

Horse welfare lesson plan

Main Welfare Aims:

To highlight the current issues around the huge number of horses at risk and needing charitable help. Encourage groups to consider ways in which the industry and individuals could help to improve the situation and protect the future of our UK's horses.

Resources Needed:

Mary King video ([click here](#))

Introduction (15 minutes)

- Ask the group what they know about Blue Cross and what it does. This can be done by discussion, writing on post its, or showing the Blue Cross website.
- Encourage the group to discuss the following "Should everyone own a horse?" Explore the responsibilities of owning a horse, what can happen when it goes wrong, what are the consequences for the person and the horse.
- Ask them why horses might come into Blue Cross?

Main (30 minutes)

- Ask the group to consider the reasons why there are so many horses not being adequately cared for
- Play the Mary King video
- Get the group to explore possible solutions to improve the number of horses needing help. This can be done on flip charts, post its etc. Get them to consider the impact their solution could have, how might they monitor this, how could they gain people's support?

Extra activities

- Can the group pick out their top idea?
- Can they make a plan to share information on the current issues with their peers, parents or local yard?
- Follow Blue Cross on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram to hear about the animals we help and those that need homes
- Search the internet for initiatives that equine charities run to help improve horse welfare and care

Information sheet for session facilitator

The UK's horses are in crisis and charities are at bursting point. With thousands of horses facing an uncertain future because of abandonment or neglect, the horse welfare crisis is a reality that can no longer be ignored. Many of these horses are being fly grazed (grazing on private land, without permission) or belong to irresponsible breeders who have too many horses and no market to sell them. Some may belong to overwhelmed owners who are simply no longer able to cope.

Here are some of the issues that are contributing to this growing crisis:

- Value – horses have been sold for as little as £5, and with such a low value placed on them the standard of care for some horses has become less important
- Overbreeding – many irresponsible dealers are still buying, breeding and selling. With the cost of castration often more than the value of the horse, breeding of low quality horses is becoming a huge problem.
- Fly grazing – grazing horses on private land with no permission from the owner is a real issue. Many areas have hundreds of horses fly grazing, and often receiving little or no care at all.
- Identification – without a horse passport and microchip it is very hard to locate an owner

What can you do to help?

- Consider really carefully the impact that breeding just one horse can have
- Free up a space at a charity by rehoming a rescue horse. Blue Cross has many horses and ponies in need of a good home.
- If your circumstances change and you have to find a new home for your horse, be responsible and make sure it's the right home. Blue Cross may be able to help with our Home Direct Scheme.
- Know what issues are affecting horses out there and keep up to date. For more information on the horse crisis go to **NEWC.co.uk**.
- Spread the word – be an ambassador for horses. Share what you know about horse welfare and how people can help reduce the number of horses in need.

Blue Cross provides talks about equine welfare and the work of Blue Cross to students at Key Stage 5 and above. Arrange for one of our team to deliver our equine talk to your college group. Click **here** to book your college talk.



Useful resources

bluecross.org.uk

[Horse crisis documents](#)

[Equine codes of practice](#)

[The Control of Horses Act 2015](#)

[Rehome a Blue Cross horse](#)

[National Equine Welfare Council](#)