

A black and white photograph of a group of nine volunteers standing in a forest. They are all wearing high-visibility safety vests. Some are holding tools like chainsaws and axes. On the far right, a person is wearing a full protective suit with a helmet and face shield. The background shows a dense forest with many trees.

The
British
Horse
Society

Volunteer Handbook

Updated 2024

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Purpose of this handbook

This handbook is designed to provide an overview of what it's like to be a volunteer at The British Horse Society.

On the following pages we'll take you through the structure of the BHS, how volunteers fit into our structure and how volunteers help us with our charitable work. We'll also provide you with all key information you need to know.

When you first join the BHS, we ask you to familiarise yourself with the content of this handbook so you can volunteer with us safely and stay well informed.

Welcome to The British Horse Society, and thank you!



“

We're really pleased to have you here and are excited about what we can **achieve** together. As part of our One Team (which we share a little more about on the following pages) you're at the heart of the largest equestrian charity in the UK. Here, every person is **supported** and **encouraged** to be the **best they can be**. We want you to love volunteering for the BHS. It's a place where you will really make an impact, **delivering our charitable aims** through on-the-ground work or in a support role. Either way, you'll be playing your part in innovating for the benefit of the whole equestrian community, working together as One Team to make a **better future for horses** and everyone who loves them. Thank you for being part of our story.

-James Hick, BHS CEO

”



The Evolution of the BHS

The British Horse Society was founded in 1947 when The Institute of the Horse and Pony Club and the National Horse Association of Great Britain merged.

Some key milestones:

- In 1962, the organisation was granted charitable status.
- In 1986, the 'stages' examination structure was introduced.
- In 1997, our membership exceeded 65,000.

Today, the BHS has over 120,000 members, over 1,300 volunteers and represents the interests of 3.5 million people in the British Isles who are involved with horses.





Vision

Every horse is respected,
protected and enjoyed by
knowledgeable, caring
people



Mission

We are the charity
dedicated to knowledge -
encouraging people &
horses to enjoy life together

Our Vision for Volunteering at the BHS:

We're recognised for making our volunteers feel valued as an integral part of our diverse team. Their contribution to delivering our charitable objectives is celebrated and rewarded.



Charitable Objectives

- To promote and advance the education, training and safety of the public in all matters relating to the horse.
- To promote the use, breeding, wellbeing, safety, environment, health and management of the horse for the public benefit.
- To promote community participation in healthy recreation involving the horse.
- To promote and facilitate the prevention of cruelty, neglect or harm to horses and to promote the relief, safety, sanctuary, rescue and welfare of horses in need of care, attention and assistance.
- To promote and secure the provision, protection and preservation of rights of way and of access for ridden and driven horses over public roads, highways, footpaths, bridleways, carriage ways, public paths and other land.

Our Values



The horse is at the heart of all we do

We collaborate with and value our employees, members, supporters, volunteers and partners

We deliver with respect, integrity, dedication and passion

We support horses and people to enjoy life together safely

We strive for excellence in everything we do

One Team Big Impact

As One Team, we can be **stronger together**. We want to **increase dialogue** and **strengthen partnerships** to make sure that all individuals and organisations feel they belong, are part of the broader conversation and have access to all that we offer.

'Collaborative approach'

'Maximising opportunities'

'Broader conversations'

'Strengthening partnerships'





