



Skills England

Standard Draft Preview

Contents

1. Key information
2. Occupational summary
3. Typical job titles
4. Occupation duties
5. Knowledge
6. Skills
7. Behaviours
8. Qualifications
9. Consultation
10. Progression routes
11. Supporting uploads
12. Involved employers

Standard in development
L2: Underkeeper
Version 2.0

Title of occupation

Underkeeper

UOS reference number

ST0412

Core and options

No

Level of occupation

Level 2

Occupational maps data

Route: Agriculture, environmental and animal care

Pathway: Agriculture, Land Management and Production

Cluster: Environment technician

Typical duration of apprenticeship

18 months

Minimum hours for compliance

326 hours

Resubmission

No

Would your proposed apprenticeship standard replace an existing framework?

Yes

Does professional recognition exist for the occupation?

No

Regulated occupation

Is this a statutory regulated occupation?

No

Occupational summary

This occupation is found in the game and wildlife management sector. The broad purpose of the occupation is to participate in habitat management, pest and predator control and animal husbandry in support of a shooting enterprise. As well as producing a harvestable surplus of gamebirds, an underkeeper contributes to associated conservation activities for the benefit of other flora and fauna. An underkeeper will assist on shoot days and will be expected to undertake routine estate maintenance. In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with a variety of organisations and individuals, including estate

managers, senior gamekeepers, police/other statutory bodies, paying guests, other land users and the general public. Underkeeper's work under some challenging conditions, can be expected to work some unsociable hours and will be outdoors in all weathers. They need to follow instructions precisely from the headkeeper or estate manager to help deliver an estate's management plan, but frequently operate alone and need to rely on their own initiative and adaptability. An employee in this occupation will be responsible for supporting the management of landscapes, wildlife and shooting activities. To fulfil these requirements an underkeeper needs to be competent and qualified in a range of practical gamekeeping skills, including animal and bird husbandry, the creation and maintenance of healthy habitat, and the responsible and appropriate use of all relevant traps, pesticides, hand tools, power tools and firearms.

Typical job titles

Underkeeper

Are there any statutory / regulatory or other typical entry requirements?

No

Occupation duties

DUTY	KSBS
Duty 1 Maintain healthy gamebird populations including the use of medications, feeding wild birds, care of laying birds, hatching eggs, rearing game, recognise and responding common diseases and releasing game, whilst raising animals with optimal welfare and consideration for their needs throughout the different stages of life Uphold the five animal welfare freedoms as contained in the Animal Welfare Act 2006.	K2 K3 K15 K16 K21 S1 S4 S6 S7 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8
Duty 2 Use a variety of integrated methods to control pests and predators of game, including the use of firearms, traps and pesticides.	K1 K2 K5 K6 K7 K8 K9 K10 K11 K13 K16 K19 S1 S6 S7 S8 S9 S10 S19 S20 S21 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B8
Duty 3 Participate in the running of a shoot day by ensuring all equipment is ready to use, help with briefing beaters/pickers, welcome guests, assist with the beating line for drives, prepare game for the chiller and prepare for the next day.	K1 K5 K7 K8 K9 K12 K13 K20 S1 S2 S5 S7 S8 S10 S13 S14 S20 S21 S22 S23 S24 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8
Duty 4 Undertake the care of gundogs.	K3 S1 S5 S21 S22 B1 B3 B4 B7 B8
Duty 5 Work safely and undertake risk assessments for all aspects of work. Maintain good standards of health and safety for self and others. Administer emergency first aid.	K5 K6 K7 K8 K9 K13 K14 S1 S2 S9 S10 S11 S12 S18 S20 S21 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8
Duty 6 Use ATVs/RTVs, tractors, chainsaws, strimmers and brushcutters that you identify as appropriate to undertake, maintain and create the habitat appropriate to the landscape.	K4 K9 K14 K17 K18 K19 S10 S11 S12 S13 S14 S15 S16 S17 S18 S19 S21 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7
Duty 7 Identify habitats that require management to provide conservation benefits.	K2 K4 K9 K12 K13 S1 S3 S7 S9 S10 S11 S12 S13 S14 S15 S16 S17 S18 S21

