

Water Rangers Volunteer Policy

Volunteering with the Water Rangers Scheme

About us

Northumbrian Water is committed to protecting and improving the environment and as part of this we want to encourage the community to let us know about pollution to watercourses. This will allow us to attend to and resolve pollution incidents more quickly.

Water Rangers is a new scheme which has been set up to allow us to work with volunteers from local communities to protect and improve water quality in the most vulnerable watercourses.

Purpose of our volunteer policy

Our volunteer policy has been created to explain to our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed into the Water Rangers Scheme at Northumbrian Water. It also outlines that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. This policy should also help our volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

Our vision and mission for volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering for Water Rangers you will be making a positive contribution to the environment in our local areas. Volunteers are vital to our work.

Water Rangers have the opportunity to help us maintain very good water quality in rivers, streams, becks and burns inside their own local community. In return we offer a thorough training package, reduced sewerage bills and other thank you incentives.

We are looking for people who share our company values - these are:

Ethical – care about their environment and ecosystems

Results Driven – committed and driven to keep reports coming in

Customer Focussed – who believe, like Northumbrian Water, that the environment is our customer and should be given first class service

One Team – are flexible enough to work with us to agree upon in route patterns with other volunteers in your area

Creative - give feedback of your experiences at regular intervals to allow the scheme to flourish and share with others what you are enjoying about being a volunteer

Attracting volunteers and volunteer agreement

The Water Rangers Scheme involves volunteers patrolling predetermined 20-30 minute 'public access' routes within our known vulnerable areas on a weekly or fortnightly basis. These areas are highlighted in the 'Are You In?' guide to Rangers and on our website.

While they are on their walk, Water Rangers will report any potential pollution incidents to Northumbrian Water so that the issue can be resolved as quickly as possible.

You'll find everything you need to know about being a volunteer on our website. If you do want to volunteer you will need to complete our short Volunteer Registration Form. Alternatively, you can come along to one of our open days being held across the region. We'd love to meet you and give you all the information you need. Open day dates can be found online at www.northumbrianwater.co.uk/waterrangers.

Once we receive a copy of your completed registration form, a member of our team will get in touch with more information on specific opportunities and we can decide together which option best matches your interests and time availability and also our needs. Your help will be greatly appreciated and really will make a difference.

Induction and training

It does not matter how much you already know, as there will be opportunities to learn.

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by one of our team. This will include:

- some information about Water Rangers our vision, mission and our future plans;
- the role of the volunteer;
- training on what to look for and environmental issues;
- a copy of all the relevant guidelines and also our incentives and health and safety information.
- essential procedures such as timekeeping and walking route rotas

Support

Our Volunteer Coordinator will offer support to you. They will remain your key contact throughout your volunteering with us. This will include regular contact with you to discuss how you are getting on and deal with issues arising. This will also ensure that we are doing all we can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and rewarding one.

Recognition and reward

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. Here are some of the incentives associated with the Water Rangers scheme:

- reduced sewerage bills (equivalent to £4 per route walked);
- on the spot rewards for Water Rangers that have gone 'above and beyond';
- thorough training on environmental issues and what to look for when you are out walking to enable you to become a successful Water Ranger;
- social events each year to celebrate our achievements. During these events you will get an opportunity to meet other volunteers and supporters of our work and share in our plans for the future;
- PR opportunities - via our website, Facebook page and the media to praise the achievements and effort of our volunteers;
- a newsletter, which will be produced every two months, for all our volunteers which will give details on how the scheme is working, tell you about what other volunteers are doing in their areas and celebrate our success as the scheme moves forward.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. Therefore we will make sure that any telephone calls which are made to us on the Water Ranger report line are reimbursed. In order to claim these expenses, an Expenses Form must be completed, a valid receipt provided and this should be handed in to the volunteer co-coordinator. This can be sent in via e-mail or post and you can find out more about this on the training day.

Health and safety, accidents and risk assessment

The safety of our volunteers is of utmost importance to us. We will regularly update you on our Health and Safety Policy and give training on how to perform Water Ranger tasks safely. As you will be walking around public rights of way, footpaths and bridle paths (all public access routes with which you would be able to freely walk along on an everyday basis) we require you to maintain a duty of care to yourself, each other and those who may be affected by your activities. We will only ever ask you to observe watercourses from the walking route you have been provided and to not divert away from this public path. We will also provide dynamic risk assessment training which will detail that you should not patrol when the route is unsafe in any way. We can not remain liable for anything that may happen to you should you not follow out training, risk assessments or guidance. As well as this document we have a risk assessment drawn up for you to follow and you will be required to sign both when you attend your training.

Resolving problems

We hope that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us. However if your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations or with the commitments we have made to you, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. We will perform quarterly research, where we will get in touch with you to find out how you feel about the scheme and highlight any issues. Should you need to get in touch with us about anything in between these times please contact our volunteer coordinator and we will be happy to help.

Confidentiality

We expect all volunteers to adhere to confidentiality guidelines which will be explained to you before you begin volunteering with us. This also includes use of social media and contact with any press.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Northumbrian Water is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. When representing Northumbrian Water as a volunteer we expect you to support our commitment to promoting equality.

This is the Volunteer Policy of the Water Ranger from Northumbrian Water

Signature _____

Print _____

Position _____ Water Ranger _____

Ranger Area _____