

Shadow Volunteer

Role Name: Community Shadow Ranger

Forest: National Forest and N. Staffs Beat

Country	England
Location	Role involves travel to multiple woodlands across NW Leicestershire, South Derbyshire & North Staffordshire, with main reporting location being: Hicks lodge, Ashby-de-La-Zouch, LE65 2UP
Supervisor	Lauren Tucker, Community Ranger
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. 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 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.

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Where will I be volunteering?

This role will be based in the National Forest and North Staffordshire beat, shadowing the Community Ranger **across 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**.

Successful applicants will be given training and development opportunities by shadowing the current Community Ranger, with opportunities to shadow other staff. They will develop on the job skills, including practical site management, 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 area.
- Volunteer parking pass after 35 hours of volunteering.
- Volunteer uniform.
- Formal training opportunities - first aid, risk assessment, and manual handling.

Purpose (about the role)

Experience, encourage and support active community and volunteer involvement, and visitor engagement through community practical projects, engagement activities and management of community interest groups and public expectation.

Working as part of the Recreation team and alongside the Sustainable Land Management team, ensure safe and positive visitor experiences, and become actively involved in the care and management of urban fringe woodlands & countryside sites in the National Forest & North Staffordshire.

Work alongside a diverse range of colleagues, experiencing a range of tasks, activities, and procedures that rangers undertake within their role.

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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.
- Support with site monitoring for woodland/timber management, wildlife and visitor impact.
- Report any incidents or accidents, evaluating and rectifying issues.
- Help to keep records up to date and adhere to/help improve systems, to manage details of the estate across a variety of different departments.
- Assist with leading and supervising group practical volunteer tasks, including planning, safety briefings, kit maintenance and learning/teaching new skills.
- Support with visitor and partner engagement, both ad-hoc on sites and as part of engagement activities (eg. open days, guided walks).
- Site marketing and communication activity.
- Adhere to Forestry England's safeguarding policy, including safeguarding, inclusivity, and our social wellbeing approach ensuring best practice is followed.
- Ensure personal safety at all times by following job risk assessments and by carrying out 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 - these mirror real-job applications. 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

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Interest in the environment, Forestry England, or woodland management; recreation and customer service in an outdoor setting.

Desirable

Experience of environmental or outdoor work, practical site management, customer service, working with volunteers, creating positive and engaging experiences in nature for people, 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 services management.

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

Willingness and enthusiasm to greet groups and help visitors.

Communication

Essential

Ability or willingness 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 acting under own initiative.

and organise your time and resources effectively to meet agreed objectives when supporting as part of the team.

Motivated

Prioritise

Desirable

Understand and apply current legislation, rules and procedures relevant to the job being shadowed (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.

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Other

Able and willing to volunteer a minimum of 2 days per week, predominantly weekdays although may occasionally include evenings and weekends.

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. 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 and select for the Forest “**National Forest and N. Staffs Beat**” for question.

Please type “**Community 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

