

Shadow Volunteer

Role Name: Active Forests & Recreation Shadow Ranger

Forest: National Forest and North Staffordshire Beat

Country	England
Location	<p>Role involves travel to multiple woodlands across Northwest Leicestershire, South Derbyshire & North/ East Staffordshire, with main reporting location being one of the three below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hicks Lodge Forest Centre, Ashby-de-La-Zouch, Leicestershire, LE65 2UP• Sence Valley, Ibstock, Leicestershire, LE67 6NW• Cannock Chase Forest, Birches Valley, Staffordshire, WS15 2UQ
Supervisor	Callum Smith, Active Forests Coordinator
Position Type	2-3 days per week for 6 months
Salary	Voluntary
Closing date for applications	6 th July 2025

Background Information

Forestry England are the country's largest land manager, caring for the nation's forests for people, nature and the economy. The foundation of our organisation is our world-class sustainable management of the nation's forests.

The Central Forest District has responsibility for the management of some 30,000ha of the Nation's Forests within a triangle formed by Liverpool, Hull, and Milton Keynes. This gives rise to a large diversity of users, customers, neighbours and pressures, all of which are interacting on a varied backdrop of land uses.

The district has three Community Woodland areas, in Nottinghamshire, The National Forest and the Northwest covering Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire.

Shadow Volunteers

We are proud to be able to offer a shadow ranger volunteer opportunity for individuals with an interest in pursuing a career in green social prescribing/ nature-based wellbeing, community engagement, visitor experience, recreation, site management, conservation & working with volunteers and the public.

Community Woodlands are a key element of the land holding the Forestry Commission manages, providing woodland sites for local communities to enjoy, for nature to thrive and timber to grow. The Community Woodlands vary in size and facilities and are managed by small, dedicated, and motivated teams.

This role will be based in the National Forest and North Staffordshire beat, shadowing the Active Forest Coordinator. Much of the opportunity will be based at **Hicks Lodge Forest Centre, Ashby de la Zouch and Sence Valley, Ibstock** however opportunities will also be available for ad-hoc visits **across the wider beat area of 40 woodlands** within Northwest Leicestershire, South Derbyshire, and North/ East Staffordshire. These sites run from **Sence Valley, Ibstock, Leicestershire to Dimmingsdale, Alton, Staffordshire**. The role will provide an opportunity for the Shadow to learn about and participate in **events programming, green social prescribing/ nature connectedness, visitor experience management, recreation and woodland management, volunteer work parties and volunteer supervision**.

Successful applicants will be given training and development opportunities by shadowing the current Active Forests Coordinator, with opportunities to shadow other staff. They will develop on the job skills, including development of practical site management, visitor experience management, events supervision, working with third party providers, green social prescribing, working within communities, volunteer management, engaging and working with the public, schools and community groups. The National Forest Community Shadow Volunteer role enables individuals to gain experience of managing our recently restored Community Woodlands and surrounding mature woodlands.

What we offer

- Training relevant to the role from the experienced member of staff you are shadowing along with gaining knowledge from wider colleagues.
- Guidance and support in applying for further training or employment opportunities.
- Genuine out of pocket expenses which includes travel expenses beyond your reporting station.
- Volunteer parking pass after 35 hours of volunteering.
- Volunteer uniform.
- Formal training opportunities - first aid, risk assessment, and manual handling.

Purpose

Support the delivery of the [Feel Good in the Forest](#) green social prescribing program across Hicks Lodge Forest Centre and the National Forest Community Woodlands.

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Support sustainable income generation through Forestry England's Active Forest program. The income generated as part of this will be used to care for the nation's forests for people, wildlife, timber & the climate for generations to come.

Experience, encourage and support active community participation in Forestry England woodlands across the National Forest & North Staffordshire beat.

This will be achieved through delivery of our green social prescribing program, promotion and engagement on green social prescribing events & opportunities, community outreach, events planning and promotion, practical projects, engagement and management of community interest groups and public expectation. Learn how to develop place-based connections between local people and their local woodlands.

Working as part of the Recreation & Community team assist, support and help empower local communities to become actively involved in urban fringe woodlands & countryside sites in the National Forest & North Staffordshire. Assist and provide support to a diverse range of people, experiencing a range of tasks, activities, and procedures that rangers undertake within their role.

Key work areas

- Assist the active forests coordinator in the development and coordination of a programme of customer and community focused physical and wellbeing activity experiences.
- Site marketing and communication activity
- Ensuring as many people as possible can experience the wellbeing benefits of engaging in forest-based activities: encourage and enable the progression of groups / participants from led activities to more self-directed programmes / visits, including signposting to other opportunities.
- Develop the network of local partners, with a focus on wellbeing and social benefit.
- Site & participant monitoring and evaluation, including reviewing the partnerships developed and activities offered in the National Forest.
- Adhere to Forestry England's safeguarding policy, including safeguarding, inclusivity, and our social wellbeing approach ensuring best practice is followed.
- Support the delivery of permissions relating to physical and wellbeing activity in Hicks Lodge and the National Forest Community Woodlands.
- Support the Hicks Lodge Forest Centre team offering frontline visitor and ranger support.
- Signpost individuals and groups to existing volunteering offer in the National Forest and North Staffordshire, support rangers in delivery of Forestry England volunteering as and when required.

