



Volunteer Handbook

Contact us on info@willderland.com

For more information visit: <http://willderland.com/> or



[WILLDERLAND FARM](http://willderland.com/) Registered Charity Number: [1182071](https://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/charity-details/1182071)

Welcome to Willderland Farm

Thank you for joining our team. We greatly appreciate your interest in our work and hope that you will enjoy supporting us as a volunteer. This pack contains the information you need to get the most from your experience. It should be read in conjunction with the Volunteer Contract and other relevant documents and procedures.

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1. About Willderland Farm (also referred to as “the Farm”)

Willderland Farm is a social enterprise registered with the Charity Commission and Social Farms & Gardens. Our aim is to provide a therapeutic outdoor space with opportunities to participate in horticulture, wildlife habitat management and animal care, creating an environment that encourages wellbeing and community cohesion. Everybody is welcome to use the facilities we offer, but we have a particular emphasis on supporting children and adults with learning disabilities, and other groups with specific needs, for example, cognitive impairments or physical disabilities. Our ethos and purpose can be summarised as:

- * Providing a safe, therapeutic, natural environment to experience small breed livestock and chickens
- * Participation in wildlife management and monitoring
- * Opportunities to learn about the principles of agro-ecology, how to grow vegetables and fruit, and identify plants and animals

The facilities we offer at Willderland Farm include:

- * Community orchard
- * Community garden and pond
- * Grazing animals
- * Educational building (The Lodge)
- * Picnic area
- * Wildlife pond
- * On-site parking
- * Disabled access
- * Disabled toilet facilities

2. What you can expect as a volunteer

Your role as a volunteer will comprise two elements:

- * To engage in activities to support the day-to-day running and management of the Farm, for example feeding livestock, site maintenance, gardening jobs, cleaning, etc.
- * To facilitate activities undertaken by groups or individuals visiting the farm to enable them to enjoy a beneficial, therapeutic, and rewarding experience.

We will discuss and agree with you before you begin volunteering the specific roles you will be performing. We will never ask that you undertake any tasks for which you are not competent, or with which you are not comfortable. Visitors to the Farm (also referred to as “service users”) will follow specific planned activities, and will at all times be accompanied by their own support staff, parent or guardian, or other responsible adult. As such, your job will be to support, encourage, and facilitate; you are not responsible for the conduct, safety, or general welfare of service users, beyond the policies and procedures specific to the Farm, or those required of all persons under UK law. The policies, procedures and regulations regarding Willderland Farm, including those derived from its obligations under the law, are detailed in this Handbook and the referenced documents.

You are asked to undertake the duties you have agreed to in any given week and to attend punctually, especially if it has been agreed that you will be responsible for opening the Farm to service users. If you are unable to attend for any reason, please ensure that you contact us at the earliest possible opportunity in order that we can make alternative arrangements. Contact details are provided below.

3. Special Requirements

Willderland Farm is committed to the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity. We value our volunteers and will do everything that we reasonably can to accommodate any specific requirements that you might

have in order to perform your role. We shall be happy to discuss this with you.

4. Willderland Farm contact details and location

Address:

Land West of North Fen Drove
Sutton Road
Haddenham
Cambridgeshire
CB6 3PS

Telephone (24 hours): *Number to be confirmed*

Email: info@willderland.com

Willderland Farm is located just outside Haddenham, off the A142. Access is down North Fen Drove, running alongside St Georges Farm. Please note the access gate to the drove is locked during the winter, but you will be provided with a key as necessary.

Willderland is located 500m down the drove on your left-hand-side. The drove is accessible to vehicles and can be navigated on foot. It is uneven in places, so caution must be taken when walking. If you have a vehicle with a low sump, you should be particularly cautious.

Once on site, eco-grid paths permit access to key areas of the farm. These are suitable for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility. Access to the environmental area and inside the animal paddocks is limited to those who can walk safely along uneven ground.

The site consists of animal paddocks, chicken run, petting area, community orchard, community garden, ponds, The Lodge, disabled toilet, and equipment storage.

5. Parking

Parking is available on site and can accommodate ten vehicles up to size of a large minibus. We cannot guarantee access to parking places for volunteers, as priority must be given to service users. However, we would anticipate that in many instances space will be available, and we will of

course prioritise volunteers where a specific need for on-site parking exists. There is additional parking in the lay-by adjacent to St George's Farm.

