

Welfare Officer Role Description

Role Summary The British Horse Society Welfare Team are striving to make a difference for horses throughout the UK by providing advice and support for their owners and guardians. As a BHS Welfare Officer, you will be joining that team, working with the staff at BHS Headquarters (HQ) and fellow volunteers. We are not a rescue or rehoming charity but we work with people to improve horse welfare through increased knowledge and awareness of their needs. Being an advocate for the horse within the remit of equine law can provide rewarding results.

If you are passionate about horse welfare and enjoy working with people to make a difference this could be the role for you. Our Welfare Officers respond to welfare concerns providing information to the Welfare team at HQ and if required partner charities and statutory organisations. You can also make a difference by raising awareness of current welfare campaigns and providing information and guidance to horse owners in your area.

What's in it for you As a Welfare Officer you will be helping to improve horse welfare through support and advice. You will also have the opportunity to expand your skills and experience and be part of a motivated and proactive team of like-minded people. Your training and experiences will increase your equestrian knowledge and confidence in working with and supporting people.

Main duties and responsibilities You will be part of the Welfare Team supporting the Society's Welfare charitable objectives, this will involve:

- Attending and assessing welfare concerns received from: BHS HQ, direct from a member of the public or a Development Officer;
- Reporting your findings to the Welfare team at HQ, through the submission of welfare report forms within two weeks of each assignment and telephone reports which support a concern;
- Providing feedback to the Complainant in a professional and confidential manner;
- Working with and sharing best practice with your fellow Welfare Officers including attending a minimum of two Welfare Support Group sessions, per annum, in your area;
- Supporting the delivery of BHS advice and guidance to horse owners and enthusiasts in your area in relation to welfare;
- The BHS Welfare Officers do not have any legal standing and therefore, it is integral to your role to develop relationships with local authorities and other organisations (Police, Trading Standards or other Welfare Charities) to enhance our proactive approach to horse welfare;
- Establish effective relationships with your fellow committee volunteers and local riding clubs;
- If requested, act as a buddy or mentor to a fellow Welfare Officer/prospective Welfare Officer.

NB This role does not involve rescuing or rehoming horses nor does it involve assessments of the welfare of horses residing at BHS approved centres or Local Authority Riding Establishments/centres.

Skills and Knowledge

Essential

- Passionate about horse welfare;
- Equestrian knowledge - *equivalent* to BHS Horse Care and Management Stage 2;
- Good communication skills – essential in your role advising and supporting people to improve the welfare of their horse(s);
- Diplomacy and professional approach - especially when dealing with threatening behaviour;
- An ability to act in a confidential, discrete and sensitive manner;
- Keep accurate records, have excellent attention to detail and be able to complete clear and comprehensive reports;
- Good communication and organisational skills;
- Have use of a telephone, be computer literate and have an email address.

Desirable

- Experience of working with the public;
- Experience of volunteering;
- Experience of the BHS.

Training and Support

Your Regional and Committee Lead Welfare Officers will assist you throughout your role along with your fellow Welfare Officers and your Development Officer. The Welfare team at BHS HQ are available at all times to advise you and will provide you with specialised support, guidance and training

You will have a full induction into the role include attending two welfare concerns as a shadow volunteer and completing a training day. Biennial CPD is essential to this role. At least once every two years you will attend one of the training days provided by BHS HQ at different venues throughout the UK. It is here that up-to-date information will be given and ideas shared as well as practical sessions and presentations from Guest speakers. The BHS Welfare Conference will also offer CPD and interesting training.

You will attend two Welfare Support Groups per year, in your area, to share best practice and provide/welcome support from fellow Officers.

You will also receive quarterly newsletter updates directly from the Welfare Team at BHS HQ, which will include any changes to legislation regarding Welfare, updates on our Welfare campaigns and other news.

Resources

You will need computer and email access and must be willing to receive email, telephone and written correspondence from the BHS, committee volunteers and organisations and individuals concerned about horse welfare in your area.

N.B. All correspondence relating to welfare concerns must be treated with utmost confidentiality and therefore must be received personally. We regret that a family members contact number or email cannot be used.

It is essential to have the ability to travel and it is essential that you have, or have access to, a vehicle that you can use in your role

We will provide you with all necessary reference documents. You will be provided with an identification card, which should be kept securely and be with you at all times should you be asked to produce it, when attending any welfare concerns.

Your Commitment

We ask all our Welfare Officers to commit to the role for a minimum of two years.

Due to the nature of this role, commitment will vary and involve some evening and weekend meetings and visits.

The geographical location of where you live can have a significant impact on the number of welfare concerns you may be asked to assess. Some areas in the U.K have a higher population of horses than others.

You are required to attend two Welfare Support Groups in your area with your fellow Welfare Officers and chaired by your Lead Welfare Officer.

You are encouraged to attend at least one local Committee Meeting per year and/or an event to meet the wider committee and where possible support committee activities.

You may be expected to travel a further distance than what is considered reasonable to attend training and / or your Welfare Support Groups. Due to the geographical location of our network of Welfare Officers, some Welfare Support Groups may be combined.

How do I get involved?

Complete an enquiry form and the Welfare team will contact you to discuss the role.

All Welfare Officers have to complete a probationary period before they became an active officers

Notes

To avoid conflict of interest we are unable to consider approval for a person who is working in a Welfare Officer role, with respect to horses, with another welfare organisation. Please note your application **would** be considered if your voluntary role, within that organisation, does not involve the assessment and assistance with welfare concerns. If you wish to clarify if your current role would be viewed as a conflict of interest please note this on your enquiry form.