
Volunteer Communications Policy

V1.0

January 2024

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The primary aim of this policy and procedure is to make sure that all communications and interactions by volunteers with our members, the public, our supporters and all who engage with us are of the highest possible standard.
- 1.2. If volunteers are unsure about any communications they are making, they should seek advice from their Regional/National Manager or Departmental Co-ordinator to confirm the correct information.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION (GDPR)

- 2.1. Communications should be considered as being in the public domain and should be conducted in accordance with the standards and views of the BHS.
- 2.2. In order to maintain privacy, consider carefully what information you send to individuals or the wider public via any communication channel. Please refer to the [BHS privacy notice](#) for more information.
- 2.3. We must be compliant with GDPR on how personal and private information is kept and used. Misuse of personal data can have far reaching and cost implications for the Society. Training in GDPR compliance is available and if anyone is unsure of the implications of GDPR they should contact the Volunteer Department who can offer support and advice.
- 2.4. Personal contact information should not be shared with a third party or the wider public without the individual's permission or 'legitimate interest'. If personal information can be sourced from a public forum, i.e. an individual's own website, it is better to signpost to this link rather than share personal details directly.
- 2.5. Any surveys or polls created as part of a volunteer remit should only be carried out with the express permission, and in conjunction with, the relevant Department(s) including Marketing & Communications.

3. EMAIL

- 3.1. Email is the most common form of direct communication, and we need to ensure that content fulfils the public's expectation of a caring, agile, respected and trustworthy organisation.
- 3.2. Some BHS Volunteers are provided with a dedicated email address to use. Where an email address has been provided, you should use this to observe a distinction between your BHS and personal email communications.
- 3.3. Volunteers should be confident that the information they give via email is correct and in line with BHS standards and policies.
- 3.4. Email content should be respectful and courteous.

- 3.5. Use the blind carbon copy (Bcc) email function when sending email to groups of people to avoid sharing personal email addresses with other recipients.
- 3.6. When representing the BHS, volunteers should sign off an email by using their full volunteer title e.g. BHS Volunteer Access and Bridleways Officer (insert area if appropriate).
- 3.7. Volunteers should do everything possible to keep themselves safe online. Do not open any email that is not from a recognised or trusted source and do not click on any links that appear to be suspicious.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA

- 4.1. Social media is of great benefit to the Society and can reach a wide audience. We need to ensure that everything posted on social media fulfils the public's expectation of a respected and trusted organisation.
- 4.2. We would ask that BHS Volunteers observe a distinction between their own personal social media presence/profile and that which they hold in their volunteer role. For the benefit of all parties, BHS volunteer roles/titles should not form part of a personal profile. Volunteers are encouraged to share positive and informative content about their work, however, please refrain from posting/sharing negative content or engaging in open discussions about the BHS in posts, comments or public/ private groups.
- 4.3. Volunteers should be aware that their online presence and actions captured via images, posts or comments can reflect on themselves, the BHS and our reputation.
- 4.4. Any volunteer posting or commenting on social media, should be confident that the information they give is correct and in line with BHS policy. Be aware that even anonymous postings can be traced back to the Society. Volunteers should remember to be careful to manage what and with whom they are sharing and don't assume absolute privacy. Remember any posting on social media can be copied and reposted without an author's consent.
- 4.5. Posts and comments should be respectful and courteous.
- 4.6. Do not comment on posts that are offensive or disrespectful to a Volunteer or the Society, these should be reported to the Volunteer Department.
- 4.7. Images and logos posted on social media should be in line with BHS image/brand guidelines and should respect copyright laws (i.e. images owned by others).
- 4.8. Sensitive information such as horse welfare concerns must not be shared publicly.
- 4.9. Volunteers are responsible for their own online safety and should not share any personal contact details directly.

5. EXTERNAL MEDIA

- 5.1. External Press and Media contact the BHS regularly for comment on equestrian issues. We have a responsibility to be open and responsive to these requests, whilst ensuring that correct and timely information is given.
- 5.2. No volunteer, without the permission of the Communications Department, should engage directly with the media on any matter relating to their role or The British Horse Society.
- 5.3. If someone from an external media source contacts a volunteer to ask for comment on anything related to the BHS or their work within their voluntary remit, please refer them to the Head Office Communications Department – 02476 840521 or pressenquiry@bhs.org.uk. Please call the Communications Department and let them know which media contact has been in touch and what information they were looking for. The communications department will respond accordingly and advise on the next steps.
- 5.4. For out of hours contact information, and if the enquiry can't wait until the next working day, please visit our website: www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/press-enquiries
- 5.5. This does not affect your right to disclose appropriate information to relevant statutory bodies and the BHS Whistleblowing policy.

6. COMMUNICATING VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- 6.1. If a volunteer wishes to publicise anything relating to their activities and achievements in the media, or have suggestions for stories that may be newsworthy, please contact your Regional/National Manager or the BHS Communications Department - 02476 840521 or pressenquiry@bhs.org.uk.