



**Horse Sport Ireland and Eventing Ireland Meeting
Held at HSI Offices, Naas
On Monday, 11th May 2026 at 10am**

Present:

Denis Duggan, CEO – HSI (DD)
Avalon Everett, COO & General Counsel – HSI (AE)
Triona Connors, HP Operations Manager – HSI (TC)
Lucinda McClure, Senior Executive Assistant – HSI (Minutes) (LM)
Nikki Potterton, Chair – Eventing Ireland (NP)
Bridget McGing, Vice Chair – Eventing Ireland (BM)
Richard Ames, Director – Eventing Ireland (RA)
Alison Packman, General Manager – Eventing Ireland (AP)
David Nestor, Chair Youth Committee – Eventing Ireland (DN)
Kieran Connors, Youth Committee – Eventing Ireland (KC)

At 10.08hrs, DD opened the meeting and welcomed the Eventing Ireland representatives. Introductions were made and reference was made to the Transparency Policy.

NP thanked HSI for convening the meeting and invited KC to lead discussion on governance structures and reporting lines within the High-Performance function. AE & DD clarified that, pending appointment of a Head of Performance and Coaching, the senior high-performance programme continues to report to DD and AE, while the youth programme reports into AE & TC. It was noted that all programme areas are expected ultimately to report to a permanent Head of Performance and Coaching once appointed.

Eventing Ireland representatives stated that it was important to understand the structure and responsibilities within the High-Performance system, as a number of frustrations had been raised by athletes, members, owners, and committees at senior, U25, and youth levels. They noted in particular that they did not have direct contact with team managers and sought clarity on the appropriate route for escalating concerns.

DD emphasised that team managers and other personnel are HSI contractors and that concerns relating to programme delivery should be raised through AE, TC or DD, rather than directly with managers.

Concerns were raised regarding the U25 programme, with Eventing Ireland representatives noting that, with the World Championships approaching, there had been insufficient visible training activity, no clearly communicated plan, and limited contact with athletes and stakeholders.

AE advised that the manager retained discretion in allocating available time and confirmed that a delivery plan for the U25 programme existed. It was acknowledged, however, that lack of communication was a significant issue, although this feedback differed from positive comments DD had recently received from athletes. Eventing Ireland representatives noted that the senior programme was functioning more effectively than the U25 programme.

Eventing Ireland representatives said they were seeking to work collaboratively to bridge any gaps in the programme and had previously asked to see a plan for the youth pathway. There was discussion on youth selection structures, including the absence of a formal youth selection panel and the intention to roll out panel arrangements more fully in due course.

The absence of an active High Performance Advisory Group was identified by Eventing Ireland as an ongoing concern. AE clarified that the High-Performance Advisory Group provide support rather than operational oversight and it was noted that Eventing Ireland were asked at the previous meeting to provide candidate nominations to HSI taking into account possible conflicts of interest. To date no suitable candidates have been provided to HSI for consideration. Eventing Ireland reiterated its request that the committee be re-established, with HSI appointing a Chair and progressing the structure. BM stated that she no longer considered herself conflicted in that regard.

It was agreed that an advisory group and a selection committee serve different purposes, with the latter focused on selection decisions. It was suggested that conflict-of-interest concerns may now be more manageable given the existence of a selection structure. Eventing Ireland will revert to HSI following the meeting with candidate nominations.

Communication was identified as a central issue. Eventing Ireland representatives stated that the principal challenge was the lack of timely and consistent communication between HSI, team managers, athletes, owners, and committees. Specific reference was made to youth programme communications, coaching arrangements, and uncertainty regarding show jumping support.

A discussion took place regarding coaching arrangements within the youth programme and safeguarding and vetting. HSI confirmed that safeguarding and vetting procedures apply to all accredited coaches and that any formal safeguarding concern must be raised through the appropriate process and be referred through Eventing Ireland's National Children's Officer and then, where appropriate, to the HSI National Children's Officer. HSI noted that some matters discussed had not previously been raised directly with HSI and reiterated that committees should not seek to manage operational matters.

