



THE  
THOROUGHBRED  
BREEDERS'  
ASSOCIATION

100 years  
1917–2017

THE  
RACING  
FOUNDATION

# Racing and Thoroughbred Breeding Industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention Research

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## Introduction and Background

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The Racing Foundation, in partnership with the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association (TBA), commissioned a survey of Thoroughbred stud farms about recruitment, skills and retention. This follows on from similar recent surveys conducted with racehorse trainers and staff.

The surveys were conducted to better understand staffing pressures in the industry. In particular, the surveys aimed to provide baseline information to help measure the impact of the Racing Foundation's three-year £1 million initiative in the area of recruitment, skills and retention.

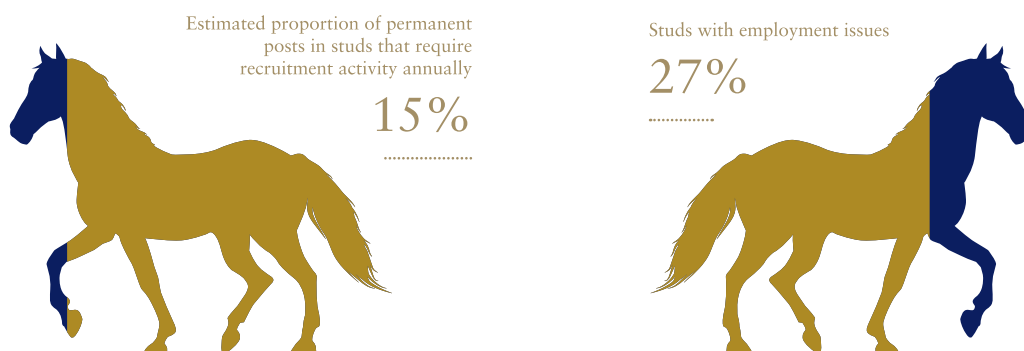
The survey of studs took place between mid-January and the end of February 2017. In total, 139 studs responded to the postal and on-line survey, representing a healthy 49% response rate.

## Key Findings

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The research estimates that 15% of permanent posts in studs require recruitment activity annually, due to staff turnover or growth. This compares to a rate of 24% in racing yards.

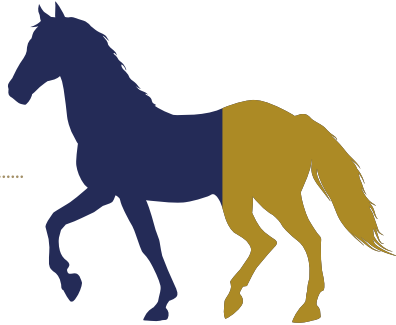
27% of studs indicated that recruitment, skills and retention are problematic for their businesses, compared to 38% of trainers. Larger studs are more likely than smaller studs to state recruitment, skills and retention issues are a problem.



Although there tend to be less vacancies in the Thoroughbred breeding industry compared to the racing industry, 55% of permanent vacancies in the Thoroughbred breeding industry are hard to fill, compared to 48% in the racing industry and 33% nationally. Similar to trainers, studs said the two main reasons for recruitment difficulties are a lack of staff and a lack of sufficiently skilled staff, especially stud hands, stud grooms and second persons.

17% of studs also stated they have retention difficulties, compared to 8% of businesses nationally and 19% of racehorse trainers.

