

# National Equine Welfare Council

## Code Of Practice



ESTABLISHED 1977



**NEWWC**  
**NATIONAL EQUINE**  
**WELFARE COUNCIL**

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The Elise Pilkington Charitable Trust was delighted to be able to help fund this valuable National Equine Welfare Council Code of Practice.


The Trust supports the intent to improve welfare with a code of conduct aimed at promoting best practice.

Established in 1979, The Elise Pilkington Charitable Trust's aim is to support equine charities in their role of preventing cruelty by relieving suffering and distress, and by caring for and protecting those equines at risk.

More information on the Trust's work can be found on the Trust's website [www.elisepilkingtontrust.org.uk](http://www.elisepilkingtontrust.org.uk) including how to apply for funding.

**National Equine Welfare Council is most grateful for the generous support from The Elise Pilkington Trust in the production of this Code of Practice.**

Many thanks to Martin Taggart, The Donkey Sanctuary, and all who contributed to the production of the revised Code of Practice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicolas de Brauwere', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Nicolas de Brauwere**  
NEWC Chairman

# NATIONAL EQUINE WELFARE COUNCIL

## CODE OF PRACTICE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
ENTRY CRITERIA	2
Reasons for Accepting horses	
Quality of Life	
Purchase	
Resources	
Ownership	
PLANNING FOR SUCCESS	2
Correct Stocking Levels	
Good Husbandry and Presentation	
Accommodation	
GOVERNANCE & LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES	3
Legal Responsibilities	
Health and Safety	
Risk Management	
Insurance	
Record Keeping	
Fundraising	
STAFFING	4
Availability	
Competence and Qualifications	
Voluntary Staff	
Costs	
Working of Horses	

	<b>PAGE</b>
HUSBANDRY/ENVIRONMENT	<b>4</b>
Stable Management Programme	
Grazing	
Pasture Management	
Shelter	
Feed and Water	
HEALTH	<b>5</b>
Daily Inspection	
Veterinary Support	
Health Plan	
Bio-security	
Parasite Management	
Foot Care	
Dental Care	
Saddlery (Tack and Harness)	
Exercise	
EUTHANASIA	<b>6</b>
Guidelines & Checklist	
Carcass Disposal	
RE-HOMING/LOAN SCHEMES	<b>7</b>
Introduction	
Advantages	
Management	
Choice of Home	
Suggested Procedures	
Insurance	
Third Party Activities	
Change of Circumstance	
Regular Home Checks and Enforced Return	
Loan Agreement	
GENERAL /OTHER ISSUES	<b>II</b>
Identification	
Inspection of NEWC Member Facilities	
Permanent Closure of Organisations	
NEWC Member Standards of Conduct	

# INTRODUCTION

## AIM

This Code of Practice, produced by the National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC), aims to ensure the maintenance of high standards of equine welfare by all NEWC member organisations holding horses, ponies, donkeys, mules and their hybrids (hereafter referred to as “horses”).

NEWC is an overarching body that comprises a number of member organisations who have a commitment to equine welfare. It is an unconditional requirement of NEWC membership that organisations who provide accommodation for horses - for whatever purpose - must adhere to the Code.

In addition to the legal responsibilities placed on owners and keepers by United Kingdom animal welfare legislation, it is a requirement that NEWC members accept ongoing inspections by NEWC to confirm that proper standards of care are being maintained.

All equine welfare organisations are encouraged to become members of NEWC. By seeking membership, those who currently do not meet the required standards will thus be in a position to receive advice on how this objective may be met. Persons who are contemplating

setting up such an organisation are invited to contact NEWC who may be in a position to offer appropriate advice.

The Code of Practice outlines the framework for delivering exemplary levels of horse care that must be demonstrated by NEWC member organisations. These should be universally recognised as the benchmark for all individuals and organisations charged with the care of horses. The Code should be read in conjunction with the more detailed information that is provided in the NEWC Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys and other appropriate specialist publications.

This Code also provides an outline of the various administrative aspects of operating an equine establishment that must be addressed by NEWC member organisations.

Use of the generic term “horses” within the Code should not undermine the importance of recognising the specific requirements of different equine species, such as donkeys and mules. These are addressed in more detail within the publications referred to above.

