



INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to the Volunteer Support Worker Information pack, we're really pleased that you are interested in becoming a part of the team. This information pack is here to outline what is expected of our support worker volunteers and what you can expect from us. It is our aim to make sure every person who volunteers with us feels valued, understood and supported. If you would like more information about our work or have any questions, please email HOOF@mvuf.org.uk.

A BIT ABOUT US

Meanwood Valley Urban Farm is a grassroots charity and working farm in Leeds, open 362 days a year for the public to explore nature in the heart of the city. Established in 1980, we have cultivated our 26 acres of green space to be a place of community and innovation.



Our charity supports a whole host of projects aimed to enrich the lives of local people. These projects include:

- Our 1-acre Market Garden that grows, donates, and sells chemical-free produce to the local community.
- Our Helping Out On the Farm (HOOF) programme, which provides long-term placements for adults with learning disabilities and autism.
- Our Education team who run educational projects for local schools, allowing

them to learn with nature as their classroom.

- Our ornamental gardens and woodland which are home to over 150 varieties of plants, supporting numerous species of mammals, birds, butterflies, and other insects.

WHO ARE THE HOOF TEAM?

The Support Worker Volunteer role entails working alongside staff to support the HOOF team with their tasks around the farm. This role is a wonderful opportunity to work outdoors with adults with additional needs engaging in meaningful outside tasks and activities.

The HOOF team is made up of a diverse range of adults with learning disabilities and/or autism who all have long-term placements on the farm. They each come to the farm up to 5 times a week Monday to Friday and help with animal care, gardening and veg growing and site maintenance including woodland care. These placements provide valuable social contact, practical skills, engaging activities, and aims to increase their confidence to help them navigate life.

The members of the HOOF are aged between 18-63. Many have been coming to the farm for 15+ years! As well as practical tasks on the farm, the team may work on other life skills by going on excursions, ordering lunch at the farm café, working on arts and crafts for farm fairs or practicing digital skills on the iPads.

YOUR ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

Your responsibilities will include:

- Engaging with the HOOF Learners
- Supporting the staff as necessary
- Helping the team to deliver varied manual tasks around the farm
- Treat each team member as an individual based on their own needs
- Displaying a positive and respectful attitude
- Agreeing to a consistent and reasonable attendance routine
- Adhering to safeguarding procedures and ensuring the safety of service users

PLEASE NOTE: THIS ROLE REQUIRES US TO CARRY OUT A DBS CHECK WHICH CAN TAKE SOME TIME TO PROCESS. WE NEED TO RECIEVE YOUR DBS BEFORE YOU START YOUR ROLE.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential criteria:

- **Respectful and patient:** Treat everyone with respect, understanding, patience, and an open mind.
- **Calm under pressure:** Remain calm and responds appropriately to challenging behaviour.
- **Flexible and hardworking:** Work outdoor in all weather conditions and get involved with a variety of farm tasks.
- **Self-sufficient:** Able to work independently and manage responsibilities with minimal supervision.
- **Takes initiative:** Use initiative and respond proactively when required.
- **Commitment to safeguarding:** Follow safeguarding policies at all times, maintain professional boundaries, never share personal information, take photographs of HOOF learners, or meet them outside of the farm.
- **Compassionate:** Treat HOOF learners with empathy, patience, and respect, ensuring they feel listened to and supported.
- **Good listening skills:** Listens attentively and communicate respectfully

Desirable criteria:

- **Relevant experience:** Experience supporting vulnerable adults or adults with learning disabilities.
- **Interest in the outdoors:** An interest in gardening, biodiversity, or outdoor environments.
- **Safeguarding training:** Previous safeguarding training or experience

A DAY OF VOLUNTEERING WITH US

9.15AM - Head to the office to sign in. You will be given a brief of the day. You should then put on steel toe boots and gloves.

9.30AM - We start our first jobs of the day at this time

10.30AM to 11AM - We will have break at this time. As a volunteer you are not required to stay with the HOOF team during your breaks but let a staff member know what you're doing.

11AM - We start our second jobs of the day at this time

12PM to 1PM - We will have lunch around this time. As a volunteer you are not required to stay with the HOOF team during your breaks but let a staff member know what you're doing.

1PM - We start our last jobs of the day at this time

2.30PM - Most learners will leave at this time and you will be asked to attend an informal debrief before you leave where you'll talk through the day and be given some feedback if required.