

Policy Statement

Policy Title: BHS Volunteer Press and Media Policy

Number: 11.17V1

Functional Area: Volunteers

Brief Description: Policy relating to communicating with the press and media

Effective: November 2017

Approved by: Communications Department

Responsible Department: Volunteer Department

Policy Contact: emma.thompson@bhs.org.uk

Supersedes: N/A

Last Reviewed/Updated: November 2017

Applies to: All BHS Volunteers, including Trustees and Advisory Board Members

Reason for Policy: To ensure volunteers understand the procedures involved in connecting with the media and to clarify our expectations of them in regards to the press and media.

I. INTRODUCTION

The British Horse Society is an established and highly respected charity. We have a reputation for providing excellent, professional services and we enjoy strong relationships with our customers and members as the destination for equestrians, in particular our welfare, education, access and safety work.

While providing this service, the media is frequently interested in The British Horse Society. We have a responsibility to be open and responsive to their information requests because the media are among the many ways we are able to gain more exposure of the work of our charity and to be able to continue its work.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Purpose

This policy exists to assure that information disclosed by The British Horse Society is timely, accurate, comprehensive, authoritative and relevant to all aspects of The British Horse Society. Adherence to this policy is intended to provide an effective and efficient framework to facilitate the timely dissemination of information.

Scope

This media policy applies to all volunteers of The British Horse Society as well as members of its Board of Trustees. This policy covers all external news media including broadcast, electronic and print. For social media, please refer to the '*BHS Volunteer Communications and Social Media Policy*'.

Requests for Comment from the Press

If a member of the press contacts a volunteer asking for a comment on anything related to the BHS or their work within their voluntary remit with the BHS please refer them to the HQ Public Relations Department.

Please tell the reporter: **“The British Horse Society policy is to refer all media inquiries to the PR department. You can reach them on 02476 840521 or pressenquiry@bhs.org.uk.”**

Please then call the PR team and let them know which member of the press has been in touch and what information they were looking for, this will ensure they have a positive experience.

The BHS Press Office telephone line is open 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Please call Seona Shuttleworth on 02476 840521 or email pressenquiry@bhs.org.uk when contacted by the press regarding any BHS or BHS Affiliated efforts.

Comments to the press will be most appropriate coming from the CEO or Department Director, this enables us to provide a clear, concise and consistent message.

Communication with the Press

To protect the business of The Society volunteers are expressly forbidden, either during or after their time volunteering with us:

- To directly or indirectly publish any opinion, fact or material on any matter connected with or relating to the practices of the Society, the Society or customers without the prior written approval of the PR Department;
- To make any public appearances or comments to the press on any matter connected with or relating to the practices of the Society, the Society or customers without the prior written approval of the PR Department.

This does not affect your right to disclose appropriate information to relevant bodies under the Public Disclosure Act 1998 and the Volunteer Policy's whistle blowing protocol.

Communicating your Volunteer Efforts

If volunteers wish to get anything relating to committee or voluntary efforts with the charity into the media, whether that is radio, newspaper, TV or online outlet, the Committee Communications Officer and National/Regional Manager will be able to suggest stories to our PR team at HQ. Our HQ team will then contact the press with appropriate stories and may contact volunteers for more information or pictures.

The Communications Officer and National/Regional Manager will also be able to share information on Facebook pages and the Volunteer Manager can share information in the Volunteer Newsletter. The National/Regional Manager will also be looking for stories for the British Horse.

Communication Volunteers may provide local British Horse Society event listings of interest to regional media (only), if approved by their National/Regional Manager.

The above suggestions are the only way information should be sent to the press, press releases, statements or quotes must not be made by volunteers directly to the press as a representative of the BHS unless previously approved by the BHS PR Department.

DEFINITIONS

Press and media:

- Any reporter or journalist from a newspaper, television, radio or online outlet or working independently who gets in touch to find out about BHS activities. Activities will include anything related to the BHS or BHS Affiliated groups, including volunteer organised events, accidents or actions related to the role.

III. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, FORMS, GUIDELINES AND OTHER RESOURCES

A. Policy Statements and Other Policies

The *BHS Volunteer Policy* and *Communications and Social Media Policy* are directly related to this policy. Any inappropriate contact with the media will need to be addressed; this will be done using the *BHS Problem Solving Procedure*.

B. Procedures

As mentioned above any contact with the press should be done through the BHS PR Department on: 02476 840521 or email pressenquiry@bhs.org.uk

C. Guidelines

The BHS has photo guidelines on the Volunteer Resources Page, these are also available from your National/Regional Manager. Please read these guidelines before taking pictures at events to ensure that any pictures posted on social media, or which you later wish to use for press releases through the PR Team or in the British Horse will be approved.

D. Other Resources (i.e. training, secondary contact information)

Communications Officers will receive additional training and information relevant to their role, it may be advantageous at times for Communications Officers to share or remind other committee members of this policy and others.

IV. HISTORY

This policy replaces any previous documents relating to press and social media for volunteers.