Forest Farm Peace Garden

Ecotherapy Worker Job Description

**Conditions of Work**

**Salary:** £15,720 pro rata (£26,200 per annum)

The position is 3 days per week. You will work Wednesdays and Fridays at the Garden in Hainault, and one flexible office day from our office in Ilford (on a Monday or Tuesday preferably).

The contract is for a permanent post, subject to funding. There will be a six month probation period. This post is entitled to 25 days annual leave pro rata, with an additional day for every year employed up to a maximum of 30 days per year.

**Accountable to:** Project Manager

**Responsible for:** Mental health service users and buddy volunteers in the Garden

**Works alongside:** Project Manager, Head Gardener, volunteers and the Board of Trustees

**Funders:** Forest Farm Peace Garden is supported through funding from the Big Lottery Fund and Postcode Local Trust

Forest Farm Peace Garden is a registered charity no: 1123031.

**About the Role**

The Ecotherapy Worker position is an opportunity to be at the cutting edge of a mental health project that uses nature-based interventions to improve mental, social and physical wellbeing. The selected candidate will be able to build on the foundations of our successful Ecotherapy Programme and take it to the next level.

The role of the Ecotherapy Worker will be to take the lead responsibility for supporting people with mental health needs, as well as adults with learning disabilities, to be active outdoors doing gardening, food growing, and other activities in nature to support their recovery. 

The Ecotherapy Worker will work closely with the Head Gardener and Project Manager in overseeing activities in the garden, including planning tasks and running twice-weekly ecotherapy sessions,with a particular emphasis on creating and developing a healing and welcoming place for all. You will manage the referral process including developing partnerships and liaising with local organisations in the public and third sector to attract new service users each year.

You will also co-ordinate our team of buddy volunteers who provide one to one support to referred clients in the garden. Your role will include recruiting, training and supporting new buddy volunteers each year. The role also includes fulfilling our funders monitoring and evaluation requirements, and tracking our success in improving mental health and wellbeing of our service users.

We particularly welcome candidates with an interest in and experience of food growing, social and therapeutic horticulture and permaculture.

The successful candidate will be required to undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

**Main Tasks**

* **Work with mental health service users and buddy volunteers in the garden during our twice-weekly ecotherapy sessions, coordinating tasks and volunteers.**

You will run our twice-weekly ecotherapy sessions on Wednesday and Friday at our garden in Hainault. This will involve setting up the day’s activities, allocating tasks, pairing service users with buddies and supervising the activities of the day alongside other staff. A minimum of two staff will be present during each garden session. You will be responsible for ensuring that the day to day service will be of a high quality and standard. You will also have the opportunity to deliver occasional workshops on specific topics, according to skills and interests, as part of our garden sessions.

* **Support ecotherapy service users**

You will be point of contact for ecotherapy service users, keeping personal records, inducting new clients and providing one to one reviews to support them to get the most from their placement and work towards personal goals.

* **Liaise with referrers and recruit new service users**

You will manage the referral process for new service users to the ecotherapy programme and liaise with referring organisations. You will work together with the Project Manager to proactively develop relationships with local statutory, voluntary, community and mental health services and help to ensure that the charity meets its targets for referrals. This will involve visiting partnership organisations, giving presentations, running information stalls and support with devising information materials for referrers.

* **Recruit, train and co-ordinate buddy volunteers**

You will co-ordinate the buddy volunteer scheme and are point of contact for buddies, providing ongoing support. This will involve organising the rota, correspondence, providing feedback and being available for support. Together with the Project Manager you will organise and deliver volunteer training and recruit 8-12 new buddies per year. You will arrange for any other appropriate training for buddies and make sure that their DBS checks are undertaken. You will run review and evaluation sessions for buddies together with the Project Manager.

* **Undertake relevant monitoring and evaluation**

You will undertake monitoring and evaluation requirements to track our success in meeting our aims of improving mental health and wellbeing. This will involve keeping up-to-date data records, running evaluation sessions with other staff and using evaluation tools, such as surveys, case study interviews and focus groups. You will work closely with the Project Manager to ensure that monitoring data is collected on time and in an appropriate format to meet funding requirements.

* **Support Forest Farm Peace Garden events**

You will work with other staff to support the planning and running of our two annual community events.

**Ecotherapy Worker Person Specification**

**Experience**

* At least 2 years’ experience of working with people with mental health issues in a community and/or formal context. Experience of working with adults with learning disability is also desirable. We welcome candidates who can demonstrate relevant experience or transferrable skills of supporting people with high support needs.
* Experience of providing one-to-one support for people with a range of needs and abilities.
* Experience of maintaining regular monitoring and evaluation systems and producing monitoring data.
* At least 1 year experience of recruiting and managing a team of volunteers and supporting their learning and development.
* Experience of supervising groups, giving group presentations and/or running training and workshops for groups.
* Experience of building and developing partnerships with statutory and voluntary organisations and services.
* Experience of networking with diverse communities, including with people from BME communities, and an understanding of, and commitment to, implementing equal opportunities.

**Education/Knowledge**

* Good knowledge and experience of organic gardening.
* Knowledge of statutory and voluntary mental health and community services and referral pathways.
* Good understanding of befriending or similar projects involving volunteers - how they work, common pitfalls, how to develop them over time.
* Understanding of safeguarding and risk assessment and management, both in terms of practical outdoor work and of working with mental health service users.
* Good knowledge of what goes into building a supportive and rewarding volunteering experience.
* Understanding of data protection issues relating to personal records.
* An interest in and knowledge of social and therapeutic horticulture or ecotherapy approaches, and permaculture, is desirable.

**Skills and Abilities**

* Good oral and written communication skills.
* Strong organisational skills with the ability to plan your workload independently, setting goals and monitoring the progress of work.
* The ability to work to tight deadlines in a fast paced environment.
* Resilience and adaptability to a changing working environment, and the ability to work confidently and flexibly through challenging periods of development**.**
* The ability to work in a small team.
* The ability to maintain a professional attitude and boundaries in working with project volunteers, stakeholders and management committee members.
* Computer literate with an ability to use Microsoft Office, spreadsheets, email and social media.

**Other Characteristics**

* Commitment to the multiple aims and the values underpinning Forest Farm Peace Garden.
* To be available for occasional weekend events and 6-weekly evening trustee board meetings (usually on a Monday evening.)

**Application Process**

Your application for the position of Ecotherapy Worker at Forest Farm Peace Garden includes:

1. A cover letter outlining your relevant skills and experience, with examples, of how you meet the requirements for the role and person specification. We cannot give you credit for assumed of implied skills, so please be specific. Please keep to a maximum 2 sides of A4.
2. A completed Application Form which includes personal details and references.
3. Your detailed and up-to-date CV.
4. An equal opportunities monitoring form, which will be kept separate from your application.

All four documents must be submitted as .doc or .pdf files via email by **5pm on Friday 21st September 2018**. Incomplete applications will be discarded. Please email your application to: [info@forestfarmpeacegarden.org](mailto:info@forestfarmpeacegarden.org)

We aim to contact candidates who are selected for interview by Tuesday 25th September and interviews will be held on Monday 1st October 2018.

Unfortunately, we can only offer the position to individuals who have a right to work in the UK.

If you have any questions about this position or the application process, please contact the Project Manager, Kate Allardyce, on: 07525 131996 / [kate@forestfarmpeacegarden.org](mailto:kate@forestfarmpeacegarden.org)