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- Report any incidents or accidents to Shadow Mentor/Supervisor.
- Always ensure personal safety by following job risk assessments and by carrying out Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safety checks, in compliance with policy guidance.

Person Specification

Read this section carefully as it will help you complete the [online application form](#).

We are not expecting you to have qualifications or previous experience in the environment sector. The Shadow Volunteer program is about giving you that experience. We are looking for enthusiasm, curiosity, the ability to listen and learn, ask questions, show initiative and show responsibility for the people and environment where you work.

The application form will ask you questions based on the person specifications below. You don't need to give examples related to the environment sector or forestry. They can be relevant examples from other experiences you have had.

What interests you in this role

This is your opportunity to tell us about you and why you want to be a Shadow Volunteer. Give us an insight into who you are your reasons for applying to be a Shadow Volunteer.

Experience

Essential

Interest in the environment, green social prescribing/ green space therapy, community engagement, Forestry England, woodland management, recreation, or customer service in an outdoor setting.

A competent user of IT including Microsoft Windows-based IT systems.

Desirable

Experience of taking part in activities in nature or connecting with nature to support your own mental or physical health and wellbeing or to manage a mental or physical health condition.

An understanding or experience of the benefits of woodlands and green spaces for wellbeing, nature connectedness and green social prescribing.

Experience of events promotion or visitor experience work.

Experience of environmental or outdoor work, customer service working with volunteers, practical site management, delivering sessions to a variety of groups; through previous employment, voluntary work, or study.

Seeking a career in the environmental sector; countryside ranger, environmental or visitor experience management.

Working with Other People

Essential

Be approachable, open, polite, and helpful to others.

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Respect diverse backgrounds, views, and approaches. Willingness to work as part of a team as well as the ability to work on your own.

Desirable

Experience of working with people from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds.

Willingness and enthusiasm to greet groups and help customers.

An understanding/ experience of supporting individuals with mild to moderate mental/ physical health needs.

Communication

Essential

Ability to listen and communicate with people from a variety of age groups, abilities, behaviours, and backgrounds.

Ability to deal with difficult situations with tact, diplomacy and in a constructive manner.

Deliver Results

Essential

and capable of working under own initiative.

and organise your time and resources effectively to meet agreed deadlines and objectives.

Motivated

Prioritise

Desirable

Understand and apply current legislation, rules and procedures relevant to the job (e.g. Health & Safety, Risk assessment).

Experience of coordinating or delivering physical activities or events including experience of working with physical activity or health providers.

Experience of delivering activities in an outdoor setting.

Learn and Apply

Essential

Be open to change and show a willingness to undertake appropriate training to develop new skills and confidence.

Take responsibility for own work, learning from experience, mistakes, and constructive feedback.

Other

Able and willing to work a minimum of 2 days per week, midweek and weekend working is key to getting the most of this opportunity. We understand what a commitment of time this is, so are willing to consider 1 flexible day per week - but due to the nature of the role, 1 day per week, especially a fixed day will not provide enough opportunities to gain experience in the role.

This post may require you to hold and continue to hold, a full current driving licence.

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For this particular role there is a requirement to complete practical tasks, engage face to face with communities and assist with computer-based work. Some Forestry England workspaces allow dogs to be present as part of the team - if this is something that concerns you, we are happy to discuss it in further detail. Some Forestry England sites which you may be volunteer at have rough terrain; we welcome a discussion about any barriers this may present to you and will work with you to find solutions where possible.

This role will require a DBS check.

How to apply

Please apply online by completing the [online application form](#).

Make sure when applying you type in and select **“National Forest and N. Staffs Beat”** for **question 1**.

Please type **“Active Forests & Recreation Shadow Ranger”** when asked which volunteer role you would like to apply for?

When completing the person specification areas please give examples of experiences you have had. These don't have to be in the environment sector they can demonstrate your experience or things you have done in any situation relating to the specification area.

If you are interested in multiple roles, you will need to complete multiple applications. You can, however, use the same information and answers for each so feel free to copy the information from one to the other, if you are happy this is correct.

If you have any problems with the application or questions please email victoria.tofte@forestryengland.uk

If you consider yourself to have a disability the application form will ask you to provide details of any support you may need or reasonable adjustments we can make to enable you to fulfil the role (as outlined in the role description for the placement you are interested in). If you are selected for a Shadow Volunteer role based on your application and interview this will help us discuss with you regarding what we can safely and practically put in place to enable you to carry out the role or other alternative solutions.

Closing date: Sunday 6th July 2025