

Shadow Volunteer

Role Name: Shadow Recreation Ranger

Forest: Dalby Forest

Country	England
Location	Dalby Forest Visitors Centre, Low Dalby, Thornton-Le-Dale, Pickering, YO18 7LT
Supervisor	Paul Ashford
Position Type	1-2 days per 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.

Dalby Forest is one of Forestry England's leading visitor facilities and attracts approximately 400,000 visitors each year. Customers typically visit Dalby to enjoy the facilities and activities we offer including: play areas, cycle trails, walking trails, Go Ape, Forest Segway, concerts, school visits, cycle events, Christmas tree sales, orienteering, picnic areas and other recreational events. Providing the best possible 'total visitor experience' is essential and the services provided at Dalby help make this happen.

We are proud to be able to offer this shadow volunteer role to individuals with an interest in pursuing a career in conservation, community engagement, recreation, site management, working with volunteers and the public and wanting to gain experience in the sector.

Successful applicants will be given training and development opportunities by work shadowing current staff developing on the job skills, including development of practical site management, working within communities, volunteer management, engaging and working with the public and schools. The Dalby Forest Shadow Recreation Ranger position enables individuals to gain experience of managing our award-winning recreation facility.

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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 colleagues in the wider team.
- 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

The Shadow Recreation Ranger will work alongside the Dalby Forest Recreation team to promote an enjoyable, clean, safe and welcoming environment for visitors. The Shadow Recreation Ranger will get a taste for the wide variety of tasks the team do day-to-day, from running events for visitors, maintaining and inspecting play areas and trails to fixing fences and gates and keeping vegetation in check. This role is intended to give the volunteer a wide range of experiences of the different activities the recreation team undertake in their day to day jobs, with the possibility of specialising further into the placement depending on business needs and volunteers interests.

This role will include occasional weekend working.

Key work areas

Increase our value for money, and maximise opportunities to increase income

- Provide face to face customer service at peak times giving advice and information to visitors as well as selling Forestry England Memberships and leaflets.
- Undertake practical management tasks to improve the experience for visitors.

Provide a built estate that is fit for purpose for all users

- Carry out facility and trail inspections and ensure that defects are properly recorded and rectified in a timely manner.
- Assist in the maintenance of recreation facilities including, but not limited to, litter picking, bin emptying, dealing with fly tipping, installation and maintenance of signs, vegetation management, trail maintenance.

Embed a safety-first culture in our teams

- Report any incidents or accidents to Shadow Supervisor or Mentor.
- Ensure personal safety at all times by following job risk assessments and by carrying out PPE and safety checks, in compliance with policy guidance.

Increase our capacity and effectiveness through partnership working

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- Support the recreation team on event delivery by both Forestry England and third parties, to include monitoring of authorised permissions.
- Support in management of volunteer groups on site such as Friends of Dalby Forest

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 the environment, Forestry England, woodland management, or recreation.

A willingness to give everything a go, whatever the weather.

Desirable

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.

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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.

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

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 occasionally include weekend working.

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

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

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

How to apply

Please apply online by completing the [online application form](#). Make sure when applying, you type Shadow Recreation Ranger when asked “Which volunteer role you would like to apply for”. For the Forest, please type in and select “*Dalby*”.

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