



The Findings

BGA Survey 2025

**Do you have a written
contract of employment?**



**BRITISH GROOMS
ASSOCIATION**

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1 Introduction

a) About the survey

In January 2025, the British Grooms Association (BGA) conducted a survey to gain insight into the prevalence of written contracts of employment in the equestrian industry.

The survey was open for 10 days, and 343 grooms responded. 255 respondents told us they were employed full-time, part-time, or on a zero hours/casual contract.

The remaining 87 respondents stated that they were self-employed with more than one client. They were removed from the analysis because, as a freelancer, it is their responsibility to give their clients a Client Agreement.

The employment contract is also known as a 'written statement of employment particulars'. However, in the equestrian sector, it is commonly referred to as a 'written contract of employment'.

Before taking the survey, respondents were reminded that a 'written contract of employment' is a legally binding agreement between an employee and an employer that outlines the terms and conditions of the employment relationship. This includes the employee's rights, responsibilities, and duties.

By law, this document must be issued to an employee either on or before their first day of work. It should include details of things like pay, holidays and working hours.

b) The BGA

The [British Grooms Association](#) (BGA), established in 2007 by former grooms, serves as the professional body for individuals working with horses.

The BGA provides support, education, and advocacy to its members across the equestrian industry, promoting professionalism and improved working conditions.

As a non-profit organisation, the BGA's mission is to enhance the working lives of all grooms working in any sector, ensuring they are represented in key industry decisions.

2 Survey aims and objectives

The aim of the survey is to gain an insight into the proportion of grooms that have been given a written contract of employment by their employer.

This is a survey that the BGA has run periodically for several years.

The survey data will be analysed to inform future initiatives, and all responses will be consolidated to provide a snapshot of the industry's current state.

a) Methodology Overview (how the survey was conducted)

This survey was designed by the BGA with questions based on anecdotal evidence received from grooms.

The survey was responded to by both BGA members and non-members and it consisted of five questions which were answered anonymously.

The survey was shared twice via social media, and twice via email directly to the BGA membership.

b) Survey limitations

While the survey offers valuable insights into whether grooms do or do not have a written contract of employment when working within the equestrian industry, a few important limitations should be considered for transparency and balance.

The sample size is informative but is not large enough to fully represent the entire equestrian workforce.

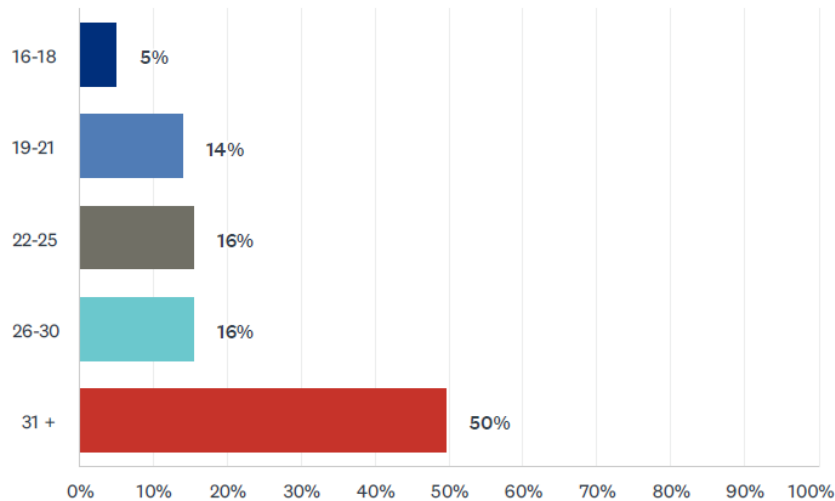
However, it should be noted that the survey results are consistent with what is repeatedly noted by other means of data collection by the BGA.



3 Results

a) Age

A figure of 50% of respondents are over 31 years old. This shows that half of respondents are likely to have worked in the equestrian industry for a significant period of time.



