



The Findings

BGA Survey 2025

**A report for Horsescotland
10.10.2025**



**BRITISH GROOMS
ASSOCIATION**

Contents

1	Introduction	3
	a) About the survey	3
	b) The BGA.....	3
	c) Horsescotland	3
2	Survey aims and objectives	4
	a) Methodology Overview (how the survey was conducted)	4
	b) Survey limitations	4
3	Demographic	5
	a) Age	5
	b) Gender	5
	c) Location	6
	d) Sector	7
	e) Employer and Client profile	8
	f) BGA membership	8
	g) Employment status	9
4	Employed Grooms' Results	10
	a) Indicators of Good Employment.....	10
	b) The National Minimum Wage	11
	c) Recording of working hours and overtime	12
	d) Accommodation.....	12
	e) Workplace issues affecting mental health and wellbeing	14
	f) Industry futures	15
	g) Horsescotland	15
5	Self-employed grooms results.....	16

a) Employment status 16

a) Indicators of self-employed status 16

b) Freelance groom's liability insurance 17

c) Bookings and invoicing 18

d) Workplace issues affecting mental health and wellbeing 18

e) Industry futures 19

f) Horsescotland 20

6 Conclusion.....21

1 Introduction

a) About the survey

- 1.1 In August and September 2025, the British Grooms Association (BGA), in partnership with Horsescotland conducted a survey to gain insight into the working lives of grooms in Scotland.
- 1.2 The survey was open for 4 weeks, and 108 grooms responded.
- 1.3 60 respondents told us they were employed full-time, part-time, or on a zero-hours/casual contract.
- 1.4 The remaining 48 respondents reported that they were self-employed.
- 1.5 Employed grooms were asked a different set of questions than those who reported that they were self-employed.
- 1.6 An opportunity to win an Amazon voucher and a BGA hoodie was offered as an incentive to complete the survey.

b) The BGA

- 1.7 The British Grooms Association (BGA), established in 2007 by former grooms, serves as the professional body for individuals working with horses.
- 1.8 The BGA provides support, education, and advocacy to its members across the equestrian industry, promoting professionalism and improved working conditions.
- 1.9 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.

c) Horsescotland

- 1.10 [Horsescotland](#) is the national organisation for all equestrian sports and activity in Scotland and was founded in 1998.
- 1.11 Horsescotland aspires to empower Scotland to be a leading inclusive nation for horse sports and activities.
- 1.12 Horsescotland is a partner of Sportscotland (the national sports agency) and seeks to enable equestrian sport and the equestrian sector in Scotland to develop and excel through the highest levels of participation in the sport and the highest levels of growth for the country's equestrian industry.

2 Survey aims and objectives

- 2.1 The survey aimed to gain an insight into the working lives and experiences of grooms in Scotland to highlight areas where more support, education, and advocacy may be required.
- 2.2 This survey contained themes that the BGA has researched periodically across the United Kingdom. **The focus of this survey was grooms who worked only in Scotland.**
- 2.3 The survey data will be analysed to inform future initiatives, and all responses will be consolidated to provide a snapshot of what it is like to be employed in the Scottish equestrian industry.

a) Methodology Overview (how the survey was conducted)

- 2.4 This survey was designed by the BGA with questions based on anecdotal evidence received from grooms.
- 2.5 The survey was responded to by both BGA members and non-members, and it consisted of 24 questions, which were answered anonymously.
- 2.6 The survey was shared via social media by Horsescotland and the BGA, as well as via email directly to the BGA members in Scotland.

b) Survey limitations

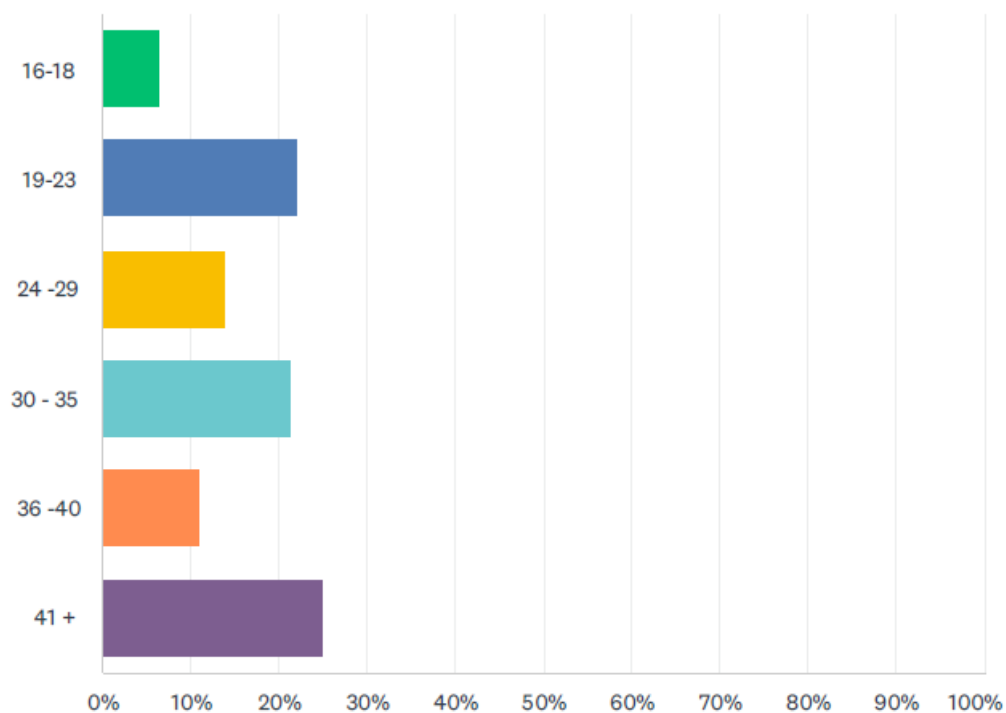
- 2.7 While the survey offers valuable insights into the experiences of grooms working in Scotland today, a few important limitations should be considered for transparency and balance.
- 2.8 The sample size is informative, but it is not large enough to fully represent the entire equestrian workforce.
- 2.9 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 Demographic

a) Age

- 3.1 57% of respondents were over 30 years old. This demonstrates that the majority of respondents are likely to have worked in the equestrian industry for a significant period of time.

