



# nars

National Association of Racing Staff



# Racecourse Ratings 2023

**Covering:**

Overnight Accommodation

Day Facilities

Canteen

Stable Yard



# nars

National Association of Racing Staff

## Introduction

**This publication is our 4th edition as we missed years 2020 and 2021 due to Covid and the aftermath of the pandemic.**

**The 2023 edition follows the same format as the previous editions and reports with the NARS appointed Racecourse Inspectors, who inspect their allocated racecourses twice annually. The objective is to focus on facilities for the staff and their horses while on duty at a racecourse. Their reports help us understand what every racecourse in the UK is providing and where improvements are possibly needed, but also to highlight where improvements have been made.**

Each of the eleven RCIs are allocated racecourses, usually within a reasonable radius of their employment. They are provided with an iPad which has pre-loaded questions for consistency when carrying out their inspections. The RCIs are then charged with making recommendations where improvements are required. This is added to our database which goes back to our first reports carried out in 2018 so we can track improvements over the years. A copy of every report is sent to the Clerk of the Course, the racecourse group or if it is one of the 29 independents, to the General Manager. Every racecourse is sent a pdf and hard copy of the annual report.

It will become obvious to the reader how much has improved at racecourses for staff and horses in recent years, and also where we continue to campaign for improvements. The lowest rated racecourse in 2018 was Plumpton, it has improved 18 places in 2023.

In 2018 there were only six racecourses with a 5-star rating, scoring over 100 points, now there are 23.

In 2018 there were seven racecourses who only achieved a single star, in 2023 there is only one racecourse with a single star, Ripon.

The headline findings within this publication are below, but the logic and scoring matrix is contained in each of the pages covering the 4 main headings and 12 sub headings giving a maximum of 120 points.

### Headlines from 2023.

- York is the top-rated racecourse in the UK with 115.17
- 23 racecourses achieved a 5-star rating.
- 1 racecourse scored just one star.
- The lowest rated racecourse scored 66 points in 2023, the lowest rated course in 2018 scored 44 points.
- Market Rasen improved by 20.3 points, climbing 23 places up the leader board.
- Haydock improved by 17 points, climbing 36 places up the leader board.
- The highest rated Jockey Club racecourse was Epsom, their lowest was Huntingdon.
- The highest rated ARC racecourse was Doncaster, their lowest was Bath.

### The 4 main headings for scoring a racecourse are.

- 1 Overnight facilities, judged on quality, cleanliness, and whether the rooms are single occupancy and en suite.
- 2 Day Facilities, judges on quality and cleanliness and if there is an area away from the canteen to relax.
- 3 Canteen, judged on quality, choice on offer, cleanliness, price, and service. For 2024, any racecourse that doesn't provide a meal free of charge will receive a score of ZERO on cost.
- 4 Stable yard, judged on the loading ramp, stable yard, washdown facilities, and water pressure.

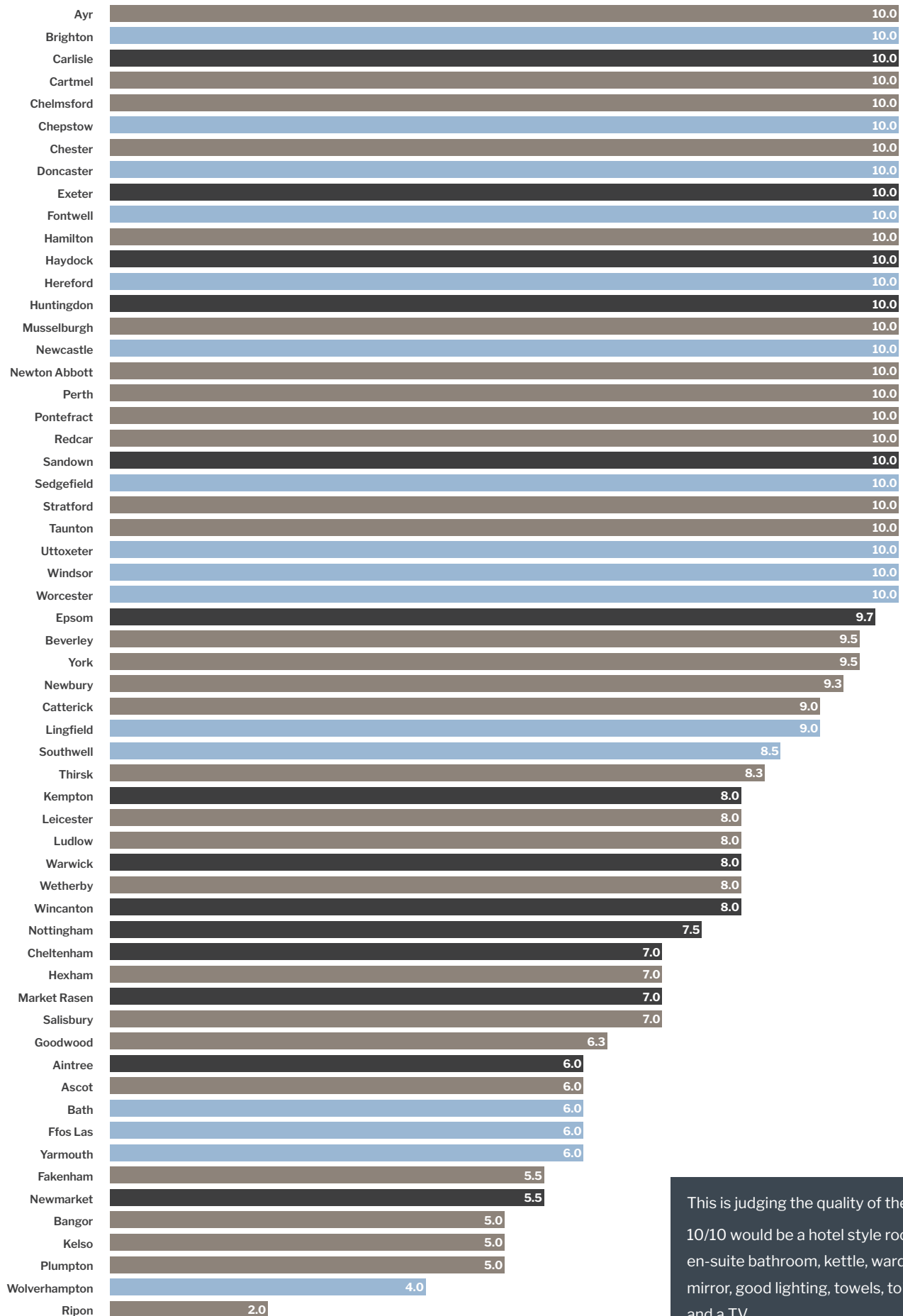
### There are 4 main headings and 12 subheadings with a total of 120 points available.

- 100 points + = 5 stars
- 90 – 99.99 points = 4 stars
- 80 – 89.99 points = 3 stars
- 70 – 79.99 = 2 Stars
- Any points below 70 points will be judged as a 1-star racecourse.

NARS and its members owe a great deal of gratitude to our RCIs. For 2024 they are.

