

Volunteering at KentCOG as a Community Volunteer.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at KentCOG.

At KentCOG we value our volunteers from the community who give their time, resources, creativity and energy to support the growing space and community. At the heart of the Kent Community Oasis Garden is sharing of skills and experiences across generations, cultures and communities, creating a vibrant space in which to engage with growing, nature, education and sustainability.

Why Volunteer at KentCOG ?

Volunteering with us can help you:

- Improve mental health and overall wellbeing
- Connect with the environment and nature
- Contribute to the local community and build new friendships
- Learn new skills and grow personally
- Support others in meaningful ways
- Prepare for re-entering the workforce
- Increase resilience and reduce social isolation

How to become a Volunteer from the Community

The first step is to complete the expression of interest form. This form can be accessed online from our website, but if you need support filling this in, then please email us kentcog@kent.ac.uk.

On receipt of this expression of interest form, the KentCOG team will assess the availability of a suitable space for you to volunteer within the project and contact you to either inform you of the initial offer and to arrange a taster session, or to ask whether you would like your name to be added to our waiting list until a space becomes available.

Please note that Volunteers are allocated to one of 5 Priority pathways depending on availability. However, if you are unsure or feel that you don't fit into any of the pathways below, please do contact us by email so we can explore the options.

The pathways

1. Community Garden Volunteer (with gardening experience)

These spaces are for individuals who can attend regularly, have gardening knowledge or experience, can work collaboratively within a team and are happy to share their

knowledge when needed to support other volunteers to carry out a particular task during sessions.

These volunteers commit to a regular session or to attend regularly.

2. General Community Garden Volunteer

These sessions are offered for a 10-week period on a selected session day of Wednesday or Friday. Volunteers can only attend once a week and will only be offered another 10-week period if space becomes available and the individual continues to benefit from the project.

3. 18-25 Young Person Community Volunteer

We want more young people to be able to gain experience and access to nature-based projects.

These sessions are offered for a 10-week period on a selected session day of Wednesday or Friday. Volunteers can only attend once a week and will only be offered another 10-week period if space becomes available and the individual continues to benefit from the project.

4. East Kent Mind (EKM) Referrals

KentCOG is a partnership project between the University of Kent and East Kent Mind (EKM). Therefore, we offer a specific pathway for East Mind Clients.

These sessions are open to those directly referred through EKM and are offered on the basis of a 10-week period of sessions. Volunteers will need to commit to a Wednesday or Friday session and can only attend once a week. Additional 10-week sessions will only be offered if space becomes available and the individual continues to benefit from the project.

5. Refugee Community Volunteer

As a project based within Kent University with its University of Sanctuary status, the project aims where possible to offer volunteer opportunities to Refugees or asylum

applicants who possess a valid Application Registration Card (ARC). These sessions are offered for a 10-week period on a selected session day of Wednesday or Friday. Volunteers can only attend once a week and will only be offered another 10-week period if space becomes available and the individual continues to benefit from the project.

The Steps to Volunteering

To become a volunteer at KentCOG, you will follow these steps:

Step 1: Complete the [Expression of Interest form](#) online.

Step 2 : The Taster -We will then contact you to let you know the availability of spaces and if space is available, arrange a Taster Session in the garden for us to meet, for you to find out more about what the projects about, the volunteer role and meet the other volunteers. At the end of the taster, if you want to volunteer we will then ask you to complete an application, sign the volunteer code of conduct and agree a date for you to come along to start volunteering at the project.

Step 3: Starting as a Volunteer – As part of the first session we will go through Health and Safety on site, tool use and task requirements and any questions or concerns that you may have.

Step 4: Feedback - At the end of 10 weeks we will have an informal review process check in and feedback opportunities.

