Farm and Gardens Group Coordinator

Working with people with support needs, including learning disabilities, mental health and substance misuse issues.

Responsible to Health and Social Care Manager

Responsible for Volunteers

Location: Windmill Hill City Farm

Hours working pattern: Monday and Thursday: 9.00 -5.00

Grade C

# Purpose

To deliver our Supported Farm Placement programme which includes facilitating animal care and gardening groups for volunteers with support needs, including people with learning disabilities, mental health and substance misuse issues. The facilitator is responsible for planning and delivering the groups in a safe and welcoming environment, ensuring that our aims and objectives are achieved.

# Key tasks

A typical day will involve planning, setting up and delivering a morning and afternoon group, comprised of 6-8 volunteers (5-7 volunteers with support needs and 1-2 volunteers without support needs assisting the running of the group.)

The role is based outdoors, and sessions will either have an animal care (cleaning out, health checks, therapeutic activities) or gardening focus (weeding, planting in the greenhouse, polytunnels or allotments, propagating plants to sell, growing flowers and veg etc).

Sharing relevant information with the Health and Social Manager and keeping records that relate to volunteers’ wellbeing is a key part of the role that ensures our ongoing commitment to effective Safeguarding.

 **Key objectives**

The key objectives for this role contribute towards achieving the Health and Social Care Team’s aims and objectives, and those of the wider farm.

These include:

* Creating a supportive and welcoming environment where volunteers receive person-centered support, are valued and are given meaningful tasks to complete. This leads to good volunteer retention and supports an individuals’ recovery – the two main objectives within the H&SC team.
* Although the main objectives of this role are therapeutic, the H&SC team’s session plans should support other areas of the farm and contribute to their success. This could include growing food for the shop and café, propagating plants to sell, caring for the animals and maintaining the site so that it looks presentable and welcoming to visitors.
* The H&SC Team works closely with the Farm and Gardens and Education Teams, so a farm-wide view of the role and a friendly collaborative approach to working is essential.

**Main duties**

* Plan and deliver the supported Farm Placement sessions so that they are engaging and stimulating, with a variety of tasks from week to week.
* Create a positive, enthusiastic atmosphere in which group members are encouraged to communicate with each other, staff, and volunteers.
* Ensure the safety and wellbeing of group members including following the farm’s safeguarding policies.
* Understand the complex lives of individuals with support needs (including mental health issues, learning disabilities and substance misuse), and consequently the situations and issues that might arise within the group and how to resolve them.
* Work with and support individuals to achieve their personal goals, whilst maintaining focus on the group as a whole.
* Set up and pack away resources for each session.
* Monitor group resources needed (including refreshments and food) and buy any resources needed.
* Encourage volunteer engagement with group activities.
* Manage problems that may occur during the group with individuals or group dynamics and record incidents.
* Contribute to risk management processes and procedures.
* Give information and guidance to volunteers and signpost to relevant support.
* Follow-up concerns about volunteers or communicate issues for immediate action to the Health and Social Care Manager.
* Work in partnership with the Volunteer Coordinator and Health and Social Care Manager to support the practice and development of volunteers including post-group de-briefs.
* Carry out administration duties including inputting data such as attendance and other monitoring data.
* Ensure that internal policies and procedures are followed, with regards to confidentiality and vulnerable adults, volunteer procedures, attendance records and HR processes.
* Contribute to monitoring and evaluation processes.

### General

* Work with the other Farm teams and attend meetings as appropriate.
* Maintain an understanding of the Farm’s structure and ethos and contribute to the smooth running of the organisation.
* Comply at all times with Farm policies (e.g. Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Environmental and Confidentiality) and contribute to risk assessments.
* Carry out other duties commensurate with the responsibilities of the post.

# Person Specification

### Essential

* At least 2 years’ experience in supporting people with mental health issues and other support needs (e.g. learning disabilities, those recovering from addiction).
* Excellent active listening and interpersonal skills.
* Ability to liaise with external agencies (e.g. care teams, social workers, support teams) or guardians about volunteers’ wellbeing.
* Excellent group facilitation and coordination skills.
* Commitment to social inclusion and equal opportunities.
* A flexible attitude and ability to work collaboratively.
* A passion for working with people with complex needs and supporting them to reach their full potential.
* Skills and experience in either horticulture, animal care, or land-based activities and a willingness to learn new skills in these areas.
* Sufficient physical stamina to work outside and engage in physical activity for the majority of the working day.
* Good understanding of the statutory and legal requirements of caring for vulnerable adults.
* Must be legally entitled to work in the UK and will be required to provide an enhanced DBS check.

**Desirable**

* Excellent knowledge of the organisations and agencies involved in social care and the ability to liaise appropriately with the relevant organisations.
* An understanding of the changes in health and social care funding and the skills to help the organisation and the individuals concerned to move forward and manage these changes.
* Qualifications in either mental health/animal care/horticulture/land-based activities.