



Northumberland
Wildlife Trust



Red Squirrel Recovery Network Project Assistant (*early career role*)

Information Pack

Contact Details:

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Who we are...

The Red Squirrel Recovery Network (RSRN) is a new programme which aims to build on conservation efforts of the last 20 years and lay the foundations for species recovery by working with volunteers, agencies and communities to protect the red squirrel in northern England and southern Scotland. It is led by a partnership of conservation organisations, with support from leading red squirrel conservation agencies and the network of volunteer-led squirrel groups.

The RSRN is a shared ambition for red squirrels in Northern England and Southern Scotland and which is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The RSRN is committed to supporting conservation volunteers and the employed workforce. As such, the RSRN partnership is supporting four new Project Assistant roles to provide new opportunities for individuals who have previously experienced barriers to accessing employment in the conservation sector. These roles will be hosted by four of the RSRN partners.

About the host organisations:

Northumberland Wildlife Trust was founded in 1971 to protect wildlife and promote nature conservation within Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland. Today, our voice for wildlife is stronger than ever. We are a charity, supported by membership, donations, local businesses and charitable trust grants. We will create Wilder Places, Wilder People and a Wilder Future, with more, bigger and better joined-up areas for wildlife to thrive, more people taking action and connecting to nature and influencing more decisions to secure nature's recovery locally, regionally and nationally.

We work as part of a national movement

Northumberland, Cumbria and Lancashire Wildlife Trusts are part of The Wildlife Trust movement in the UK. There are 46 local Wildlife Trusts across the whole of the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney, all working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. Together, The Wildlife Trusts are supported by 850,000 members, and are the largest UK voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving the full range of the UK's habitats and species, whether they be in the countryside, in cities, or at sea.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Safeguarding:

All the RSRN partners believe that everyone should have the opportunity to experience the joy of wildlife in their daily lives, that's why we're committed to putting equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our movement. Through RSRN we are able to offer new opportunities to engage with and take action for nature.



Job title

RSRN Project Assistant (early career role)

Information for applicants

We are looking for an outgoing, friendly and enthusiastic person to support the work of our Red Squirrel Recovery Network programme. This role would suit someone who is interested in taking a first step on a career path where you can make a real difference to the natural environment and local communities. We're particularly interested in receiving applications from young people (aged 18- 25) local to South East Northumberland. We don't expect you to have experience in all areas, but a can-do attitude and a willingness to learn are essential. There will be plenty of training opportunities and time to shadow experienced members of staff.

To apply for the position of RSRN Project Assistant (early career role) please complete the corresponding Application Form in full, and return it to me (paula.turner@northwt.org.uk) by 9am on the 11th February 2026.

Interviews are planned for the 2nd March, with an intended start date of the 1st April 2026.

Please note, CVs and/or covering letters will not be accepted.

If you require further information regarding any aspect of the application process, please do not hesitate to get in touch (RSRN@northwt.org.uk).

Thank you for your interest in the Red Squirrel Recovery Network programme

Job specification

Post title

RSRN Project Assistant (early career role)

Location

Northumberland Wildlife Trust (based at St Nicholas Park, Gosforth, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne)

These roles are not entirely office-based jobs. It is expected that up to 50% of the role will be based out in the field, working alongside RSRN project staff or other staff within the host organisation. There may be some opportunity to work from home and



there will also be a requirement to occasionally travel to attend training or to visit other organisations within the RSRN.

Responsible to

RSRN Project Officer/Community Engagement Officer, depending on the interest area.

Responsible for

- N/A

Internal relationships

- Staff and volunteers within the host organisation
- RSRN project staff based at other organisations
- Other RSRN Project Assistants

External relationships

- Community organisations, groups and volunteers
- Members of the public

Job role

The Red Squirrel Recovery Network (RSRN) is a partnership between organisations working in northern England and southern Scotland to conserve, protect and celebrate red squirrels. Together we are working towards safeguarding the species, raising awareness and supporting more people to take action to help red squirrels. The RSRN Project Assistant is an early career role designed to give more people the chance to have a career in the conservation sector. This role comes with a generous training budget and will provide opportunities to develop skills and experience as part of a conservation project. The postholder will be expected to support a wide range of activities, working alongside and supported by Project Officers and Community Engagement Officers. These activities will include supporting volunteer activities, ecological surveys and field work, community events and education workshops, digital events and social media, data analysis.