	B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8
Duty 8 Operate within current legislation and licensing requirements.	K1 K5 K9 K10 K11 K13 K22 S19 S20 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8
Duty 9 Use firearms safely and comply with all legal requirements (Home Office guidance) for ownership, storage and use.	K1 K5 K6 K7 K8 K13 S1 S2 S10 S20 S21 S25 B4 B5 B6 B7
Duty 10 Ensure safe access to land for the general public where appropriate.	K1 K5 K8 K9 K12 K13 S1 S2 S8 S9 S18 S19 B1 B2 B3 B4 B6 B7
Duty 11 Creation and maintenance of healthy habitat but undertaking conservation management that is appropriate to the landscape to ensure sustainable and thriving wildlife and habitats.	K2 K4 K13 K14 K17 K18 K19 S1 S3 S7 S8 S9 S10 S13 S14 S16 S17 S18 S19 S20 S21 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8
Duty 12 Have a basic understanding of the effect of deer on the surrounding landscape and appropriate methods of control.	K2 K4 K5 K6 K7 K8 K9 K17 K18 K22 K23 K24 S20 S25 B4 B8
Duty 13 Develop an understanding of the ambassadorial role of a gamekeeper and what it means to represent the countryside and a rural way of life to the wide public.	K12 S8 B4 B5 B7

KSBs

Knowledge

K1: Legislation and licensing requirements applicable to game shooting in England.

K2: The ecological requirements of relevant game species and habitat preferences.

- K3:** The requirements of animal and bird husbandry as dictated by the enterprise. Including the use of medications, feeding wild birds, care of laying birds, hatching eggs and rearing game, releasing game and care of associated animals such as gundogs.
- K4:** How to maximise conservation benefits relevant to the shooting enterprise.
- K5:** Current legislation appropriate to rifle and shotgun use.
- K6:** Rifle and shotgun cleaning and routine maintenance procedures.
- K7:** Storage and transport of shotguns and rifles.
- K8:** Health and safety considerations relating to rifle and shotgun use.
- K9:** Relevant health and safety legislation, industry good practice and the administration of emergency first aid.
- K10:** The law and DEFRA endorsed Code of Practice covering humane restraints.
- K11:** Humane restraint design and equipment preparation to comply with the code of practice.
- K12:** The social and economic impact of shooting in the UK.
- K13:** How to manage public access, to include an understanding of the requirement to maintain public footpaths and access points such as stiles and gates and the implications of public access to land mapped as 'open country' (mountain, moor, heath and down) or registered common land.
- K14:** Identifying the tools and methods appropriate for relevant land management operations, such as choosing between a nylon trimmer head and a brushcutter blade for a vegetation clearance task.
- K15:** Understand how to identify signs of common game bird diseases, such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), rotavirus, coccidiosis, gape worms, mycoplasma ('bulgy eye'), spironucleus/trichomonas, strongylosis and tick borne disease.
- K16:** Understand how to plan an integrated pest and predator control regime appropriate to the landscape, choosing relevant pest control methods.
- K17:** Understand and identify common diseases and appropriate land management practices to enhance habitats.
- K18:** Recognise common countryside flora and fauna.
- K19:** Understand landscape designations such as Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), National Landscapes, RAMSAR and the laws surrounding them.
- K20:** Understand the principles of flushing game on a driven shoot day, including a thorough understanding of the drives on a relevant shooting enterprise.

K21: Know the five freedoms as set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006. a. its need for a suitable environment b. its need for a suitable diet (and water) c. Its need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns d. any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals in appropriate social groupings e. its need to be protected from fear, pain, suffering, injury and disease.

K22: To have knowledge of and comply with the law relating to current legislation on animal welfare and species protection legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act, Animal Welfare Act, the Conservation Habitats of Species Regulations, UK trapping standards, Wild Mammals Protection Act etc.

K23: Identify the six species of deer that live wild in the UK.

