

Job Description – Community Activities & Volunteering Lead

Reports to: Head of Services.

Responsible for: Outreach & Development Worker; Volunteers.

Contract: Fixed term to 31st December 2027.

Hours: Full time - 37.5 hours per week. Part time and flexible working applications also considered. Some regular working outside Monday-Friday 9-5 may be required, for which TOIL will be available.

Salary: £32,644 + 6% pension contribution.

Annual Leave: 33 days including bank holidays pro rata.

Based at: Sydenham Garden Resource Centre, SE23 2LW, and De Frene Market Garden, SE26 4AB, with travel in London.

Our Organisation

Sydenham Garden, based in Lewisham in South-East London, is a unique wellbeing centre utilising its gardens, nature reserve and activity rooms to help people living with and recovering from mental and physical ill-health. We provide nature and arts based creative, social and therapeutic activities for co-workers (the name we give to our primary beneficiaries). People are referred to us from community organisations and health professionals and we use an integrative approach where those with different degrees of mental and physical ill health come together with volunteers from the local community to reduce social exclusion and prejudice. Each year we work with on average 300+ co-workers and over 70 volunteers.

Currently co-workers join a group in one of our projects - African Caribbean, Art & Craft, Garden, Growing Lives, m.u.d (18-25) and Practical Organic Gardening (for mental health referrals) and Sow & Grow (for dementia referrals). Our projects offer a 12-month placement in a weekly group, with m.u.d. offering open-ended placements up to the age of 25. We also deliver volunteer-led Clubs, community lunches and public fairs and festivals which involve our whole community. We have a positive impact on our co-workers' mental health and wellbeing by providing a supportive, inclusive and non-judgemental community, set in our beautiful green spaces.

Context

With funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to help us grow our community and increase the sustainability of our impact, we're excited to advertise this post to lead and develop our Community Activities and Volunteering Programme at Sydenham Garden.

This pivotal role will contribute to some of our key strategic aims by:

- Increasing the number of co-workers we support.
- Improving our engagement with co-workers at the end of their therapeutic placement by offering a range of community activities.
- Increasing co-worker empowerment and voice by developing a supported pathway for co-workers to become volunteers.
- Improve our services by increasing the ethnic diversity and mental ill-health lived experience of our volunteers.

Our Community Activities & Volunteering (CAV) Lead will build relationships with co-workers and volunteers across Sydenham Garden services. They will be responsible for gathering feedback and ideas from co-workers about how they want our community activities to develop and what support they need to play an active role in this. The CAV Lead will also work with co-workers and volunteers to further enhance our supported pathway for co-workers to become volunteers in our therapeutic groups and community activities as well as managing the day to day running of our volunteer programme.

Job Purpose:

- To lead continuous improvement and development of volunteer-led community activities for the benefit of co-workers.
- To manage the day to day running of our volunteer programme and lead on volunteer recruitment, training and development.
- Lead data collection and analysis to monitor impact of Community Activities and Volunteering Programme.

Key Responsibilities

Community Activities

- Manage delivery of our existing Community Activities (Clubs and Community Lunches), including preparing resources and managing budgets
- Manage volunteers delivering Community Activities – including participating in or supporting session delivery when appropriate, conducting debriefs with volunteers
- Develop and deliver new Community Activities in consultation with co-workers and volunteers.
- Explore and make recommendations for development of Community Activities.

Staff & Volunteer Management

- Line management of the Outreach & Development Worker.
- Ensure all Sydenham Garden services and office functions are appropriately resourced with volunteers.

- Manage Sydenham Garden's existing Volunteer-led Clubs (Social Strolls, Gardening Club, Cosy Club and Art Club).
- Manage and strengthen Sydenham Garden volunteer processes for recruitment, induction, training, including delivering regular Volunteer Forums and reviews.
- Develop and implement plans to achieve our strategic ambitions to increase diversity and lived experience within our volunteer base.
- Develop and implement a supported pathway for co-workers to become volunteers.
- Facilitate involvement of co-workers and volunteers in community lunches.
- Support co-workers and volunteers to actively contribute to Sydenham Garden's public events.

