

Foresight Gardening Enterprises CIC

Volunteer Policy

Volunteering with Foresight

Foresight Gardening Enterprises assists individuals who have a visual impairment to gain new skills, confidence and experience through horticulture; enabling them to find employment, improve their sense of wellbeing and engage with their local community. Our aim is to achieve this through the use of sustainable techniques which will have a positive effect on the environment.

Purpose of our volunteer policy

Our volunteer policy has been created to show our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at Foresight Gardening Enterprises. We strive to create a diverse and inclusive organisation and wish to see all sections of the community represented among our volunteers. The policy also confirms that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. It should also help our volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

Our vision and mission for volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas while having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering for Foresight Gardening Enterprises you will be making a positive contribution to community development in our area. Volunteers are vital to our work.

Attracting volunteers and volunteer agreement

We have a range of opportunities for volunteers to become involved in and endeavour to make recruitment and selection materials available in a format accessible to all groups and individuals. Opportunities include gardening, supervising and supporting gardening sessions, administration, social media support and driving. Up to date information about our volunteer vacancies and our application forms can be found on our website or details can be provided by contacting Foresight directly. Once we receive a copy of your completed registration form, a member of our team will get in touch with more information on specific opportunities and we can decide together which option best matches your interests and time availability and also our needs. Your help will be greatly appreciated and really will make a difference.

DBS Checks

Some volunteer roles will require a DBS check to inform Foresight Gardening Enterprises of any criminal convictions that a person wishing to volunteer may have. For example, any volunteer position which involves regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to a DBS check.

Induction and training

It does not matter how much you already know, as there will be opportunities to learn, and we have roles to suit every level of expertise. There will be an induction prepared and delivered by one of our staff. This will include:

- Information about Foresight Gardening Enterprises, our vision, mission and our future plans
- The role of the volunteer
- Introduction to other volunteers
- Tour around our facilities and see some of our initiatives
- Copy of all the relevant policies including this volunteer policy and also our Health and Safety and our Equal Opportunities policy.
- Essential procedures such as timekeeping, rota
- Information about training and ongoing learning opportunities

There will be a trial period of four weeks to give Foresight Gardening Enterprises and you time to discover if you are suited to each other. If appropriate there will be an opportunity for volunteer “buddying” during the settling in period. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end. This is not an assessment, it is just so that we can be sure that you benefit the most from the volunteering experience and maximise the time you are giving freely.

Support

Our supervisor will offer support to you. They will remain your key contact throughout your volunteering with us. This will include regular meetings with you to discuss how you are getting on, discuss any training needs and deal with issues arising. This will also ensure that Foresight Gardening Enterprises are doing all we can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and meaningful one.

Recognition and reward

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. There will always be a listening ear or shoulder to lean on. We will also ensure there is a social side to being part of Foresight Gardening Enterprises and will raise awareness of the work being carried out by our volunteers via our publicity materials including leaflets, website and social media.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. As long as funds are available, all reasonable out of pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed including expenses for travel. In order to claim expenses, an Expenses Form must be completed, a valid receipt provided. Payments are normally made monthly but can be paid more often to prevent hardship if required.

Insurance, health and safety, accidents and risk assessment

Foresight Gardening Enterprises has a valid insurance policy so that volunteers are covered by public liability insurance, which you are advised to read. It covers the volunteering activities you will be doing. We will keep reminding you of our Health and Safety Policy and give simple instructions on how to perform each task safely. We have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies and will always have a first aider on field sites.

Resolving problems

We hope that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us. However if your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations or with the commitments we have made to you, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. We cannot resolve problems if we do not know about them so please raise issues as soon as possible with your supervisor.

Confidentiality

We expect all volunteers to adhere to confidentiality guidelines which will be explained to you before you begin volunteering with us and this also includes use of social media and contact with any press.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Foresight Gardening Enterprises is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. When representing Foresight Gardening Enterprises as a volunteer we expect you to support our commitment to promoting equality.

Photographs of volunteers may occasionally appear on our website or marketing material. If any volunteer has any objections to this they should make this clear to those concerned if and when photography takes place.

This policy was first published in June 2016 and will be reviewed annually.

Last reviewed April 2020