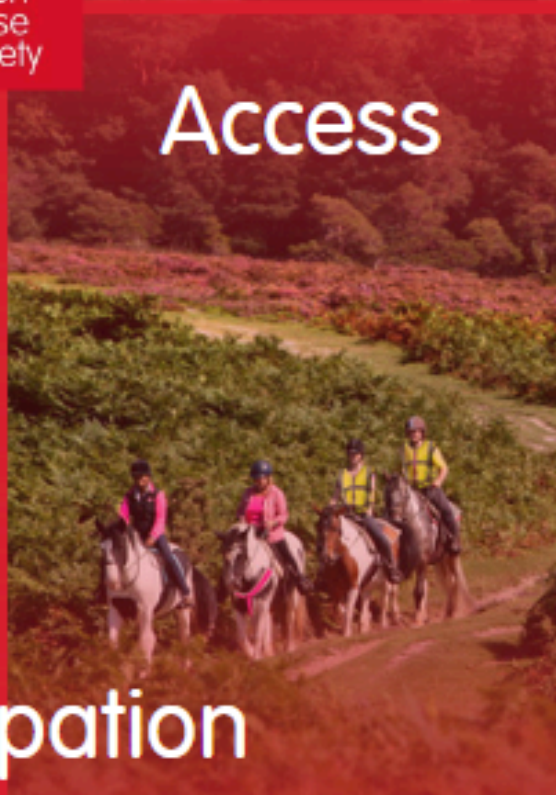
Education



Welfare



Safety



Access



Participation

What We Do

The BHS is the largest and most influential equestrian charity in the UK. We work tirelessly for every horse, rider and carriage driver, with our activities focused in five primary areas:

- **Horse Care and Welfare through education**
- **Keeping horses, riders and drivers safe**
- **Safer off-road riding and carriage driving**
- **Recreational and professional learning and development**
- **Access to horses from grassroots upwards**

We have a powerful voice within **government** and a strong voice within **the media**; this allows us to bring equestrian concerns into **public awareness** and push for change.

We also run **charitable campaigns** across our core foundations of education, care and welfare, safety and access.



What We Do

The BHS is the home of British Riding Clubs, offering **participation opportunities** to the equestrian public through training, competition and - most importantly - fun and support in a team environment. There are currently **28,000 BRC members**.

The accreditation we offer for **professional coaches** allows riders to easily access **world-class training** while also driving continual professional development and **innovation** in coaching.

Our Approvals scheme supports riding schools, livery yards and trekking centres across the UK, helping them to maintain the **highest of standards**. This ensures riders and horse owners can feel confident in a **safe, welcoming and professional** environment.

Charitable Campaigns

Listed below are just some of our ongoing campaigns. Through these campaigns, we can make a real impact on the lives of horses and those who care for them.

[Second Chance Rehoming Project](#)

[Keep Britain Riding](#)

[Changing Lives Through Horses](#)

[Dead Slow](#)

We run many more campaigns that are designed to promote wellbeing of horses, riders and owners

[Access](#)

[Horse Care and Welfare](#)