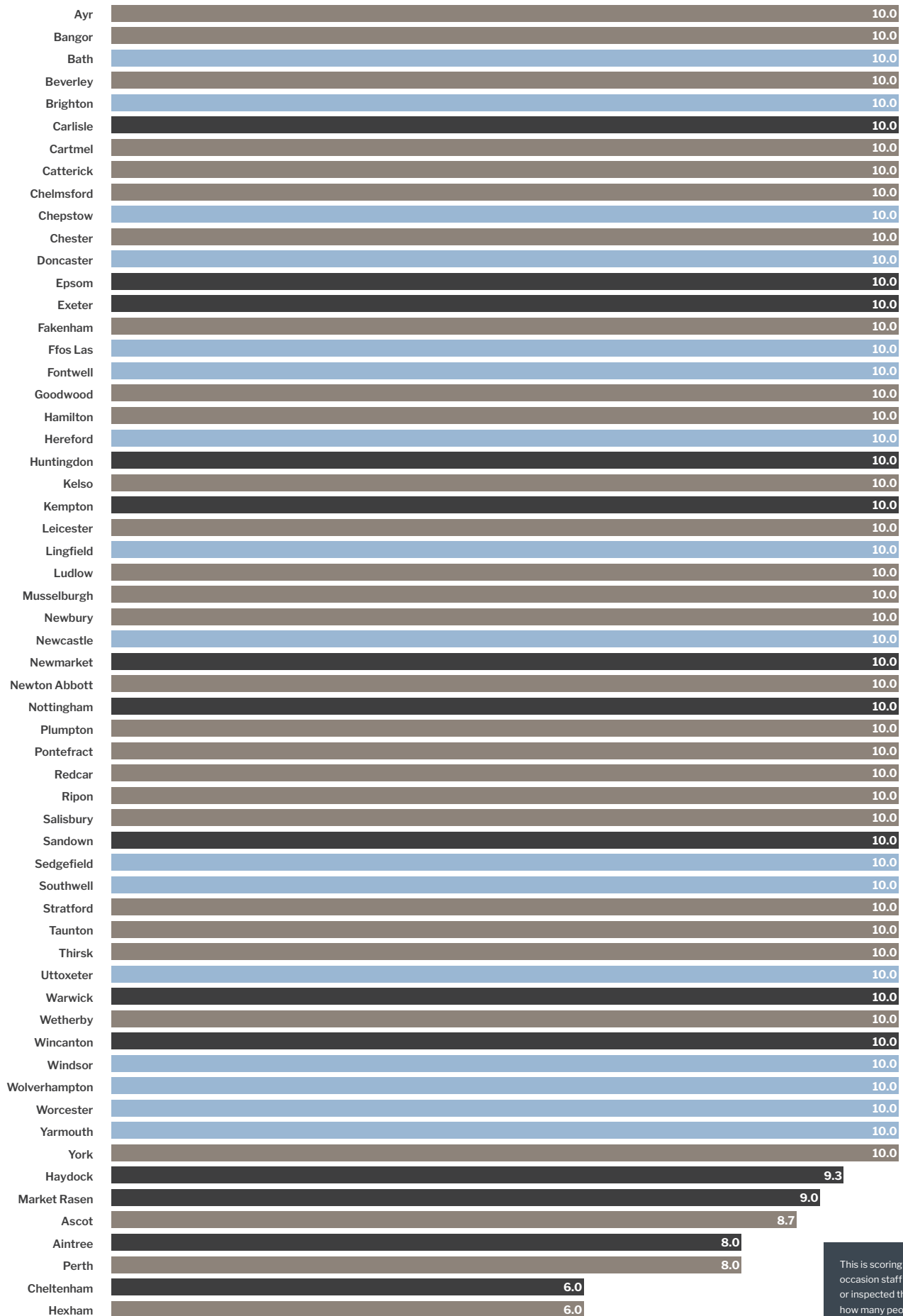
Julia Bennet, Angela Bramham, Fran Brown, Mark Ellwood, Sarah Guest, Helen Halliwell, Natasha Kent, Peter McCulloch, Jo Meadowcroft, Sarah Peacock and Melanie Tingey.

# Overnight Accommodation: Quality



This is judging the quality of the room. 10/10 would be a hotel style room, en-suite bathroom, kettle, wardrobe, mirror, good lighting, towels, toiletries and a TV.

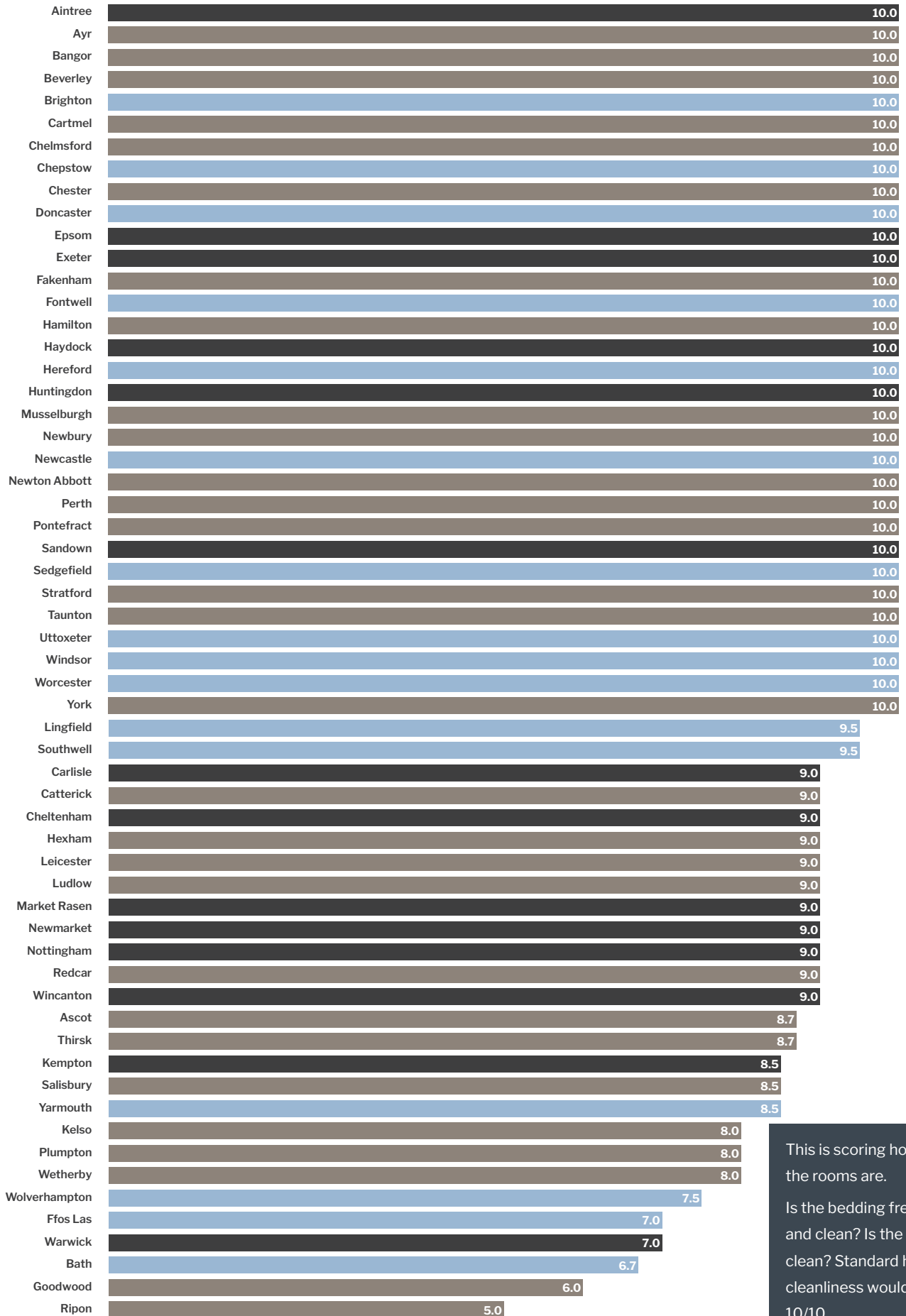
# Overnight Accommodation: Numbers to a Room



This is scoring for on the occasion staff have stayed or inspected the course, how many people to a room?