Eventing Ireland representatives also raised concerns regarding limited engagement with owners, particularly in the senior and U25 programmes. It was suggested that other systems provide a clearer liaison point between the High-Performance structure and owners, and that stronger communication with owners would be beneficial. HSI noted that owner engagement had been identified in previous meetings as an area which requires development and Eventing Ireland had been asked to help to make improvements in this area. Eventing Ireland responded that it could not effectively promote or support the programme without greater visibility of what was being delivered. Eventing Ireland requested greater visibility of the programme plan, including competition supports and delivery arrangements, while HSI noted that feedback from athletes did not necessarily align with all concerns raised in the meeting.

Eventing Ireland stated that, in order to seek external support or ring-fenced funding, it needed a clearer view of the programme structure, anticipated costs, and existing gaps. It was agreed in principle that ring-fenced funding for defined supports could be considered where funds are raised for that purpose.

Eventing Ireland stated that it wanted a more collaborative working structure, while HSI noted that correspondence previously issued on programme matters had not received a response. There was extensive discussion on sponsorship, owner communications, and how the programme could be presented more effectively to current and prospective supporters. Eventing Ireland highlighted practical measures that could improve owner engagement, including timely communications, acknowledgement of selections, and coordinated hospitality or sponsor initiatives. HSI agreed that owner support was important and stated that sponsorship relationships should be developed in a coordinated manner through HSI.

Eventing Ireland proposed that the programme, associated costs, and funding gaps should be more clearly understood so that HSI and Eventing Ireland could work together on sponsorship opportunities. HSI reiterated that programme expenditure includes a range of items such as chef fees, coaching and veterinary support, and confirmed openness to ring-fenced sponsorship where appropriately structured through HSI.

Eventing Ireland were invited to prepare a concise proposal setting out sponsorship tiers, levels of commitment, and funding priorities. HIS indicated they would be willing to hold a workshop on this basis once such a proposal had been prepared. Eventing Ireland agreed to prepare a proposal.

The immediate position of the U25 group was raised again. HSI undertook to review the concerns raised. NP noted that he will contact Sam Griffiths to seek a meeting at Millstreet.

A query was raised regarding the presentation of VAT on certain invoices via HorseSource and the need for greater clarity in invoice descriptions.

HSI confirmed that the Terms of Reference for selectors would be made available. It was also noted that the youth points system had not yet been published, and AE agreed to follow up on this matter.

The meeting concluded that, while the senior programme was generally seen as operating well, a more proactive liaison and communication approach was required for owners, riders, and families, particularly at U25 and youth level. A perception of insufficient connectivity between programme leads was also mentioned, although HSI advised that communication between relevant personnel was taking place.

It was noted that FEI processes govern a number of the relevant pathway and championship arrangements and that these processes are not subject to short-term change.

NP undertook to provide two names for consideration for the Advisory Group. There was further discussion regarding the role of the committee and the importance of debrief processes at year end. HSI noted that internal debriefing had taken place and that anonymous surveys had been used to gather feedback where individuals were not comfortable speaking openly.

In response to a query on the affiliate agreement, AE advised that it is under review and being restructured, particularly in relation to safeguarding and reporting requirements. A revised draft is expected to issue in Q4 of 2026, while funding arrangements will be addressed separately from the affiliate agreement.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded with thanks to all attendees for their time and contributions.

The meeting concluded at 12.22hrs.

Actions:

- Review concerns raised regarding the U25 programme and support arrangements. (HSI)
- Follow up on publication and clarity of the youth points system. (AE)
- Confirm the show jumping coaching arrangement for the youth programme. (HSI)
- Provide two names for the Advisory Group. (NP)
- Prepare a proposal outlining sponsorship tiers, levels of commitment, and funding priorities. (Eventing Ireland)
- Make the Terms of Reference for selectors available. (HSI)
- Improve communication with athletes, owners, riders, and stakeholders on programme plans, supports, and selection/points pathways. (HSI)