



# Volunteering insights, Walk Notts partnership.

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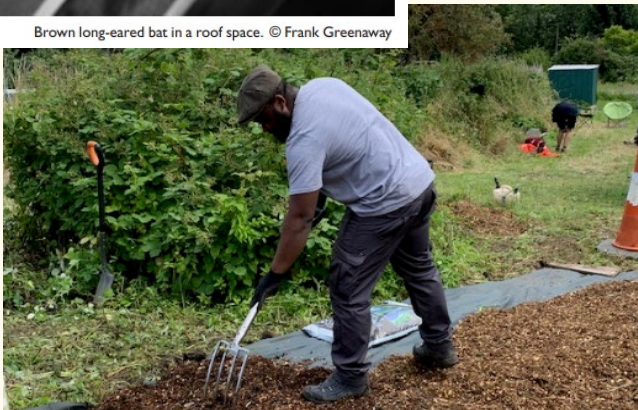
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# Volunteering with Natural England



Brown long-eared bat in a roof space. © Frank Greenaway

We have over 2000 volunteers including over 1000 associated with our National Nature Reserves and about 400 volunteer bat roost visitors



NE staff volunteering: site cleared to make way for a community orchard, growing space, meadow, seating & wildlife pond, retaining strategic wild patches for nature. Selby, Yorkshire.

- Policy and procedure
- induction
- Training
- Supervisor
- Volunteer recognition and perks
- Volunteering promise
- NE staff volunteering days

# Nature Buddies

NATURAL  
ENGLAND

Connecting people with nature.

Nottingham  
Community  
and Voluntary  
Service

[Nature Buddies - National Academy  
for Social Prescribing | NASP  
\(socialprescribingacademy.org.uk\)](https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk)



# What is a Nature Buddy?



[Nature Buddies \(youtube.com\)](#)

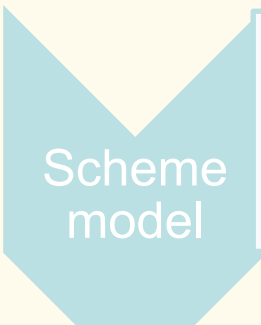


Role title	Nature Buddy (Walk companion)
<b>Purpose of the role</b>	A Nature Buddy is a volunteer who supports an individual to connect with nature. The Nature Buddy builds their confidence and ability to take part in the activity which has been prescribed for them and helps them to overcome any barriers that stand in their way. A Nature Buddy will find what best suits the person they are supporting and will support them on their journey to living a happier and healthier life.
<b>What you will be doing</b>	In this role, you will meet with a person regularly over an agreed period to take a walk outdoors together. It is an opportunity to support people in a simple, practical, but very important, part of the Nature Buddy programme.  You will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage the person that you are buddying to get outdoors for a walk</li> <li>• meet them at an agreed point – which could be their own home</li> <li>• walk and talk with them</li> <li>• keep records of your communications and their outcomes.</li> <li>• follow-up any missed sessions</li> <li>• report your activity and any concerns to your volunteer coordinator</li> <li>• maintain strict confidentiality.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills, experience and qualities needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No special qualifications or experience needed.</li> <li>• Flexibility.</li> <li>• Approachable, relatable, reliable, trusting, understanding.</li> <li>• A friendly personality with time to listen and respond to individual needs.</li> <li>• Empathy, friendly, non-judgemental.</li> <li>• You should be enthusiastic about the benefits of outdoor environments and have an interest in nature, although you don't have to be an expert.</li> <li>• You will have to have a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.</li> <li>• It is likely that contact details will be stored online, so you may also need internet access and some IT skills.</li> </ul>
<b>When and where</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a community-based opportunity.</li> <li>• We expect it will take about an hour a week.</li> </ul>
<b>Support offered</b>	You will be given induction and initial training. You will receive ongoing training and peer support at regular volunteer meetings with other buddies.
<b>What you could get out of it</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop new friendships and interpersonal skills.</li> <li>• Feel part of making a meaningful difference to someone who needs your support.</li> <li>• Gain experience in the social care sector or environmental sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Other relevant information</b>	There are four complementary Nature Buddy roles that offer you a range of different kinds of involvement to suit your own time availability, interests and skills.
<b>What to do if you're interested</b>	Contact...





