

Finding a Yard CHECKLIST

Due to the lack of regulation for those offering livery services, we provide the below checklist which helps you undertake the right research for potential yards in terms of asking questions relating to their experience and levels of care, welfare, and maintenance on the yard, as well as questions that will help determine if their yard offers the right environment and services for your needs, as well as meeting expected industry best practice.

This list is not exhaustive, and you should consider any aspects of your equine's health or your specific needs as an owner that may need discussion in addition to the points below.

YARD NAME:

Administration:

- Does the Yard hold Professional Liability Insurance?
(You should be able to see a copy of their insurance, ideally including care, custody and control and claim limitations more than the value of your horse)
- Does the Yard retain your Horse Passport?
(This is a legal requirement from DEFRA for all livery services other than pure DIY for the Horse Passport to remain on the premises)
- What documentation does the Yard require from you?
(Such as horse and owner details, next of kin details, end of life options, copies of vaccinations and insurance...)
- Does the Yard provide written livery contracts?
(If so, request to see a copy, when do they need this returned by, what happens if terms are broken...)
- What is the notice period for either party to terminate the contract?
(Standard notice period and if they have any shorter notice periods i.e. for gross misconduct, how notice is given, final billing...)
- Does the Yard require all horses on site to be insured?
- Does the Yard require a Security Deposit?
- What are their Payment Terms?
(Is there a late payment fee, how are any extras invoiced, when are payments due by...)
- Do they have restrictions on external services?
(Such as trainers, farriers, freelance grooms, and must you show proof of the professional insurances of such service providers...)
- How do you need to organise external service providers?
(Do you need to fit in certain times or days, or give advance notice, does the Yard arrange...)
- Does the Yard have any restrictions on visitors?
(Such as children, dogs, friends or family and do you need to let the Yard know if someone will be visiting ...)
- Can anyone else care for or ride your horse -and use the facilities- in your absence?
(Such as other liveries, sharers, loaners or those being paid to do so external to the yard such as freelance grooms...)

The Livery Package:

- What exactly is included in the livery packages offered?
(To ensure both parties are clear on responsibilities and expectations...)
- Are there any additional charges that may be implemented? Do they have a price list?
(Such as assisted services, late payment fees, electricity meters for arenas or solariums, hay supply for bad weather...)
- Are you obligated to use the yard for services or provisions?
(Such as hay or bedding, the provision of assisted services such as holiday cover or clipping or using a specific yard farrier...)
- If there is "Ad-Lib" forage or bedding included, are there any restrictions on the usage?
- If feed is included, is it a generic feed or tailored to each horses' dietary requirements?
(Who supplies or decides on the feed type/ brands and the quantities given, what about supplements...)
- How do you arrange the order of feed, hay, bedding etc?
(If the yard provides, or this is bulk ordered in, or storage if you order independently...)
- Do you have a dedicated paddock to use, or are herds and paddock designation down to the Yard?
- Will the times you are likely to want to attend to or ride your horse fit with the 'normal' Yard routine?
- What are the arrangements over holiday periods?
(Such as your own holidays or absences, Christmas and New Year holiday or bank holidays)
- What happens if you leave your stable vacant for a period of time?
(Such as selling or death of horse, students, travelling for events, moving to alternative grazing, how is the stable held, what monies are charged ...)

Experience and Qualifications:

- What experience does the Yard Owner have? How long have they been running the yard?
- Does the Yard Owner or their staff hold any professional qualifications or training?
(Such as BHS or equestrian management qualifications, human or equine first aid, safeguarding, or other related training...)
- Are all the staff insured appropriately to be carrying out the care and handling of your horse?
(Including any freelance staff, must hold Care, Custody and Control...)
- Can the Yard provide you with professional references if required?

Equine Care and Welfare:

- Do all horses on the yard look relaxed, happy and healthy?
- How does the Yard introduce new horses to the yard?
(Such as isolation paddocks, introducing into herd...)
- Does the Yard have a Biosecurity Policy or Procedures?
(Such as systematic testing or temperature checking of new arrivals or those returning from events, isolation ...)
- Is there a requirement for all horses to be Vaccinated?
- Does the Yard have a Worming Policy or Procedures?
(Such as systematic worming or worm counts, how is this arranged...)