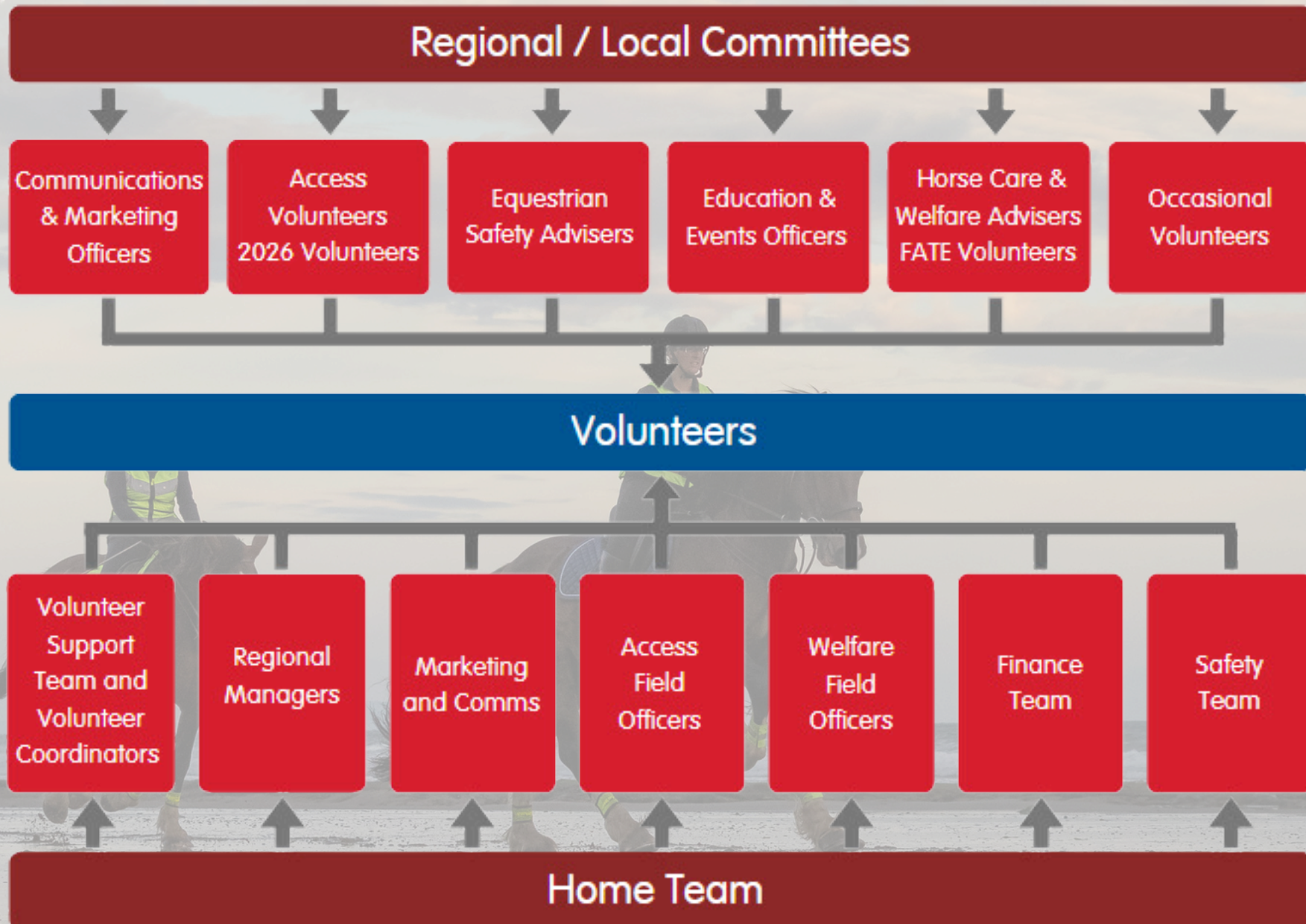
[Education](#)

[Safety](#)



Structure of the BHS Home Team

This chart shows the structure of teams you are likely to work with or encounter as a BHS volunteer.





Volunteer Structure

Where do you fit in?

Our volunteers are a vital part of how the BHS connects with its membership.

