

Volunteering with Natural England

Volunteering for people, places, and nature



Volunteering Promise

A message from our Chief Executive

Volunteers are at the very heart of the nature conservation movement. Your contribution makes a real difference. It is a critical part of the collective effort to conserve England's special places and wildlife for the benefit of us all, and for future generations. We value your dedication, energy and enthusiasm and appreciate that you freely give your precious time for our shared cause.

This 'Promise' is our agreement of what we can expect of each other. It shows how we aim to deliver the volunteer programme, so it is as supportive for you as possible. We work hard to ensure our relationship with volunteers works well, and the Volunteering Promise sets out the actions that you or we can take to this end.

We are committed to supporting our existing network of volunteers which you will now join. We hope you will share many successes with us.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to be "D. [unclear]", written in a cursive style.

Chief Executive
Natural England

Who is this promise for?

This Promise is an agreement between Natural England and its volunteers. If you are conducting work experience or are a student you are still considered a volunteer. It should be read in conjunction with any personal volunteer placement agreement you have agreed with the organisation. All new volunteers will receive a copy of the Promise when joining Natural England, at the start of their volunteering or work experience or student placement. You can also request a copy directly from your supervisor or Natural England contact.

As a volunteer with Natural England, you can expect:

- To be treated with courtesy and respect as a valued member of the volunteer network.
- That we take care of your health, safety, and welfare to the same standard as we do for staff, as laid out in Natural England's Health & Safety and Safeguarding Policies. This will include processing relevant sensitive data about personal health gathered on your Expression of Interest form or via other official channels.
- That you will be involved in a role which matches your skills and interests and that also helps to achieve our business objectives.
- That we will always be mindful of your voluntary status and your right to decline involvement at any time.
- That everyone will have equal opportunity to volunteer based on your ability, aptitude and willingness to volunteer. We will not discriminate against anyone and will encourage diversity amongst our volunteers.
- That we will take good care of your personal information and not use it for anything other than managing and supporting your volunteering role in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Sensitive data you provide about personal health will be processed to ensure you and others are kept safe whilst you volunteer for Natural England in keeping with our Health & Safety policy. Please see our [privacy notice](#) for more information.
- That we will reimburse your agreed out of pocket expenses in line with our volunteers' expenses policy.
- That we will recognise and acknowledge the contribution that you make to the organisation, to the local community and to nature conservation.
- That we will provide an induction for new volunteers, provide refresher training and invest in training and development for existing volunteers where appropriate.
- That we will tell you if there is a problem and encourage you to work with us to put things right.
- That we will provide clear official guidance and other information appropriate / necessary for your role in an easily accessible form.
- That we will communicate with you in a professional, clear, courteous, and open manner.
- That we will welcome and encourage your feedback and provide regular opportunities to do so.

As our volunteer we expect you to:

- Co-operate with Natural England in all health and safety and wellbeing procedures. Read and accept and follow Natural England's Safeguarding policy and procedures for working with children and adults at risk.
- Report all accidents, incidents, hazards and near hits by informing your supervisor or Natural England contact.
- Respect and welcome diversity amongst our staff, volunteers, the public and our partners.
- Be aware of issues of confidentiality in respecting personal or sensitive information that you may have access to even if you leave your voluntary role.

- Treat staff, volunteers, the public and our partners with courtesy and respect both in person and in any correspondence.
- Ensure that any communications via social media do not bring Natural England, its employees or volunteers into disrepute.
- Carry your identity card and any necessary permits (if your role requires it).
- Help us to keep our records up to date by telling us about changes.
- Tell us when things go wrong, and where we have not upheld the Promise give us the opportunity to put things right.
- Follow the code of conduct for volunteers set out below and tell us if you have any issue which means you might not be able to follow the code of conduct.

Code of conduct for volunteers

Volunteers are ambassadors for Natural England. It is essential that you act professionally when you are volunteering with us, and we ask you to be aware that members of the public may see you as the public face of the organisation. The code of conduct for volunteers echoes many of the requirements for our staff (who also have additional codes including political impartiality and whistle blowing procedures).

Whilst you are acting as a volunteer, we respectfully request the following:

- that you will act with honesty, integrity, and impartiality.
- that you will act responsibly and to keep personal views and judgements separate from the time when you are representing Natural England as a volunteer.
- that you will not misuse your position of trust and responsibility as a Natural England Volunteer.
- that you will report any safeguarding concerns related to a child or adult immediately to your supervisor or Natural England contact.
- that where you enter people's homes as part of your role (as with a Volunteer Bat Roost Visitor (VBRV)), you always show your identity card and that you act with respect for people's property.
- that you do not accept gifts, hospitality, or any other benefit where the purpose of the giver is to use undue influence on you or to seek benefits from you that you could only bring because of your involvement as a Natural England Volunteer.
- that you deal with the public fairly, promptly, and sensitively.
- that you do not frustrate the implementation of Natural England policies by taking inappropriate action or declining to take an agreed action.
- that you are not involved in any activity that could bring Natural England's name into disrepute. For some activities, we may decide that your continued involvement as a volunteer is not compatible with the activity even if you choose to do this outside of your time with us as a volunteer. For example, non-peaceful campaigning activities which have the potential to harm others.

Whilst you are acting as a volunteer you must comply with the following:

- Carry out your role safely and tell us immediately if there is any health and safety issue, which could affect you or those you volunteer with.
- In line with our safeguarding guidance, inform Natural England or if necessary, the police if you become aware of any safeguarding issues.
- Be respectful of Natural England property and use tools and equipment (including branded clothing) with care and only for their intended purpose.
- Familiarise yourself with and adhere to our IT security policies where you have been granted access.

Dealing with problems

If you have an issue with your voluntary role, or have any problems affecting your involvement with the organisation please contact us:

- **Volunteer Bat Roost Visitors (VBRV):** Contact us through the [bat volunteers mailbox](#)
- **Site or office-based volunteers (NNR/Work experience/Student etc.):** Speak to your supervisor. If this does not result in a satisfactory outcome, please contact the [volunteer enquiries mailbox](#).

These arrangements for volunteers are in addition to the general complaints procedure that you have access to, and which can be found via the [Natural England complaints procedure](#). We do recommend that you contact the relevant email address above for support before you submit a formal complaint.

Should you have any safeguarding questions or concerns you must contact your site-based supervisor or Natural England contact as soon as is practicably possible, or email healthandsafety@naturalengland.org.uk and one of our designated safeguarding officers will respond to you.

Giving us feedback

We welcome constructive feedback on how we might improve the service and support that we give to you. If you would like to provide feedback or offer suggestions, please contact your Natural England supervisor (if you have one) or our mailboxes via the contact methods listed above. If you would like to say thank you to a member of staff or another volunteer, or if you would like to share a good idea, an inspiring story, or an example of good practice, please also get in touch.