****

**Garden Buddy**

**1 – 2.5 hours per week – days can vary (likely include Tues 12.30-3pm)**

**At the Midlothian Community Hospital Garden, 70 Eskbank Road, Bonnyrigg EH22 3ND**

**Overview**

Midlothian Community Hospital Garden (MCHG) is an NHS Lothian initiative with a mission to make opportunities for good food and healthy lifestyles available to local communities.

The Community Gardens welcome hospital patients, staff and visitors, as well as individuals and groups from the local community. The gardens have a particular focus on welcoming people who are experiencing mental / physical poor health, disadvantage, isolation or poverty, sometimes these people benefit from having a ‘Garden Buddy’ while they attend.

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

As a Garden Buddy you will be in a supporting role, helping and encouraging your ‘buddy’ to come to the garden and partake in activities.  This might mean supporting them to attend a group gardening session, meeting them in the garden for a walk and a chat or encouraging them to do some gardening or craft activities with you. This role comes with full support and training.

**Your support and encouragement could help participants to:**

* Engage with gardening activities to benefit their physical / mental health.
* Relax and de-stress by spending some time in a ‘greenspace’.
* Reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.
* Learn and share skills and knowledge.
* Increase self-confidence.

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

**Essential**

* 18+
* PVG scheme membership (we process)
* Able to commit to minimum of one session a week for minimum of 3 months
* Willingness to complete trauma informed training, and other relevant training.

**Desirable**

* Confident in working outdoors in all weathers.
* Friendly and approachable personality with good listening skills.
* Ability to work as part of a team.
* Reliable with good time keeping.
* 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/NHS policies and procedures.
* Commitment to operating within Cyrenians’ core values and ethos.
* 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 and sharing 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.