



Offering Livery

The information below is a guide for people looking rent out spaces for grazing or livery.

You may have a spare space for grazing in your field, a few spare boxes you want to rent out to earn some extra money or have taken over a yard to specifically offer livery services.

In any case the information below will help you with suitable candidates for any vacancies and understand the responsibilities of all involved.

Making the Decision

- **Why Offer Livery** You may have some extra grazing in your field or a whole yard to rent out. You need to decide if this is going to be run as a fully-fledged livery business or just on a casual basis. You will be opening yourself to a whole new world of responsibility for other people's horses. Anyone accepting money in return for the provision of land and stabling, and especially those offering additional livery services, are running a business, and should run it as such.

The implications for running a livery yard as a business are complicated- you must ensure that full financial records are kept, earnings declared and adequate insurances taken out to cover the horses, people and the property.

- **What Livery** You also need to consider the implications of the type of livery you want to take on. Full livery will result in more income but do you have the time to care for a yard full of horses or do you have the finances to employ somebody, such as a yard manager, to do it for you. Similarly you can offer DIY but do you want all and sundry visiting the yard throughout the day. Below are the most common types of livery offered and the types of income you could expect to achieve:

Grass Livery: £15 – £30 per week

With grass livery you are responsible for the day to day care and exercise of the horse. Often this livery arrangement is on a rental only basis for the grazing. The cost and responsibility for any other services, hay, feed etc lies with the horse owner. The horses live out 24/7 and you do not have access to a stable, electric or other facilities as you may do at a stabled yard.

DIY Livery: £20 - £50 per week

With DIY (Do-It-Yourself) livery the owner is responsible for the day to day full care and exercise of the horse. Often this livery arrangement is on a rental only basis for stabling and grazing. The cost and responsibility for any other services, hay, feed etc lies with the horse owner. Often you will provide access to ridden facilities such as a sand school and jumps inclusive within the livery package but facilities differ from yard to yard.

You do get yards offering 'assisted' DIY livery whereby the main livery is on the basis as described above but the yard offers the services of a yard manager or groom who is able to undertake services upon request- such as mucking out, turning out, exercise- and at an additional cost.

Part Livery: £50 - £150 per week

With part livery the yard is responsible for basic care of the horse- turning out, mucking out, watering, hay and feeding but this can vary yard to yard. The horse owner is responsible for exercise of the horse and cost and responsibility for any other services, hay, feed etc although this can also vary.

Full Livery: £80 - £250 per week

With full livery the yard is responsible for all day to day care of the horse. Many give the option of full livery with or without exercise and you usually look at considerably higher charges to include exercise, particularly for competition horses or hunters. Usually feed, hay and bedding are included within the cost of the livery. Occasionally other services may be included as well such as wormers, farriery, clipping and so on.

Working Livery: £30 - £150 per week

With working livery the horse is stables at a riding school which uses the horse for an agreed amount of hours per week for their clients. Usually the yard is responsible for all services as described in full livery and the horse owner's accessibility to ride the horse on non-working days will vary between yards.

- **How Much** You need to decide a set price for your livery packages and any associated services which you may wish to offer. Livery costs can vary depending upon facilities, location and services offered so have a look at what other yards in your area are choosing for an informed decision as to what you will charge. The best way is to properly calculate your livery outgoings and calculate this compared to what you need to earn from each stable to cover costs.

Advertising the Yard

- **Where to Advertise** A good place to start is to let your local horsey friends, local riding clubs or contacts know that you will be offering livery and have vacancies. You could also place an advert in local saddlers or feed shops. Personal recommendations are always a good method of finding good liveries, particularly if they are known personally to you or an associate.

You could list on local and national directories but do keep an advertising budget in mind as often livery vacancies come from local people and are usually snapped up fast if the livery yard is of any credibility. However, especially if you'd like the opportunity to create a waiting list for future spaces (thus allowing you to choose the most suitable new liveries), or offer additional services such as facility hire or training, then year round advertising on prominent sites such as LiveryList can be hugely beneficial for minimal outlay.

You could also set up a website giving details of the yard. Many web providers now offer free and simple to use website packages which can have the website address added to any adverts you may place. Social media pages are very useful as well as being free. This can allow you to promote the 'real time' benefits of your yard and keep potential liveries, as well as existing liveries, up to date.

- **Speak to Potential Liveries** Be forthcoming in contacting any enquiries about the yard as soon as possible. Ask them about their horse and their experience to see if you think they would suit the yard. Some questions you could ask may be:
 - How long has the owner had the horse?
 - What age, size and breed is the horse?
 - What do they use the horse for- hacking, breeding, competing?
 - How well does the horse settle into a new yard and does it gel well with new herds?
 - Does the horse have any vices, behavioural issues or bad habits?
 - Does the owner require additional services such as holiday cover or exercise?

