

back to basics #4

Livery Contracts

Whether you're new to yard ownership, or simply updating what you offer, Livery Contracts are a vital step in avoiding issues, and clarifying the responsibilities and expectations of a yard and its clients.



What is Included, and What Does it Cost

The most important aspects of your agreement

First and foremost you need to define the service that is being provided, what is included and what the fee is for this. This should be the absolute basic of any livery contract or business agreement. There are [livery contract templates](#) available that can help you understand points to include.



Payment Terms

When and how it is due, and provisions for late or missing payments

Make sure you include clear details of when payments should be made and how (bank transfer, standing order etc), including any late payment fees or processes for unpaid monies.



Client Details

Having the details you need for your livery clients

Alongside a livery contract, it's ideal to have other [supporting documents](#). It is advisable to have a client and horse details form, and to request proof of ID, address and insurance. It is also a legal requirement for any more than basic yards DIY to hold the [Horse Passport](#).



Yard Rules and Expectations

Making them clear from day one is just better business

It is important to cover any 'contractual' rules, responsibilities or expectations in your [livery contract](#). Such as attending to the horse, inclusions with the package, fair usage policies or insurance expectations. Clients formally acknowledge and accept these rules by signing the contract. You can also consider issuing a [Yard Handbook](#) for rules and information that is likely to change frequently.



Equine Welfare

Keeping your owners on track

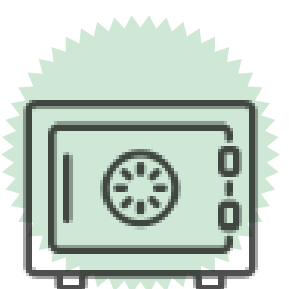
[Welfare expectations](#) should be an important part of your contract. Expectations for the care of equines on the yard, and the right to intervene if you have concerns are not unusual. You have a responsibility for their welfare too.



Ending a Contract

Clarity for termination of the agreement

The conditions of notice should be clear in contracts. This should include the period of notice required, with 30-days usually being acceptable, and specific clauses for shorter notice periods such as for gross misconduct. Notice should be given in writing by either party.



Security Deposits

Peace of mind against financial shortfalls and damage

Refundable security deposits should be taken at the start of livery contracts and should equate to at least one month's livery. This should be noted in the contract or receipted separately. Deposits can be used to discourage short notice periods, or to cover any damage or losses incurred. If there are no issues, the deposit is returned 7 days after the termination of contract.



Keeping it Correct and Current

Proper contracts and regular updates to avoid issues

When drawing up your contract, make sure the content applies to your situation, especially if using an off-the-peg template, and ideally get it checked over by a solicitor to avoid any future issues. Make sure you review your livery contracts regularly. Bi-annually is ideal. Any changes to contracts, including changes to terms or costs, should be provided with the same notice as the notice period of termination.