

# GROOM AND EMPLOYER SURVEY 2014

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# PART ONE: THE LANDSCAPE



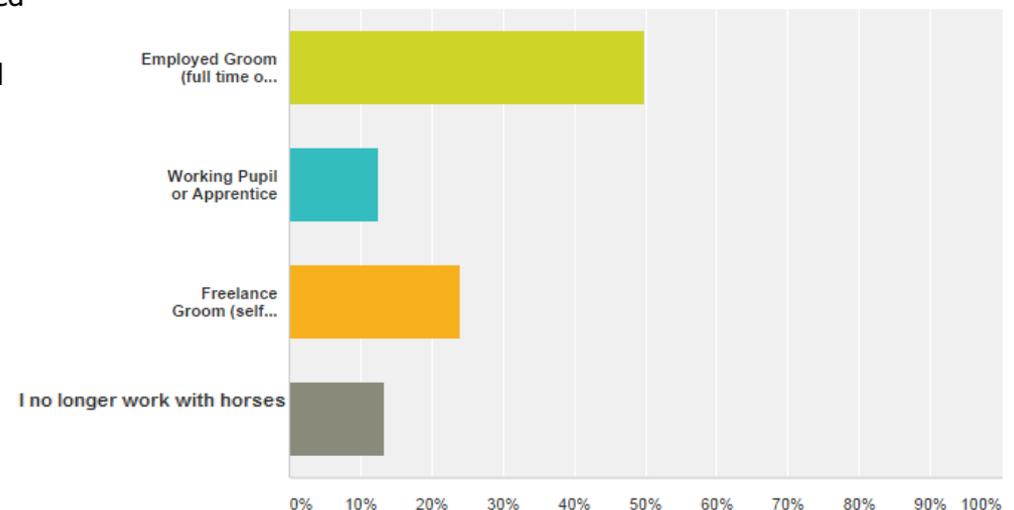
- This survey finds that the vast majority of employees enter the horse industry both committed and motivated, but that a large proportion leave disappointed. The survey also highlights how grooms and employers are united in their passion and dedication to the industry, but disagree on crucial employment issues.
- The horse industry is a truly diverse environment which spans a variety of sectors, including competition riding, livery, riding schools and hunt yards. With diversity, however, comes a difficulty in accurately defining the size and scope of the industry, as highlighted by Lantra in their 2011 Study into the Business Skills Requirements of the UK Equine Industry.
- It can be stated, with reasonable confidence, that nearly one million horses make up the UK equine population (BETA, 2011) and that approximately 3.5 million people rode in the year 2010-2011 (BETA, 2011). There are 4.3 horses for every square kilometre of land in the UK (BHIC, 2009). With this industry comes employment and Lantra, (2011) found that the industry directly employs 41,000 people across 19,000 businesses.

- Nearly 1100 grooms and 160 employers responded to the survey, which ran in January and February 2014. Of the grooms, nearly 50% were employed as staff and 24% worked as freelance grooms.
- The remainder were either working pupils/apprentices (13%) or had already left the industry (13%).

GROOMS RESPONSES IN BLUE

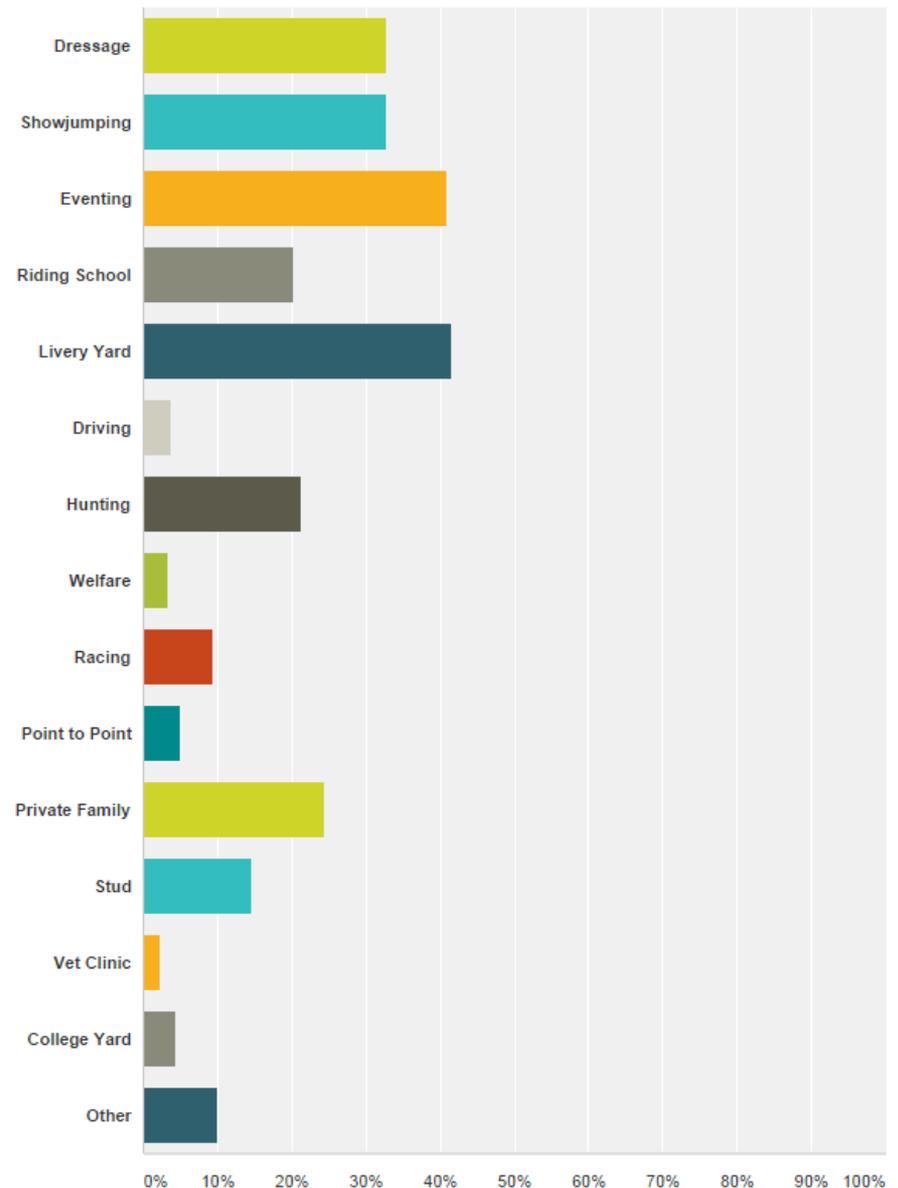
EMPLOYERS RESPONSES IN RED

## WHAT IS YOUR EMPLOYMENT STATUS?

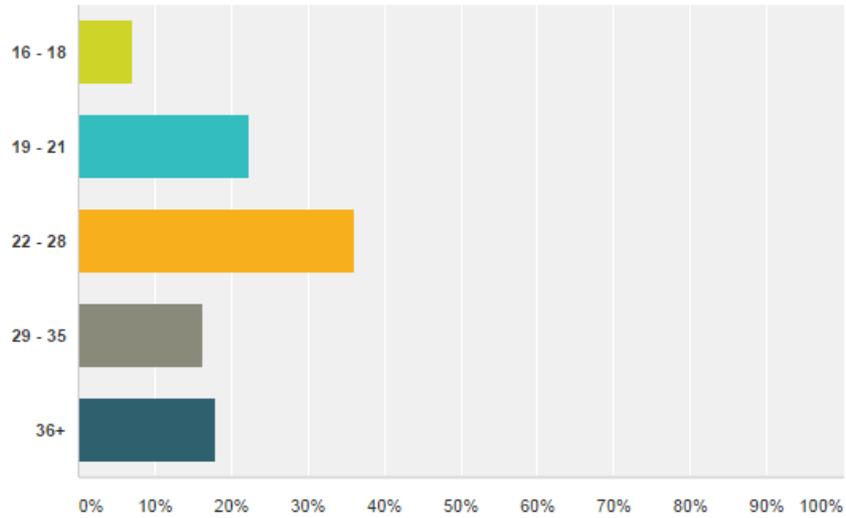


## WHAT SECTOR OF INDUSTRY DO YOU WORK IN?

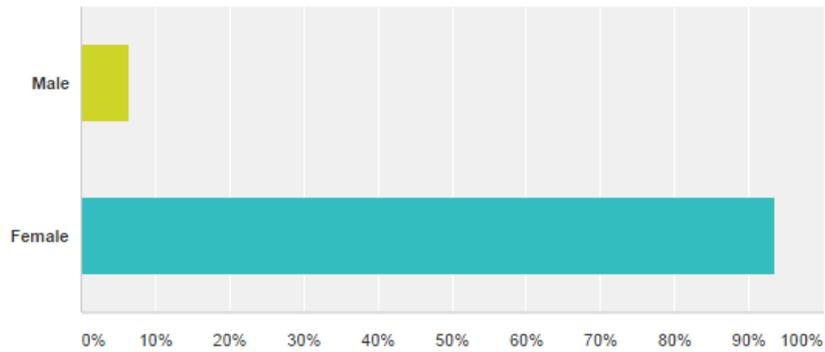
- Our survey drew from every sector of the horse industry and grooms were employed within livery yards (42%), eventing (41%), dressage (33%) and show jumping (33%).
- It is also clear that yards engaged simultaneously in multiple sectors of the industry.
- The majority of grooms were young with 30% of respondents aged below 22 years and 36% aged between 22 and 28 years.
- Only 34% were over the age of 28 years. The horse industry is an employment environment where women are over-represented and Lantra (2011) estimated that 70% of the workforce within the UK horse industry was female.
- This survey supports the concept of occupational segregation within this industry as the vast majority of respondents within the grooms survey were female (94%).
- This clustering was also apparent among employers with 85% of respondents identifying as female. In terms of age, however, employers were generally older and the largest group was between 51 and 60 years (36%).



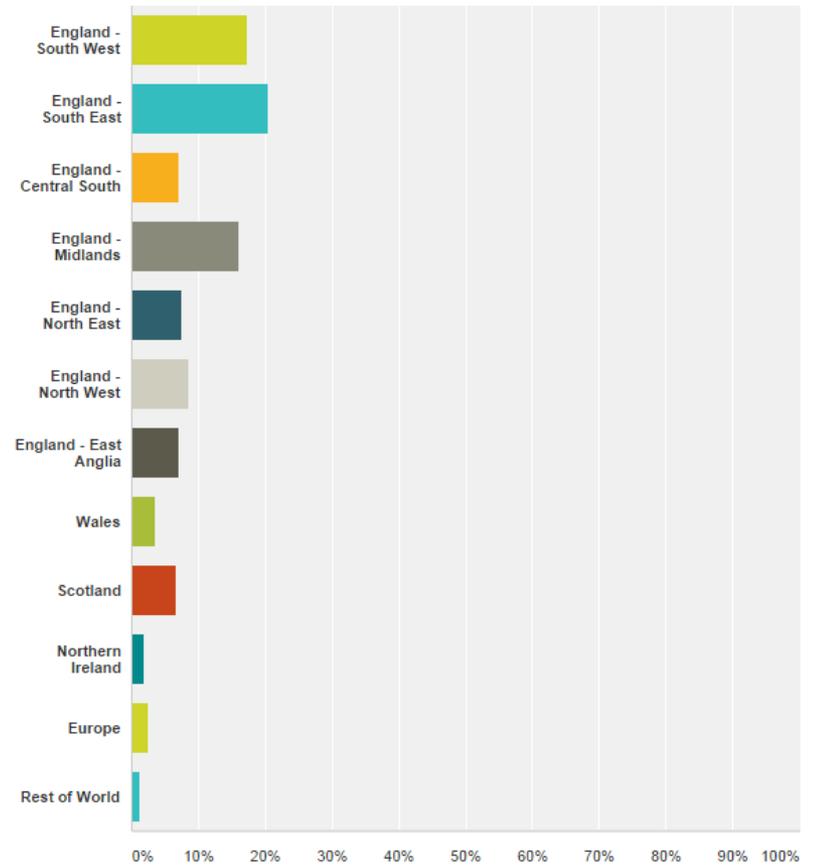
## HOW OLD ARE YOU?



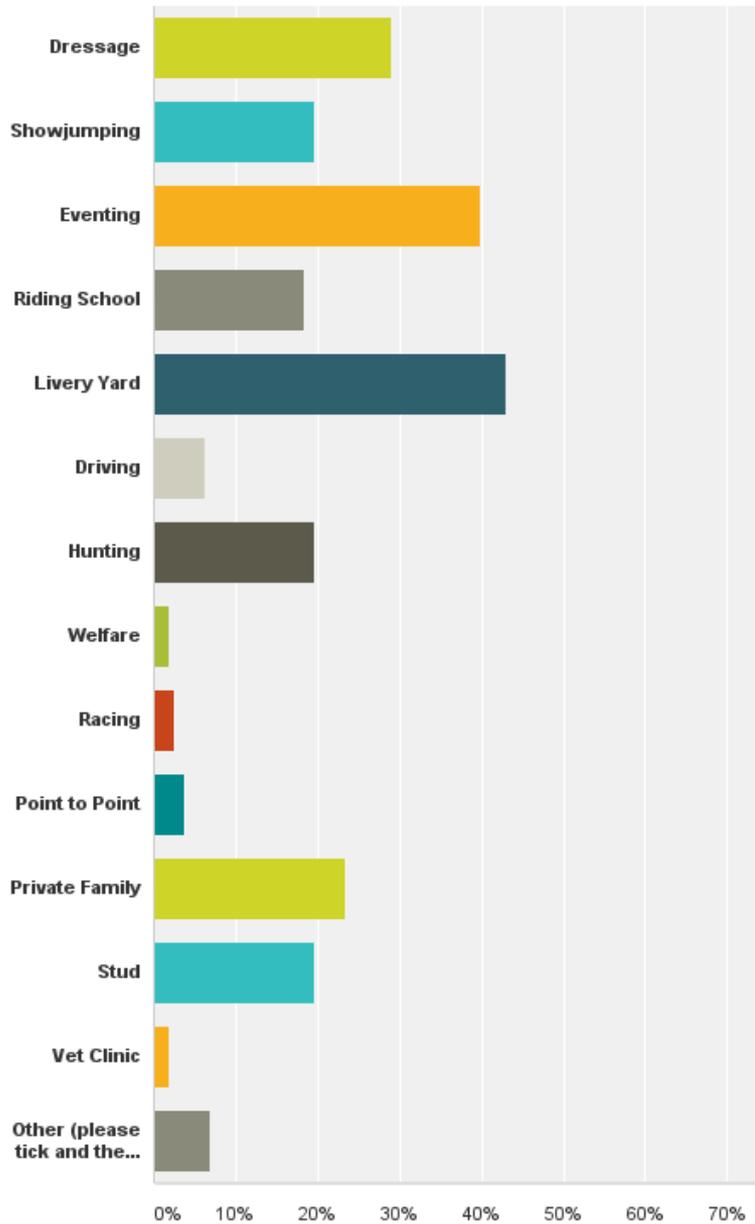
## MALE OR FEMALE?



