

ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY



Updated 01 December 2025

Overview

At Stoke Lane Stables, we are committed to providing the highest standard of care for all our animals. Our approach follows the Five Freedoms as outlined by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to ensure that every animal under our care leads a healthy, comfortable, and stress-free life. This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring the welfare of all animals, equine and ovine, by adhering to the Five Freedoms.

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst

- All animals will have access to clean, fresh water at all times, ensuring they stay hydrated and healthy.
- Adequate, nutritionally balanced feed will be provided according to each animal's specific dietary requirements, taking into consideration factors such as age, health, activity level, and season.
- Regular assessments by qualified associates
- ¹ will be conducted to ensure that all animals are being properly fed and hydrated.

2. Freedom from Discomfort

- Animals will be provided with an environment that is comfortable and safe, promoting their well-being.
- Stables and shelters will be designed and maintained to provide adequate protection from the elements (wind, rain, extreme temperatures) and will be cleaned regularly to prevent the build-up of waste or harmful bacteria.
- Bedding will be clean, dry, and comfortable, and adequate space will be provided for the animals to move freely.
- All equipment, including tack and harnesses, will be well-maintained to prevent injury or discomfort.

3. Freedom from Pain, Injury, and Disease

- Every animal will receive regular veterinary check-ups to ensure they remain healthy, with immediate treatment provided if any illness or injury is detected.
- All associates will be trained in recognising signs of pain or distress in animals and

will act swiftly to address any issues.

- Injuries will be treated promptly by a qualified veterinarian, and any animal deemed to be suffering will be given appropriate care or, if necessary, humanely euthanised to prevent further suffering.
- Vaccinations and parasite control programs will be strictly adhered to as part of our proactive approach to animal health.

4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour

- Animals will be allowed to express their natural behaviours in a safe and stimulating environment.
- Horses will have access to regular turn-out or grazing time in fields or paddocks, allowing them to interact with other horses and engage in natural behaviours such as grazing and socializing.
- The stables will provide enrichment activities, such as varied environments, objects for foraging, and opportunities for exercise, to stimulate the physical and mental well-being of the animals.
- Training and handling methods will be based on positive reinforcement to ensure that animals can express themselves without fear of intimidation or stress.

5. Freedom from Fear and Distress

- Animals will be handled in a calm, gentle, and respectful manner at all times to minimize stress.
- Associates will be trained in animal behaviour and welfare to recognise and address any signs of distress, fear, or discomfort.
- The use of force, intimidation, or harmful practices will not be tolerated. We promote the use of positive reinforcement methods in training and interactions.
- Quiet and low-stress environments will be maintained in the stables and during any activities that involve human interaction or exercise.

Additional Commitments:

Associates Training: All associates at Stoke Lane Stables will receive ongoing training in animal welfare, including the Five Freedoms, and will be required to stay informed of best practices in animal care.

Emergency Procedures: We have clear emergency protocols in place, including

procedures for accidents, veterinary emergencies, and handling difficult situations.

Regular Audits: We will conduct regular internal audits to evaluate our animal welfare practices and ensure that all animals are being cared for in accordance with this policy.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains up to date with current animal welfare standards. Feedback from associates, veterinarians, and visitors will be encouraged to maintain continuous improvement in animal care. Non-compliance with this policy will be addressed through further training or corrective actions as needed.

¹ **Associate** - A self-employed individual engaged by Stoke Lane Stables to provide professional services, including instructors. Associates are not employees, and this term does not create an employment relationship.