

**Mentor Guide  
to  
Work-Based  
Training  
& Apprenticeships**



## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL HORSERACING COLLEGE**

The National Horseracing College (NHC) provides a responsive centre of training excellence, identifying, encouraging and nurturing talent, particularly within young people.

The NHC's wide range of courses specifically cater for the staffing needs of the British racing industry. We are a winning team, with over 90% of our Foundation Course learners going on to exciting careers in the horse racing industry, many of whom continue their education with NHC during their employment.

### **OUR VISION**

Support British Horse Racing as its sustainable, resilient, responsive centre of training excellence in the north.

### **OUR MISSION**

Deliver trained staff into horse racing.

### **OUR ETHOS**

Working as a team, exercise enthusiastic good leadership to nurture, inspire and motivate all learners to develop a passion for horses and racing and the skills to work in the industry.

### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

- We provide training that is relevant to the needs of the horse racing industry, to ensure learner success.
- We are committed to the developmental improvement of our training, to keep it relevant.
- To constantly adapt and seek further opportunities within the industry, to be responsive.
- We work with local, regional and national stakeholders to exert positive influences within the college.

### **HOW WE DO IT?**

The NHC is well-established and valued as a centre of excellence for the horseracing industry, our contributions include:

- Around 500 training outcomes achieved annually, amounting to over 20,000 people training days.
- Promoting life skills and citizenship – we provide training across a range of skills for independent living, which include monetary budgeting, health & wellbeing, cooking, communication & organisation skills.
- Ofsted rated GOOD with OUTSTANDING elements during 2022.

### **COURSE DETAILS**

The NHC offers a range of courses at all levels for people who are looking at horseracing as a future career and for those who are currently working in the industry wishing to develop their qualifications and skills. The College works with the British Horseracing Authority, delivering Jockey License courses and Racehorse Trainer modules; successful completion of which are a mandatory element of securing their respective race-riding and training licenses.

Additionally, the NHC focuses on providing learning opportunities for young people wishing to gain experience with racehorses and riding. Pony Racing training and the 14-16 Work Related Programme are very popular, and we are now seeing young people progressing from these courses to careers in racing and achieving race riding success.

The NHC also hosts Doncaster Equine College for people who are interested in working with horses other than in the racing sector. This can also lead to learners applying for the foundation course if they decide to pursue a career within the racing industry. Courses are available in Levels 1, 2 and 3 in Horse Care. For further information visit the website; [www.doncasterequinecollege.co.uk](http://www.doncasterequinecollege.co.uk)

### **BENEFITS OF TRAINING**

#### **FOR THE EMPLOYER**

An efficient and capable workforce who are technically competent, resulting in:

- Greater motivation and loyalty inspired by employers investing in their employees.
- More cost-effective operation through better retention of staff working more efficiently.

- Better horse welfare resulting in better performance.
- Peace of mind – staff who can work independently and reliably.

#### FOR THE EMPLOYEE

- Improved knowledge and skills, enabling better performance in current and future roles.
- Being an active and successful part of the only equine industry with proper career and training structures.
- The opportunity to earn more money and progress to more senior or fulfilling roles.
- Achieve accredited qualifications that are recognised by other racing nations opening doors to a host of opportunities both at home and abroad.

#### YOUR ROLE AS A MENTOR

The learner you will be mentoring will have most likely completed a 12 week foundation course at the NHC and are now with you for an initial 6 week work placement which will hopefully lead to employment. Once employed the learner will be signed up on a level 2 Equine Groom Apprenticeship. This will include all aspects of daily horse care within a yard and the option to ride or be yard based. The apprenticeship also includes Maths and English qualifications which will have been started and in most cases completed whilst at the NHC. The majority of the Level 2 Apprenticeship is completed at the learner's place of work, with one of our RTs Roving Tutors visiting the learner on a regular basis to support knowledge, skills and behaviours development alongside the employer and set SMART targets. The achievement of a Level 2 Apprenticeship usually takes 12 – 18 months with sections signed off by employer/learner and RT in a Skills Passport. Regular reviews of progress are recorded. The final stage in passing the Apprenticeship is an EPA (End Point Assessment) which requires time off-the-job and is a final assessment of knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Learners completing the L2 Equine Groom Apprenticeship will be guided by their RT Roving Tutor as to their suitability to enrol onto the Level 3 Senior Groom Apprenticeship.

It is not uncommon for a short period of time to pass before a learner is enrolled onto this programme. This delay affords the learner the opportunity to further develop existing knowledge, skills and to learn new competencies and behaviours. A Level 3 Apprenticeship usually takes 18 – 24 months to achieve. Learners on both levels of Apprenticeship are invited to return to the National Horseracing College for intensive training, when necessary, at a time which is convenient for their employer. An element of self-study is required from learners who are on an Apprenticeship programme. Employers are required to provide 20% of the hours the apprentices normally work towards "off the job training" to allow them to learn new skills and knowledge.

The National Horseracing College welcomes the chance to discuss with employers the training programmes we deliver. All our training programmes are tailored to meet the needs of the individual learner. To this end please share with us your thoughts and together we will create a learning environment which is both workable for you as an employer and one in which the learner will thrive and develop.