# Things to consider...



- Who is hosting and supporting the volunteers
- Policy and procedure
- Co design and co production?



- Who are your stakeholders
- Referral route
- Networking and support



- societal issues and local health priorities
- Your org/group priorities
- funding bids for resources, expenses etc
- evaluation

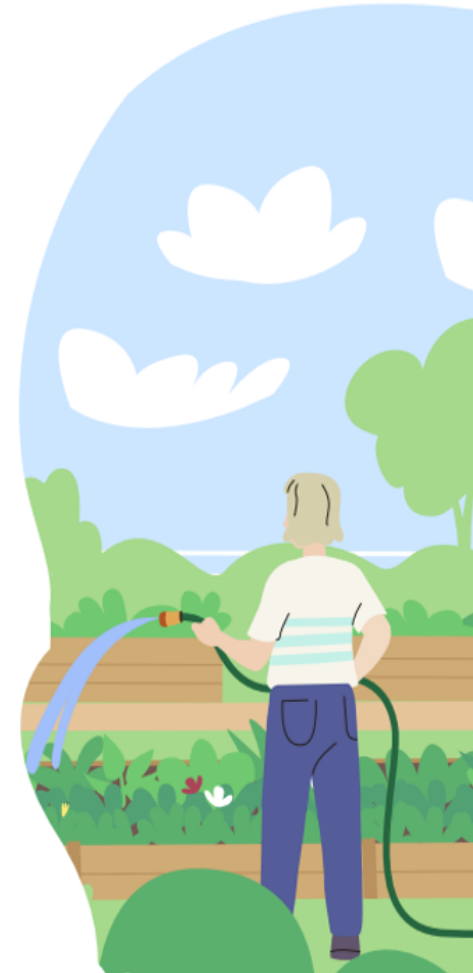




# Nature Buddy

## What's in it for me?

- The chance to develop new friendships and skills, such as communication, mentoring, negotiating.
- You will feel part of making a meaningful difference to someone who needs your support.
- You will be given induction training into the various aspects of the role.
- You will receive ongoing training and peer support at regular volunteer and networking meetings.
- Develop your understanding of, and increase your connection to, the landscape, wildlife, history, culture.
- You will have access to a wealth of online resources.
- You will gain experience in the social care sector and environmental sector.



# Developing and supporting your Nature Buddies

## Induction

Welcome/introductory session  
Online and/or in person

## Training

Mandatory/optional  
Mental awareness  
Nature connection

## Resources

Nature/green provider info  
Transport routes  
Provider intro videos  
Support/emergency contacts

## Networks

Buddy peer support groups  
Nature buddy newsletter  
Ongoing training



### Nature Buddies Induction





# Forestry England's Shadow Ranger Scheme





# What is the Shadow Ranger Volunteer Programme?



- Providing people with practical ‘hands-on’ experience in the forestry sector
- Aimed at anyone interested in a career in conservation, community engagement, recreation, site management, or working with volunteers

# What makes the scheme so successful?



- People feel valued
- Flexibility (for both staff and volunteers)
- Focus on skills development





# People Feel Valued



- Information about the scheme available prior to applying
- Treated like a member of staff entering a paid role
- Formal induction and training provided
- Mentoring throughout
- Away days and events

# Flexibility

- Options to explore other areas of the organisation to gain new skills and see what they involve
- Volunteers can choose to stay on after their placement ends
- Scheme works with site and staff capacity, and around the volunteer's other commitments





# Skills development



- Volunteers become ‘work-ready’
- Volunteers take the role seriously and turn up
- Benefits to organisation and wider sector



**Thanks for listening**