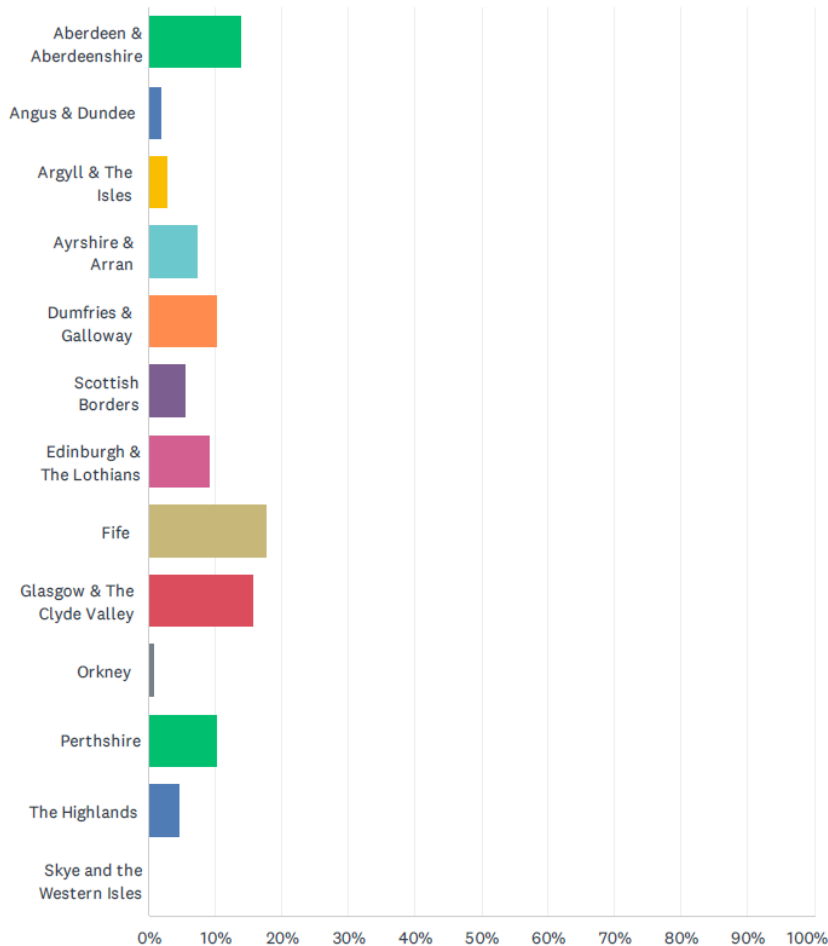


b) Gender

- 3.2 Almost 95% of respondents identified as female. 4% identified as male, and the remainder did not wish to disclose their gender.

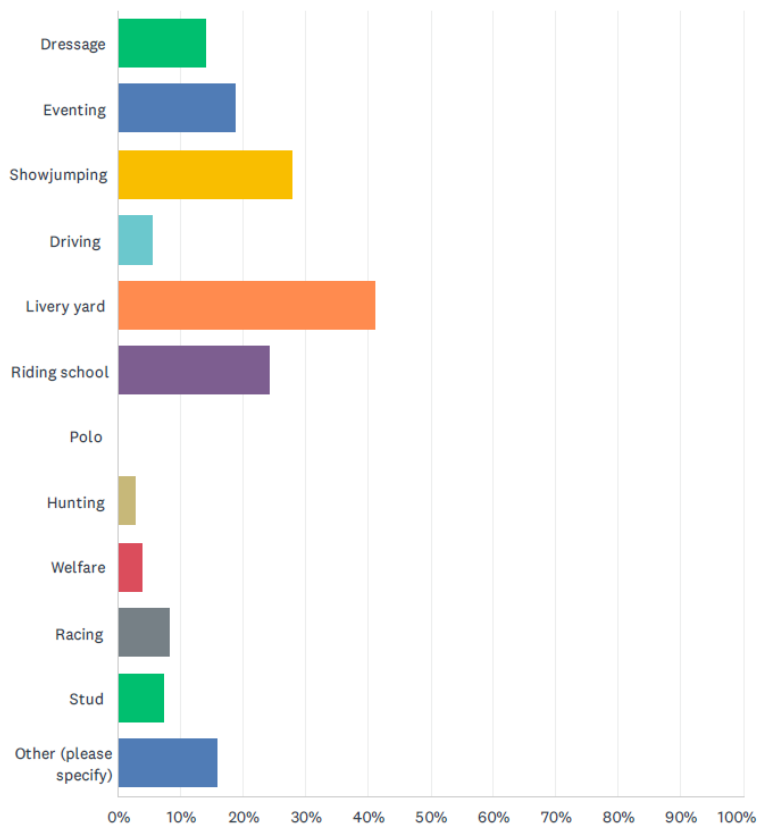
c) Location

3.3 Grooms from across Scotland responded to the survey. The majority were located in the Fife area, and a significant proportion were working in the Clyde Valley, Glasgow, and Aberdeenshire areas.



