

# The Farriers Registration Council



Established under the  
Farriers (Registration) Act 1975

## FARRIER, APPROVED TRAINING FARRIER & APPRENTICE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

**2024 EDITION**



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## Guiding Principles

Registered Farriers are expected to make horse welfare their first consideration, with due regard to a safe working environment, and to fulfil their professional responsibilities by upholding the following guiding principles:

- ensure that all horses under your care are treated humanely and with respect
- maintain and continue to develop your professional knowledge and skills
- uphold the good reputation of the farriery profession
- recognise the limits of your professional competence
- be honest and trustworthy
- communicate openly with clients and behave professionally at all times
- foster and maintain a good relationship with your clients, earning their trust, respecting their views and protecting client confidentiality
- foster and endeavour to maintain good relationships with your professional colleagues
- respond promptly, fully and courteously to complaints and criticism
- understand and comply with your legal obligations
- avoid situations both within and outwith the professional context which could be in breach of the law, or may call into question your fitness to practise

## Introduction

### About the Code of Professional Conduct

1. The Farrier, Approved Training Farrier and Apprentice Code of Professional Conduct (the Code) sets out the professional responsibilities of Registered Farriers and offers supporting guidance to them. The Code describes the principles of good farriery practice, and the standards of competence, care and conduct expected of Registered Farriers in all aspects of their professional work. Registered Farriers have a responsibility to behave professionally and responsibly and uphold the reputation of farriers and the trust of the public in their personal and professional lives.
2. The Code comprises three parts:
  - Part 1 describes the responsibilities and sets out supporting guidance for Registered Farriers
  - Part 2 describes additional responsibilities for Approved Training Farriers (ATFs)
  - Part 3 sets out guidance for Enrolled Apprentices
3. A profession is any type of work which needs special training or a particular skill, often one which is respected because it involves a particular level of education and qualification. The word 'professional' within the context of the Code refers to all aspects of a farrier's craft and business dealings, in the widest context.
4. The Disciplinary Committee (DC) of the Farriers Registration Council may refer to this Code as the standard for conduct expected of Registered Farriers and it may be quoted in disciplinary proceedings.
5. The Code cannot, of necessity, deal with every eventuality but it is intended to set general standards.

6. Reference to 'horse' throughout this Code includes pony, mule, donkey or other equine animal.

### **Farriers (Registration) Act 1975, as amended**

7. The Act is:

‘An Act to prevent and avoid suffering by and cruelty to horses arising from the shoeing of horses by unskilled persons; to promote the proper shoeing of horses; to promote the training of farriers and shoeing smiths; to provide for the establishment of a Farriers Registration Council to register persons engaged in farriery and the shoeing of horses; to prohibit the shoeing of horses by unqualified persons; and for purposes connected therewith.’

8. The Act applies throughout Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland), but it does not apply in the Channel Islands, in the Isle of Man or in Northern Ireland.

### **Farriers Registration Council**

9. The Farriers Registration Council (FRC) was established under the Farriers (Registration) Act, as amended, to:
  - a. maintain a Register of Farriers and to determine who is qualified to register, to make rules with respect to the form and keeping of the Register;
  - b. approve and supervise courses of training, qualifications and institutions providing training in farriery;
  - c. undertake preliminary investigation of disciplinary cases through an Investigating Committee; and,
  - d. determine cases through a Disciplinary Committee.

## **Declaration on Admission to the Profession**

10. The following declaration is taken by apprentices on completion of the apprenticeship in farriery End Point Assessment (EPA); the declaration applies to all Registered Farriers:

‘I solemnly and sincerely declare that I will pursue the work of my Craft with diligence and integrity, maintain the established standards of the Farriery Profession, and accept the professional responsibilities now entrusted to me, and that my constant endeavour will be to ensure the welfare of horses committed to my care.’



## **PART ONE**

### **Registered Farriers**

## **Professional Responsibilities**

11. Rights are accompanied by responsibilities. Accessibility, accountability, and transparency are expected of every regulated professional. Legislation governing regulated professions is designed to meet these requirements, and to protect the public interest by ensuring a high level of education and training combined with personal and professional integrity.

### **12. Farriers and Horses**

- a. Farriers must treat all horses humanely, with respect, and with welfare as the primary consideration.
- b. Farriers must work within their professional competence, save for emergency first aid.
- c. Farriers must work in conjunction with the advice of a veterinary surgeon when so directed.
- d. A farrier must not usually penetrate sensitive structures on an animal, make a veterinary diagnosis or administer drugs to an animal. [See paragraphs 20 – 23 – *Farriers and Veterinary Surgeons*].
- e. Farriers must make adequate arrangements for the provision of holiday and emergency cover for horses usually committed to their care.

### **13. Farriers and Clients**

- a. Farriers must be open and honest with clients, and any representative of the client, and respect their needs, requirements and freedom of choice.

- b. Farriers must not exhibit behaviour towards a client (or any other individual) that is at variance with the core values of a Registered Farrier, including any form of abuse, bullying, coercion, discrimination, exploitation, harassment, intimidation or offensive language. This list is not exhaustive.
- c. Farriers must provide clear information about their practice, including prices, contact details, insurance and complaints procedures.
- d. Farriers must keep a legible record of appointments, which is capable of being referred to at a later date.
- e. Farriers must respond to client enquiries, complaints and criticism in a timely and courteous manner.
- f. Farriers must advise clients when a second opinion is required, or when attention from a veterinary surgeon may be appropriate.
- g. Farriers must not attend to trim or shoe a horse in the absence of the client, or other person responsible for that animal, without prior arrangement with the client.
- h. Farriers must not disclose information about a client or a client's horse to a third party unless the client gives consent, or where reasonably necessary in an emergency or in the interests of horse welfare, or where necessary for legal or regulatory purposes.
- i. Farriers must observe and respect their own welfare and the wishes of their client when on site, particularly in relation to awareness of their use of technology (such as the use of mobile devices while at clients' premises and the playing of loud music), accompanying animals (such as Registered Farriers'

pets) and/or visitors (e.g. Registered Farriers who bring other persons such as children onto clients' premises). The examples given here do not constitute an exhaustive list.

#### **14. Farriers and Professional Colleagues**

- a. Farriers must provide all relevant information promptly to any colleague including, but not limited to, farriers and veterinary surgeons taking over responsibility for a horse.
- b. Farriers must refer cases responsibly.
- c. Farriers must not speak or write, including online, disparagingly about professional colleagues or their standard of work.
- d. Farriers may only delegate farriery work to those who are appropriately registered and have the necessary competence.

#### **15. Farriers and the FRC**

- a. Farriers must be registered with the Farriers Registration Council (FRC) to carry out farriery in Great Britain and pay the relevant registration or retention fee on time. Failure to pay the retention fee on time will result in the removal from the Farriers Register. A restoration fee may apply to be restored to the Register.
- b. Farriers must notify the FRC of any change to their registered details, such as their address, within one month of the change.

