

British Geriatrics Society  
Improving healthcare for older people

BCGS

# Volunteer policy





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# Welcome

**Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the British Geriatrics Society and helping us to improve healthcare for older people.**

We value our volunteers and want everyone to enjoy being part of the BGS. By donating your time, skills and experience you're enabling us to extend our support to healthcare professionals working with older people. We hope you will get something out of the experience, through meeting new people, learning more about our work or developing your skills.

We want to make sure you feel valued and supported throughout your time with us. This handbook will help you to get started in your role – I hope you find it useful. Please do get in touch with your supervisor if you have any further questions or suggestions.

Thank you again for joining us.



**Sarah Mistry**  
CEO



# About BGS

## Who we are

Founded in 1947, the British Geriatrics Society now has over 3,400 members, and we are the only Society in the UK offering specialist expertise in the wide range of healthcare needs of older people. Geriatric medicine is the branch of general medicine concerned with the healthcare of older people. The term geriatrics comes from the Greek word, geron meaning 'old man' and iatros meaning 'healer'. At its core, Geriatrics requires comprehensive assessment of older people living with illness or long term conditions which affect their daily lives. This involves close inter-disciplinary working with nurses, therapists, pharmacists, dietitians, social workers and many other health and care professionals.

We work closely with GPs, Old Age Psychiatrists and many hospital clinical specialists to ensure that old people receive the highest possible levels of care. Our membership is truly multidisciplinary. It includes consultant geriatricians, nurses, GPs, old age psychiatrists, allied healthcare professionals, and researchers. Everyone specialising in the healthcare of older people is welcome to join. Special Interest Groups within the Society focus on specific conditions including Falls and Bone Health, Oncology, Community Geriatrics, Cardiovascular Disease, Movement Disorders, Diabetes and Dementia.

With the advent of diverging health and social care policy in the devolved nations, the British Geriatrics Society has devolved national and regional networks which cover all of the UK, providing detailed focus on

local issues. Other working groups within the Society focus on clinical quality, academic research, education and training, and there are dedicated forums for trainees and nurses.

## What we do

The BGS promotes excellence in the healthcare of older people. We believe that care should be patient-centred, multidisciplinary, and that health, social and community care should be an integrated, seamless service. We promote and facilitate high standards of clinical quality and research through our scientific conferences and journal, *Age and Ageing*. We encourage the sharing of best practice and learning across disciplines, to help foster more integrated and multidisciplinary approaches. Our newsletter, website, blog and e-bulletin keep BGS members updated on the latest news and insights.

We support our members' professional development both through the continuing professional development (CPD) content of our regular meetings, and by offering grants and prizes at different stages of our members' careers. We are a leading national policy voice on the care of older people, influencing the development of health care policy across the UK and ensuring the design, commissioning and delivery of age appropriate health services. We publish best practice guidance on topics including diagnosing and treating frailty, commissioning services for care homes, and improving continence care.

# Volunteering with BGS

We want to make sure you have everything to get started and this policy provides basic information about volunteering with us. In addition to this policy, we will provide you with an induction and access to useful materials and information. You will also be assigned a supervisor to answer your queries.

## Recruitment

### Equal opportunities and diversities

The British Geriatrics Society is committed to equal opportunities and creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace. We will base our appointment of volunteers on the ability to fulfil the role as stated in the role description.

### Age

You will need to be 18 years old or older to volunteer with us. There is no upper age limit on volunteering but there might be particular situations that require us to ask someone to stop volunteering for health and safety reasons.

## Getting started

### What will happen on my first day?

Your supervisor will introduce you to your team and anyone else who you might be working with. Please

use this opportunity to ask any questions and to highlight any areas you would like further training and support in. The office manager will go over the health and safety requirements.

### Training and development

We want to ensure that you feel happy and confident to carry out your role. We will provide any training necessary to perform your role. You will also receive ongoing support from your supervisor throughout your volunteering time with us.

Your supervisor will organise regular meeting to discuss your role. These review meetings are an opportunity to raise issues and for you to talk constructively about your involvement with us, what support you need, and to update you on what's happening at the BGS.

If you are given the opportunity to take on an additional or alternative role, we will help you develop your skills accordingly.

