



Job Description

Role: Garden Project Assistant

Responsible to: Garden Project Lead

Responsible for: Volunteers and co-workers

Location: Our main sites (Wynell Road and De Frene Road) in Forest Hill/Sydenham with some remote working from home

Hours: Part-time (18.75 hours per week or 2.5 days)

Contract Length: Fixed term 6 month contract

Salary: £23,000 pro rata (£11,500 per annum eq. to £5,750 for 6 months) with 6% pension contribution.

Holiday: Annual Leave Entitlement is 25 days pro rata plus bank holidays as applicable.

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

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 in their recovery 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 250-300 co-workers and over 60 volunteers.

Currently co-workers can take part in one of four main projects: Garden Project, Art and Craft Project, Sow and Grow Dementia Project, and Growing Lives Project, each with a different theme and emphasis. We also run supplementary activities including community lunches, a walking group, singing and movement sessions, and regular clubs. Since 2012, in line with increasing local need and demand for our services, we have grown from two projects on one site to four core projects over two sites and from two to 13 members of part time staff. Since March this year we have also developed a significant new strand of online group delivery, though our nature-based groups remain active in a Covid-safe adapted format, out of doors.

The Role

The Garden Project Assistant will work within the Garden Project to design, plan and deliver engaging and inclusive outdoor activity sessions with co-workers. They will be responsible

for the successful monitoring of their sessions and the collection of outcome data relevant to the project, to be shared with the Project Lead and Head of Services, feeding into our wider outcome monitoring. They will also be responsible for contribution to development and delivery of digital resources for our co-workers, enabling us to maintain contact and activity based support in the advent of further Covid-19 related restrictions on our face to face delivery.

The Garden Project Assistant will bring enthusiasm for the natural world, an understanding of the benefits of connecting with nature for mental wellbeing and physical health, and an active, imaginative approach for devising person centred, therapeutic, meaningful and uplifting tasks in our Garden, our Nature Reserve, on our Market Garden site and online. There may be scope for delivery on other green spaces in the borough through partnership working and we are seeking to recruit an individual who can grow into the role, bringing plenty of ideas and passion for the benefits of green activity for health.

Our team is small so the Garden Project Assistant may occasionally be called to provide cover or support for other project strands and a flexible approach to working will be a key quality for the successful candidate. Other duties may include supporting the Project Lead with day to day administration tasks, helping team wide community fundraising initiatives and providing input to social media and other forms of communications to raise the profile of our work.

Thanks to Lottery funding we are able to employ the Garden Project Assistant on an initial 6-month contract. There may be scope to extend the role, further funding dependent.

Key Responsibilities

- To assist the Garden Project Lead in all aspects of the Garden Project.
- To deliver therapeutic and educational sessions to co-workers, providing cover for additional sessions when required across the delivery team.
- To support the Garden Project Lead and Business and Premises Manager to maintain the garden, nature reserve, buildings and the site at Wynell Road.
- To ensure Sydenham Garden is a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- To promote peoples' recovery from ill mental and physical health.

Main duties

Delivering activity sessions, and practical demonstrations for people with a range of mental and physical health problems:

- Devise and plan creative and engaging sessions together with Project Lead.
- Provide clear and supportive instruction to co-workers with a range of needs and abilities.
- Support co-workers to undertake additional certificates and recognise learning and progress in other ways as appropriate.
- Communicate any concerns or issues to Project Lead to ensure timely attention and resolution of the problem.

Maintaining the garden, environmental areas, buildings and site:

- Keep all working areas in good condition.
- Carry out routine maintenance as appropriate in consultation with Garden Project Lead.
- Work within the scope of the garden and nature reserve management plans.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding.

- Understand and assess risk from an activity or situation.
- Carry out daily, weekly and monthly health and safety checks in relation to activities.
- Ensure the safety of all participants through safe delivery and monitoring of activities.
- Work with Garden Project Lead to ensure Safeguarding Procedures are followed and any concerns or issues raised and dealt with appropriately.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Collect accurate attendance data.
- Support Garden Project Lead to deliver quarterly reviews for co-workers.
- Store collected data in the correct format and in a timely fashion for internal and external monitoring purposes.

Providing support and guidance for co-workers and volunteers.

- Provide a "listening ear" to group members (co-workers and volunteers).
- Demonstrate an understanding of the issues faced by co-workers and volunteers.
- Give guidance where appropriate, working with other team members including the Garden Project Lead, the Outreach and Development Worker and the Head of Services.

Other areas that will require contribution from the Garden Project Assistant:

- Events planning and co-ordination.
- Organisational communications and marketing planning and activity.
- Other tasks as and when required e.g. providing holiday/ sickness absence cover for frontline delivery staff across the team.

The postholder will be required to attend training as appropriate in line with the scope of their role and the development needs of the organisation.

They will also be required to attend occasional 'out of hours' activities which may be in evenings or weekends. Time off in Lieu will be available for this work. This role will demonstrate a commitment, and make an active contribution, to the vision, ethos and culture of Sydenham Garden.

Person Specification

Essential

- Ability to devise, plan and deliver creative and engaging garden-based activities collaboratively and independently, delegating some tasks to volunteers.
- Confident using IT (Zoom, MS Teams, social media, word processing etc) to deliver group sessions and produce creative materials.

- Experience of providing support to people with a wide range of different abilities and sensitivity to different needs within a group and possible interactions of group behaviours and dynamics.
- Good horticultural knowledge and experience.
- Confident written and spoken communicator with an open and welcoming presence and excellent listening skills.
- Good working knowledge of mental health issues and experience of providing activity based support to people with depression, anxiety and other common mental illness.
- Accurate record keeper with good attention to detail.
- Commitment to values of inclusivity, environmental conservation and equity of access to and experience of mental health support and the therapeutic benefits of nature.

Desirable

- A specialism in garden crafts, green woodworking, outdoor cooking or related skill.
- Experience of working in therapeutic horticulture and/or other 'green care/ care farm' settings.
- Experience of working with people who live with enduring mental/physical health issues.
- Experience of creating digital content for learning and education purposes for groups.
- Experience of working in a small charity and the challenges and opportunities that this offers.

To Apply

Please email your completed application form to: jobs@sydenhamgarden.org.uk by 12 noon on the closing date of Friday 4th December 2020.

Interviews will take place on Tuesday 15th December 2020.