

Nature Buddies Network

Volunteer Induction
(organisations)



1

Nature Buddies: What we will cover

- An overview of the purpose and content of the role
- Required skills, experience and qualities
- Benefits to the volunteer
- Benefits of being outside
- Setting boundaries
- Safeguarding
- Goal-setting
- Urgent mental health response
- Further training opportunities, resources and requirements



2

Nature Buddies: Your Journey

Induction

You join the induction by watching this video or attending in person training.

Training

Training will be available online through our partners or ourselves.

Pairing Up

Your organisation will pair you up with a new or nervous member who you will then become a buddy to.

Support

You will encourage, engage with and support your buddy, hopefully making them feel safe and welcome.

Feedback

You will be given the opportunity to provide feedback to your organization which will help improve buddies in the future.

What's next

Hopefully your client is now a confident member of your group, and you can use your new skills and learning to help more people.

3

Nature Buddies: Purpose of the Role

Overall purpose?

Support individuals to gradually increase their confidence and ability to enjoy engaging with nature.

By supporting them to take part in nature-based activities and help them to overcome barriers that stand in their way.

How long?

- Minimum 4 hours / month. Expected 1 – 2 hours a week for minimum 6 months, plus ongoing training. (role outline in pack)

This might be through:

- Walking Buddy – helping people access green spaces
- Meet and greet role – being a friendly face at the gate
- Participant buddy – taking part alongside the person, sharing skills and facilitating social aspects



4

Nature Buddies: What will you be doing



Depending on what organisation you are working with you may be asked to:

- Provide regular support to enable people to walk or visit their local parks and open spaces.
- Encourage people who would not normally engage with outdoor environments
- Work with the person on an activity they would like to do, paying particular attention of likes, dislikes, past hobbies and interests to tailor the activity.
- Be aware of the key messages and benefits of health and well-being they can gain from being outdoors



5

Nature Buddies: Skills, experience & qualities

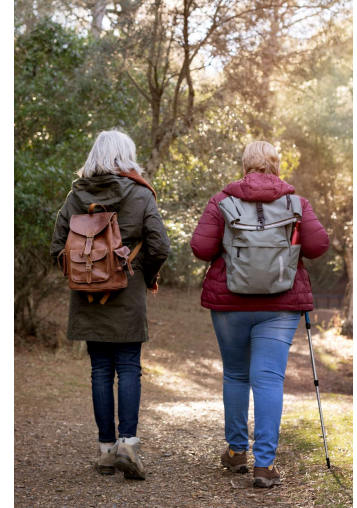
- No special qualifications or experience needed.
- We are looking for volunteers who are understanding, patient, empathetic and good at listening.
- You should be enthusiastic about the benefits of outdoor environments and have an interest in nature, although you don't have to be an expert.



6

Nature Buddies: 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.



7

Nature Buddies: What makes a good buddy?

Here are some of the things that we believe are important qualities in a Nature Buddy

- A real appreciation of and interest in nature and the outdoors (no expertise required)
- Strong listening skills
- Understanding of the service user / participant group
- Ability to approach new people or be approached without prejudice
- Honesty and trustworthiness
- Understanding of the service user/ client group
- Commitment and reliability
- Respect for confidentiality
- Friendliness and warmth
- Empathy and resilience
- Professional approach to volunteering with the organisation
- Ability to offer caring and understanding presence



8

Nature Buddies: Benefits of Nature Based Activity

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Greater meaning and purpose in life | Greater connection to a place or community | Social engagement | Sharing experiences | Increases self esteem |
| Helps reduce isolation and loneliness | Feelings of belonging | Helps brain health through learning and reminiscence | Greater vitality and happiness | Help in the management of long-term conditions. |
| Can reduce stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression | Helps boost immune systems | Encourages physical activity | May reduce the risk of chronic diseases | More satisfied with life |

9

Nature Buddies: Boundaries

Why do we need them? Boundaries set out our limits and expectations.

Some dos and don'ts to consider when navigating boundaries:

- ✓ **Do** recognise your own personal boundaries
- ✓ **Do** avoid getting into situations that could be misunderstood
- ✓ **Do** think before you say "yes" to a request for help
- ✓ **Do** remember that the main focus of the relationship is the needs and progress of the other person



X Don't give out your home telephone number or address (to withhold your mobile number use 141 or 150 if EE network)

X Don't take the other person to your own home

X Don't become emotionally over-involved (this can be difficult)

If you are ever in doubt about a boundary issue, speak to the senior person running your activity session as soon as possible.

10

Nature Buddies

Don't...

- provide personal care or any kind of therapy
- meet at non agreed times (the relationship is a partnership not friendship).
- provide transport – this is at discretion of volunteer host organisation.

They are not a nature expert / therapist / care giver / driver.

They are a friendly person who wants to help you engage with nature in a way that suits you



11

Nature Buddies: Safeguarding Overview: Adults

It is important to remember that, as a volunteer, it is not your role to deal directly with safeguarding issues. It is, however, your duty to know when and how to report any potential concerns.

