

Volunteer Programme FAQs

How do I become an RZSS volunteer?

To become an RZSS volunteer you must complete and submit the online application. Please read about each of the positions and their individual requirements. Applicants who submit a complete application will be contacted when the next recruitment period starts (usually every 3 months) or when openings become available. Candidates who meet the requirements of the position they've applied for will be contacted to schedule an interview. Candidates who are interviewed and approved for a position must complete a mandatory two-day induction before beginning.

Is there a cost associated with volunteering?

There are no costs specifically associated with volunteering for RZSS. Receiving a uniform and induction is free for all accepted and active volunteers.

How old do I have to be to volunteer for RZSS?

A: Volunteers need to be aged 18 years or over.

Can I become a volunteer at any time of the year?

Usually there will be specific times of the year that volunteers are recruited which will vary depending on the volunteer role. We will advertise on our website when we are recruiting for new volunteers.

Will you keep my application on file until the next time you recruit volunteers?

We do not keep peoples' applications on file unfortunately. When we are recruiting volunteers this will be advertised on our website and we ask people to complete an application form if they are interested in volunteering. We also have a mailing list you can ask to be added to so that you can be contacted when we start the next round of volunteer recruitment.

Do I have to have qualifications to volunteer?

No, but having relevant skills and experience will help – also being motivated and enthusiastic!

How often would you like me to volunteer?

Different roles have different time requirements. We ask our volunteers to agree to an intended level of commitment and we would like our volunteers to make a regular and reliable commitment. Most volunteers currently come in on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

How long would you like me to volunteer for?

We ask volunteers to be honest about the amount of time they have to give. We invest time and resources into recruiting and training volunteers so we need to have workable arrangements. Some volunteers have been with us for many years whereas some can only volunteer for shorter periods of time.

Is there a selection process for volunteers?

Yes. In order to ensure we are matching the right people to the right role there will be a selection process. People interested in volunteering will be required to complete an application form and if short-listed will be asked to attend a group interview. We cannot offer volunteer roles to everyone interested in volunteering as we have limited places available and not all applicants will be suitable for the roles we have on offer.

Will I be trained after being recruited as a volunteer?

All volunteers will receive an induction and will complete training. The training provided will vary depending on the volunteer role and may be provided by staff, experienced volunteers or even external organisations.

How long will my volunteer shift be?

This will depend on what volunteer role you have. For example, our Engagement Volunteers usually start volunteering at 10am and finish at 3pm whereas our Event Volunteers may volunteer at various different times, including at evening events.

Is there anywhere for me to stay whilst I volunteer?

No. We do not provide accommodation for volunteers.

Can I volunteer in more than one volunteer role?

Yes, as long as you maintain workable arrangements for each volunteer role.

If I volunteer will this lead to a job with RZSS?

The skills and experience you gain through volunteering may help improve your CV and make you a better candidate for employment. However, we cannot guarantee employment for any of our volunteers and they will be required to go through the usual recruitment process when vacancies arise.

Is volunteering the same as work experience?

No, volunteering cannot be used in place of a work experience placement. It does, however, provide experience of working within the zoo environment.

Am I allowed to touch or interact with the animals when I volunteer?

Volunteers do not have any direct contact with any of the animals at this time.

Do I need qualifications to become a volunteer?

For most roles, qualifications aren't necessary. However, we may look for evidence in your application that you have the approach and interests that will make you suited to the role. Please read the role profile carefully to ensure you demonstrate these in your application.

How do I get to the Zoo?

[See here for your transportation options!](#)

Do I have to wear a uniform?

Our volunteer uniform includes Volunteer logo shirts, Volunteer logo jumpers, Volunteer name badges, dark pants or shorts (of your choosing) and closed-toe shoes.

What are the benefits of volunteering?

[link to volunteer benefits]

Do you accept volunteers with additional support needs?

We do have volunteers with additional support needs, and they are valued members of the volunteer team. However, we have an extremely limited capacity, and these opportunities are heavily oversubscribed.

Please note that we are unable to offer one to one support to volunteers and they need to be able to work unsupervised. If one to one support is required, we would expect the volunteer to provide their own support worker.

I'm not a UK citizen, can I still volunteer?

If you have the right to work in the UK, then you can volunteer. We will require to see the relevant supporting documentation before starting your role, for example your passport, visa etc.

I have a criminal record, can I still volunteer?

If you have been convicted of an offence which is not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 you will be asked to declare that offence on your expression of interest form. This information will then be assessed on a case-by-case basis. A conviction does not automatically mean you will not be allowed to volunteer with us.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact eduvolunteers@RZSS.org.uk