

Woodland Officer - Kent

Location

London (region), South East England

About the job

Never has there been a more important time for trees and forests to help tackle the climate emergency and provide a much-needed sanctuary for people and wildlife. Our Prime Minister and our government are committed to creating 30,000 hectares of woodland a year across the UK, of which 7,500 ha per year are anticipated to be in England, by the end of this Parliament. This acceleration in current planting rates in England will contribute to meeting the net-zero by 2050 ambitions, and to government's wider environmental targets.

This was supported by the announcement in the 2021 budget of £640m for a new Nature for Climate Fund 'to support natural habitats like woodland and peat' and the publication of the England Tree Action Plan.

The Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission have set up a joint tree planting programme for England to support the forestry sector, landowners and communities in the delivery of these ambitions.

Forestry Commission will lead the delivery of the following parts of the tree planting programme:-

- Developing sector capacity.
- Woodland creation on public land.
- Woodland creation on private land.
- Engagement.

If you are passionate about the role of trees, woods and forestry in creating a better future for England, and want to play a key part in realising that, we want to hear from you.

By joining the Forestry Commission, you will become part of a team of passionate, committed colleagues, and be able to build on a wealth of expertise to take this ambitious work forward. You will be able to make your mark by helping the Forestry Commission to revolutionise how we work together and reach new stakeholders.

Our staff engagement levels are consistently well above the Civil Service average and staff turnover is well below. We value our people, we look after them, and we will look after you. We hope you will join us for the challenge.

Job description

We are seeking dynamic individuals with experience in forestry and/or land management, who are quick to learn and inspire and enthuse others.

The Woodland Officer role can be seen as the 'face' of the Forestry Commission to landowners, managers and stakeholders. Each Woodland Officer has their own geographic area of primary responsibility, enabling them to develop a strategic view of the local landscape, a network of local stakeholders and an understanding of the challenges and opportunities.

In your 'patch,' you will be at the forefront of delivering the Forestry Commission's incentives and Regulations, and able to provide advice and support to the private forestry sector in addition to Local Authorities and Defra colleagues. Internal team working is also integral in the Woodland Officer role, for example across the Area Team (e.g., assisting others in 'alleged unlicensed felling' investigations) and the wider Forestry Commission (e.g., opportunity for review of national guidance and procedure). Through both, you will have the ability to assist the Forestry Commission build strong working relationships to help create and manage diverse, resilient multi-purpose woodlands.

This Woodland Officer posts will cover:

- East Kent – covering districts of Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet
- West Kent – covering districts of Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells

The substantive office will be Bedgebury. If you live within that area then you have the opportunity to work in a blended manner directly from your home, once you have become fully established in the role.

New Woodland Officers are expected to attend your substantive office 2 to 3 days per week to allow you to learn the role from managers and colleagues.

When fully established we would expect you to spend 1-2 days per week in Bedgebury. If your home lies out with your work area you will be expected to travel to your work area or Bedgebury in your own time and cost.

Responsibilities

Expand Woodland Cover:

- Champion the multiple benefits of new woodland as business opportunities for landowner and as natural capital (including biodiversity, water quality, flood management, carbon sequestration/substitution, etc) for the wider environment and society; facilitate the design and delivery of new woodlands optimising the benefits they can deliver to the owner and as natural capital.
- Administer the forestry Regulations relating to woodland creation (Environmental Impact Assessment); and administer/process applications for grants.

Protect our existing trees and woodlands:

Administer Forestry Regulations to include:

- Forestry Act – Felling Licences to ensure tree felling is carried out legally in accordance with the principles of the UK Forestry Standard as appropriate.
- Environmental Impact Assessments – afforestation, deforestation, forest roads and forest quarries,
- Habitats Regulations – re forest operations within Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation.
- Advise on the links with other legislation such as those pertaining to European Protected Species; and
- Provide specialist advice to planning authorities re the impact of proposals on existing woodland and how new trees and woodland could be used to enhance new developments.

Improve the condition and resilience of our existing woodlands and wider treescape:

- Champion the benefits of actively managed woodland.
- Support woodland owners and managers in responding to key challenges of pests and diseases including Chalara ash dieback, Phytophthora ramorum, deer and grey squirrels.
- Work to increase resilience within woodlands to the challenges of a changing climate; and - facilitate closer working across the forestry sector – for instance between markets, contractors, managers, etc.

Engaging partners, stakeholders and the public:

- Encourage, enthuse and support key partners and stakeholders to help facilitate the expansion, protection and improvement of our woodlands and treescape; and
- champion the many values of trees and woodland to the wider public helping them understand and appreciate the importance and values of active management.

Professional membership of the Institute of Chartered Foresters or another relevant professional body is desirable.

Benefits

- A Civil Service pension
- A range of family friendly benefits
- An environment with flexible working options

- Learning and development tailored to your role
- A culture which promotes a diverse and inclusive work environment
- A range of wellbeing benefits including discounted Civil Service Healthcare, access to an Employee Assistance Programme 24/7, Bike to Work Scheme, plus many more.
- 25 days annual leave, with 1 additional day for each years' service up to 5 years (pro rata)
- Ability to buy or sell 5 days annual leave
- 3 days volunteering per year (pro rata)

We aim to provide a great place to work, whichever location you work from. Blended working forms part of our flexible and inclusive approach to future ways of working. It is an informal arrangement which gives you the option to work some of the week from home, and some of the week from our Forestry Commission workplaces, subject to role requirements, business needs, and regular review. Informal blended working arrangements will be available as agreed with the line manager.

Salary £32,612 - £35,343

To apply, please visit [here](#).

Closing date: Apply before 11:55 pm on Sunday 4th June 2023



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