

Care Farm Development Worker and Grower (New Role)

JOB DESCRIPTION

Role:	Care Farm Development Worker and Grower
Job purpose:	With experience and passion for organic growing 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 offer at Fordhall, ensuring your own unique skills and strengths continue to be utilised for the benefit of those involved.
Duration:	Average of 19.5 or hours per week over 3 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 13 years and has gone from strength to strength in the intervening years. We are 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 natural 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.

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.

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

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.

Job Purpose:

You 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.

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 different individuals appropriate to their needs. Growing spaces will become more productive and opportunities will be grasped and developed and your enthusiasm for growing and the soil are shared with the team.

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. Most importantly, you will be willing and keen to share this knowledge with others.

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.

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 through building connections to our natural world. This is fundamental to the role, together with the linked behaviours we all need to adapt to limit our impact on the climate.

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 proactively engage with developments within the garden setting, suggesting ecological improvements or gardening activities suitable for the group.
- To support the 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.

- 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 jointly 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.
- 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.
- To pro-actively ensure Fordhall Farm remains an interesting and safe place for care farm participants, staff and visitors.
- During the course of your work, it is expected that members of the team will be required to support community open days/events to help showcase the work of the care farm. These could be on weekends or during the week. Members of the care farm team should expect to be asked to attend these on rotation.
- Act up as 'Session Lead' as required during periods of holiday/sickness cover and cover for staff absence.
- When leading care farm sessions, you will responsible for the supervision of external support workers and volunteers, safe use of tools; ensuring appropriate risk assessments are in place and all safeguarding measures are taken.
- To undertake any other duties within your skill and which may be required to ensure the smooth and successful running of the organisation.

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: Immediate

Hours: Average of 19.5 hours per week over 3 days (9-3.30pm) with options for overtime

The Care Farm operates Monday to Thursday year-round, with a compulsory close over Christmas.

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: £10.80 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