

FREELANCE/SELF EMPLOYED GROOMS SURVEY

JANUARY 2019



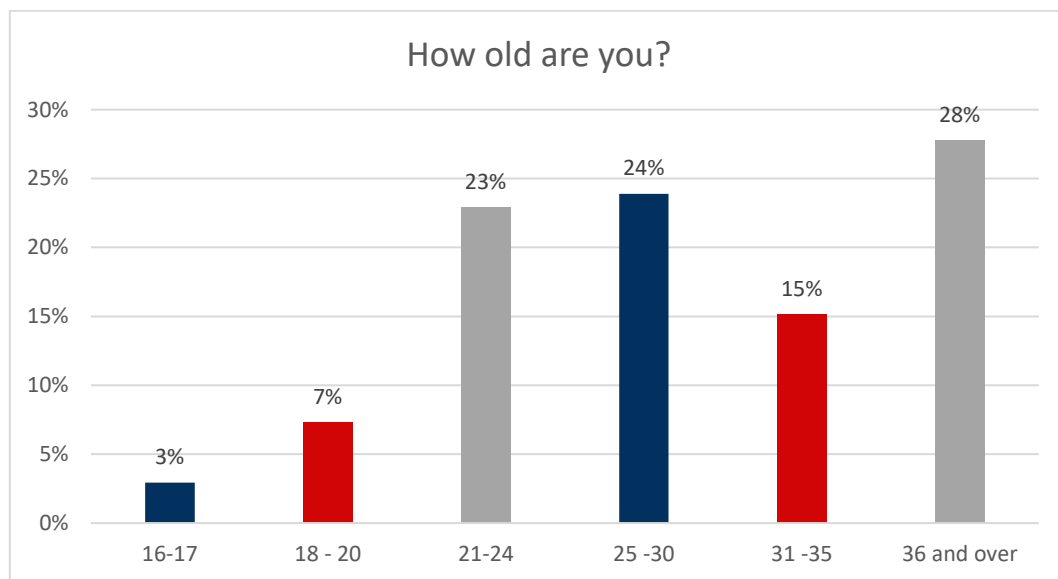
The British Grooms Association's (BGA) freelancers survey explored the everyday practices of self-employed grooms, giving the opportunity to compare their working practices, earnings and common challenges.

This survey found that 18% of grooms who responded have been told that they are self-employed when they are actually employed.

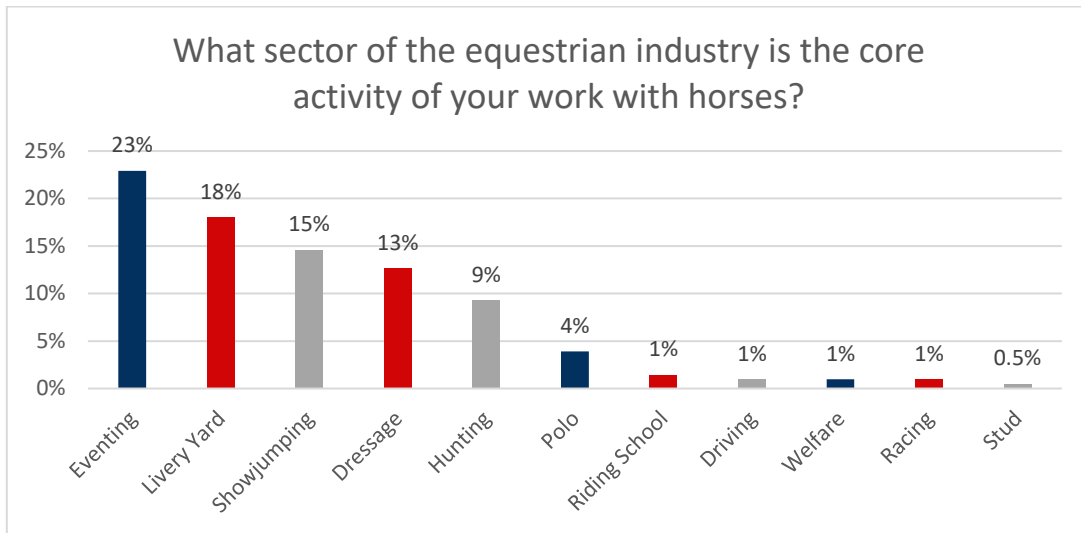
There were specific questions built on pathways depending on the first step of identifying true or false self-employment.

The survey was open for 12 weeks in autumn 2018 and was specially targeted at freelancers who were invited to complete. On this occasion, employed grooms were asked to not take part.

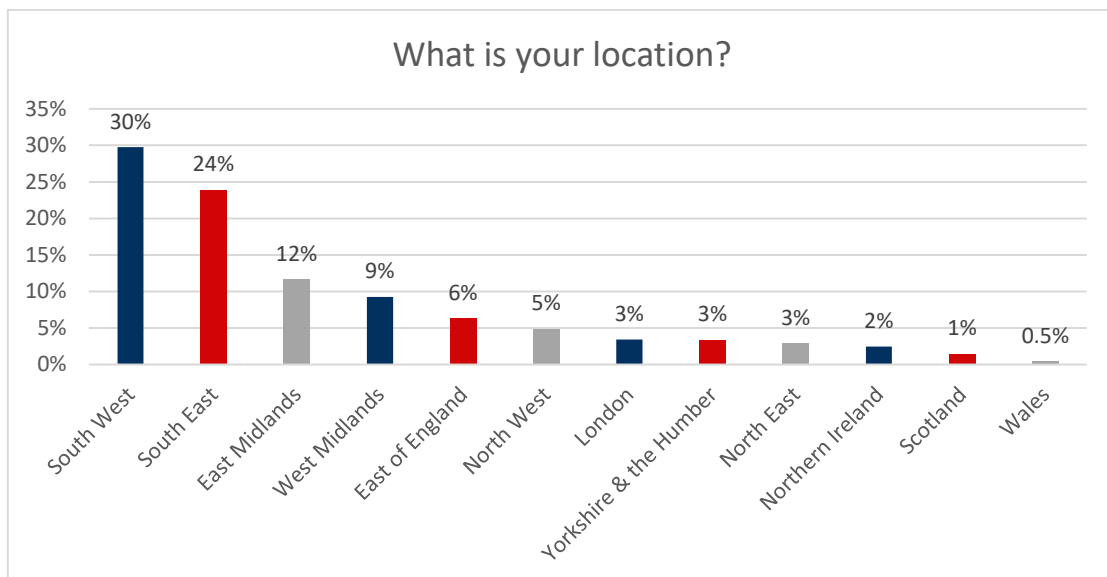
DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS