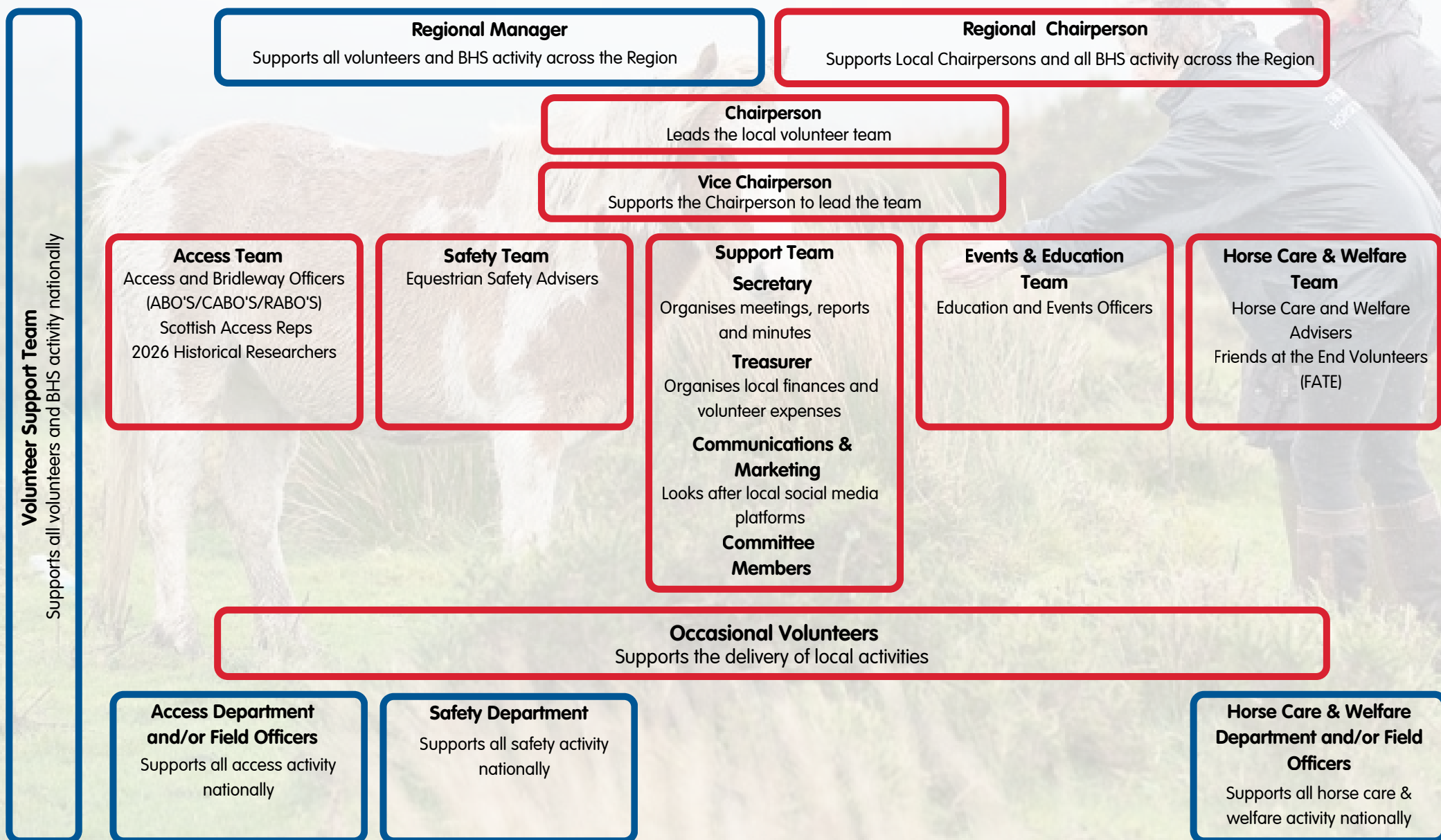
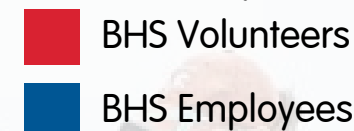
Most of our volunteers are connected to a **local committee**. This provides you with team support and an opportunity to get involved in things that might not be directly related to your own volunteering role, but will support the work of the BHS.

Local committees play an important role in representing the views of members in their area to the Home Team and raising funds to support our charitable work. They meet throughout the year to discuss local issues and success stories and to decide how they will raise awareness of upcoming campaigns.

Local Structure

Who will be in your local area?

Key





2024 Pilots

During 2024 we are piloting different volunteering structures in West Midlands, Yorkshire and South West.

Your Regional Manager can tell you more.

Other BHS Volunteering

In addition to our local committees/group, there are a variety of other voluntary roles across the organisation including:

- **Governance**
- **British Riding Clubs**
- **Accredited Professional Coach (APC) Mentor scheme**
- **Veterinary Student Champions**
- **Head Office support**

A photograph showing the backs of two people riding horses through a grassy field. The person in the foreground is wearing a purple helmet and a bright yellow high-visibility vest with reflective stripes. The person behind them is also wearing a high-visibility vest, which has 'The British Horse Society' printed on the back. They are riding away from the camera towards a hilly landscape.

What We Offer

Joining the BHS as a volunteer means joining a supportive, welcoming team. Staff will always be there to guide and help you, whatever your role.

We provide training for volunteers to make sure you're prepared for your role. We run general introductory sessions for all new volunteers, and other training includes:

- **Volunteer Email Support Training**
- **Events Training**
- **Social Media Marketing Training**
- **Role Specific Training**
- **Event Health & Safety Training**
- **GDPR Training**
- **Safeguarding Training**

Our Public Liability insurance covers volunteers and the activities that they undertake on our behalf.

As a BHS volunteer, you may be eligible for £10 off BHS Individual Gold* Membership. Please contact our Volunteer Support Team to learn more.

*Not currently available for other membership types.