- c. Farriers must respond promptly and constructively to any request from the FRC, such as for comments in relation to any allegation or complaint made against them.
- d. **Annual Return**  
[See paragraph 85 – *Annual Return*]

### **Farriers**

Farriers must submit an Annual Return to the FRC in which they confirm:

- i. their registered details to be held by the Council
- ii. details of any police caution\* or criminal conviction awarded since their last declaration. There is generally no requirement to disclose cautions\* or convictions which are spent. The exception is for Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) who may be working with people under the age of 18; ATFs are required to disclose all cautions\* and convictions, even if spent, unless those matters are protected.  
*\*In Scotland, this includes a Recorded Police Warning, an Anti-Social Behaviour Fixed Penalty Notice and/or any Procurator Fiscal Direct Measure*
- iii. professional indemnity insurance cover in respect of practising farriery.

### **Approved Training Farriers ATFs**

Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) are additionally required to declare in their Annual Return that:

- i. they hold employer's liability insurance;
- ii. apprentices in their employment are subject to a written employment agreement;
- iii. apprentices in their employment are subject to a written apprenticeship agreement, and

- iv. their business remains financially capable of sustaining an apprentice.

The FRC may request further information from registrants through the Annual Return. The FRC reserves the right to review, revise, amend or replace the contents of the Annual Return over time to reflect the changing needs of regulation or as legislation demands.

- e. Farriers are encouraged to engage in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to keep their knowledge and skills up to date throughout their professional life. CPD is compulsory for all Registered Farriers. The FRC may request details of CPD undertaken; and farriers should respond promptly to all reasonable requests from the FRC for such details.
- f. The FRC will not tolerate abuse, bullying, harassment and intimidation aimed at the FRC members and/ or staff made in person, on the telephone, via any electronic means or in any form.

## 16. **Farriers and the General Public**

- a. Farriers must promote responsible horse management.
- b. Farriers must be courteous and professional in communications with members of the public, including when communicating online.
- c. Farriers must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute.

- d. Farriers must use their professional status to provide only factual information to the general public.
- e. Farriers must not exhibit behaviour that is at variance with the core values of a Registered Farrier, including any form of abuse, bullying, coercion, discrimination, exploitation, harassment, intimidation or offensive language. This list is not exhaustive.

## **Supporting Guidance**

### **Definition of Farriery**

17. Farriery is defined at Section 18 of the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 ('the Act'), as amended, 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 to the foot.'*

18. The practise of farriery in Great Britain is restricted by the Act to those who are registered by the FRC. The only exceptions are: persons undergoing approved training in farriery if carried out in the course of their training; veterinary surgeons; veterinary students working under the supervision of a qualified veterinary surgeon, or persons rendering first aid in case of emergency to a horse.

### **Acts Not Considered as Farriery**

19. Activities such as trimming feet when there is no intention of fitting a shoe do not fall within the definition of farriery. However, the FRC recommends that such work should be carried out by Registered Farriers or veterinary surgeons who are trained and qualified to do so.

## **Farriers and Veterinary Surgeons**

20. Farriers and veterinary surgeons are involved in providing attention to and care of horses' feet. While veterinary surgeons are exempt from the restrictions in the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975, as amended, farriers are not exempt from the restrictions in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and may not carry out procedures deemed to be acts of veterinary surgery. A farrier must not usually penetrate sensitive structures on an animal, make a veterinary diagnosis or administer drugs to an animal.
21. There is no clear, detailed demarcation between Registered Farriers and veterinary surgeons in the exercise of their respective professional responsibilities when tending to any issues related to a horse's shoeing. Much will depend on the particular circumstances of a case, together with the individuals concerned, including the client, and the relationship between them. Decisions as to whether a particular procedure should be performed by one or the other are a matter for consultation and co-operation, so long as the procedure in question is covered by the registration status of the person concerned. Farriers should make every effort to discuss cases personally with veterinary surgeons.
22. Where a veterinary surgeon requires particular work from a Registered Farrier, this should be specified in personal contact between them, or in writing. Verbal messages passed via the client should be confirmed by direct contact between the veterinary surgeon and the Registered Farrier.
23. If the farrier has any concerns or queries relating to a veterinary surgeon's treatment of a particular animal or considers that a further condition is present which also requires treatment, they should notify the veterinary



surgeon or advise the owner to discuss it with the veterinary surgeon. A farrier should not make detrimental comments about the work of a veterinary surgeon to others, unless in the context of a complaint to, or raising concerns with, an appropriate body, such as the veterinary surgeon's practice or the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons ('RCVS'), or in the context of legal advice.

## **Difficult Horses**

24. Farriers are advised not to commence or continue working with an animal if it is felt that the present temperament of the horse, or the conditions the horse is kept in, are unfavourable to a successful outcome and/or that the health and safety of the farrier or others, including the horse, may be compromised by proceeding. The farrier may request the horse owner or keeper to seek assistance from a veterinary surgeon.

## **Referrals and Second Opinions**

25. Farriers should recognise when a case is outside their area of competence and be prepared to refer it to a colleague whom they are satisfied is competent to carry out the investigations or work required. This may involve contacting the client's veterinary surgeon with the knowledge of the owner. Asking for a second opinion is not a sign of weakness, lack of professional competence or inferiority but an indication that the farrier cares about the welfare of the animal. Properly arranged consultations will advance the reputation of both parties in the eyes of the public and the owner. Farriers should be aware that the client has a right to request a referral or second opinion. In such cases, the initial contact should be made by the primary farrier or veterinary surgeon, as

appropriate, and the client is then asked to arrange the appointment.

26. The distinction between a second opinion and a referral should be clearly understood by both farrier and client. A second opinion is the view of another professional in relation to the issue in question and, if appropriate, confirmation of the proposed course of action, whereas a referral to a referral practice will be for possible treatment, after which the animal's care should be referred back to the original farrier. Neither a second opinion farrier nor a referral practice should seek to take over the client, unless the client chooses to change practices.
27. When a referral has been discussed and agreed with a client, a case history and instructions as to the particular reason for referral should be supplied to the referral farrier or veterinary surgeon. The provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) place significant emphasis on clear consent for the processing of personal data. As a client's personal data is likely to be included in this transfer, the farrier is advised to remind the client of the need to share this data for the purpose of the referral, to seek express consent for the transfer of this data, and to record how and when this consent was given. Any relevant further information which may be requested in relation to the referral should be supplied promptly.
28. Farriers should not use a referral as an opportunity to pass on difficult clients, or bad debtors.
29. The primary farrier should have the opportunity to correct or amend their work before referral to another farrier if a problem has been highlighted by a third party. The second/referral farrier should not take on the referral

unless satisfied that a reasonable attempt has been made to afford the primary farrier an opportunity to do so.