The grooms who took part in this survey ranged from 16 to 36 and over.

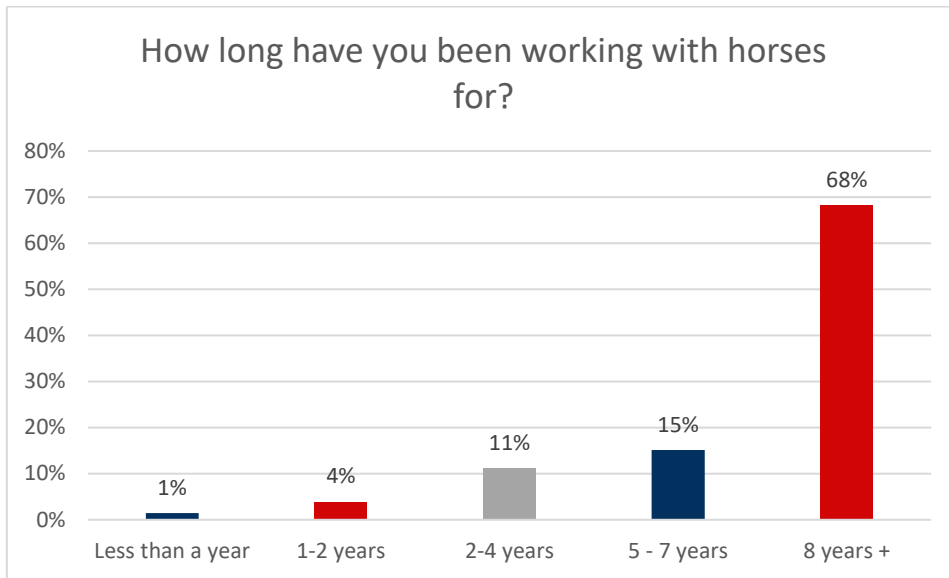


The respondents worked in a range of different disciplines, such as eventing, dressage, and hunting.



Respondents hailed from all around the UK, including England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Wales.

The greatest percentage of grooms who responded to the survey were from the South West and South East of England.



Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents have been working with horses for 8 years or more.

This indicates that the practices explored in this are mainly the practices of experienced grooms.

THE RESULTS - PART ONE:

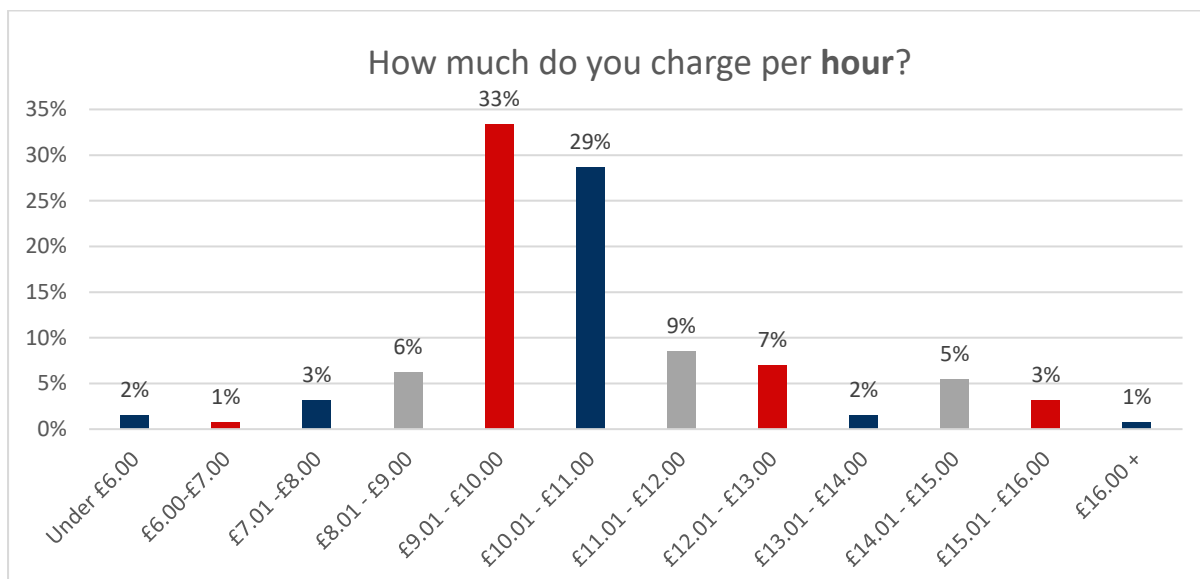
Working Practices of Self-Employed Grooms

The BGA has created a resource that freelancers can compare themselves to, ensuring that they are in line with the most commonly occurring practices in the industry.

