

Thinking of buying a horse, donkey or pony?

Keeping a horse, pony or donkey is a huge responsibility and commitment that should not be taken lightly

Equines can live for 25 - 40 years. Can you commit to providing care for the animal throughout its life even after you are gone?

Did you know:

- Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 a pet owner has a legal duty to ensure the welfare of his animal(s). A pet's welfare needs include:
 - A proper diet
 - Somewhere suitable to live
 - Any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
 - Allowing animals to express normal behaviour
 - Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease

If you decide to buy a horse, pony or donkey we would always recommend the following:

- Consider contacting your local animal rescue/rehoming centre
- Research before you buy. Be sure you understand the needs of the horse and that you have the time, skills and finance to provide for them
- Choose a type of horse that will be suited to your circumstances and requirements
- Make sure you have secured appropriate facilities where your new horse will be kept and you will have the support of knowledgeable people
- Check that the horse is healthy and fit for the purpose for which you intend to use it. Your local veterinary practice should be able to advise you on pre-purchase vetting
- Take someone experienced, perhaps your riding instructor, with you to try the horse. It may be necessary to visit more than once before you make the decision to buy
- Be prepared to wait for the right horse rather than settle for something which proves unsuitable and that you may be forced to part with after a short time
- If your chosen horse does not originate from the place of purchase, ask where it came from and try to discover its previous history
- Ensure that the equine passport is available and that the animal matches the description. If the animal also has separate vaccination certificates, breed papers or other identification documents, make sure that these are given to you at the time of purchase if they form part of the conditions of sale

- In the case of a foal, ideally you should view the parents and buy from a reputable breeder once the foal has been successfully weaned at an appropriate age
- Foals and young horses require a lot of additional care and handling to ensure that they develop properly until they are able to be prepared for riding when they are at least four years old
- Remember, horses, ponies and donkeys are powerful animals and can cause considerable damage. You should consider taking out 3rd party insurance cover. Similarly, veterinary bills for equines can be very high and you may wish to consider insurance to cover these bills

If you require further advice, contact:

National Equine Welfare Council: 01295 810060 or by email infbgo@newc.co.uk or visit their website at <http://www.newc.co.uk>

Wood Green Animal Shelters: 08701 904090

RSPCA: 0300 1234 999