K24: An understanding of legislation relating to deer, and in particular the latest Deer Act.

Skills

S1: Maintain good standards of health and safety, keeping self and others safe in the workplace.

S2: Administer emergency first aid.

S3: Use land management techniques such as cover crops, vegetation management, pesticide application, coppicing, hedge laying, habitat creation and planting.

S4: Animal and bird husbandry, including recognising and dealing with common gamebird diseases through administering medication and seeking veterinary assistance as appropriate, in a speedy and timely manner.

S5: Undertake the care of gundogs through identifying and treating minor injuries and ailments.

S6: Use a variety of integrated methods to control pests and predators of game, including firearms, humane restraints, traps and poisons.

S7: Identify relevant species of game, pests, predators and vegetation.

S8: Use digital technology relevant to the workplace effectively, including Global Positioning Systems and the responsible use of social media.

S9: Work safely and carry out risk assessments for all practical land management activities undertaken.

S10: Select and use the appropriate personal protective equipment.

S11: Carry out pre-use safety checks on ATVs/RTVs, chainsaws, strimmers and brushcutters.

S12: Undertake pre-use maintenance of ATVs/RVs.

S13: Operate and ride/drive machinery such as sit in or sit-astride ATVs, and with a trailer or implement.

S14: Hitch a trailer or Power take-off (PTO) driven attachments.

S15: Carry out maintenance of trimmers, brushcutters and chainsaws.

S16: Cross-cut timber using a chainsaw safely.

S17: Fell and process trees up to 380mm.

S18: Operate trimmers and brushcutters safely.

S19: Set humane restraints according to the Code of Best Practice.

S20: Demonstrate safe handling and use of a rifle and a shotgun.

S21: Manually handle loads safely such as moving coppiced wood, gundogs, equipment or game.

S22: Care of working dogs, to include fitness, routine care and handling in the field.

S23: Communicate instructions clearly to beaters/pickers and shoot guests.

S24: Correct handling of all shot game/deer

S25: Capable of accurate rifle and shotgun shooting.

Behaviours

B1: Have a strong work ethic, including self-motivation and time management.

B2: Have a flexible, positive attitude to work.

B3: Ability to work as a lone worker and as a member of a team.

B4: A willingness to listen and learn from others.

B5: An enthusiasm for the conservation benefits of game shooting.

B6: Ability to take personal responsibility.

B7: Problem solving and effective decision making.

B8: To respect wildlife and all animals in their care.

Qualifications

English and maths

English and maths qualifications must be completed in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.

Does the apprenticeship need to include any mandated qualifications in addition to the above-mentioned English and maths qualifications?

Yes

Other mandatory qualifications

Level 2 Award in Wild Game Meat Hygiene or the Game Meat Hygiene Training Course, provided by the National Game Keepers organisation

Level: 2

Additional information: Lantra Awards Level 2 Award in Wild Game Meat Hygiene OR Game Meat Hygiene Training Course, provided by the NGO. Please refer to the Awarding Organisation to confirm if English and maths is a regulatory requirement or is an essential component of any mandatory qualification.

Level 2 award in Safe Use of Pesticides. On completion of the pesticides foundation one of the following units will also be required: a:) boom sprayer b:) mounted, trailed or self-propelled equipment c:) granular applicator equipment d:) handheld applicator equipment

Level: 2

Additional information: 1. Lantra Awards Level 2 Award in the Safe Application of Pesticides Using Hand Held Equipment OR Lantra Awards Level 2 Award in the Safe Application of Pesticides Using Variable Geometry Boom of Broadcast Sprayers OR Lantra Awards Level 2 Award in the Safe Application of Pesticides using Vehicle Mounted Boom Sprayer Equipment OR Lantra Awards Level 2 Awards in the Safe Application of Pesticides using Pellet and Granular Equipment OR Lantra Awards Level 2 Award in the Safe Application of Pesticides using Drone Equipment OR Lantra Awards Level 2 Award in the Safe Application of pesticides using Vehicle Mounted or Trailed Wick Type Applicators. 2. City and Guilds Level 2 Award in the principles of Safe Handling and application of Pesticides (PA1 AND:City and Guilds Level 2 Award in the Safe Application of pesticides using pedestrian Handheld Equipment (PA6) OR City and Guilds Level 2 Award the Safe Application of Pesticides using self-propelled mounted or trailed horizontal Boom Sprayers (PA2) OR City and Guilds Level 2 Award the Safe Application of Pesticides using Variable Geometry Boom or Broadcast Sprayers (PA3) OR City and Guilds Level 2 Award the Safe Application of Pesticides using Mounted or Trailed Applicators (PA4).Please refer to the Awarding Organisation to confirm if English and maths is a regulatory requirement or is an essential component of any mandatory qualification.

