

Master Composter Volunteer Role Description

*This scheme is only open to Leicestershire residents (excluding Leicester City) and volunteers must be over 18.

Master Composter role:

The role of a Master Composter includes:

- raising awareness of the benefits of composting to the community
- encouraging more people to home compost,
- promoting the sale of subsidised compost bins and food waste digesters
- helping people who already home compost
- promoting the Rot a Lot Home Composting Club

Supervisor / link person for this role is Laura Neale (Master Composter Co-ordinator)

The main tasks and responsibilities will be:

In return for free training, free resources, paid expenses and ongoing support, Master Composters will spend a minimum of 30 hours over 12 months promoting composting in their local community. After the initial 12 month period Master Composters can either continue in the scheme, committing as many hours as they wish or end their volunteering.

The promotional activities can be tailored to each Master Composters individual skills or areas of interest.

Activities can include:

- attending a variety of events
- giving demonstrations to friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues
- visiting schools or community groups to give talks about composting

- writing articles for local magazines and newspapers
- setting up displays at garden centres, village fetes and other community events to encourage home composting
- helping to develop community composting schemes

Master Composters will need to send any articles or editorial to the Master Composter Co-ordinator for checking before they are published.

Master Composters will be responsible for filling in their expense forms, monitoring forms and diary sheets logging where and when they have undertaken Master Composter volunteering. Full training will be given on completing all documentation.

Benefits to the volunteer:

- receive free training, resources and have expenses such as travel paid
- gain experience of working with a variety of new people and groups
- learn new skills and improve existing skills, including presentation and communication skills
- become a composting expert
- make new friends
- enhances CV
- very flexible hours
- builds confidence

Who is running the Scheme?

The Master Composter Scheme is run by the Waste Management Department of Leicestershire County Council in partnership with Garden Organic and WRAP. The Scheme is part of Leicestershire Waste Partnership's (consists of 7 Leicestershire Districts and County Council) Waste Prevention Project. The aim of the project is to introduce a series of measures which will reduce the amount of waste produced within the county. These measures will contribute to a more sustainable use of resources through both behavioural and operational change. The Master

Composter Scheme is an example of such a measure which it is hoped will reduce the amount of organic waste going to landfill.

The usual time commitment for this role is:

Minimum of 30 hours over 12 months, this includes preparation and travel time. The 30 hours can be spread over the 12 months or completed in an intensive block if more suitable. After the initial 12 months volunteers can choose to leave the scheme, or continue committing as many hours as they would like.

Master Composters are able to volunteer at any time, weekends, weekdays, mornings, afternoons or evenings, although they must bear in mind that events tend to be held at weekends, and community groups often meet in the evenings. Although, as stated above, volunteers are able to choose how they would like to promote home composting, so can work around their own availability and interests.

Skills required:

None, as training will be given. Volunteers do not need to have composted themselves. Good communication skills and some knowledge or interest in home composting are desirable.

We are looking for people from mixed ages, backgrounds, areas and abilities to reflect the communities that they will be working in and spreading the home composting message.

Support and Supervision:

The Master Composter Co-ordinator, based at County Hall, Glenfield, directly supports and supervises the volunteers and is available to help with any problems. The Co-ordinator organises further training and networking opportunities, provides advice and information to volunteers, provides display materials and co-ordinates volunteer attendance at larger events.

All Master Composters receive a manual at the training session which includes a variety of information. Additional information and task sheets will be sent to add to the manual. Resources such as posters and compost bins are also available to borrow for events etc. A quarterly newsletter is provided to all Master Composters that includes lists of events, composting related features and news from other Master Composters. Master Composters get access to a website for further information on home composting and specific information on news and events, as well as a discussion forum.

Master Composters are also entitled to membership of *Garden Organic*, which gives them access to information and expert advice on a wide range of technical composting and gardening queries.

After Master Composters have completed their 30 hours within the initial 12 months they will be invited to attend a graduation ceremony as a thank you and to celebrate their achievements.

Training:

All Master Composters will attend a 2 day training course. The first round of training takes place in November 08 (Friday 28th and Saturday 29th November) and the second round will be held in April 09. This two day training session is to ensure all volunteers have the same basic level of knowledge. The training covers the basics of home composting and how best to get the composting message across, as well as communication and presentation issues.

Additional training will be given on Food Waste Digesters and Wormeries. Both this and the 2 day training course are compulsory.

There is a possibility of additional training throughout the year.

Expenses:

As a general principle, volunteers should not be 'out of pocket' in volunteering for the Master Composter Programme.

All travel expenses incurred when volunteering for the Master Composter scheme will be paid for. This includes mileage, bus fares, parking etc. Volunteers will need to complete an expenses claim form, with relevant receipts attached, (including VAT receipts for fuel). Training will be given on how to complete all paperwork.

Insurance Cover available:

Volunteers are covered by Leicestershire County Councils' Public Liability insurance & Accident Cover.

Master Composters are volunteering on behalf of Leicestershire County Council and Garden Organic and will be provided with adequate insurance cover during their voluntary activities. Individual volunteers registered with Leicestershire County Council under this agreement will be indemnified by the Council's liability policies. If there is an accident resulting in injury to a third party/damage to third party property and it is alleged that the volunteer has been negligent, the Council and/or its insurers will deal with any liability claim. The liability policy will apply if the volunteer suffers personal injury in an accident and considers the Council's negligence to be the cause. Of course, compensation would only be payable if the Council were proven legally liable for the accident. The Council owes a duty of care to its volunteers while they are acting on its behalf and this should be recognised when their activities are organised.

Volunteers driving their own vehicle in the course of volunteering (including travelling to and from the location), will be subject to an annual check for their licence (must be UK), vehicle insurance, road tax and MOT. As Master Composters will be paid mileage expenses all volunteers using their own vehicle for volunteering purposes must send a letter to their insurance

company informing them of the fact they are a volunteer and will be paid mileage rates and ask them to indemnify Leicestershire County Council (A template letter is available to use).

Grievance Procedures:

The relationship between the volunteer and the partners in the Master Composter Programme is one of mutual benefit and trust. It is expected that any problems that arise are resolved through reasonableness and goodwill by all parties. Occasionally, a volunteer may have a disagreement with their supervisor or other employees and volunteers. If the volunteer's supervisor cannot resolve this satisfactorily then the volunteer may approach the supervisor's manager outlining the problem. A response should be given within 14 days. The supervisor and manager will ensure that the volunteer's views are treated seriously and dealt with fairly.

Where a supervisor has concerns about a volunteer's conduct, performance or reliability they will discuss it with the volunteer. If there is no improvement over a set period of time then the volunteer arrangement may be ended, but the supervisor should discuss the matter first with their manager. Where there is alleged serious misconduct, the volunteer may be asked to leave the site until the matter is investigated (see Volunteer Code of Conduct).

The relationship is not contractual and there is no obligation on the volunteer or Garden Organic/ Leicestershire County Council to give notice that the arrangement is to end. As a courtesy, however, the volunteer should give 2 weeks notice when resigning, and Garden Organic/Leicestershire County Council should provide 2 weeks' notice when ending the arrangement. There may be occasions where the arrangement is ended with immediate effect but this will be rare and usually only in the event of 'gross misconduct'.