

Employment in the equine industry

Anybody hiring someone, whether part-time or full-time, to provide regular duties is an employer in the horse industry. For example the hire of: grooms, instructors, riders, drivers, yard managers.

Many employers are unaware of the most basic employment rights to which their employees are entitled. This is particularly the case in the horse industry due to the amount of informal employment contracts entered into, but employees may still have the benefit of such rights, even if there is no written contract.

Every employee is entitled to be provided with a written contract/statement of the main terms of employment within two months of commencing employment or upon request during their employment. It is important that contracts of employment are provided, ensuring both parties understand their position and basic entitlements. This will help resolve any disputes that may arise from lack of a contract.

The following is our guide on standard areas covered by contracts of employment:

Job description	Detail of tasks expected to carry out.
Pay	When and how much you will be paid.
Hours	Expected hours per day/per week and detail of any flexible working arrangements or overtime. Noting the working time regulations – max 48 hours over a 7-day period (this can be opted out of).
Holiday	Entitlement to time off for holiday.
Sickness	Time allowed for sick leave and when a doctor's note will be required.
Conduct	For example, no smoking at premises, politeness to customers.
Maternity and paternity leave	Entitled to leave when your baby is born. Maternity leave up to 26 weeks on statutory maternity pay and option to take a further 26 weeks. Paternity leave up to 2 weeks.
Grievance procedure	System in place to report any complaints you have about your working conditions.
Disciplinary procedure	System in place for dealing with an employee who misbehaves.
Harassment	System in place for dealing with harassment or bullying among staff.
Health and safety	Policy should be detailed in contract including employer's liability for injury and vicarious liability.

Failure to comply with employment procedures and regulations can lead to unwanted disputes and financial

penalties if the employers are found to be in breach of legislation.

Contact

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