

Countryside workers Apprenticeships and Kickstarter Scheme

What is a countryside worker?

Countryside Workers carry out specific environmental and conservation tasks and they will also be clear about how practical conservation work interacts with the productive and recreational use of the countryside, including allied farming (livestock and crop production) and sporting activities (most commonly fishing and shooting) and how these relate to countryside management practices. Countryside Workers will be able and willing to do challenging work outdoors, in a variety of locations, which may be remote, interact with the public and explain their work as well as undertaking their role all year round in a variety of weathers, both on their own and as part of a team. Typical job titles of roles that successful Countryside Worker Apprentices undertake include Estate Worker, Access Ranger, Maintenance Ranger, Site Warden, Assistant Ranger, Field Operative and Volunteer Leader.

Kickstarter Scheme

The tables below highlights the key knowledge, skills, and behaviours required to work in the countryside management sector. As the Kickstarter scheme is only 6 months long the depth of each will be basic but allowing the participant time each week to create a portfolio of experience demonstrating what they have done and how this relates to the three areas. This along with basic courses that will be funded by the scheme e.g., first aid and strimmer certificates and support and guidance from experienced members of staff will set them up for either further study via apprenticeships or a basic entry level role such as a seasonal ranger.

Benefits of the Kickstarter scheme include giving the

Apprenticeships

The tables below highlights many of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours an apprentice countryside worker will need to demonstrate to become an effective and valued employee. They will gain job specific skills whilst working with experienced members of staff and gaining industry recognised qualifications e.g., chainsaw and brush Cutter tickets. Along with support and guidance from the education provider out at Bridgewater college

Knowledge

As a countryside worker a certain level of knowledge is required to carry out effective management of the site. We can help the Kick start applicant by Passing on an introduction level knowledge in the following areas

REF	Knowledge	Description
K1	conservation	Some knowledge how habitats and vegetation are managed to promote conservation. The different types of management used, and which is appropriate depending on the location, we can demonstrate the differences in habitat and vegetation structures of woodland, hedgerow, and grassland habitats
K2	ecology	the basic principles behind how our flora and fauna (both native and non-native) live and survive and how this knowledge is used when carrying out habitat management work effectively.
K3	The principles of boundary management;	how the different types of boundaries (hedges, fences, walls) relate to their location and usage; how their management varies depending on the area and their function
K4	the principles of access management	the legal status of a Right of Way and Open Access to the Countryside legislation. The different types of surfaces (aggregate, paving, woodchip, pitching) and furniture/structures (such as gates, bridges, boardwalks, benches, bins) and their suitability for different areas and usage such as multiuser access paths.
K5	Land management	how conservation work complements/interacts with other land management uses such as recreation, game keeping, tourism and estate management.

APPENDIX 17A

K6	surveys	the basic techniques which can be used to carry out a range of surveys to help determine the nature of work on access or furniture management in a particular location.
K7	Countryside legislation	the major pieces of legislation that govern the use of the countryside, such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act, Environmental Protection Act and the Countryside Rights of Way Act.
K8	Designations	conservation designations in the UK, for example, National Nature Reserves, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
K9	climate change	the way increased rainfall and higher temperatures impact upon the countryside, conservation practices, habitats, flora, fauna and water levels and how we can go about managing these changes at local/national level.
K10	sustainability	understanding environmental best practice and the importance of using products from the local area or from sustainable sources such as wood from Forest Stewardship Council woodland
K11	Health and safety;	understanding clearly the risks inherent in carrying out tasks such as building a fence, surfacing a footpath and cutting back vegetation. This should be complemented by knowing how to write risk assessments, carry out manual handling safely and when personal protective equipment should be worn. Equally as important is recognising the potential risks to the public and knowing how to mitigate these.
K12	first aid	practical first aid techniques for use in outdoor situations.
K13	pollution	the environmental impact of conservation work, for example, the use of vehicles, fuel for machinery, dealing with waste materials and how to improve working practices to benefit the environment.

Skills

REF	Skill	description
S1	manage habitats	Managing habitats using a range of specialist techniques such as coppicing, hedge laying and establishing native plants, using appropriate tools and equipment.
S2	construct and repair boundaries	construct or repair boundaries including different fencing types hedging (establishing a new hedge or laying an existing hedge)
S3	construct and maintaining access ways	Construct or maintain access ways, for example a path surface using aggregate, stone pitching, slabs, bark, concrete or tarmac. This will include the skills to ensure that the path surface drains properly.
S4	manage vegetation	Manage vegetation in a range of different situations, for example strimming pathways, using pesticides, managing trees and hedgerows, eradicating invasive species in order to conserve native flora and fauna.
S5	constructing and maintaining site furniture	Construct and /or maintain site furniture for access and interpretation. For example, bridges, gates, stiles, boardwalks, signs/waymarks or information boards using sustainable materials where possible. This will involve both following standard methods and also undertaking site specific design. For example, installing a gate on a sloping field will involve modifying the standard method.
S6	use a range of hand and power tools	safely such as hammers, panel saws, levels, drills, strimmer or chainsaws, hold the relevant certification for powered equipment and undertake the routine maintenance of the tools used.

APPENDIX 17A

S7	problem solving	be resourceful in finding solutions to problems that may arise in day-to-day work and know when to ask a supervisor for advice.
S8	species identification	Identify a range of British flora and fauna native to the specific local area e.g. commonly seen birds, mammals, insects, flowers, trees or fungi to determine the appropriate habitat management needed.
S9	undertake surveys	Undertake surveys which feed into site management plans and work plans, for example, survey habitats and species, numbers of visitors, the condition of Rights of Way or structures/furniture.
S10	write simple dynamic risk assessments	Write a simple dynamic risk assessment and be able to use it on site. Use the risk assessment as the basis of working safely; understanding the hazards on the site and involved in the wide range of practical tasks undertaken by Countryside Workers. Know how to reduce these risks to an acceptable level for themselves, the public and colleagues through using safe working practices and wearing personal protective equipment.
S11	communicate effectively	Communicate effectively in a range of situations e.g. through face-to-face interaction, electronic communication, telephoning or presenting to members of the public, contractors, colleagues or landowners.

Behaviours

APPENDIX 17A

REF	Behaviour	Description
B1	enthusiasm for the countryside and environment	Enthusiasm for the countryside and environment; a positive approach to working outdoors, and undertaking practical tasks in all weathers;
B2	work ethic	Work ethic; reliability and punctuality, commitment, diligence and a pride in doing a job well;
B3	work constructively	Work constructively; both within a team environment and be self-motivated as a lone worker; be comfortable working both with other paid colleagues as well as unpaid volunteers;
B4	flexibility	Flexibility and adaptability; to working locations, hours and requirements, including changes in weather conditions, situations and working environment;
B5	skills development	Skills development; responsibility for continual personal skills development;
B6	communication and behaviour	Communication and behaviour; appropriate behaviour with a wide range of people including colleagues, landowners, contractors and other professionals and the public;
B7	safety conscious	Safety conscious; promoting safe working practices for themselves and others.