

Filling Livery Vacancies

The information below is a guide for people looking to 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 purchased or rented a yard to specifically offer livery services.

In any case the information below will help you with finding suitable candidates for any vacancies, correctly managing the paperwork and understanding the responsibilities of all involved for taking a new horse onto your yard. It is important to ensure that any new liveries are suitable for their yard, and their horse too. Its important to do as much due diligence as possible before they confirm acceptance of a space to ensure they are the right fit for the yard.

Additional resources and template documents for running a yard can be found on the LiveryList website.

Advertising

- **How to Advertise Your Spaces** There are many ways to find new horses and owners to join your yard. From advertising online, in local publications, saddleries notice boards, local Facebook groups, through to riding clubs or just through word of mouth. The way you advertise should be determined by the type of client you are after and your level of knowledge of your potential clients. Word of mouth may be best if you want to be informed about potential clients- they are likely known to other horse owners in your area, but will not give you huge coverage to potential liveries. The first port of call may even be your own existing clients who may have friends or acquaintances that may be looking to relocate to a new yard, or they may have contacts in their own riding circle (riding club, competition circuit etc) who may also be interested.

The wider you cast the net of advertising the wider the knowledge of potential clients will be spread. The publication of online listings can be beneficial, not only to promote your vacancies, but to promote other services you may offer- such as facility hire or events- to a wider audience. Advertising year round, rather than only when you have vacancies, can be advantageous also and allow you build up a waiting list for when vacancies do arise. If you do have annual advertising listings, make sure these are updated accordingly.

- **Who to Invite to View the Yard** What is ideal is to advertise sufficiently to find several potential clients and see who would fit the yard best, but this is not always possible if there are few enquiries, especially if they enquire by text, private message or email and it is difficult to determine information about themselves or their horse. It maybe that you arrange a viewing by messages alone and the second they arrive at the yard you know they will not fit in! It is always best, after initial contact, to suggest they give you a call directly to discuss what they are after, find out about their horse and see if you think they may be a genuine possibility. Think about asking for the following as key information before a visit is considered. These should give you a good indication of how well a new horse (and owner) may fit on the yard:
 - Size, breed, age and sex of the horse
 - How long has the horse been owned
 - What activities do they undertake with the horse
 - Does the horse have any illnesses, injuries or behavioural difficulties
 - Does the horse have any specific needs (restricted grazing, riggy, specific diet etc)
 - How well does the horse settle in a new yard

- What livery package they are wanting
 - What type of yard or livery package are they on at present
 - What reason are they leaving their existing yard
 - When are they looking to move
- **Finding Out About the Owner** The horse is not the only concern as a new arrival on the yard. Often yards run smoothly because there are friendships and camaraderie between established livery clients and often a new client who does not gel well can 'upset the apple cart'. It is just as vital to ensure that the new livery client is of similar personality and disposition of your existing clients and that the harmony of the yard is continued as uninterrupted as possible. It is worth bearing in mind to find out a little more about the person too.
 - Age of owner and riding experience
 - Are they members of any riding clubs or do they compete
 - Which farrier, vet, instructor etc they use
 - Does anyone else loan/ part loan/ share/ ride/ help care for the horse
 - Are they known to existing liverys
 - Do they drive
 - Do they have children
 - What is their employment status (student, part time, unemployed)
 - Can they provide a reference from their current yard owner
 - Notice period for current yard

These questions can give you an indication as to the type of person they are, whether they are likely to be able to afford the packages offered at your yard and their level of competency amongst other things. While this information may seem intrusive and extreme, it is worth remembering that any fallouts on your yard can leave to bad feeling and people leaving and, in the worst circumstances, ultimately damage to the reputation of yourself or your yard so it is well worth putting in the research.

- **Telling Them About You** The information exchange works both ways. New clients may be looking to meet specific needs, or have a specific reason they want to move yard (better facilities, more turnout, closer to home etc) and equally you should inform, them as much as possible about the yard, what you offer and how you work during your call because it may be that there and then they decide it is not right for them. Some information you could consider sharing with them would include:
 - Livery packages you offer and related costs
 - Protocol for new liverys (isolation, worming, blood tests)
 - Competitions, events etc held on site or local venues
 - What the current horses are like (uses, size, temperament)
 - What the current livery clients are like (age range, personalities, social events)
 - Facilities and use of (i.e any restrictions, extra costs)
 - Grazing and use of (i.e restricted grazing, winter turnout, 24/7)
 - Any specific conditions (i.e buy hay from yard, must use yard farrier, no children etc)
 - Yard routine and responsibilities of the horse owners on the yard

The Viewing

- **Arrange a Meeting** Now you've satisfactorily vetted potential clients you can invite them to a viewing at 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. You should arrange this as soon as possible at a time convenient to yourself. Confirm the day before that they are still coming and confirm the time. It is an idea to choose a busy time on the yard, when horses are in and other liverys or staff are present. You can then see how the potential client interact with the horses and people they meet on the yard and it will give them a sense of the yard itself- horses, how it runs etc. After all, you may feel they are suitable but they may decide the yard is not for them.

