



NEWBURY
RACECOURSE

SENSORY GUIDE

Sensory Guide

Visiting a busy place if you, or someone you care for, has a sensory disorder, or is anxious around crowds, noise and in an unfamiliar setting can be both daunting and unsettling.

Research has shown that more often than not people will avoid these situations altogether for fear of the “unknown” and finding themselves or their loved one in a situation that makes them distressed or uncomfortable.

As part of the #GoRacingGreen initiative, in partnership with Unibet, we have put together a simple sensory guide, so you can know in advance what to expect when you visit us for a day at the races.

This covers the most common sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures that you might experience on a race day...Of course, there are many more as our senses are working all the time and detecting things both familiar and unfamiliar, and we are all different, but we hope that this covers in the main what you can expect at a race day.

We are by no means experts, but our staff have attended an autism and sensory awareness session and Dementia Friends awareness session to help us understand what we can do to help, and we hope this simple guide may assist in making your race day stress free and enjoyable.

What Will I See?

1.0 Cars/Vehicles

When I drive into the racecourse there will be other cars parking as people arrive to enjoy their day. I will also see cars when I leave the racecourse.

2.0 Trains

When I drive into the racecourse, I will see a train station, as Newbury Racecourse has its own train station.

3.0 Helicopters & Planes

Often helicopters will fly into the racecourse. These may be transporting visitors, jockeys, trainers and other racing personnel.

Newbury Racecourse is also in close proximity by air to several airports so aircraft may fly over at any time, though they will not be low flying.

4.0 People

Entering, leaving and inside the racecourse I will see lots of people. Some of these people will be staff that work at the racecourse. They will be wearing navy blue jackets or high visibility vests. These people will be able to assist me if I have any questions or need any help on the day.

Some of the people will be people like me that have come to enjoy a day's racing, and these will be people of all ages, including babies and children.

There will be people there to help keep me, and everyone else, safe and I may see security staff, who usually wear bright yellow jackets or waistcoats, ambulance men and women, and occasionally at a busy fixture I may see policemen and women.

I will see people that are involved with the horses – these may be their trainers, jockeys, the stable staff who look after them, vets and owners.

5.0 Buildings

As I enter the racecourse, I will see several different buildings. These include places where I can get something to eat and drink, the main grandstand buildings where there are bars and restaurants and toilets, and even temporary buildings such as marquees and gazebos.

6.0 Television, Media & Filming Equipment

On race days, there will be photographers, reporters and television crew.

I may see filming equipment being moved around and people carrying cameras and microphones. Video cameras and television monitors may be set up too.

So the people operating the cameras can get a good view of the racetrack, the cameras are sometimes moved by crane-like machines so they can be operated from high up, so I may see these moving up and down.

7.0 Horses

I will see horses at the racecourse. These will be in the parade ring and on the race track, and may also be walking to and from their destinations. Horses can seem very big animals, but at all times they will have someone leading them and looking after them, so I will be safe.

Very occasionally horses can become frightened, just like us. This may cause them to rear on two legs, or look like they are dancing about, but at all times there will be someone with them so I will not be in any danger.

8.0 Green Screens

If a horse or a jockey, or any official that is out on track at the racecourse, has an accident, they will put up a green screen around them. This means that whoever is injured can be treated with privacy and nothing I need to worry about.

9.0 Assistance Dogs

Dogs are not permitted on a race day, however, we do of course accept assistance dogs, which will always be on a lead and kept under control.



10.0 Sniffer Dogs

When I am entering the racecourse and sometimes if I am walking around the racecourse I may be approached by a “Sniffer Dog”. These are working dogs and are just checking that people are not carrying anything on them that is not permitted into the racecourse. They may sniff at me but they are friendly, gentle dogs who will be carrying out their job and are not there to be petted or to cause harm to anyone.

11.0 Lights

If I am at an evening meeting, I may see lights that light up the racecourse both outside and inside. I may also see lights if I go indoors at any time, to use the bar, restaurant or the bathrooms.

What Will I Hear?

1.0 Traffic

As I approach and leave the racecourse, and very occasionally during the day, I may hear traffic.

I may also hear vehicles moving about the racecourse such as horseboxes or emergency vehicles.

In the unlikely event of an emergency I may hear sirens within the racecourse, and it may be possible to hear sirens if an emergency vehicle is passing the racecourse on the road outside.

2.0 Trains

When I drive into the racecourse, I will see a train station, as Newbury Racecourse has its own train station. This means I will hear the sounds of trains passing through the station, and trains slowing down to stop at the station. Sometimes they will blow their horn and sometimes I will hear the station officer blow his whistle to signal the train is ready to leave.

3.0 Helicopters & Planes

Often helicopters will fly into the racecourse. These may be transporting visitors, jockeys, trainers and other racing personnel, so I will hear these as they take off any land.
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Newbury Racecourse is also in close proximity by air to several airports so I may hear aircraft may fly over at any time in the distance.

4.0 People

I will hear people throughout the day.

People will be talking, laughing and cheering. I may hear people shouting or singing. I may hear babies and children crying.

There is someone called a Race Commentator that talks about the horses and the races throughout the day, and commentates on the presentations of the prizes, and I will hear him talking over a loud speaker.

5.0 Horses

I will hear horses.

I will hear their hooves faintly when they are walking around the parade ring.