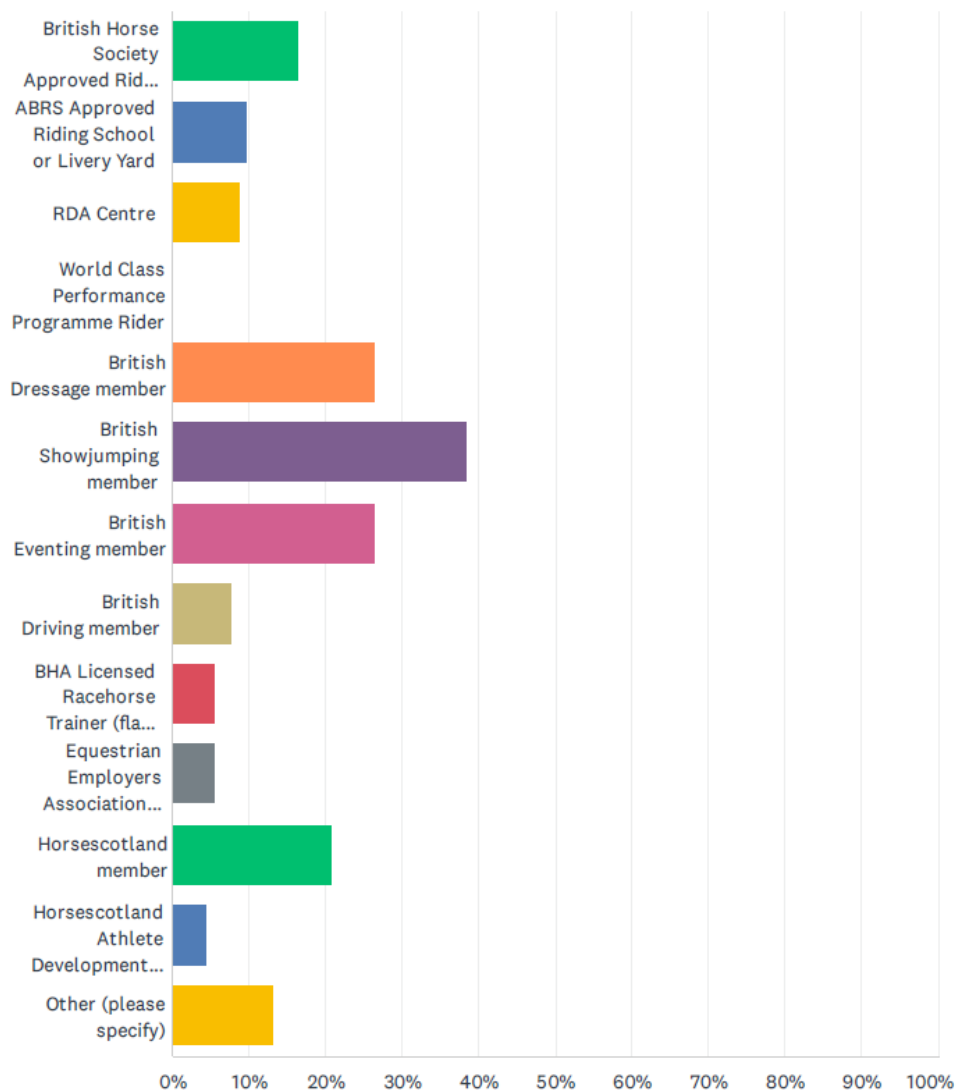
d) Sector

- 3.4 Responses were received from workers across a variety of different sectors, including hunting, racing, welfare, dressage, and eventing.
- 3.5 The majority of respondents (41%) worked on livery yards, and 28% worked in the showjumping sector.



e) Employer and Client profile

- 3.6 Respondents were asked to indicate whether their employer (or clients if they were self-employed) was a member of any professional equestrian organisation.
- 3.7 21% indicated that they worked for members of Horsescotland, and 5% reported that they worked for members of the Equestrian Employers Association (a sister organisation to the BGA).
- 3.8 The majority (38%) worked for members of British Showjumping.

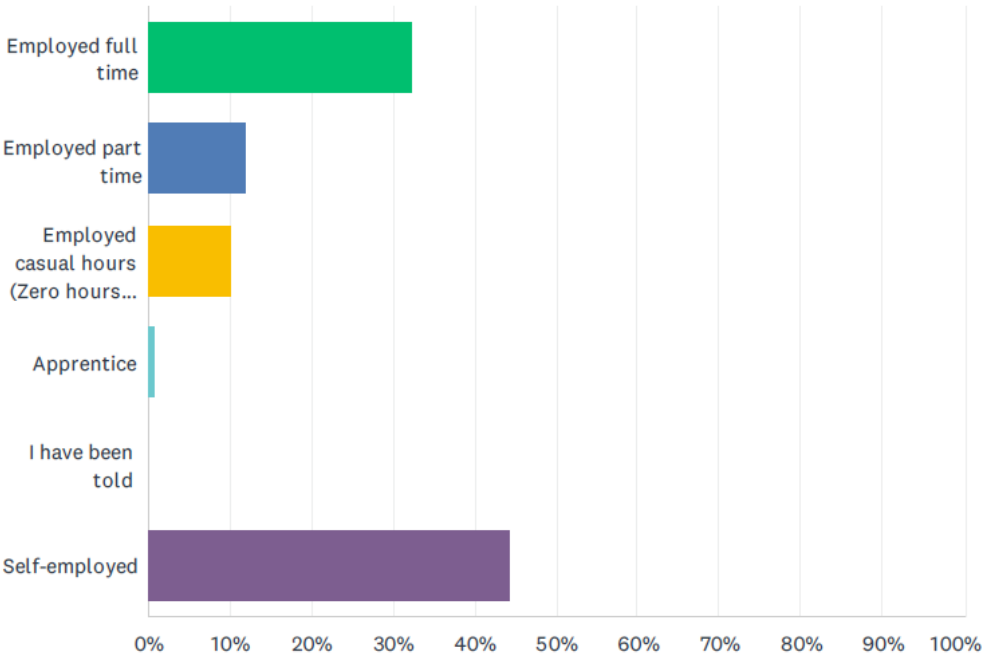


f) BGA membership

- 3.9 Almost 50% of respondents reported that they were members of the BGA.

g) Employment status

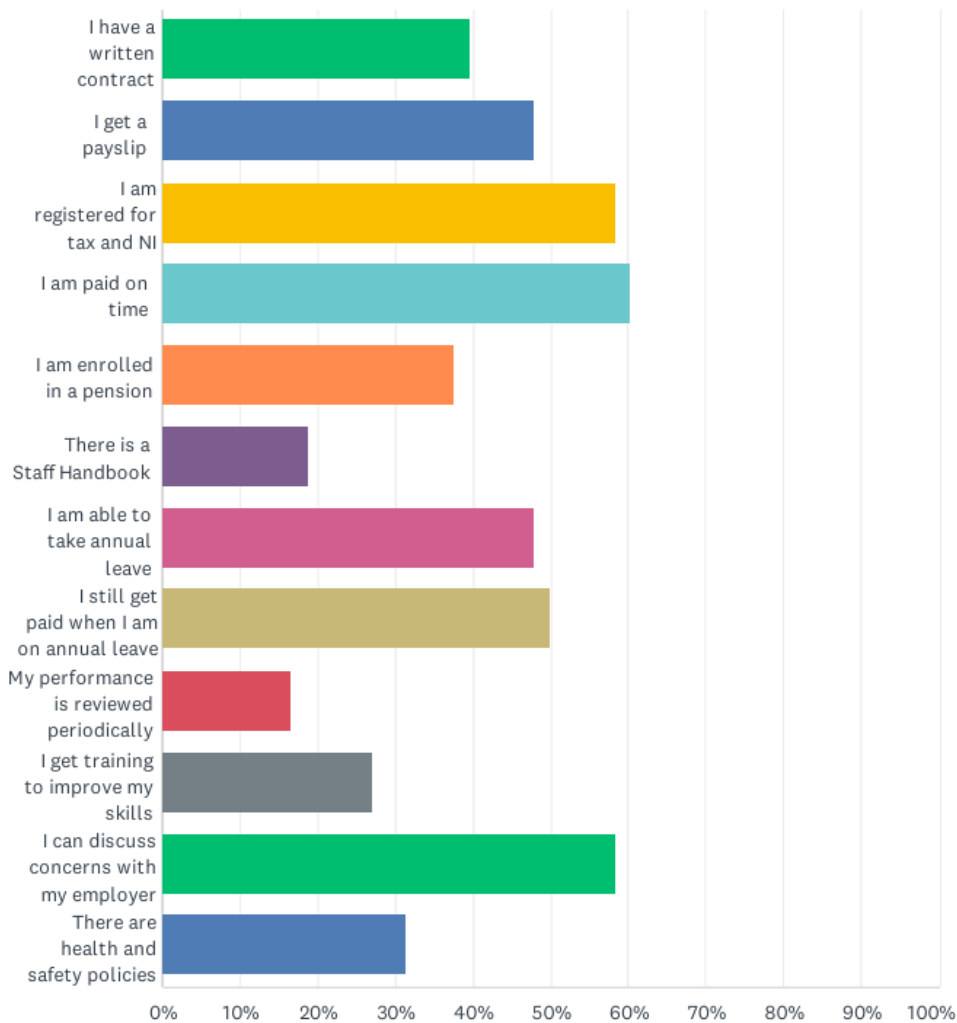
- 3.10 55% of respondents told us that they were employed on a full-time, part-time time zero zero-hour, or apprenticeship basis.
- 3.11 45% reported that they were self-employed.



