal welfare groups, such as the RSPCA and World Horse Welfare. The latest rules include a threshold on the number of times the whip can be used before racing stewards can consider an inquiry. If the rules are broken, the jockey may be banned from racing for a certain number of days depending on the seriousness of the offence.

The Horse Welfare Board's five-year 'Horse Welfare Strategy', published in February 2020, contains twenty recommendations for improving horse welfare. It recommends that the penalties for misuse of the whip need to increase and that the BHA should conduct a consultation on the use of the whip sometime this year. As well as seeking views on appropriate sanctions for misuse of the whip, it also recommends that the BHA uses the consultation to consider whether the use of the whip for encouragement should be banned or retained, and whether the rules that restrict the use of the whip for encouragement need to be amended. While I am aware the consultation process has been postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic, a new timetable will be agreed at an appropriate point in the future and I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this consultation once it has taken place.

In addition to sanctions from the sport, using the whip indiscriminately on horses could lead to a prosecution under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, which makes it a criminal offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal. I would encourage anyone with evidence that a racehorse has suffered unnecessarily from being whipped, to report it to the relevant local authority.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**