



Volunteering Policy

Reviewed May 2020

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Overview

There are several ways in which volunteers can become involved with Horton Community Farm.

- Gardening and maintaining the site alongside other volunteers and staff.
- Working in the therapy garden alongside our staff and directly with our clients
- Helping with fundraising activities to develop and sustain the project
- Office administration support
- Helping with our marketing

Time commitments can vary from one-off days to regular support. Volunteers who work directly with clients will need to undergo a criminal records check (DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service) before starting their volunteering. We ask that volunteers who work directly with our clients commit to the project for a minimum period of three months on a regular day each week so that we can create a stable environment for our clients.

Volunteers have much to gain from volunteering at our project. It provides people with the opportunity to learn new skills, develop old ones, meet new people, try out new things and have some fun. In addition, we endeavour to provide them with support (including a named contact) and interesting and challenging work. We will also cover reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.

What volunteers need to do to join

Volunteers can apply for a placement (lasting at least 8 sessions over two months) via our website or come to a drop-in session when they are operating. Any enquiries can be directed to volunteer@hcf.org. If an application is successful, they are given forms to fill in so that we hold their contacts, medical information in case of emergency and any other useful information that will enhance their experience.

If people wish to volunteer with us working directly with clients, we ask them to supply us with the contacts of two independent referees and complete a DBS. We invite volunteers to join us for a session on a trial basis. If volunteers are working directly with clients, we invite them to work with us for 4 sessions in the first instance.

If we are all comfortable with each other after this period, we ask them to sign a Volunteers' Agreement Form.

Policies relevant to volunteers

Horton Community Farm has put in place several policies and procedures, all available on our website, that are part of our volunteer support system – something we take very seriously. Not all policies and procedures will be relevant to all volunteers; this will depend on the role or activity in which they are involved. A volunteer's named contact will make sure they are aware of all policies and procedures relevant to them at their induction. If they would like further information or guidance on any of our policies and procedures, their named contact will be happy to discuss them.

Equal Opportunities

We aim to create an environment free from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, religious/political beliefs, trade union membership, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or marital status and develop a community which supports equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our aim is to ensure that our policies and practices are without prejudice. Decisions relating to an individual are made purely on the basis of merit and ability.

All volunteers are required to comply with this policy at all times. A copy of this policy is displayed on the notice board.

Harassment

Harassment describes the behaviour of one or more persons that another person or group of people, finds unacceptable or unwanted. Harassment occurs when unwanted aggression or attention is given on the grounds of gender, (or gender reassignment), age, religion, race, skin colour etc. Harassment can take place face to face via words and actions or via telephone or e-mail.

It does not matter how the behaviour was intended. It is the effect it has on the recipient that determines if it is harassment. Harassment of any kind is a form of discrimination.

It is no excuse to say, "I was only joking." Harassment is often taken to refer to sexual advances (sexual harassment), however many things can form the basis of unwanted aggression and attention.

Volunteers are responsible for their own behaviour and are expected to act in a manner that avoids and discourages any form of harassment. Volunteers are required to uphold this policy and to report any known actions of harassment to Horton Community Farm's management committee.

Confidentiality

Everyone involved at Horton Community Farm has the right to confidentiality. Horton Community Farm is committed to providing a confidential service and to integrating the principles of confidentiality throughout the organisation.

Volunteer Health and Safety

Health and safety is important. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) Horton Community Farm has a duty of care to make sure there are systems in place to ensure the health and safety of its volunteers. Horton Community Farm has a written Health and Safety Policy, which can be obtained from your named contact. Volunteers also have a duty of care to look after themselves and those with whom they come into contact. Staff and volunteers together can help to promote a positive safety culture throughout Horton Community Farm. Your named contact is there to support you. Get in touch as soon as possible if you have any concerns about health and safety, or if you are worried about your own role.

Induction and Training

All new volunteers receive an induction to the project to introduce them to the project, its staff and clients (where applicable) and their role within the project. Any initial training required will also be provided at induction.

Insurance

Horton Community Farm provides adequate insurance cover for volunteers undertaking voluntary work approved by us (and agreed in advance of it being carried out).

Complaints

Complaints should be taken to the staff member, client or volunteer involved, if possible. If they are not available, or they failed to satisfactorily resolve your complaint or you feel unable to approach them directly in the first place another staff member will handle your complaint. If you don't wish or are unable to meet with them in person you may send your complaint by email. The email addresses for HCF staff begin with the first name of the staff member followed by @hcf.org.uk

Current staff are:

- jonathan@hcf.org.uk
- charlie@hcf.org.uk
- laura@hcf.org.uk

If your complaint fails to be addressed to your satisfaction within the Horton Community Farm Organisation, a third party will be solicited to mediate. In the case of a serious enough action by HCF being committed that you suspect is breaking the, you may feel it necessary to call the police. See our complaints policy for full details.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Management Committee to ensure it remains fit for purpose.