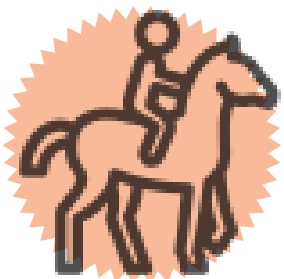


back to basics #1

Offering Livery

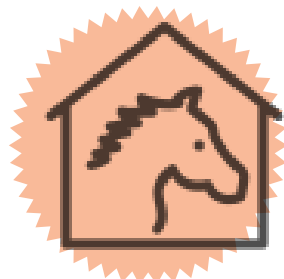
If you're looking to open a yard, or are restructuring your existing yard, these are the key considerations to ensure you set off on the right foot.



Decide on your Packages

Knowing what you want to offer

It's important to try to find a unique selling point (USP) for your yard which will help you stand out. Perhaps you have facilities or skills, or can provide a type of livery package, not already available in your area. Deciding what type of yard you want to run, the rules you want to have, and the services, inclusions and facilities you will provide will determine the cost and the type of clients you appeal to. It will also determine the amount of staffing that may be required, and your associated costs such as for consumables or equipment.



Decide an Identity

Making your business your own

Giving your yard a name will help people find and identify you, but try to find something that is not too common! You can also consider having a brand colour and even a logo too. You can use this across your marketing and as an identity for your yard.



Get Your Paperwork in Order

Be organised from day one

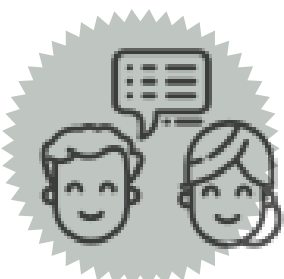
Before advertising, you should have all of your yard paperwork ready to go. This includes livery contracts, client and horse details forms, checklists for information required from clients, health and safety policy, emergency plans and anything else recommended for the type of livery service you intend to offer.



Basic Marketing

Letting people know what you offer

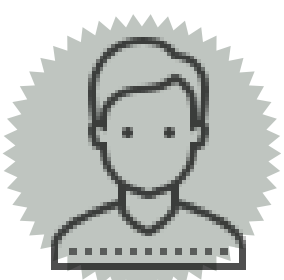
A simple website or social media pages can be a cost-effective way to promote your yard, services and facilities. Make sure they are updated regularly. You can also add your yard to online directories such as LiveryList, and on local directories. Make sure you include plenty of details about the yard, what you offer, and your contact details.



Finding New Clients

Only accept those most suitable

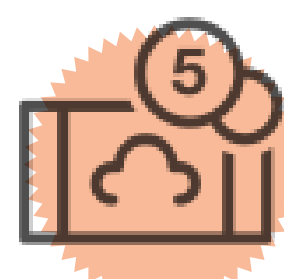
Whilst you want to fill stables, it's important to find horses and owners who suit the yard and what you offer. Be honest and ask plenty of questions to potential liveries when they enquire, explain in detail about the yard and what you offer- especially if you have any specific rules or restrictions, as finding the right clients can reduce the turnover of horses on the yard. Find out as much as possible about potential clients and their horses, and if you don't think they are right, then say no!



Decide on Your Client Type

Different packages, different clients

The level of service provided will determine how much interaction you have with clients and their horses. DIY for example will be minimal, but full livery you are responsible for day-to-day care and will see owners on the yard less. You will also find that the type of horse will determine the yard requirements. Retirement livery, for example, will not require any riding facilities but if aiming for competition riders then they will expect facilities to permit them to train and exercise their horse or pony.



Work Out Costings

To cover what you intend to provide

From day one you should have your prices worked out correctly. Whilst it's good to have an idea of what's charged locally, do not use this as the basis for your pricing! Your prices should relate to your running costs, or anticipated running costs, for the yard and the services provided- including any labour and consumables- and should be reviewed regularly. Make sure you have a suitable way of recording and invoicing each month. Taking a security deposit for new clients can also be beneficial to protect against damages or losses.