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**Patient Buddy**

**A few of hours a week on Thursdays – 1x Person, (9:30am – 12:30pm) and 2x Persons, Friday (1:00pm – 4:00pm).**

**Royal Edinburgh Community Garden, Morningside,**

**Edinburgh EH10 5HF**

**Overview**

At the Cyrenians’ Royal Edinburgh Community Garden, we endeavour to provide a beautiful, interesting and relaxing amenity space for patients, visitors, hospital staff and the larger community. We also run a range of structured services for patients in the garden, on the wards and use the well-maintained garden and its resources as a base. The gardens have a particular focus on welcoming people who are experiencing mental or physical health problems, disadvantage, isolation or poverty.

To achieve this aim, we seek volunteers to take part in activities under the direction of the Project Coordinators and Group Facilitators.

**What are the aims and expectations of the role?**

Your support and encouragement could help someone to:

* Engage with a gardening session to benefit their physical / mental health.
* Relax and de-stress by spending some time in a ‘greenspace’.
* Reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.
* Recover from the impact of Covid-19 (including feelings of isolation and anxiety).
* Increase self-confidence.
* Create links with the local community.
* Develop informal local support networks.

A respect for the lived experience of individuals with mental health difficulties and their recovery process is essential to the role.

As a Buddy you will know that:

* Recovery from a severe mental illness is possible.
* Recovery means different things to different people.
* Recovery has its ups and downs.
* A person should be defined by their abilities, interests and dreams, rather than defined by their diagnosis or symptoms.

**What kind of volunteer are we looking for?**

* Confident in working outdoors in all weathers.
* Ability to work as part of a team.
* Sympathetic to the needs of people who have experience of mental ill health, disability, homelessness, social isolation or long-term medical conditions such as dementia/acquired brain injury
* Commitment to adhere to Cyrenians and NHS Lothian policies and procedures
* Commitment to operating within Cyrenians’ core values and ethos.
* Demonstrate a hopeful and positive attitude
* Reliability

**Essential**

* 18+
* PVG scheme membership required.
* Able to commit to a minimum period of 12 weeks in the role.

**Desirable**

* Good listening skills
* Friendly and approachable personality
* Reliable with good time keeping
* Able to work with individuals who may have different support needs
* Non-judgmental
* Respectful of confidentiality

**What can you gain from this opportunity?**

* The rewarding experience of helping someone improve their quality of life, health, and sense of wellbeing.
* Develop empathy and listening skills.
* Meet new people and have new experiences.
* Learning horticultural and craft skills.
* Personal development with training and ongoing support provided.
* Shared participation in seasonal activities.

**Further Info**

**Expenses**

We cover local travel costs at public transport rate or mileage, and £2.50 or a meal if volunteering over 4 hours at one time.

**About Cyrenians**

Cyrenians is over 50 years old. We began with the creation of an innovative community to meet the needs of a group of homeless people who had fallen through the cracks of whatever support was available at the time. Our roots lie in responding to the injustice of homelessness.

We have spent the last five decades journeying with people grappling with the causes and consequences of homelessness through building and nurturing of trusted relationships and engaging with social exclusion and inequality which has so often been at the root of their tough reality. We are values-led and relationship based; our core values are Compassion, Respect, Integrity and Innovation.

Cyrenians’ head office is based in Edinburgh, with smaller offices in other areas, including Falkirk and West Lothian. Cyrenians is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), registered charity SC011052.