KEY ● JOCKEY CLUB ● ARENA RACING COMPANY ● INDEPENDENT

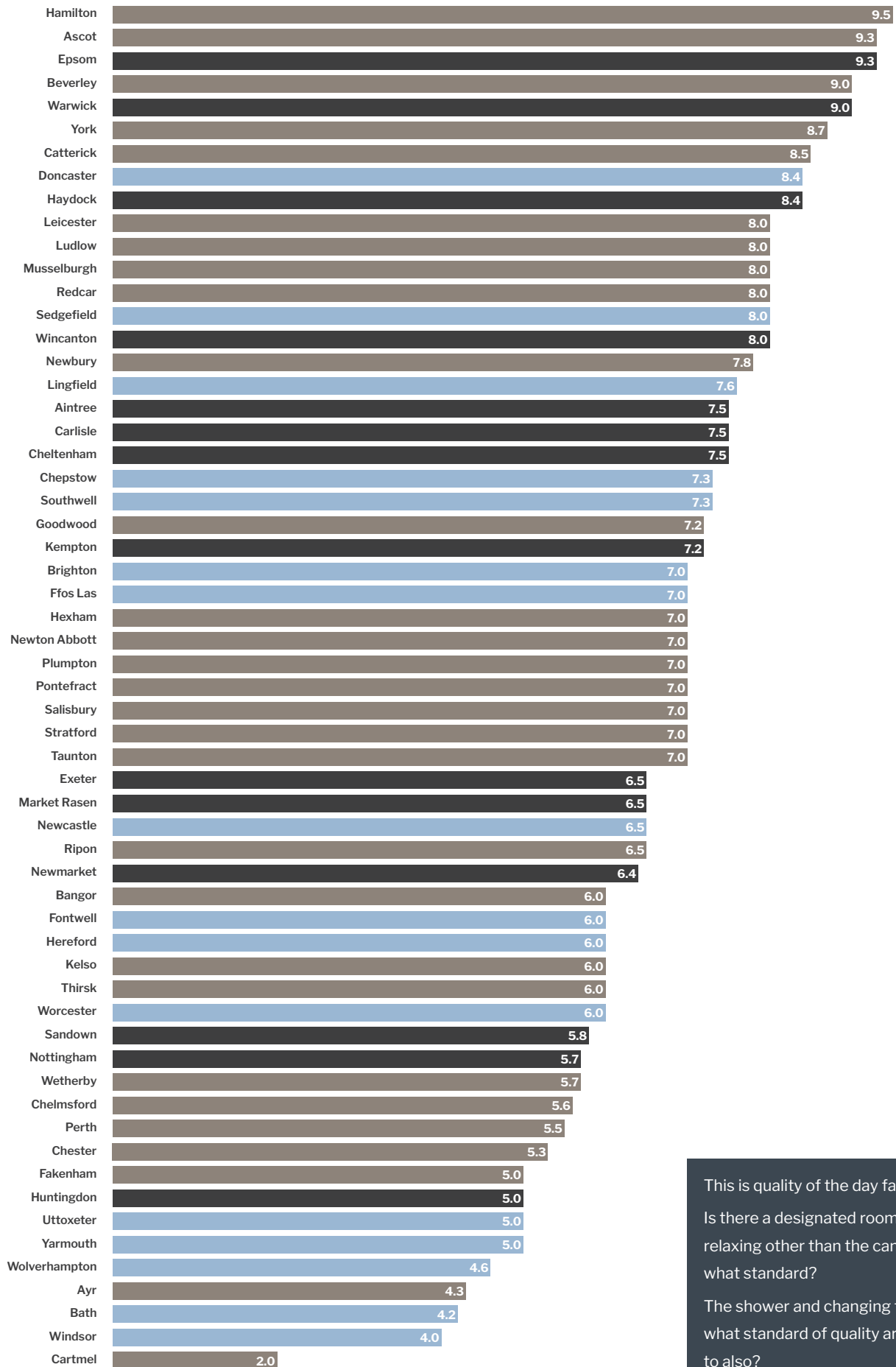
# Overnight Accommodation: Cleanliness



This is scoring how clean the rooms are. Is the bedding fresh and clean? Is the room clean? Standard hotel cleanliness would be a 10/10

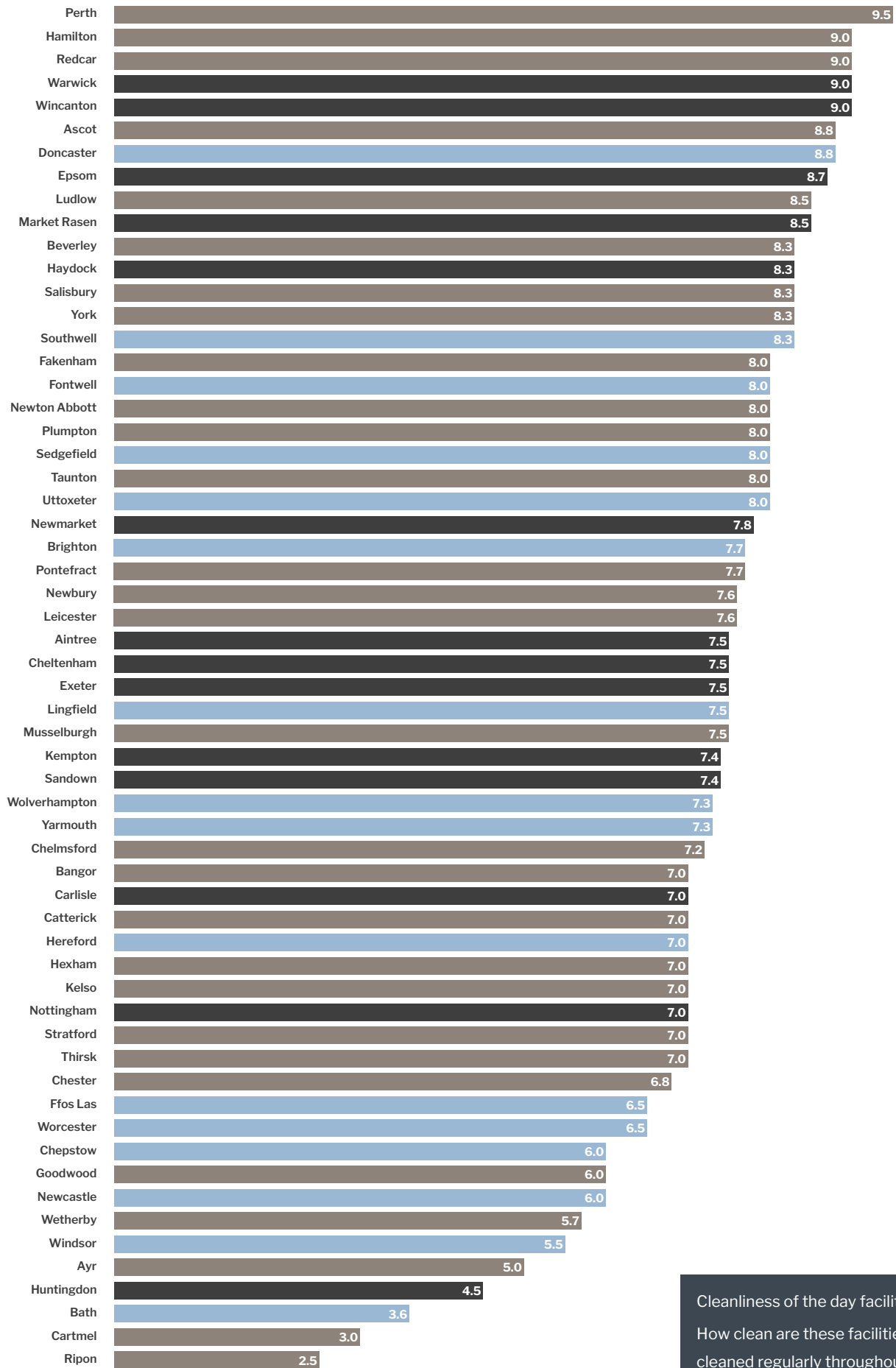


# Day Facilities: Quality



This is quality of the day facilities. Is there a designated room/area for relaxing other than the canteen? If so to what standard? The shower and changing facilities, what standard of quality are these up to also?