## ENTRY CRITERIA

### REASONS FOR ACCEPTING HORSES

Each organisation should have a clear view of:

- ▶ Its Aims and Objectives; and
- ▶ The criteria that must be met by each horse before it is accepted by the organisation

### QUALITY OF LIFE

Before acceptance, careful consideration must be given to the future welfare and quality of life of the animal, and the organisation's ability to provide it.

### PURCHASE

Rescuing horses by purchase is strongly discouraged, as this encourages and rewards those who may be responsible for neglect.

### RESOURCES

It is unacceptable for an organisation to take in more horses than the resources will allow for the proper care and attention of the animals.

### OWNERSHIP

It is vital that organisations are clear on what legal basis they admit horses into their care (e.g. transfer of ownership, boarding on behalf of another body or authority; or temporary custody on behalf of an owner).

## PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

### CORRECT STOCKING LEVELS

As a condition of membership, NEWC member organisations will, as a matter of their own (internal) policy, establish optimum and maximum stocking levels based upon factors including, but not necessarily limited to:

- ▶ Availability, type, quality and condition of grazing and land
- ▶ Time of year and climatic conditions
- ▶ Type and age of animals held
- ▶ Availability of shelter and stabling
- ▶ Staff availability and competence
- ▶ The organisation's objectives
- ▶ Availability of sufficient funds

NEWC encourages organisations to refuse to accept animals that would exceed their capacity. In such circumstances the organisation should be prepared to work with other bodies to find alternative arrangements.

It must be borne in mind that at all times there remains a legal duty of care that places responsibilities upon owners and keepers to ensure a proper level of care on behalf of all animals in their charge. This must be considered when determining whether to accept horses in excess of the normal capacity.

### GOOD HUSBANDRY AND PRESENTATION

Organisations must demonstrate responsible ownership through a high standard of horse care and presentation of premises.

### ACCOMMODATION

Suitable, secure accommodation of adequate size and quantity to cope with maximum stock levels must be provided.

## GOVERNANCE & LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Trustees and Managers of organisations to which this Code of Practice refers must be aware of their responsibilities. In this connection up to date guidance can be obtained by referring to the Charity Commission website:  
[www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk)

Organisations must comply with a raft of legislation ranging from Health and Safety and Employment legislation through to more specific horse related legislation such as animal welfare and Passport laws. It is vital that NEWC member organisations are aware of their responsibilities and comply with existing and new or updated legislation relevant to their work.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

Staff, volunteers and visitors to its premises must be made aware of the organisation's health and safety policy. It is the responsibility of all parties to ensure a safe environment by adhering to health and safety procedures and safe working practices.

In addition to ensuring all work equipment is suitable, fit for purpose and well-maintained, organisations must have in place safe systems of work and ensure that these are followed by all.

### RISK MANAGEMENT

Organisations are strongly advised to have a written Risk Management policy, which should include relevant Risk Assessments, some of which have a statutory requirement. In addition to responsibilities indicated in the Health and Safety policy, consideration must be given to the consequences arising from,

for example, theft, vandalism and disease, in addition to matters such as loss of income or premises.

### INSURANCE

Liabilities may arise through the pursuance of legal action by a third party or an employee, whose claim may be made against the Centre as a corporate body (regardless of its legal status), against the proprietors in person or, if a charity, against the Trustees.

It is therefore important that specialist advice is sought from a qualified insurance professional to ensure the most appropriate cover is obtained.

### RECORD KEEPING

Organisations must keep accurate records of their activities to comply with legal requirements as well as to assist good husbandry. In particular, organisations should document where horses are located, the feeding arrangements, procedures such as farriery or dentistry, veterinary interventions and assessments made for health and training.

### FUNDRAISING

NEWC members should fundraise ethically and responsibly, in line with rules set out by the Charity Commission (or other regulating body). Such activities should aspire to the principles in the Code of Practice for Fundraising, as produced and updated by the Institute of Fundraising (or other relevant body).



## STAFFING

### AVAILABILITY

Sufficient suitably competent staff must be provided at all times to ensure proper, regular and timely attention to all horses held. When calculating staff requirements and rotas it is necessary to make allowance for absences due to training, holiday, sickness, maternity and unforeseen circumstances. It is also important that the organisation maintains sufficient funds to meet its legal responsibilities as an employer.

### COMPETENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Persons having responsibility for the safety, care, and working of horses must demonstrate competence in horse care, training and management either by recognised professional qualifications or extensive practical experience.

NEWC members involved in investigations arising from allegations of horse cruelty or neglect by third parties must be competent in understanding the legal framework within which welfare concerns can be investigated, together with the correct procedures for evidence gathering and recording.

This includes carrying out any work involving the provision of advice, or removal of horses from situations of cruelty and neglect and subsequently caring for them; it applies in all cases, whether operating as enforcers of animal welfare legislation or alongside enforcement bodies such as Local Authorities and Police.

NEWC strongly supports and recommends the industry benchmark qualification, the Level 3 Diploma in Equine Legislation, Welfare and Field Skills. This qualification will develop the knowledge and skills of those undertaking these roles and ensure that individuals are competent and qualified in all aspects of equine welfare work.

## VOLUNTARY STAFF

Assistance provided by volunteers can prove to be both valuable and effective, but the employment of full-time, paid staff is likely to provide the necessary supervision and continuity of care.

As is the case with paid members of staff, a formal written agreement between the organisation and volunteers will set out clearly the responsibilities of both parties, whilst providing a sound basis for resolving misunderstandings or disputes that may arise.

### COSTS

The cost of paid staff is a contractual responsibility, and is likely to be the organisation's single greatest expense. Supporting volunteers also requires resourcing.

It is therefore imperative that sufficient funds are always available to meet all commitments as an employer.

## WORKING OF HORSES

Horses should be schooled (ridden or driven) only by, or under the direct supervision of, a suitably qualified and experienced person. In such situations all parties must make use of safety equipment that is appropriate to the task.

## HUSBANDRY / ENVIRONMENT

### STABLE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Effective stable management relies to a great extent on a methodical approach to routine tasks, and the identification of individual / team responsibilities for carrying out nominated tasks. It is the duty of managers or senior members of staff to ensure these are adhered to.

The maintenance of accurate records will contribute greatly to the success of the stable management programme.

## GRAZING

Turnout is an essential welfare need for horses. Sufficient grazing and/or exercise facilities, with appropriate secure fencing and a continuous water supply, must be available throughout the year so that horses may exercise and express normal social behaviour. It is imperative to understand that horses are herd animals with definite social needs.

## PASTURE MANAGEMENT

An effective pasture management programme should be employed, primarily to provide grazing that is safe and fit for purpose. This will also create and maintain a favourable impression of the organisation.

Pastures must be frequently cleared of muck and be free of noxious weeds such as ragwort. Both of these measures will contribute greatly to the control of internal parasites and the protection of the horses' health.

## SHELTER

Animals must have unrestricted access to shelter (purpose built or natural) that will adequately protect them from inclement weather conditions. Where donkeys /mules are being cared for, managers must be aware of their specific requirements that do not always coincide with those of horses and ponies.

## FEED AND WATER

All horses must receive sufficient, regular feeding and water appropriate to their individual type, condition, age and level of work.

# HEALTH

## DAILY INSPECTION

Methodical and thorough daily inspections must be carried out to ensure the animals' health and well-being. These will include checking the animals for changes in their physical appearance or behaviour; and checking for external wounds or other signs of injury; water supply must be monitored for availability and cleanliness; security and safety will be best protected by checks on the condition of stables, shelters and fencing.

Any deviation from the normal standards must be acted upon immediately, and necessary steps must be taken without delay to remedy the problem.

## VETERINARY SUPPORT

A nominated veterinary practice, experienced in equine care, should be retained to treat animals and will be a key partner that provides professional advice on preventative and reactive health care plans.

It is important that all diagnosis and treatment of horses must be under the direction of a veterinary surgeon.

Up to date records of each animal's ailments and treatments must be maintained and be available for reference by attending veterinary surgeons.

Equine passports must be made available to the veterinary surgeon on each visit to treat a horse.

## HEALTH PLAN

A health care plan should be agreed with veterinary advisors to include details of environment, diet, parasite control, vaccination, and other routine procedures. This must be supported by accurate and up-to-date records of all relevant interventions.

