



**MINUTES OF THE 6TH COACHING AND EDUCATION ADVISORY FORUM
OF HORSE SPORT IRELAND
held online via MS TEAMS**

WEDNESDAY 3rd December 2025 AT 11AM

Present: Sean Keane, Teagasc (SK)
Siobhan McAuliffe, IEVA (SMc)
Soraya Morscher, University of Limerick (SM)
Colin Hannan, AIRE (CH) (Elected to Chair)
Alan Fahy, UCD (AF)
Fiona Cloke, IPC (FC)
Niamh O'Sullivan, Maynooth University (NO) (Joined at 11.08)

In attendance: John Bagnall – Education, Coaching and Training manager (JB)
Robyn Gillespie – General Administrator (RG) (Minutes)
Jenny Gaffney – Breeding Department (JG)

Apologies: Bridget McGing, Eventing Ireland (BM)
Kate Solon, Kildalton Agricultural College (KS)

Abbreviations: Horse Sport Ireland (HSI); Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Microsoft (MS); Terms of Reference (ToR); Eventing Ireland (EI); Irish Pony Club (IPC); Irish Pony Society (IPS); Association of Irish Riding Establishments (AIRE); Association of Irish Riding Clubs (AIRC); University College Dublin (UCD); Maynooth University (MU); College of Agriculture, Food & Rural Enterprise (CAFRE); Irish Equine Veterinary Association (IEVA); General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); Royal Dublin Society (RDS); Irish Horse Board (IHB); Department of Food, Agriculture and the Marine (DAFM); Showjumping Ireland (SI); Continuous Professional Development (CPD); Lucinda McClure (LMC); C&E (Coaching and Education) ; Equine Assistance Services (EAS)

Meeting Opening/Apologies/Quorum

CE006.1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, the 5th Coaching & Education Advisory Forum, held on Wednesday 17th September 2025, were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting, and will be DocuSigned by the Chair following the meeting. The apologies were noted.

CE006.2 New items for discussion

HSI provided a brief update on recent coaching events and courses. The High Performance Level 1 Coaching Course has begun with 16 coaches enrolled and is partly funded by Macra. Fourteen Level 2 candidates completed their assessments, with ten achieving a pass and receiving positive feedback from assessors. There are currently fourteen individuals seeking to start their coaching pathway, and additional Intro Courses will be scheduled in 2026 to meet this demand.

HSI provided an update on the shared calendar for Advisory Forum members and noted that the team is working with IT to move the project forward. (CE006.1)

JG representing the HSI Breeding Department joined the meeting to give a brief overview of Breeding Schemes and Initiatives.

The National Breeding Services have closed for 2025, and the 2026 plan has been submitted to DAFM for approval. Dates for next year are not yet confirmed. All schemes require animals to be studbook registered. The Starting Scheme supports horses aged three to four and Grants €1,000. The Schooling Schemes cover horses aged four to six with set performance criteria. €1,500 for Schooling 1 and €3,000 for Schooling 2. There is a limit of two horses per owner for these schemes. Details are available on the National Breeding Services page on the HSI website.

The Premium Contention Scheme offers €6,000 towards production costs. Subsidies are available for mare and stallion X-rays, and plans are in place to combine stallion X-rays and the health screen next year. The Embryo Transfer Scheme continues to provide support.

HSI also delivers several breeding initiatives, including the Young Breeders Programme, the Studbook and Development Series, foals and loose jumping, all requiring studbook registration. Breeding grant initiatives, including prize money support, are currently open. All schemes remain subject to DAFM approval.

It was noted that all applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, and animal ownership cannot be altered for the purpose of entering a scheme.

HSI confirmed approximate scheme capacities: 200–210 places for the Starting Scheme, around 250 for the Schooling Schemes, and 15 places for the Environmental Scheme. Allocation varies according to demand. The Retention Scheme offers 30 places for premium animals. High Performance Stallion places remain limited due to low demand.

The forum suggested that HSI host a webinar or produce video tutorials to explain breeding grants and schemes. HSI noted the recommendation.

JG to pass on further information on 2026 Breeding Schemes and Initiatives once finalised with DAFM. (CE006.2)

CE005.3 Any Other Business

The forum raised the Stud Manager Apprenticeship survey. It was explained that Teagasc is leading the hands-on apprenticeship, which is planned for launch in 2026. A questionnaire has been sent to stud owners to assess willingness to host apprentices. JG confirmed they will share further information as it becomes available. (CE006.3)

The forum addressed health and safety concerns related to working with horses. AIRE will be meeting to highlight the issue, and it was agreed that increased awareness and improved health and safety measures are required at shows.

The forum discussed improving engagement and effectiveness, emphasising active participation, input from affiliates, and better communication with grassroots members. Sue Foley may join future meetings for Q&A sessions. SMC acknowledged

that forums are not fully meeting their intended purpose. Communication and representation, particularly for High Performance, need improvement. It was advised that members who miss 3 meetings should be replaced by their affiliate, and inter-forum collaboration was suggested.

AF proposed an annual meeting with all forum and board members to review achievements, plan for the year ahead, and improve efficiency. Subcommittees could address specific issues across forums. SMC supported this and requested an email summarising these points. ^(CE006.4)

There was no further business to be discussed, and the meeting closed at 12:05hrs.

Date of the Next Meeting – Wednesday 11th March 2026,

Signed:

Colin Hannan, Chairman

Date

Actions to be taken from the minutes of the meeting:

Action	Detail	Assigned to	Due by
CE006.1	RG to continue working with IT to move forward with a forum calendar.	RG	Next Meeting
CE006.2	JG to share further detail on 2026 Breeding Schemes and Initiatives in 2026.	JG/RG	
CE006.3	Further information on the Stud Manager Apprenticeship.	HSI	
CE006.4	Summary email of forum engagement suggestions to be sent to SMC.	CH	