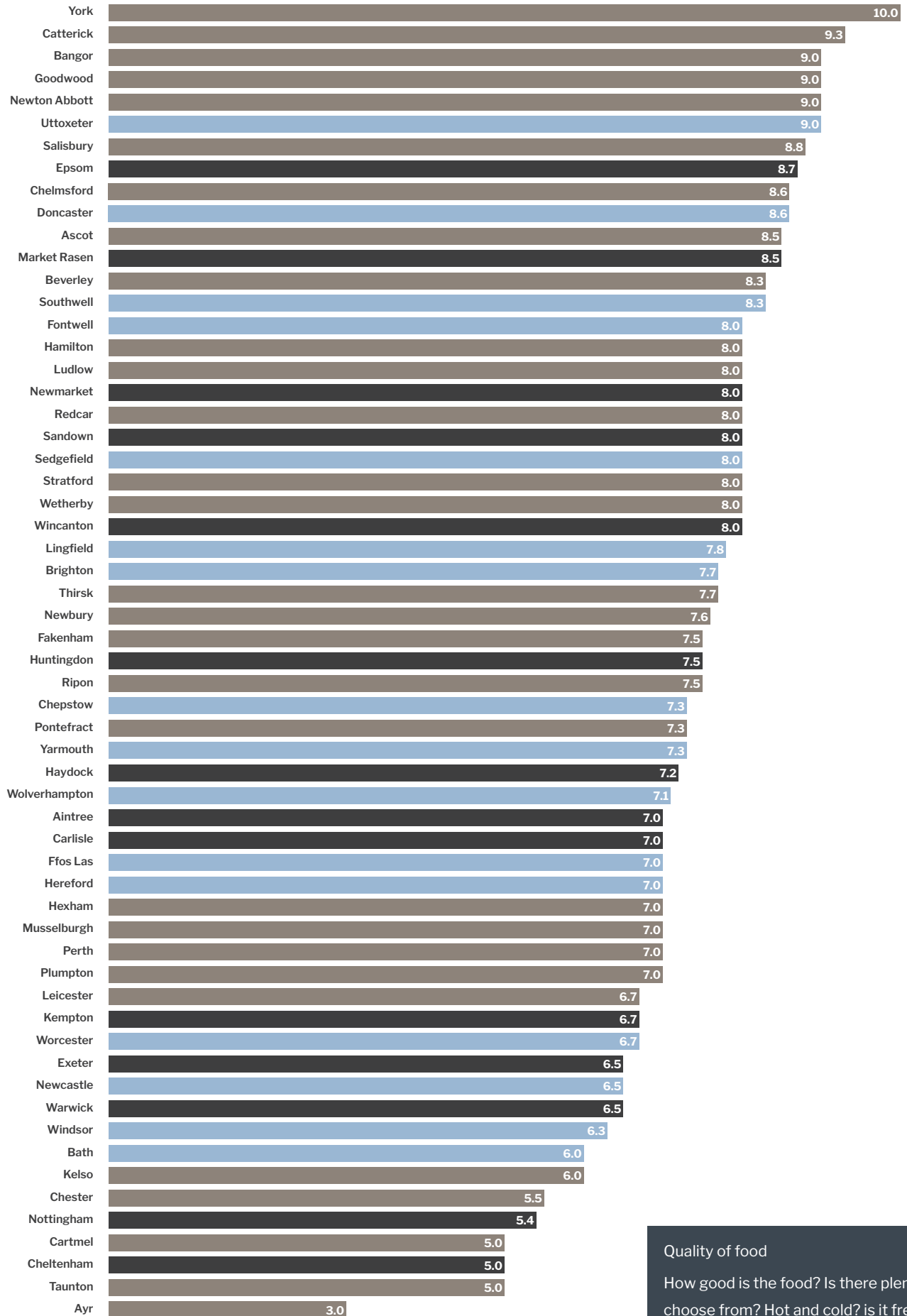
# Day Facilities: Cleanliness



Cleanliness of the day facilities.  
How clean are these facilities? Are they cleaned regularly throughout the day?