A small minority of learners will simply do a diploma rather than the full Apprenticeship albeit they will require a mentor also.

#### STARTING A NEW ROLE

The time when a new member of staff (learner) begins their career in a racing yard can be a daunting experience; remember your initiation! In most places, they will be a long way from home and have no friends or acquaintances in the yard they are going to. As you will appreciate, this can be rather intimidating for them which can sometimes result in the learner leaving racing prematurely. Reduced staffing levels in the industry are a cause of concern for everybody and we all need to do what we can to retain new recruits. The mentor scheme will complement the support and training already provided by the National Horseracing College.

NARS currently offer a fully funded level 2 qualification in Mentoring and Leadership if you think this would be of benefit to you.

#### APPRENTICESHIP

The Apprenticeship is a work-based qualification that will help staff to become more competent in their role. The employer and their staff will provide the majority of the training and a trained RT Roving Tutor supports this throughout the programme - preparing the learner with knowledge, skills and behaviours for a final

assessment day at the end of the qualification. The End Point Assessment is carried out by an external assessor from 1st4Sport or iPet Network and includes a knowledge test, a practical observation and a professional discussion. However, all learners require training and support to help them to achieve their qualification and the mentor has an invaluable role to play. The RT Roving Tutor may not be able to cover all aspects of a certain skill set in all circumstances, e.g. taking horses racing, so witness testimony from a competent person will help to establish the competence of the learner.

## **THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR**

The National Horseracing College has asked Trainers to nominate a key member of their staff to undertake the role of a mentor. The mentor's duties could be carried out by the trainer, but they are more likely to be delegated to the head groom or another senior member of staff. This will mean that mentors will help to train, support and monitor the progress of the learner. They will also be required to discuss the learner's development with the NHC's visiting staff. It is essential that a close working relationship is established between mentors and NHC staff so that we are both aware of the training required to bring the learner up to the required standard.

A mentor can really help a learner to settle into a new yard by ensuring that they are involved in out of yard activities, their accommodation is suitable and they are able to access facilities such as the shops and doctors. Learners may often feel homesick or just generally down especially when they first start their apprenticeship. A smile and a friendly word from their mentor can make a huge difference in this situation, however, on occasions the learner may require support that the mentor is unable to provide and there are several organisations which are able to assist. If you are worried that the learner may be a danger to themselves or others you should call 999 immediately. These other organisations may be able to assist with other issues:

- The NHC will allocate a RT Roving Tutor to each yard and they will be accessible during office hours. Each learner will have contact details for their RT Roving Tutor or the main NHC number can be used if they are unable to reach them. 01302861000.
- Racing Welfare have a helpline 0800 6300 443, they can provide access to trained counsellors and also provide other support.
- NARS (National Association of Racing Staff Union) can provide information regarding employment to the learners and all the NHC apprentices are encouraged to register to be a member of NARS.
- RSDP (Regional Staff Development Programme) can provide practical and knowledge training for all the staff on the yard in a variety of ways including simulator sessions, fitness programmes and informative webinars - <https://www.facebook.com/RacingRSDP>.
- Racing2Learn may help support a learner's knowledge and understanding towards their apprenticeship portfolio. These courses are free and accessible to all on a mobile phone or computer. Mentors may find these useful also.

These organisations may also be able to help:

The Samaritans phone number 116 123

Sane (Mental Health) phone number 0300 304 7000

NHS Phone number 111

The RT Roving Tutors will ask the mentor for feedback on the learner's progress since their last visit. They will ask them to highlight any areas where they have worked hard and any areas where they need to improve. This feedback will be recorded on the learner's review form which will be sent to both the learner and the employer.

## **MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To induct the learner onto the yard within the first two weeks of employment. An 'Induction' is required to ensure that the learner understands their own responsibilities and how the yard operates. Learners should be made aware of health & safety issues, fire drills etc on your yard. (For BHA licensed yards, all Trainers must have completed a compulsory course – which is good practice).

- It is good practice for the mentor to have undergone Racing2Learn free safeguarding course (for BHA licensed yards, this is required for Trainers and is good practice).
- To provide training and support throughout the learner's programme and coaching towards their Apprenticeship. The learner receives training and support from our RT Roving Tutors at each visit over a period of time, usually every 6 weeks, this ensures that a proper level of understanding and competence is consistently demonstrated.
- To assist the learner to collect a variety of evidence e.g. witness testimonies for their portfolio, pictures and videos to support evidence of their growing knowledge, skills and behaviours. The Skills Passport is often paper-based and signed off by learners/employers and RT Roving Tutors. A portfolio of work is gathered to provide evidence for the final End Point Assessment carried out by an external assessor in evaluating the learner's KSB (knowledge, skills, behaviours). Once the EPA has been taken, the apprentice will pass (70%), gain a distinction (90%) or fail – the latter is very unusual but RT Roving Tutors will support further.