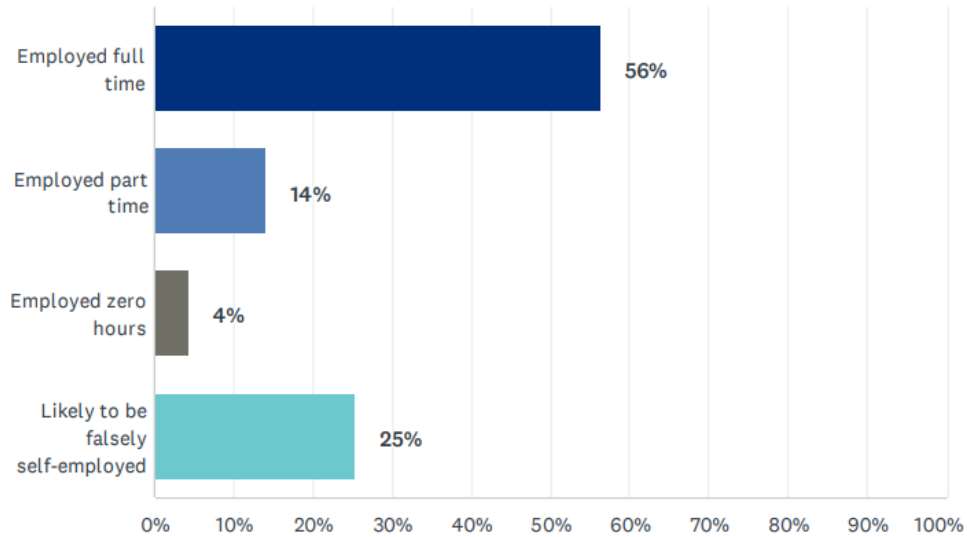
Further analysis finds that of the respondents who did not have a contract of employment:

- 26% were under 21 years old
- 27% were between 22 and 30 year olds
- 47% were 31+ years olds

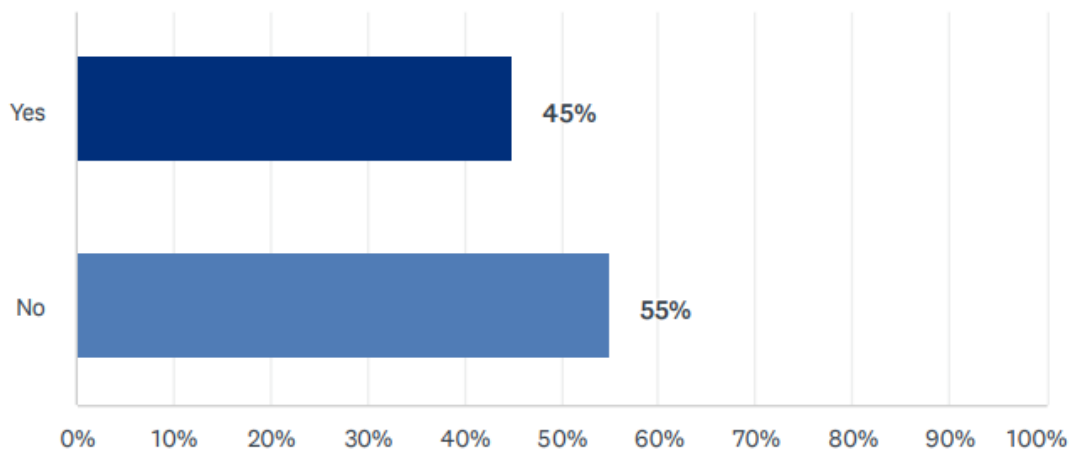
Worryingly, although the sample size was small, 9% of the 16-18 year olds did not have a contract. This is concerning as they are minors and not only is a contract required, but there are also strict regulations that employers must adhere to when employing under 18-year-olds.

b) Employment status

25% of grooms reported that the person they work for told them they were self-employed, however, they only worked at one yard. These individuals are likely to be falsely self-employed (illegal) and therefore should have a written contract of employment.