A photograph of a person riding a dark brown horse in a field at sunset. The rider is wearing a black helmet, a high-visibility yellow vest over a dark shirt, and dark pants. The horse is in motion, and its reflection is visible in the water in the foreground. The background shows a hazy landscape with hills under a warm, orange sky.

Volunteer Emails

Most volunteers are provided with a BHS Email address to use for their volunteering-related communications.

Why do we do this?

Separate Email Accounts:

- It's advisable for volunteers dealing with personal information to have separate email accounts specifically for BHS communications, keeping charity work distinct from personal or other professional accounts.
- A specific email address looks more professional and consistent.

Privacy and Data Protection:

- Helps in ensuring that sensitive information is handled, adhering to data protection laws and the charity's privacy policy.

Record Keeping and Transparency:

- Aids in record-keeping, making it easier to retrieve past communications, and ensuring transparency.
- In case of an audit or any other form of review, having all charity-related correspondence in one place can be immensely helpful.

Volunteer Emails

Access and Continuity:

- In the event of a volunteers departure, it ensures continuity and eases the transition.
- It also allows for necessary access to past communications, which might be critical for ongoing operations or legal compliance.

Professionalism:

- Organisation-specific emails reflect a level of professionalism. It signals to others that you are representing the charity in your communications.

Domain Control:

- The charity has control over the email domain and that security measures are in place to protect sensitive information.

Branding:

- Serves as a branding tool, making the charity's name visible with every email communication.



Policies

Volunteer Policy

Our [Volunteer Policy](#) is the most important of our volunteer documents. It provides:

- A summary of other policies
- An overview of our expectations of volunteers
- An overview of our expectations of employees who work with volunteers

We have many other documents available to support your volunteer journey; some are relevant to specific roles, others you may never need to use. Regardless, it's good to [familiarise yourself with them](#) and know what's available to you.

Mileage and Subsistence

Our [Volunteer Expenses Policy](#) gives details on how you can be reimbursed for travel, accommodation, food or other costs necessarily incurred while carrying out duties on behalf of the BHS.

Health & Safety

It's the responsibility of The British Horse Society to make sure the working environment is safe and without risk. All employees and volunteers also play a role in implementing and maintaining our health and safety programme; our [Health and Safety Policy](#) outlines what you need to know and how you can stay safe when volunteering with us.

Volunteer Communications Policy

Our [Volunteer Communications Policy](#) helps volunteers make sure that their communications always support the charitable objectives of, and protect the reputation of, the BHS.

As well, it details the correct conduct of volunteers on social media, media and the press to ensure their safety and avoid damaging the reputation of the BHS.

As an established and highly respected charity, the BHS needs to ensure that we are open and responsive to requests from the media. Our [Volunteer Communications Policy](#) lays out the procedures involved in connecting with the media and clarifies our expectations of volunteers in regards to media correspondence.



Lone Working Policy

Our [Lone Working Policy](#) breaks down how employees and volunteers who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety.

Inclusive language Policy

Our [Inclusive language Policy](#) outlines how we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, actively:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences are valued.
- Upholding the right of every person to volunteer in a place that promotes respect to all.
- Taking disciplinary action where any acts of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation occur.

Conflicts of interest Policy

The [Conflicts of interest Policy](#) helps to ensure any conflicts of interest are identified and understood.

Volunteers will strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the Society on the one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other.



Raising a concern

We encourage all volunteers to [raise a concern](#) as soon as it becomes apparent and enlist the support of an employee to help resolve the problem immediately. In most cases, any problems can be resolved and a positive relationship can continue between the involved parties. Our [Volunteer Resources](#) provide official guidance.

Policies

Key Contacts

All BHS volunteers have several points of contact for questions or problems.

If the query is related to your local team the first point of contact should be your local chairperson or secretary.

If the query is related to your role the first port of call should be your relevant relevant co-ordinator or National/Regional Manager Find you regional managers contacts here <https://www.bhs.org.uk/bhs-in-your-area/>

If you are not sure who to contact, you should start with the Head of Volunteer Support or your National/Regional Manager.

We also have a general volunteering email address to contact if you have general queries or are unsure who the best contact is in certain situations.

volunteer@bhs.org.uk