RATES OF PAY

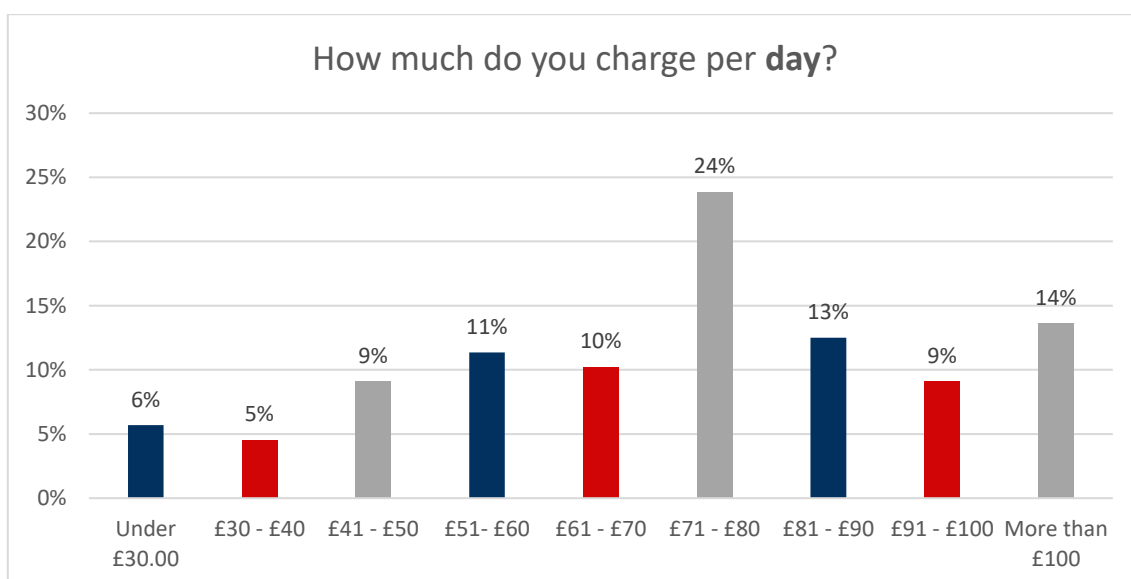
The first practice this survey covered was rate of pay/charge. Some respondents chose to charge per hour, whereas others chose to charge per day.

RATES CHARGED PER HOUR



- There is a great discrepancy in the rates charged per hour. The rates of pay range from under £6 to up to £16 or more per hour.
- Part of this can be attributed to experience, as those who charged £13.01 or more per hour tended to have 8 or more years of experience working with horses.
- However, this still suggests that there is a great difference between the amount grooms charge.
- Those who are charging at the lower end of the scale may consider re-evaluating their rates of pay, and consider charging between £9.01 and £11 per hour, as the majority (62%) of self-employed grooms who responded to this survey do.
- If those who are charging at the lower end of the scale have a significant number of years of experience working with horses, they could consider charging £13 or above.

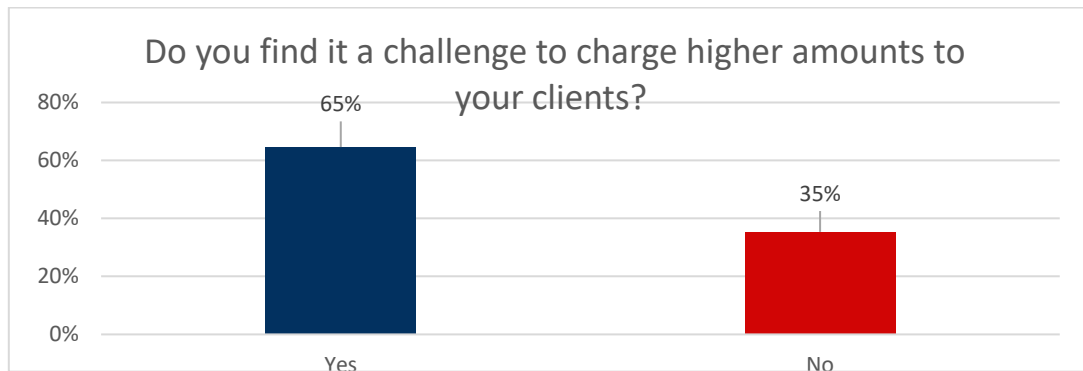
RATES CHARGED PER DAY



- As with those who charge per hour, there is a great range in pay between those who charge per day. The rate self-employed grooms charge per day ranges from under £30 to more than £100.
- Again, part of this can be attributed to experience, with the majority (77%) of those who charge £81 or more per day having 8 or more years of experience working with horses.
- However, the most common rate charged per day by self-employed grooms is £71-80, regardless of experience, with almost a quarter (24%) charging this amount.
- Therefore, grooms who are charging a rate per day that is reflected in the lower end of the scale could consider charging closer to £71-80 a day.
- When charging per day, however, grooms should take into account the amount of hours they work per day in order to charge a fair rate for their services.

