# **Patient Buddy Volunteer**

**Location:** Royal Edinburgh Community Garden, Morningside, Edinburgh EH10 5HF.

**[See on a map here.](https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Royal+Edinburgh+Community+Gardens/@55.9274009,-3.219079,17z/data=!4m14!1m7!3m6!1s0x4887c70fd33cf349:0x11ecdfbbfdea37dd!2sRoyal+Edinburgh+Hospital!8m2!3d55.9274009!4d-3.2165041!16zL20vMGI0ajA0!3m5!1s0x4887c71b342a9397:0xd81d1231cc124ed5!8m2!3d55.9257834!4d-3.2185981!16s%2Fg%2F1pp2x02gd?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MDUyNi4wIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D)**

**Time commitment:** A few of hours a week on either Thursdays (9:30am – 12:30pm) or Fridays (1-4pm).

We are flexible on when you can volunteer. Just let us know your availability and preferences. You need to be able commit for at least 12 weeks.

## **What is the Royal Edinburgh Hospital community garden?**

Our community garden at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital is an NHS Lothian initiative. We want to make opportunities for good food and healthy lifestyles available to the local communities in which NHS Lothian hospitals are based.

We aim to provide a beautiful, interesting and relaxing space for patients, their visitors and hospital staff. We also do activities and services for patients, using the garden and its resources as our base. The gardens have a particular focus on welcoming people who are experiencing mental or physical health problems, disadvantage, isolation and / or poverty.

## **What will you do as a volunteer?**

Volunteers take part in garden activities under the guidance and support of the Garden Coordinator. You will be supporting and encouraging your ‘buddy’ to come to the garden and do activities. This might mean supporting them to:

* attend a gardening session
* meeting them in the garden for a walk and a chat
* encouraging them to do some gardening or craft activities with you.

Your support and encouragement can help your buddy to:

* engage with gardening activities to benefit their physical and mental health.
* relax and de-stress by spending some time in a green space.
* reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.
* learn and share skills and knowledge.
* increase self-confidence
* create links with the local community and develop informal support networks.

It is important as a buddy to know and be aware that recovery is possible yet will look different to each person. Every person should be defined by their interests and dreams, rather than by any diagnosis or symptoms they might have.

We will provide support and training needed for you to engage with the tasks in a safe manner.

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

* Be a part of a positive and supportive community
* Support and help people from all backgrounds to participate in activities
* Meet new people and have new experiences
* Develop your interpersonal skills
* Know that you have contributed to help someone improve their quality of life, health and sense of wellbeing
* Join in with others in our seasonal activities
* Learn and develop horticultural and craft skills
* Gain further understanding on issues and barriers for those affected by homelessness
* Opportunity to share your knowledge and shape activities.

## **Does this sound like you?**

Everyone is welcome to join and get actively involved with our garden activities as a volunteer in our community garden. We are open to individuals and group of people alike.

If you…

* are min 18 years old
* like to be active outdoors in all kinds of weather
* have a respect for the experience and personal circumstances of individuals
* work well as part of a team and do no mind doing practical tasks on your own
* are friendly and easy to approach
* are reliable and respectful of someone’s recovery journey
* can be flexible to needs and ability of individuals
* can work with individuals who may have different support needs or have experience of mental ill health, disability, homelessness, social isolation or long-term medial conditions such as dementia or acquired brain injury.
* do not judge and are respectful of confidentiality.

Then let us know your interest and get in touch by filling in the online form. We can then arrange a chat to get to know each other better, and we can share more information about the place and volunteering opportunity.

## **Your accessibility**

Please let us know in the online form, if you need any support or adjustments to make our first chat together and volunteering a positive experience for you.

If for any reason, you cannot fill in our online form, not to worry. Please reach out to Kathryn B, our Garden Coordinator, on 07809 555946.

You are also welcome to submit a short video (MP4 format) via our online submission tool instead. Please include the information that we ask for in our ‘interest form’.

Any expenses for helping with these activities, which have been agreed, will be paid back to you. We cover local travel costs at public transport rate, or mileage if you drive here. We provide a meal for all volunteers joining for over 4 hours at one time.

We have free parking by the hospital, and several buses stop nearby (5-10 min walking distance).

We will ask you for the contact details of a person, who you have known for more than 6 months (1 reference). If you need support identifying a reference, please let us know.

## **Keeping everyone safe**

When volunteering, you will engage with people, who are either young people under 18 years old and / or considered particularly vulnerable in our society. It is therefore required that you are a member of the[**PVG scheme in Scotland**](https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-scheme).

If you are not already a member, then we will process your application with you. There are no costs to you in becoming a PVG scheme member for volunteering.

You can read [**our safeguarding policy here**](https://cyrenians.scot/assets/000/001/672/Safeguarding_Policy_original.pdf?1729240047) that details our commitment to keeping everyone safe. It is expected of everyone to adhere to these commitments. We expect all volunteers to do relevant training, so you can help keep yourself and others safe from harm.