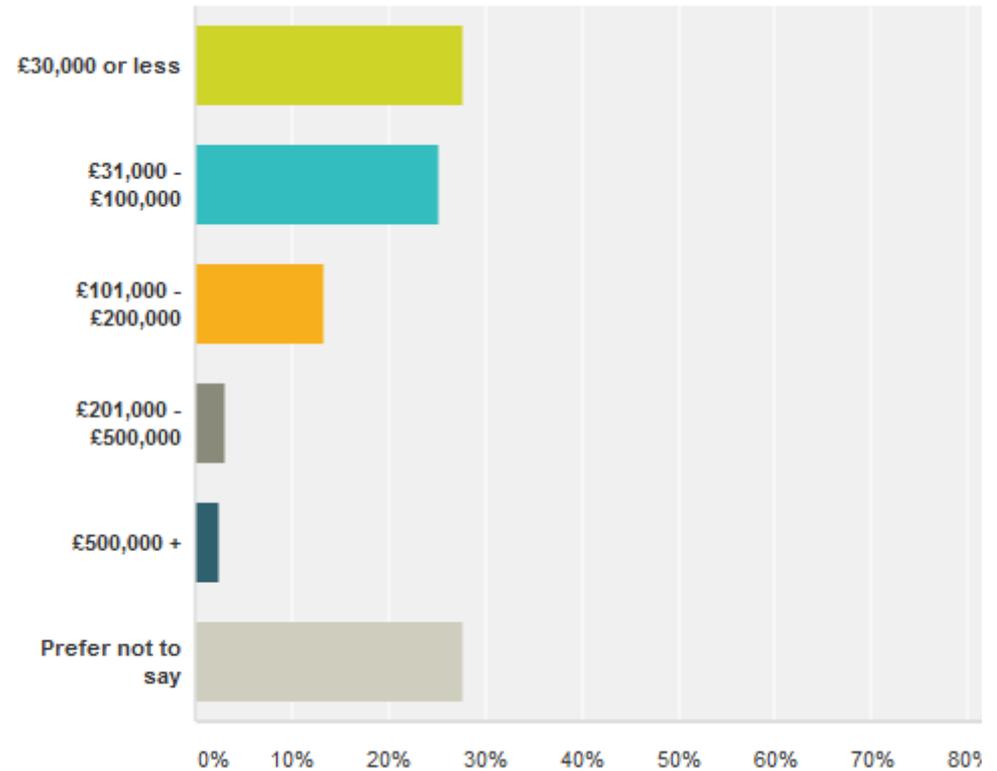
## WHERE DO YOU LIVE?



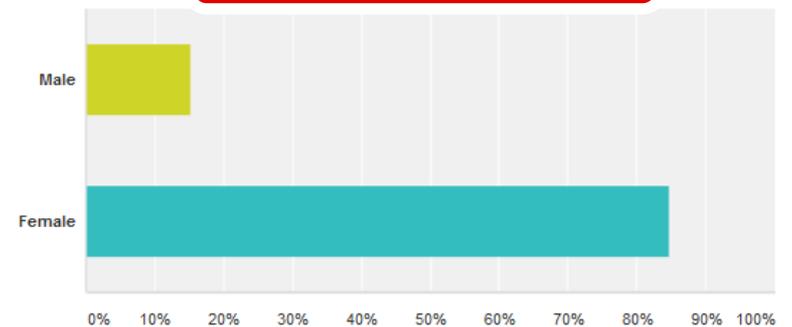
## WHICH INDUSTRY SECTORS DOES YOUR BUSINESS COVER?



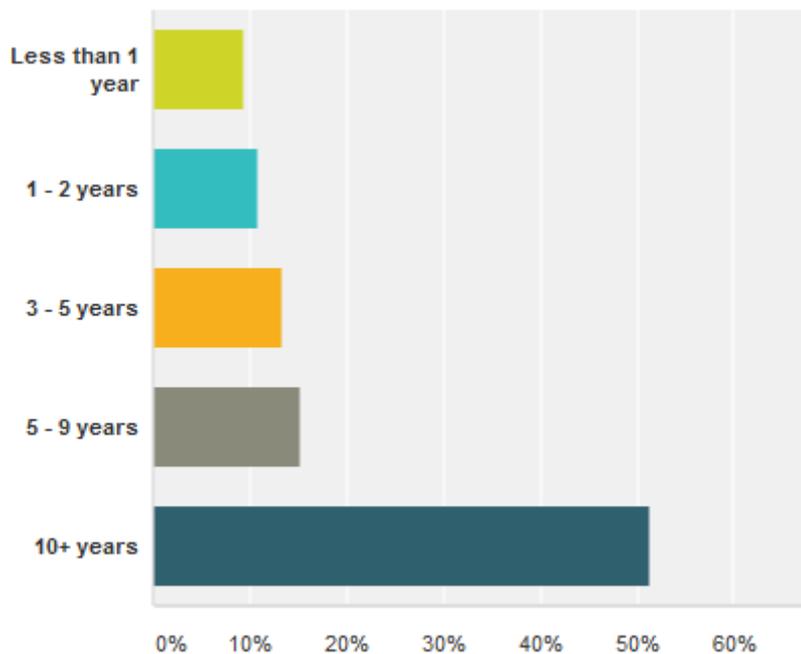
## WHAT IS THE APPROXIMATE TURNOVER OF YOUR BUSINESS (IN GB£)



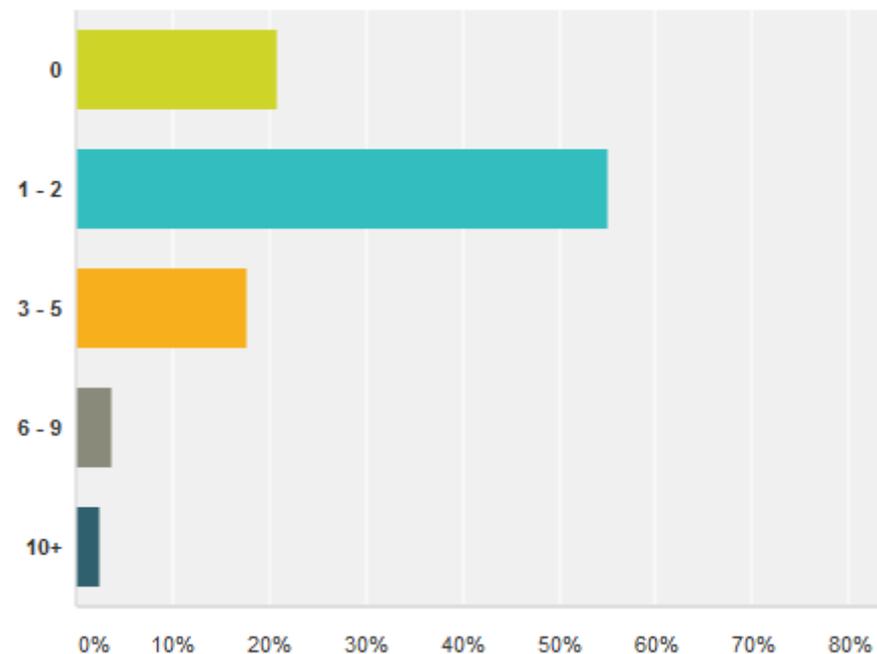
## MALE OR FEMALE?



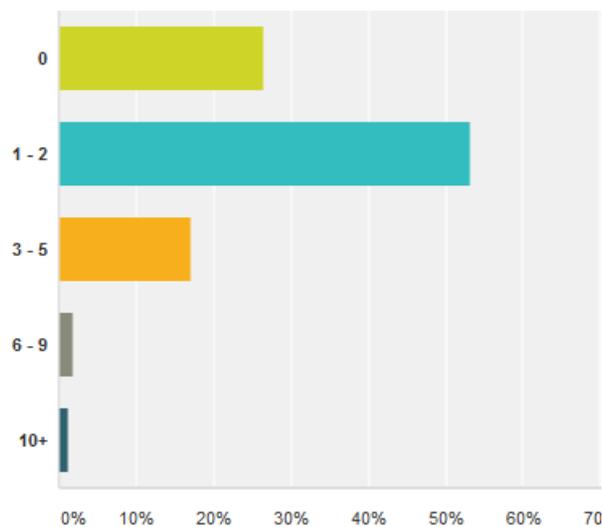
### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYING OTHERS IN YOUR BUSINESS?



### HOW MANY FULL-TIME PEOPLE DO YOU EMPLOY?

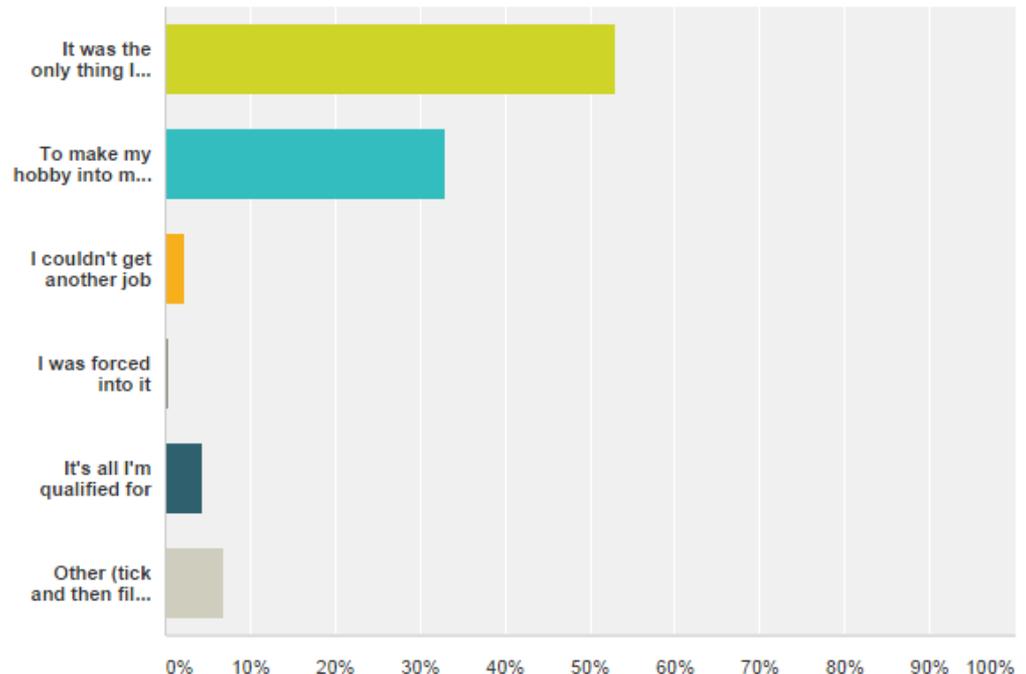


### HOW MANY PART-TIME PEOPLE DO YOU EMPLOY?



- The majority of employers ran their own yard (82%) and had a turnover of less than 100,000GBP (53%). 28% of employers had a turnover of less than 30,000GBP.
- The largest proportion of employers (51%) had been employing others for more than ten years, mainly employing only one or two people full-time (55%) and one or two people part-time (53%). Both employers (91%) and grooms (89%) considered the role of the groom to be one which is professional and highly skilled.
- The results of this survey made absolutely clear the high levels of motivation and enthusiasm that exist among grooms within the industry. Over half (53%) of grooms in our survey *'have only ever wanted to work with horses'*. A further 33% wanted *'to make their hobby their job'*.
- Turnover, however, was still clearly an issue within the industry. Only 18% of respondents had been in their current role for more than five years, whereas nearly 60% had been in their current role for less than two years.
- 59% of grooms responded positively when asked if they enjoyed their current job and 41% responded negatively.
- Additionally, 43% of grooms only viewed their job as a short-term prospect.

#### WHY DID YOU START WORKING WITH HORSES?



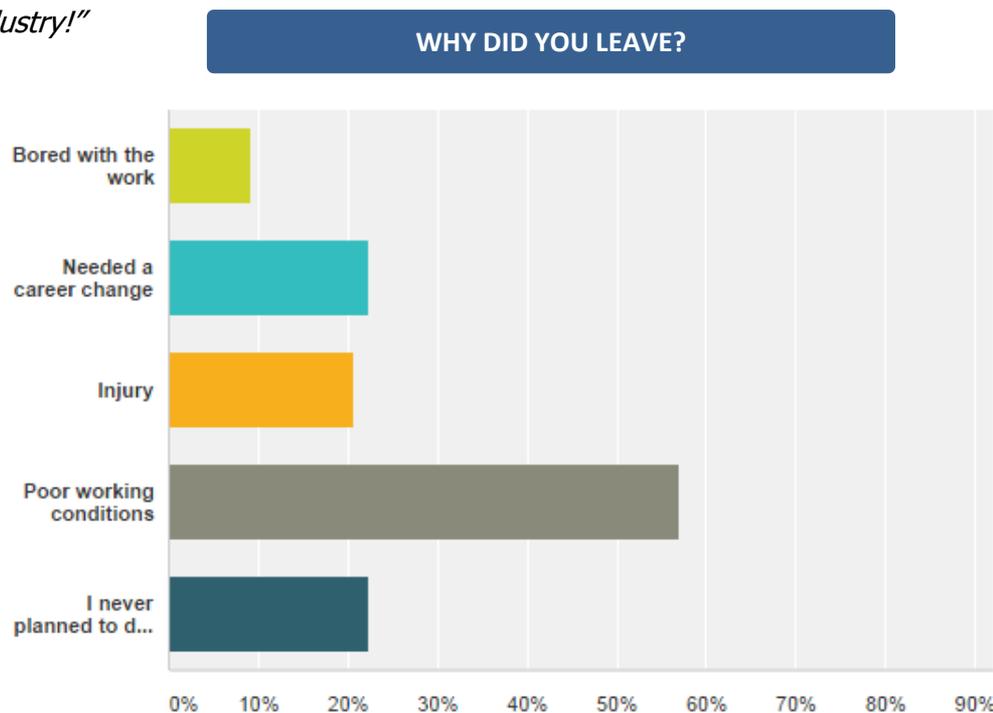
- The causes of high turnover, we suggest, are embedded in the issue of 'working conditions'. Of those grooms who had already left the industry, 57% cited 'poor working conditions' as the reason for their exit.
- We must ask if it is acceptable, therefore, that nearly six in ten grooms from our survey are leaving the industry because of working conditions, when we have clearly found evidence for high levels of initial enthusiasm.
- We must also interrogate what is meant by 'working conditions'. Are there tangible employment practices taking place that are causing grooms to become de-motivated?
- From our survey, we at the BGA suggest there are real issues that can be easily tackled by the industry, that will improve the employment situation for both employers and grooms.
- As found by the survey, we are all 'horsey' and all in this together. Let us move away from the kind of circumstances that motivated respondents to make statements such as:

*"The conditions I work in would be illegal in any other industry!"*

*"Dangerous working conditions, treated badly by employer, employer refused to pay for extra insurance to cover my medical needs."*

*"I don't think a grooming career is compatible with having a family, own house etc. as unless you are receiving accommodation as part of the package, it is near impossible to pay a mortgage on a groom's wage – grooming was an option for me when younger, single and happy to live off my weekly wages."*

*"I was let go without warning."*



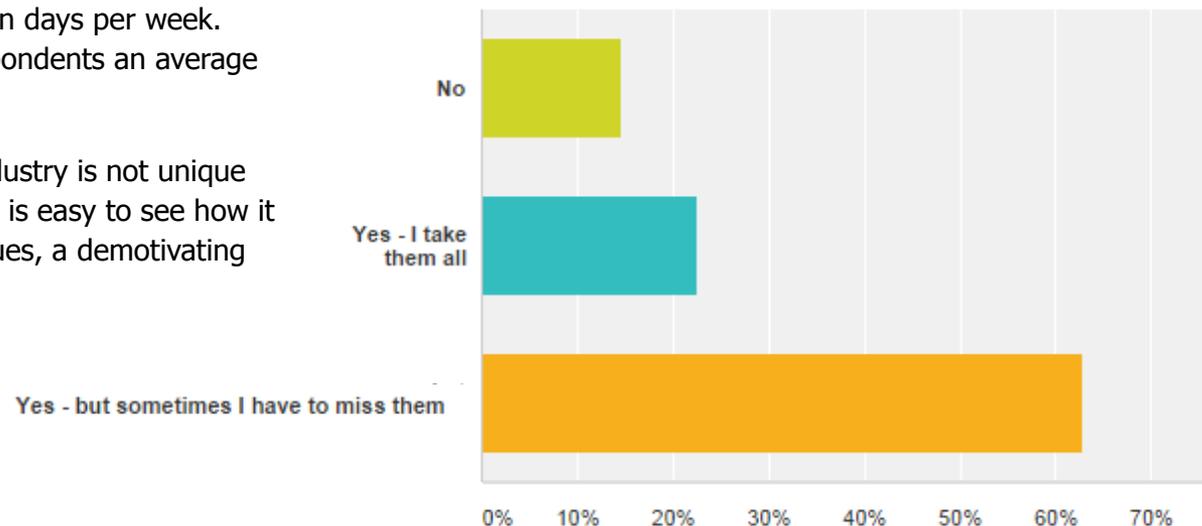
# PART TWO: KEY FINDINGS



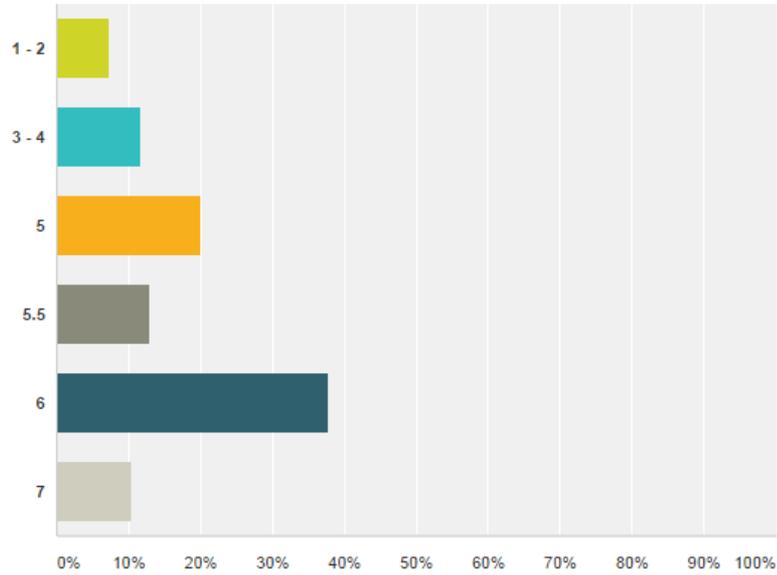
## WORKLOAD AND HOURS

- The horse industry is well known for being one that requires a great deal of time and commitment. Horses need regular management and care and the work is physically demanding. An important question confronting the industry, is therefore: how many horses should one groom be responsible for, and what is the appropriate time commitment?
- The survey found that the greatest proportion of respondents had responsibility for between five and ten horses (46%). 43% had responsibility for over ten horses and 11% cared for fewer than five horses.
- Current UK legislation specifies that workers do not usually have to work for more than 48 hours per week, unless they choose to and that work hours should be set out in an employment contract. This survey found that nearly 50% of full-time grooms were working more than nine hours per day.
- Over 60% of grooms worked more than five days per week and 10% claimed to work seven days per week. The survey found that across all respondents an average of 49 hours was worked per week.
- Although it is clear that the horse industry is not unique in requiring a demanding workload it is easy to see how it can be, when coupled with other issues, a demotivating factor.

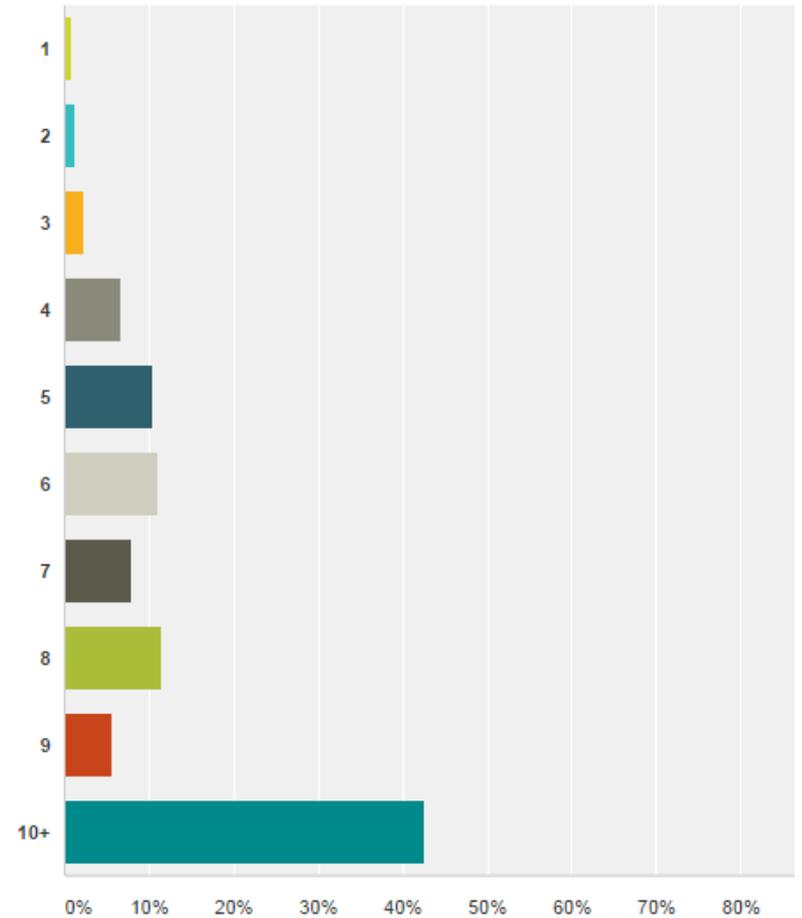
## DO YOU GET BREAKS DURING YOUR WORKING DAY?



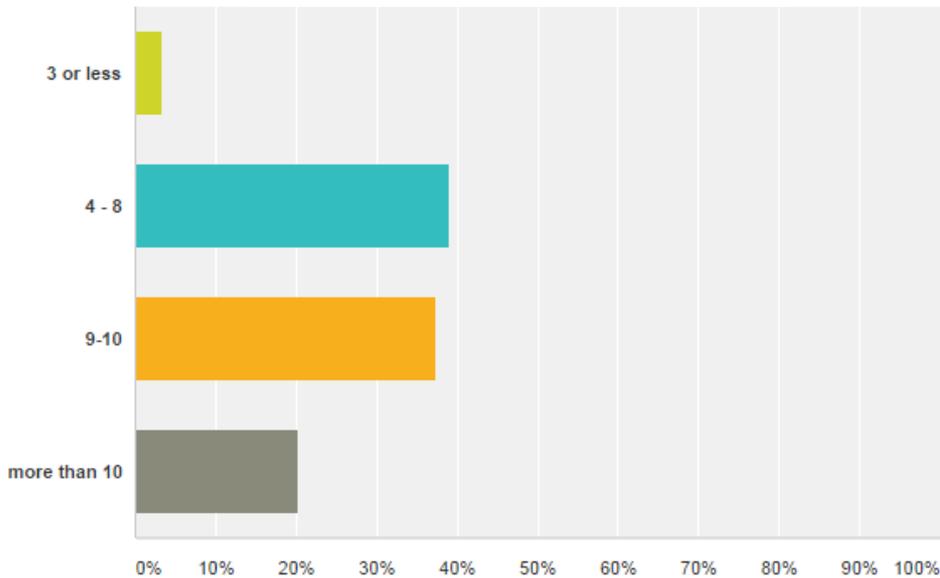
### AVERAGE DAYS WORKED PER WEEK



### HOW MANY STABLE HORSES DO YOU LOOK AFTER YOURSELF PER DAY (ON AVERAGE)



### AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER DAY



A positive working culture can be crucial in maintaining a motivated and loyal workforce. This survey found that:

- \* 80% of grooms felt their work was valued by their employer/client.
- \* 100% of employers stated that their staff were made to feel like a core member of the team and 82% of grooms felt that they were made to feel like a core member of the team.
- There were clear areas of disagreement, however, that implied grooms were not as satisfied in their workplace as employers may expect. It is important to note that these differences may be partly demonstrative of a sampling bias, those employers more likely to respond may well be those more engaged with their workforce. Findings from the employers survey, therefore, are not necessarily truly representative of the 'real' situation amongst grooms.

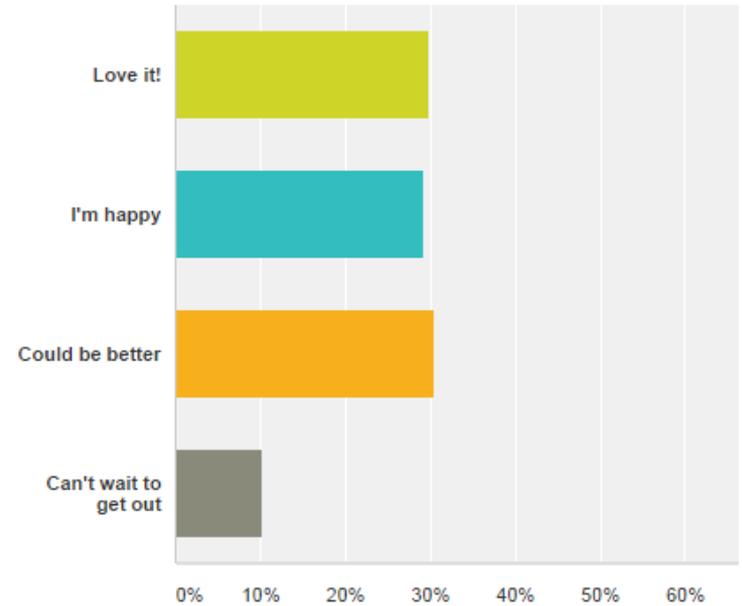
The survey found that:

- \* 93% of employers stated they have a good team structure and that managers train and mentor younger members of staff. Only 56% of grooms agreed with this statement.
- \* 92% of employers felt that they were a great manager, but only 56% of grooms felt that their employer was a great manager.
- \* 95% of employers believed their staff would feel happy speaking up about working conditions without fear for their job. Only 56% of grooms agreed with this statement.
- Comments included:  
*"Unlike other business sectors, the employers and employees alike are in it for the love of horses and grooms who get too picky about their rights re salary, time in lieu etc. will not be liked by others – staff or bosses – on a team when the horses need caring for."*
- **The clear implication here is that satisfaction levels are lower among grooms compared to the perception of employers and that, crucially, if they speak up about poor employment conditions they may face conflict at work which could result in termination or resignation. It is unacceptable to use the concept of 'love for the horse' as a justification for poor working conditions.**

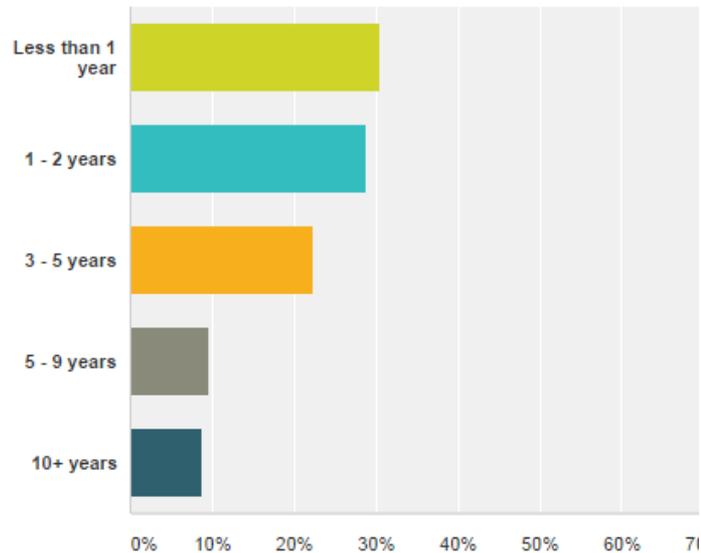
## HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am made to feel like a core member of the team	35.90% 270	45.61% 343	14.49% 109	3.99% 30
My work is valued by my employer/client (if freelance)	37.77% 267	42.43% 300	14.43% 102	5.37% 38
We have a good team structure and the managers train and mentor younger members of staff	19.77% 139	36.42% 256	30.44% 214	13.37% 94
I am employed legally and I am aware of my employment rights	27.85% 203	38.96% 284	20.99% 153	12.21% 89
My employer is a great manager	20.97% 151	35.00% 252	31.25% 225	12.78% 92
My employer is willing but lacks the knowledge to improve employment terms and conditions	5.87% 41	27.32% 191	44.21% 309	22.60% 158
I would feel happy speaking up about working conditions without fear for my job	20.54% 153	35.03% 261	27.52% 205	16.91% 126
I know I am being paid at least the National Minimum Wage	35.70% 266	30.20% 225	16.64% 124	17.45% 130
My friends/family are concerned about my current employment	17.12% 126	28.40% 209	26.22% 193	28.26% 208

## WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU ENJOY YOUR CURRENT JOB?



## HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION?



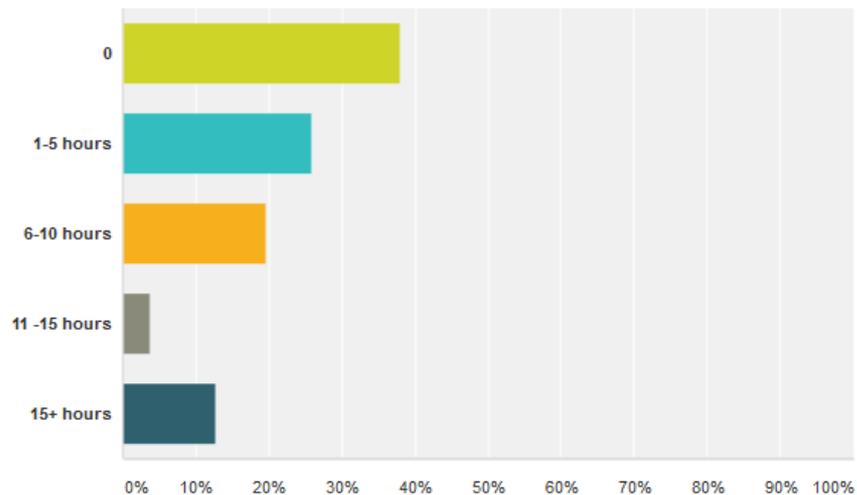
This survey found that 45% of grooms began their career with great ambitions, but have been left disappointed.

