



into profit

retirement homes are gaining traction due to ageing horse populations and owners seeking peace of mind.

Cheryl points out that, as well as being a growth market, retirement livery can be a more attractive option for property owners.

"You don't need facilities like an arena, you get the horses without the owners and the horses are generally easier to handle," she says. "Although you're also more likely to have horses with medical conditions, so that takes more time and management."

Shadowmere Equine Retirement Livery, in Lincolnshire, opened in 2022.

"We originally had the idea because our own thoroughbred was nearing retirement," says Caroline Hirst, marketing manager for the yard.

So Caroline's parents, Lizzie and Chris, set about turning part of their family home into what they call an "exclusive country club" for retired horses. With facilities like red light therapy, air-quality and water-consumption monitoring technology,

a weighbridge and CCTV for owners to watch their horses, they earned a highly commended from the British Horse Society in 2024. The yard is currently full with a waiting list.

With Lizzie and Chris living on-site, the decision to offer retirement livery only was also a personal one.

"We're able to provide a calm and relaxing lifestyle for our livery horses and for ourselves," says Caroline.

Retirement liversies vary in what they offer and, therefore, the financial investment and time commitment required and prices they can command. But even a simple set-up providing the basics can still charge more than DIY livery, while retirement yards offering more extensive or specialist care packages can price themselves equal to the premium full-livery bracket.