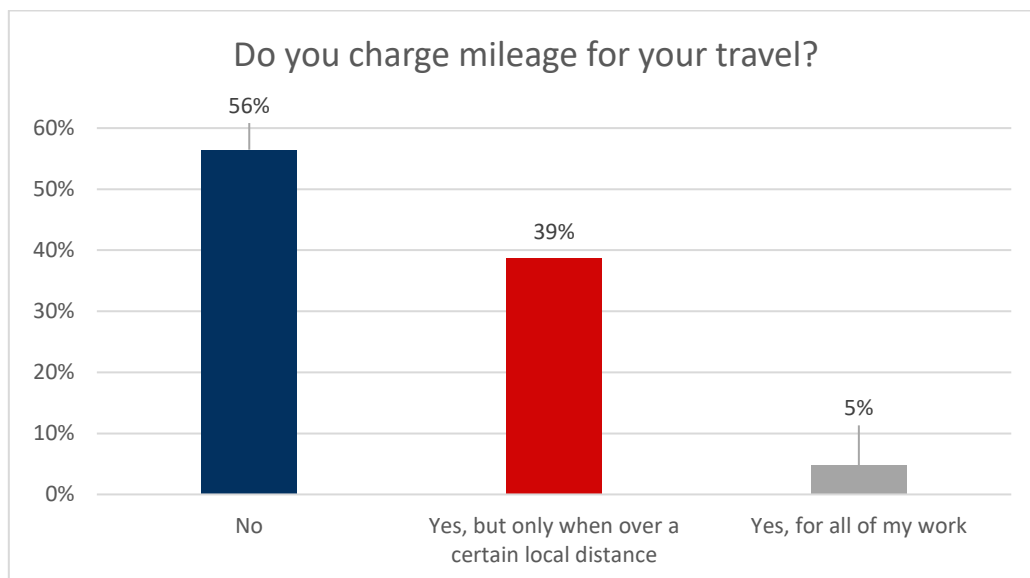
CHARGING MORE

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of grooms find it a challenge to charge higher amounts to their clients:

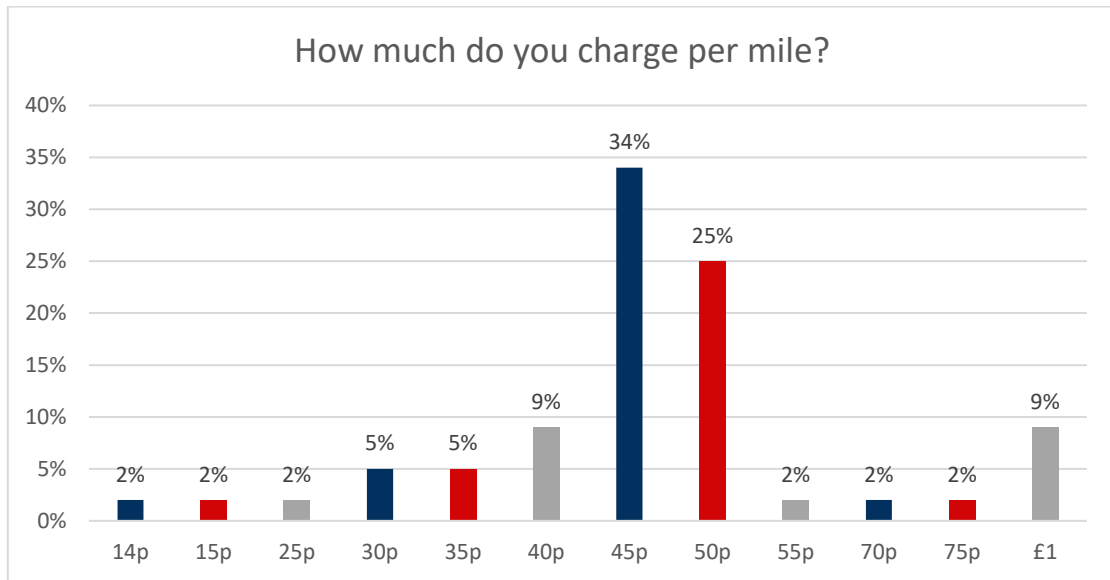


We hope that grooms will be able to use this to compare their rates to those of others and, if they find a disparity, will feel more comfortable charging a higher and fairer rate for their work.

TRAVEL AND MILEAGE



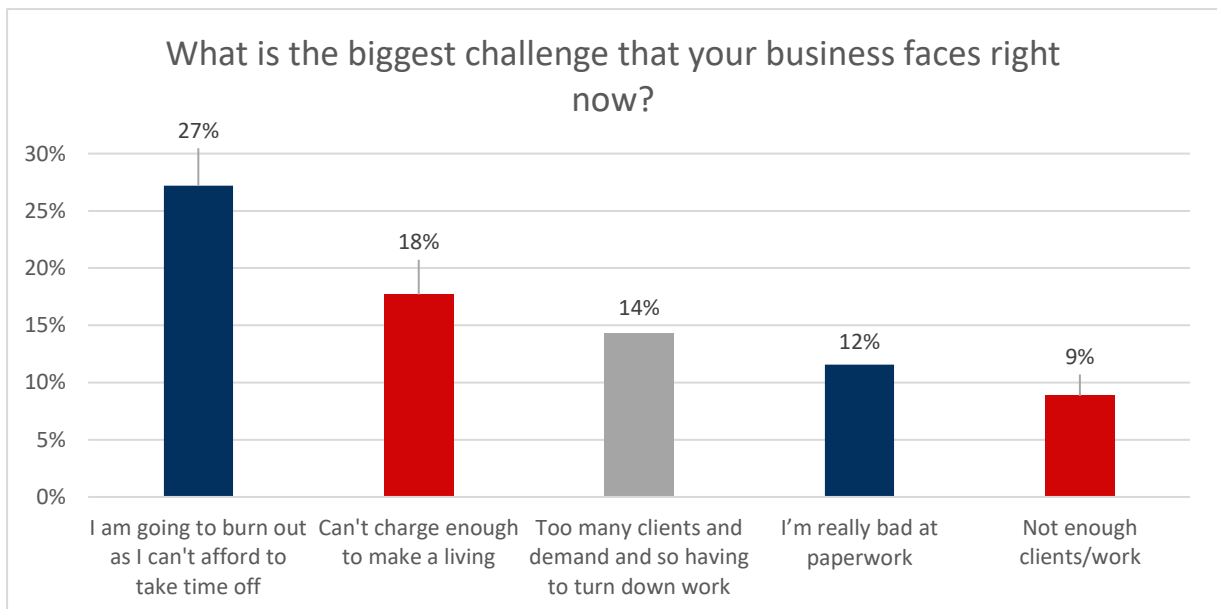
- The majority (56%) of self-employed grooms who responded to this survey do not charge mileage for their travel.
- 39% charge mileage for travel over a certain local distance.
- 5% of self-employed grooms charge mileage for their travel for all of their work.