- Comments included: *"There was no potential to progress my career."*
- Only 43% of grooms felt there was career progression in their job and 55% of employers felt there was career progression in the jobs on their yard. This demonstrates a recognition among those in the industry of the current uncertainty regarding a career path for grooms.
- 63% of grooms felt they had opportunities to learn and develop skills, whereas 97% of employers felt their grooms had opportunities to learn and develop skills. This finding highlights possible ambiguities regarding definitions of skills. Employers may perceive skills that grooms do not recognise and these could potentially be communicated more efficiently.
- The same argument could be made for the transferability of skills. 69% of grooms felt their job gave them transferable skills for their future, whereas 90% of employers believed the skills their staff gained as a groom would be transferable for their future career.
- Of major concern, the survey found that over a third of employers (38%) did not provide any training or professional development to their staff, whether employees or working pupils/apprentices. Although there is no legal requirement to provide training for employees, there is a requirement to make provision for apprentices, whether for on-yard training or in agreement with a third party training provider.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have opportunities to learn and develop skills	25.34% 189	37.53% 280	28.42% 212	8.71% 65
There is career progression in my job	16.71% 123	26.09% 192	39.54% 291	17.66% 130
I can see career opportunities in the equine industry for me	22.21% 165	44.15% 328	24.09% 179	9.56% 71
I see myself as a professional and skilled groom	44.30% 338	44.82% 342	8.26% 63	2.62% 20
I started with great ambitions for a career with horses but have been left disappointed	18.19% 131	26.81% 193	36.25% 261	18.75% 135
I am really enjoying my job, but I only see it as a short term thing	11.99% 86	30.96% 222	39.33% 282	17.71% 127
I believe the skills I gain as a groom will be transferable for my future career	21.22% 153	47.99% 346	23.86% 172	6.93% 50
I have opportunities to learn and develop my skills within my role	19.62% 143	43.76% 319	26.20% 191	10.43% 76

## ON AVERAGE HOW MANY HOURS A MONTH TRAINING /CPD DO YOUR EMPLOYEES RECIEVE



## WORKING PUPIL AND APPRENTICES

- The majority (55%) of working pupils/apprentices stated that they had no training planned or received. However, 67% of employers stated that their working pupil/apprentice staff had a training program that they were receiving.
- Of the employers who engaged working pupils/apprentices, 61% had them on a recognised training scheme. Of those who did, nearly half were engaged in NVQ qualifications (49%) and only a small number (12%) were studying for their BHS examinations. The implication, therefore, is that the majority of those employers who are not utilising a third-party training provider, are not providing any training.
- Just over half (55%) of working pupils/apprentices were not aware that they were entitled to all the same employment benefits and rights as any other employee and the majority of working pupils/apprentices (59%) did not have an employment contract.
- Of those who did, the larger proportion (29%) stated that their contract did not specify how much training they would receive.
- When asked how they would rate the value of their employment as a working pupil/apprentice, three in ten respondents stated that the value was 'limited'. 43% stated that the value was either 'excellent' (16%) or 'good' (27%). 27% of working pupils/apprentices stated that there was no value in their employment.
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- Comments included:

*"Training not always happening, worked for nearly two years and got nowhere further towards BHS exams with the promise of when I started of completing my stage 2 by summer 2013."*

*"My wage is not high enough for me to be able to pay for the BHS exams I am supposed to be taking, I can just about keep myself and my horse. I get a maximum of two riding lessons per week if I am lucky, and no theory training."*

*"I work for free in return for training for BHS exams (1+2) and an NVQ Level 2 apprenticeship. I receive limited training and although the work I do day to day has been invaluable for my experience, the actual training sessions are often left to the head girl, and being very understaffed, she rarely has time to do this."*

*"Being a working pupil is cheap labour – you work long hours and in my case, for no pay but the opportunity to keep my horse for free – you are only allowed one day off a week and if you want to compete then that has to be on your day off."*

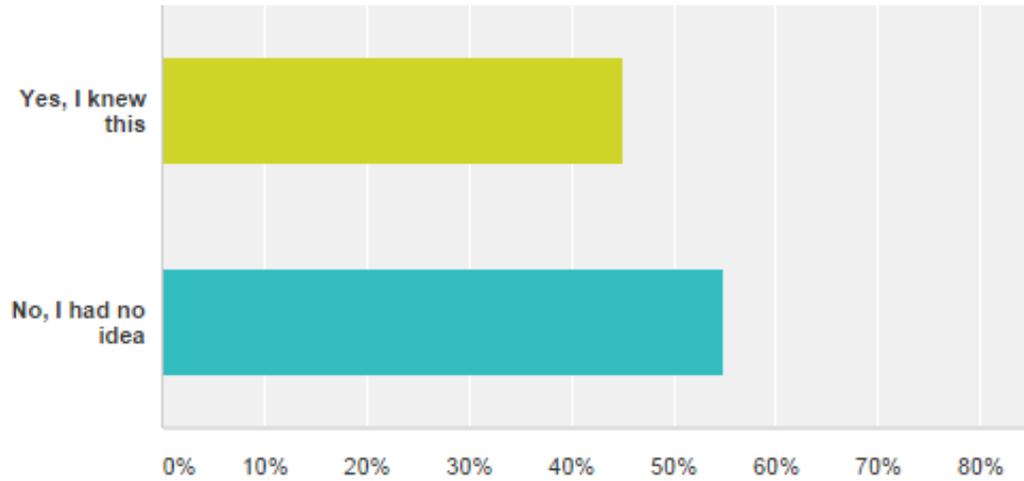
- Some more positive comments regarding training included:

*"Learn in the job, free riding lessons, everyone's always willing to help/teach me new stuff."*

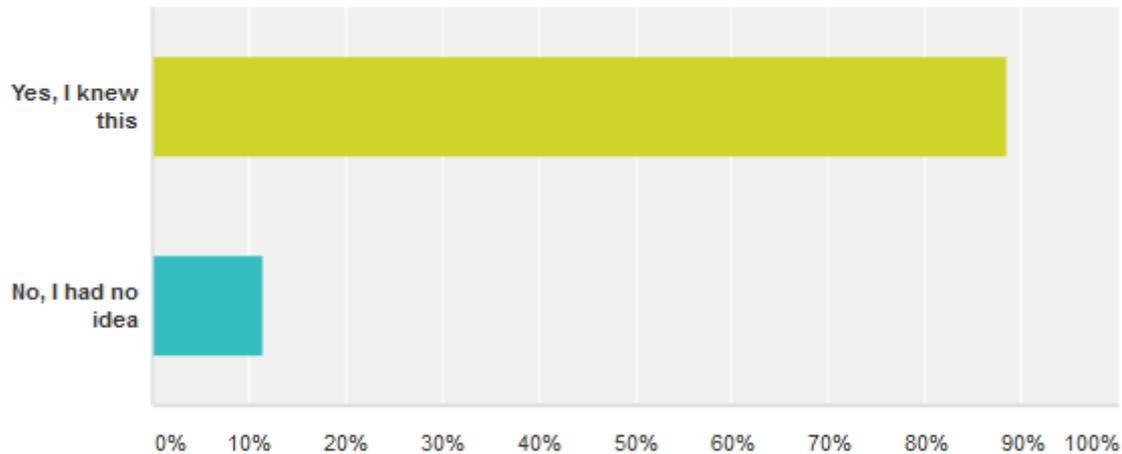
*"I am trained 2 hours a day religiously. I have new horses to ride & assess regularly. I have a GP schoolmaster to be trained on daily."*

- **The training of working pupils/apprentices is clearly an area that needs to be clarified within the horse industry. There is evidence of good practice which can be rolled out across the entire industry.**

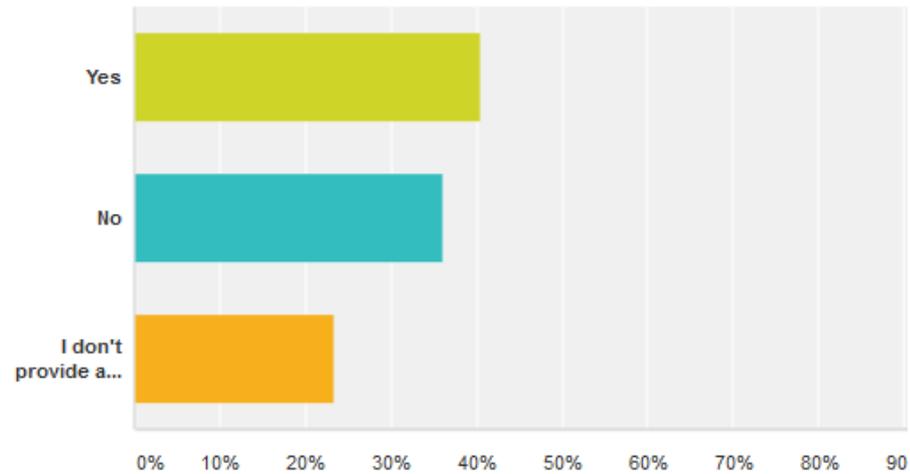
**WORKING PUPILS ARE ENTITLED TO ALL SAME EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AND RIGHTS AS ANY OTHER EMPLOYEE. WERE YOU AWARE OF THIS?**



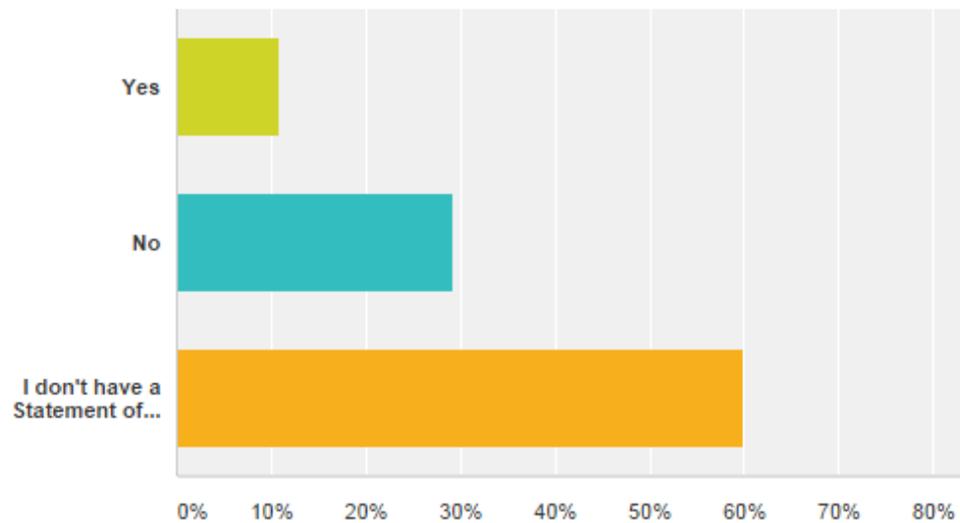
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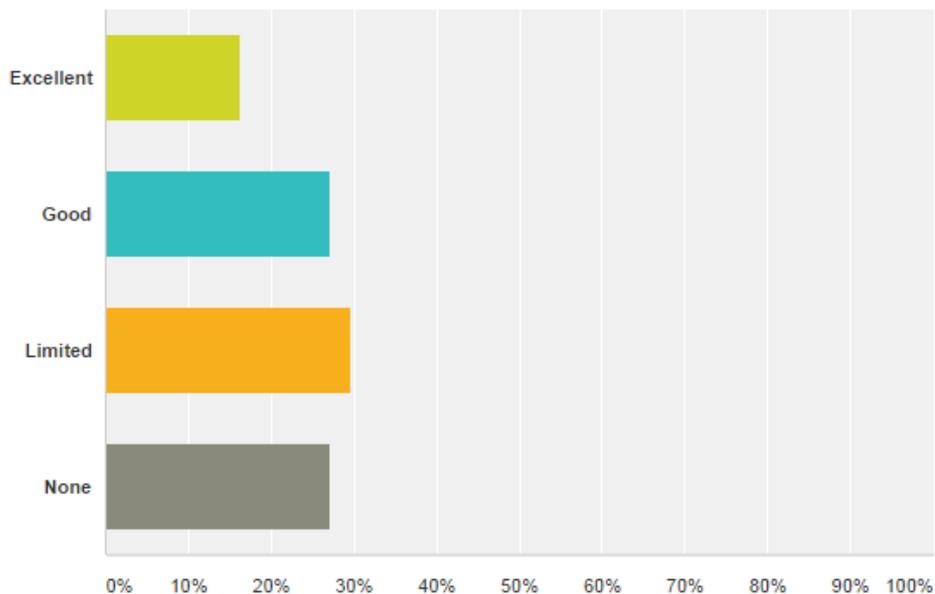
**DOES YOUR STATEMENT OF TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT IDENTIFY HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK/MONTH/YEAR YOUR WP/APPRENTICE WILL BE TRAINED?**



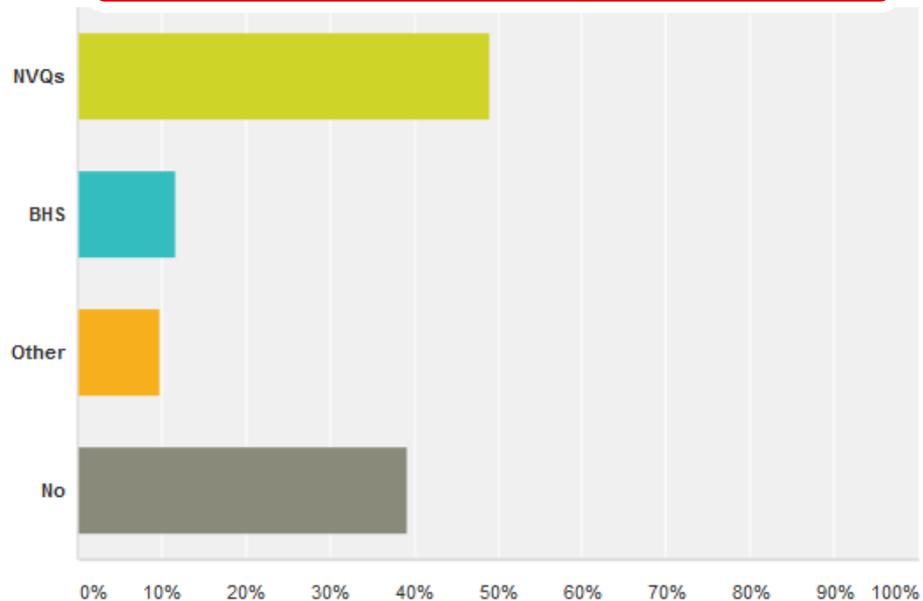
**DOES YOUR STATEMENT OF TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT (WRITTEN CONTRACT) IDENTIFY HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK/MONTH/YEAR YOU WILL BE TRAINED?**