## BIO-SECURITY

All members of staff and volunteers must practice the highest practicable standards of hygiene and cleanliness throughout the premises where animals are kept. This will include taking all steps that are reasonably necessary to prevent the spread of infection.

In this regard proper isolation facilities must be available in order to minimise the risk of infection being imported by new admissions to the premises.

NEWC strongly recommends that copies of the industry endorsed Checklist for Equine Health are prominently displayed on the premises. Copies of this can be found on the NEWC and BEVA websites.

## PARASITE MANAGEMENT

Internal (worms) and external (lice and mites) parasites must be actively managed in line with up to date evidence on effective programmes and products. Emerging resistance to available products is a serious threat to horse health, and programmes should place emphasis on appropriate husbandry measures and control methods that are evidence based (e.g. using faecal worm egg counts to decide on deworming requirements). As with the overall health plan, a parasite control programme should be agreed with veterinary advisors.

## FOOT CARE

All horses should have their feet regularly attended to by a professionally qualified and registered farrier, as required.

## DENTAL CARE

Regular dental checks are essential to the health of horses. These should be carried out only by Veterinary Surgeons and qualified Equine Dental Technicians (EDTs) who should provide the keeper with an updated dental chart following each examination and treatment.

## SADDLERY (TACK AND HARNESS)

When horses are to be ridden or otherwise worked, it is important that saddles and harness /tack are fitted by a suitably qualified person. Periodic checks of equipment will also help to lessen the potential for injury caused by ill-fitting tack. All harness and tack must be suitable for the purpose and properly fitted with professional advice being sought as required.

## EXERCISE

All horses should be given adequate and regular exercise/turnout according to their age, fitness and state of health.

During these periods it is advisable to monitor the animals for signs of lameness, ill health or abnormal behaviour.

## EUTHANASIA

### GUIDELINES AND CHECK LIST

Whilst it is not possible to provide precise policy advice on this delicate subject, organisations must recognise that having in place a policy on Euthanasia is an essential part of responsible horse ownership.

In order to avoid conflict or confusion the organisation's policy must be fully explained to, and followed by, all members of staff.

Horses must be humanely destroyed promptly on veterinary advice or when their quality of life is considered to be significantly and permanently reduced. Where possible, this should be carried out on site in order to avoid causing further distress or injury by transporting the animal to another location.

There are strict legal protections for the welfare of animals during transport, including restrictions on moving animals that might suffer as a consequence of being transported.

## CARCASS DISPOSAL

Organisations that look after horses must be familiar with local carcass removal and disposal services that may be called to assist.

The disposal of carcasses is subject to legal restrictions. Before a decision is taken to bury carcasses on private land it is also necessary for advice and authorisation to be sought from the Local Authority.

## RE-HOMING/ LOAN SCHEMES

### INTRODUCTION

NEWC encourages welfare organisations to re-home their animals, whenever appropriate, through a 'loan' scheme. Although this type of scheme is practised by a number of its members whose schemes use different titles, the principles remain the same.

Most loan schemes are based on a principal that the organisation retains ownership of the animal, whilst others may decide to transfer ownership after a suitable probationary period.

Whilst NEWC has no specific guidelines relating to such schemes, organisations must remain conscious at all times of their ongoing legal responsibilities to ensure the continued well-being of the animals wherever they are located. These conditions should be clearly specified in written agreements made between the organisation and the borrowers.

## ADVANTAGES

- ▶ The organisation can make space for the acceptance of new animals, thus more horses can be cared for by the organisation over a given period.
- ▶ Horses can be placed in loan homes to receive a level of individual attention that would be difficult to achieve if they remained as part of a larger herd at the sanctuary.
- ▶ Costs are spread, with the borrower taking responsibility for the animal's upkeep.

## MANAGEMENT

The cost of administering a loan scheme will be a major expense requiring time, resources and staff. It is unacceptable – and a potential breach of Animal Welfare law – to place a horse on loan and then ignore it.

An agreed management procedure is required to ensure that horses are matched with the appropriate home. In order to avoid confusion, it is essential that written Terms and Conditions of the loan are clearly explained to potential borrowers prior to the movement of animals into their care. These documents should be signed by both parties, who should also retain copies of the agreement.

Follow-up home checks should be carried out and recorded by designated representatives of the organisation to ensure the continued well-being of the animal, and to provide support and advice to the borrower whenever required.

## CHOICE OF HOME

Organisations loaning horses must be particularly careful to match the horse with the home and the requirements of the borrower. Failure to do so may mean the horse being returned as unsuitable, together with a complaint being made against the organisation for consequences arising from

loaning a horse perceived as unsuitable, or the horse being returned with behavioural issues.

Borrowers should be able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of, and competence in equine husbandry. Their riding competence must be sufficient to manage the animal in the activities in which the borrower wishes to engage.

Where the horse concerned is described as 'not for a novice rider' the potential borrower may be invited to initially demonstrate his / her competence by riding a 'schoolmaster' type of horse before being asked to ride a horse that may be described as 'less easy'.

Potential borrowers must be made aware of the extent of their responsibilities for the cost of caring for the horse. Whenever appropriate, organisations may consider inclusion of an estimate of the cost of basic care, together with the potential for unforeseen expense resulting from injury or illness to the horse. This will allow the borrower to assess whether he /she is able and willing to meet /undertake such expenditure should it become necessary.

NEWC recommends that all potential homes be inspected for suitability prior to loan. The facilities on offer should be suitable for the particular horse(s).

The borrower must be able to meet all the needs of the horse including specific reasonable requirements set by the organisation above minimum requirements under animal welfare legislation. These could include provision of companionship, the nature of fencing and shelter; and special care such as restricted grazing to manage weight.

## SUGGESTED PROCEDURES

The following outline describes a useful sequence of events for a successful loan.

- (a) Initial reception and assessment of the horse at welfare establishment.
- (b) Rehabilitation and re-schooling, where required.
- (c) Applications from potential borrowers sought and processed.
- (d) Selection of potentially suitable borrowers for the particular horse. This process may require more than one visit.
- (e) Initial home check and discussion of requirements at loan home.
- (f) Potential borrower introduced to horse and trial ride at the organisation's premises. This process may require more than one visit.
- (g) Horse is homed, both parties having signed the rehome /loan agreement
- (h) Follow-up home check takes place within one month.
- (i) Follow-up advice available.
- (j) Regular home checks continued. Some may be unannounced, if felt necessary.

## INSURANCE

NEWC recommends the inclusion of a mandatory condition of the loan agreement that places responsibility on the borrower to maintain a current third party insurance policy which indemnifies him /her against claims arising from keeping the horse(s).

It is also advisable to insure for the cost of veterinary fees relating to the horse. Individual insurance companies may have restrictions on horses that are not owned by the person seeking the cover; and may have restrictions on the age of the animal and the amount that may be claimed. Some may also require a copy of the signed agreement showing details of the owner and the conditions of the loan.

Where insurance for death or destruction of the horse is in operation, an agreement must be made with the owner to determine who receives the insurance payment.

## ‘THIRD PARTY’ ACTIVITIES

A policy should be established in relation to the use of Loan horses, ponies, donkeys or mules for commercial purposes or the promotion or support of other charitable or non-profit-making activities (e.g. donkeys at Palm Sunday church services). Where such activities are permitted it is important that the insurance company is aware; some companies charge an additional premium for this.

## CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Organisations setting up loan schemes should make annual provision for a percentage of animals to be returned through unforeseen changes to borrowers' circumstances. Such contingency should be made for those horses even though it will adversely affect the number of new horses that can be admitted.

It is not uncommon for horses to be loaned to homes where responsibility for their day-to-day care is delegated to a member of the family or knowledgeable member of staff. In such circumstances the organisation must be aware of any changes that may adversely affect the horse's welfare.

## REGULAR HOME CHECKS AND ENFORCED RETURN

It is important that horses on loan are inspected at least annually. Representatives of organisations should take steps to develop a harmonious and effective working relationship with Borrowers to ensure that visits are made at mutually convenient times, and that they are appropriate to the needs of the Borrowers and the welfare of the horse.