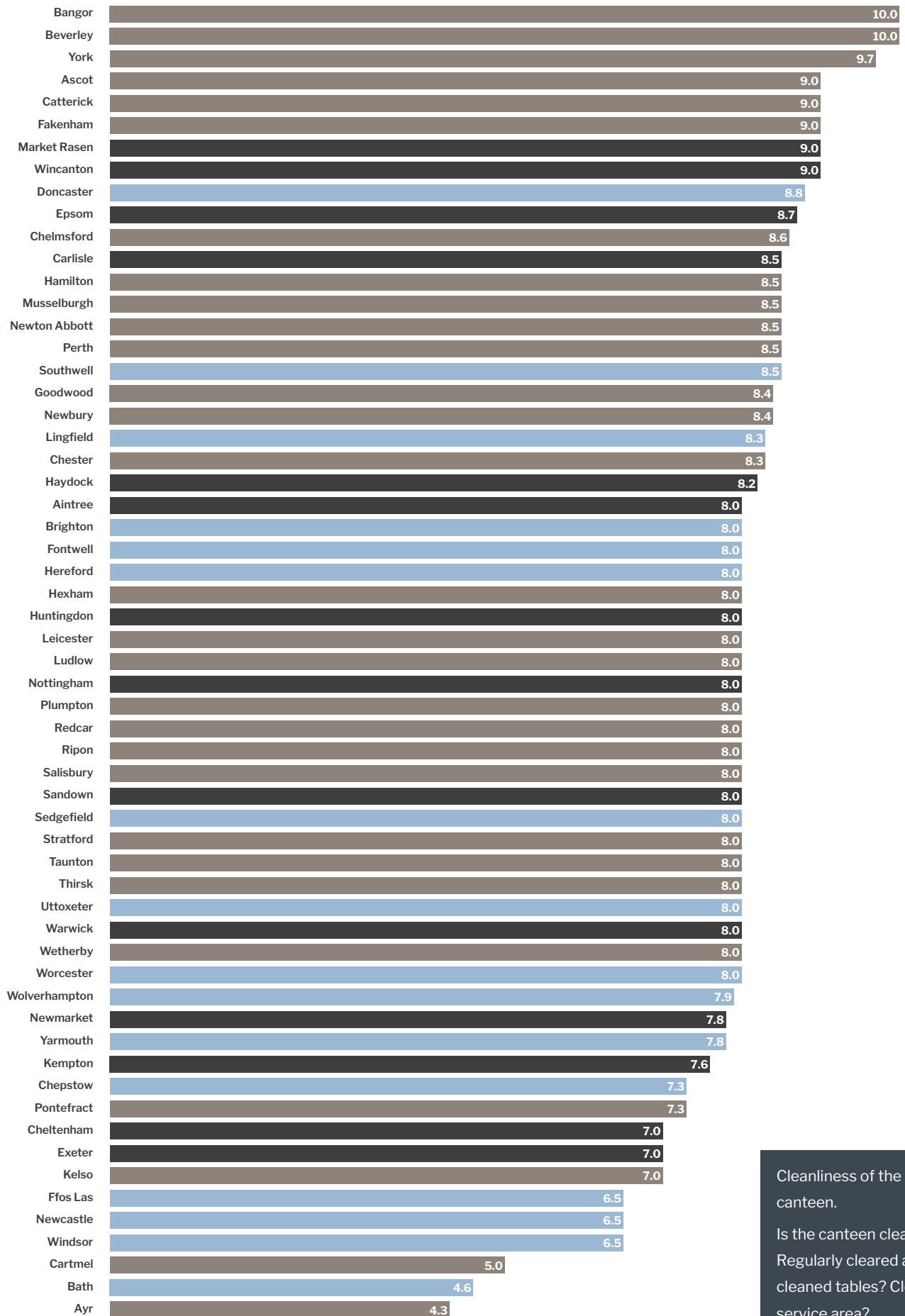


# Canteen: Quality



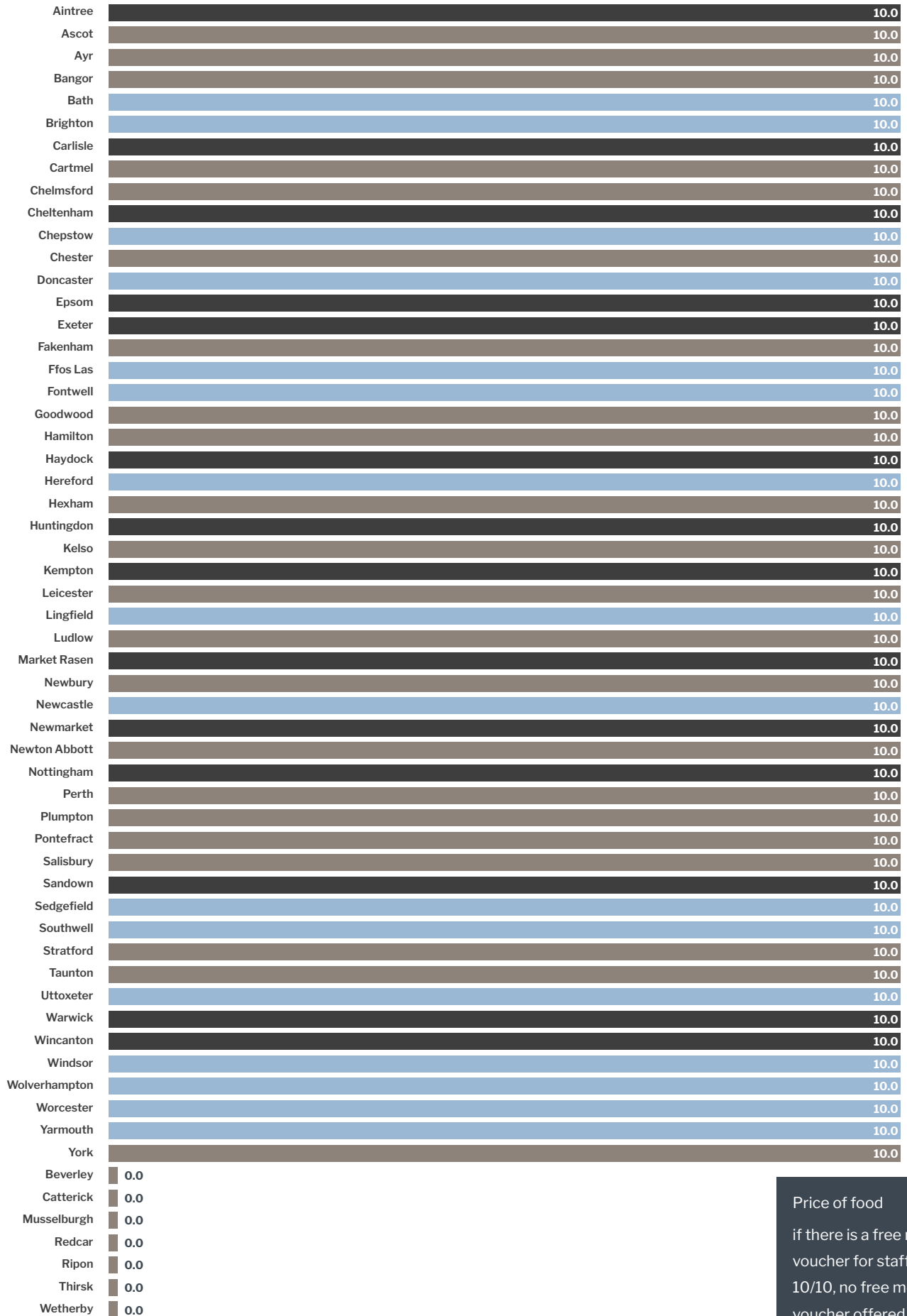
Quality of food  
How good is the food? Is there plenty to choose from? Hot and cold? Is it fresh?

# Canteen: Cleanliness



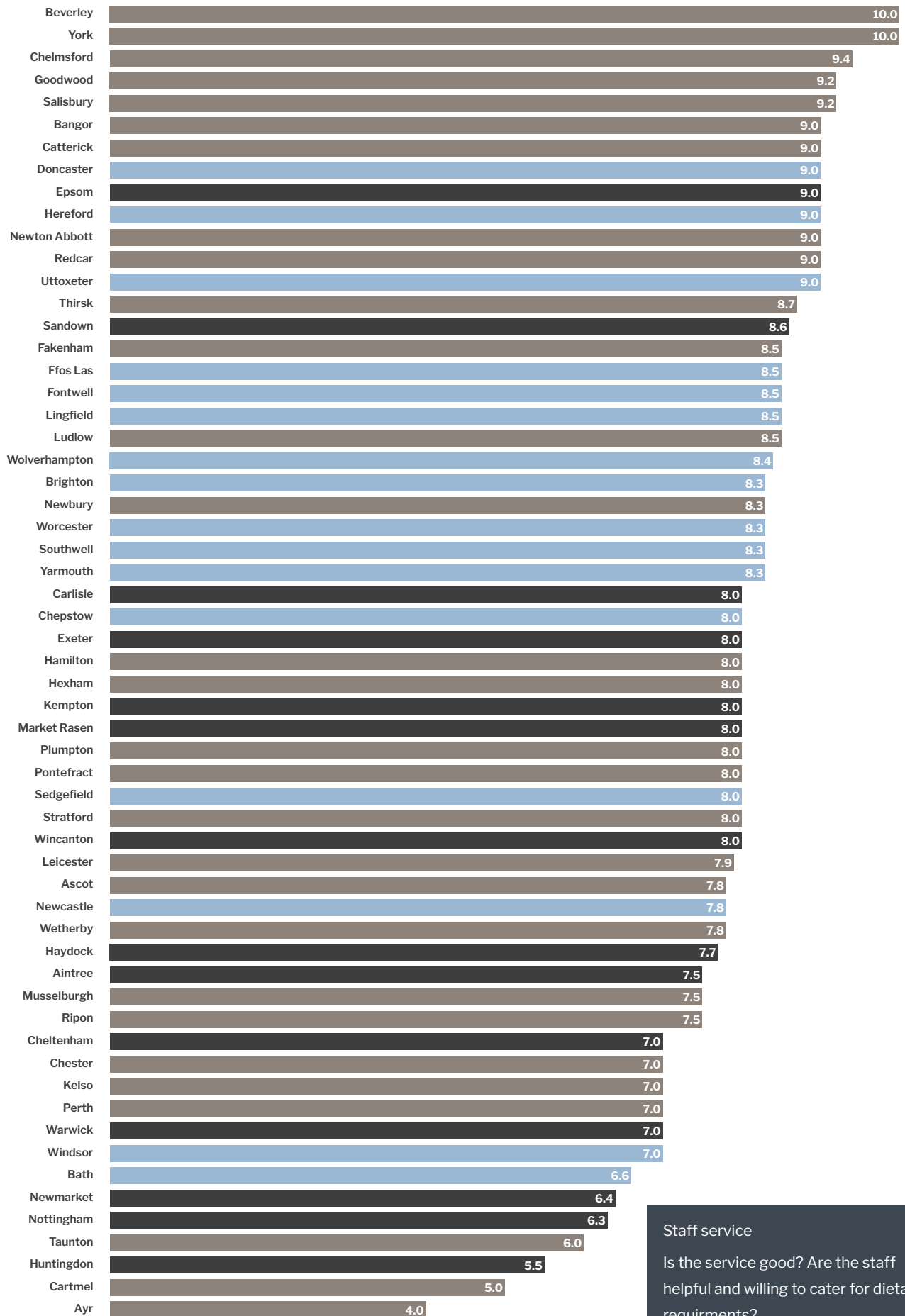
Cleanliness of the canteen.  
Is the canteen clean? Regularly cleared and cleaned tables? Clean service area?