- What happens with Poo-picking or filling of field troughs?
(Whose responsibility is this, how is it done...)
- Is there a certain time that horses must be attended to AM or PM?
(What happens if you're late, is the yard fed as a whole each morning, when must they be turned out by...)
- Are there any restrictions on grazing? How does the yard cope with grass shortages or bad weather?
- Are horses allowed to be turned out with head collars/ muzzles??
- What is the Yard stance on emergency vet care, end of life or welfare issues?
(This should be detailed in their livery contract- such as the ability to contact your vet or authorise euthanasia in an emergency, or intervene if they have welfare concerns...)
- Does the owner or staff live on site? What are their security considerations?
(Is there anyone on site, is there CCTV, how are stables, gates and tack room secured if left overnight ...)
- Are there late-night checks on the Yard?
- Does the yard offer, or are you permitted to use, stable cameras?
(Is there a GDPR policy, if you supply cameras what are the rules, how can these be powered...)
- Are there any environmental factors that may affect your horse?
(Such as the yard being prone to flooding, other animals kept at the Yard, crow scarers, local shoots etc)
- What problems may arise on the yard if it is bad weather- very muddy or frozen?
(Such as restricted turnout, difficulty to access, lack of water supply due to frozen pipes...)
- Does the Yard have a procedure in place in the event of fire or another emergency?
(Such as fire extinguishers, human and equine first aid kits, emergency numbers, emergency details for horses/ owners...)

Facilities and Management:

- Does the Yard seem in good order- neat, tidy, and well-maintained?
(Considering it is a working area but should be reasonably tidy, and well maintained. No H&S concerns or potential risks or hazards)
- How are tack or belongings stored?
(Is this shared or individual, does it meet your insurance requirements, are there limitations on equipment you can keep on the yard...)
- Who undertakes the maintenance of the paddocks and facilities?
- If you or your horse cause damage whose responsibility is this to remedy?
(Do you or the yard repair, do they subcontract the repairs, are there any charges, what are the sanctions ...)
- Are there any restrictions on Yard access or facility use?
(Such as opening/ closing hours for the yard, time of permitted use, weather related facility restrictions, closures for events or other times when facilities may not be available...)
- Are there any specific rules on the use of exercise facilities?
(Such as no lunging or free schooling, arena to be raked, jumps or equipment to be put away after use, possibility for sole use ie for lessons, time limits for horse walkers...)
- Are there any other restrictions or rules on the yard facilities?
(Such as where horses can be fed/ bathed/ tied, where rugs or headcollars can be left, cleaning responsibilities...)
- What is the local hacking like?
(How close are off road routes, is there any private tracks available, how busy the surrounding lanes are...)

- Are you able to keep your lorry/ trailer on the yard?
(Must it hold Tax/ MOT, are there access restrictions, is there a charge for this...)
- Are you expected to provide your own mucking out tools and equipment or is this provided by the yard?
(Such as forks, barrows, feed bowls, haynets...)
- What are the rules or any restrictions for the use of Electric or water?
(Such as coin meters for facilities, use of sockets for clipping, phone charging etc, hay soakers or steamers, ability to hose legs off or bathe horses...)

Important Point to Mention About Your Needs

- Does your horse have any vices or unfavourable behaviours the Yard would need to be aware of?
(Such as handling problems, behavioural issues under saddle, spooking or unpredictable behaviour...)
- Does your horse respect fencing and field boundaries?
(Considering all fencing types- electric tape or wire, temporary fencing, post and rail, fence chewing or pushing, gate crowding...)
- Does your horse have any specific dietary requirements for food or forage, or require specific bedding?
(Such as specific feed types, allergies, prone to laminitis, needs restricted grazing, needs hay or feed soaked...)
- Does your horse have historic settling issues when arriving on a new yard?
- Is there anything about your routine that may not work if yard access is restricted?
(Considering working hours, frequency of attending events or off site activities...)
- Is there anything about your horse's 'normal' routine that may cause an issue?
(Such as feed times, needing to be turned out by a certain time, cannot be left alone in the paddock...)

Use this space to write any other notes of importance that may need to be raised during a yard viewing:

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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.