

Heart of England Forest Volunteer Role Profile



Volunteer Outdoor Learning Assistant

Volunteer role:	Volunteer Outdoor Learning Assistant
Hours:	Flexible opportunities to support our curriculum and weekend education sessions, with a commitment of at least one session per month. Weekday sessions run between 08.30AM - 3.00PM Weekend sessions typically run in AM (09.30AM -1.00PM) and PM (1.30PM - 4.30PM) sessions.
Reporting to:	Outdoor Learning Officer
Location:	Gorcott Hill Education centre or Middle Spenal Farm (The Heart of England Forest).
Date:	June 2025

ROLE SUMMARY

We are looking for volunteers who enjoy working with children and young people in an outdoor environment to join our Learning and Skills team at the Heart of England Forest.

At the Heart of England Forest, we work with local schools to deliver regular learning opportunities within the forest for their pupils. Working with children, we aim to develop the values of resilience, respect, kindness, and to care for the environment, themselves and others. We also run afterschool clubs for inner city children, and weekend activities for families, young people and adults, including forest birthday parties, clubs and workshops, as well as our successful holiday club which runs three days a week over the school holidays. Our Learning and Skills learning program is a big part of the charity's activities to help individuals form a deeper connection to nature and to improve health and wellbeing and develop closer links to our communities.

Volunteer Outdoor Learning Assistants will work directly with members of the Learning and Skills team to deliver high quality outdoor learning sessions. Volunteer Outdoor Learning Assistants will help set up and tidy down sessions, and work with children and adults to help support their learning, keeping them safe and happy during their visit to the forest.

Volunteer Outdoor Learning Assistants will work directly with the Outdoor Learning Officer who will help them develop their skills through training opportunities available to committed volunteers. For example, first aid training, wildlife identification training, and opportunities to participate in outdoor adult learning workshops. The role is flexible with opportunities to support both the delivery of our schools' programs and/or weekend or holiday activities to suit your availability and interests.

While prior experience of working with children and knowledge of the natural environment is helpful, enthusiasm and a willingness to learn are just as important. This role will require an enhanced DBS check, which will be provided by the charity and initial safeguarding training prior to starting the role. Individuals will need to be able to provide two references.

Benefits:

- Meet new people, engaging with members of the public, members of staff, and other volunteers.
- You will receive appropriate training to support both your role and your personal development.
- Play a vital role in helping the charity engage with children and young people
- Help the Heart of England Forest grow and work towards its mission to create and manage a huge new woodland for the country.
- Should you require it, a written reference can be provided by the charity.
- Branded clothing provided for working on sessions.
- Opportunity to undertake training opportunities which are subject specific to learning and skills team.
- Opportunity to participate in Learning & Skills skill workshops.
- The joy of working with a different generation in their journey within the natural world.

Responsibilities:

- Support members of the learning and skills team to help deliver high quality outdoor learning.
- Reading and familiarising yourself with session plans, ensuring that you understand the session and allow time for any questions or clarifications.
- Help and support in the setup and tidying down of sessions and equipment.
- Support children, young people and adults to keep them safe and happy in the forest.
- Interacting with school staff in a professional manner to help meet the needs of their students. Working with small groups to help undertake activities safely.
- Help create a positive and professional rapport with school staff.
- Work with the activity leader to reflect and feedback on individual sessions.
- Follow health and safety processes, and safeguarding procedures.
- Engage with training opportunities as appropriate for the role, for example safeguarding training prior to commencement of role.
- Act as an ambassador for the Heart of England Forest, sharing relevant information about the charity, and promote further opportunities for members of the public to engage with or support the Heart of England Forest.

Required Skills:

- The ability to communicate effectively with good levels of literacy.
- A flexible approach, with the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and needs of the group.
- A love of the outdoors and the ability to inspire young people to enjoy nature.
- The ability to build relationships and empathize with participants.
- Comfortable working outdoors in all weathers.
- Physically active and comfortable with walking on uneven terrain, this role will involve spending extended periods of time outdoors.
- To be prepared to undertake enhanced DBS check, this is funded by the charity.

Desirable Skills

- A basic understanding of the importance of safeguarding and health and safety in the outdoors.

- Experience working with children and young people.
- A broad range of interests and knowledge, and a passion for the natural world.

If you're interested in joining us as a Volunteer Outdoor Learning Assistant, please email ellie.jones@heartofenglandforest.org with a short introduction about yourself, your experience, and why this role appeals to you.

ABOUT THE HEART OF ENGLAND FOREST

Planting tomorrow's great native woodland

The Heart of England Forest is an exciting and ambitious charity. We want to help reverse centuries of woodland decline and plant one of the largest forests in England. Our goal is to create a huge, unbroken woodland – a refuge from the modern world where people can rediscover nature and wildlife can flourish. It's an ambitious vision, which we're determined to make happen, one tree at a time.

The Heart of England Forest is not only a perfectly positioned lung for the Midlands, but a breath of fresh air for the nation. With over 1.8 million new native trees planted so far, we are restoring our native woodland – providing a safe and permanent habitat for wildlife as well as an escape for people from the urban environments surrounding it.

The forest stretches up the Warwickshire / Worcestershire border, from the present-day borders of Shakespeare's Forest of Arden to the edge of the Vale of Evesham – the north Cotswolds to south Birmingham. It's an area dense in cities, towns and industry. Which is why we're creating a place to walk under shady canopies and through airy glades, away from the bustle of city life.

The UK has less than a third of the native tree cover of many other European countries, including France, Germany and Italy. Planting tomorrow's great native woodland has already started. With 7,000 acres of land, the Forest currently consists of 600 acres of mature woodland and 4,500 acres of new planting. We have planted an incredible 2 million trees so far, that's over 23% of the way towards our goal of a 30,000-acre forest. But with patience and your support, who knows how far it will grow!

More information can be found at www.heartofenglandforest.org