Pony club has produced a 5 phase plan post lockdown and from today we are at phase 1, riding from home. This phase is about bringing horses and ponies back into full work and doing this where they are usually based, at livery or at home. Some of our horses and ponies have been turned out to grass or just had very light work so it is important that we increase their fitness slowly.

Please see the advice below from Alnorthumbria vets: **Myopathy / Tying-up:**

After this period of lockdown, some horses will start to come back to work after a long period of rest. This exercise after a long period of rest could mean an increased risk of suffering Exertional Rhabdomyolysis, also known as Tying-up or Monday Morning Disease. This consists in a disturbance of the muscles in the horse, causing painful cramps and muscle damage, similar to the pain we suffer after doing hard exercise for the very first time and we struggle to move the following day as everything aches!

The clinical signs can vary between the different grades of presentation, but usually all the episodes occur after exercise. Horses can appear stiff, particularly in the hind legs and unwilling to move, show abnormal sweating and even swelling and hardening of muscles, especially in hindquarters. Dark red or brown urine can be seen. In more severe cases, the horse can be extremely painful and can have a similar presentation to colic.

Diagnosis can be made on the basis of clinical signs and can be confirmed with a blood sample, where the enzymes related with muscle damage are markedly increased. If the condition reoccurs frequently, a muscle biopsy might be suggested to identify the cause.

If you suspect that your horse may be tying-up, keep it still to reduce further damage and contact your vet. While you wait, provide fresh water and encourage it to drink. The initial treatment consists of reducing pain and inflammation, and restoring fluids and electrolytes in the more severe cases. This will be followed by rest until the horse is comfortable, turnout can be useful at this time before returning gradually to normal management as planned by your vet. If there is an underlying cause, this should be addressed to prevent further episodes.