

## Fact Sheet

# Microchipping



### What is microchipping?

Equine microchipping is a permanent method of identifying horses, ponies and donkeys. A small microchip (about the size of a grain of rice) is implanted under the skin, providing a unique 15-digit identification number that is linked to a national database.

### Legal requirements

Since 1 October 2020, all horses, ponies and donkeys in England, Wales and Scotland must be microchipped.

Horses born after 1 July 2009 were already required to be microchipped, but the 2020 law extended this to all equines.

In Northern Ireland, microchipping is mandatory for all foals born after 1 July 2009 and any horse requiring a passport.

#### Equine passport requirement:

All equines must have a passport, which includes the microchip number.

Passports must be updated with correct owner details.



### Benefits of microchipping

- **Permanent identification:**  
Unlike passports or markings, microchips cannot be lost or altered
- **Lost or stolen horses:**  
Helps trace and recover stolen or missing equines
- **Prevents illegal slaughter:**  
Ensures horses cannot enter the human food chain fraudulently
- **Better welfare protection:**  
Helps local authorities track neglected or abandoned horses

# Microchipping | Fact

## Checking and Updating Microchip Details

Owners can check their horse's microchip details through the Central Equine Database ([equineregister.co.uk](http://equineregister.co.uk)).

Any changes in ownership must be updated with the relevant Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO).

## Where to get more information

Defra (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs):  
[gov.uk](http://gov.uk)

British Horse Society (BHS):  
[bhs.org.uk](http://bhs.org.uk)

World Horse Welfare:  
[worldhorsewelfare.org](http://worldhorsewelfare.org)

## Penalties for non compliance

Owners who fail to microchip their horse can face fines up to £200.

Local authorities can seize and rehome abandoned horses.



## Unsure if your horse is microchipped?

As your vet to scan your horse to check for you.

This factsheet was originally published on 05/11/20 and last reviewed on 28/02/25. It will be reviewed annually/ as necessary.

This factsheet was created by the VetPartners Equine Team, with assistance from our Marketing Team and Veterinary Regulatory Advisors.

For further information, please contact your local VetPartners Equine Veterinary Practice on:

## vetPartners

VetPartners Equine has a diverse range of practices and expertise within the group.

Together with our practices, our focus is on providing an excellent service to our equine clients. No two practices are the same, and we understand and embrace that independent spirit.