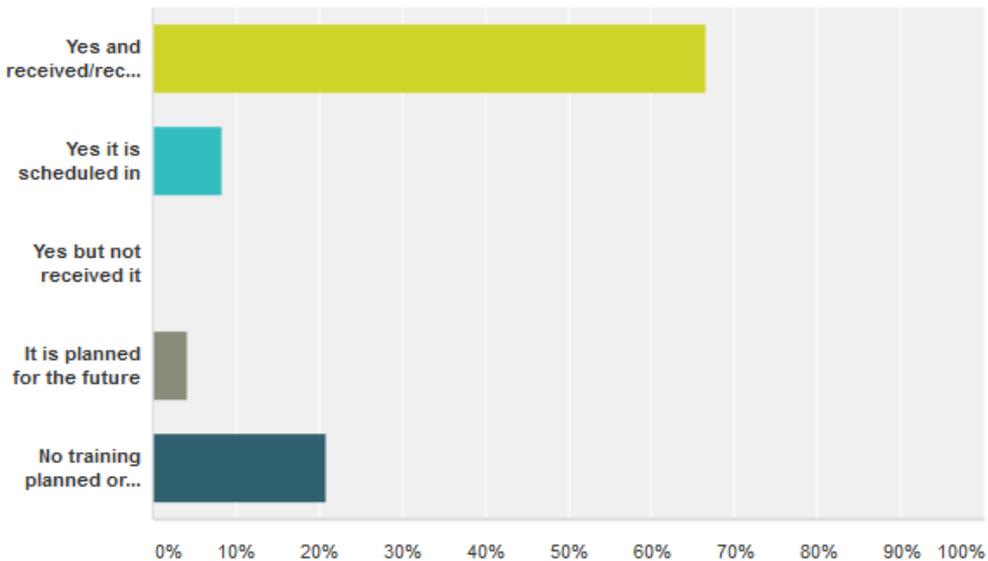
### HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE VALUE YOU ARE GETTING FROM YOUR EMPLOYMENT AS A WORKING PUPIL



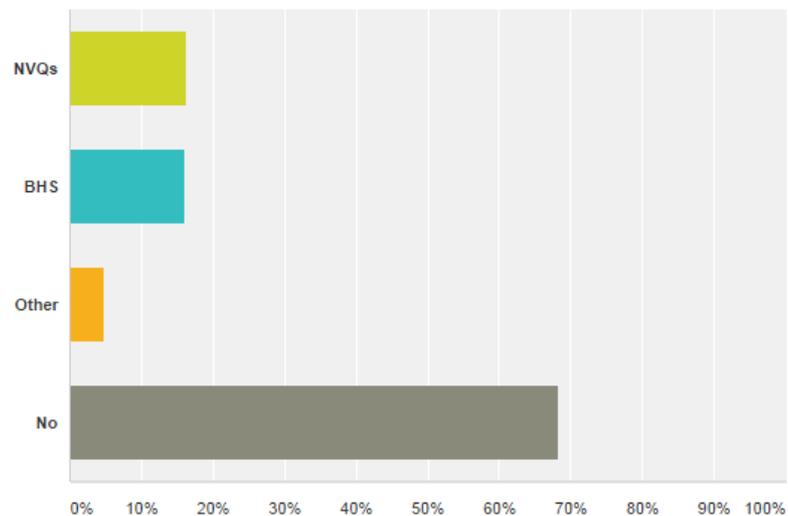
### IS /ARE YOUR WP OR APPRENTICE ON A RECOGNISED TRAINING SCHEME?



### HAVE YOU SET A TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR YOUR WP/APPRENTICE AND HAVE THEY RECEIVED THIS TRAINING?



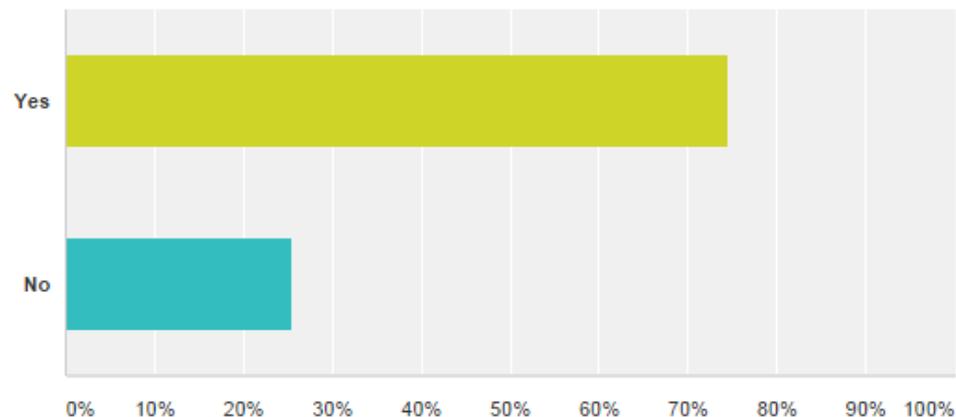
### ARE YOU ON A RECOGNISED TRAINING SCHEME



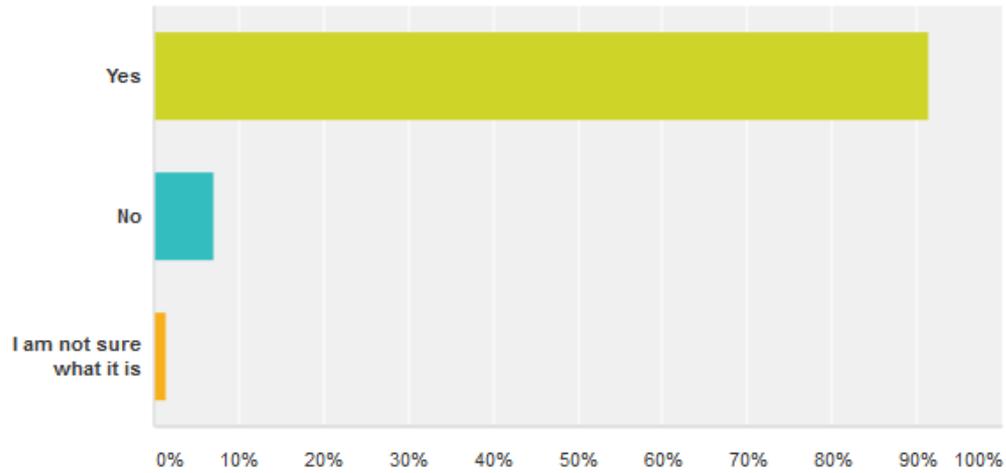
## LOW PAY

- The survey enabled us to calculate the average wage for each type of groom. These rates did not include the value of accommodation (lived in by 36% of respondents) and benefits in kind, which would need to be calculated separately and require more information than we have currently.
- For grooms employed by businesses, the average wage was **£4.19** per hour.
- This rose to **£4.90** for freelance grooms and fell to **£1.96** for working pupils/apprentices.
- The National Minimum Wage (NMW) for the year in which the survey took place (October 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 to 2014) was £6.31 for workers 21 and over; £5.03 for 18 – 20 year olds; £3.72 for 16 – 17 year olds; and £2.68 for apprentices under 19 or in the first year of apprenticeship. We therefore suggest that the industry's reputation for low pay is justly deserved.
- 95% of employers claimed to pay at least NMW, yet only 66% of grooms knew they were being paid at least NMW.

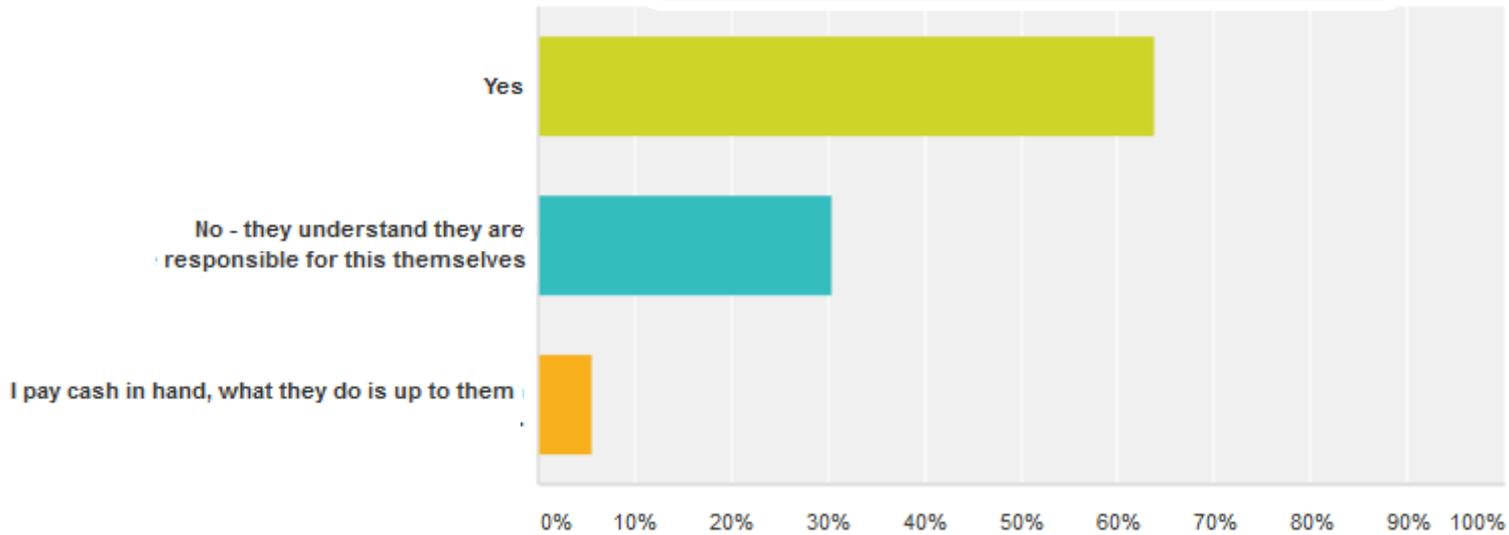
### DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE IS?



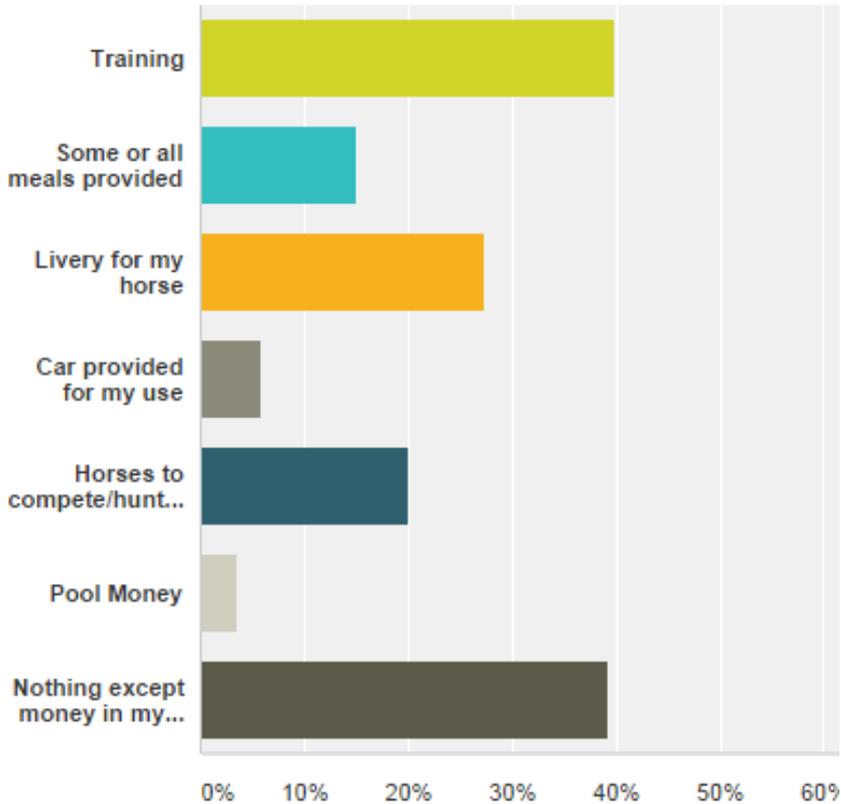
**DO YOU PAY YOUR STAFF NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE OR MORE?**



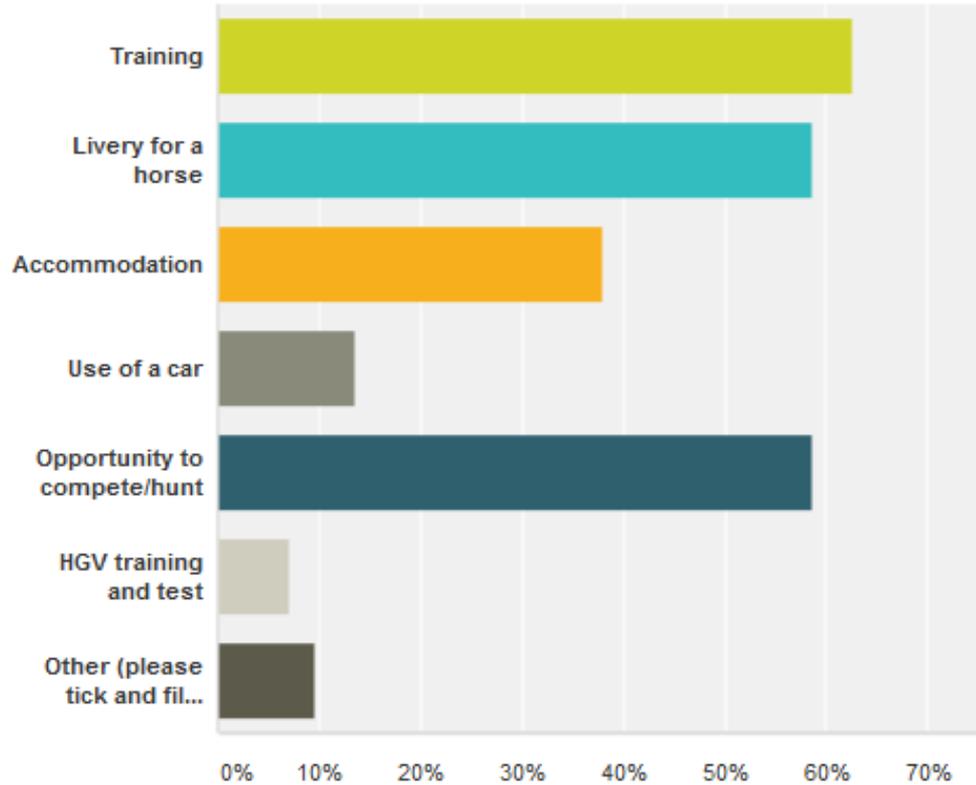
**DO YOU PAY TAX AND NI CONTRIBUTIONS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES?**