## Your volunteering

As a volunteer, you will be giving your time to support BGS work within an agreed role. This volunteering relationship is based on trust and does not involve the obligations of employment. This means that you will perform all duties on a voluntary basis and you will not receive remuneration or payment for your work other than reimbursement of expenses in accordance with the expense policy.

### Changes in personal details

We may need to contact you in an emergency so let your supervisor of any change of address, emergency contact etc.

## Reliability and commitment

It is very important that you're reliable and you keep to any arrangements you have made with us. If your circumstances change, please let your supervisor know as soon as possible. If you are planning to go on holiday, please let your BGS contact know well in advance that you will be unavailable for certain dates and when you plan to return.

## Health and safety

All volunteers must follow the health and safety measures at the BGS office and other venues you may be volunteering on. We will provide you with a full induction when you commence as a volunteer. However, please do not hesitate to talk to your supervisor at any time if you have any health and safety concerns.

## Confidentiality and data protection

Before we can collect, store, or use data about an individual, the law requires us to ensure that we have that individual's consent to do so. The way we do this is by using what we call 'Data Protection Statements'. Our statements comply with the Data Protection Act. This is a legal act that protects people's personal information. You may while volunteering with us have access to and handle personal information of our members and people who are contacting us. As a volunteer we expect you to keep information about our members, our delegates, our staff and our work confidential, unless sharing this information is required by law.

## Intellectual Property

The rights to original work that you may produce whilst volunteering will belong to the BGS, unless otherwise agreed. This includes written work, photography, and other research or original document produced.

## Problem solving

If you have any problems related to your volunteering please talk to your supervisor immediately. We will make every reasonable effort to resolve any difficulties. If you are unhappy with the outcome you may raise the issue with your supervisor's line manager.

## Insurance

During your time with us you are covered under our insurance policies. However, our insurance does not cover your personal belongings. No liability is accepted for any loss of, or damage to, property.

## Smoking and substance abuse

Smoking is not permitted on BGS property or when staff and volunteers are involved with BGS activities. Volunteering whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted.

## Communications

The BGS aims to communicate consistently and clearly. Whether you are speaking on behalf of BGS, drafting an email or writing marketing campaign, it should be in line with our 'tone of voice' guidelines. Please refer to our tone of voice guidance or ask your supervisor for details.

## Expenses

BGS will reimburse volunteers for any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. We will reimburse the amount that you have spent as a result of your volunteering, up to agreed maximum levels. Expenses must be claimed on an expense claim form with receipts attached.

You are entitled to claim the following expenses incurred during volunteering with us:

- Travel to and from home to the place of volunteering within Greater London travel zones
- Additional travel costs incurred during volunteering
- If volunteering a full day, we will cover up to £5 for lunch.

## Support and advice

If you would like further information on any aspect of your volunteering with us, please ask your supervisor.

We have put together policies to cover both staff and volunteers and you will be encouraged to read these during your induction:

- Data protection statement and confidentiality policy
- Health and safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Tone of voice guidance

## Responsibilities and expectations

### You can expect us to:

- Ensure you have a clear idea of your responsibilities, including the length of time we'd like you to be involved with us
- Provide a named volunteer supervisor who will guide and support you in your role
- Provide an induction and any training to help you carry out your volunteering
- Explain the standards we expect and to encourage you to maintain them
- Provide you with support through regular meetings and discussions
- Try and resolve fairly any problems and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us
- Provide a safe working environment
- Always treat you with respect, consideration and appreciation
- Offer you fair, honest and timely feedback on your work
- Welcome your feedback, good or bad, so that we can improve what we do

### In return we ask that you:

- Always treat BGS staff and members with respect, consideration and appreciation and act in a professional way whenever you represent BGS in public
- Follow the agreed attendance schedule. This is important to us so that we can keep our projects on track to deliver good results. We hope that volunteers will make every effort to attend and arrive on time, but understand that unexpected events may on occasion prevent this from happening.
- Provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or if you no longer wish to be involved in a project.
- Perform your volunteering role and project responsibilities as outlined in your role description to the best of your ability and attend any ongoing training if required. If you don't fully understand your role and responsibilities, please ask your supervisor for guidance
- Respect our aims and values
- Not commit the BGS to any expenditure other than agreed travel expenses
- Provide regular feedback including at the end of the project or your time with us



# Thank you

By donating your time you are helping us  
improve healthcare for older people



**BGS**

**British Geriatrics Society**  
Improving healthcare  
for older people

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