6. Personal Belongings

Space will be available in the lodge for personal belongings. Items will be left in an open non-secure space so belongings are left at the owners risk so we would encourage visitors to keep valuables on their person. However, valuables can be stored in our lockable shipping container if it is not convenient to keep them on your person. During open farm events we cannot accept responsibility for any lost or damaged items.

7. Activities

Willderland provides a range of outdoor activities as well as a selection of indoor activities within our educational building. Activities are facilitated by volunteer staff and are selected based on service user choice and preference. The activities available to service users will include:

- * Animal husbandry
- * Therapeutic animal walking
- * Fruit and vegetable plant care
- * Apple and fruit picking
- * Bird spotting
- * Wild plant identification
- * Habitat management

A range of activities can be provided in the lodge in the event of adverse weather. These include:

- * Educational activities, e.g. wildlife identification, nature and environmental quizzes, and talks
- * Potting and seeding
- * Produce cleaning and preparation

We will induct you into all these activities and ensure you only facilitate activities that you feel comfortable with.

8. Farm Cover Rota

The site is visited at least twice daily for animal care and general upkeep of the site, alongside facilitating service user visits. A rota of Trustees and volunteers details who will cover which days and tasks. Your availability and preferences will be factored into this rota and arrangements made for when you are not available. We ask that, where possible, a minimum of two weeks notice is given for any planned unavailability so that cover can be arranged. We understand, however, that circumstances can change abruptly, and a number is provided above for use in the event that you are unable to attend at short notice.

9. Health, Safety and Welfare

When reading the following guidance, you should refer also to the Farm's Health and Safety and other relevant policies, which will be explained to you during your induction.

Equipment: Equipment will be provided and training given where necessary. We can provide personal protective equipment including gloves and goggles, however would ask that you provide your own suitable footwear (we recommend steel toe-capped boots) and dress appropriately for land work.

Hand Hygiene: Hand-washing stations and bathroom facilities are provided. These should be used after any contact with animals.

Lone working: We have in place procedures to support volunteers working alone on the Farm. These will be explained to you during your induction and you are asked to adhere to them at all times.

Refreshments: We do not presently provide refreshments, other than a limited supply of bottled water. You are therefore asked to bring adequate food and drink for the duration of their work on site.

Smoking and Alcohol: You are welcome to use the designated smoking area, but we politely ask that smoking does not take place during site visits. Alcohol is not permitted on the Farm except under special circumstances.

Covid-19: At the time of writing this Handbook, the situation regarding regulations with respect to Covid-19 remain fluid. You will be advised further of our policies in regard to this matter during your induction.

First aid: A first aid box is provided on site for any minor injuries. You should not administer first aid to visitors outside unless you are competent to do. For health advice, call NHS 111, and in the case of emergencies, 999.

Although service users will be with support staff, we encourage all volunteers to follow the choking and CPR training provided for free at <https://life-saver.org.uk/>

Manual Handling: When undertaking lifting or moving tasks, you must use safe recommended handling procedures. These are detailed in the Farm's Health and Safety Policy and will be explained to you during your induction. Service users will attend with their own support staff, and you would therefore not be expected to assist in the moving or handling of any individuals, other than under exceptional circumstances, for example, to protect someone from immediate harm.

General site cleanliness: It is the responsibility of the Trustee or volunteer facilitating the visit to tidy up the site and clean the toilet at the end of each visit, so far as reasonable. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and cleaning products and equipment will be provided.

10. Action in the event of discovery of Fire

Should you discover a fire, raise the alarm by shouting and dial 999. Ensure all visitors are directed to the designated fire assembly point. A fire extinguisher is provided in The Lodge, and fire should only be tackled where it is safe to do so.

11. Site Security and Signing In/Out

The Farm is equipped with comprehensive security facilities, including a remotely-enabled alarm system. You will be given more information about security arrangements during your induction, as well as keys and the required security codes.

When visiting the Farm, or supporting service users to do so, you will be required to complete a signing-in/-out book.

12. Relationships with Service Users and Farm Visitors

Visitors to the Farm will be supported in all instances by their own staff, parent or guardian, or other responsible person. However, you remain responsible for your own conduct with regard to facilitating individuals to access the Farm's activities. This means that you should be mindful of issues relating to personal space, dignity and respect, professional boundaries, and appropriate personal behaviour and conversation. Where service users may exhibit challenging behaviours, you will be made aware of this, and given appropriate guidance by the persons supporting the individual concerned.