**WHAT OTHER BENEFITS DO YOU GET AS PART OF YOUR JOB?**



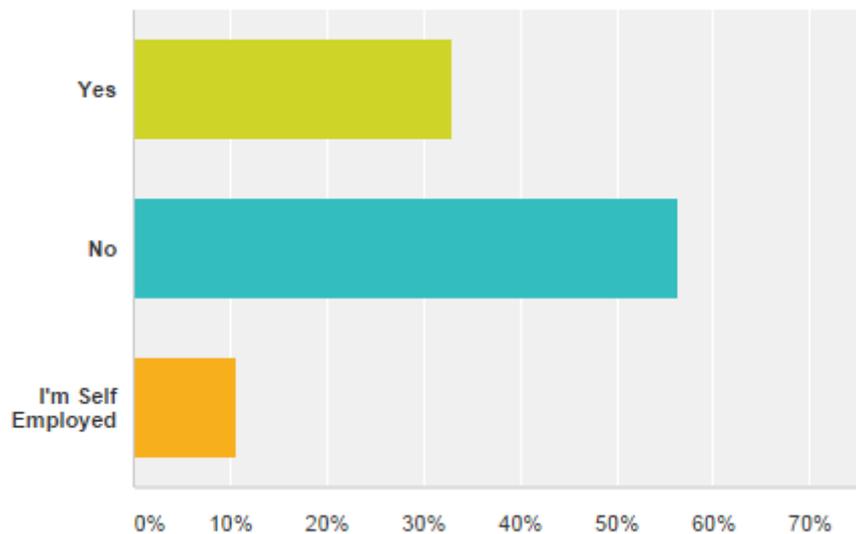
**DO YOU OFFER ANY ADDITIONAL BENEFITS TO YOUR EMPLOYEES?**



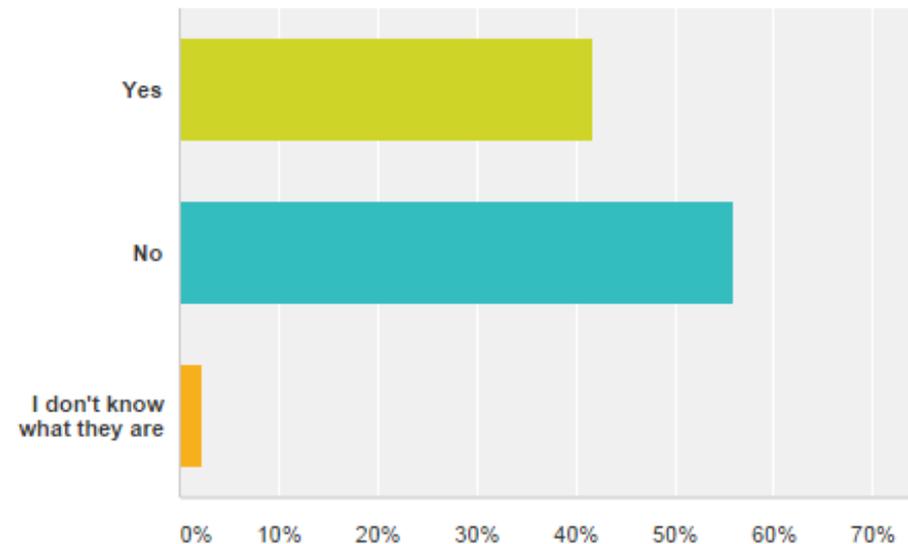
## ADHERENCE TO CURRENT EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

- There is broad evidence to state that basic employment law is being disregarded in many cases within the horse industry.
- Employment contracts, a legal requirement are not being given to 56% of the grooms who responded to the survey. Equally concerning, 56% of grooms stated that they do not receive payslips, also a legal requirement.
- 62% of employers that responded stated that they do provide employment contracts for their employees. However, 13% stated that they do not provide their grooms with a written contract of employment.
- **This contradicts the assertion by 98% of employers within the survey that their staff were employed legally and are aware of their employment rights. Unsurprisingly perhaps, only 67% of grooms agreed with this statement.**

### DO YOU HAVE A WRITTEN CONTRACT OR STATEMENT OF TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT?

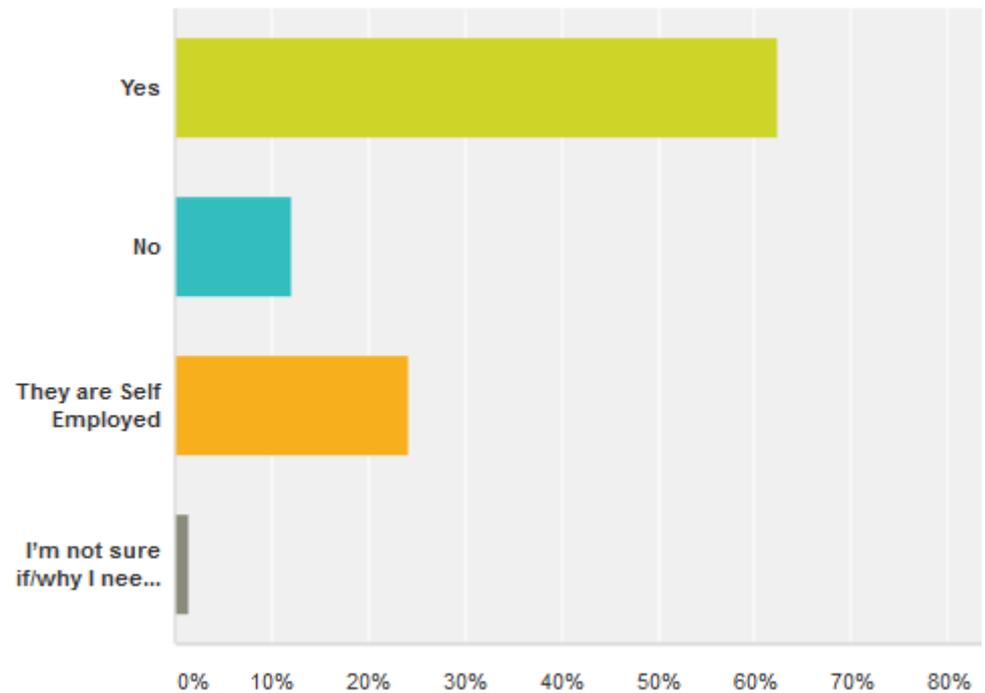


### DO YOU RECIEVE PAYSLEIPS FROM YOUR EMPLOYER?

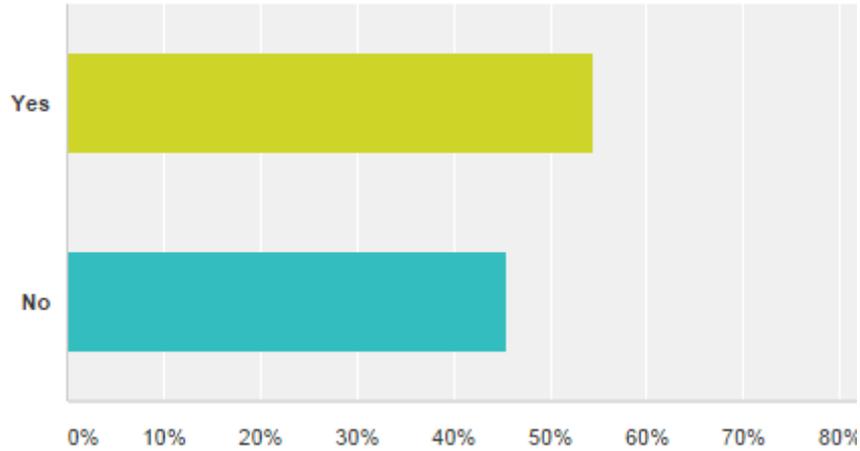


- Other conditions of employment which are considered to be normal in other industries seem to be inconsistent within this industry (*it is important to note that 24% of grooms, according to both the employer and groom survey identified as self-employed – further investigation required to decipher if these respondents are genuinely self employed or are told this employment status by their employer*):
- \* 46% of grooms stated that they did not get paid holiday and 31% of employers stated that they do not provide paid holiday.
- \* 45% of grooms did not receive sick pay of any sort, whereas 74% of employers stated they provided their employees with some kind of sick pay.
- \* Only 27% of employers paid a usual level of pay during sickness, and 47% only paid statutory sick pay. 26% don't pay any sick pay.
- \* 70% of grooms stated that they did not get paid overtime or receive time off in lieu when they work longer than their normal day.
- \* Only 20% of grooms had regular appraisals with their employer and 59% of employers stated that they had regular appraisals with their employees.
- \* 90% of grooms did not pay into a pension scheme and 55% of employers were aware that their staff did not pay into a pension scheme.
- **Even when the level of self-employment has been taken into account these figures, especially those reported by the grooms, are exceedingly worrying.**

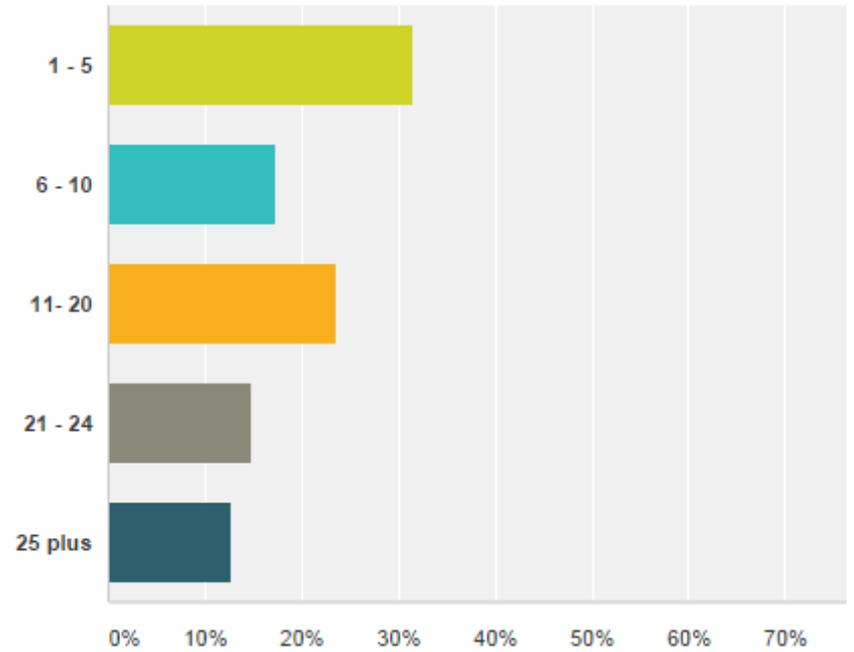
**DO YOU PROVIDE A WRITTEN STATEMENT OF TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT (CONTRACT) FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES?**



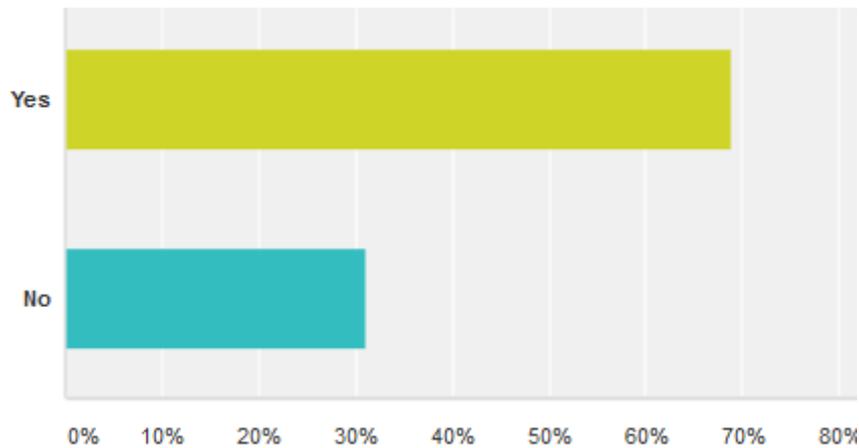
## DO YOU GET PAID HOLIDAY?



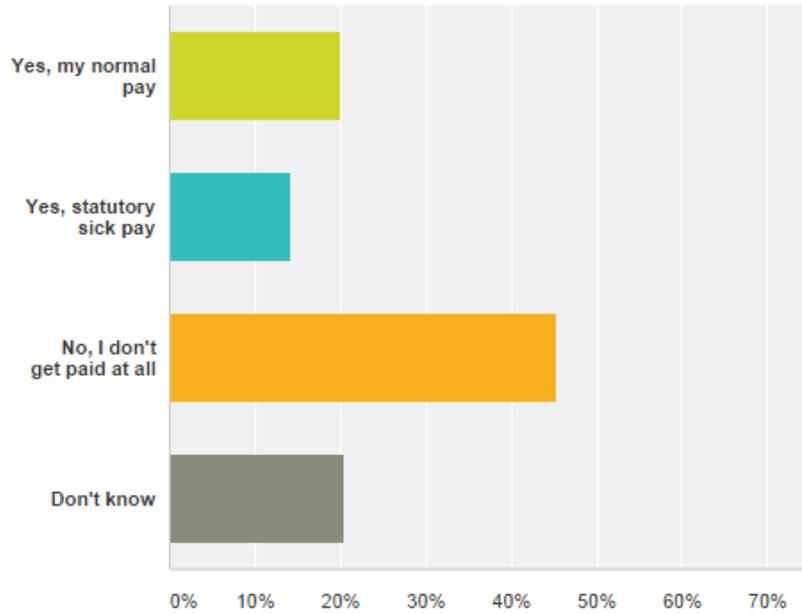
## IF YES, IN 2013 HOW MANY HOLIDAY DAYS DID YOU TAKE?



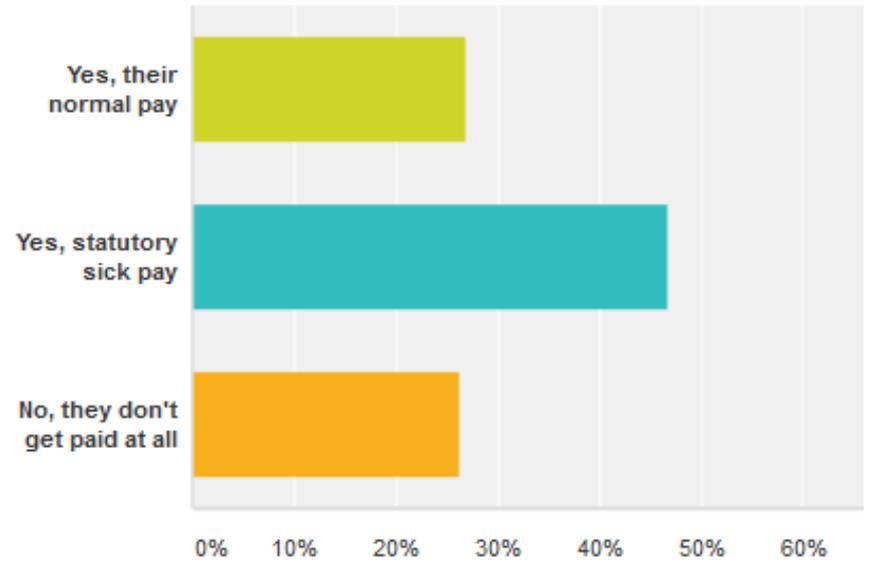
## DO YOUR EMPLOYEES GET PAID HOLIDAY ?



