Raising Concerns

Policy Statement

We are committed to making sure that all communications and interactions with our members, our volunteers, the public, our supporters and all who engage with us are of the highest possible standard. This includes anyone involved with BHS assessments and programmes. We listen to all views and feedback received, welcoming both positive and constructive feedback, so that we can continue to improve the society and the services which we offer.

If you are worried about a child, young person or adult at risk or have a safeguarding concern please follow this link: Safeguarding | The British Horse Society (bhs.org.uk)

If your concern is about the welfare of a horse or pony, please follow this link:

Report a welfare concern | The British Horse Society (bhs.org.uk)

We have a three-stage approach to managing any concern or issue you may have.

STAGE ONE – Informal Process

Many issues and concerns can be resolved quite easily by better understanding and communication between the parties concerned. This should be your first option. Please contact the relevant BHS Team for an informal discussion regarding your concern or dissatisfaction.

It may be possible to resolve the issue by providing clarity, an explanation, an apology, or a further course of action. Where it's not possible to resolve the issue, we may ask you to submit your concern in writing as a formal complaint, so that we can carry out a more comprehensive investigation. We define a complaint as any 'expression of dissatisfaction' by one or more people about the standard of service provided by the BHS.

You can call us 02476 840500 or send an email customer.relations@bhs.org.uk contact details for all our teams are available on our website www.bhs.org.uk

STAGE TWO – Formal Complaint

Should you wish to make a formal complaint, please follow this link www.raisingconcerns.bhs.org.uk and complete our online form. The relevant BHS Team will investigate your complaint and review any evidence and documentation supplied. Sometimes this means that information may need to be shared with third parties, such as Coaches, Assessors, Centres, Awarding Organisation or Clubs. Where additional evidence or documentation is required, we will discuss this with you directly.

Our response will include the following:

- What we did to investigate the complaint
- Conclusions from the investigation
- The outcome or decision
- Where appropriate, what has been done as a result to change or improve

We aim for an outcome to be reached within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, it may take longer for us to make sure the outcome is fair and thoroughly considered. You'll be provided with a regular progress report detailing anticipated timescales.

If the complaint is about a BHS employee, responsibility for the investigation will initially be directed to their respective line manager.

STAGE THREE – Appeals

If you are unhappy with the outcome of a Stage Two process, you may decide to appeal. There must be appropriate grounds for your appeal. This may be that there is further evidence to consider, that we have not followed our published policies or processes or that we have come to a decision that is not consistent or appropriate to the concern raised.

Please note that BHS Education Assessments Appeals may be excluded from this process as they are managed separately, for regulatory purposes. You will be advised accordingly at the point that you submit your Appeal.

Stage Three is the final step in resolving issues and all Appeals must be submitted within ***10 working days*** of the outcome of the Stage Two formal complaint having been sent to you. We'll then appoint a review panel to manage your Appeal. The Review Panel will:

- Review the complaint
- Ensure processes and procedures have been fairly and consistently applied
- Make sure that any decisions reached are fair, proportionate, and impartial

Where additional evidence or documentation is available or required, we will discuss this with you directly.

The Review Panel aims for an outcome to be reached within 30 working days of an appeal being submitted. You'll be informed by the panel within 48 hours of them reaching an outcome.

The complaint will then be closed by the BHS. Without further substantial and objective evidence, there will be no further investigation.

Exceptions and Conditions

We will investigate your concerns regarding any product, standard or service. However, please be aware of the following:

- A complaint made against the BHS may be unfounded. In these circumstances you will be made aware of the situation and that no further action will be taken. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

- Some areas of the BHS may require you to submit your complaint within a specific timeframe, for example if you are raising a complaint about an assessment. We would encourage you to contact us as soon as practically possible, but we will endeavour to consider all complaints, regardless of the timeframe.

- If a complaint is being investigated by the police or statutory authority, this will take precedence and we may not be able to investigate or act.

- While your identity as the complainant is usually confidential, there are some occasions where this cannot be guaranteed. By the very nature of some investigations, your identity may become apparent. Please discuss this with us if you have concerns.

- While many complaints are made through genuine concern, there are an unfortunate number which are malicious and are intended to harm the reputation of the Society, an individual or a stakeholder. If a complaint is found to be malicious, you may be found liable for the cost of the investigation and any expenses incurred.

- We are committed to providing a professional and fair service to everyone we work with. In return we ask that customers respect our BHS employees. We won't tolerate threatening, abusive, or violent behaviour. No BHS employee is required to deal with any such customer, either face-to-face, over the phone or in correspondence.

The BHS is inclusive and committed to encouraging disadvantaged communities, specialist organisations, faith groups, people from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds, disabled people, and people from the LGBTQ+ community to enjoy horses and riding. Please be assured that if you require any assistance with raising your concern, we'll always be able to help.

Please contact us for more information on 02476 840500 or customer.relations@bhs.org.uk

Monitoring and Review:

This document and its content will be reviewed on a three-year cycle, or earlier should it be needed, to ensure it remains fit for purpose and reflects the types of complaints that have arisen.