

BHS Young Volunteers' Guidance Note

The BHS welcomes all volunteers as part of our flexible volunteering team. However, we must make sure that we have the capacity, resources, and systems to provide them with a safe and enjoyable volunteering experience and that the volunteer has the appropriate skills and aptitude for the role. For this reason we only accept volunteers from the age of 16.

Volunteer Enquiry

Potential volunteers between the ages of 16-18 should enquire using the BHS Volunteer Enquiry form. They will be asked to provide the contact details of a parent/guardian which will be used to collect parental/guardian consent for the young person to volunteer with the BHS.

Assessment

If we receive an enquiry from someone under the age of 18 years, in addition to our standard volunteer suitability assessment we will consider:

- Is there a minimum age set for the role?
- Are there any safeguarding issues we need to consider? The role should not involve regular one to one contact with an employee or volunteer.
- Will any elements of the role have a detrimental effect on the applicant's ability to attend college or school?

During this assessment we will not make assumptions about the applicant's skills or experience, but use the facts available to us. If we decide they are not suitable for the role they are enquiring about we will consider if there are other roles in which they could volunteer.

If you would like to recruit or welcome a younger volunteer to your team but you aren't sure how to proceed, contact the Volunteer Support Team or your Regional/National Manager.

If we decide that the volunteer is suitable for the role, we will follow the usual volunteer recruitment process.

Group Volunteering

You may be contacted by schools or youth organisations about involving groups of young people as volunteers. The first consideration is whether you have a suitable opportunity; generally, groups are looking for one off activities/events such as a bridleway clearance day or fundraising opportunities. If you have a suitable opportunity you need to check that the group organiser can arrange appropriate numbers of leaders to supervise the activity and support the preparation of event/project risk assessments.

Group volunteering can be challenging to run. It is important to maintain communication with the group organiser, to clarify the needs of your team and their group and to manage expectations of the day. If you are unsure about offering a group volunteering opportunity please contact your Regional/National Manager or Volunteer Support Team to discuss.

Attendance of non-volunteers

Volunteers may ask if they can bring their children or young relation or ward with them while volunteering. You need to assess if it is appropriate to have a young or vulnerable person present, and if their presence will impact on the volunteer's ability to undertake their role. If you are confident there are no issues with the young person attending, you must make it clear to the volunteer that the young person's supervision and welfare is solely their responsibility. You should ensure that any identified risks are documented on your activity/event risk assessment.

If the young person is volunteering rather than just observing, they will need to be registered by the completion of an Occasional Volunteer form.

Safeguarding Young Volunteers

Any concerns about young volunteers should be brought to the attention of the BHS Safeguarding Team on 02476 840746 or safeguarding@bhs.org.uk. You can find our Safeguarding policies on our website: <https://www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/how-we-operate/our-policies/safeguarding/>

If there is an emergency or you believe that someone is in immediate danger, contact the police by telephoning 999 as soon as possible.

If the matter is not an emergency but you are concerned that a child, young person is at risk of harm, contact the police by telephoning 101 without delay. You can also contact your local authority social care team.

Other contacts

British Equestrian (BEF) safeguarding@bef.co.uk or call 02476 698871
NSPCC 24-hour Safeguarding Hotline: 0808 800 5000

If you contact the police or local authority in relation to a safeguarding concern which relates to the BHS, you must inform the BHS Safeguarding Team without delay.