30. Referrals to other farriers should not be made without the primary farrier's knowledge. The second/referral farrier should take reasonable steps to ensure that the primary farrier is aware of the referral.

### **Taking over Clients**

31. Although both farrier and client have freedom of choice, as a matter of professional courtesy and in the interests of the welfare of the horse involved, a farrier should not knowingly take over another farrier's client without informing the farrier in question. Farriers should not encourage clients to leave another farrier in favour of themselves or attempt to take advantage of temporary arrangements, such as referrals, holiday cover or other circumstances, to gain clients.

### **Farrier-Client Relationship**

32. The farrier-client relationship is one of mutual trust and respect under which a farrier must fulfil certain obligations.
33. The farrier must maintain client confidentiality, providing it does not conflict with the horse's welfare, for example where reasonably necessary in an emergency, and/or unless required to provide information for legal or regulatory purposes. Farriers should be especially aware of obligations under the DPA and UKGDPR in respect of processing personal data, including the accuracy, storage, and transfer of that data.
34. The farrier should treat the client and the client's representatives with respect and observe professional

courtesies. This would include the use of appropriate and respectful language and behaviour. A farrier should endeavour to keep and arrive for appointments on time, and keep clients informed of any unforeseen delays that may occur.

35. Farriers should endeavour to ensure they discuss the shoeing plan with the client and ensure discussions with the client are clear and unambiguous, giving the client every opportunity to take a full part in any discussions. Explanations should be given whenever possible in non-technical language. Appropriate records should be kept of advice given. The farrier should give due consideration to the client's concerns and wishes where these do not conflict with the welfare of the horse or the safety of others.
36. Farriers should accept that their own preference for a certain course of action cannot override the client's specific wishes other than on welfare grounds. It is, however, permissible for the farrier to withdraw their services in the event of such disagreement; farriers are advised to keep a written record of such circumstances.
37. Farriers should provide a reasonable period of notice if they do not wish to continue to work for a client for whatever reason.
38. Owners often ask a farrier to catch, tie up and release the horse before or after trimming and shoeing. Farriers are not required to do so, but if they choose to accept these additional tasks and the associated risks, they must perform them with all due skill and care.
39. Farriers may wish to request clients to provide a suitable environment in which to carry out work. These might include: a clean, dry standing with good light and a non-

slip surface; a secure, safe ring to which the horse can be tied; protection from the rain, wind and bad weather; a properly fitted, sound head collar/halter with a good rope of adequate length, and competent assistance should the farrier require it.

40. Farriers may also find it helpful to ask whether the horse is used to being handled and, if appropriate, has a companion animal close by.

### **Relationships with Colleagues**

41. In the interests of the profession, farriers are advised to make every effort to resolve any disputes with colleagues or others by dialogue and direct communication. This may involve an informal procedure such as mediation or conciliation where an independent person is chosen by the parties to assist them in reaching a mutually acceptable solution. Neither a mediator nor a conciliator has any power to impose a solution.
42. No farrier should speak or write, including online, disparagingly of a colleague to a third party, since the effect may be to undermine public confidence in the profession. This does not however apply to complaints made to an appropriate body such as a professional regulator, such as the FRC, or to evidence given in a court of law; nor instances where professional negligence or misconduct may be involved, and in the interests of justice all parties must be able to speak freely.
43. Employees, including apprentices, should be treated in a fair and reasonable manner, without discrimination, and in accordance with their contracts of employment. A written contract of employment must be provided to an employee on or before the first day of work, and employees should be advised in writing of any

subsequent changes to their terms and conditions of employment. Details of standard terms of employment contracts can be obtained from Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) or a legal adviser.

## **Promoting the Practice**

44. Farriery practices should provide good quality information about the nature and scope of the services they provide. This information should include:
- a. the name and legal status of the business
  - b. the business address and contact details
  - c. professional qualifications held
  - d. evidence of registration with the FRC, such as the Annual Registration Card
  - e. VAT identification number, if applicable
  - f. any terms and conditions of business, such as arrangements for placing bookings and out of hours emergency attention
  - g. the existence of any after-sales guarantee not imposed by law
  - h. the price of the service where the price is pre-determined
  - i. the main features of the service if not already apparent from the context
  - j. information about professional liability insurance cover, including the contact details of the insurer
  - k. a privacy notice, including how client data will be used and processed, the purpose for the data being processed, the circumstances in which data may be shared, the client's rights as a data subject, and the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office
  - l. contact details for making an enquiry or complaint directly to the farrier or, if appropriate, to the FRC

45. All the information must be given in a clear and unambiguous manner and in good time before the contract is concluded or before the service is provided, where there is no written contract.

## **Advertising**

46. Publicity or advertising material must be lawful, decent, honest and truthful in compliance with British codes of advertising practice and standards. Advertising and publicity should not be misleading, make unsubstantiated claims, or exploit a horse owner's lack of farriery knowledge. Farriers are encouraged to keep any websites or social media pages up to date with current information.
47. Advertising must not be of a character likely to bring the profession into disrepute, such as unsolicited approaches by text, email, telephone or visit ('cold-calling'), or by criticising other Registered Farriers.
48. The FRC logo is trademarked and may not be used in any promotion of any farriery business, save for displaying an FRC-issued annual vehicle window sticker, or showing an FRC Annual Registration Card to enquirers.

## **Public Life and Interaction with the Media**

49. Farriers can make a worthwhile contribution to the promotion of horse welfare and responsible horse ownership by taking part in public life, whether in national or local politics, community service, or involvement with the media, including the press, television, radio or the internet.

50. When commenting to the media, farriers should endeavour to ensure that any statement is factually correct, and clearly distinguish between personal opinion, political belief and established facts. Any conflict of interest should also be disclosed in any interaction with the media. Farriers should be careful not to express or imply that any personal view is shared by a professional or regulatory body unless previously authorised to do so by that body.

### **Endorsements**

51. Farriers should ensure that any product endorsements are undertaken responsibly and that such endorsements are factually correct, not misleading and do not bring the profession into disrepute.

### **Fees and Related Matters**

52. The FRC has no jurisdiction under the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975, as amended, with regard to the level of fees charged by farriers. There is no statutory scale of charges; fees are a matter for negotiation between farrier and client. Farriers should be open and honest regarding fees and clients should understand how fees have been calculated; fully itemised invoices should be provided if requested by the client.
53. Farriers are entitled to charge a fee for the provision of services, and if payment difficulties occur with a client, the matter should be discussed amicably and in a timely manner with a view to resolution. Where a fee remains unpaid, the farrier may place the matter in the hands of a debt collection agency, or instigate civil proceedings, for example in the Small Claims Court. In the interests of animal welfare, a farrier should never seek to remove shoes from horses in response to outstanding fees.



