



## **BHS Lone Working Guidance Note**

We want all our volunteers and employees to feel safe, supported, and confident in every aspect of their role. Sometimes your activities may involve working alone, and while the risks are often the same as when working with others, being on your own can make situations more challenging. This guidance is here to help you plan ahead and stay safe.

### **Our Commitment to You**

Everyone at BHS—staff and volunteers alike—receives guidance and support to help them work safely. We encourage you to work with others wherever possible, but we understand that some roles naturally involve being alone at times.

Your wellbeing is our priority, and we're here to help you feel prepared and supported.

### **Your responsibilities when working alone**

As a volunteer, you play an important role in keeping yourself and others safe. Please:

- Take care of your own health, safety, and wellbeing.
- Look out for the safety of others who may be affected by your actions.
- Keep us informed about anything that may impact your safety, including:
  - Near misses, incidents or accidents
  - Physical or mental health concerns
  - Anything that feels unsafe or causes you to worry while you're working alone

We're here to support you—please never hesitate to speak up.

### **Plan ahead**

Before starting any lone working activity, please:

- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- If you don't have someone to check in with, please contact Head Office with:
  - Your location
  - Nature of the work
  - Expected finishing time
- Plan your route in advance.
- If useful, enable smartphone tracking apps so someone you trust knows where you are.

Taking a few minutes to prepare can make a big difference to your safety.

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## **Transport**

Your journey is just as important as the task itself:

- Refer to the BHS Motor Policy to ensure your vehicle is suitable and safe to use.
- Consider keeping a small first aid kit in your car.
- Drive carefully, calmly, and consciously.
- Where possible, consider alternative travel such as public transport or walking for short distances.

## **Bring a Buddy (if you can)**

Depending on the activity, it might be helpful to bring someone with you. This could be:

- Another volunteer or staff member
- A family member or friend
- Even your dog, if appropriate!

They don't need to be involved in the task and must not access confidential information—but they can offer reassurance and support.

## **Use What3Words**

You can download What3Words app to your mobile phone for free. This clever app can help others (including emergency services) locate you if necessary. It will provide a precise grid reference to your location, irrespective of whether you are in a rural field, mountain or busy urban street anywhere in the world.

## **Practical ways to stay safe**

When visiting a new site:

- Park where you can leave easily, facing the exit.
- Choose a well-lit area if possible.
- Keep valuables out of sight.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear; wear high visibility items if needed.
- Carry your BHS ID if you have one.
- Consider whether wearing branded clothing is helpful or may put you at risk—ask your mentor or Role Coordinator if unsure.
- Only give out Head Office contact details, never your personal information.

## **Check you are reachable**

When you arrive:

- Make sure your phone has signal.
- If there's no reception, think about:
  - Rearranging for another day
  - Taking a buddy
  - Leaving a note instead of speaking face-to-face

Your safety comes first.

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## **Be Aware of Your Surroundings**

Always take a moment to look around and consider:

- Does the environment feel safe?
- Are there signs of possible risk (e.g., warnings, aggressive messaging, loose dogs)?
- Do you feel uneasy, or out of your depth?
- Trust your instincts (if something doesn't feel right—whether it's a person, a situation, or simply the atmosphere—don't ignore that feeling)

If anything makes you uncomfortable or unsure, **please leave immediately and report it to Head Office.**

Your instincts matter, and we will always support your decision to prioritise your safety.

## **If you feel unsafe - leave**

No matter what you hoped to achieve, your safety is always the priority. If you feel threatened or uncomfortable at any time, please leave immediately.

## **Where to find more information**

More detailed guidance can be found in:

- [Lone Working Policy](#) – available in Volunteer Resources
- [Lone Working Risk Assessment](#)– also in Volunteer Resources
- Lone Worker Training – contact [volunteer@bhs.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@bhs.org.uk)

We encourage you to access these resources, so you feel confident and supported in your role.

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