

About Age UK Norfolk's Green Companionship Project

Age UK Norfolk's Green Companion Project supports older people to reconnect with nature to improve wellbeing, reduce loneliness and build confidence. Volunteer Green Companions offer encouragement, companionship and light practical support to help participants engage with local green spaces or bring nature into their homes. Support is short-term (up to 6 sessions per person) and goal focused. Each participant is supported to set personal aims, helping them build confidence and independence so their engagement with nature can continue beyond the project. This project has been funded to deliver within selected postcodes that follow the Norfolk offshore wind farm pipeline route through North Norfolk, Broadland and Breckland. Volunteers may apply from any part of Norfolk, provided they are willing to travel.

About the Volunteer Role

Main Purpose

To provide tailored, short-term support to older people at risk of loneliness, helping them improve wellbeing and confidence through meaningful engagement with nature.

Main Responsibilities

- Liaise with and report to the Companionship Coordinator regarding the client you are matched with.
- Support each client to identify personal goals linked to nature-based activity and wellbeing.
- Provide encouragement, companionship and practical support during up to six sessions.
- Facilitate doorstep nature activities where required, such as birdwatching and planting seeds or bulbs etc.
- Support gentle outdoor activities where appropriate, such as short walks, litter picking and visiting allotments, parks, local estates and coastal areas etc.
- Help identify ongoing local opportunities that enable participants to continue engaging with nature independently.
- Complete monitoring information using the forms provided.
- To adhere to the policies and practices of Age UK Norfolk at all times.

General Skills

Essential

- Excellent communication and active listening skills.
- Ability to build a rapport and encourage confidence
- Ability to adapt sessions if the older person's goals or circumstances change.
- Ability to relay information and instructions in a clear, accessible, relevant and personable way.
- Ability to work with learners with different levels of knowledge and skill.
- Ability to maintain confidential communication where applicable.

Desirable

- Good digital skills in order to assist older people, if necessary, to access online nature resources.
- An interest in nature, gardening or the outdoors.

Behaviours and Values

- Willingness to understand the issues and barriers affecting older people, specifically with regards to loneliness/ social isolation.
- An open-minded approach to individuals, avoiding judgement and stereotyping.
- A commitment to and understanding of equal opportunities.
- Enthusiasm for helping others build confidence and independence.
- Being patient, understanding, empathetic and reliable.

.Responsible to –Companionship Coordinator

Availability - Flexible hours between Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm

Training & Expenses - Full training and ongoing support is provided. A satisfactory DBS (criminal records) check is required. Expenses are reimbursed.