Main responsibilities

The RSRN Project Assistant will:

- Assist with community events and other education/engagement activities
- Work with the RSRN Project Officer to support local volunteers by providing information, organising training, and facilitating meetings
- Support local volunteers to complete and submit their monitoring results from the annual spring survey
- Assist with project communications and digital awareness, including social media
- Develop skills in all aspects of the project, with additional opportunities to work within other areas of the host organisation to gain a wider breadth of skills and experiences



- Represent RSRN, red squirrel conservation and the host organisation at meetings, events, conferences/seminars, networking events and other activities (both face to face and virtual)
- Participate fully in all aspects of the RSRN training programme
- Contribute to project monitoring and evaluation, including developing a personal portfolio, providing feedback to the project evaluation and producing reports to fulfil funder/partner requirements
- Observe the host organisation's working policies at all times, including those on Health & Safety, Safeguarding, and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Assist with any other additional duties that may reasonably arise from time to time

It is expected that by the end of the 10 month contract, the RSRN Project Assistant will have:

- Completed their Personal Development Plan, including undertaking training and broadening their work experience
- Participated in a variety of project activities
- Demonstrated skill acquisition in different areas
- Increased independence within their role
- Produced a personal portfolio
- Have a clear idea of their next steps (beyond RSRN)

Other responsibilities

- Attend all necessary NWT and partner staff, departmental and supervisory meetings
- Support delivery and development of NWT strategy, policies – working towards wider organisational goals as well as RSRN programme outcomes

Salary band

National Living Wage

Age 21+: £12.71 from 1st April 2026

Age 18 – 20: £10.85 from 1st April 2026

Contribution to personal pension

A further 5% is payable into the Trust's Stakeholder Pension Scheme after three months, conditional on the employee contributing at least 5% of salary.

Holidays

Holidays are calculated based on a full-time entitlement of 22 days per year (plus bank holidays). For the RSRN Project Assistant, holidays will be pro-rata depending on hours (e.g. 28 hours per week will be entitled to 17.6 days' holiday plus 6.4 bank holidays; 21 hours per week will be entitled to 13.2 days' holiday plus 4.8 bank holidays). All posts are also entitled to additional discretionary days at Christmas



Hours

21-28 hours per week for 10 months, April – January 2026

NWT operates a flexitime system. The post holder will be expected to work hours according to the needs of the communities that are being engaged. Regular evening, weekend and bank holiday working is expected.

Driving and travel

While a driving licence would be beneficial, it is not required for this role.

Contract, probation & notice

The post is offered as a single 10-month contract.

There is a probationary period of 3 months.

A minimum of 4 weeks' notice is required from either party.

This post will be subject to a DBS check.

Person specification

Skills & experience

Essential

- A genuine interest in the role and the work of the Red Squirrel Recovery Network
- Good communication skills (written and verbal) Warm, friendly and polite. Confident with people. Good at working as part of a team.
- A desire and commitment to gain practical, 'on the job', skills and experience
- A willingness to take part in activities outdoors and in all weathers
- Commitment to timekeeping and self-discipline (including the ability to work independently on a set task and meet deadlines)
- Confident using IT, including email and word processing

Desirable

- Experience of working or volunteering in the environment sector
- Experience or organising and delivering events
- Experience of using social media in a professional or volunteering capacity
- Knowledge of the red squirrel or other UK species and habitats

Qualifications

There is no requirement to have any particular qualifications for this role. We value a desire to learn and commitment the post.

We are an equal opportunity organisation and are committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion. Our mission is to welcome everyone, to celebrate difference, and we encourage everyone to join us and be themselves regardless of: age, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital



status or pregnancy and maternity.

We welcome applications from people who are disabled or neurodivergent and we will be happy to discuss any additional support or adjustments needed. We are committed to diversifying our workforce and we will prioritise applications from people who demonstrate that this opportunity will enable them to develop skills/experience and overcome barriers to enable them to access a career in the conservation sector.