c) Written contract of employment



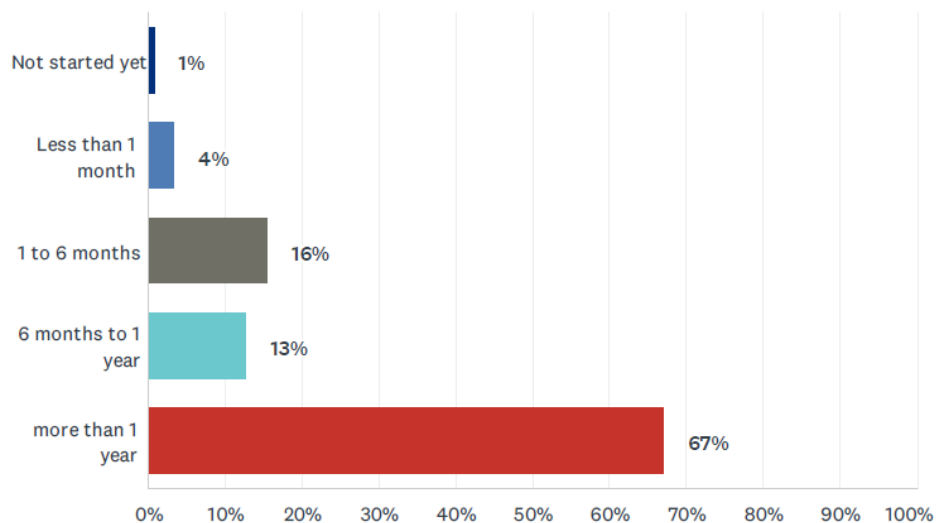
55% of respondents confirmed that they did not have a written contract of employment (otherwise known as a written statement of employment particulars). **This means that 55% of respondents were employed illegally.**

Further analysis of the data identified that:

- **38%** of **full-time** grooms do not have a contract
- **50%** of **part-time** grooms do not have a contract
- **80%** of **casual** (also known as zero hours) grooms do not have a contract

d) Length of time in role

All employed grooms are legally entitled to receive a written contract on, or before their first day of employment.