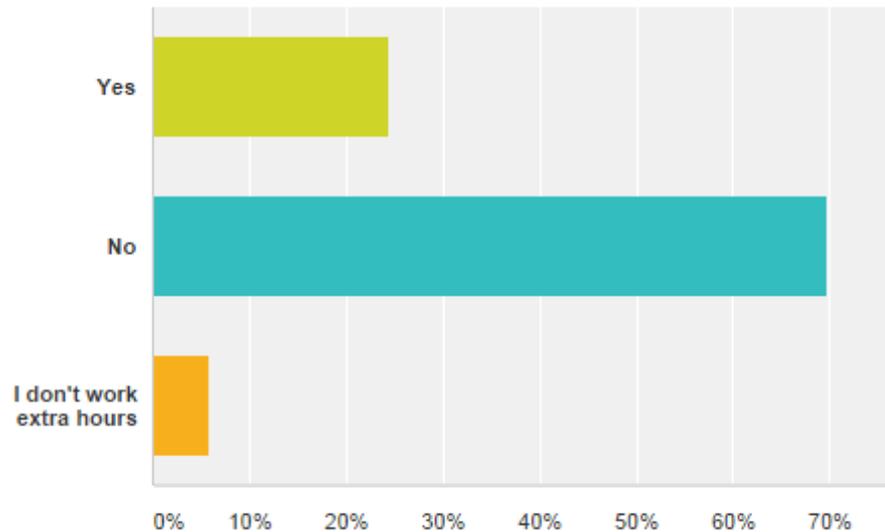
### WHEN YOU ARE SICK AND OFF WORK, DO YOU GET PAID?



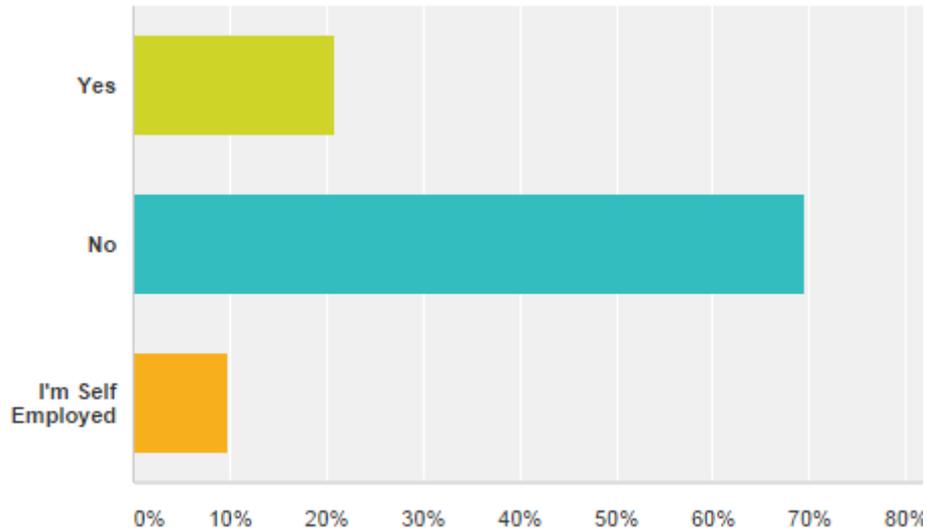
### WHEN YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE SICK AND OFF WORK, DO THEY GET PAID?



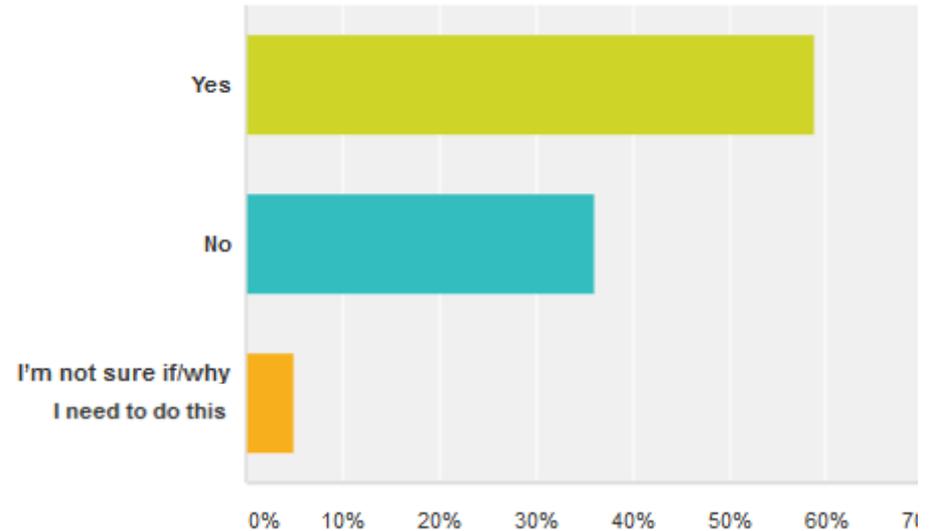
### DO YOU GET PAID OVERTIME OR GET TIMES OFF IN LIEU WHEN YOU WORK SIGNIFICANTLY LONGER THAN YOUR NORMAL DAY?



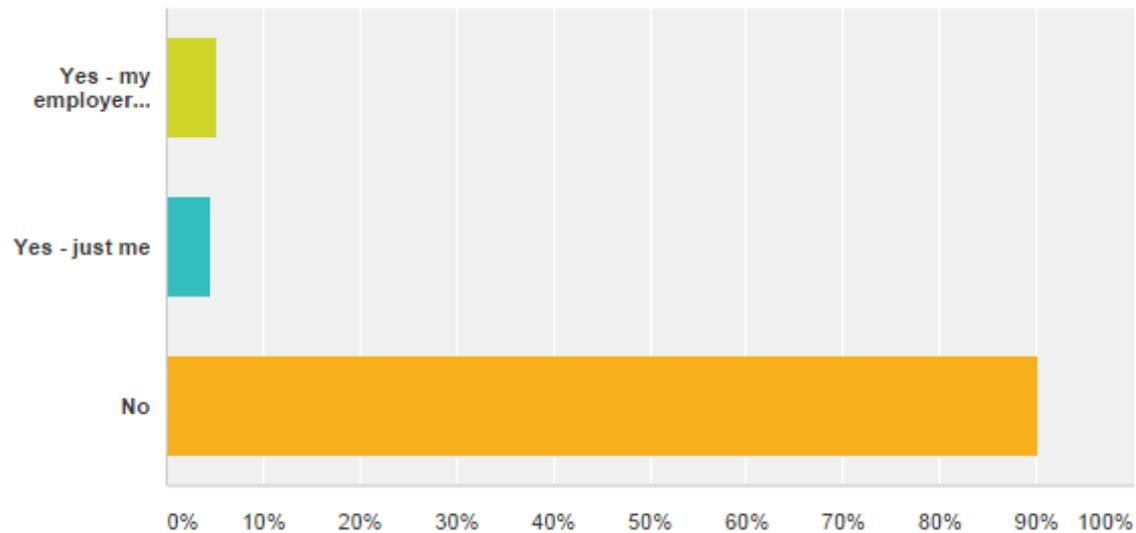
### DO YOU HAVE REGULAR APPRAISALS WITH YOUR EMPLOYER?



### DO YOU HAVE REGULAR APPRAISALS WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES?



### DO YOU PAY INTO A PENSION SCHEME?



## PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

- The horse industry can be a high-risk industry and although the National Health Service can provide a level of care, wages that are lost through injury can also be protected with personal accident insurance.
- Although 58% of grooms did not have personal accident insurance, the majority of employers (57%) stated that they have personal accident insurance for everyone. The vast majority of grooms (90%) felt that employers should provide personal accident insurance to all employees. Comments included:

*"Working with horses is a dangerous job and employers should care enough about their people to make sure they're covered."*

*"It may encourage staff to keep working for their employer."*

- Some grooms recognised the potential economic impact of requiring employers to pay for personal accident insurance, comments included:

*"Cost would impact on wages."*

*"Not sure it's financially viable for many businesses that are struggling to break even at the moment."*

- Although six in ten employers felt that they should provide all employees with personal accident insurance, comments were generally negative and included:

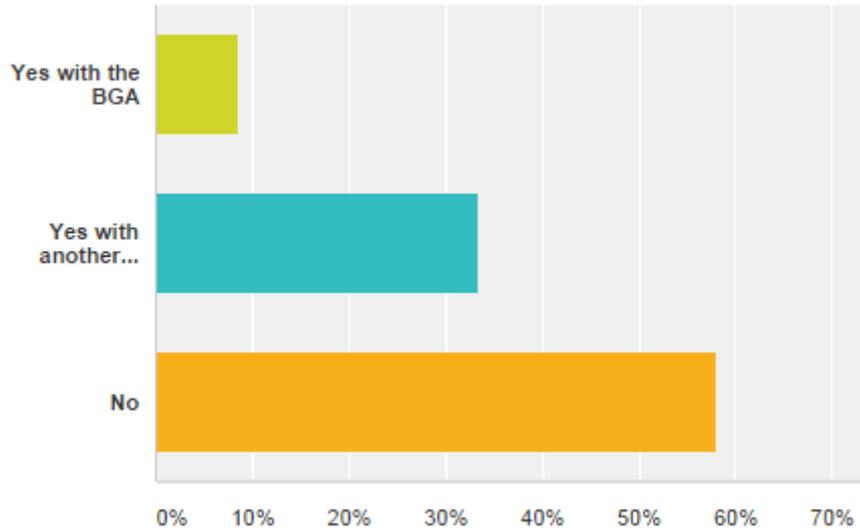
*"Self-employed part-time staff, up to them to get their own insurance. We do have public liability."*

*"The job is taken knowing horses are a risk. I would hope employers would take care not to put their staff in an uncalculated situation."*

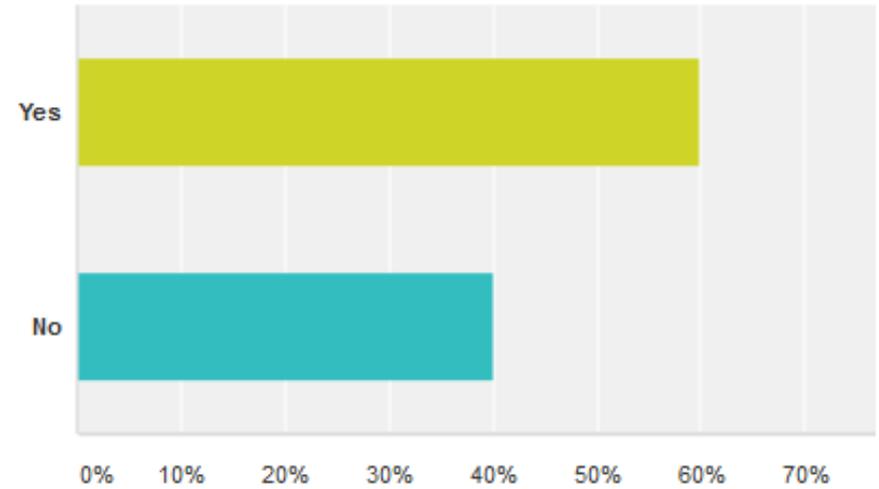
*"It's cheaper for both parties for an individual to get their own insurance."*

*"Staff move around. We have Employer Liability, Public Liability. Staff can and should join something like BHS which provides this. Workers in other industries don't get this, grooms aren't alone in working in a risk area. Those that are qualified are earning enough to make a choice of taking out this cover. If my staff are injured in the line of their work we support them on full pay."*

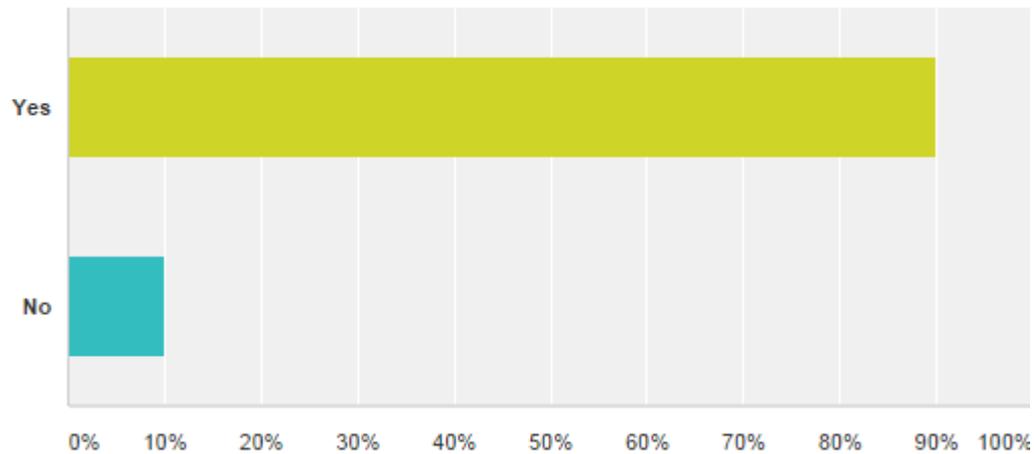
### DO YOU HAVE PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE?



### EMPLOYERS SHOULD PROVIDE PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE TO ALL EMPLOYEES



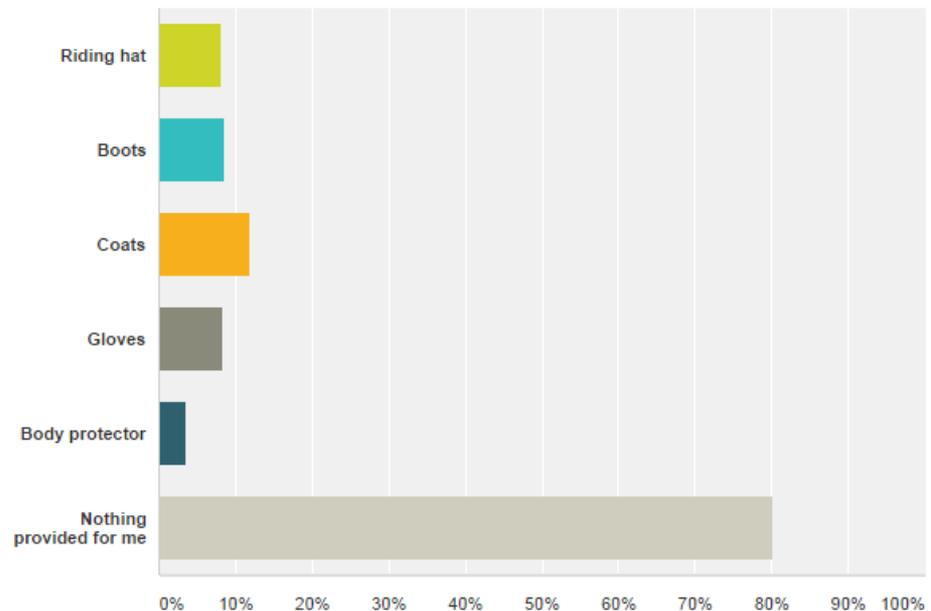
### EMPLOYERS SHOULD PROVIDE PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE TO ALL EMPLOYEES?



## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- It is the responsibility of an employer to provide PPE except where such risk has been controlled by other means that are deemed to be more effective. This is an issue of debate within the horse industry and risk assessments should be carried out to ascertain whether PPE is required.
- According to our survey, 80% of grooms had no protective equipment provided to them by their employer.
- 53% of employers did not provide safety equipment for their grooms. The piece of equipment most likely provided was a coat (28% of those who did provide equipment).
- It is probable that grooms provide their own equipment, such as mucking out boots, gloves, coats and riding helmets. It should be debated as to whether these are the responsibility of the groom or the employer.