4 Employed Grooms' Results

a) Indicators of Good Employment

- 4.1 Employed grooms were asked to indicate which statutory entitlements and elements of good HR practice they had experienced in their current role.
- 4.2 They could select more than one option.



- 4.3 Of the 48 grooms who responded to this question, only 19 (40%) reported that they have a contract of employment in their current role.

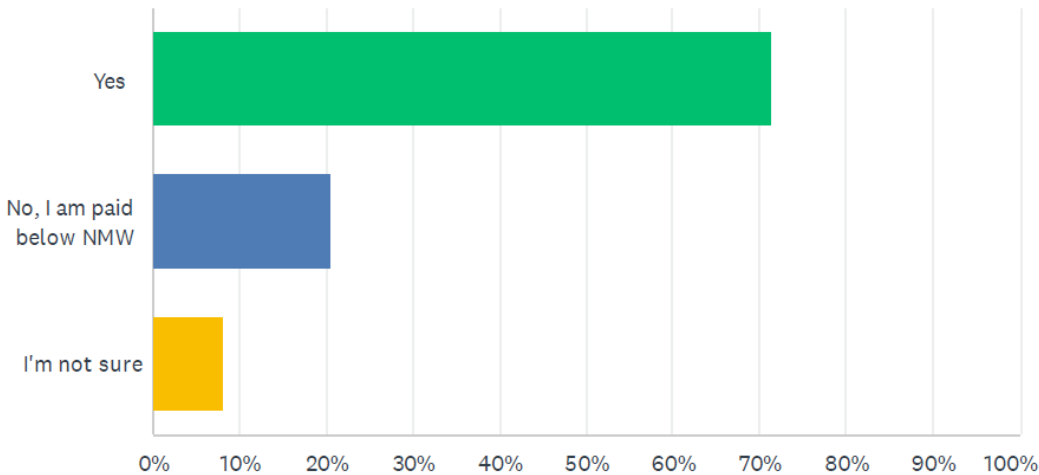
This indicates that 60% of grooms in Scotland could be working without a written contract.

A written statement of employment particulars is required by law.

- 4.4 Concerningly, only 48% of employed grooms told us that they receive a payslip each time they are paid. Payslips are a legal requirement in almost all employment circumstances.
- 4.5 Further analysis revealed that 40% of respondents were not always paid on time and only 38% were enrolled in a pension scheme, despite this being a legal requirement for anyone between the ages of 22 and state pension age.
- 4.6 Only 50% of respondents reported receiving paid annual leave, and 48% were able to take their statutory annual leave entitlement.
- 4.7 **This indicates that approximately 50% employers in the Scottish equestrian industry may not be complying with their legal obligations.**
- 4.8 Analysis of indicators of Good Employment reveals that only 27% of employed grooms reported receiving training to improve their skills, and only 17% had their performance periodically reviewed.

b) The National Minimum Wage

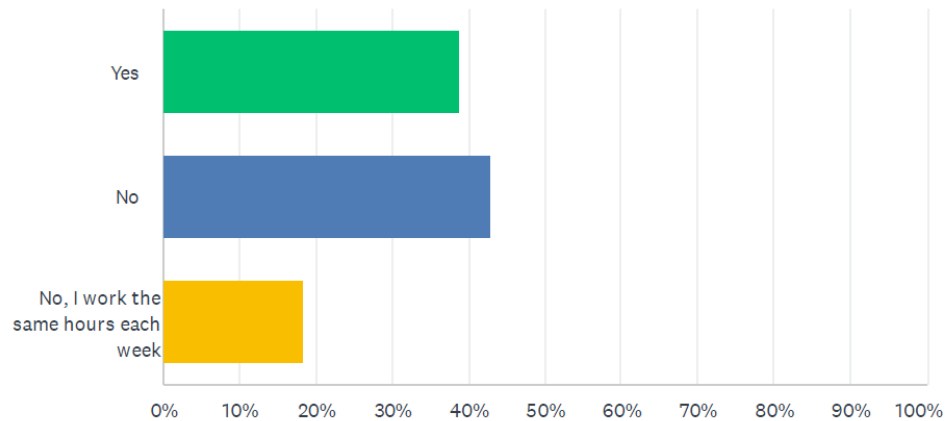
- 4.9 Participants were asked whether they were paid at least the National Minimum Wage (NMW) for their age. They were given information regarding the current rates and were able to watch a video informing them how to calculate their pay.



Concerningly, 20% of respondents reported being paid below NMW.

c) Recording of working hours and overtime

4.10 Participants were asked whether their employer formally recorded their working hours.



4.11 43% of respondents reported that their working hours were not recorded by their employer.

4.12 63% stated that their employer did not record any overtime that they worked, and 35% indicated that they were concerned that their employer did not accurately record their working hours.

