

Reporting Issues on Public Rights of Way in England and Wales

Reporting issues on public rights of way helps improve off-road equestrian access.

The
British
Horse
Society

If there is a problem on a public right of way, for example a fallen tree or a broken gate, or anything else that makes the route difficult to use – you **MUST** report it to your local Highway Authority (this may be your County Council or Unitary Authority).

Use the guide below to report any issues you may come across on your local rights of way

1

Identify the location of the issue

You can use an app such as What3Words, find the Ordnance Survey grid reference using an OS paper or online map, a postcode from the nearest road, or mark the location on a screenshot of a map.

2

Take a photo of the issue, if possible

Take a photo of the issue, if it is safe to do so.

It is helpful to use an everyday object for scale if you can, so that, for example, if you are reporting a hole, the size and depth can be assessed.

3

Check the online map of Rights of Way

Make sure the route is recorded on the Highway Authority's online map.

For equestrian access, it should be recorded as a Public Bridleway, Restricted Byway or a Byway Open to All Traffic. Make a note of the route reference number(s), for example BW123.

If you do not have access to the internet, ask a friend or family member to help, or telephone the Highway Authority.

4

Report the issue

Reports can be submitted online to the Highway Authority. You may have to register an email address to submit an online report. If there is the option to tick to receive an acknowledgement and updates on the issue, select yes.

Add the location, any photos, and the route references, along with any additional information that supports the report.

5

The issue has already been reported...

Even if the problem has already been reported, report it again!

Multiple reports can help indicate the level of public demand and severity of the problem.

6

Response from the Highway Authority

Allow the Highway Authority time to respond; 4 weeks is reasonable. If there is an immediate serious safety risk or an injury has occurred, the issue may be given higher priority. This may result in the route being temporarily closed for a long period of time.

7

Follow up the report

If you haven't had a response in a reasonable time, contact the Highway Authority with your report reference number requesting an update.

8

Dissatisfied with the response?

Raise the issue with the Parish Council, provide them with your report details and correspondence. Ask them to encourage the Highway Authority to act.

For further support

The issue must have been reported to the Highway Authority for the BHS to provide support. Please be aware that some Highway Authorities may be under-resourced or have funding limitations, and as such may be unable to act.

Contact the BHS Access & Rights of Way Team for further support and guidance.

Email access@bhs.org.uk or call 02476 840515.