

Citizen Researcher Job Description

Salary: £12.21 per hour

Contract: Up to 6 hours per week, from May 2025 to June 2026. Flexibility will be required to adjust to programme activities.

Organisation: The employing organisation is Northern Roots (Oldham) Ltd, charity no 1196806.

Based: In the community and on site at Northern Roots.

About Northern Roots

The Northern Roots charity has been created to transform 160 acres of urban greenspace in the heart of Oldham into a destination for learning, leisure and growing. The charity aims to benefit the environment, and to improve the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of local communities. We are currently constructing a Visitor Centre, Forestry Skills centre and four acres of Urban Farm, and will open as a visitor destination in 2026.

Since 2020 we have been building relationships within the communities that neighbour Northern Roots, and across Oldham. Over the last year, with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we have recruited a team of local and youth community champions and supported them to co-produce a series of heritage-themed events and activities for local people.

Building on the success of this project we have now secured additional National Lottery Heritage Fund funding for a **new project**, to expand and diversify the community champion model, and create new opportunities for our local communities to get involved in shaping and benefiting from Northern Roots.

Specifically, we now seek to recruit three new teams of community roles:

- **Heritage Champions** – who will be supported to explore the industrial, social and natural heritage of Northern Roots, develop ideas for activities and events that bring that heritage to life, and help to organise and deliver those activities.
- **Citizen Researchers** – who will be trained in a range of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and then supported both to evaluate the impact of the project, and to carry out research to help shape different aspects of the development of Northern Roots.
- **Citizen Rangers** – who will be trained in species identification and monitoring skills and supported to oversee volunteers to carry out a series of seasonal species surveys to build up a comprehensive picture of the fauna and flora at Northern Roots.

All community roles will also play a key role in bringing members of their communities together to help shape, deliver, participate in and evaluate plans and activities at Northern Roots.

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The Citizen Researcher role

Do you enjoy asking questions, finding out what other people think and hope, sharing ideas, collating information and working in a team? Would you like to train to become a paid Citizen Researcher with Northern Roots?

We are looking to recruit a team of four local Citizen Researchers who will be trained in a range of research methods and then supported to evaluate the impact of our latest National Lottery Heritage project. You will also carry out research to help shape different aspects of the development of Northern Roots.

What is research?

Research is the process of looking for information to learn more about something or solve a problem. It involves asking questions, gathering facts, and studying the results to understand something better.

What is evaluation?

Evaluation is the process of judging how good or effective something is. It involves looking at something carefully to see if it meets its goals or works well. Evaluation helps answer questions like: Did it work? How well did it achieve its goals? What can be improved moving forward?

What is a Citizen Researcher?

A Citizen Researcher contributes to research and evaluation by collecting information or observing things. They bring expert knowledge of their own communities, and work alongside scientists or researchers to contribute to studies.

It's a way for local people to contribute to research and ensure that projects respond to their needs and wishes.

Northern Roots is keen to empower local communities to shape and benefit from every aspect of its work. Topics to be explored by the Citizen Researchers could be anything from what to serve in the Northern Roots café, to what school holiday activities to organise, to how best to manage the Northern Roots site for nature.

Training will be provided. Research and evaluation skills can be developed through training and practice. Northern Roots is recruiting an Evaluation Consultant who will train and support the Citizen Researchers throughout the project to ensure they have the skills and support they need.

Citizen Researcher - Key Tasks:

- Raise awareness of Northern Roots within your community, including with key partners like schools, faith organisations, health centres etc. Act as an ambassador for the project. Ensure the community understands the significance of Northern Roots in a way that is accessible, inclusive and relevant to them.
- Take part in training with the Evaluation Consultant to develop expertise in different research methods.
- Work with the Evaluation Consultant, Heritage Engagement Manager and Chief Executive to develop the evaluation framework for the National Lottery Heritage Fund project.
- Carry out baseline and endline research with local communities, visitors to the site, partners and stakeholders to assess the impact of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project and Northern Roots' activities more broadly.
- Carry out ongoing research to inform the design of activities and events, and the development of Marketing, Interpretation and Learning plans.
- Support the Learning Manager to engage with local educational institutions and develop an appropriate and engaging pilot learning programme.
- Work with the Evaluation Consultant, Heritage Champions, Citizen Rangers and wider Northern Roots staff to collate and share end of project evaluation reports and lessons learnt in a variety of formats suitable for internal and external audiences.

Person Specification: for the role you must be able to demonstrate:

- Good functional literacy and numeracy skills.
- An interest in learning to work with data and developing skills in this area.
- Ability to connect and speak with a diverse range of people in a warm and engaging manner.
- A good knowledge of and good relations with the residents, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), religious and educational institutions of your community.
- Where relevant, ability to communicate in community languages eg. Urdu, Bangla, Roma or Polish.
- An affinity for local heritage, nature, the environment, growing, arts, culture or outdoor sports would be an advantage.