4.13 Lack of accurate records of working hours could result in underpayment of wages and non-compliance with NMW legislation, as well as potential breach of the Working Time Directive by employers.

d) Accommodation

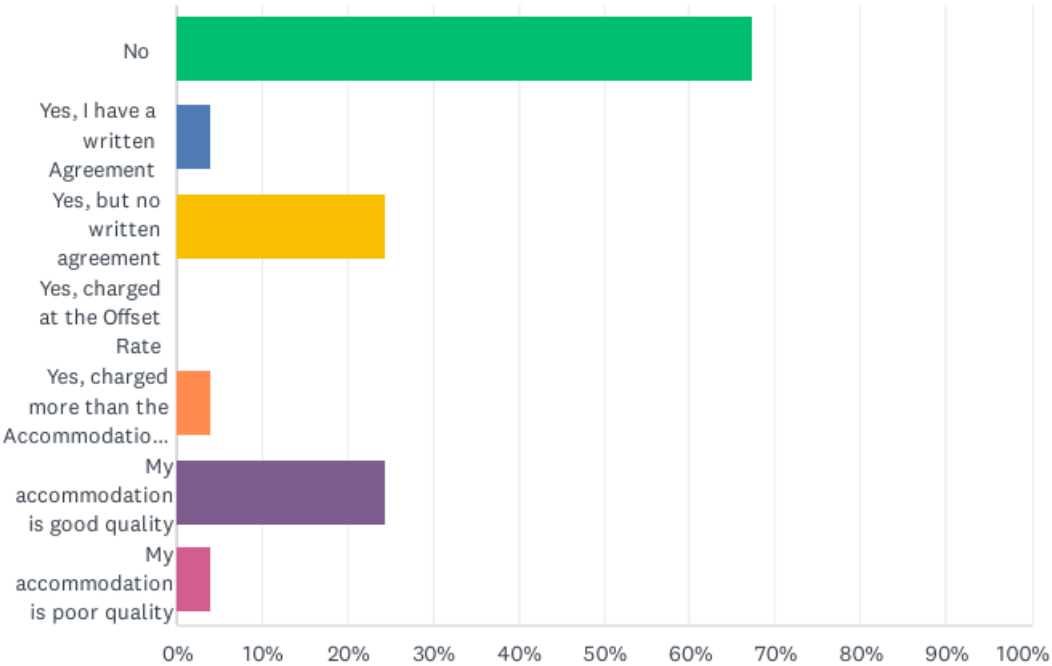
4.14 Respondents were asked whether they lived in accommodation at their place of work, and if so, they were asked what the quality of the accommodation was, whether they had a written occupancy agreement, and whether they were charged at the Accommodation Offset Rate.

4.15 33% of employed respondents reported that they lived in accommodation at their workplace.

4.16 24% of these had no written service occupancy agreement.

4.17 4% respondents rated their accommodation as poor, and 24% reported living in good quality accommodation.

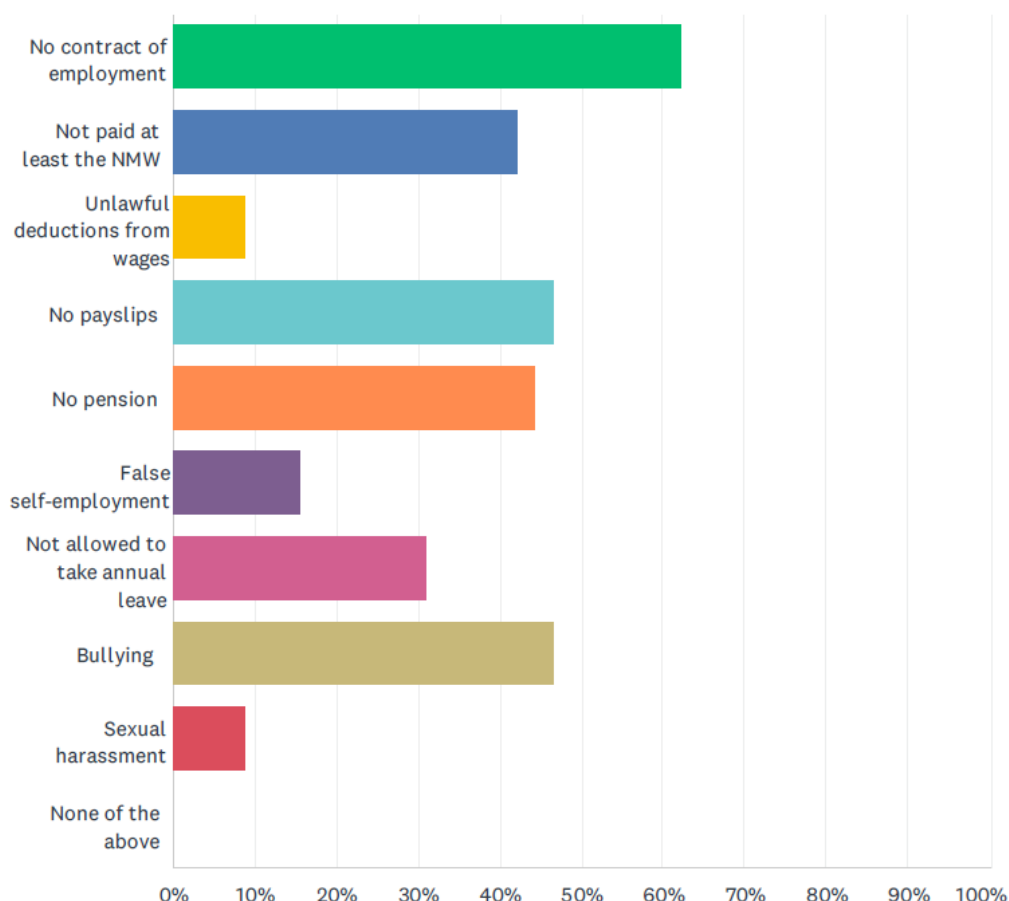
4.18 Do you have accommodation?



e) Workplace issues affecting mental health and wellbeing

4.19 Respondents were asked whether they had experienced a variety of different workplace issues that can affect mental health and well-being, within the last 3 years. They were also asked how this made them feel.

4.20 45 respondents answered these questions, and all had experienced at least 1 issue.



4.21 Consistent with data from the previous questions regarding contracts, 62% of respondents reported that they had worked in an employed position without a written contract.

4.22 42% indicated that they had not been paid at least the NMW for every hour they worked.

4.23 47% reported not receiving payslips, and 31% had been prevented from taking their statutory annual leave entitlement.

4.24 Worryingly, 47% of employed grooms who responded to the survey told us that they had experienced bullying in the workplace within the last 3 years, and 9% had experienced sexual assault.

4.25 45% reported that workplace issues had made them feel anxious, and 36% described feeling depressed.