54. In the case of persistently slow payers and bad debtors it is acceptable to give them notice in writing, preferably by recorded delivery, that farriery services will no longer be provided.
55. Where a client has made advance payment for a service which the farrier will not carry out within a reasonable timescale, a refund must be made to the client without delay.

### **Farriery Specialists**

56. Farriers are encouraged to display formally recognised professional qualifications they hold or examinations they have passed. Farriers may make reference in their letterheads and advertising material to commercial trade qualifications and to areas of specialist expertise.
57. In order to legitimately claim to be a 'remedial' farrier, the farrier must be able to substantiate that competence if requested to do so. Holding a qualification or examination pass certificate should constitute evidence of competence. For the farrier qualified by experience, a minimum of teaching notes, study notes, records of cases and a well maintained and detailed CPD record is generally the minimum requirement. Not being able to satisfactorily substantiate the competence when requested to do so – perhaps where a course of treatment has failed or an animal has been damaged – would place the farrier at risk of legal action, for example from an owner or an insurance company, and if findings were made against the farrier in such proceedings the matter may, dependent upon the circumstances, be considered to be professional misconduct. Farriers are therefore advised to be accurate, and perhaps circumspect, in describing any competence as a

'remedial' farrier, and not exaggerate their levels of knowledge, skill and experience.

### **Acting as a Witness**

58. Farriers must be aware of their responsibilities as witnesses of fact or as expert witnesses in any civil or criminal proceedings in which they may be involved.
59. When asked to examine a horse that is the subject of a claim or complaint, the farrier should ensure that statements of fact are clearly differentiated from opinions. Comment should be confined to what is apparent at the time of inspection and not relate to conjecture about what might or might not have been the situation previously. Opinions must only be given in areas where the farrier is professionally competent, and must not include the diagnosis of diseases or injuries.

### **Maintaining Practice Standards**

60. All fixed and mobile forges must be safe for staff, clients and horses, and they must be adequately equipped for the services offered by the practice. All employers are also required to carry out a risk assessment of their premises, and all Registered Farriers are advised to do so.

### **Insurance**

61. Farriers are required to be covered by professional indemnity insurance which must cover their professional activities. Farriers will be asked to confirm they hold professional indemnity insurance by self-certification via the Annual Return. The FRC may conduct a random check of farriers' professional indemnity insurance from time to time, and by asking for confirmation of insurance

details if a farrier is referred to the Investigating Committee (IC) of the Council.

62. Farriers are strongly encouraged to take public liability insurance appropriate to their needs and must have employer's liability insurance when employing others.
63. Farriers are also advised to check with their insurer whether they are covered to work on horses not attended by their owner.

### **Client Data and Confidentiality**

64. The farrier-client relationship is founded on trust and in normal circumstances a farrier must not disclose to any third party any information about a client or their horse. This duty also extends to the farrier's employees. Care should be taken that client data is stored securely, and also destroyed securely when no longer needed.
65. UKGDPR permits the processing of personal data where it is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation or for the purpose of a legitimate interest, except where the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the relevant individual override this.
66. Information can be disclosed in certain circumstances, for example where the client's consent has been given or where disclosure is required by law. A farrier should seek a client's express permission to pass on personal data (or that of the client's horse); consent given verbally should be noted.
67. Clients have the right under UKGDPR to access their personal data, and the information should generally be provided to them within one month of the request. Care should be given not to disclose the data of any third party

when complying with such a request. A client may also request the correction of personal data if it is inaccurate or incomplete.

68. Farriers should also remember to seek client consent before taking photographs of animals, especially if it would be possible to recognise those animals and therefore possibly the client in any subsequent use of those images. Clients should also be informed about the ways any images may be used and further consent should be sought before images are used for other purposes.

### **Online Communications including Social Media**

69. Social media is a term used to describe websites and online applications that encourage social interaction between users and content creators. Examples include media sites that allow public posts and comments (e.g., Twitter), content sharing sites (e.g., YouTube, Instagram and Flickr), professional and social networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn and Facebook), internet forums, discussion boards, blogs and instant messaging; the list is not exhaustive.
70. It is recognised that social media may form part of everyday life for some. Such media can be valuable communication tools and enhance a farrier's personal and professional life. However, the use of social media is not without risk and farriers should be mindful of the consequences that may arise from its misuse.
71. Farriers have a responsibility to behave professionally and responsibly when offline and online, whether as themselves or in a virtual capacity (e.g., as an avatar or under an alias). Farriers may put their registration at risk if they demonstrate inappropriate behaviour when using

social media including any form of abuse, bullying, coercion, discrimination, exploitation or harassment, intimidation or offensive language. This list is not exhaustive. The standards expected of farriers in the real world are no different to the standards they should apply online, and farriers must always uphold the reputation of the farriery profession. Farriers should remember that social media activity outside of work may still reflect on the public perception of the profession. Similarly, posts or comments made on a shared on-line space may have an adverse impact on the reputation of the profession even if the number of participants in that space is limited/not open to the general public.

72. When using social media farriers should:
- a. remember that the Code of Professional Conduct must be followed at all times, even under the anonymity of social media
  - b. maintain and protect client confidentiality by not disclosing information about a client or their equine that could identify them on social media, unless the client gives their express consent
  - c. be respectful and protect the privacy of others
  - d. be proactive in removing content that could be viewed as unprofessional.
73. When using social media farriers should avoid making, posting or facilitating, such as reposting or forwarding, statements, images or videos that:
- a. may cause undue distress or provoke anti-social or violent behaviour
  - b. are offensive, false, inaccurate, misleading or unjustified. Comments which damage an individual's reputation could result in a claim for defamation for which the farrier could be personally liable
  - c. abuse, bully, victimise, harass, threaten, intimidate or make derogatory comments about clients,

- colleagues, other equine professionals, staff or others.
- d. discriminate against an individual based on their race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity.

The above lists are not exhaustive; there are many types of social media misuse.

74. Farriers should carefully consider protecting their own privacy when using social media; it should be remembered that online information can readily be accessed by others and that once it is published online the information can be difficult, if not impossible, to remove. In addition, others may comment on the information or circulate or copy to others. It is therefore sensible to assume that everything shared online will be there permanently and that content uploaded anonymously can, in many cases, be traced back to the original author.

## **Keeping Up to Date**

### **Registration**

75. Registered Farriers must ensure that their registration to practise farriery is maintained through the payment of the requisite annual retention fee on time. Farriers must notify the FRC of any change to their registered details, such as their address, within one month of the change.

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

76. Farriers are expected to continue their professional education, training and development by keeping up to date with advances in farriery, and by keeping their

knowledge, skills and behaviours up to date throughout their working life.

