

#GoRacingGreen Sensory Guide Draft: Chepstow Racecourse

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. This can lead to social exclusion and social isolation, as well as conditions such as depression.

People have anxieties by many things relating to a day out, that many take in their stride. These can be what some regard as simple things, such as making a telephone call, asking a question, or using a public toilet, or bigger things caused by conditions such as social phobias, sensory conditions, early onset dementia, PTSD or Asperger’s Syndrome, to name a few.

As part of the #GoRacingGreen initiative, in partnership with Unibet, #GoRacingGreen has put together a simple sensory guide, so you can know in advance what to expect when you visit Chepstow Racecourse 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 from your day.

We are by no means experts, but there will be someone on site who is a Mental Health First Aider, Dementia Champion and Autism Champion on site throughout both days, and we hope this simple guide may assist in making your race day stress free and enjoyable.

Approaching the Racecourse

- If I am travelling from some parts of England, I will need to cross a bridge – The Severn Bridge or the Second Severn Crossing. These bridges are part of the normal motorway network, but appear large and high. However, they are very safe, and will get me across the Severn Estuary. I will be in a vehicle so there is no danger to me.
- If I am travelling by train from some parts of England, I may need to go through the Severn Tunnel. This goes underneath the Severn Estuary and crosses from England into Wales, just like the Severn Bridges do, but under the water instead of over. This is just like any railway tunnel, but lasts for 4 miles. It will be dark in the tunnel but only takes a couple of minutes to get through and is perfectly safe.
- The Racecourse is situated on, and reached via a main road, with parking opposite, including disabled parking.

- If I have any anxieties about queues, **I can raise a hand.**
- I do not have to wear a lanyard or disclose my condition or disability to anyone.

The #GoRacingGreen Area is Situated:

As I go through the main entrance, I can turn right, and walk down the side of the stand. Here I will see a set of steps to my right that lead to the Weighing Room. The area is at the bottom of these steps. The steward will know that I am able to access this area.




There will be someone here who will understand if I have any concerns and will be able to support me.

If I feel more comfortable watching the whole even from this area, I am more than welcome to do so. No one will ask me any questions. I can talk to people here if I want to, or sit on my own, but most importantly, I can be myself.

I can come and go from this area if I wish. The area is close to the pre-parade ring and has views of the track, so I will be able to see the horses from here. It is also close to toilets and outdoor catering facilities, so I do not need to go inside if I am not comfortable with this.

If I have any pre-event questions, I can email debbie@novicefilly.co.uk, or call Chepstow Racecourse on [01291 622260](tel:01291622260) if I feel comfortable doing that.

What will I see?

- **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 horse boxes and lorries, ambulances that will be on standby just in case there is an accident and other racecourse vehicles. I will also see cars when I leave the racecourse. There may be a lot of queuing traffic waiting to enter and leave the racecourse too.
- **Helicopters & Planes** 
 - Often helicopters will fly into the racecourse. These may be transporting visitors, jockeys, trainers and other racing personnel.
 - Chepstow is close to Cardiff and Bristol Airport as the crow flies. Therefore, I may see larger aircraft flying over the course.
- **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. 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.
- I will see other racing fans. I may see them clapping or cheering with their arms in the air.
- There will be on-course bookmakers where I can place a bet if I wish. These will have trolleys with screens on, much like a television screen and often have illuminated writing on them.

- **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.

- **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.


- **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.




- **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 is nothing I need to worry about.

- **Assistance Dogs**

- Dogs are not permitted on a race day, however, Chepstow do of course accept assistance dogs, which will always be on a lead and kept under control.
- **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.
- **Lights** 
- If I am at an evening meeting, or the weather is particularly dark, 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.
- I may see lights from emergency vehicles

What will I Hear?

- **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.
- **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.
- Chepstow Racecourse is also in close proximity to Bristol and Cardiff Airports, so I may hear aircraft fly over at any time.
- **People** 
- I will hear people throughout the day.
- People will be talking, laughing and cheering. I may hear people shouting, clapping, cheering 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.

- 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. This is nothing I need to be alarmed about, this is just the horses' hooves on the turf.
- 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, I 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.

- Dogs

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

- 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.
- I may hear music coming out of some of the bars.

- Food Preparation



- Whether I am inside or outside I 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, coffee machines grinding and steaming and the opening and closing of catering equipment.

- 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.

- 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.
- **Birds Singing** 
- I may hear birds singing.
- **The Weather** 
- I may hear the breeze rustling through the plants and trees. I may hear the wind or the rain.
- If there are temporary buildings like gazebos and it is wet or windy, I may hear these flapping or rustling.

What will I smell?

- **People** 
- People have all different sorts of smells, most commonly perfumes and aftershaves which can be faint or quite strong. If I have a sensory condition, I may notice these more.
- I may pick up on faint smells such as hair products or laundry softeners.
- 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.
- **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, or wet. 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 it 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!
- **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, garlic, spices, burgers being cooked, or sandwiches being toasted.
- Drinks can also give off smells, such as coffee and alcohol.
- **Bathroom Smells** 

- If I use the toilet, I may smell chemical smells from cleaning products.
- I may also smell soap from the handwashing 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.
- I may smell normal, human, bathroom smells.

- **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.

- **Indoor Smells**

- If I go inside, I may smell a mixture of various smells created by people, food and drink. These smells may all mix together, or I may be able to distinguish each one separately.
- 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.
- Although these smells may not be familiar to me, they are nothing to worry about. They are just normal, every day smells to expect at a race meeting.

What will I touch or 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. On a very rare occasion it may be a fire alarm.

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 (**would be good to have a pic of a staff member in jacket please**) 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.