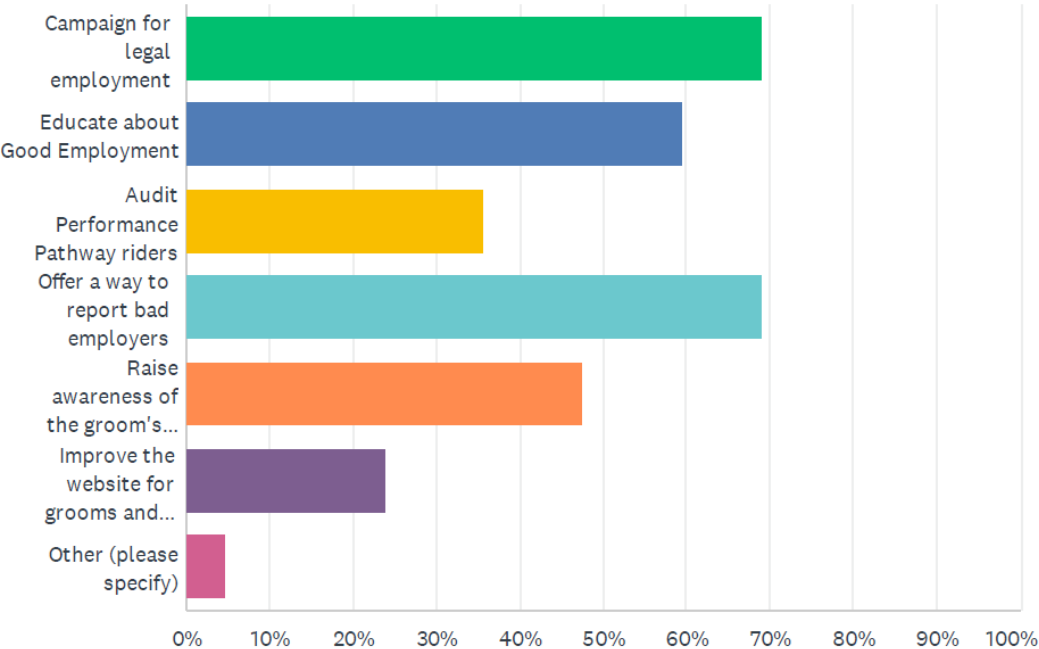
This data indicates that employers in the Scottish equestrian industry are not complying with UK employment law, and this is having a significant impact on the mental health of grooms in Scotland.

f) Industry futures

- 4.26 Respondents were asked how they feel about working in the industry and whether they saw it as a long-term career.
- 4.27 40% told us that they love working in the industry and couldn't see themselves in any other role.
- 4.28 26% said they enjoyed their job but did not see it as a long-term career, and 19% reported that they were considering leaving the industry within the next 6 months.

g) Horsescotland

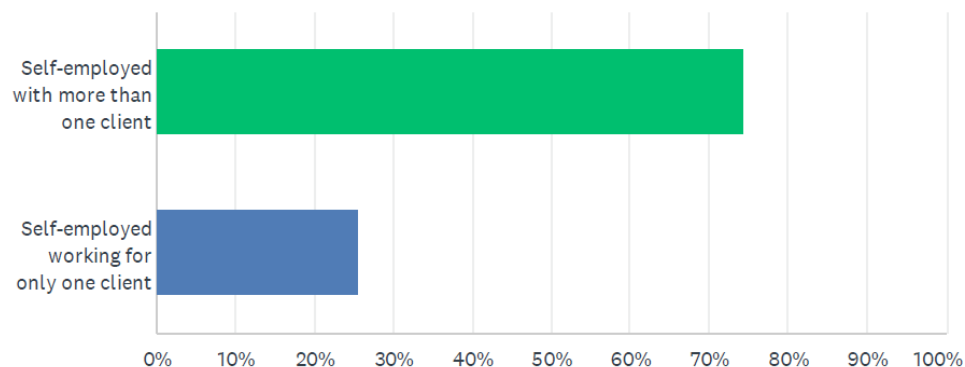
- 4.29 Respondents were asked what they believed Horsescotland could do to support grooms in Scotland.



- 4.30 69% stated that they would like Horsescotland to campaign for legal employment in the equestrian industry, and 60% felt that they should educate equestrians about Good Employment.
- 4.31 69% would like Horsescotland to offer a way to report bad employers, and 48% felt that Horsescotland should raise awareness of the role of the groom.

