

Shadow Volunteer

Role Name: Forestry and Forest Planning Shadow Volunteer

Forest: Yorkshire Forest District

Country	England
Location	Forestry England Outgang Road, Pickering YO18 7EL
Supervisor	Tom Andre
Position Type	1-2 days a week for 6 months
Salary	Voluntary
Closing date for applications	5 th January 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.

Yorkshire is one of the smaller districts in Forestry England, but we pack a lot into our activities in the district. Yorkshire District is based from a hub at Pickering, where our staff go out as far north as Darlington, as far west as Stainburn near Harrogate, down to Bishop Wood near Selby and over east coast at Broxa and Wykeham. Our main forest blocks are on the southern edge of the North York Moors, making Pickering the perfect gateway to all our biggest areas of forests.

We are proud to be able to offer this shadow volunteer role focussing on Forestry and Forest planning, enabling individuals with an interest in pursuing a career in forestry, land management or forest planning, the opportunity to gain experience in the sector by working alongside our team of experts.

Successful applicants will be given training and development opportunities. This will include shadowing current staff and developing on the job skills such as forest planning, monitoring and data collection, and hands-on forest management tasks. Across the six-months you'll see the behind-the-scenes of how we care for the nation's forests, from planning to planting, seed to sawmill.

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What we offer

- Training relevant to the role from your 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 where appropriate.

Purpose

The Forestry and Forest Planning shadow role is all about giving you a real feel for modern forestry. You'll start by getting stuck in with the practical side, helping our forestry team with on the ground with tasks like preparing for tree planting or harvesting, supporting conservation work, fixing fences and gates, or checking tree safety. You might even help mark and measure trees for sales or carry out surveys to see how well the forest is growing. Or you could be working with our Works Supervisors, ensuring that our operations are being delivered to plan.

Once you've got a good sense of what happens out in the forest, you'll spend time with our forest planning team. Here's where the big picture comes in, seeing how all that data from the ground feeds into our GIS systems, helping us make maps, plan operations, and build resilience into our forests for the future.

Key work areas

Shadowing the team

- You'll spend time with the team across a range of specialisms. This will include our forest operatives (craftspeople), foresters, work supervisors, GIS specialists, forest planners, ecologists and more.

Support the team with sustainable land management activities

- Support in the management of the forest by helping with various surveys, timber harvesting, tree planting and establishment activities, and other forest management works such as instillation of fencing, gates and signage.
- Learn how data collected on the ground gets used to inform sustainable forest management operations and our future forest plans.

Embed a safety-first culture in our teams

- Ensure personal safety at all times by following job risk assessments and by carrying out PPE and safety checks, in compliance with policy guidance.
- Report immediately to your supervisor and health and safety concerns or incidents.

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Increase our capacity and effectiveness through volunteer supervision

- Support the Dalby Forest volunteer groups such as the Friends of Dalby Forest, Conservation Wednesdays, Cycle trail maintenance, by planning and leading task days in the Forest, and being the responsible team member for tools, equipment and risk assessments.

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, 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

An interest in Forestry, Forestry England or woodland management.
A willingness to give everything a go, whatever the weather

Desirable

Seeking a career in the environmental sector; countryside ranger, or forestry.

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

Willingness and enthusiastic to lead groups and activities.

Communication

Essential

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

A willingness to be shown and told what to do with an open mind to help you learn new skills.

Be open to learning and ask questions when you need help

Deliver Results

Essential

Motivated and capable of working under own initiative.

Ability to 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

Listen to and observe your mentor and rest of the team, demonstrate willing to learn and repeat tasks to build experience.

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 1-2 days per week, predominantly weekdays although may very occasionally include weekend working to support an event or volunteer group.

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Duties will require you to be fit and able to negotiate rough terrain and to be able to work outside in all weathers. However, Forestry England is willing to consider any proposal put forward by applicants that would allow them to do the role by other means.

This role will require a DBS check. Applicants must be over 18

This role may require you to hold and continue to hold, a full current driving license.

How to apply

Please apply online by completing the [online application form](#). Make sure when applying, you type the Shadow Volunteer Role Name shown at the start of this document when asked **“Which volunteer role you would like to apply for”**.

For the Forest, please type in and select **“District Wide Yorkshire”**.

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: 5th January 2026