Co-worker support

- Have oversight of the co-worker journey (Adult Mental Health referrals, intros, end of placement transitions etc).
- Working with the Outreach & Development Worker and Project Leads to further strengthen and develop the co-worker journey.
- Providing support and guidance to co-workers in the context of Clubs and end of placement transitions, assisting them to review their progress and identify their next steps.
- Ensure policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults are promoted and adhered to in accordance with best practice principles.
- Liaise with the Safeguarding Lead regarding co-worker concerns in Clubs.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

- Lead data collection and analysis to monitor impact of Community Activities and Volunteering Programme.
- Establish and implement systems for monitoring Community Activities outputs and outcomes.
- Ensure reporting deadlines are met and reports are to a high standard.

Budget management

- Manage budget for Community Activities & Volunteering Programme.

Other

- Work within the policies and procedures of Sydenham Garden and in a way that meets legal, statutory and best practice requirements.
- Proactively seek and propose personal development opportunities and training.
- Provide cover for services delivery in the case of staff absence.
- Work to promote equality and diversity principles and practice.
- Work flexibly, including occasional evening and weekend work.
- Undertake any other duties as reasonably required

Person Specification

CRITERIA	To be assessed via application form	To be assessed at interview	To be assessed via task
Experience			
Experience of recruiting, working with, and managing volunteers, including delivery of skill-building and development activities for and with volunteers with Lived Experience of mental and/or physical ill health.	X	X	X
Experience of developing and delivering activities for and with people who have a diverse range of needs and experiences, including Black and minoritised people, Neurodivergent people, Disabled people and people with mental and physical health issues and/or dementia.	X	X	
Line management experience, including managing high-performing individuals; providing strategic direction, constructive challenge and development support.	X	X	
Qualifications/Training/Skills/Abilities			
Excellent people skills and the ability to demonstrate sensitivity, kindness, and a person-centred understanding of different mental, physical, and neurological needs.		X	X
A range of personal tools and practices which help you to respond to challenges and setbacks in a way that supports your own and others' wellbeing.		X	
Knowledge and Understanding			
You understand and care about building safe and inclusive spaces, are committed to an accountable and safe working culture and have the knowledge and understanding of how Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles apply in our setting.	X	X	X
Knowledge and understanding of Safeguarding, Professional Boundaries and best practice in relation to working with vulnerable adults.		X	X

This role requires an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Sydenham Garden is committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). We want to build a diverse and inclusive staff, volunteer and trustee team where everyone feels that they belong and that reflects the profile of the communities we serve. Therefore, we will welcome and consider applications from candidates of all backgrounds and protected characteristics, and we particularly encourage applications from people of African or Caribbean heritage to ensure our staff team represents the communities we serve.

How to Apply

To apply, please send us a CV together with a supporting statement that addresses how you meet the following criteria in the Person Specification:

1. Experience of recruiting, working with, and managing volunteers, including delivery of skill-building and development activities for volunteers with Lived Experience of mental and/or physical ill health.
2. Experience of developing and delivering activities for and with people who have a diverse range of needs and experiences, including Black and minoritised people, Neurodivergent people, Disabled people and people with mental and physical health issues and/or dementia.
3. Line management experience, including managing high-performing individuals; providing strategic direction, constructive challenge and development support.
4. You understand and care about building safe and inclusive spaces, are committed to an accountable and safe working culture and have the knowledge and understanding of how Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles apply in our setting.

The supporting statement should be no more than two A4 pages, minimum font size 11. Applications should be made by email to: jobs@sydenhamgarden.org.uk with 'Community Activities & Volunteering Lead' in the subject line.

Please provide the names, positions, organisations and telephone contact numbers of two referees, relevant to this role. References will only be taken up with your express permission.

A note on the use of AI for your supporting statement:

We understand applicants may use AI tools for accessibility support and for proofreading, or structuring their thoughts. However, we're looking for authentic examples from your own experience and your genuine voice. We ask that your supporting statement is not drafted entirely through generative AI.

Recruitment Timeline

Deadline for applications: Thursday 5th March.

Interviews: Thursday 12th March.

Do you have any questions? If you would like to find out more about the recruitment process or the role, please contact our Head of Services, Ollie Moss at ollie@sydenhamgarden.org.uk with suggested times for a call.

Equal Opportunities Form

A diverse workforce is important to us, and for this reason, we request that you complete our equal opportunities form [here](#), which is kept separately from the recruitment process.