### **NHC ROVING RT ROVING TUTORS**

The NHC's RT Roving Tutors will support you in your mentoring role as well as supporting and providing training for learners during each monitoring visit. They will give you guidance on what underpinning knowledge the learners will need to back up the practical tasks that you have trained them in, the skills and behaviours gained – all logged in the Skills Passport with underlying evidence in their electronic portfolio.

RT Roving Tutors will visit learners approximately every 6 weeks to provide training and discuss with the Mentor the assistance they require for subsequent visits. The following notes describe the job role and responsibilities for each level of Diploma:

**Level 1** - Yard workers that need constant supervision. They should have an understanding of basic stable management but are likely to be slower than would be considered acceptable in the industry. They don't yet have the confidence, knowledge or experience to deal with horses that have problems or vices. If you relate level 1 candidates to a horse think of a yearling that has just been introduced to tack. Some days they remember what you have taught them and others you are back to square one! Patience is a virtue and it will pay off!

**Level 2** - Members of staff that are able to work with minimal supervision. They should be capable of undertaking a range of stable duties, showing awareness and ability to identify problems and seeking help where appropriate. Their duties should be carried out efficiently whilst working at a speed acceptable in the industry. They should be capable of riding or exercising straightforward fit horses. Relate them to the two-year-old that is going nicely. It will canter in a straight line but is very green and 'has a leg in every county when asked to gallop!' The potential is there; it just needs educating a bit more before seeing the track.

**Level 3** - Senior staff that are able to assume responsibility if the Head Groom is away for a limited period of time. They can take horses racing, make the travelling arrangements and take the relevant equipment. They should be capable of feeding horses at different levels of training and be able to alter feeds as appropriate. At this level they should have a good knowledge of the industry as well as high standards of horse care. This person should have good people skills and be able to offer help and guidance to level 1 and 2 staff. They should be capable of riding a wide range of horses (if they are doing the riding option) including difficult/unpredictable rides. They should be able to assess the horse's performance and give feedback to the Trainer/Head groom. Non-riders at level 3 should be able to assist with implementing a wider training/fitness programme for a range of different horses. Acting under instruction/supervision, they should be able to show improvement in the horse. They are like the good old handicapper that when all the seasons flying machines have been beaten, can be relied on to bring home the bacon.

### **APPRENTICESHIPS – MANDATORY OUTCOMES**

Equine Groom (L2) Apprenticeship	Senior Equine Groom (L3) Apprenticeship
Functional Skills:  Achieve Level 1 and sit L2 Functional English exam or GCSE grade 2 or above	Functional Skills:  Achieve Level 2 Functional English or GCSE grade 4 or above

Achieve Level 1 and sit L2 Functional Maths exam or GCSE grade 2 or above	Achieve Level 2 Functional Math's or GCSE grade 4 or above
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### **PORTFOLIOS**

Learners are asked to produce portfolios of underlying evidence stored electronically on eAssessor. This will contain completed evidence of knowledge, skills and behaviours development and a Skills Passport which is completed by competent individuals declaring that the learner is capable of certain tasks. Photographic evidence would be a big help and possibly the Mentor could assist in taking pictures or videos of the learner performing various duties. Each learner will have their own unique log in to eAssessor and should use this to store any evidence for their portfolio. This evidence may include written work, photos, videos and Racing2Learn certificates.

### **KNOWLEDGE TEST**

Near the end of their apprenticeship the learner will be asked to sit an online test which includes 50 questions. These are all multiple choice in the Level 2 Equine Groom and a mix of multiple choice and open questions in the Level 3 Senior Equine Groom. The pass mark for both is 70% and a mark of 90% or higher is required to get an overall distinction grade in the apprenticeship. There are practice tests on Racing2Learn.

### **PRACTICAL OBSERVATION AND PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION AT END POINT ASSESSMENT (EPA)**

At the end of their apprenticeship each learner will be assessed either in the workplace or at the NHC by an Independent End Point Assessor (IEPA) who will carry out an observation of the learners completing their daily tasks for a minimum of 5 hours for level 2 Equine Groom and 6 hours for the Level 3 Senior Equine Groom. This will be immediately followed by a professional discussion lasting up to 90 minutes where the IEPA can ask questions about the tasks they haven't seen, such as taking horses racing or anything else they need to check the knowledge and understanding of. Results are given within 21 working days after the EPA. If the learner fails the EPA, they would be given further training where required and asked to re-sit the EPA again.

### **MENTOR TRAINING**

Although you have vast experience working in the industry, the thought of helping a learner can sometimes be slightly daunting. NHC is happy for mentors to attend the college to shadow staff, giving them greater insight into what is required of learners to achieve their Apprenticeship. NARS also offer fully funded mentor training courses throughout the year which are easily accessible. Support and guidance can also be delivered on the yard.

If you require any further guidance please do not hesitate to contact the National Horseracing College by telephone on 01302 861000 or by E-mail at [info@thenhc.co.uk](mailto:info@thenhc.co.uk). Also see NHC contact sheet.

### **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

For those learners who have any additional learning needs we provide a support through additional RT visits and remote check in sessions. Our RTs can provide support in portfolio building, revision session and preparation for EPA day as well as signposting to other resources such as Racing Welfare or NARS when required.