- Of those who do charge for mileage, over half (59%) stated that they charge between 45 and 50p per mile.
- Those charging the lowest prices per mile may consider charging closer to 45 or 50p per mile, dependent on their situation, in order to bring their practices in line with the majority.
- The most expensive charge per mile, £1, was charged by 9% of groomers.

CHALLENGES

This survey also sought to find the difficulties facing self-employed groomers. Some of the biggest challenges facing their businesses right now are the difficulty of making a living, paperwork and the amount of work available.



DIFFICULTY MAKING A LIVING

- Self-employed grooms are facing a financial challenge, with 18% feeling that they can't charge enough to make a living.
- Over a quarter (27%) of self-employed grooms who responded to the survey are concerned that they are going to burn out as they cannot afford to take time off.
- This justifies the need for this report, as with this information, self-employed grooms may feel more capable of charging higher, fairer rates that may consequently mitigate their financial challenges.

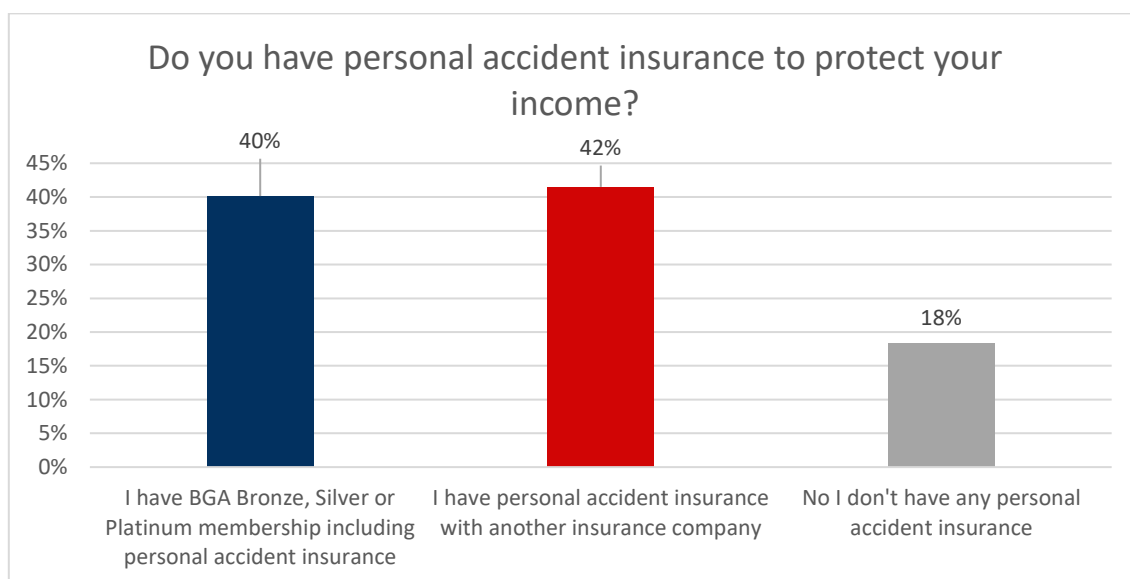
AMOUNT OF WORK

- 14% feel that there is too much work and they feel that they have to turn work down.
- 9% are worried that there is not enough work.
- This suggests that self-employed grooms may be able to help each other, by referring clients to other grooms in the case in which they have too much work.

These challenges of being self-employed may take a toll on grooms' mental health. The BGA urges any groom who is worried about their mental health to visit the [Grooms Minds](#) section of the BGA website.

INCOME SECURITY

Self-employed grooms are at greater risk of losing their income in the case of an injury at work, as they are not entitled to statutory sick pay.

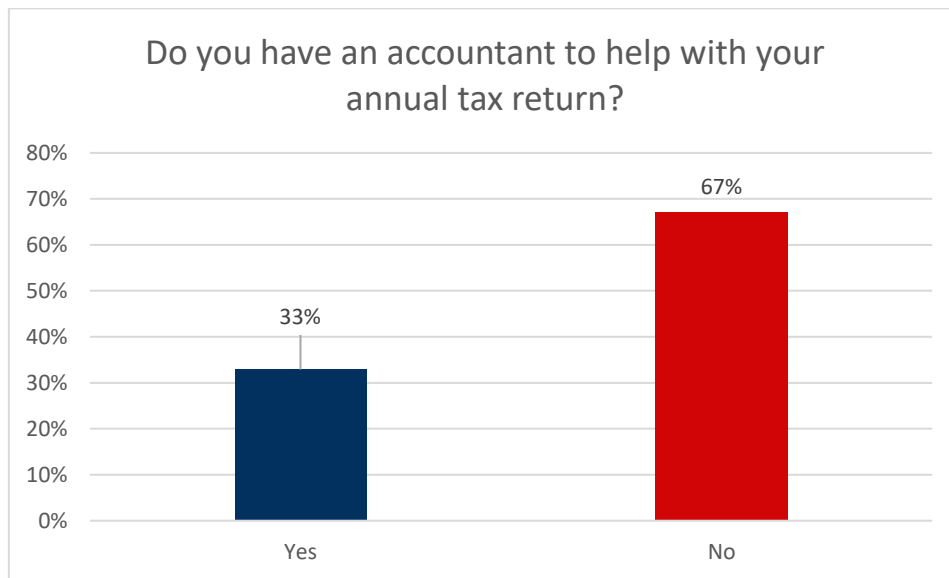


- 18% of self-employed grooms surveyed did not have any personal accident insurance and are therefore at risk of losing their income if an accident were to happen.
- A total of 60% have not taken advantage of the British Grooms Association's Bronze, Silver, or Platinum membership which includes personal accident insurance.