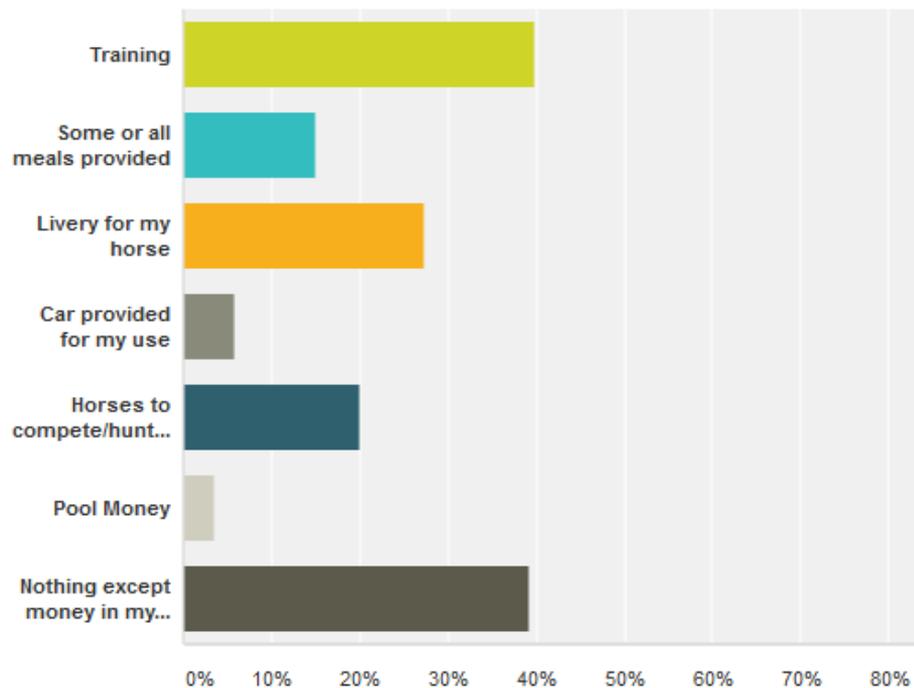
ARE YOU PROVIDED WITH PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) BY YOUR EMPLOYER?



## PERCEIVED EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

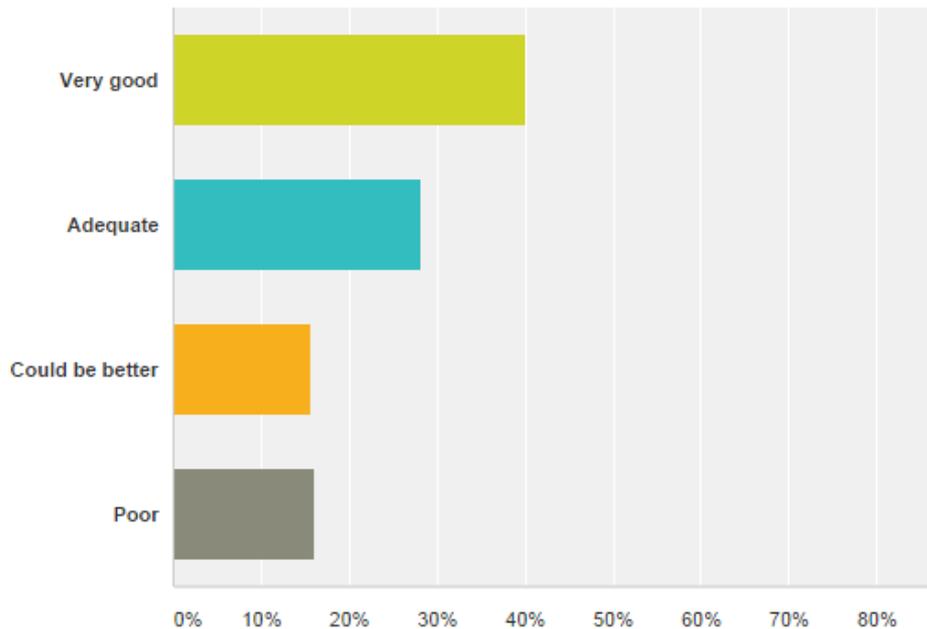
- Nearly four in ten (39%) grooms received no perceived benefits as part of their job. Of those that did, the largest group received training (40%), followed by livery for their horse (27%).
- Other benefits included the use of a horse with which to compete, or hunt (20%), some or all meals provided (15%), a car provided for use (6%), and pool money (4%). Further benefits included part of livery costs, some training, some living expenses (e.g. utility bills), and riding opportunities.
- 63% of employers stated that their grooms received training as an additional benefit. Livery for their own horse, and the opportunity to compete or hunt were also frequently cited benefits (59% for both). Other benefits referred to included exam fees, Christmas bonuses, household utility expenses.

### WHAT OTHER BENEFITS DO YOU GET AS PART OF YOUR JOB?

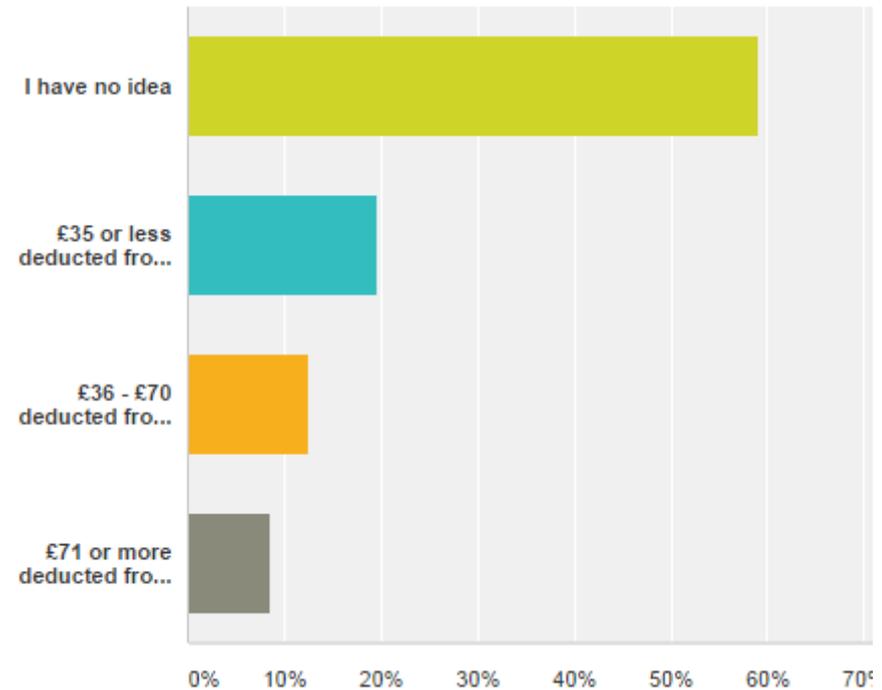


- In terms of accommodation, 64% of grooms stated it was received as part of their job.
- Of those who did receive accommodation, 68% gave a positive response and found it to be either adequate (28%) or very good (40%). Just under a third of respondents (32%) gave negative feedback about accommodation, and stated that it was either 'poor' (16%) or 'could be better' (16%).

**IF YOU ARE PROVIDED WITH ACCOMMODATION HOW WOULD YOU RATE ITS QUALITY?**



**IF YOU ARE PROVIDED WITH ACCOMODATION. HOW MUCH DOES THIS COST YOU PER WEEK?**



## SHARED AND CONTRARY PRIORITIES

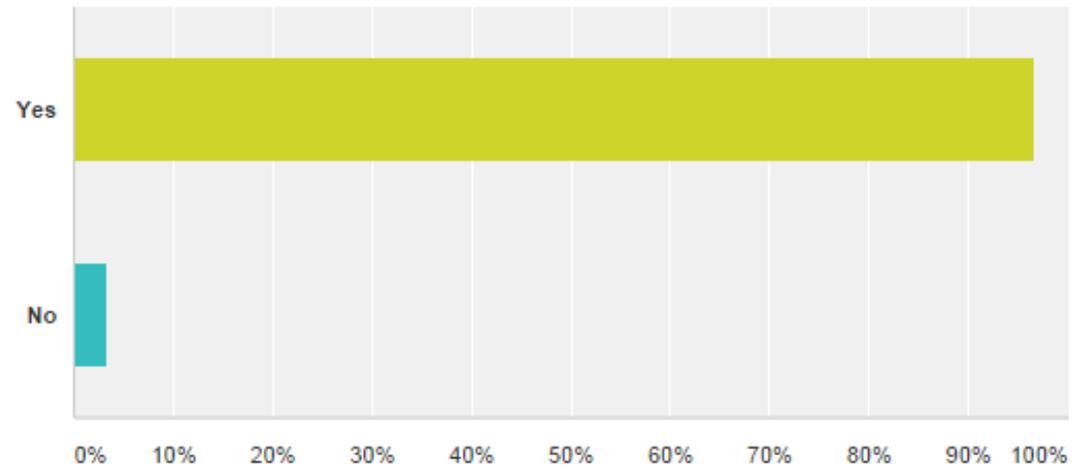
- Further to the concept of a good working culture and communication between employers and grooms, this survey explored the different priorities held regarding working conditions. There were interesting similarities and differences, but overall it should be emphasised that there was more coherence of opinion than perhaps expected.
- \* Grooms (92%) and employers (91%) agreed that salary was a high priority when looking for work as a groom.
- \* Grooms (87%) and employers (84%) agreed that working hours was also a high priority.
- \* Grooms (81%) and employers (80%) both felt that the opportunity to define own work-life balance was important for a groom.
- \* Grooms (98%) and employers (98%) both agreed that caring for the horses was a high priority for a groom.
- \* Grooms (39%) felt that travel opportunities were slightly more important than was believed by the employers (33%).
- \* Both grooms (48%) and employers (49%) felt that accommodation was fairly important for a groom.
- \* Grooms (92%) and employers (92%) equally felt that employer reputation was of high importance.
- \* Grooms (87%) felt that good Human Resources within the business, and knowing that they were employed legally and correctly, was important. This compared to only 80% of employers.
- \* 80% of employers felt that 'riding' would be important to staff, whereas only 70% of grooms felt likewise.
- \* 51% of grooms felt that it was important to take their own horse onto a yard compared with 68% of employers.
- \* 90% of employers and 96% of grooms agreed on a need for an association to educate and support the development of good employment practices.
- It is possible that employers over-estimate the importance, to the grooms, of riding and livery as a benefit.

# PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS

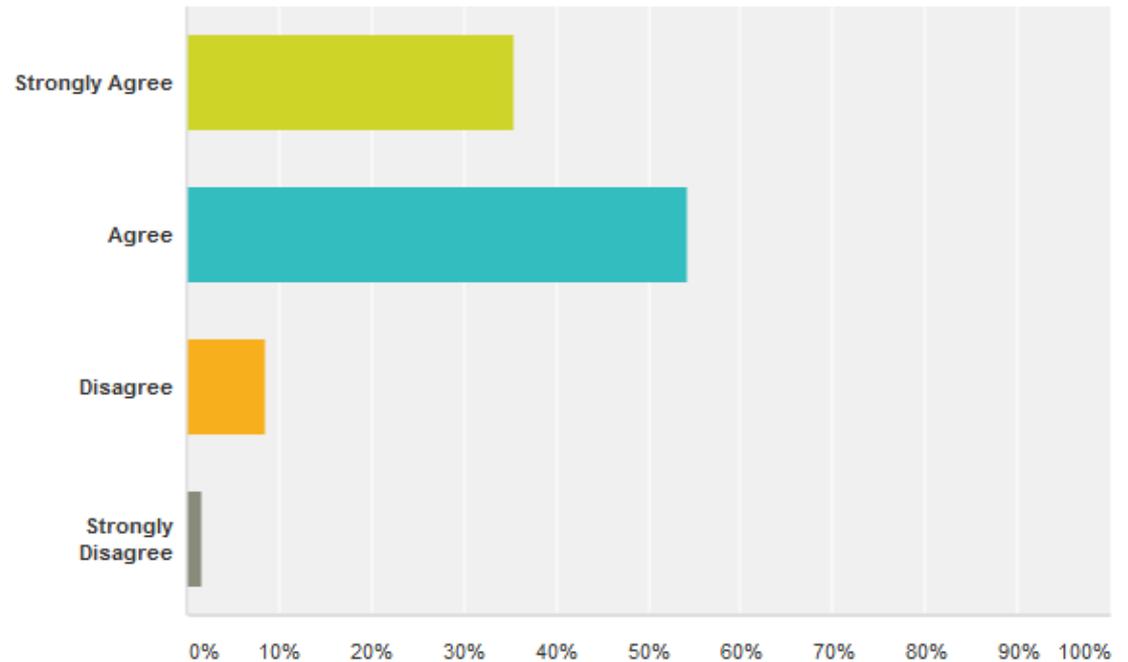


- It is not presumptive to infer, therefore, that this report has detailed the 'difficult working conditions' cited by 57% of grooms who had already left the industry, as a reason for their exit.
- It is easy to visualise the overworked groom, unable to take holiday and unable to be sick. The groom who works through injury, demotivated when her promised training is never received. Unable to feedback to their employer in a safe, systematic format of appraisals. Although many employers who responded to the survey demonstrated a responsible and caring attitude to their staff, there is evidence that some are not providing a good, or legal, working environment for their grooms.
- The findings from this survey are not entirely negative, however, grooms and employers are largely on the same page regarding a wide variety of issues.
- Grooms appear to be, on the whole, 'in it for the horse' and it is crucial that this emotional connection is not abused.
- There is some evidence of good practice and a great deal of goodwill toward improving the current situation on the part of employers.
- Grooms and employers alike need to be better educated on legal working conditions. The survey indicated that there is demand for clear information, with nearly 90% of employers and 96% of grooms agreeing on a need for an association to educate and support the development of good employment practices.
- The British Grooms Association hopes to provide training and information to achieve this throughout the industry.
- Hopefully, in the not too distant future, we can be sure that stories of people working for 86 pence per hour, 70 hours per week are apocryphal rather than true.

**I BELIEVE THERE IS A NEED FOR AN ASSOCIATION TO EDUCATE AND SUPPORT EMPLOYERS IN THE PRACTICE OF GOOD EMPLOYMENT**



**EMPLOYERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THEIR STAFF AND SHOULD WORK WITH THE BGA TO IMPROVE STANDARDS**



# REFERENCES



- British Horse Industry Confederation. 2009. BHIC Briefing – Size and Scope of the Equine Sector.
- British Equestrian Trade Association. 2011. National Equestrian Survey, conducted by Sportwise.
- Lantra Sector Skills Council. 2011. A Study into the Business and Skills Requirements of the UK Equine Industry.

# THANKS TO



- This research would not be possible without the dedication from Georgina and Kate who brought real expertise and knowledge to the project. The BGA thanks them for their tireless work and support.
- The BEF and all Member Bodies helped the BGA to publicise the survey and encourage all members to take part.
- All grooms and employers who took part with such enthusiasm – see you all again in 2015 when the survey will be re run.