# Canteen: Cost



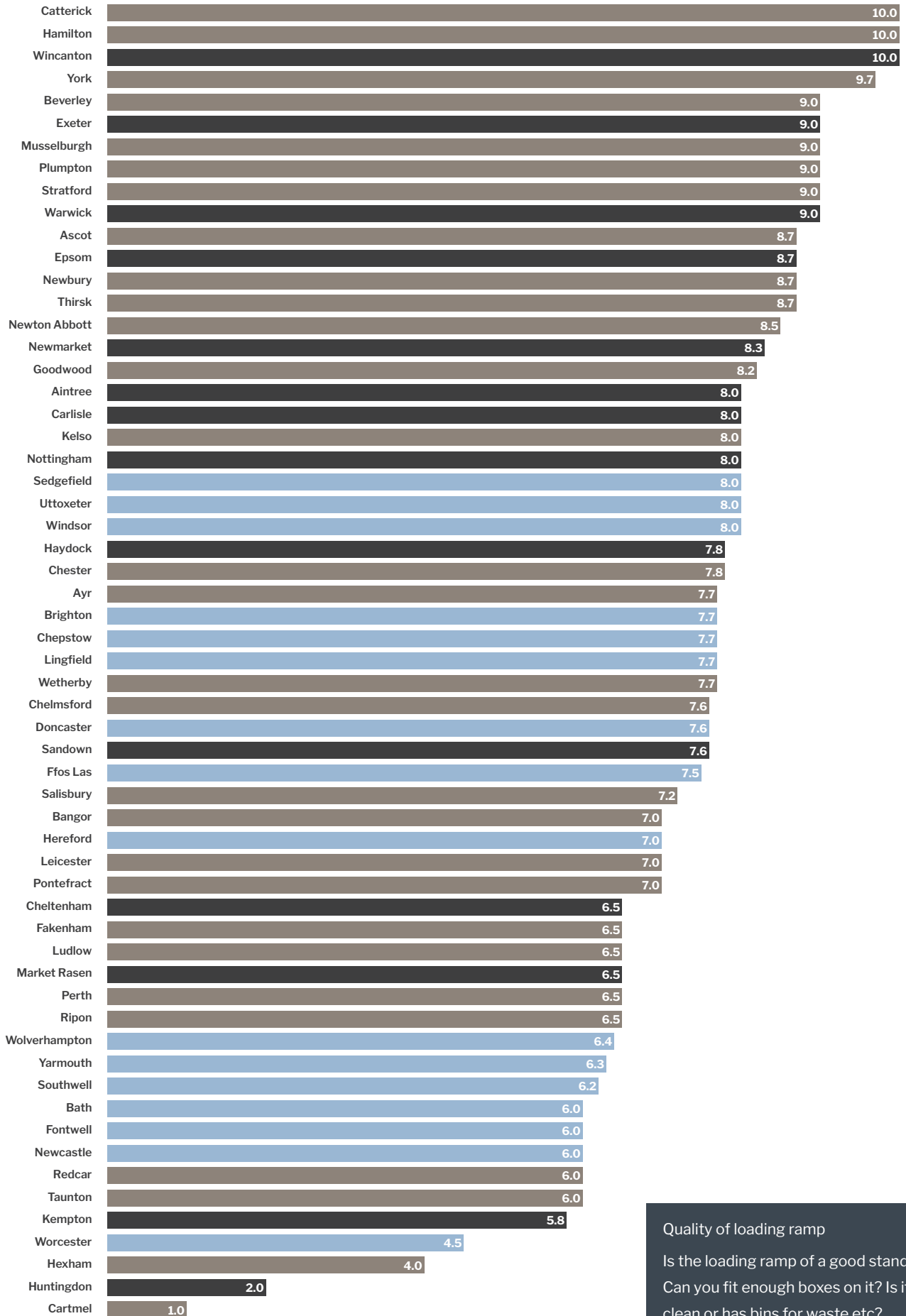
KEY ● JOCKEY CLUB ● ARENA RACING COMPANY ● INDEPENDENT

# Canteen: Service



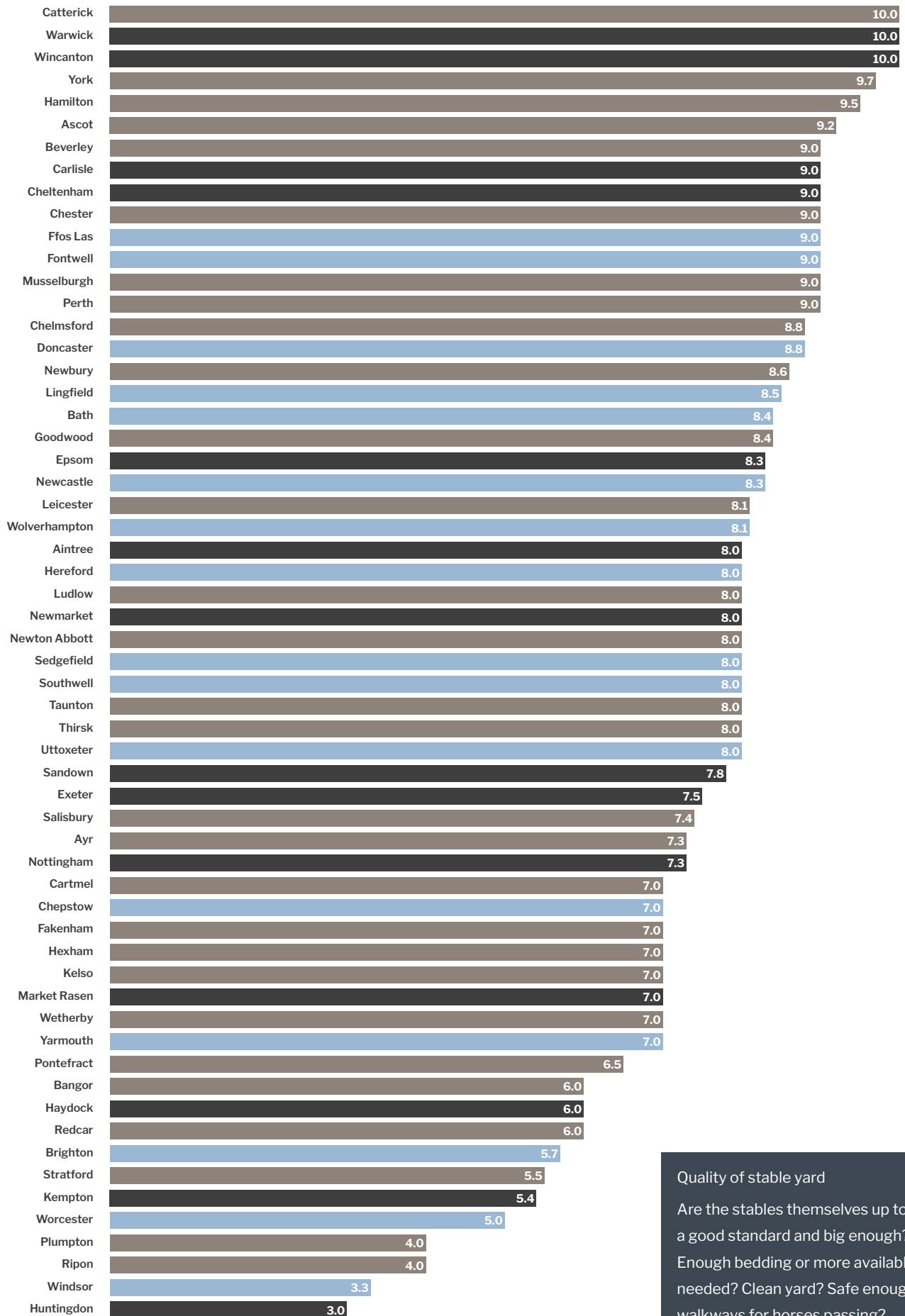
Staff service  
Is the service good? Are the staff helpful and willing to cater for dietary requirements?

# Stable Yard: Loading Ramp



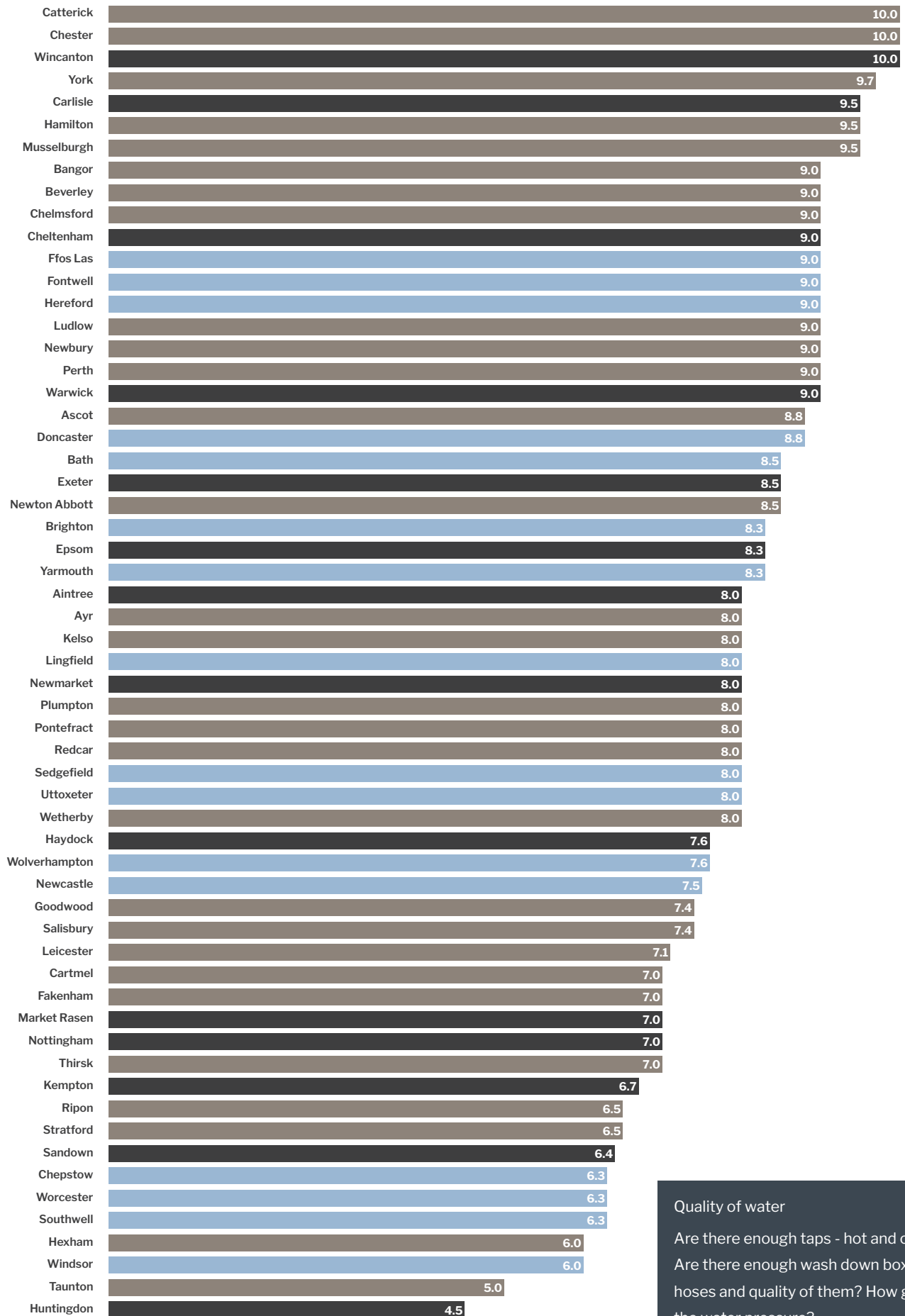
Quality of loading ramp  
 Is the loading ramp of a good standard?  
 Can you fit enough boxes on it? Is it kept clean or has bins for waste etc?