PAPERWORK

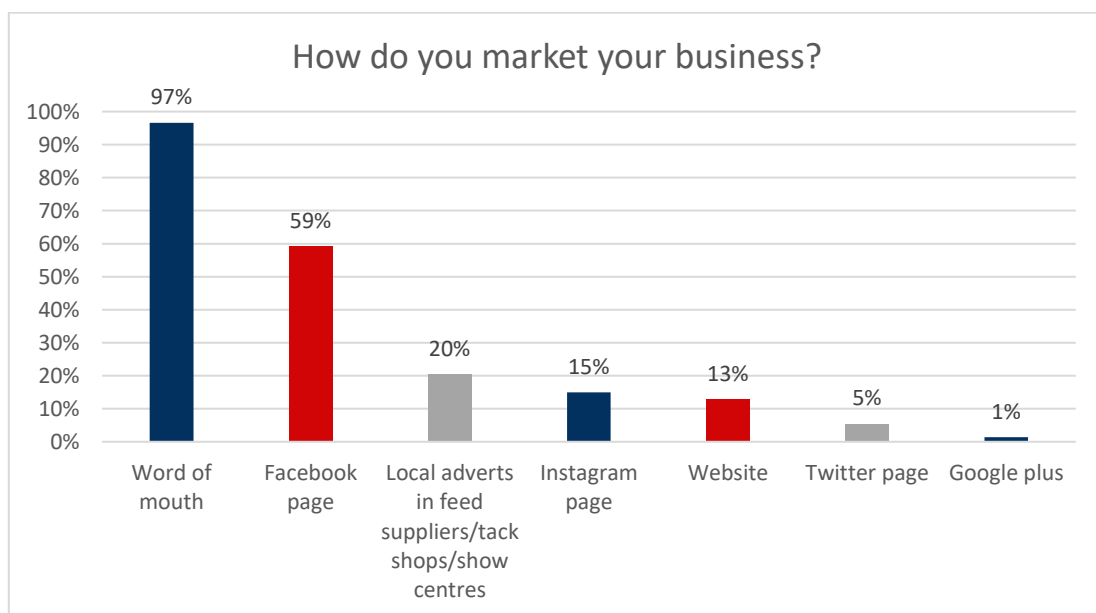
- 12% believe that their biggest challenge that their business faces is the paperwork that comes with a freelance role.

The BGA website has a dedicated section filled with resources to help with this, such as templates, guidance on marketing and managing your business.



- Over two-thirds (67%) do not have an accountant to help with their annual tax return.

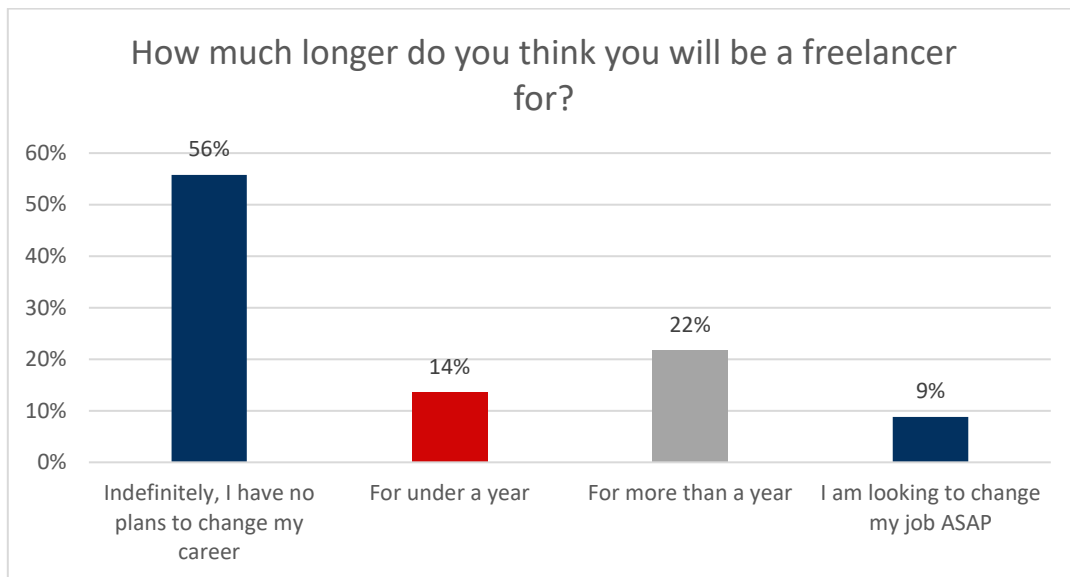
MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA



- Nearly all of the of respondents (97%) rely on word of mouth to market their business.
- Social media tend to be less utilised with Instagram and Twitter only being used by 15% and 5% of respondents.

- Facebook was used by over half of respondents (59%).
- This suggests that freelance grooms could further market their businesses by taking greater advantage of social media.

LENGTH OF STAY IN CAREER



- 56% of respondents stated that they have no plans to change their career.
- 9% are looking to change their job as soon as possible.
- 14% are considering changing their career in less than a year.
- By comparing their working practices to this resource and potentially altering them in response, self-employed grooms may find that their working life improves and therefore they feel more comfortable in their career.

