



Shadow Volunteer

Role Name: Community Recreation & Active Forests Shadow Ranger

Forest: National Forest and N. Staffs Beat

Country	England
Location	Role involves travel to multiple woodlands, with main reporting location being one of the three below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hicks lodge, Ashby-de-La-Zouch, LE65 2UP• Sence Valley Forest, Ibstock, LE67 6NW• Cannock Chase Forest, Birches Valley, WS15 2UQ
Supervisor	Lauren Tucker , Community Ranger & Callum Smith , Active Forests Coordinator
Position Type	2-3 days per week for 6 months
Salary	Voluntary
Closing date for applications	23:59 on 5 th July 2026
Interview dates	20 th July 2026

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.

We are proud to be able to offer a shadow ranger volunteer opportunity for individuals with an interest in pursuing a career in conservation, community

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engagement, recreation, site management, 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 both the Community Ranger for the beat area and the Active Forest Coordinator at **Hicks Lodge Forest Centre**.

The Community Ranger covers **25 of the wider woodlands** within Northwest Leicestershire, South Derbyshire, and North Staffordshire. These sites include **Sence Valley, Ibstock and Dimmingsdale, Alton** as two frequent work locations, with Hicks Lodge, Moira used as a base.

The role will provide an opportunity for the Shadow to learn about and participate in **recreation and woodland management, volunteer work parties and volunteer supervision**, as well as **events programming, green social prescribing/ nature connectedness, and visitor experience**.

Successful applicants will be given training and development opportunities by shadowing the current Community Ranger and Active Forests Coordinator, with opportunities to shadow other staff. They will develop on the job skills, including:

- development of practical site management,
- working within communities,
- volunteer management,
- events supervision,
- working with third party providers,
- green social prescribing,
- engaging and working with the public, schools and community groups.

The National Forest Community & Active Forests Shadow Volunteer role enables individuals to gain experience of managing our recently restored Community Woodlands and surrounding mature woodlands for all aspects of visitor recreation.

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.

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- Formal training opportunities - first aid, risk assessment, and manual handling.

Purpose

Experience, encourage and support active community and volunteer involvement on community woodland sites within the National Forest & North Staffordshire area; through community practical projects, engagement and management of community interest groups and public expectation. Learn how to involve local people in the decision making and management of their local environment.

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.

Working as part of the Recreation team assist, support and help empower local communities to become actively involved in the care and management of urban fringe woodlands & countryside sites in the National Forest. 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

- Carry out facility and trail inspections and ensure that defects are properly recorded and rectified in a timely manner.
- Assist in the maintenance of facilities including, but not limited to, litter picking, dealing with fly tipping, installation and maintenance of signs, vegetation management, trail maintenance.
- Report any incidents or accidents to Shadow Mentor/Supervisor.
- Ensure personal safety at all times by following job risk assessments and by carrying out PPE and safety checks, in compliance with policy guidance.
- Assist in the development and coordination of a programme of customer and community focused physical and wellbeing activity experiences.
- Site marketing and communication activity
- 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.

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The key work areas detailed are the typical duties expected of the role but are not an exhaustive list. The post holder may be reasonably requested to undertake other duties by their manager.

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

Desirable

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.

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.

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

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Working with Other People

Essential

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

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

Motivated and capable of working under own initiative.

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

Desirable

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

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, predominantly weekdays although may occasionally include evenings and weekend working.

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,

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especially a fixed day will not provide enough opportunities to gain experience in the role. Key days for volunteer supervision are Wed/Thurs/Sunday throughout the 6 months.

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

Duties will require you to be fit and able to negotiate rough terrain. For this particular role you will need to be comfortable working around dogs as part of the team, completing some practical tasks as mentioned above, and also assisting with computer-based admin work.

However, Forestry England is willing to consider any proposal put forward by applicants that would allow them to do the role by other means and will support with any additional needs or reasonable adjustments 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 “**Community Recreation & Active Forests Shadow Ranger**” as the role you are interested in. For the Forest, please type in and select “**National Forest and N. Staffs Beat**”.

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 rosie.hernon@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: 23:59 on 5th July 2026