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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Racing Welfare announces first ten members of its Virgin Money London Marathon 2015 team.**

**Racing Welfare's** team of runners for this year's Marathon represent a wide cross-section of the racing industry, including jockeys, trainers, veterinarians, racecourse staff, horse transporters and industry management. They are now all gearing up their fundraising and training efforts with the majority stepping up in trip, attempting the marathon distance for the first time.

The team to date comprises; **Rod Street**, CEO of Great British Racing and British Champions Series, who ran the British 10k London Run for Racing Welfare in July 2014; **Sophie Ignarski** a qualified veterinarian and Darley employee; **Paul Booth**, apprentice jockey to Dean Ivory; **Paul D'Arcy**, Newmarket racehorse trainer; **Amelia Williams**, Market Rasen stabling manager; **Bryan Elliott**, horse transport company proprietor; **Sophia Upton**, ex professional jump jockey and work rider for Jonjo O'Neill; **Jason Favell**, pupil assistant to William Haggas; and **Helen Longstaff** and **Henri Merriam** who both have strong family connections to the racing industry.

The runners have a tough act to follow although it is accepted that the 2014 Racing Welfare Virgin Money London Marathon team's achievement in raising over £200,000 thanks to the participation of Qatar Racing, was a 'one-off'. This phenomenal amount led to the receipt of the Golden Bond Award for the charity generating the highest return from their team of runners.

All participants are very enthusiastic to be running for a cause close to their hearts and their training progress is already being tracked closely via social media. They each have their individual reasons for wishing to support the work of Racing Welfare, for example Henri Merriam states "*I would love the opportunity to give something back to an industry that has been so much a part of my life*". Bryan Elliott said "*I believe that Racing Welfare looks after the unsung heroes of racing - those that dedicate their lives to looking after the horses that provide all the special moments that many people share when they go racing.*"

Racing Welfare still has a limited number of spaces available for keen runners and fundraisers wishing to participate in the 2015 London Marathon. Full details of the application process are on the Racing Welfare website [www.racingwelfare.co.uk](http://www.racingwelfare.co.uk) and anyone interested should contact Sophie Matthew on 01638 560763 ([smatthew@racingwelfare.co.uk](mailto:smatthew@racingwelfare.co.uk)) .

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Press contact:

Jan Wade (07976 827999; [janwade@btopenworld.com](mailto:janwade@btopenworld.com))

### **Notes for Editors:**

Racing Welfare is a UK-wide charity whose headquarters are in Newmarket. It serves the needs of racing personnel from the beginning of their careers through to retirement. The wide range of help provided includes provision of affordable housing, mentoring schemes for young workers, advice for those coping with illness and disabilities; through to specialist counselling and support at times of need or personal crisis.