

Therapeutic Garden Lead (New Role)

JOB DESCRIPTION

Role:	Therapeutic Garden Lead
Job purpose:	With experience and passion for organic growing and working with vulnerable adults, you will support and empower our volunteer workers to achieve new heights, build their independence, their feeling of self-worth and sense of well-being. Your organised and practical skills will see you lead project delivery within our Care Farm and Community Garden, working collaboratively with empathy, kindness and patience.
Duration:	25.5 hours per week over 4 days (9-3.30pm) with options for overtime.
Salary:	Competitive according to skills and experience.
Reporting to:	Outdoor Experience and Education Manager

Background:

As England's first community-owned farm, Fordhall has always been a dynamic and innovative organisation. We are forward thinking, environmentally conscious and with over 8,000 community shareholders, we are definitely community-focussed. Whilst the organic farmland is leased to a tenant farmer (Ben Hollins), as a community body and landlord, we utilise the same land for the benefit of our community. Working collaboratively and holistically is at our core.

We believe that by restoring connections between hearts, minds and the soil, we will encourage and create meaningful change which helps to build health and resilience within people and planet. We run many projects at Fordhall that support our mission and this role sits at the core of many of these. These include a youth project working with vulnerable young people, volunteer opportunities, community events, free community access to the farm through managed farm trails, and a care farm, which supports adults with learning disabilities.

This is a wide-reaching role, whose purpose is to ensure our delivery team are supported in their work to nurture our landscape and the vulnerable people who attend our services

For more background on how Fordhall became community-owned, or for additional information on the many projects we run at Fordhall, please see www.fordhallfarm.com

A bit about our Care Farm:

Our Care Farm has been running for over 15 years. We are open four days a week (Mon-Thurs) supporting up to seven SEN adults (volunteer workers with learning disabilities and autism) each day on a 3 or 4:1 ratio. We work year-round in the community garden and polytunnel, growing organic food for our volunteer workers to take home, for us to make chutney and jams to sell, or occasionally to add to the delights in our onsite café, Athur's Farm Kitchen.

We also complete conservation work around the farm, manage all of the composting, take part in woodworking in the greenwood shelter, support other activities and events on site, and enjoy being creative through naturally based arts and craft activities. During the winter months we have access to the main room in the Straw Lodge and the large catering kitchen, which is perfect for cooking delicious food with our produce!

Our purpose is to create therapeutic garden and outdoor experiences that nurture the growing spaces we have onsite whilst, most importantly, nurturing and supporting the volunteer workers that attend, enhancing their lives in every way possible.

Our approach focuses on empowering people as individuals; encouraging them to grow, enjoy, partake and flourish in the activities provided at Fordhall. We value the volunteer workers as integral members of the wider Fordhall team, together we are creating a beautiful and welcoming place to visit for all members of our community.

Offering AQA certificates for the work carried out to increase their sense of achievement and contribution will also be part of this role.

You will be a leading part of the team that implements the program, creating more opportunities for our volunteer workers to flourish. As an organisation we love to try ideas and we are not afraid to fail, as long as we develop our learning along the way.

A day on the Care Farm is never dull with a myriad of tasks and activities on offer. From growing food to planting trees, cooking outside or engaging with a craft activity, no two days are ever the same.

Job Purpose:

By having a leadership role within our Care Farm, you will ensure the activities on the ground are productive, impactful and run smoothly for the benefit of the volunteer workers who attend and add value to Fordhall's offer to the wider community, whilst supporting the wider team.

Your approach will empower and facilitate opportunities for our volunteer workers to be involved in all aspects of Fordhall, specifically within growing food, nurturing the soil, woodworking and conservation/ecology work. Nurturing these spaces, sharing knowledge as well as providing opportunities for an individual's progression will be a key aspect of your

role. As a result, you will be adaptable to working with the seasons and delivering outdoor sessions appropriate to the time of year.

Working collaboratively with the staff team and the volunteer workers, you will lead and manage tasks/areas within the Care Farm including, but not exclusive to:

- Planting plans and garden design for the organic, permaculture-based community garden and other flower and growing beds onsite
- Site food composting (Riden hot composter)
- Garden compost toilet
- Woodworking and hard landscaping
- Public engagement within the community garden space
- Sheds and storage areas
- Guiding simple conservation tasks
- Awarding AQA's or other relevant certification to individuals
- Personal development of volunteer workers

This will include managing small budgets allocated by your manager, planning and developing new activities for the group, ordering stock/seeds, coordinating the maintenance of tools, assisting with impact reports, following risk assessments, and reporting any safeguarding concerns.

You will support the Outdoor Education and Experience Manager in maintaining positive engagement with the families and carers of our volunteer workers. This will include providing regular seasonal updates on activities and achievements within the Care Farm, as well as communicating any relevant information or concerns on a weekly basis.

Most importantly, you will get to know the incredible individuals that attend our service, you will understand their personal journey and become dedicated to building on their individual strengths, as you aspire on their behalf. This will involve creating, managing and maintaining individual profiles that capture their personal goals, interests, strengths and areas for development. You will use this information to inform the planning and delivery of the program. This will help to ensure that the activities and opportunities we provide on the Care Farm are person-centred and support each volunteer workers individual development and interests.