# Stable Yard: Quality



Quality of stable yard  
 Are the stables themselves up to a good standard and big enough?  
 Enough bedding or more available if needed? Clean yard? Safe enough walkways for horses passing?

# Stable Yard: Water



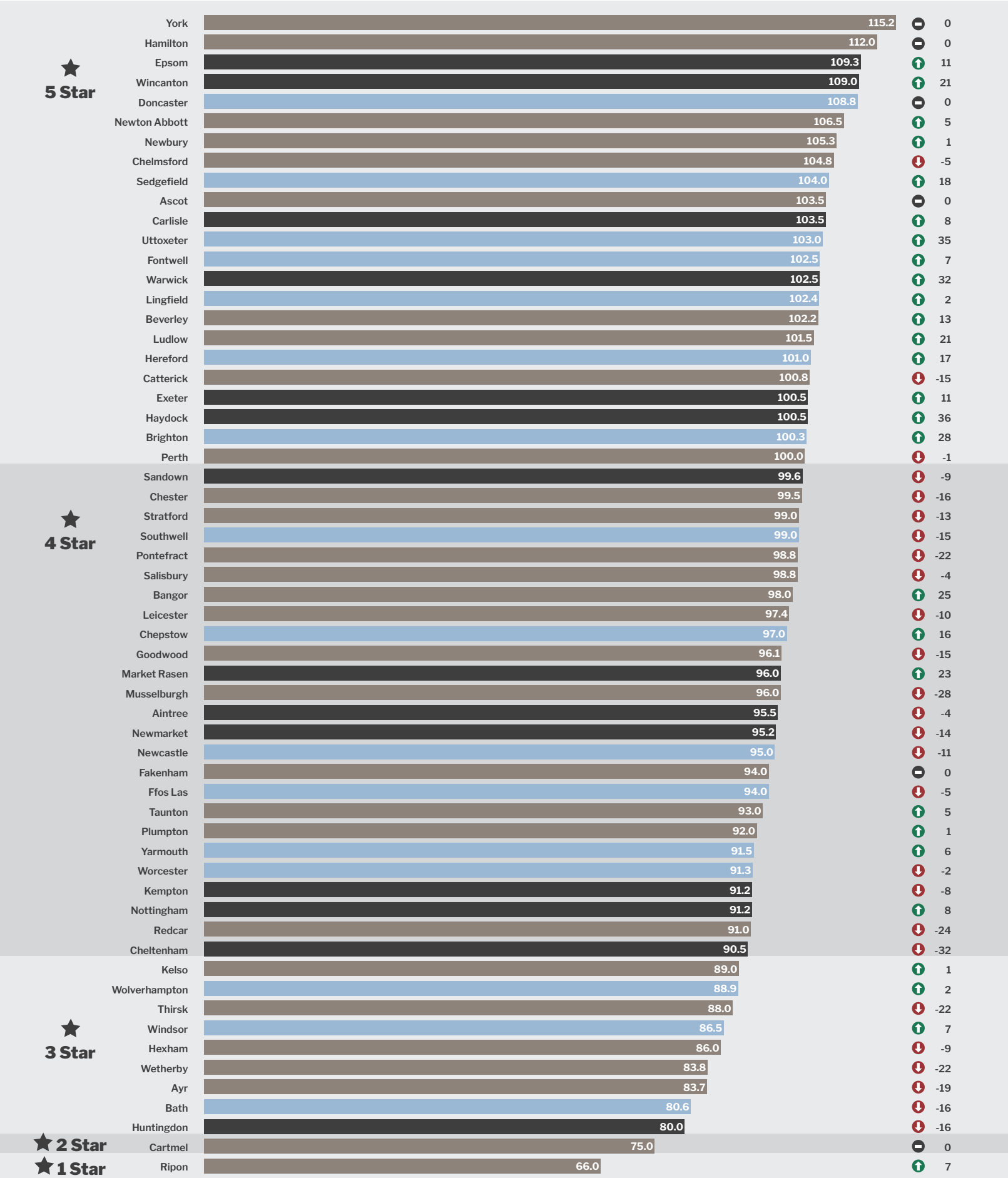
Quality of water  
 Are there enough taps - hot and cold?  
 Are there enough wash down boxes/  
 hoses and quality of them? How good is  
 the water pressure?