5 Self-employed grooms results

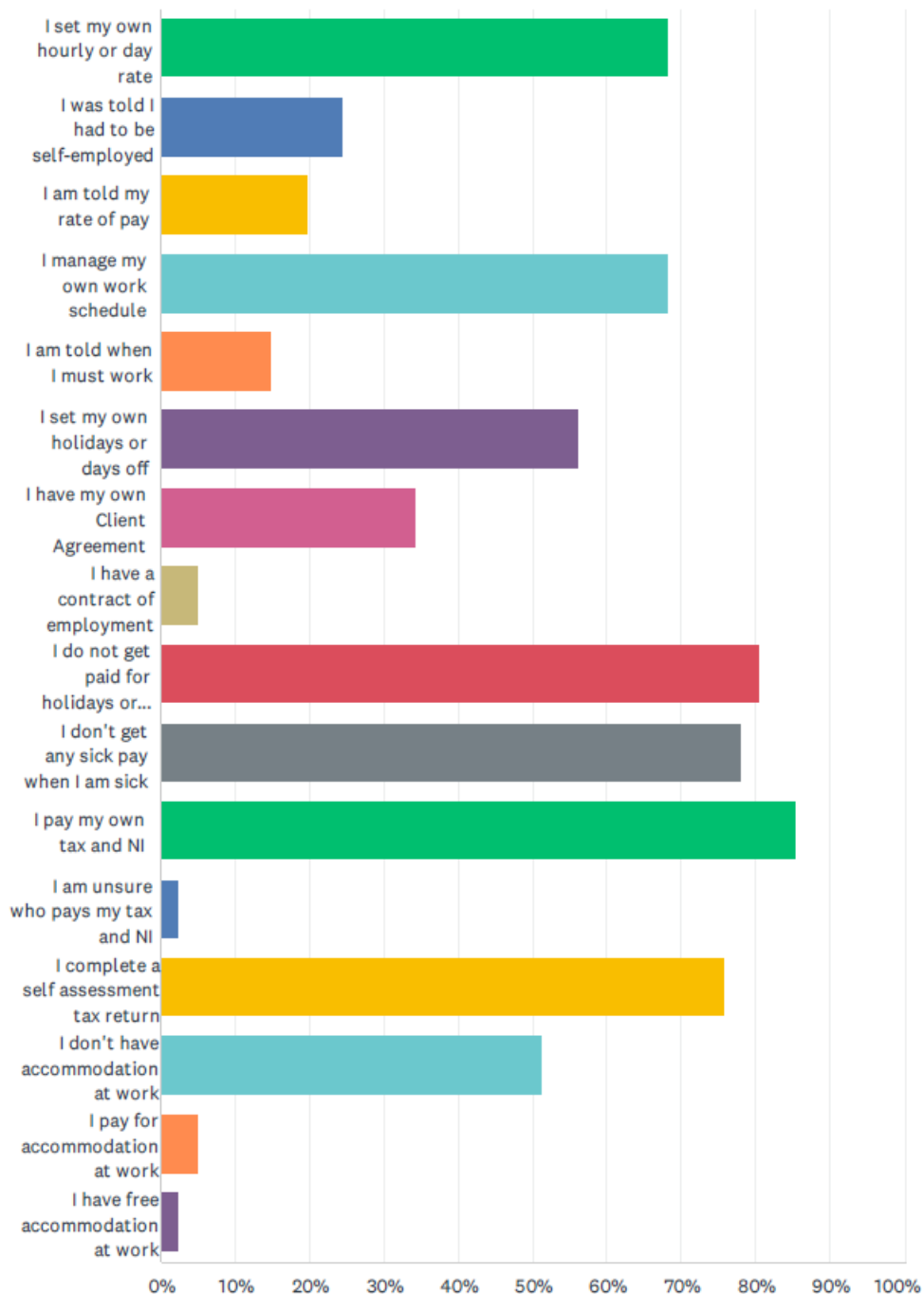
a) Employment status



26% of grooms reported that they were self-employed but working for only 1 client. These individuals may be falsely self-employed.

a) Indicators of self-employed status

- 5.1 Respondents who reported that they were self-employed were asked to select all the factors that applied to them from a list of indicators of employed and self-employed status.
- 5.2 68% of respondents reported that they set their own rate of pay and manage their own diary or work schedule. This indicates that they are likely to be truly self-employed.
- 5.3 20% reported that they did not negotiate their own rate of pay, and 15% were told when they must work.
- 5.4 5% reported that they pay for accommodation at their workplace. These are factors indicative of false self-employment.



b) Freelance groom's liability insurance

5.5 Self-employed grooms were asked whether they had appropriate insurance cover.

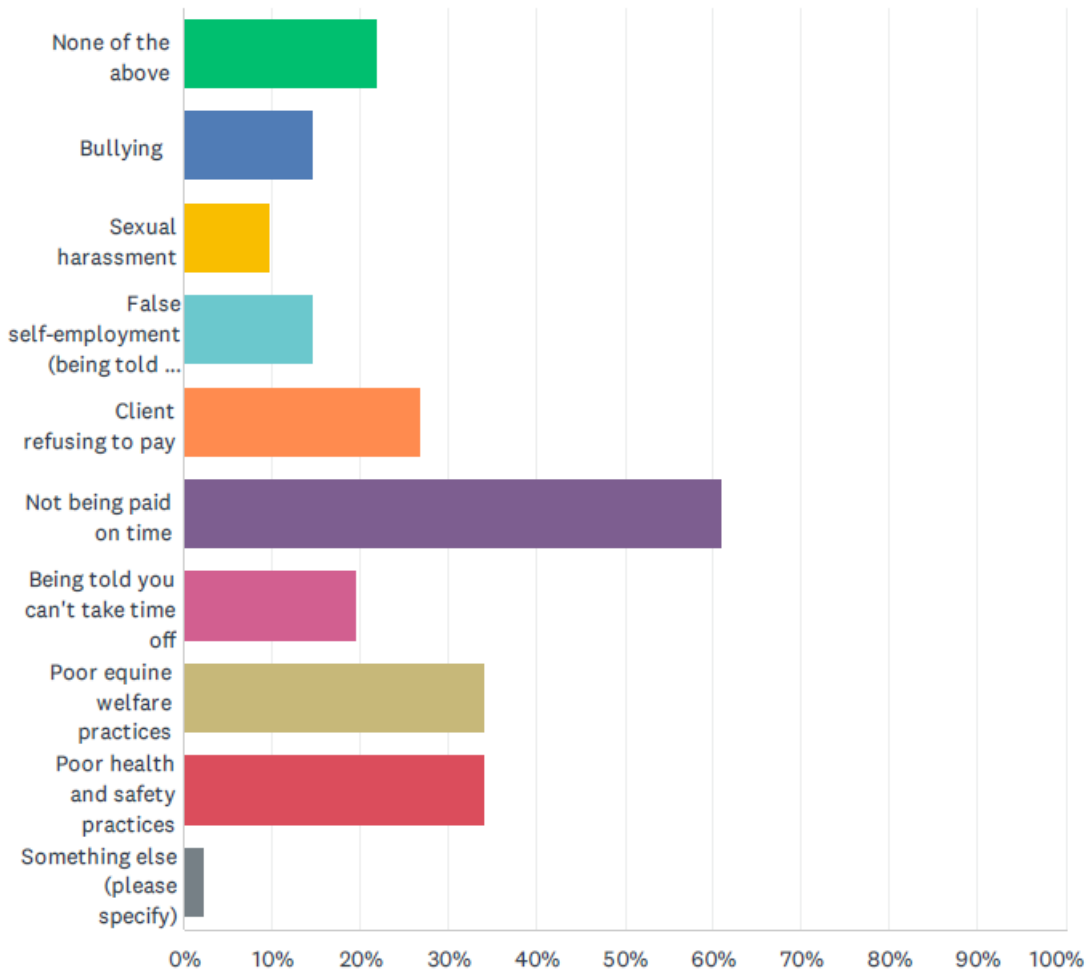
5.6 It is positive to note that 78% of respondents told us that they had freelance groom's liability insurance, either through the BGA or with another provider.

c) Bookings and invoicing

- 5.7 Self-employed respondents were asked whether they currently use an online system for booking and invoicing clients.
- 5.8 78% indicated that they did not use an online system.
- 5.9 Respondents were then asked whether they would consider using an online system if the BGA provided an affordable option.
- 5.10 63% stated that they would consider using an online system provided by the BGA.

