

Job Description – Garden Project Worker

Reports to:	Garden Project Lead.
Responsible for:	Volunteers.
Contract:	1 Year Fixed Term.
Hours:	18.75 hours per week across 2.5 days.
Salary:	£29,726 per annum pro rata.
Annual Leave:	33 days inclusive of 8 bank holidays pro rata.
Based at:	De Frene, 35A De Frene Road, SE26 4AB & Sydenham Garden Resource Centre 28A Wynell Road, London, SE23 2LW.

Our Organisation

Sydenham Garden, based in Lewisham in South-East London, is a special, unique and beloved wellbeing centre utilising its gardens, nature reserve and activity rooms to help people living with and recovering from mental and physical ill-health. We were established in 2002 and will celebrate our 25th anniversary in 2027. We provide nature and arts based creative, social and therapeutic activities for co-workers (the name we give 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 over 250 co-workers and over 70 volunteers.

Sydenham Garden's mission is to promote the physical and mental wellbeing of residents living in South London by providing:

- Community gardens where horticulture is used for therapy and rehabilitation
- Opportunity for training for work and education
- Opportunity for artistic and creative expression principally in our resource buildings
- The protection and preservation of the environment for the benefit of the public through nature conservation and the promotion of biological diversity

Some examples of our impact from our most recent [annual report](#) include:

- 95% of our coworkers reported increased confidence to advocate for themselves
- 93% of our coworkers and 100% of our volunteers reported increased contentment with life
- 91% of volunteers reported improving their skills

What our co-workers say about Sydenham Garden:

"You make people feel important, special and welcome – there isn't anywhere else like it"

"I've enjoyed the fresh air and being outside and connecting with others. Everyone is very supportive. I've gained better confidence, more independence, and less anxiety about speaking with people. I feel more assertive and confident now."

"I have really enjoyed being part of a group. I feel a real bond with the people in the group. Everyone is friendly, warm, supportive, and welcoming"

Our values are Empowerment, Inclusivity, Accountability.

Job Purpose

To plan and deliver three high-quality, therapeutic garden sessions per week for our co-workers and to manage associated admin.

Key Responsibilities

Planning and delivering gardening sessions for people with a range of mental and physical health problems

- Deliver gardening sessions suitable for co-workers with a choice of physical and gentle activities for a range of different abilities.
- Co-develop grow plans, session plans, and seasonal plans with the Garden Project Lead (GPL).
- Three sessions per week.

Co-managing a support team of volunteers alongside Garden Project Lead (GPL) and Community Activities & Volunteering Lead (CAVL)

- Manage and provide support to a team of approx. 8-12 group support volunteers.
- Run briefing and de-brief sessions with volunteers before/after each session.

Maintaining the garden and the nature reserve during therapeutic session

- Assess garden maintenance needs on a regular basis and plan activities according to what needs doing in the garden.
- Risk assess and maintain high safety standards in conjunction with GPL.
- Support GPL and Business & Premises Manager to carry out essential maintenance.
- Support GPL in implementing the nature reserve management plan.

Supporting GPL to grow and produce a range of products to sell at fairs / public events

- Effectively grow salads, vegetables and other plants using organic and/or permaculture principles.
- Support in the production of plants/flowers/gift items for selling at community events.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Keeping accurate records of co-worker and volunteer attendance on group registers.
- Maintain the quarterly review assessment system and transition 1:1s.
- Support GPL in maintaining regular communication with coworkers throughout the placement.

- Provide pro-active communication to coworkers following SG non-attendance process so that spaces remain filled and coworkers are appropriately supported.

Providing support and guidance to co-workers approaching graduation and supporting GPL in assisting them to review their progress and identify their next steps

- Supporting the GPL, CAV Lead and other team members to ensure a smooth transition for co-workers coming to the end of their placement.
- Using quarterly reviews to assess co-workers' needs and provide support with transitions.

Model robust safeguarding awareness in line with Sydenham Garden Safeguarding Policy and professional boundaries good practice.

General Duties

- Work within the policies and procedures of Sydenham Garden and in a way that meets legal, statutory and best practice requirements.
- Identify and participate in appropriate personal and skills development and training.
- Work flexibly, including evening and weekend working for Board meetings and events, for which TOIL is available.
- Provide cover for services delivery in the case of staff absence.
- 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			
Facilitating horticultural and/or nature-based group activities in a community setting.	X		X
Managing and supporting volunteers.	X	X	
Record-keeping and feedback collection.		X	
Qualifications/Training/Skills/Abilities			
Excellent people skills and the ability to demonstrate sensitivity, kindness, and a person-centred approach to different mental, physical, and neurological needs.		X	X

Level 2 Qualification or equivalent experience with the ability to inspire and promote the benefits of horticulture, connection with nature and urban growing.	X	X	X
Knowledge and Understanding			
Understanding of working with people living with mental health and physical health conditions.	X	X	
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) and Safeguarding principles apply in our setting.	X	X	X

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

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Sydenham Garden is committed to **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**. 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 Person Specification, including how you have gained the experience and abilities required (maximum 2 pages). Applications should be made by email to: jobs@sydenhamgarden.org.uk with 'Garden Project Worker' in the subject line.

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: **9am Monday 10 August.**

Interviews: TBC

Questions & Equal Opportunities

Do you have any questions? If you would like to find out more about the role then we can arrange an informal chat with Ollie, please contact jobs@sydenhamgarden.org.uk to arrange a call.

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.