- Are they able to offer references?
- Do they have to give notice at their current yard?
- **Viewing the Yard** Encourage anybody who seems that they may be suitable to come and meet you and to view the yard. However, do bear in mind that every time a stranger enters the yard you are compromising your security so try to ensure only people genuinely interested visit the yard.
- **Answer Questions** Be prepared to answer a lot of questions from any potential liveryes. They will want to know about facilities, routine, responsibilities and much more so make sure you have any necessary information to hand. It is the responsibility of both parties to ensure that it is a suitable yard for both the horse and the owner. The more information you can gain about each other on first meeting can only be beneficial to decide if they are a right fit for the yard.
- **Choosing the Right Liveryes** Ensure that you do not rush into agreeing someone can have a livery space if you do not feel that they would fit in well at the yard. As well as considering whether the horse would fit in, you also need to consider if the horse owner would fit in with other personalities at the yard. Ensure that you feel the yard is the most suitable place for the horse and its owner.

You will often find that you will have to compromise to find the perfect livery- it is unlikely that anyone will meet all of your requirements. There are always people looking for livery so do not rush into filling a vacancy just because the person can move immediately or want more expensive services- if they do not fit in you will only end up with an empty box again in the long run.

What You Can Offer

- **Practicality of the Yard** Ensure that the yard is a safe and inviting place for people to want to keep their horse. The yard should be well managed and all parties should know what their individual responsibilities are. These are some areas you may want to consider:
 - Is there a yard manager or groom on site and what is their experience?
 - Is there a safe hard standing area to tie up for grooming, shoeing, hosing off and so on?
 - Is there access to water and electricity on site and how close is this to the stables?
 - What are your herd sizes, do they get on well and mixed or separated?
 - What is the state of the grazing, how do you rotate this and are there any winter restrictions?
 - What is your usual or proposed daily routine, is this manageable for liveryes as well?
 - Are there alternatives if the horses are unable to go out such as a horse walker or turnout in the sand school?
 - What facilities are you including in the costs- sand school, jumps XC course and do you have specific rules with regards to these or restrictions on availability?
 - Do you have a biosecurity procedure, or require isolation for new liveryes?
 - What is the hacking like, are the roads safe and how far to access off-road riding?
 - Is there a worming routine and what worming would any horse require should they move to the yard?
 - What services are included within the livery package and what are the exact responsibilities of the horse owner?
 - Are you happy for external instructors to come in and instruct liveryes at the yard?
 - What security precautions do you have in place regarding the yard, tackroom and CCTV?
 - Can you offer adequate and secure storage for feed, bedding and tack?
 - Will you provide hay, feed or bedding on site or do liveryes need to arrange this independently?
 - Do you have a yard farrier or vet and what are the arrangements for this?
 - Do you have adequate insurance (at least 3rd party) to cover all horses and visitors to the yard?

- Are there any particular rules you want to have at the yard with regards to use of facilities, access or any restrictions?
- **Your Responsibilities** As the yard owner the ultimate responsibility for the welfare of the horse lies with you. It is your responsibility to ensure that the yard is well maintained and a safe environment at all times and that at least minimum requirements are met with regards to accommodation and supervision of the horse. This responsibility increases significantly if you offer part and full livery.

Making Arrangements

- **Taking a Deposit** Once you have verbally agreed with a horse owner that they would like to fill a vacancy it is advised to take a deposit in order to secure the place until the horse can be issued a receipt for any deposit that may be paid. Don't forget that the horse owner may need to give notice at your current yard and under some circumstances it may be acceptable for you to request they pay livery charges for the box whilst empty if this is more than a couple of weeks but it is important to clarify this upon taking the initial deposit.
- **Arrival of the Horse** Arrange a mutually convenient time for you and the horse owner when the horse can be moved to the yard. Make sure you are on the yard to meet and greet the new livery and their horse. If there are any biosecurity protocols to be met ensure these are explained thoroughly. You should also be present the first time that the horse is turned out and observe it with the new herd.
- **Horse Details** Make sure that upon arrival the horse owner gives you information about themselves and the horse, including their contract, passport and copies of any other relevant documentation. Make sure that information is given about the horse's routine, worming, feeds and so on. Make sure all equipment, feed bowls, feed bins and so on are labelled for easy identification. Ensure that you are given the horse owner's emergency details for themselves, their next of kin, and your preferred vet.
- **Make an Agreement** Ensure that you make a livery agreement with all livers. This should specify who is responsible for what aspects of the yard and care of the horse and should include details of any financial agreements. Ideally this should be signed on their day of arrival, and at the very latest 7 days after arrival. A signed copy of the agreement should be retained by both parties.
- **Observe** Give the horse time to settle in and make sure that it is closely observed for the first few days. Ensure the livery feels welcomed and is shown around the yard and introduced to other liveries. Some horses may settle in a day, others may take a few weeks so give it time for your horse to find his feet in its new herd. If you have any concerns or queries raise these as soon as possible with the horse owner.

IMPORTANT

This information as provided above is intended to provide guidance and areas for consideration for those intending to enter into such arrangements. Anyone proposing to enter into such a written agreement should take consideration and their own legal advice as to their particular circumstances.