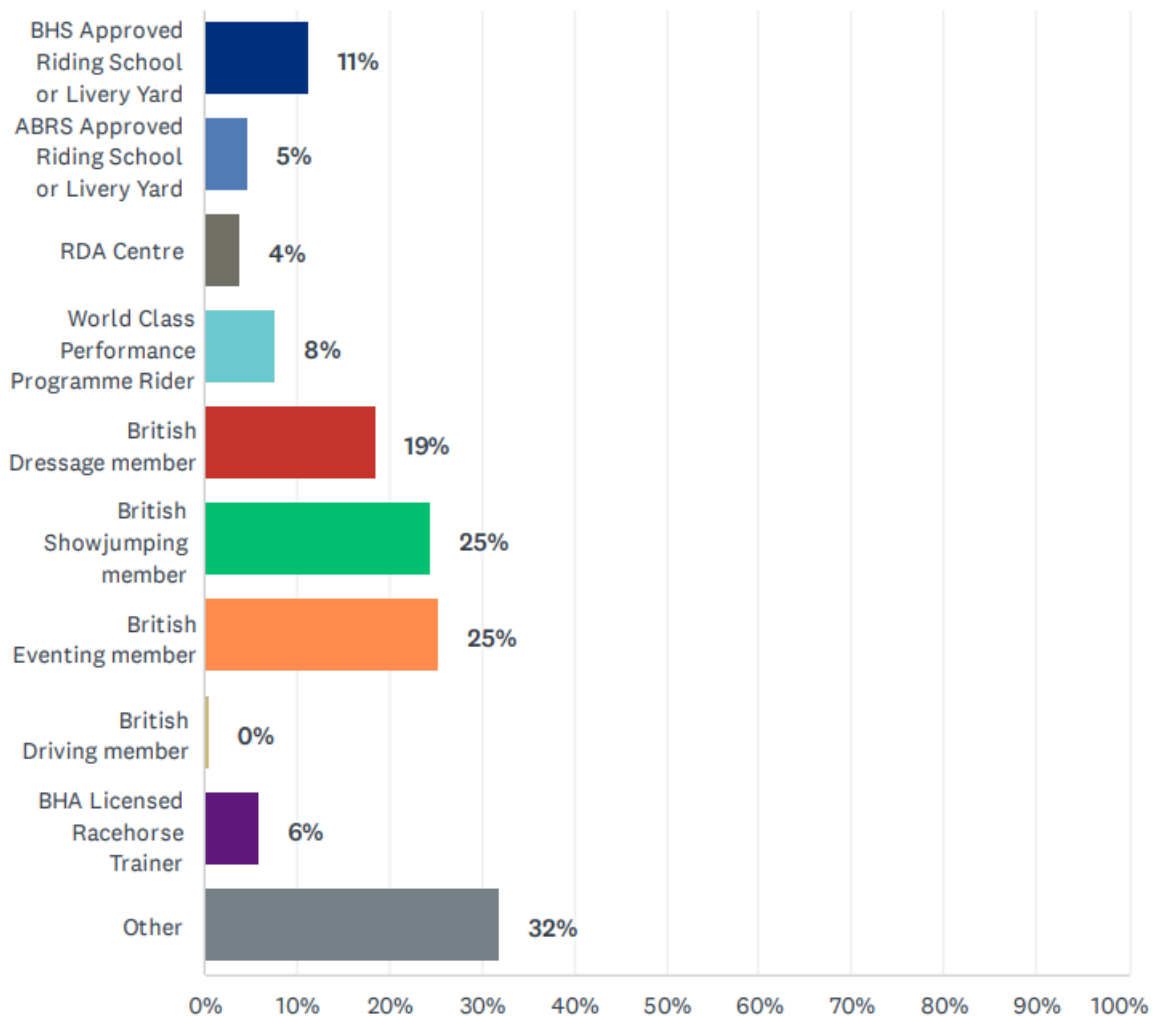


60% of the respondents who had identified that they did not have a contract of employment had been in their role for over a year and 17% for 6 – 12 months.

e) Organisations that their employer belongs to

By asking the groom which organisation their employer belonged to, it is possible to identify which equestrian sector they are involved with.

It is important to note that respondents could select more than one option.



On further analysis, of the respondents who **did not have a contract of employment**:

- 30% work for members of British Showjumping.
- 23% work for members of British Dressage.
- 23% work for members of British Eventing.
- 13% work for a BHS or ABRS approved riding school.

4 Conclusion

This survey report has revealed that there is a lack of compliance with employment legislation in the equestrian industry.

The absence of a written contract of employment is commonly linked with the absence of other employment rights, including compliance of the National Minimum Wage, correct annual holiday entitlement, paying by PAYE and adhering to the Working Time Directive.

The percentage of 55% of no written contract being given by the employer backs up the anecdotal evidence received by the BGA by phone, email and messages.

In addition, the BGA visits over 25 colleges and universities per annum and the percentage of students who are employed alongside their studies who don't have a contract is circa 80%.

Encouragingly, the survey reveals that the percentage of full-time grooms without a contract has decreased to 38% (from 43% in 2023). The BGA views this as possible progress towards an increase in compliance and awareness of the importance of a contract of employment.

This is likely to be due to recent media coverage and the increase in membership to the [Equestrian Employers Association](#) (EEA) and the use of its Contract Creator tool.

Expanding these positive practices industry-wide is not just an ideal but a necessity and a legal, moral and ethical obligation.

The BGA, EEA, industry leaders, stakeholders and employers have a responsibility to raise standards and be compliant.

The equestrian industry has a clear path forward; enforce fair employment, and ensure that every worker feels secure, valued and respected. Taking these steps will foster a healthier, more resilient workforce, ultimately benefiting both grooms, the horses they care for and the wider industry.





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