**Working Hunter Rules**

**Horses**

Animals to be 4yr old and over, exceeding 148cm and riders to have attained their 14th birthday before January 1st in the current year.

**Ponies**

As our classes are based on height of fence rather than height of pony, the classes are eligible for:

**Ponies not exceeding 153cms. For ponies, mares or geldings, 4 years old and over, not exceeding 153cms, suitable for and to be ridden by riders of correct age.**

As a guide:

153cms ponies (over 143cm and not exceeding 153cm), 4 years old and over, and to be ridden by riders who have not attained their 20th birthday on 1st January of current year.

143cms (over 133cm and not exceeding 143cm), 4 years old and over, suitable for and to be ridden by riders who have not attained their 17th birthday on 1st January of current year.

133cms (exceeding 123cms but not exceeding 133cms) 4 years old and over, and to be ridden by riders who have not attained their 14th birthday on 1st January of current year.

**M&M Ponies**

May be ridden by riders of any age, exceeding 5 years on 1st January of current year.

**Part-breds are NOT eligible.**

**Ponies must be passported with their respective Breed Society Stud Books to compete in Mountain & Moorland Classes.**

**Guidelines for eligibility for the NIF Qualifier Classes** **(rules from NIF website)**

The top 4 in each class will qualify.

It is up to you to ensure you meet the requirements for NIF, please read their rules etc on their website[Northern Ireland Festival – Ireland's Largest Horse and Pony Show](https://www.northernirelandfestival.co.uk/) . As a quick guide, these are the class requirements for the festival classes at NIF:

**FESTIVAL OPEN WORKING HUNTER HORSES**

Class 401 Festival 4 Year Old Working Hunter Horse Final Open WH Stallion, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old, exceeding 148cms, foaled in 2021. Passport will be required to prove eligibility for this class. Rider to have attained their 14th birthday before 1st January in the current year.

Class 402 Festival 80cms Working Hunter Horse Final Open WH Stallion, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, exceeding 148cms. Rider to have attained their 14th birthday before 1st January in the current year.

Class 403 Festival Small Hunter Working Hunter Horse Final Open Small WH Stallion, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, exceeding 148cms but not exceeding 158cms. A current height certificate, not exceeding 158cms, will be required to show eligibility for this class. Rider to have attained their 14th birthday by 01st January in the current year.

Class 404 Festival 90cms Working Hunter Horse Final Open WH Stallion, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, exceeding 148cms. Rider to have attained their 14th birthday by 01st January in the current year.

Class 405 Festival 1m Working Hunter Horse Final Open WH Stallion, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, exceeding 148cms. Rider to have attained their 14th birthday by 01st January in the current year.

Class 406 Festival 1.10m Working Hunter Horse Final Open WH Stallion, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, exceeding 148cms. Rider to have attained their 14th birthday by 01st January in the current year

**FESTIVAL OPEN M&M WORKING HUNTER PONIES**

Festival Open Mountain and Moorland Working Hunter Pony classes are divided by the height of the pony and NOT by the breed.

Mountain and Moorland WHP, Stallion, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, rider any age.

**Registered in the approved Pure Breed Society Stud Books of Connemara, Dartmoor, Dales, Exmoor, Fells, Highland, New Forest, Shetland or Welsh A, B, C or D.**

Rider any age. Rider to be the correct age to ride a stallion.

Class 407 Festival M&M Working Hunter Pony Final– Exceeding 143cms Mountain & Moorland Working Hunter Pony, Stallion, Mare or Gelding, exceeding 143cms. Rider any age.

Class 408 Festival M&M Working Hunter Pony Final– Exceeding 133cms but not exceeding 143cms Mountain & Moorland Working Hunter Pony, Stallion, Mare or Gelding, exceeding 133cms but not exceeding 143cms Rider any age.

Class 409 Festival M&M Working Hunter Pony Final– Exceeding 122cms but not exceeding 133cms Mountain & Moorland Working Hunter Pony, Stallion, Mare or Gelding, exceeding 122cms but not exceeding 133cms. Rider any age.

Class 410 Festival M&M Working Hunter Pony Final– Not Exceeding 122cms Mountain & Moorland Working Hunter Pony, Stallion, Mare or Gelding, not exceeding 122cms. Rider any age

**FESTIVAL MINI WORKING HUNTER PONIES**

Class 411 Festival Cradle Stakes Working Hunter Pony Final Working Hunter Pony, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, not exceeding 122cms. Rider not to have attained their 11th birthday on the 1st January in the current year.

Class 412 Festival Starter / Nursery Stakes Working Hunter Pony Final Nursery / Starter Stakes, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, not exceeding 133cms. Rider not to have attained their 12th birthday before 1st January in the current year.

**FESTIVAL OPEN WORKING HUNTER PONIES**

Class 413 Festival 133cms Working Hunter Pony Final Open Working Hunter Pony, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, not exceeding 133cms. Riders not to have attained their 14th birthday before 1st January in the current year.