Studs hard to fill positions  
55%



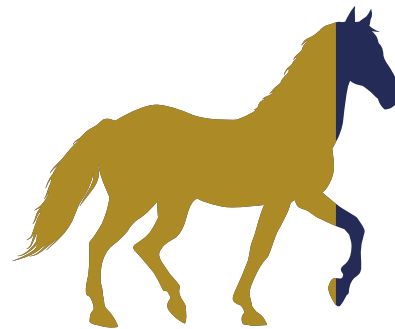
National hard to fill positions  
33%



Businesses nationally with retention difficulties  
8%

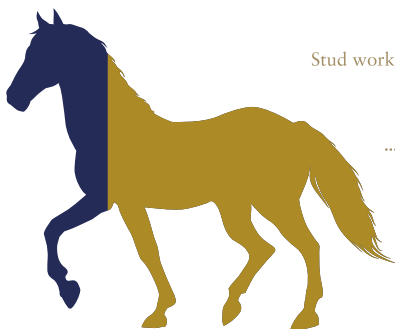


Studs with retention difficulties  
17%



26% of studs said their workforce has skills gaps (i.e. some existing staff lack the skills to do their jobs effectively), compared to 14% of businesses nationally and 29% of racehorse trainers. In addition, on average, 21% of studs are not aware of industry training and development initiatives and only 13% of studs have made use of these initiatives.

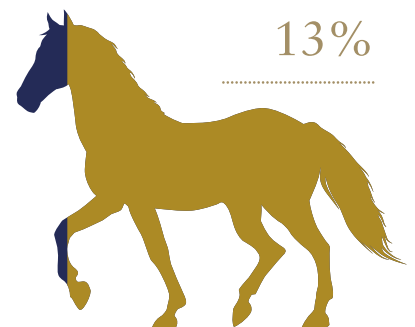
Stud workforce skills gaps  
26%



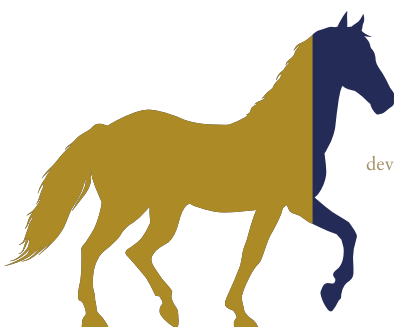
National workforce skills gaps  
14%



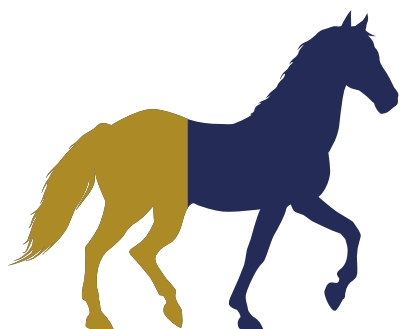
Studs who made use of initiatives  
13%



Studs unaware of development initiatives  
21%



Furthermore, 54% of studs did not fund or arrange training or development for their staff in the last 12 months, compared to 34% of businesses nationally and 51% of racehorse trainers.



Studs who did not fund or arrange training for their staff

54%



Businesses nationally who did not fund or arrange training for their staff

34%

## What Happens Next?

This research highlights that recruitment, skills and retention issues are impacting on the Thoroughbred breeding industry, with recruitment of sufficient staff and adequately skilled staff standing out as key issues. In addition, a notable proportion of studs experience retention difficulties, and therefore reducing the proportion of staff that leave their jobs and the industry should help reduce recruitment pressures.

There also appears to be some skills gaps amongst existing staff and there is scope to increase the awareness and exposure of staff to training and development opportunities.

These issues may not be quite as notable as in the racing industry, but they tend to be more significant than the national picture. This suggests the Racing Foundation's programme to promote recruitment, retention and skills development is important and relevant. This includes the following initiatives:

- **Accessible learning for stable and stud staff:** The British Racing School, Northern Racing College, Thoroughbred Breeders' Association and National Stud are providing flexible and accessible training across the country to support the professional development of staff.
- **Careers Advice and Training Service:** A service delivered by Racing Welfare to help racing and stud staff develop their skills and careers within racing.
- **Enhanced careers marketing:** A programme of initiatives designed to improve recruitment to the industry, support training and development and promote career progression opportunities.

These initiatives supplement the existing programme of education, training and support provided by the TBA and National Stud.

The full report is available on the Racing Foundation's website:

[www.racingfoundation.co.uk](http://www.racingfoundation.co.uk)