



PRESS RELEASE

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Looking to grow a farming career? New apprenticeship scheme launches

Young people keen to launch a career in farming are being invited to apply for a unique apprenticeship opportunity being offered by The Ernest Cook Trust, at its upland sheep farm in Cumbria.

The Trust – one of the UK’s leading educational charities – has launched The Francis Stone Apprenticeship. The successful applicant will start in September and have the chance to learn a thorough grounding in farming, based at Low Beckside farm, Mungrisdale.

“We’re looking for applications from young people with a real interest in getting into farming, but who might otherwise struggle to make that step without some support, such as we are offering through The Francis Stone Apprenticeship,” said Emily Crawley, Head of Learning Strategy & Delivery at The Ernest Cook Trust.

“We would like to make this an opportunity which is accessible to all, and will be paying the National Living Wage rather than the standard apprenticeship wage, to ensure that this is a financially viable opportunity for the successful applicant. We’ll also be offering a package of support including mentoring, extra training, work experience and the option of a travel bursary, if required.”

The Ernest Cook Trust has launched The Francis Stone Apprenticeship in memory of a former long-serving tenant farmer of the Trust, who lived on its Boarstall estate in Buckinghamshire.

The Francis Stone Apprenticeship is a full-time role, with 20 per cent off-the-job training and is being run in conjunction with Kendal College. All training will take place at Low Beckside, or at other farm locations in the area. In total, the apprenticeship lasts 18 months and is for a General Farm Worker, with Option 1: Livestock Worker.

Emily said: “We’re very excited to welcome the new apprentice. They’ll have the opportunity to get hands on experience of upland sheep farming, and gain a number of qualifications in the process, including first aid, quad bike driving, spraying and veterinary medicines. They’ll also have the chance to work alongside other apprentices, and the students who visit Low Beckside Farm as part of their studies.”

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The Ernest Cook Trust is a UK-wide educational charity, which creates outdoor learning experiences for children, young people and their families, on its own estates and with partner estates across the country. It also gives out some £2m in grants every year, to support outdoor learning activities.

The Francis Stone Apprenticeship is a first for Low Becks farm, but not for The Ernest Cook Trust, which has run other apprenticeship schemes. The Trust is well known for supporting young people into employment. In 2021, it took on nine recruits through the Government's Kickstart Scheme, to give them work experience and paths to employment in land-based roles. The majority went into employment.

The Trust is holding an **open afternoon** at Low Becks Farm on **Monday April 17, from 1-5pm**, for anyone who'd like to come along and find out more, and see if farming is for them. The closing date for applications for the Francis Stone Apprenticeship is **Monday April 24** . For more details and information on applying, visit <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/jobs/>.