- **First Impressions** Timeliness and presentation of the potential client says a lot but it can work both ways- make sure the yard is also clean, tidy and well presented and that you are there to meet them at the agreed time. Whilst undertaking the viewing try to show the potential client as much as possible but in a sensible manner, especially if they are a complete stranger! Most importantly show them the grazing; the herd their horse is likely to join, the stable that is available and the riding facilities. It may be that you realise immediately they are not right for you as a client. In which case keep the viewing brief- there is no point in wasting your or their time. If the first impressions are good, ask them as many questions as possible about themselves and their horse, and equally encourage them to ask any questions or raise any concerns they may have.
- **When do you mention the C-Word** Contract. Contract. Contract. So important for all parties. Make sure you take a copy of your livery contract to the viewing. If you or they feel the yard is not right, there is no point in mentioning it. However, if all is looking positive you should show them a copy of the contract for their information whilst they are at the yard on the day of the viewing. You don't want them to come to the yard with their horse and on the first day be provided with a contract that is not suitable for them, or that they disagree with. Make sure you have a clearly laid out contract and give them a copy to look at (not to take away) with adequate time for them to read through it and raise any questions. You should also advise them of any protocol you have in place for new horses such as blood tests, worming insurance requirements and the like to ensure this is in line with their expectations.
- **Acceptance of a Space** If everyone seems happy you can mutually agree that they can join the yard there and then and make the arrangement to move, although if there is any doubt do encourage them to go home and sleep on it and come back to you the following day. Advising potential clients if you've had other enquiries will often help weed out the time wasters and will encourage genuinely interested parties to come back to you quickly to answer one way or another. If the person is known to you, you may be happy to accept on word of mouth. However, if you do not know them and have had other enquiries on the space it may be worth asking for a deposit to hold the space until they are able to make arrangements to leave their current yard. If this is a considerable amount of time, for example a months notice period, you can rightfully request that they contribute towards the stable during this notice period as you may have sourced an alternative client that could have moved immediately. Ensure a receipt is given for any deposit taken, and that they advise you as soon as possible of an approximate arrival date for the horse.
- **Saying No.** Sometimes when someone visits the yard you will feel at some point they are just not right for the yard. Be it them or their horse if you get this feeling it is advisable not to offer a stable to them, even if it has been empty for a while, and to wait for someone more suitable to come along. In this situation, honesty is the best policy. There is no point telling them the stable is 'taken', only for them to see it continues to be advertised, and do not string it out making them wait whilst they could be finding alternative stabling elsewhere. Just be honest and state the reason why you feel it would not work in the politest way possible.

However, do bear in mind that you will often find 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. Equally, a reason for refusing a livery may be something that is workable which could change your mind.

Arriving at the Yard

- **Arranging the Arrival of a New Horse.** Once a new client has agreed to fill a space, and the necessary arrangements made you need to sort everything ready for their arrival. If the stable has been empty this should be no problem with plenty of time to sort out arrangement. It is not so simple if they are

moving in within a day or so of another horse leaving, but even so a good plan of action and ensuring the previous livery leaves everything cleared, neat and tidy will make life easier. Being organised will make the transition of a new livery quick and easy without them intruding on other peoples storage areas, or getting off on the wrong foot with anyone. Some things to consider:

- Cleaning and disinfecting the stable floor and walls
 - Checking all stable fittings, doors, light bulbs
 - Clearing a designated space in the tackroom or storage areas
 - Filling their hay/ bedding spaces with supplies (if applicable)
 - Making the bed, filling water and a haynet (if applicable)
 - Advise all other liveryes of a new arrival
 - Preparing for wormer, worm counts, isolation protocol etc
 - Printing out two copies of the contract
- **Required Documentations** There are certain documents you should request from the owner I regards to both themselves and their horse. These are administrative duties that can make the management of the horse and clients easier in the long run. Templates of many of these documents can be found on the LiveryList website.
- Two signed copies of the Livery Contract (and Yard Handbook if applicable)
 - Completed Horse Details Form
 - Horse Passport (to be retained by the yard owner or a copy of passport if only DIY)
 - Details of Horse Vaccinations
 - Copy of Utility Bill and ID for owner (to verify address and identification)
 - Copy of Horse Insurance Certificate
 - Copy of Insurance Certificate for any external Instructors, Freelance Grooms etc they use

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?
 - Are the stables in good condition, light and airy?
 - 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, is there plenty of grass for the number of anticipated horses and adequate acreage for rotation?
 - Are all fencing and gateways in a sound and solid condition?
 - 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?
 - 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 liveries at the yard?
 - Do you have CCTV and consider the accessibility/ visibility of the yard from the road and general security?
 - Can you offer adequate and secure storage for feed, bedding and tack?
 - Will you provide hay, feed or bedding on site or do liveries 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 week.
- **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. 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. 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 liveries. 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. 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.