Key results from your role will be seen as our volunteer workers increase their practical skills and confidence. Appropriate AQA certificates will be awarded to support a clear progression path, with different opportunities being provided to each individual appropriate to their needs and interests. Our work is person-centred, which means it is guided by them as much as us and this collaborative approach will be vital to your role.

Success will see growing spaces become more productive as opportunities are grasped and developed using your enthusiasm for organic vegetable growing, people and the soil. As a space open to the public, it will be one to be enjoyed by all Fordhall visitors.

You, your role and the volunteer workers are part of the wider Fordhall family. Fostering this sense of connectedness and community through your role will mean we remain strong as an organisation.

About You:

You will be an experienced organic gardener, love nature and have an instinctive understanding of how the health of the soil and a connected growing system provides a healthy and productive site. Most importantly, you will be willing and keen to share this knowledge with others.

Woodworking or DIY skills? We have a wonderful greenwood shelter and we would love to use it more. You will have the skills to help us do this, or be willing to learn, to support the development of basic carpentry and tool use skills within the Care Farm. You may be helping to create things for them to take home, making repairs together to enhance the garden space, or maintaining other areas onsite.

You will need to be sensitive to the needs of others, open-minded and a willingness to be as open hearted as possible when the need arises. Patience, together with empathy and kindness are critical attributes when working with vulnerable adults.

You will be committed to championing the needs of the individuals you are working with. Ensuring their voice is at the front of all of our activities.

Working within a small dynamic team, adaptability is essential, as is an ability to plan ahead and resource effectively.

Your strengths will include problem solving, creative thinking and self-motivation.

Your Skills and Attributes:

Essential:

- A qualification or extensive practical experience in organic horticulture, or perhaps you are a keen gardener and have completed a Permaculture course. Having the right understanding and approach is vital to us.
- An ability to creatively guide and plan simple woodworking projects with appropriate tools.
- A qualification or extensive experience of working with SEN adults (with learning disabilities and/or other support needs)
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Basic computer skills – Word/excel/regular email communication.
- An understanding of the importance of confidentiality, data protection and the needs and wishes of service users as appropriate.

- Working knowledge of risk assessment, Health and Safety, safeguarding, person-centred planning.
- Excellent organisational skills and ability to manage and deliver multiple activities, prioritising workload. An ability to plan long-term and think strategically about the project will be advantageous.
- A caring, empathetic and understanding approach and an ability to empower and support others.

Working hours and arrangements:

Start date: Immediate

Hours: 25.5 hours per week over 4 days (9-3.30pm) with options for overtime

The Care Farm operates Monday to Thursday year-round, with a compulsory close over Christmas. Weekend work is required once or twice a year, to engage with our wider community of shareholders and supporters.

Sickness: Company sickness pay is in place and is activated following six months' continual service.

Holidays: Equivalent to 5.6 weeks per annum pro rata

Pay: starting from £13.64 per hour (all breaks are paid for)

Pension: The organisation has a pension scheme in place with the Peoples Pension

Application: Please complete an application form from our website and submit to charlotte.hollins@fordhallfarm.com

Deadline: Midnight Sunday 23rd August 2026

Key Roles and Responsibilities:

- To proactively engage with developments within the garden setting, suggesting & implementing ecological improvements or gardening activities suitable for the group.
- Planning and delivery of basic wood working projects and gardening activities
- To support the delivery of an activity planned by another member of the team.
- To supervise/guide external support workers and volunteer workers safely, including safe use of tools and ensuring appropriate risk assessments are in place.
- To be responsible for maintaining the organic growing areas and storage spaces, ensuring a safe and tidy site. Co-ordinating the general cleaning and maintenance of greenhouse, shed, storage areas, all internal external areas used by the group.
- Support people attending the care farm to ensure they are safe and welcomed, and are able to carry out the activities to best of their abilities.
- To work with empathy and understanding to support, guide and empower our participants to achieve their potential and improve their physical, mental and emotional well-being.
- To regularly liaise and communicate with carers, family members, professionals and other external agencies.
- To support the Outdoor Experience and Education Manager to fill vacant places on the Care Farm, liaise with agencies and help market the service to others.
- To help make the farm a welcoming and safe place for care farm participants, staff and visitors.
- Undertake training and continuous professional development in accordance with the needs of the service and the people we support.
- Be actively involved in the gathering and documentation of individual's achievement. Keep all appropriate records and information up to date, provide any information and documentation required and prepare regular reports on the day's activities, including individual evaluations to help make sure there is accurate and timely information available to evidence our impact.
- To be organised and have good written communication skills necessary for record-keeping, evaluations, social media and newsletter items.
- Comply with Fordhall's health and safety policies, including protection of vulnerable adults and child protection policies. Comply with Health and Safety Legislation, food hygiene and other relevant policies and procedures.
- To undertake any other duties within your skill and which may be required to ensure the smooth and successful running of the organisation.