Level 2 Rat Control for Gamekeepers certificate

Level: 2

Additional information: The following are acceptable: RSPH/BPCA Level 2 Award in Pest Management, RSPH/BPCA Level 2 Certificate in Pest Management, City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Pesticides for Vertebrate Pest Control for Rats and Mice, Lantra Awards Level 2 Award in Rodent Management, Killgerm Principles of Rodent Control (Exam through BASIS), RSPH Level 2 Award in the safe use of rodenticides, BPCA Using Rodenticides Safely (Exam through BASIS), Open Awards Level 2 Award in the Principles of Rodent Control (RQF) 610/1782/6, Open Awards Level 2 Award in Rodent Control for Gamekeepers and Rural Environments (RQF) 610/1783/8.Please refer to the Awarding Organisation to confirm if English and maths is a regulatory requirement or is an essential component of any mandatory qualification.

a level 2 qualification in chainsaw maintenance and cross cutting

Level: 2

Additional information: Lantra Awards Level 2 Award in Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross Cutting (610/6589/4) OR City and Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross-Cutting (603/7353/2). Please refer to the Awarding Organisation to confirm if English and maths is a regulatory requirement or is an essential component of any mandatory qualification.

a level 2 qualification in the use of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

Level: 2

Additional information: City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate of Competence in the Safe Use of All-terrain Vehicles (ATVs) OR Suitable certified training courses from Lantra, EASI (European ATV Safety Institute), the British Off Road Driving Association (BORDA). For example: o Lantra Awards All Terrain Vehicle – Sit Astride o Lantra Awards All Terrain Vehicle – Sit-In Skid Steer o Lantra Awards All Terrain Vehicle – Sit-in Conventional Steer. Please refer to the Awarding Organisation to confirm if English and maths is a regulatory requirement or is an essential component of any mandatory qualification.

a level 2 qualification in the safe use and handling of guns (rifle and shotgun)

Level: 2

Additional information: Lantra Awards Safe use and handling – Rifles, OR Lantra Awards Safe use and handling - Shotgun, OR any other comparable industry or in-house training courses. Please refer to the Awarding Organisation to confirm if English and maths is a regulatory requirement or is an essential component of any mandatory qualification.

Emergency First Aid at work

Level: 2

Additional information: Award or training and assessment in emergency first aid at work minimum 1 day course (face-to-face), carried out by either an awarding organisation, a UKAS accredited trade body or voluntary aid society recognised by government as specified in HSE document GEIS 3. Please refer to the Awarding Organisation to confirm if English and maths is a regulatory requirement or is an essential component of any mandatory qualification.

a level 2 qualification in brushcutters and trimmers

Level: 2

Additional information: Lantra Awards Brushcutters/Trimmers – (training with assessment) or City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Brush-cutters and Trimmers (601/1299/2). Please refer to the Awarding Organisation to confirm if English and maths is a regulatory requirement or is an essential component of any mandatory qualification.

Consultation

Update to standard due to the assessment reform. This will be consulted on with a public survey.

Progression routes

Supporting uploads

Mandatory qualification uploads

-  ST0412_standard_off-the-job-type-2-evidence_Underkeeper - mandatory qual evidence 29.07.26.docx

Mandated degree evidence uploads

Professional body confirmation uploads

Subject sector area

3.1 Agriculture