Checks will include: the horse's body condition; availability and condition of shelter; feeding, water; companionship and security; inspection of health records, equine passports and third party insurance certificates. Details should be recorded regarding records of foot care, dental and vaccination.

A written record of all visits must be made at the time of the visit, with any concerns or shortcomings being brought to notice at the time, together with an agreed timetable for such matters to be put right.

In exceptional circumstances where the organisation believes that the horse's welfare is not being adequately catered for despite advice being given previously, or if the horse is in immediate danger due to abuse or neglect, it may be necessary to remove the animal to the custody of the organisation. This contingency must be clearly defined within the terms of the agreement.

## LOAN AGREEMENT

A number of NEWC member organisations have their own Loan Agreement forms which can be adapted by others who may contemplate such a scheme. Details of these can be obtained from the NEWC office.

Formal loan agreements are necessary to safeguard the welfare of the horses, and to clearly set out the respective responsibilities of the organisation and the borrower. The agreement should include details of:

- ▶ The horse – including age, height, gender, breed, colour and markings, together with microchip and passport numbers. The description should also include the type and level of work to which the horse is suited and, if appropriate, any specific restrictions on its use.
- ▶ The owner – the welfare organisation

- ▶ The borrower – this is the named individual who will remain responsible for the care of the horse, whether or not the day-to-day tasks are delegated to a third party. It should also be noted that all parties concerned with ownership or care of the animals are liable under UK Animal Welfare legislation.
- ▶ The location – where the animal is to be kept.
- ▶ Responsibilities of the Borrower
  - Keep the animal in sound and healthy condition, including the provision of the necessary level of care, shelter and stabling
  - Be responsible for the cost of items such as feed, farriery, dental, veterinary care and all other associated costs, as detailed in the Loan Agreement. Full written records must be kept of all such visits and treatment.
  - Ensure that the animal's feet are properly maintained through trimming by a competent person /shod by a registered farrier as necessary (normally every 6-8 weeks) in order to maintain healthy and well balanced feet.
  - Adhere to the organisation's policy and procedures regarding worm control. This will normally include regular dung sampling to identify the presence and type of infestation, which will determine the necessity and type of worming treatment that may be required.
  - Ensure that vaccinations against equine influenza and tetanus are kept up to date.
  - Ensure that teeth are regularly checked (usually annually) by a veterinary surgeon or qualified equine dental technician.
  - Ensure that the horse has an equine

companion. This is particularly the case in respect of donkeys, which have a propensity to form strong bonds of friendship.

- Notify the organisation immediately if they move the horse; if they are unable to continue to offer the required level of care; or if the horse undergoes any veterinary treatment.
- Notify the police and the organisation immediately, should the horse become lost or missing.

#### ▶ Passports

It is a legal requirement that passports relating to individual animals must accompany them to their new location. Borrowers must be advised of their responsibility for the safekeeping of these important documents, which must also accompany the animals when they are moved (even on a temporary basis) from the premises where they are normally kept.

Borrowers must also be advised of the need to produce passports for inspection during each visit by a veterinary surgeon, and be aware of the status of the animal to the food chain, as indicated at Section IX of the passport.

In situations where passports are placed in the care of Borrowers, organisations are strongly recommended to keep a photocopy or other accurate record of the details of each passport.

#### ▶ Inspections

The borrower must agree to allow access at any reasonable time by the owner (i.e. an authorised representative of the organisation) to inspect the animals and their conditions under which they are being kept.

#### ▶ Restrictions of Use

The borrower must comply with any reasonable restrictions of use placed upon the horse. These may include:

- Use of the animal for activities that are unauthorised by the owner
- Turning out the horse with any animals known to be dangerous or diseased, or when the pasture contains any poisonous plants
- Breeding from the horse
- The riding of animals loaned as companions
- The riding of horses by any person other than the Borrower, other than a person specifically authorised to do so by the organisation.

► Humane Destruction

Agreement is required that, in the event of a horse suffering from a severe illness or accident and a veterinary surgeon advising that it is necessary for the horse to be immediately destroyed in order to prevent further suffering, the Borrower will have the horse humanely destroyed immediately.

The Borrower will, at the earliest practicable opportunity, notify the owner and supply full details of the nature of the illness or injury, circumstances of the accident (if appropriate), date of destruction, together with a copy of the veterinary certificate authorising and certifying the destruction.