77. It is mandatory for Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) to complete a minimum of 10 CPD points each year. Failure to take part in CPD may result in an ATF being subject to an ATF Review, and also affect an ATF's ability to work with FRC approved training providers.
78. From January 2023 all Registered Farriers must undertake and evidence CPD annually. The requirement is to obtain a minimum of 10 CPD points annually.
79. Registrants may be subject to annual audit by the FRC and must submit annual CPD records to the FRC when requested to do so.
80. CPD records should be kept online in the 'My FRC' section of the FRC website, or as a file on a computer, or in hardcopy, in order to provide evidence of CPD completion, and these records must be available to the Council on request.
81. Failure to comply with CPD obligations (including failure to provide CPD details to the FRC on request) may lead to a referral to the Investigating Committee (IC) as a matter of serious professional misconduct. The fact that a Registered Farrier has not undertaken any CPD or failed to provide proof that they have undertaken any CPD, may count against them in the event that the matter is subsequently referred to the Council's Disciplinary Committee (DC).
82. Employers should encourage and facilitate participation of their staff and apprentices in CPD programmes. CPD is viewed as positive for the profession, for equine welfare and for Registered Farriers themselves, and all

Registered Farriers are encouraged to participate in CPD activities.

83. Newly qualified farriers are encouraged to seek support and guidance from experienced colleagues. Farriers returning to practise after a period of absence should undertake appropriate training and or CPD to ensure they are competent to do so.
84. Details of the FRC's CPD Policy can be found within the Guide to CPD which may be accessed via the FRC website.

### **Annual Return**

85. Registered Farriers must complete an Annual Return. The Annual Return currently seeks a registrant's confirmation of four things:
  - a. confirmation of personal data; e.g., address, telephone number, e-mail address etc.
  - b. confirmation by declaration that the Registered Farrier holds professional indemnity insurance cover.
  - c. confirmation by declaration of any police caution or conviction received. There is no requirement to disclose cautions\* or convictions which are 'spent' as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, except for ATFs who may be working with people under the age of 18. ATFs are required to disclose all cautions\* and convictions, even if spent, unless those matters are protected as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions Order) 1975.

*\*In Scotland, this includes a Recorded Police Warning, an Anti-Social Behaviour Fixed Penalty Notice and/or any Procurator Fiscal Direct Measure*



- d. Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) are additionally required to declare that:
  - i. they hold employer's liability insurance;
  - ii. apprentices in their employment are subject to a written employment agreement;
  - iii. apprentices in their employment are subject to a written apprenticeship agreement, and
  - iv. their business remains financially capable of sustaining an apprentice.
  
- 86. Matters disclosed to the Council which infer an element of risk to horse welfare, the welfare of clients, the reputation of the profession, and any other matter that may amount to serious misconduct in a professional respect may be referred to the IC.
  
- 87. In the matter of cases presented to it, the IC considers whether there is a realistic prospect of a finding of serious professional misconduct by the Disciplinary Committee (DC).
  
- 88. Where a registrant may be unsure as to whether a police caution or conviction should be disclosed, they are to seek advice from the FRC offices.

## **Complaints and Disciplinary Matters**

- 89. The FRC is required by statute to investigate any complaint against a Registered Farrier which may give rise to an allegation of serious misconduct in any professional respect. The FRC receives complaints on a wide variety of issues, all of which are considered initially to establish whether or not they contain issues within its jurisdiction, and also in order to fulfil the public's legitimate expectations of a statutory body.

90. Under the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975, as amended, the FRC has authority to remove someone from the Register, at the direction of the Disciplinary Committee, where:
- a. a person who is registered by the Council is judged by the Disciplinary Committee to be guilty of serious misconduct in any professional respect; or
  - b. the Disciplinary Committee is satisfied that such a person was not qualified for registration at the time he was registered; or
  - c. such a person has been convicted of an offence involving cruelty to animals.

### **Fraudulent Registration**

91. Fraudulent registration would arise if, for example, someone was to gain admission to the Register of Farriers by falsely claiming to have the appropriate qualifications, or meet the appropriate criteria, at the time of registration.

### **Convictions for an Offence Involving Cruelty to Animals**

92. The FRC is required to consider any conviction against a Registered Farrier which involves cruelty to animals; the introductory paragraph of the Act states: “An Act to prevent and avoid suffering by and cruelty to horses ...”. The Council shall consider as a matter of some gravity any offence by a Registered Farrier in respect of cruelty to any animal; such conduct may well bring into question the suitability of a farrier to remain on the Register.

### **Serious Misconduct in a Professional Respect**

93. The circumstances in which serious misconduct in a professional respect may be considered to have occurred are so varied that it is impossible to catalogue or to even

envisage them all. Generally speaking, a minor breach of this Code of Professional Conduct might well not amount to serious professional misconduct. Repeated minor breaches in aggregate could well do so. However, a single, serious breach might also lead to such a finding.

94. The kind of behaviour which would almost certainly be regarded as serious misconduct would be that which severely compromises the welfare of a horse; e.g., refusal to attend a horse that appears to be in distress as a result of shoeing or trimming or working beyond one's own current knowledge and/or experience. Behaviour which calls into question a farrier's honesty or integrity could amount to serious misconduct as could failure to respond to written requests from the FRC.
95. Serious criminal offences will usually amount to a matter of serious misconduct, but not every offence shall be viewed as serious. Not every criminal offence will necessarily be notified to the FRC or referred to the DC, but as a guide, offences which are likely to affect the farrier's ability to practise, call their honesty and integrity into question, endanger the public or bring the profession into disrepute – these examples are not exhaustive – may amount to serious misconduct. Offences resulting in the award of a fixed penalty may of themselves be unlikely to amount to serious misconduct.

## **Unethical Conduct**

96. Unethical behaviour is essentially a departure from that standard of behaviour accepted as the norm for members of the profession.
97. Although serious misconduct in a professional respect may well be unethical, unethical behaviour may not necessarily be considered as serious misconduct unless

there are repeated and/or substantial instances which may undermine the credibility of a Registered Farrier as a skilled and ethical professional.

## **Professional Negligence**

98. Professional negligence occurs when a Registered Farrier has failed to show a reasonable and competent degree of skill when carrying out farriery and as a result of which damage has occurred. Such negligence might, if sufficiently serious in nature, also be regarded as serious misconduct in a professional respect, especially if the failure is deliberate, gross or frequent. In either case, those with higher qualifications or who claim specialist status are expected to have correspondingly higher standards.
99. Alleged cases of professional negligence are usually heard by civil courts which have power to award compensation, damages and/or costs. The FRC has no such powers, so complainants may decide to follow the civil route as well as, or instead of, raising a complaint with the FRC. This would not prevent the DC from considering serious misconduct in a professional respect but, unless there was a risk of further damage to horses, the disciplinary hearing would usually not take place until the civil action had been heard.

## **Unlawful Farriery**

100. Under Section 16 of the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 it is an offence for unregistered persons to carry out farriery on any horse (whether their own or a member of the public's). Illegal farriery is a criminal offence which can result in a fine of up to £1000, legal costs and a criminal record.

