



Improving fitness, minds and local wildlife for all to enjoy

Participation and referral guidelines

Please be aware that Nature's Gym is primarily a nature conservation group and tasks can be complicated, involve the use of tools and require volunteers to work on their own and under their own guidance. While we understand that being and working outdoors can have a number of benefits for all volunteers, staff are not trained to support those experiencing mental ill health or those with significant disabilities. Due to the nature of the work and the size of the group the staff are unable to offer one to one guidance.

With the above in mind it is strongly recommended that you check through our current programme and read about what we do, to ensure that Nature's Gym is the right project for you (and/or your client) prior to completing the registration and/or the referral form.

Volunteers need to have a level of independence that enables them to carry out tasks independently or with minimal supervision. If you or your client are unable to work independently under instruction then this might not be the right project for you. For volunteers who are unable to work independently the referring organisation must provide support for every session that their client attends. If the referred client is unable to work on their own and you are unable to provide this extra assistance we will not be able to accept the referral.

Please complete the registration form in full as we cannot accept any individuals without this information. Should you wish to discuss either of these forms or the nature of our work please feel free to contact us on 020 8314 2119 or email naturesgym@lewisham.gov.uk.

All volunteers joining Nature's Gym must attend a 'taster session' where we will assess their suitability for the project and the projects suitability for them. We will then discuss this with them and/or the referring agency. After 12 weeks, all volunteers will be invited to a feedback session where we can discuss this further

Specific Referral Guidelines

- Check that your client has an interest in nature conservation volunteering and that both of you have a sound understanding of the work Nature's Gym carries out and the abilities required to carry out the tasks involved.
- Carry out a careful assessment to gain an understanding of your clients needs and abilities, with a particular focus on any implications that your client's condition may have on the work Nature's Gym does.
- Ensure you give the Nature's Gym leaders all the correct information about your client as without this they can not accept the referral. The Memorandum of Understanding explains the reassessment process for referrals if it proves necessary.

- Please make sure you read the task for each session and assess its suitability for your client. If the work isn't suitable please either call the organisers to discuss further or give that session a miss. This is important as we are limited to the number of people we have, and, if someone turns up and doesn't work because they do not like/are unable to do the task, it means another individual has lost the opportunity to take part.