# Scores Overview

COURSE	OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION			DAY FACILITIES		CANTEEN				STABLE YARD			SCORES	
	Quality	Numbers	Cleanliness	Quality	Cleanliness	Quality	Cleanliness	Cost	Service	Loading	Quality	Water	TOTAL 2023	DIFF 2022
Aintree	6.0	8.0	10.0	7.5	7.5	7.0	8.0	10.0	7.5	8.0	8.0	8.0	95.5	1.0
Ascot	6.0	8.7	8.7	9.3	8.8	8.5	9.0	10.0	7.8	8.7	9.2	8.8	103.5	3.2
Ayr	10.0	10.0	10.0	4.3	5.0	3.0	4.3	10.0	4.0	7.7	7.3	8.0	83.7	-9.2
Bangor	5.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	7.0	9.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	7.0	6.0	9.0	98.0	14.1
Bath	6.0	10.0	6.7	4.2	3.6	6.0	4.6	10.0	6.6	6.0	8.4	8.5	80.6	-10.4
Beverley	9.5	10.0	10.0	9.0	8.3	8.3	10.0	0.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	102.2	6.7
Brighton	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	7.7	7.7	8.0	10.0	8.3	7.7	5.7	8.3	100.3	13.7
Carlisle	10.0	10.0	9.0	7.5	7.0	7.0	8.5	10.0	8.0	8.0	9.0	9.5	103.5	5.8
Cartmel	10.0	10.0	10.0	2.0	3.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	5.0	1.0	7.0	7.0	75.0	1.0
Catterick	9.0	10.0	9.0	8.5	7.0	9.3	9.0	0.0	9.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	100.8	-4.8
Chelmsford	10.0	10.0	10.0	5.6	7.2	8.6	8.6	10.0	9.4	7.6	8.8	9.0	104.8	-1.3
Cheltenham	7.0	6.0	9.0	7.5	7.5	5.0	7.0	10.0	7.0	6.5	9.0	9.0	90.5	-7.5
Chepstow	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.3	6.0	7.3	7.3	10.0	8.0	7.7	7.0	6.3	97.0	9.8
Chester	10.0	10.0	10.0	5.3	6.8	5.5	8.3	10.0	7.0	7.8	9.0	10.0	99.5	-3.5
Doncaster	10.0	10.0	10.0	8.4	8.8	8.6	8.8	10.0	9.0	7.6	8.8	8.8	108.8	3.7
Epsom	9.7	10.0	10.0	9.3	8.7	8.7	8.7	10.0	9.0	8.7	8.3	8.3	109.3	10.8
Exeter	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.5	7.5	6.5	7.0	10.0	8.0	9.0	7.5	8.5	100.5	5.5
Fakenham	5.5	10.0	10.0	5.0	8.0	7.5	9.0	10.0	8.5	6.5	7.0	7.0	94.0	2.0
Ffos Las	6.0	10.0	7.0	7.0	6.5	7.0	6.5	10.0	8.5	7.5	9.0	9.0	94.0	0.0
Fontwell	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	10.0	8.5	6.0	9.0	9.0	102.5	5.0
Goodwood	6.3	10.0	6.0	7.2	6.0	9.0	8.4	10.0	9.2	8.2	8.4	7.4	96.1	-1.5
Hamilton	10.0	10.0	10.0	9.5	9.0	8.0	8.5	10.0	8.0	10.0	9.5	9.5	112.0	2.0
Haydock	10.0	9.3	10.0	8.4	8.3	7.2	8.2	10.0	7.7	7.8	6.0	7.6	100.5	17.0
Hereford	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	7.0	7.0	8.0	10.0	9.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	101.0	7.7
Hexham	7.0	6.0	9.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	4.0	7.0	6.0	86.0	-3.0
Huntingdon	10.0	10.0	10.0	5.0	4.5	7.5	8.0	10.0	5.5	2.0	3.0	4.5	80.0	-10.1
Kelso	5.0	10.0	8.0	6.0	7.0	6.0	7.0	10.0	7.0	8.0	7.0	8.0	89.0	2.3
Kempton	8.0	10.0	8.5	7.2	7.4	6.7	7.6	10.0	8.0	5.8	5.4	6.7	91.2	-1.5
Leicester	8.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	7.6	6.7	8.0	10.0	7.9	7.0	8.1	7.1	97.4	-0.1
Lingfield	9.0	10.0	9.5	7.6	7.5	7.8	8.3	10.0	8.5	7.7	8.5	8.0	102.4	4.6
Ludlow	8.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	8.5	8.0	8.0	10.0	8.5	6.5	8.0	9.0	101.5	9.0
Market Rasen	7.0	9.0	9.0	6.5	8.5	8.5	9.0	10.0	8.0	6.5	7.0	7.0	96.0	20.3
Musselburgh	10.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	7.5	7.0	8.5	0.0	7.5	9.0	9.0	9.5	96.0	-9.0
Newbury	9.3	10.0	10.0	7.8	7.6	7.6	8.4	10.0	8.3	8.7	8.6	9.0	105.3	2.1
Newcastle	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.5	6.0	6.5	6.5	10.0	7.8	6.0	8.3	7.5	95.0	-1.0
Newmarket	5.5	10.0	9.0	6.4	7.8	8.0	7.8	10.0	6.4	8.3	8.0	8.0	95.2	-1.8
Newton Abbott	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	8.5	10.0	9.0	8.5	8.0	8.5	106.5	6.5
Nottingham	7.5	10.0	9.0	5.7	7.0	5.4	8.0	10.0	6.3	8.0	7.3	7.0	91.2	5.8
Perth	10.0	8.0	10.0	5.5	9.5	7.0	8.5	10.0	7.0	6.5	9.0	9.0	100.0	2.5
Plumpton	5.0	10.0	8.0	7.0	8.0	7.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	9.0	4.0	8.0	92.0	2.5
Pontefract	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	7.7	7.3	7.3	10.0	8.0	7.0	6.5	8.0	98.8	-6.2
Redcar	10.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	0.0	9.0	6.0	6.0	8.0	91.0	-6.0
Ripon	2.0	10.0	5.0	6.5	2.5	7.5	8.0	0.0	7.5	6.5	4.0	6.5	66.0	-19.5
Salisbury	7.0	10.0	8.5	7.0	8.3	8.8	8.0	10.0	9.2	7.2	7.4	7.4	98.8	2.3
Sandown	10.0	10.0	10.0	5.8	7.4	8.0	8.0	10.0	8.6	7.6	7.8	6.4	99.6	1.3
Sedgefield	10.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	104.0	8.0
Southwell	8.5	10.0	9.5	7.3	8.3	8.3	8.5	10.0	8.3	6.2	8.0	6.3	99.0	0.0
Stratford	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	7.0	8.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	9.0	5.5	6.5	99.0	0.2
Taunton	10.0	10.0	10.0	7.0	8.0	5.0	8.0	10.0	6.0	6.0	8.0	5.0	93.0	4.7
Thirsk	8.3	10.0	8.7	6.0	7.0	7.7	8.0	0.0	8.7	8.7	8.0	7.0	88.0	-7.5
Uttoxeter	10.0	10.0	10.0	5.0	8.0	9.0	8.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	103.0	15.0
Warwick	8.0	10.0	7.0	9.0	9.0	6.5	8.0	10.0	7.0	9.0	10.0	9.0	102.5	14.0
Wetherby	8.0	10.0	8.0	5.7	5.7	8.0	8.0	0.0	7.8	7.7	7.0	8.0	83.8	-10.8
Wincanton	8.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	9.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	8.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	109.0	12.5
Windsor	10.0	10.0	10.0	4.0	5.5	6.3	6.5	10.0	7.0	8.0	3.3	6.0	86.5	14.3
Wolverhampton	4.0	10.0	7.5	4.6	7.3	7.1	7.9	10.0	8.4	6.4	8.1	7.6	88.9	3.4
Worcester	10.0	10.0	10.0	6.0	6.5	6.7	8.0	10.0	8.3	4.5	5.0	6.3	91.3	1.3
Yarmouth	6.0	10.0	8.5	5.0	7.3	7.3	7.8	10.0	8.3	6.3	7.0	8.3	91.5	4.8
York	9.5	10.0	10.0	8.7	8.3	10.0	9.7	10.0	10.0	9.7	9.7	9.7	115.2	-3.2

# Overall Scores & Star Rating



# Most Improved 2022 – 2023

**1st** Market Rasen, improved by 20.3 points

**2nd** Haydock, improved by 17.0 points

**3rd** Uttoxeter, improved by 15.0 points

In each individual area, the most improved were

Area	Category	Course	Improved Points
Overnight Accommodation	Quality	Windsor	+4.0 to 10.0
	Numbers	Newmarket	+4.0 to 10.0
	Cleanliness	Aintree	+3.0 to 10.0

Day Facilities	Quality	Epsom	+2.8 to 9.3
	Cleanliness	Uttoxeter Warwick	+3.75 to 8.0 +3.75 to 9.0

Canteen	Quality	Epsom	+4.2 to 8.7
	Cleanliness	Warwick	+2.2 to 8.0
	Cost	N/A	N/A
	Service	Haydock	+3.3 to 7.7

Stable Yard	Loading Ramp	Market Rasen	+5.5 to 6.5
		Newton Abbot	+5.5 to 8.5
	Quality	Beverley	+2.5 to 9.0
	Water	Bangor	+3.7 to 9.0

# Conclusion

**The ratings we have allocated racecourses are the culmination of the individual work carried out by the RCIs throughout the year. However, the final results are only compiled once every Racecourse Inspector has been to our final group meeting towards the end of the year.**

**This year the entire RCI team met at York racecourse and spent a full day going through every racecourse score and every single heading. It is a thorough bit of work with a lot of debate and a shared passion to make improvements at racecourses for all of our members.**

**We were also delighted to be joined on the day by Roderick Duncan, Clerk of the Course at Huntingdon and Rebecca Davies from Arena Racing Company, who has also been working closely with us this past year.**

The consistent theme throughout our NARS Racecourse ratings since 2018 has been an overall improvement in the facilities for both staff and our horses. There have been significant changes in some racecourse scores with the two particular headings dominating the differing scores being overnight accommodation and meals in the canteens. Many racecourses have made a move to either using hotels for overnight stays or providing onsite single en-suite accommodation, as they should.

The other area which has seen scores move significantly is the fact the NARS Executive Committee decided to allocate any racecourse which did not provide a meal free of charge a zero under the heading Cost. There are only seven racecourses that still refuse to provide a meal free of charge, they are Beverley, Catterick, Redcar, Ripon, Thirsk, Wetherby and Musselburgh. The first six named racecourses refuse to follow the example of the other 52 racecourses, but it must be noted that the canteen at Musselburgh is run by the local council, much to the detriment of the racecourse in general as well as the canteen.

During 2024 we will review our scoring matrix and engage with racecourses that are ambitious and want to improve.

Our thanks goes to the Clerks of the Courses and Racecourse Management teams who have been very helpful and accommodating throughout the year and we look forward to working with them all again in 2024.

**George McGrath, NAORS Chief Executive**





**nars**

National Association of Racing Staff