

BHS Volunteer Mentors Guidance Note

All BHS Volunteer Officers have a named BHS employee as their Role Coordinator, either from the Development Team or the Department they volunteer with. Their role coordinator provides them guidance in the role, access to training and resources and should be their first point of contact for queries or support.

Volunteers can choose to be matched with a volunteer mentor. This is targeted at new volunteers, but is open to all. Volunteer Mentors, will either currently or previously have undertaken the same role as the volunteer mentee. The mentor's role is to provide them with a volunteer's perspective and help them integrate into volunteering with the BHS.

What does it involve?

The specific nature of the mentoring relationship depends on the needs and experience of both parties and should be agreed between you. Depending on your location you may meet face to face and/or talk on the phone.

There is no set time for the length of a mentoring relationship. It depends on both parties; some volunteers will continue to mentor others for an extended duration as the mentee takes on new responsibilities. The important thing to remember is to be honest with each other about your availability and experience.

What is expected of a Mentor?

- Share your experience as a volunteer
- Give support, information and guidance when needed
- Introduce your mentee to colleagues or contacts who could support them in their role, or if they are in a different geographical area explain the people they need to seek out. This could be BHS volunteers or employees, or contacts in external organisations for example their local authority.
- Encourage them and allay any concerns or fears

What is expected of a Mentee?

- Be open and honest with your mentor
- Ask for help and support when needed
- Be realistic about the time and support your mentor can provide
- Be willing to act as mentor for a new volunteer when you have settled into your role

What makes a good mentor?

- You need to be a people person, with great listening skills
- Able to communicate clearly
- Have a positive outlook, especially about the BHS and being a volunteer
- Display sensitivity and be empathetic to your mentees situation and experience
- Have a non-judgmental attitude

How do we match mentors and mentees?

When a volunteer asks to be matched with a mentor their role coordinator will contact volunteers who have previously agreed to act as a mentor or those that they feel would excel in the role. If the mentor agrees the role coordinator will provide both parties with each other's contact details.

Confidentiality

The content of the discussions related to a volunteer's experience and enjoyment of their role should be kept confidential. The exceptions to this are:

- Discussions which reveal information that is potentially damaging to the mentee or any other person for example bullying or discrimination;
- Discussions which reveal information that is potentially damaging to the Society for example non-compliance with BHS policies.

Under these circumstances the Mentor should contact the BHS Volunteer Manager for guidance.

Developing Volunteer Mentoring in the BHS

The BHS are committed to developing all areas of volunteering. We encourage volunteers to provide feedback on all their experiences with the Society. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to feedback to their Role Coordinators and the BHS Volunteer Manager on their experience of volunteer mentoring and their suggestions for improvements.

BHS Volunteer Mentors can contact the BHS Volunteer Manager on volunteer@bhs.org.uk, 02476 840479 at any time for support or guidance.