Class 414 Festival 143cms Working Hunter Pony Final Open Working Hunter Pony, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, exceeding 133cms but not exceeding 143cms. Riders not to have attained their 17th birthday before 1st January in the current year.

Class 415 Festival 153cms Working Hunter Pony Final Open Working Hunter Pony, Mare or Gelding, 4 years old and over, exceeding 143cms but not exceeding 153cms. Riders not to have attained their 20th birthday before 1st January in the current year.

**General Rules:**

1 ENTRY FEES are NOT refundable once the start list is published.

2 No behaviour of an offensive, abusive or unpleasant manner to any person at will be tolerated. Any act of discourtesy to any Judge, Steward or any Show Official on the part of the competitor groom, rider, driver or agent of an animal, will, at the discretion of such Official disqualify that animal from being judged, in which case entry fees, prizes and charges will be forfeited. Exhibitors are reminded of their responsibility for the actions of others within their party.

3 No person shall ill-treat animals at any time whether by misuse/excessive use of a whip, bit or any item of saddlery or in any other way whatsoever.

4 Failure to observe any of the rules may result in disqualification of the animal concerned.

5 THE JUDGE’S DECISION IS FINAL.

6 DOGS- For reasons of safety and to prevent nuisance the Committee has decided that dogs can only be permitted on the Showground whilst on a lead. Exhibitors MUST clean up after their dogs. Any person found to dis-regard this rule will be fined. No dogs will be permitted inside any building at the showground with the exception of Assistance Dogs.

7 STALLIONS– in the interest of safety, stallions may only be ridden / driven / handled by persons over the age of 14 years– with the exception of Small Breeds Mountain & Moorland stallions, where the rider / handler must have attained their 12th birthday by the 1st January in the current year.

8 All ridden animals must be four years old and over. The age of an animal shall be calculated from the 1st January in the year of its birth.

9 An animal must be shown in the name under which it was originally registered with the AHS, BMS, BSHA, BSPA, BSPS, CHAPS, IPS, NPS, Native Breed Stud Books, SHB (GB), BS or any other recognised passport issuing society.

10 Mountain and Moorland ponies must be registered in the main body of their respective Breed Society Stud Books to compete in classes restricted to registered Mountain and Moorland ponies.

11 The identification of the animal must be in accordance with their passport at all times, this include all markings and whorls. Removing or addition of features is not permitted.

12 Exhibitors are required by DEFRA to carry the passports for their horses/ponies when competing or travelling.

13 Exhibitors must comply by the registration requirements as set out in the class rules.

14 No animal or rider may leave the ring without permission of the Judge or Ring Steward.

15 No rider may ride more than one animal in a class except for the jumping classes where they may ride two.

16 Once aclass has commenced there shall be no change of rider, except in a championship if a rider has more than one exhibit eligible to compete. The substitute rider must be eligible for the class and the Ring Steward informed of the change of rider.

17 A fall of animal or rider whilst mounted in any class will result in disqualification and they MUST leave the ring DIS-MOUNTED.

18 Animals displaying continued disobedience or leaving the ring whether mounted or dismounted will be disqualified.

**CLOTHING & TACK**

1. HATS: It is the sole responsibility of riders to ensure that at all times whilst on horseback, they wear correctly fitting, 3-point protective headgear which complies with the latest British Standard. The Society accepts no responsibility for any injury arising from a failure to comply with this regulation.

2. Correct dress should be worn in all classes. Gaiters may be worn however Chaps are not permitted in any class.

3. Body protectors may be worn and are recommended whilst competing in WHP classes.

4. Earrings and / or body studs must not be worn.

5. Mobile telephones, ear pieces and communication devices MUST not be used in the ring.

6. Spurs / Dress Spurs– must not be worn in any pony class

8. Show canes are not to exceed 75cms (30”) in pony classes. Hunting crops are permissible.

9. Under no circumstances may tack be changed during the judging of a class.

10. If competing in a championship the same tack used in the class must be worn. Whips are not considered tack.

11. All Lead Rein ponies must be shown in a suitable snaffle bridle only.

12. Bit-less bridles and running gags are not permitted unless otherwise stated in the class specific rules.

13. In WH / WHP classes the use of any type of noseband and martingales are permitted.

14. Boots of a plain colour only may be used for the jumping phase of Working Hunter Pony classes. Boots must be removed for the conformation section of the class

15. No bandages or protective pads on any animal's legs or feet are permissible in any class

16. In the interest of safety, long hair should be tidy and appropriately secured.

17. Any suitable bit is accepted.

**JUDGING OF CLASSES**

1. In all cases the Judge’s decision is final.

2. No person, including exhibitors, handlers or grooms should enter the ring at any time without the Judge’s permission.

3. A class is deemed to have commenced when the Judge enters the ring and the exhibits are present.

4. Exhibits will not be allowed into the ring after the ponies/horses have been asked to trot.

5. The class is deemed to be over when the Judge has given permission for the class to leave the ring.

6. If a mistake in the marks is discovered, even after dismissing a class, it MUST be corrected and any qualification/result amended.