Adult safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014 [1] apply to an adult, aged 18 or over, who: Has needs for care and support and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.



People in this situation may be referred to as:

- adults with care and support needs
- adults at risk
- vulnerable adults

Your role is to:

- ✓ Prevent harm and reduce risk of abuse or neglect to adults
- ✓ Stop abuse and neglect wherever possible
- ✓ Support adults in making choices about how they want to live

Report anything that causes concern to the senior person running your activity session as soon as possible.

12

Nature Buddies: Pairing Up

Your organisation will pair you up with a member who you will buddy.



My client's name is:

They will be attending:
(activity, dates times)

My aim is to support them to:

Useful to know:

Best way for me to get in contact:



13

Nature Buddies: Goal Setting

Goals are so important but must be chosen wisely and in collaboration with your client.

The smaller the goal the more achievement can be gained.

The more achievement the more confidence builds.

You might have fabulous plans of where the client might be in a months time but they might just need to know where they need to be tomorrow, at what time and which bus to catch.

Start small and keep them achieving.

The big goals will all come in time.



14

Nature Buddies: Supporting your buddy



The Plan:

Note down anything that you may find helpful to support your client.

When you might see them, speak to them, any little goals that you might set together.

Anything they might need to read, look at or prepare in advance to make things easier, such as flask of tea, a change of clothes, car park procedures, etc.

Urgent Mental Health Response

There may be a time when someone attending your group needs urgent support with their mental health. This can happen to anyone during their lifetime but knowing what to do to support them can really make a difference.

They may:

- Have **harmed themselves** and need medical attention
- Be having **suicidal feelings**, and feel they may act on them
- Be putting themselves or someone else at **immediate, serious risk of harm**.

If they are not safe by themselves: Stay with them and help them to call 999 or let others know and take them to A&E.

If they can keep themselves safe for a little while: You can help them to contact their GP or alternatively you can get quick medical advice by calling the NHS on 111. You can also encourage them to call the Samaritans on 116 123 or to contact one of the services detailed in the following pages.

If you or others feel in danger: Call 999 and ask the Police to help. You may be worried about getting the person in trouble, but it's important that you keep yourself and the other members of your group safe.

If applicable, please also contact the person who made the referral into your group to inform them of the situation.

Further places to signpost the person to are listed in the section on additional support in this booklet.

Nature Buddies: Training and volunteer support

We will provide you with all the key information to keep you and the people you are supporting safe and informed. These will be available as online videos and information downloads from Volunteer Dorset Centre website.

If you wish to develop your skills further, we can offer a range of free additional training modules* which may help you in your role, for example: Diversity and Inclusion, Nature Connection, Befriending, Dementia Awareness.

* Modules will be updated as new opportunities arise.



17

Nature Buddies: Resources

For **Nature Buddies** information

- [Nature Buddies Network | Dorset National Landscape](https://dorset-nl.org.uk/project/nature-buddies-network/)

<https://dorset-nl.org.uk/project/nature-buddies-network/>

Our online platform – **Picnic in the Parks*** has a wealth of **resources** to help you in your new role. There's ideas to inspire nature connection, such as creative resources, taster activities, webcams, podcasts and much more.

- [Picnic in The Parks | Dorset National Landscape](https://dorset-nl.org.uk/picnic-in-the-parks/)

<https://dorset-nl.org.uk/picnic-in-the-parks/>

For places to get out & **explore** head to

- [Explore | Dorset National Landscape](https://dorset-nl.org.uk/explore/)

<https://dorset-nl.org.uk/explore/>



* New look & Name change coming soon

18

Nature Buddies: Feedback

Your organisation will check in with you after the first session to make sure everything is running smoothly but you can feedback to them anytime to let them know how the sessions are progressing.

Please keep a record of any highlights if you can, even if it's just one sentence, which can left in your organisations 'Jar of Joy'

- ✓ This will help you to identify any patterns of behaviour
- ✓ It will remind you of awesome memories
- ✓ It will help you to reflect when things don't go to plan.
- ✓ It will help us shape the project and our research



19

Sharing Success Stories and Case Studies

A set of numbers cannot fully describe the social and emotional impact of an experience, and so we would be really grateful if you would be prepared to share any stories, experiences and case studies with the Stepping into Nature Project team to demonstrate the effect that Nature Buddies has on the individuals involved, whether that is from the perspective of a service user, or from someone within the organisation who is delivering the activities.

Case studies could be:



Video



Blogs/ Vlogs / Journals



Audio recordings



Anything else that shares your experiences of nature buddies.



Photographs



Please ensure that the person has given permission to share any feedback and that personal information is not shared.

20

Thank You

If you have any queries

**Please email Kate and Jules at
stepin2nature@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk**

or call Kate on 01305 228246

**Please note Kate and Jules are part time and may not
get back to you immediately.**



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