When a horse dies or has been euthanased the animal's passport must be returned to the organisation who will in turn return it to the relevant Passport Issuing Office (PIO).

will form a critical element in the acquisition of a compulsory identification document (passport) that must be obtained from a recognised Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO).

It is also a legal requirement that the horse passport must accompany the animal to which it refers on every occasion it is moved from its usual location, regardless of duration or distance.

All changes of ownership of horses must be reported promptly to the PIO in order that details of the new owner may be recorded on the passport documents. It should be noted that amendments shall not be made to passports other than by the PIO who issued the original documents (or, if the PIO no longer exists, by the PIO that has taken on responsibility for the management of those passports). This must be done within 30 days of the change of ownership.

When the horse is relocated as part of the organisation's loan scheme, it must be accompanied by its passport, despite the fact that the organisation retains ownership of the animal.

## INSPECTION OF NEWC MEMBER FACILITIES

NEWC operates an assessment and inspection scheme to ensure potential and new member organisations that provide care to equines, are able to meet their welfare obligations to a high standard commensurate with the NEWC mission to raise equine welfare standards nationwide.

The exact nature of the scheme will be determined through consultation with members as demands on the process change. It will encompass initial assessments of potential member applicants based on information submitted via a formal application, which will be followed by inspection of the applicant's establishment if the application in other respects meets NEWC criteria.

## GENERAL / OTHER ISSUES

### IDENTIFICATION

Horse owners are legally responsible for having their horses identified by an Equine Passport; all new applications must include a microchip containing a unique number. This



Membership criteria are published on the NEWC website; these may change in response to evolving demands in the sector and will be determined through consultation with NEWC members.

To ensure welfare standards are maintained within existing NEWC member organisations NEWC will operate a risk based inspection process. This will be underpinned by a combination of annual self-assessment 'health checks' of the organisations and analysis of annual statistics submitted to NEWC (as part of the annual NEWC statistics of activities programme.)

## PERMANENT CLOSURE OF ORGANISATIONS

The permanent closure of premises – whether or not the owners are members of NEWC - and the consequential loss of refuge for animals in need, is a matter of great concern and regret. It is in this connection that NEWC members may be called upon to assist.

Members of NEWC will be aware that partnership working is central to NEWC ideals. As such those who find their organisation is, or is likely to be, in distressed circumstances should report their concerns to the NEWC office in order that help or advice may be provided to safeguard the welfare of the animals that may otherwise be caused suffering or deprivation.

NEWC members must maintain a constant vigilance in order to identify organisations that are facing difficulty in maintaining an adequate level of care for the animals in their charge: this may be due to a lack of financial or human resources, or some catastrophic event that deprives the animals from shelter, grazing or other basic requirement.

On being made aware of the imminence – or actual occurrence – of such an event NEWC members are advised to pass this information to the NEWC office. Following receipt of this notification, administrative staff will notify the

Chairman and Vice Chairman who will advise on the most appropriate course of action.

If neither of these individuals is immediately available advice should be sought from a NEWC Director, who will take whatever steps he /she deems necessary to relieve animal suffering.

In dealing with such a crisis NEWC and its members should support efforts to find a sustainable solution for the affected animals, working with the affected organisation and where necessary with bodies specialising in non-equine species. In situations where there is a serious compromise to animal welfare, particularly if there is evidence of extreme distress or suffering, it may be necessary to alert enforcement authorities in line with animal welfare legislation.

## NEWC MEMBER STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

NEWC is an overarching body comprising a number of autonomous member organisations who share a common commitment to equine welfare. The credibility and integrity of NEWC will be judged by the maintenance of high standards of conduct by representatives of its member organisations.

In order to protect the interests of its members, and to demonstrate to the general public its commitment to transparency and fairness, NEWC must have in place a clear and effective process that will establish proper methods of investigating complaints or allegations made against NEWC members whose conduct may have fallen short of the required standard.


It should be noted that it is not part of NEWC's duty to examine the internal affairs of member organisations, except in situations where the conduct of such affairs may conflict with the membership criteria of NEWC, or adherence to the Code of Practice.

**National Equine Welfare Council**

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