EMPLOYER GUIDE

Hiring An Equine Apprentice

A Practical Employer's Guide

Grow Talent. Build Capability. Support Horse Welfare.



In partnership with Livery List

LIVERY LIST YARD OWNER HUB

LIVERY LIST DIRECTORY

Sheldrake Training

A **Concise Guide For Yards And Equine Businesses In England**

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What Is An Equine Apprenticeship?

A Paid Role With Structured Learning On The Job

An apprenticeship combines a real, paid job with structured training and assessment. The Level 2 Equine Groom apprenticeship develops practical horse-care and safe-yard skills.

What Can It Include?

Options can include riding, non-riding, racing, breeding or driving. Training typically lasts 12 months, followed by an assessment period, subject to the current standard.

Could It Work For Your Yard?

- There is a genuine role with useful, varied duties.
- An experienced person can supervise day to day.
- Training time is paid and protected.
- You can review progress regularly with a provider.

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Plan The Role And Budget

Make The Job, Support And Costs Clear Before Recruiting

Define The Role

- Set out daily duties: feeding, grooming, mucking out and horse checks.
- State whether riding is required and what experience is essential.
- Confirm hours, weekends, early starts, location, transport and accommodation. Note that you may offer yard-specific accommodation at reasonable and affordable rates.
- Name the supervisor and the skills the apprentice will learn.

Budget For The Whole Employment

Plan for wages, holiday pay, supervision, equipment, insurance and paid training time.

Apprentices must receive at least the applicable minimum wage, including training time. Check the current rate for age and apprenticeship stage before offering the role.

Funding may contribute to eligible training and assessment costs, but does not replace wages or employment costs. Confirm eligibility, funding and any employer contribution with the training provider.

04

Recruit And Prepare Safely

A Simple Route From Provider Choice To A Confident First Day

1

Choose A Training Provider

Confirm it can deliver the right equine option.Shedlrake Training is a reliable option.

2

Advertise Clearly

List duties, location, hours, pay, training and how to apply.

3

Select Fairly

Look for reliability, willingness to learn, communication and horse-welfare awareness. Use a supervised practical assessment where appropriate.

4

Prepare The Start

Complete the apprenticeship agreement and training plan before day one.

Induction Essentials

- Safe horse handling and yard routines
- PPE, feed and equipment safety
- Emergency contacts and incident reporting
- When to stop and ask for help

Supervision should reflect age, experience and task risk, with extra support for under-18s.

05

Employer FAQ

Evidence-Led Answers To The Questions Employers Ask First

Who Can Become An Apprentice?

Generally someone aged 16 or over who is not in full-time education and works in a relevant role; existing employees may also qualify. Confirm individual eligibility with the provider.

Do They Need Previous Horse Experience?

Not always. Be clear about essential skills and assess potential, reliability and willingness to learn; agree the starting point with the provider.

How Much Do I Pay?

At least the applicable minimum wage for the apprentice's age and stage, including training time. Check current rates before offering the role.

Does An Equine Apprentice Have To Ride?

No. The Equine Groom standard includes a non-riding option as well as specialist options.

Can They Work Part-Time?

The minimum working commitment is 16 hours per week. However, apprentices working fewer than 30 hours per week will generally require additional support, and the apprenticeship is likely to take longer to complete.

How Much Supervision Is Needed?

All apprentices benefit from guidance and support as they develop their skills. Level 2 apprentices will need closer supervision and should not be left working on the yard alone. Level 3 apprentices will generally have greater experience and confidence, allowing them to take on more responsibility and work more independently. The aim is to develop capable, confident team members who become increasingly valuable to your business.

What If They Struggle?

Raise concerns early with the apprentice and provider; review supervision, training and reasonable adjustments.

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More FAQ And Ready-To-Hire Checklist

Keep The Next Steps Practical, Safe And Documented

How Is It Assessed?

The current Level 2 Equine Groom assessment includes an observation with questions and a professional discussion supported by a portfolio; the provider will confirm the applicable requirements.

Can They Do Every Yard Task Straight Away?

No. Apprentices are learning and developing their skills, so they will need guidance, supervision and support, particularly at Level 2. As their confidence and experience grow, they will take on more responsibility and contribute increasingly to the day-to-day running of your business. The aim is to develop a capable, skilled member of your team while helping you build for the future.

I'm Concerned About The Cost Of Employing An Apprentice. How Can I Make It Affordable?

We understand that wages and employment costs can be a concern, particularly if you have employed apprentices before and found the costs difficult to sustain. However, government funding may be available to cover apprenticeship training costs, and apprentice wage rates can make recruitment more affordable. Don't rule out an apprentice on cost alone. Speak to Sheldrake Training first. We can help you understand the costs, identify available funding and work out whether an apprentice could be an affordable investment in your business.

What Is My Role As An Employer In Training An Apprentice?

An apprenticeship is employer-led, meaning you play a vital role in developing the apprentice's skills through practical, on-the-job training. Sheldrake Training provides the structure, guidance and support, but your commitment to supporting their learning and giving them opportunities to develop is essential to their success.

Ready-to-hire Checklist

- Choose role and option
- Choose Training Provider
- Confirm eligibility and funding
- Budget for employment and supervision
- Recruit fairly
- Complete agreement and training plan
- Prepare risk assessments, induction and safeguarding • schedule paid training and progress reviews

Check current requirements with the training provider and GOV.UK. Key references: Skills England Equine Groom standard, GOV.UK employing an apprentice, Apprenticeships.gov.uk employer guidance, and HSE young worker guidance.

Apprenticeships: The Facts At A Glance



Minimal paperwork:
Just a review meeting every 12 weeks, with attendance and sign-off.



Simple to set up:
Sheldrake Training guides you through the joining process.



Clear expectations:
Training, hours and safety requirements are agreed from the outset.



Plenty of support:
Ongoing guidance and support from Sheldrake Training throughout.



Your yard, your approach:
Training follows your yard's ethos and management practices, provided they meet safety and training standards.



Weekly training:
Employers must provide a minimum of 6 hours of on-the-job training each week.



Maths and English:
Where required, apprentices may need time during working hours to study these subjects.

Employee feedback

Employers find the sign up easy

It's a much easier process than it was years ago

Employers find the initial help from the Sheldrake Training Administration team excellent

Expectations are set early on so employers can decide if it is for them- no surprises later on.

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Ready To Get Started?

Talk to the Sheldrake Training team about your workforce plans, apprenticeship opportunities or the development needs of existing employees.

Supporting People.
Developing Skills.
Building Futures.



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This guide provides a practical overview and is current for the 2026-2027 academic year. Apprenticeship funding and assessment rules can change, and different rules may apply depending on an apprentice's start date and assessment plan. Sheldrake Training will confirm the requirements that apply to each apprentice.

Sheldrake Training