By engaging the services of an unregistered person, a horse owner may be risking the welfare of their animal, may invalidate any insurance if their horse is rendered lame or otherwise injured, and may be aiding and abetting criminal activity.

## **Investigating and Disciplinary Procedures**

101. FRC disciplinary powers are exercised through independently-operated Investigating and Disciplinary Committees, established in accordance with the Farrier Registration Act 1975, as amended.

### **Investigating Committee (IC)**

102. The IC is a statutory committee set up under section 13 of the Act and comprises six members appointed by the Council. Its duty is to investigate complaints against Registered Farriers which may amount to serious professional misconduct or may lead to the removal of a Registered Farrier's name from the Register. The Committee must decide whether, on the evidence available there is a *prima facie* (on the face of it) case of serious misconduct in any professional respect, and whether there is a real prospect of a case being proved before the Disciplinary Committee.

### **Disciplinary Committee (DC)**

103. The DC is a statutory committee set up under section 14 of the Act and comprises at least nine members appointed by the Council. No person who has acted as a member of the IC with respect to any one case shall act as a member of the DC with respect to that same case. The DC is a properly constituted judicial tribunal, which, as a matter of policy, applies the same standard of proof as the civil court, that is, on the balance of probabilities. If the DC finds a charge or charges against a respondent

proved, and that the matters proved amount to serious misconduct in a professional respect, it may order the respondent's name be removed or suspended from the Register of Farriers. Alternatively, judgment may be postponed for a stated period, or the DC may make no direction, or issue a reprimand and/or a warning as to future conduct.

104. Any respondent against whom a direction has been made to be suspended or removed from the Register has a right of appeal to the High Court or, in Scotland, to the Court of Session. The appeal must be lodged within 28 days after receiving notification of the DC's direction. The DC's direction itself will not take effect until after the 28-day period has expired or until any appeal has been heard or determined.
105. When a farrier's name is removed, or 'erased', from the Register they may not carry out any acts of farriery as defined in the Act. They may apply to have their name restored to the Register but will be required to reappear before the DC to satisfy it that they are fit to return to practise.
106. In the case of a suspension the farrier is prohibited from carrying out any acts of farriery until the period of suspension has expired, at which time the farrier's name will be automatically restored and they may resume practise.

### **Awards of Compensation and Damages**

107. The FRC has no power under the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975, as amended, or other legislation, to award compensation or damages which are the normal remedies where negligence is proved. Thus, allegations

of negligence which cannot be resolved directly between farrier and client are matters for adjudication by the civil courts. The FRC cannot usurp the court's jurisdiction.

## **FRC Jurisdiction**

108. FRC jurisdiction applies to all Registered Farriers practising in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland), and to all Registered Farriers practising in any part of the world whom, although practising abroad, have retained FRC registration. Where there is a local farriers' board or regulatory body, however, the FRC would expect that body to act rather than to intervene itself, although the FRC might also take appropriate action, depending on the circumstances. Similarly, the FRC will take into account any local circumstances in considering allegations of serious professional misconduct made against Registered Farriers practising abroad.

## **Difficulties with Clients**

109. When things do go wrong, farriers are advised to encourage clients to discuss any farriery related problems they may have. Farriers should use a sympathetic approach in response to a complaint rather than immediate denial and defensiveness. A sympathetic approach does not in itself amount to an admission of liability. Farriers should communicate constructively with their clients as many complaints arise from misunderstandings. Subsequently, if a complaint is made to the FRC, farriers must respond promptly and constructively to any request from the FRC for comments in relation to any allegation or complaint made against them. Farriers must be prepared to explain and justify any action or decision taken in the course of their professional activities. Failure to respond to the FRC may amount to a matter of serious misconduct.

## **FRC Complaints Procedure**

110. The FRC must investigate all complaints made against Registered Farriers which fall within its jurisdiction, however trivial they may appear, in accordance with the following procedure, which has been greatly simplified in the interest of clarity.
- a. A letter or complaint form is received at the Council's offices, along with any supporting documentation, from the complainant.
  - b. Complaint documents are copied to the Registered Farrier for a response and comments on the issues raised.
  - c. Further enquiries are made of both parties if necessary.
  - d. Complaint and response documents are collated and considered by the IC.
  - e. If there is realistic prospect of a finding of serious professional misconduct, or that the Registered Farrier's name may be removed from the Register, the complaint shall be referred to the DC. When the matter is referred to the DC the details are passed to the FRC's solicitors; otherwise, the matter is finalised by correspondence.
111. In some cases the farrier's response will reveal that there is no real prospect of the matter being found to amount to serious professional misconduct and the FRC can resolve the complaint by correspondence at the IC stage. It is, however, incumbent upon farriers to respond constructively to any allegations. Failure to do so may in itself amount to a matter of serious misconduct.



112. Where a Registered Farrier chooses not to engage with the process or decides to exercise a 'right to silence' the complaint may go forward unchallenged; the Registered Farrier must understand that adverse inferences may be drawn where a farrier elects not to respond to allegations.



## **PART TWO**

### **Approved Training Farriers (ATFs)**

## **Approved Training Farriers (ATFs)**

113. The FRC maintains a list of Registered Farriers who are approved by the Council to deliver training to farriery apprentices in Great Britain as part of the Apprenticeship in Farriery; these farriers are known as Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) and will have completed an application process in order to be included on the ATF list. ATFs are responsible for the education, training, mentoring and broader development of the next generation of farriers, and in particular planning and delivery of such activity in the workplace. ATFs are the employers of farriery apprentices, and as such they are bound by the law and other regulatory provisions that apply, e.g., employment, equality, health, safety, and welfare. ATFs will deliver workplace education and training in conjunction with a training provider approved by the FRC. Training providers have the discretion to choose whether or not to work with an ATF. ATFs shall be required to comply with direction and instructions given by training providers pursuant to the education and training of apprentices, and in respect of maintaining and developing the ATFs own knowledge, skills and behaviours as a provider of education and training in the workplace. ATFs are required to comply with rules and policies relating to the funding of apprenticeships and related matters by, but not limited to, bodies such as the Education and Skills Funding Agency. ATFs are required to maintain the core values of a Registered Farrier, to uphold the good reputation of the farriery profession, be honest and trustworthy and to understand and comply with legal obligations. Put simply, to be an ATF is a privilege not a right, and the ATF should be a role model for the Apprentice.

## Eligibility

114. Farriers applying to be added to the ATF List must meet the minimum technical qualifications, educational and professional requirements as prescribed by the FRC at the time of application. Applicants will also need to demonstrate a suitable work environment and a business model that is able to sustain the employment of an apprentice for the duration of their apprenticeship. Application also requires the disclosure of any police cautions (In Scotland, this includes a Recorded Police Warning, an Anti-Social Behaviour Fixed Penalty Notice and/or any Procurator Fiscal Direct Measure) or criminal convictions that are not protected in law, and a selection of satisfactory references from defined individuals. The requirements for application to the ATF List are set by the Council and reviewed periodically. Details regarding applying and retention on the ATF list are published in the Council's ATF Policy and Guide.
  