PART TWO: Grooms Being Denied Their Employment Rights and Benefits

People who are self-employed don't have the employment rights of employees.

However, they also do not have the responsibilities of employees, and must be able to make decisions about their own affairs, such as the rates they choose to charge and hours that they will work.

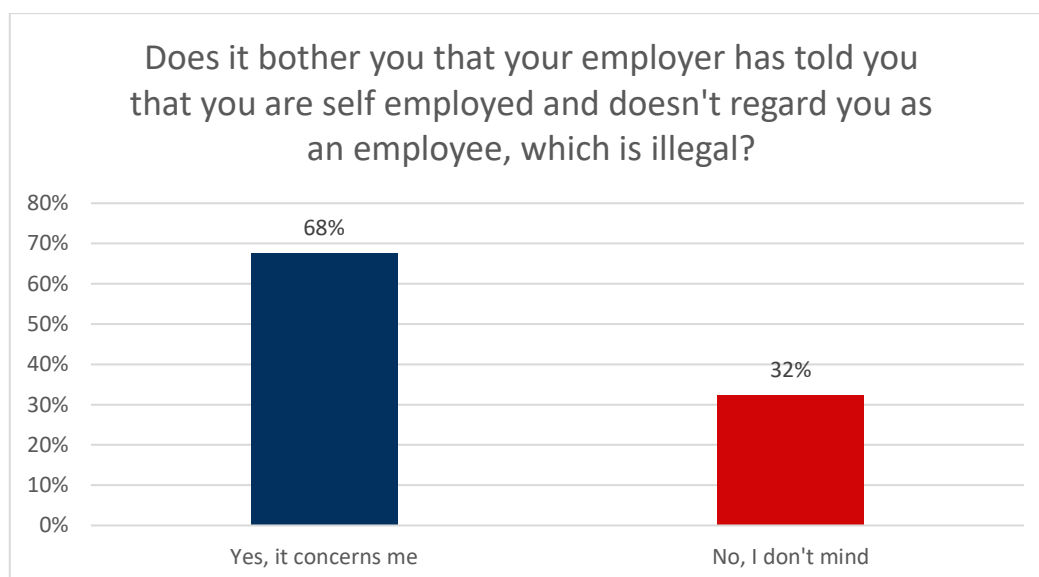
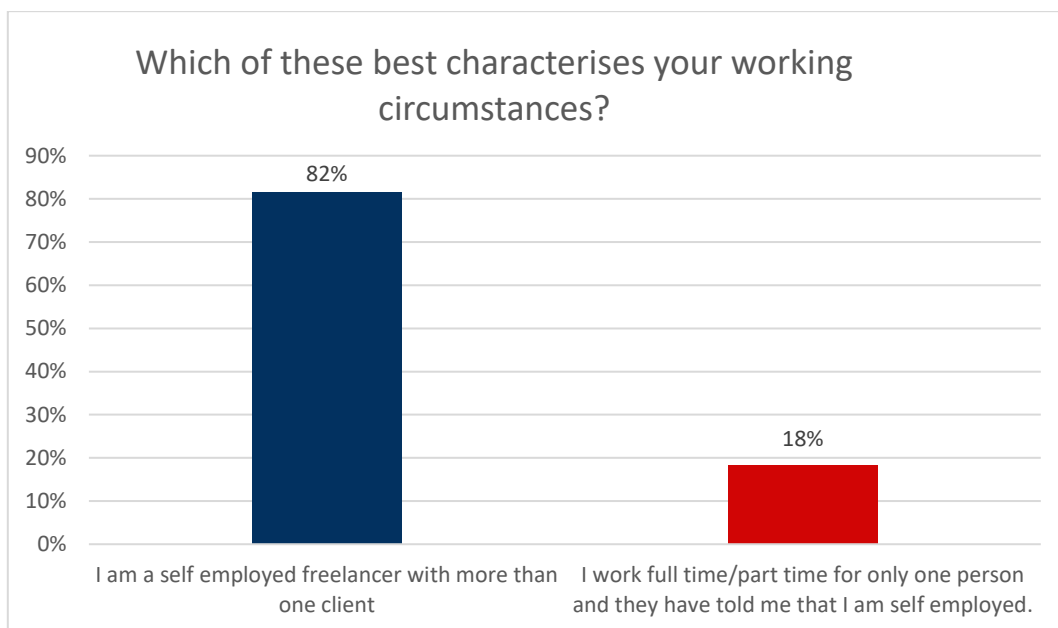
According to the UK government, a person is self-employed if 'they run their business for themselves and take responsibility for its success or failure'¹.

However, some grooms who are not running a business for themselves have been told that they are self-employed by their employer, when they are, in fact, an employee.

By doing this, an employer is denying a groom their employment rights, and this is tax evasions and is illegal.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/selfemployed-contractor> Accessed 21/11/2018

Indeed, 18% of respondents stated that they have been told that they are self-employed when they are an employee.



