

## **BHS Young Volunteers**

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The BHS welcomes the involvement of all potential volunteers. However, we must make sure that they have the appropriate skills and aptitude for the role and we have the capacity, resources and systems to provide them with a safe and enjoyable volunteering experience.

In principle the BHS welcomes volunteers under the age of 18 years, but not under the age of 16 years, as volunteer officers and part of our flexible volunteer team.

### Volunteer Enquiry

Potential volunteers between the ages of 16-18 should enquire using the BHS Volunteer Enquiry form; including providing the contact details of a parent/guardian.

### Assessment

If we receive an enquiry from someone under the age of 18 years, in addition to our standard volunteer suitability assessment we will consider:

- Is there a minimum age set for the role?
- Are there any safeguarding issues we need to consider? The role should not involve regular one to one contact with an employee or volunteer.
- Will any elements of the role have a detrimental effect on the applicant's ability to attend college or school?

During this assessment we will not make assumptions about the applicant's skills or experience, but use the facts available to us, this may include contacting the parent or guardian for permission and then calling the applicant for a telephone interview. If we decide they are not suitable for the role they are enquiring about we will consider if there are other ways in which they could volunteer. If you would like to recruit or welcome a younger volunteer to your team but you aren't sure how to proceed, contact the Volunteer Manager.

If you think a young person could be suitable for a role, before they are contacted about volunteering with the Society their parent/guardian should be contacted for their permission.

### Appointment

If we decide that the volunteer is suitable for the role, we will follow the standard volunteer recruitment process.

### Support and Guidance

As with all volunteers it is important to provide ongoing guidance and support. This is especially important with young volunteers who may have less experience. We will follow up with the volunteer themselves and their fellow volunteers to ensure they are settling in to their role and there are no concerns about their competence, health, safety or wellbeing.

### Reporting Concerns

Any concerns about young people should be brought to the attention of the Volunteer Manager who will alert the BHS Lead Safeguarding Officers on 02476 840746 or [safeguarding@bhs.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@bhs.org.uk). If the concern is urgent or out of office hours please contact your local Children's Social Care, local police or the NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000. Concerns can be raised by the young person, another volunteer or employees.

### Group Volunteering

You may be contacted by schools or youth organisations about involving groups of young people as volunteers. The first consideration is whether you have a suitable opportunity; generally groups are looking for one off events such as a bridleway clearance day or fundraising opportunities. If you have an auditable opportunity you need to check that the group organiser can arrange appropriate numbers of leaders to supervise the activity and support the preparation of event/project risk assessments.

Group volunteering can be challenging to run, it is important to maintain communication with the group organiser, to clarify the needs of your team and their group and to manage expectations of the day. If you are unsure about offering a group volunteering opportunity please contact the Volunteer Manager to discuss.

### Attendance of non-volunteers

Volunteers may ask if they can bring their children or young relation or ward with them while volunteering. You need to assess if it is appropriate to have a young or vulnerable person present, and if their presence will impact on the volunteer's ability to undertake their role. If you are confident there are no issues with the young person attending you must make it clear to the volunteer that the young person's supervision and welfare is solely their responsibility.

If the young person is volunteering rather than just observing, they will need to be recorded either by the completion of a volunteer enquiry form or on the volunteer log for the day.

If at any point you are concerned you can contact the Volunteer Manager or Safeguarding team for guidance.

### Further Information

All volunteers who work with young people and also young volunteers should be made aware of the BEF Safeguarding Policy, accessible through the BHS website or through the Volunteer Manager.

Any general questions can be raised with the Safeguarding Team via [safeguarding@bhs.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@bhs.org.uk)