115. Where an ATF either voluntarily resigns or is removed from the ATF List, any subsequent application to return to the list will need to meet the requirements in force at the time of the new application. Details regarding reviews and appeals for remaining on the ATF List are published in the Council's ATF policy.
  
116. Incidence of behaviour that is at variance with the core values of a Registered Farrier, including any form of abuse, bullying, coercion, discrimination, exploitation, harassment, intimidation or offensive language shall not be tolerated and may lead to referral to the Investigating Committee under the Council's statutory provisions, and/or a formal review and removal of an individual from the ATF List.

## **Contracts and Insurance**

117. Enrolled apprentices are to be provided with a written apprenticeship agreement, which must be signed by the employing ATF, the apprentice, and the training provider. The ATF has responsibility to ensure this is in place. The employing ATF must also provide an approved written contract of employment, which must be signed by the ATF and the apprentice. ATFs must be covered by employer's liability insurance.

## **Supervision of Apprentices**

118. Throughout their training, except when at college, apprentices work on behalf of their ATF who is at all times responsible for the quality of their work and their professional behaviour. ATFs are expected to use their judgement in deciding on the level of supervision appropriate for each apprentice. This may be:
- a. Direct, continuous and personal supervision: the ATF is standing over the apprentice or at least in the same room, forge or stable and observing the apprentice – this will be typical in the early stages of the apprenticeship.
  - b. Supervision: the ATF is nearby, in the same premises and can be located quickly and easily – this will be typical in the intermediate stages of the apprenticeship.
  - c. Under direction: the ATF has discussed the shoeing plan prior to work being undertaken but is not present; the apprentice is working alone using their own initiative – this will be typical in the latter stages of the apprenticeship.
119. Apprentices may not practise farriery independently of their ATF's business while undertaking an apprenticeship. In the instance of Apprentices found to

be practising farriery independently, the ATF (if aware of the situation) and or apprentice may face prosecution and or sanction (e.g. review of ATF status and/or referral to the IC). Once an apprentice has completed the apprenticeship they may apply for registration; once registered they may practise farriery.

## **Work Experience and Trial Periods**

120. Only Registered Farriers, enrolled farriery apprentices, qualified and trainee veterinary surgeons and persons carrying our first aid in an emergency may practise farriery lawfully. Work experience or trial periods are not part of an apprenticeship and do not permit a person to engage in acts of farriery.
121. Non-farriery activities are permitted during work experience or trial periods, these include: forging; horse handling; delivering general assistance to the farrier; observing how to trim the equine hoof, and observation of and being shown, under close supervision, how to remove a shoe in an emergency.
122. The following activities are not permitted during work experience or trial periods: removal of shoes prior to shoeing; preparation of the foot for shoeing; attaching of shoes by nails or any other means; clenching up.
123. Unlawful farriery is a criminal offence and Registered Farriers who knowingly permit unlawful farriery may be referred to the IC as a possible case of serious misconduct in a professional respect. ATFs are reminded that they are at all times responsible for activities undertaken by those participating in work experience and trial periods.





## **PART THREE**

### **Apprentice Farriers**

## **Duties and Responsibilities of Apprentice Farriers**

124. Enrolled apprentices need to be prepared for life as a registered professional in a public-facing role with responsibilities for equine welfare. Being fit to practise is a fundamental requirement of any professional. Fitness to practise is not just about achieving academic qualifications; it is about being of good character, being responsible and being worthy of the trust and confidence of the public and your peers.
125. Farriers found not fit to practise may face sanctions, possibly even removal from the Register. Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) and training providers have a responsibility to address any potential fitness to practise concerns with their apprentices. This is necessary because apprentices are the future of the profession; they will work with and be responsible for equines while treating them, and come into contact with the public during the course of their apprenticeship.

## **Principles of Behaviour for Apprentice Farriers**

126. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of behaviours expected of an apprentice farrier; this Code sets out broad principles and example behaviours expected of apprentices in the context of three key areas: people; private and student life, and practice.
127. Although apprentices are not qualified farriers, while in training they should familiarise themselves with the Code of Professional Conduct and aim to follow its guiding principles.

## People

128. You will come into contact with a range of people in the course of your education and training. Maintaining relationships is vital and will require effective communication skills and teamwork.
129. You should:
- a. communicate effectively with clients, the public and professional colleagues; listen carefully and respond appropriately
  - b. be open and honest, especially with clients, and respect clients' needs and requirements
  - c. ensure you do not disclose information about a client to a third party unless the client gives permission or there is an appropriate justification
  - d. respect the skills and experience of your qualified colleagues and work under their direction
  - e. understand and respect that clients are free to give or withhold consent to treatment
  - f. respect diversity and respect the cultural differences, values and beliefs of others
  - g. treat others courteously, with consideration and with respect
  - h. recognise that others may question your fitness to practise, and demonstrate insight and engagement with associated investigations.
130. You should not:
- a. breach client confidentiality without proper justification, including the posting of comments, pictures and videos on any online platform
  - b. be rude or lack courtesy when dealing with your ATF, clients, colleagues or training staff

- c. use inappropriate or offensive language and/or behaviour towards your ATF, fellow students, colleagues or clients, including bullying, intimidation or harassment
- d. make disparaging comments about fellow students, colleagues, clients, ATFs or training staff
- e. use aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour
- f. ignore the instructions of your ATF, a tutor, colleague or client
- g. go beyond the scope of client consent
- h. be dishonest in any context.

### **Private and Student Life**

- 131. Fitness to practise encompasses not only professional competence and practical skills, but also the way in which you conduct yourself outside the professional environment; this includes your private life and student life.
- 132. The Code of Professional Conduct states that farriers should uphold the good reputation of farriery. As an apprentice farrier you should also uphold the reputation of the profession at all times and consider how your behaviour and conduct could affect the trust that the public places in the farriery profession.
- 133. Remember, wherever you are, you are representing the farriery profession, your ATF and your college.
- 134. You should:
  - a. take responsibility for your own behaviour by accepting and engaging with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual

- liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- b. develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow you to participate and contribute to modern life in Britain
  - c. take responsibility for your own physical and mental health, seeking treatment and limiting practice if necessary, and communicating with your ATF and training staff as appropriate
  - d. abide by the rules and regulations of your ATF, college and other organisations linked to your studies
  - e. honour commitments and take responsibility for your work
  - f. attend mandatory teaching sessions or make alternative arrangements with your ATF and/or your training staff
  - g. submit academic work on time
  - h. co-operate with formal investigations about you or others.
135. Concerns affecting fitness to practise include:
- a. substance misuse including, but not limited to, drugs and alcohol
  - b. criminal convictions
  - c. cheating in examinations, plagiarising coursework and assessments, passing off other people's work as your own
  - d. forging an ATF's signature on registration documents
  - e. submitting fraudulent CVs, application forms and employment references
  - f. misuse of social media
  - g. failure to seek medical treatment or other support
  - h. refusal to follow medical advice or treatment plans.

