# **Garden Buddy Volunteer**

**Location:** Midlothian Community Hospital Gardens, 70 Eskbank Rd, Bonnyrigg, EH22 3ND. [**See on a map here.**](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Cyrenians%2BMidlothian%2BCommunity%2BHospital%2BGarden/%4055.8802548%2C-3.0949253%2C17z/data%3D%214m10%211m2%212m1%211sMidlothian%2BCommunity%2BHospital%2BGardens%2C%213m6%211s0x4887bf503b1975e5%3A0x95f257ab61392bd8%218m2%213d55.8802548%214d-3.0901617%2115sCiZNaWRsb3RoaWFuIENvbW11bml0eSBIb3NwaXRhbCBHYXJkZW5zLJIBEGNvbW11bml0eV9nYXJkZW7gAQA%2116s/g/11ghr9z4bz?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MDExNS4wIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D)

**Time commitment:** About 1-3 hours every week. Days may vary. Garden is open 10am to 3:30pm. Let us know your availability and preferences.

## **What is the Midlothian Community Hospital Garden?**

Our community garden at the Midlothian Hospital is an NHS Lothian initiative. We want to create opportunities for good food and healthy lifestyles available to local communities.

We do gardening using climate friendly techniques to grow local food and support wildlife, while building community and developing skills. We run practical sessions, workshops, events and shared meals to build skills in gardening, while encouraging healthy eating and promoting social inclusion. We provide advice and support for improving lifestyle through good food and good health.

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

As a buddy volunteer in our community garden, 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.

We will provide support and training needed for you to engage with your buddy in our garden.

## **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
* Develop your craft skills and understanding of horticulture
* 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
* 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 us in our community garden. We ask that you take part at least once a week for min 3 months. This is due to the relationship that you are building with your buddy, which we want to be a consistent support.

If you…

* are min 18 years old
* enjoy engaging with people
* like to be active outdoors in all kinds of weather
* enjoy listening actively to others’ stories
* work well as part of a team
* are friendly and easy to approach
* are willing to complete trauma informed (and other relevant) training
* are reliable
* can be flexible to needs and ability of individuals and groups
* can work with individuals who may have different support needs or have experience of mental ill health, disability, homelessness or social isolation long-term medical conditions such as dementia.
* 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 Michala, our Garden Coordinator, on 07772 886 746.

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 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.