

Farriery is defined by the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 as 'any work in connection with the preparation or treatment of the foot of a horse for the immediate reception of a shoe thereon, the fitting by nailing or otherwise of a shoe to the foot or the finishing off of such work on the foot'.

Overview

A farrier is a skilled craftsman capable of shoeing all types of feet, whether normal or defective, making shoes to suit all types of animal and working conditions and devising corrective measures to compensate for faulty limb action.

Numbers of farriers:

- Official statistics exclude businesses and employees within farriery; therefore Lantra works with industry and undertakes primary research to obtain estimates for this industry. According to the farriers Registration Council, there are 2,560 farriers in the UK¹.

Businesses by size:

- The majority of farriers run their own businesses or work within a small company; therefore the number of businesses in the UK is estimated to be almost equal to the number of farriers.

Workforce demographics^{1,4}

Gender			
Male	98%	Female	2%
Age band			
16-24	6%	45-54	25%
25-34	26%	55-64	15%
35-44	20%	65+	8%



Size and scope

Farriers tend to be concentrated in the South of England.

Nation/Region	Number of farriers ^{1,3,4}	
UK	2,560	100%
Northern Ireland	<20	1%
Scotland	170	7%
Wales	150	6%
England	2,220	87%
East of England	310	14%
East Midlands	170	8%
London	110	5%
North East	80	4%
North West	220	10%
South East	460	21%
South West	450	20%
West Midlands	230	10%
Yorkshire and the Humber	200	9%

Skills issues

Skills needed to become a farrier include:

- Horse handling
- Technical skills (e.g. blacksmithing, operating machinery)
- Customer care
- Business skills
- Essential skills (literacy, numeracy, communication).

As the majority of farriers are self-employed, heavy emphasis needs to be placed upon business skills and technical skills.

Farriers Registration Act⁵

The Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 was introduced to prevent and avoid suffering by, and cruelty to horses, arising from shoeing by unskilled persons; to promote the shoeing of horses and the training of farriers; to establish the Farriers Registration Council (FRC) to register persons engaged in farriery and to prohibit the shoeing of horses by unqualified persons.

The Act came fully into effect in England and Wales in 1980 and the requirement to be registered (Section 16 of the Act) came into force in Scotland on 1 November 1981. This specifically excluded the Highlands and Islands of Scotland because of fears that there might not be enough farriers eligible for registration to cover these remote areas and carry out all necessary farriery work. However, since 30 March 2007, the act has been extended to these areas.

The Farriers Registration Act does not apply in Northern Ireland but there is a need for it so as to regulate farriery work being done. This explains why there are only 12 farriers registered with the FRC in Northern Ireland. Unfortunately there is no way of gaining a more accurate figure at present.

Qualifications^{1,6}

To become a farrier it is necessary to qualify for entry into the Register of Farriers. To achieve this requires completion of a course of training and a minimum period of experience approved by the FRC. The course currently approved is an Advanced Apprenticeship which includes the Diploma in Farriery (work-based) and the Worshipful Company of Farriers Diploma in Farriery (including an NVQ Level 3 in Farriery and a Technical Certificate which is the Diploma of the Worshipful Company of Farriers). The prescribed period of experience is four years and two months.

Before embarking on a Farriery Apprenticeship, candidates must be over 16 and have the minimum entry requirements. The minimum educational entry requirements are currently either four GCSE passes at grade C or above which must include English Language and Mathematics or an NVQ Level 2 and the Level 2 Key Skills of Communication and Application of Number, or a BTEC First Diploma and the key or functional Skills (Scottish, Northern Ireland and EU equivalents will apply). An Access to Farriery Course is available for anyone not in possession of the academic and/or practical entry requirements.

Candidates cannot apply directly to the Farriery Training Agency (FTA) for an Advanced Apprenticeship, but must be proposed by an Approved Training Farrier (ATF). Therefore, candidates must write to ATFs from the list published by the FTA to find one to propose them as a candidate and who is willing to employ them for the period of the Apprenticeship. A Forging Certificate also needs to be gained by attending an Access to Farriery Course, a short course at an approved college, or by working with a competent person and taking the exam at an approved college.

The apprenticeship includes block release periods of between two and four weeks at college every six months. During each attendance, assessments are undertaken, and theory and practical instruction are given.

Learning supply

- Around 131 apprentices undertook a framework in farriery related studies in 2007-08 in England⁷
- An estimated 477 learners enrolled on qualifications or courses delivered by FE colleges/work-based learning in farriery related studies in the UK in 2008-09⁸; popular qualifications included the certificate in forgework, diploma in farriery and NVQ in farriery.

Employment projections 2010-20^{9,10}

- In the next ten years (2010 to 2020) the sector will need approximately 500 people.

Drivers for change

Legislation

- The price of keeping a van on the road, van insurance, and meeting health and safety regulations for portable equipment
- Workshop health and safety regulations
- First aid in the work place.

Impact on skills

- Health and safety regulations and implementation
- Business management and legislation requirements as well as finance management
- Health and safety training courses for the small business provision
- Access to first aid courses.



Economic conditions

- The price of raw materials such as steel, forge coke, and gas
- Price fluctuations have affected the profit margins of farriers whose prices for services tend to be set
- Many do not have the storage facilities to buy in bulk
- The cost of running your forge with high business rates
- Understanding/responding to change in demand.

Impact on skills

- A greater understanding of how to source the stock required
- Negotiation of prices
- Business advice, guidance and support
- Business and risk management skills
- Sales and marketing; ICT and commerce
- Advice on small business rates relief/help.

Labour supply

- Succession planning by industry
- Providing opportunities for progression/development.

Impact on skills

- Proper recognition of competence for all
- Integrated frameworks to support lifelong learning and Continued Professional Development (CPD).

Equine health and welfare

- Higher standards required of all people handling animals.

Impact on skills

- Improve awareness of the Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium
- Skills relating to horse handling and care, disease identification, control and biosecurity.

Exotic diseases

- Increasing threat of exotic diseases with increased transportation of horses and climate change
- Lack of disease management procedures in place.

Impact on skills

- Increased awareness/knowledge of exotic diseases and disease prevention/management
- Increased awareness of Horse Betting Levy Board Codes of Practice on Equine Diseases.

Training issues

- Impacts on recruitment and retention of staff
- The amount of young farriers being trained in colleges in a time of economic hardship, and the impact it is having on the farriery circuit
- More regulations on the amount of students being allowed on college courses, including the pre-Farriery access course.

Impact on skills

- Student destination information needed
- Research into the size and structure of industry
- Succession planning

Sources and information

- 1 Farriers Registration Council, register of farriers (March 2010) volume 3
- 2 Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) 2010
- 3 Figures have been rounded to the nearest ten and may not add up to the total due to the rounding of percentages used when calculating figures. Figures quoted for the nine English regions make up the England total
- 4 Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding
- 5 National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC), 2006
- 6 The Farriery Training Agency
- 7 Learning and Skills Council/Data Service (England). DCELLS (Wales) offers a framework but no Farriery Apprenticeships were undertaken in 2007-08. The framework is not available in Scotland and Northern Ireland
- 8 Data Service (England), Scottish Funding Council (SDS/SFC), CAFRE (Northern Ireland). There is no farriery FE provision in Wales
- 9 Lantra Model for Employment Forecasting (LMEF) 2010. Figures represent estimates of minimum job openings to satisfy replacement and expansionary demand. This may be higher or lower depending on future conditions
- 10 Figures have been rounded to the nearest one hundred.

Lantra website

More information about Lantra research can be found at:
www.lantra.co.uk/research



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