

Access & Bridleway Officer Volunteering Opportunity

The BHS strives to protect, extend, and promote safe off-road access for all equestrians. We believe that everyone should be able to access and enjoy a safe route or space to ride or carriage drive. The network of routes and spaces to ride across the UK is historic, extensive, and ever evolving; therefore, it is essential that we have local equestrian representation. It is imperative that threats to access are resolved, and when opportunities for new access arise, we work to ensure these are explored and supported. Together we are one voice for equestrians, making a positive difference every day.

If you are passionate about equestrian access and want to make a difference in your area, for now and future generations, this could be the volunteer opportunity for you!

Who are we looking for?

This opportunity may suit you if you:

- have a desire to protect, extend and promote access in your area.
- are passionate about equestrian access.
- have a basic knowledge of access legislation, policies, and procedures.
- are willing to attend training to extend your knowledge on Rights of Way.
- have excellent attention to detail and have a passion for maps.
- are a strong communicator with ability to persevere with projects?
- are computer literate, have access to a computer and internet connection?
- are willing to accept telephone and written correspondence from the BHS, fellow Access volunteers, and organisations and individuals involved with Access in your local area.

What's in it for you?

As a BHS volunteer Access & Bridleway Officer you will be helping to protect and increase safe off-road access to places to ride and carriage drive in your area. You can expand your own skills, knowledge and experience and be part of a strong team of like-minded volunteers.

Example activities of a volunteer Access & Bridleway Officer

We aim to work proactively to resolve existing access issues, identify threats and find opportunities to secure and protect new access. We know people have differing amounts of time available, and so below are examples of tasks you might do within your role:

- Assessing local equestrian routes, investigating access matters raised, and supporting local initiatives such as clearance parties.
- Helping to ensure that all unrecorded equestrian rights of way are applied for and registered on the Definitive Map.
- Work to link routes in your area as part of The National Equestrian Route Network
- Responding to local queries on where to ride or carriage drive.
- Working alongside the local BHS committee, your fellow Access and Bridleways Officers, Equestrian Access Groups and other interested parties.
- Provide information on activity and achievements to your local and regional committees and HQ team where appropriate.
- Getting involved with responses to local development and transport plans.
- Educating local users to potential access threats in the area and encourage others to get involved.
- Raising awareness of the latest advice on relevant access matters e.g. 2026 Campaign
- Contributing to other local BHS initiatives, such as Ride Out UK, local and regional events.

In time, you may even choose to undertake additional training and extend your role and represent your County as a County Access Bridleway Officer.

What help will you receive?

You will have local support from BHS regional staff, other Access & Bridleway Officers, and your local BHS volunteer committee. You will also be able to call upon the dedicated Access & Rights of Way Team at Head Office for technical support, guidance and training, whilst the Volunteer Support Team are on hand to help and assist throughout your personal volunteering journey with us.

We commit to providing all the necessary BHS training and resources and provide regular updates on access legislation changes and information on our access campaigns. Training is an essential and valuable part of this role. You will need to complete certain modules before undertaking key areas of your volunteering, such as providing responses to Public Path and Definitive Map Modification Orders, development and transport plans, and any development proposals or road schemes that may affect access for local riders and carriage drivers.

We also provide you with access guidance documents and toolkits as appropriate, relevant books, mapping log ins and licenses to fulfil your role. You can claim necessary travel expenses for carrying out your volunteering activities providing they have been pre agreed with your local committee.

Commitment

Being an Access & Bridleway Officer can require a high level of commitment and determination to get the results you desire; however, it is very rewarding.

The BHS invest substantially in the training costs and resources for Access & Rights of Way Officers, and so we ask all volunteers to think carefully before considering this role. Events, talks and visits may involve evenings and/or weekends, and the number/nature of local access concerns will vary, so flexibility will be important. Additionally, you will need to commit to undertake additional training/on-going learning to keep your knowledge current.

Interested and want to know more?

Contact our Volunteer Support Team

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer>