

Care Farm Development Worker (New Role)

JOB DESCRIPTION

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| Role: | Care Farm Development Worker (Chief Creator) |
| Job purpose: | <p>With specific skills and experience in organic gardening and DIY, you will support and empower vulnerable adults to achieve new heights, build their independence and their feeling of self-worth and well-being. Working within a passionate and dedicated team you will actively contribute and develop the long term Care Farm and Social Prescribing offer at Fordhall, ensuring your own unique skills and strengths continue to be utilised for the benefit of those involved.</p> <p>This is a new role to expand the skills base of the current team and develop our offer.</p> |
| Duration: | Average of 25.5 hours per week over 4 days (9-3.30pm) with options for overtime. |
| Salary: | Competitive according to skills and experience. |
| Reporting to: | Care Farm 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 are here to also utilise the same land for the benefit of our community. 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 us on our mission. These include a youth project working with vulnerable young people, volunteer opportunities, community events, free community access to the farm through managed farm trails, social prescribing, and of course our care farm, which supports adults with learning disabilities.

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 11 years and has gone from strength to strength in the intervening years. We are now open four days a week (Mon-Thurs) and work with adults with learning disabilities and autism. We work all year round growing organic produce in the community garden and polytunnel. We also do conservation work around the farm (tree planting, scrub clearance etc.), basic woodworking, composting, flower growing, make jams and chutneys with our surpluses, and enjoy being creative through arts and craft activities.

On any given day, there are 6 volunteer workers (the name chosen by the vulnerable adults attending our sessions) and two support staff working alongside them to offer support and guidance, plus any volunteers or outside sessional workers. We therefore work at a minimum ratio of 1:3.

Individuals access our service through a number of routes, but all are eventually funded through Service Level Agreements from the County Council allocated from an individual's personal budget.

Our aims are to have a positive impact on well-being through connections to nature, to increase understanding of good food and to create fun and educational experiences and memories that encourage meaningful change.

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.

We want to expand what we can offer to our volunteer workers. This includes incorporating more practical skills such as basic carpentry, tool use, DIY, and woodworking, which will be a focus of this new role alongside a strong gardening experience base.

We also hope to offer AQA certificates for the work carried out to increase their sense of achievement and contribution.

The care farm has a wonderful opportunity to develop and grow. You will be an integral part of the team that implements these changes, 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.

A bit about Social Prescribing:

After trailing a support group in 2020, we decided to extend our offer via Social Prescribing. This aspect of the project supports those struggling with feelings of isolation and loneliness. Half a day a week is available for the right candidate to deliver green care activities on a Friday, to local adults who have been referred by their GP. These activities will likely include a gentle walk around the farm, followed by a short activity you will design each week (craft or otherwise). The focus is on connections to nature and green space, to encourage healing and to provide a nurturing space for those who attend.

Job Purpose:

You will be actively empowering adults with learning disabilities to grow their own potential, their confidence and their skills within the setting of the Fordhall community garden. You will also use your love of nature and the outdoors to facilitate the healing of adults attending our Social Prescribing activities.

You will facilitate opportunities for people to be involved in all aspects of Fordhall, specifically within growing food, woodworking and conservation work. Expanding these areas of opportunity at Fordhall 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.

Key results from your role will be seen as our volunteer workers increase their practical skills and confidence. Appropriate AQA certificates will be awarded and a clear progression path for those attending the Care Farm will be evident, with different opportunities being provided to different individuals appropriate to their needs. Growing spaces will become more productive and opportunities will be grasped and developed.

You will work in collaboration with the Care Farm Manager and other team members to implement our collective vision, using your practical knowledge and nurturing approach to help shape the service and increase the potential of what we can offer.

As a member of the team, you will be committed to challenging yourself and committed to bringing the best part of 'you' to the role.

About You:

You will be a passionate 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.

Woodworking 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, developing basic carpentry and tool use skills within our group. 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 using the skills of you and your volunteer workers.

You will have excellent personal skills and a genuine interest in empowering people. You will be enthusiastic about enabling people to learn and develop at their own pace and appropriate to their situation. 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. You will be committed to championing the needs of the individuals you are working with.

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. Communication skills are also vital to maintaining the viability of the team and the needs of those you support.

We seek to support people within the context of nature. A connection to the natural world around us and an understanding of how the work we do, ties into that understanding, is fundamental to this role.

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.

Key Roles and Responsibilities:

- To take responsibility for the planning and delivery of wood working projects and gardening activities, or to support the delivery of an activity planned by another member of the team.
- To lead Friday's Social Prescribing sessions, including a walk and appropriate craft/group activity. To ensure appropriate evaluations are completed allowing the impact of our work to be evidenced.
- When leading care farm sessions you will supervise/guide external support workers and volunteers 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 and 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.
- When required, to liaise and communicate with carers, family members, professionals and other external agencies.
- To help make the farm an interesting 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.
- Act up as Care Farm Manager during periods of holiday/sickness cover and cover for staff absence.

Your Skills and Attributes:

Essential:

- A qualification or extensive practical experience in horticulture (preferably organic), perhaps you are a keen gardener and have completed a Permaculture course. The knowledge and approach are most important to us.
- An ability to creatively guide and plan simple woodworking projects with appropriate tools.
- A qualification or extensive experience of working with adults with learning disabilities and/or other support needs
- Experience of coaching / supporting individuals with specific needs.
- Experience of working with and supervising staff and volunteers
- 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.
- Good organisational skills and ability to manage and deliver multiple activities, prioritising workload.
- A caring attitude, empathetic and understanding and an empowering approach to guiding others.

Working hours and arrangements:

Start date: November 2021

Hours: Average of 25.5 hours over four days (Mon-Fri), with additional hours for overtime. Basic hours will be between 8.30/9-3.30pm on a delivery day with admin/write up time allocated throughout the week (home working for this is possible). Team meetings and supervision are likely to happen 3.30-5.30pm on a pre-arranged day, and these are usually once a month on average. Other hours would need to be flexible around training days, covering for staff on annual leave or sickness. Staff work on a rota covering these days. Our rota is worked out one month ahead of schedule.

The Care Farm operates Monday to Thursday and Social Prescribing is offered on a Friday (2 hours delivery, 1-2 hours set up/clear down/admin).

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

Holidays: Equivalent to 5.6 weeks per annum pro rata

Pay: £9.27 - £9.68 per hour depending on experience and qualifications. Pay scales and rates are reviewed on an annual basis by the FCL's Board of Directors (each February). All breaks are paid for.

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