If I watch the race from the track-side I will hear the galloping of hooves on the turf. When lots of horses are galloping fast this can sound like a loud repetitive thumping noise.

Occasionally a horse will cough, neigh or “whinny” which is a high-pitched neigh. Sometimes a horse does a snorting type sound through its nose and this generally means that they are happy.

When horses are in the parade ring, you will hear someone ring a bell when it is time for the jockeys to mount them before the race, and after the race when it is time for the horses to be taken away, back to their stables.

6.0 Dogs

Dogs are not permitted on a race day, however, we do of course accept assistance dogs and will have sniffer dogs working at some race meetings, which will always be on a lead and kept under control. They may occasionally bark.

7.0 Music

There is a speaker system at the racecourse that plays music when there is no racing or commentating going on.

Sometimes there are musicians and live bands playing at a race meeting so I may hear these too.

You may hear music coming out of some of the bars.

8.0 Food Preparation

Whether you are inside or outside you may hear the preparation of food such as frying, bubbling, sizzling, the clatter of plates and cutlery, ice being scooped into glasses, glass bottles being placed into bottle bins, a coffee machine, running water.

I may hear fans from ovens and extractors, the pinging of microwaves and the opening and closing of catering equipment.

9.0 Bathroom Noises

If I use the bathroom, I may hear water running, toilets being flushed and the noise from a hand drier, as well as doors opening and closing.

I may hear sprays such as hairsprays.

10.0 Phones Ringing & People Talking On Radios (Walkie-Talkies)

I am likely to hear people's mobile telephones ringing. This may be a ringing sound, a tune or a song.

At the racecourse the staff have radios (walkie-talkies), so they can communicate with each other easily, so I may hear people talking through these. Sometimes they may beep or make a crackling sound.

11.0 Birds Singing

I may hear birds singing.

12.0 Weather

The Safe Zone is within a garden so I may hear the breeze rustling through the plants and trees. I may hear the wind or the rain.

What Will I Smell?

1.0 People

People have all different sorts of smells, most commonly perfumes and aftershaves which can be faint or quite strong.

I may pick up on faint smells such as hair products or laundry conditioners.

If people wear certain fabrics such as leather, these can sometimes give off a smell.

Smoking is permitted outside, so I may smell cigarette smoke.

2.0 Horses

Horses can have lots of smells!

Their coat has a natural scent to it, that is slightly oily, and can be exaggerated when they are hot and sweaty. If I am very sensitive to smell, I may be able to smell this even if I am not that close to the horses.

Grooming products. When horses are racing, they like to look their best, so I may smell grooming products, similar to what we use as humans, like shampoos, scented sprays and conditioners.

Horses that race commonly have hoof oil painted onto their hooves to help protect them and so they look shiny. This can have quite a distinct smell which can be strong if has recently been applied.

Horse poo! Of course, horses will need to do a poo at some point during the day, so I may smell this!

3.0 Food Preparation

Lots of different foods are prepared at a race meeting.

I may smell things like fish and chips, salt and vinegar, onions being fried, burgers being cooked, or sandwiches being toasted.

Drinks can also give off smells, such as coffee and alcohol.

4.0 Bathroom Smells

If I use the toilet, I may smell chemical smells from cleaning products.

I may also smell soap from the hand-washing facilities.

I may smell smells such as hairsprays, perfumes and aftershaves.

Some toilets have air freshening systems that can often give of sweet or floral smelling scents to keep the bathrooms smelling nice.

5.0 Outdoor Smells

Around the racecourse there are lots of planters, trees and flowers. There are a variety of flowers planted in these that will have various different, but mild, scents. However, to me, some of them may smell stronger.

Cut grass. I may smell the grass, especially if it has been freshly cut in preparation for the race day.

If it has been raining, I may smell the rain.

6.0 Indoor Smells

If I go inside, I may smell a mixture of various smells created by people, food and drink.

Sometimes different buildings that are not my home have their own smell, which I might not be used to. These smells may be created by carpets, paintwork, flooring or cleaning products, for example.

What Will I Touch/Feel?

- There are many different textures within a racecourse setting. These include things I may come into contact with every day, such as door handles, railings, seats, benches and tables, brickwork, metal and concrete.
- If I sit outside I may touch plants and grass.
- If I eat or drink I may touch cutlery, or my food may be wrapped in a certain type of packaging like paper or plastic. My drinks will be in a glass, a can, a bottle or a plastic cup.
- I may touch other people as they stand close to me or brush past me.
- On special occasions, I may have the opportunity to touch a horse (though this is not common on a standard race day), though I do not have to do this if I am not comfortable doing so.
- I will feel the different types of weather – the warmth of the sun, the breeze or the wind, and the rain.

What Will I Taste?

- There will be food and drink available at the racecourse that is commonly available when I go on many days out, and also that I may eat and drink at home. Therefore, anything I choose to eat and drink should taste the same or similar to what I have tasted before.
- There is a lot of choice available, so I will be able to find something that I like the taste and texture of to eat and drink.

What If There Is Something Unexpected?

Very occasionally, wherever I go, something unexpected may happen. This may be something I see, something I hear, something I touch or taste that is different to how I expected it to be, or something I smell.

If at any time I feel anxious or worried about something that I experience, then I can talk to the person or people I am with, or I can find a member of staff who will be able to help and reassure me. There will be a safe place for me to go and there will be people who can help me.