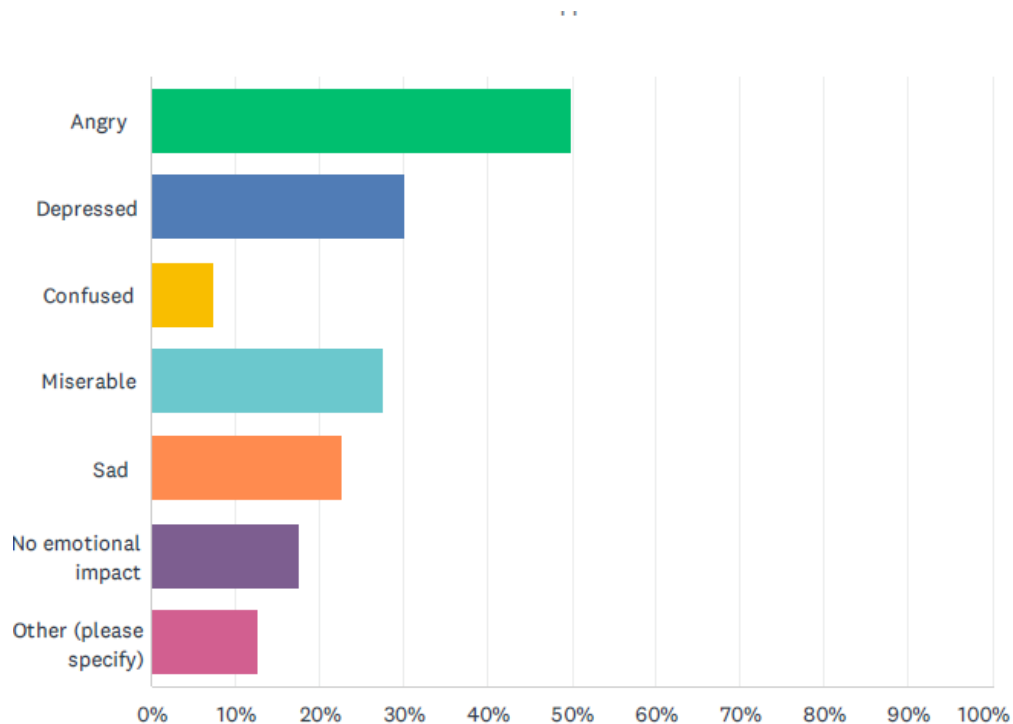
d) Workplace issues affecting mental health and wellbeing

- 5.11 Respondents were asked whether they had experienced a variety of different workplace issues that can affect mental health and well-being, within the last 3 years. They were also asked how this made them feel.
- 5.12 The majority of respondents had experienced at least 1 issue.



- 5.13 Almost 61% of respondents reported not having been paid on time, and 27% told us that a client had refused to pay them within the last 3 years.

- 5.14 34% reported experiencing poor equine welfare practices, and the same percentage had experienced poor health and safety in the workplace.
- 5.15 Almost 15% of self-employed workers reported having been bullied, and 10% experienced sexual harassment at work in the last 3 years.
- 5.16 50% described feeling angry as a result of their negative experiences in the workplace, and 30% reported feeling depressed.

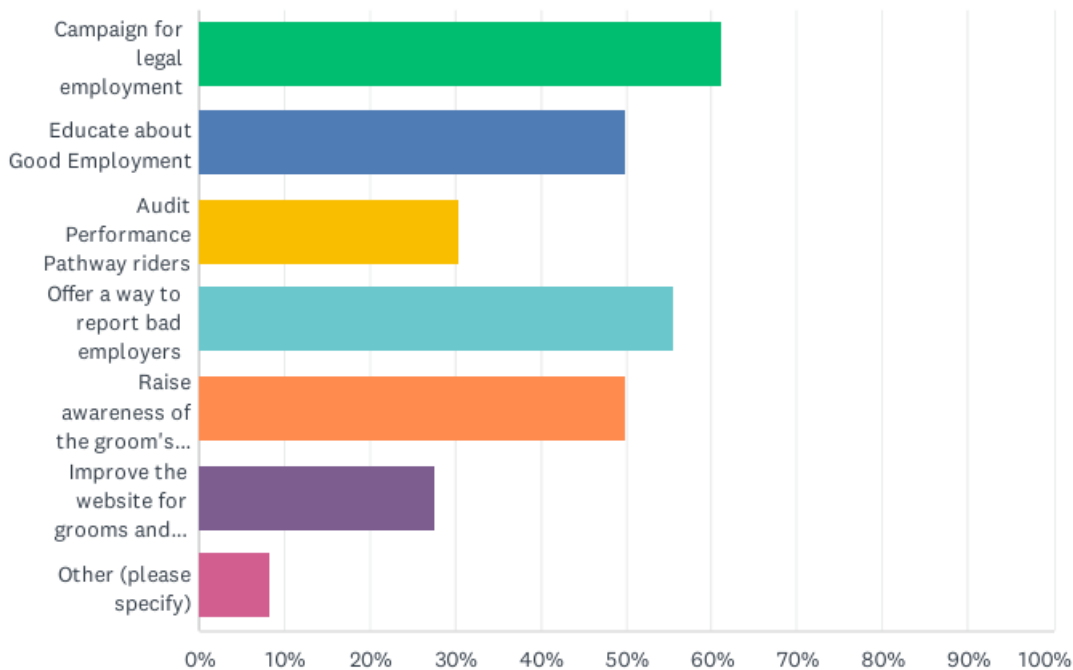


e) Industry futures

- 5.17 Self-employed respondents were asked how they feel about working in the industry and whether they saw it as a long-term career.
- 5.18 49% told us that they love working in the industry and couldn't see themselves in any other role.
- 5.19 14% said they enjoyed their job but did not see it as a long-term career, and 16% reported that they were considering leaving the industry within the next 6 months.

f) **Horsescotland**

5.20 Self-employed respondents were asked what they believed Horsescotland could do to support grooms in Scotland.



5.21 61% stated that they would like Horsescotland to campaign for legal employment in the equestrian industry, and 50% felt that they should educate equestrians about Good Employment.

5.22 56% would like Horsescotland to offer a way to report bad employers, and 50% felt that Horsescotland should raise awareness of the role of the groom.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This survey report has provided an insight into the working lives of grooms in Scotland. It has revealed a lack of compliance with employment legislation in the Scottish equestrian industry and highlighted the sometimes-negative experiences of those who work within it.
- 6.2 Both employed and self-employed grooms experience the issues highlighted by survey data. This data supports the anecdotal evidence received by the BGA from grooms across the UK.
- 6.3 Key findings concerning non-compliance with employment law include: 60% of employed grooms could be working without a written contract, and 43% do not have their working hours recorded by their employer.
- 6.4 26% grooms who reported being self-employed may actually be employees in the eyes of the law and could therefore be falsely self-employed.
- 6.5 Key findings concerning workplace well-being and good practice include: 47% of employed grooms and 14% of self-employed grooms reported experiencing bullying in the last 3 years, and 9% of both employed and self-employed grooms indicated that they have experienced sexual harassment.
- 6.6 **Expanding good employment practices throughout the Scottish equestrian industry is not just an ideal but a necessity and a legal, moral, and ethical obligation.**
- 6.7 The BGA, EEA, Horsescotland, industry leaders, stakeholders, and employers have a responsibility to raise standards and be compliant.
- 6.8 The Scottish 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 groomers and the horses they care for, as well as the wider industry.



**BRITISH GROOMS
ASSOCIATION**

britishgrooms.org.uk



@britishgroomsassociation



@britishgroomsassociation



info@britishgrooms.org