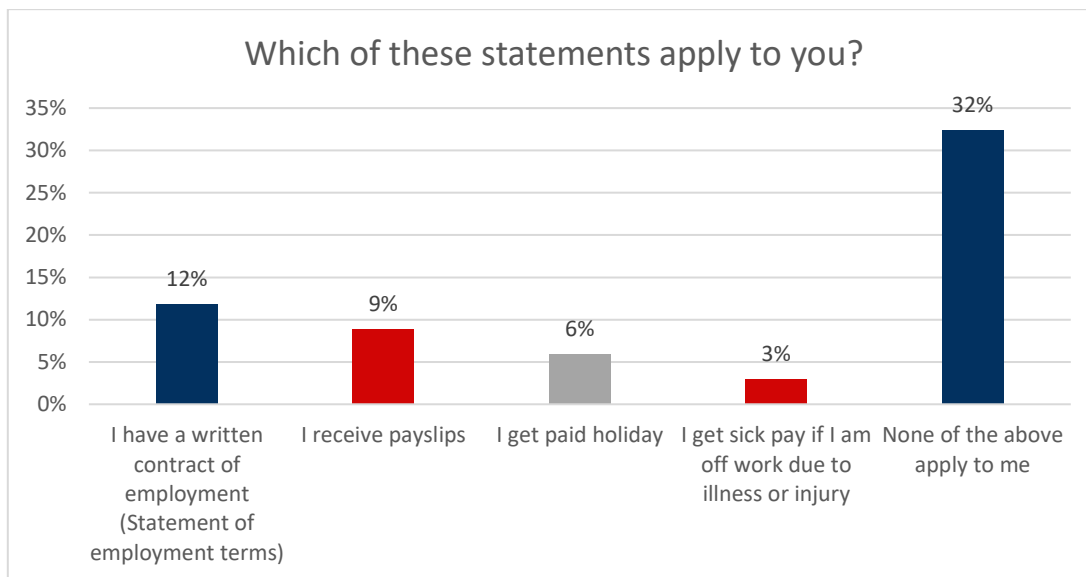
Over two-thirds (68%) of grooms are concerned that they have been told that they are self-employed when they are not.

Those that 'don't mind', perhaps are unaware of the fact that they are themselves evading tax and can be held responsible for this; and in addition unaware of what employment rights they are missing out on.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

As an employee, a person is given certain rights. These include having a written contract, being given payslips, getting paid holiday, and getting statutory sick pay if they are off work due to illness or injury.

Those who are told that they are self-employed, but are actually employed by their boss, are entitled to these rights.

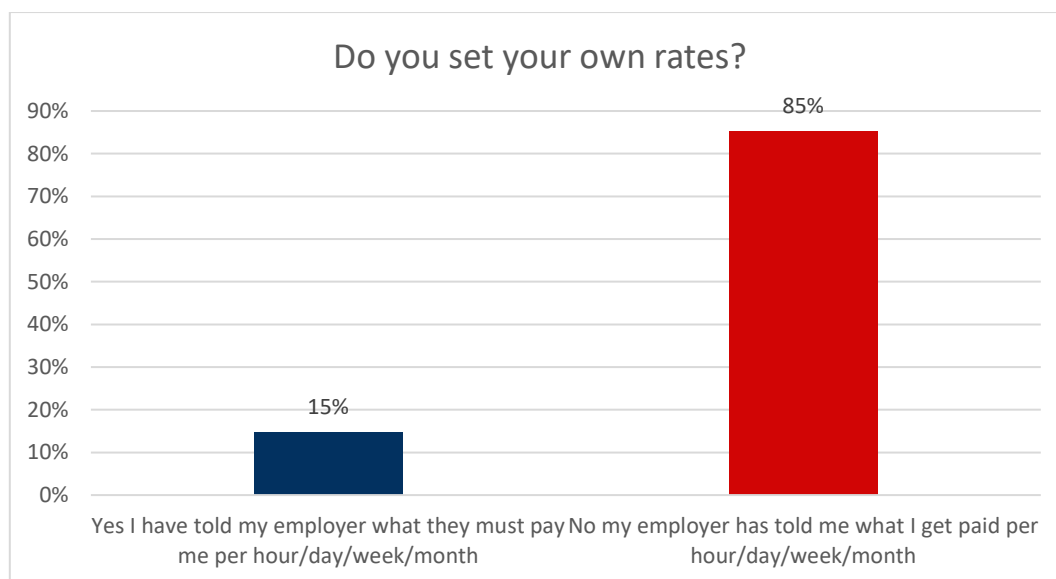


- 97% of those who have been told that they are self-employed when they are in fact not, do not receive sick pay if they are off work due to illness or injury.
- 94% are not allowed to take paid holiday.
- 91% do not receive payslips.
- Approximately a third (32%) do not get **any** of their employment rights, despite being entitled to them.

This shows that an overwhelming majority of those who have falsely been told that they are self-employed are denied the employment rights to which they are entitled.

BENEFITS OF BEING SELF-EMPLOYED

One of the benefits of being self-employed is that you can set your own rates of pay. However, the results of this survey show that the majority of those who have been incorrectly told that they are self-employed are not able to set their own rates of pay.



- 85% of respondents, despite being told that they are self-employed, are not able to set their own rates of pay.

This shows that, despite being categorised as such, grooms are missing out on the benefits of being self-employed, such as the ability to set their own rates of pay. This is further evidence that the incorrect categorisation of self-employment is disadvantaging grooms.

When it is considered in combination with the fact that it is being used to deny them their employment rights, this is a real concern.

It is inexcusable that by falsely telling grooms that they are self-employed, employers are denying them both their employment rights and the potential benefits they would gain if they were truly self-employed.

CONCLUSION

Part One of this report offers a unique insight into the working practices of self-employed freelance grooms. It will hopefully prove to be a useful resource for self-employed grooms to compare their working practices against in order to bring their own in line with other grooms.

Part Two indicates that there is a disturbing practice occurring in the equestrian industry, whereby employers are telling some employed grooms that they are self-employed.

By doing this, they can deny grooms their employment rights, which is an illegal practice.

Furthermore, grooms are also being denied the benefits of being self-employed. In short, those who have been told that they are self-employed when they are not are suffering a double disadvantage.

The BGA stands against this practice and invites anyone who has been incorrectly told that they are self-employed to get in contact for advice.