## Practice

136. Section 16 of the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 permits persons serving under articles of apprenticeship which satisfy the prescribed terms and conditions to carry out acts of farriery.
137. There are some important conditions:
- a. acts of farriery may only be carried out under: the direct, continuous and personal supervision of an ATF; supervision of an ATF, or direction of an ATF
    - i. Direct, continuous and personal supervision: the ATF is standing over the apprentice or at least in the same room, forge or stable and observing the apprentice – this will be typical in the early stages of the apprenticeship.
    - ii. Supervision: the ATF is nearby, in the same premises and can be located quickly and easily – this will be typical in the intermediate stages of the apprenticeship.
    - iii. Under direction: the ATF has discussed the shoeing plan prior to work being undertaken but is not present; the apprentice is working alone using their own initiative – this will be typical in the latter stages of the apprenticeship.
  - b. the ATF is the employer
  - c. the farriery is carried out in the course of the apprentice farrier's training and not as a private venture by the apprentice.
138. Failure to comply with these conditions not only renders your actions illegal, but may also have wider implications for animal welfare. Compliance is therefore paramount to demonstrating that you are fit to practise.

139. In addition, you must respect that in delegating acts of farriery to you, your qualified ATF retains responsibility for your actions at all times, and your ATF may be held to account for both their and your decisions and actions.
140. You should demonstrate fitness to practise by:
- a. working under the direction and supervision of your ATF as required by section 16 of the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975
  - b. ensuring that colleagues and clients know that you are an apprentice in training
  - c. making animal welfare your primary consideration when attending to equines
  - d. taking responsibility for your working practices including ensuring you are appropriately supervised
  - e. understanding the professional responsibilities and legal obligations relevant to farriery practice, including the legislation relevant to the welfare of equines
  - f. working within the limits of your competence and being aware of your personal limitations; demonstrating awareness of when and from where to seek advice, assistance and support
  - g. providing care that is appropriate and adequate; and reporting any concerns about the equine
  - h. reporting errors or mistakes, including your own, to your ATF, training staff or other appropriate body.
141. Concerns affecting fitness to practise include:
- a. undertaking farriery without direction or supervision
  - b. lacking insight into your limitations and lack of experience
  - c. deliberately ignoring instructions or advice
  - d. taking unnecessary risk and compromising animal welfare

- e. purporting to have qualifications you do not have, i.e., deception
  - f. falsely completing or signing documentation.
142. Remember, you must not carry out any farriery beyond the work allocated to you by your ATF. You should not take on clients or practise farriery independently of your ATF's business while undertaking an apprenticeship.

### **Online Communications including Social Media**

143. Social media is the term used to describe websites and online applications that encourage social interaction between users and content creators. Examples include media sites that allow public posts and comments (e.g., Twitter), content sharing sites (e.g., YouTube, Instagram and Flickr), professional and social networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn and Facebook), internet forums, discussion boards and instant messaging.
144. It is recognised that social media is likely to form part of everyday student life. Such media can be valuable communications tools and can enhance your personal and academic life. However, the use of social media is not without risk, and you should be mindful of the consequence that may arise for its misuse.
145. You have a responsibility to behave professionally and responsibly when offline and online, whether as yourself or in a virtual capacity (e.g., as an avatar or under an alias). Farriers may put their registration at risk if they demonstrate inappropriate behaviour when using social media and the same principles apply to apprentice farriers. You must uphold the reputation of the profession at all times. If you misuse social media, you may jeopardise your position with your ATF and/or training



provider; this could subsequently result in your referral to the Investigating Committee of the FRC on joining the Register of Farriers.

146. When using social media you should:
  - a. remember the Code of Professional Conduct must be followed at all times, even under the anonymity of social media
  - b. maintain and protect client confidentiality by not disclosing information about a client or their equine that could identify them on social media, unless the client gives their express consent
  - c. be respectful and protect the privacy of others
  - d. be proactive in removing content that could be viewed as unprofessional
  - e. comply with any internet or social media policy set out by your ATF and/or training provider.
  
147. When using social media you should avoid making, posting or facilitating, such as reposting or forwarding, statements, images or videos that:
  - a. contravene any internet or social media policy set out by your ATF and/or your training provider; comments or statements made or facilitated by you may reflect on your ATF, training provider and the profession of farriery more broadly
  - b. cause undue distress or provoke anti-social or violent behaviour
  - c. are offensive, false, inaccurate or unjustified. Comments which damage an individual's reputation could result in a civil claim for defamation for which you could be personally liable
  - d. abuse, bully, victimise, harass, threaten or intimidate fellow apprentices, colleagues, ATFs, training staff or others

- e. discriminate against an individual based on their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, beliefs or national origin.

The above lists are not exhaustive; there are many types of social media misuse.

- 148. Please carefully consider protecting your privacy when using social media; it should be remembered that online information can readily be accessed by others and that once published online the information can be difficult, if not impossible, to remove. In addition, others may comment on the information or circulate or copy it to others. It is therefore sensible to assume that everything shared online will be there permanently and that content uploaded anonymously can, in many cases, be traced back to the original author.

### **Voluntary Annual Return**

- 149. Enrolled apprentices working towards registration in the Register of Farriers are asked to disclose voluntarily any unspent police cautions (In Scotland, this includes a Recorded Police Warning, an Anti-Social Behaviour Fixed Penalty Notice and/or any Procurator Fiscal Direct Measure) or criminal convictions on an annual basis.
- 150. Once a conviction has been disclosed to the FRC the Council will consider what action, if any, needs to be taken, noting that apprentices are not subject to the statutory investigating and disciplinary provisions of the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975. For matters which include either public safety and/or animal welfare a case will be raised by the FRC with the relevant training provider for further investigation. Dependent on the outcome of that investigation, serious offences that may

still be considered serious misconduct in a professional respect by the Council may be deferred for formal consideration by the Council's IC once the newly qualified farrier's name is entered on the Register. In the matter of cases presented to it, the IC considers whether there is a realistic prospect of a finding of serious professional misconduct or the removal of the registrant's name from the Register by the DC. Noting that the DC has the authority to remove a person's name from the Register of Farriers, enrolled apprentices who may be subject the Council's disciplinary process upon registration may be advised that they continue with the remainder of their farriery training at their own risk.

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**Registered Office:**

The Farriers Registration Council  
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