13. Safeguarding

All volunteers working in direct contact with service users will be required to complete a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check, facilitated and paid for by the Farm. Safeguarding is naturally accorded the highest importance by the Farm, and our policies in respect to this issue will be explained to you during your induction.

14. Gifts

There may be occasions when service users, support staff or families wish to express their gratitude with a gift. In order to maintain clear boundaries, any offer of gifts should be politely declined, with the suggestion that the individual concerned might instead make a donation towards the running of the Farm.

15. Complaints, Compliments, and Comments

Complaints, comments, or compliments relating to the Farm can be recorded using the Visitor's Book provided. Where a complaint of a serious nature is made, this should be passed on as soon as possible to a Trustee.

15. Volunteer Declaration

Volunteers of Willderland Farm are asked to sign the declaration below to confirm they have read, understood and agree to adhere to Willderland policies and procedures:

I _____ (state name) agree to adhere at all times to the conditions attendant upon accessing Willderland Farm, as described in this Handbook and the Farm's Codes of Practice.

Your Name:

Your Signature:

Name (Willderland Trustee):

Signed (Willderland Trustee):

Date of agreement:

16. Appendix 1: Activity Plans

Activity No. 1	Animal experiences and husbandry
Activity Overview and Purpose	Feeding the grazing animals and chickens. Collecting chicken eggs. Mucking out shelter and distributing straw. Filling water troughs. Grooming and petting.
Learning Outcomes	To gain confidence and understanding of the care of animals. To maintain a calm manner around the animals. To learn about basic animal care and husbandry. To experience sensory feedback from therapeutic touch and contact with the animals.
Adaptations	Services users can choose which animals they feel most comfortable with. Service users can remain on the other side of the fence until confident with the animals. Service users can observe the activities until they feel confident to join in.
Monitoring	Observation of levels of engagement in the activity over time.
Risk assessment	Paddocks can be accessed via the eco-grid but on entering the paddocks there ground is uneven, so care must be taken not to trip. The animals are livestock and therefore can be spooked and react so there is always some degree of risk during animal contact. Staff who know the animals well will be present at all times. Hands must be thoroughly washed following any animal based activity.

Activity No. 2	Therapeutic animal walking
Activity Overview and Purpose	To have the experience of walking with an animal. Animals will be chosen who have a gentle nature and walk slowly, facilitating a therapeutic pace and experience in being alongside them. The service user will get to take hold of the rein during a walk around the site and along the drove.
Learning Outcomes	To experience the gentle paced walk of an animal which is both a calming experience as well as gentle outdoor exercise. To gain confidence in walking alongside an animal and responding to its needs i.e. when to stop for food/toileting. To manage temperament in order to provide a calm atmosphere for the animal. Service users can feed the animals following the walk to thank them.
Adaptations	The service user can walk alongside staff if they do not feel confident to hold the rein themselves. Service users who use a wheelchair can walk the animal along the eco-grid path.
Monitoring	Observation of levels of engagement in the activity over time.

Activity No. 2	Therapeutic animal walking
Risk assessment	Hands must be washed thoroughly following the activity. The walk will take place on a surface suited to the service user and animal but care must be taken as the site does contain uneven surfaces.

Activity No. 3	Fruit and vegetable plant care
Activity Overview and Purpose	Within the community garden there are three raised vegetable beds, an asparagus plot, and a number of fruit bushes. Service users can join in with a range of plants care activities to contribute to the growing of the fruit and vegetables and, when ready, can participate in harvesting and enjoying the crops. Tasks include digging, planting, watering, weeding, and picking. Herbs are also grown to provide stimulus for those with sensory impairments.
Learning Outcomes	To learn about the care needed to grow fruits and vegetables at each step of the process.
Adaptations	The raised beds allow access to wheelchair users and the range of activities involved in fruit and vegetable care can be adapted to service user need and attention span. This activity can also be adapted to be provided within the seated indoor yurt facility for those service users better suited to this environment or during inclement weather. Indoor activities include planting seeds and cleaning/preparing produced once harvested. Herb can be undertaken by those with sensory impairments who require tactile or olfactory stimulus.
Monitoring	To observe level of confidence and engagement in the tasks and learning and understanding overtime of what the plants require.
Risk assessment	Hands should be cleaned thoroughly after any gardening activity, especially prior to eating or drinking. Some fruit bushes can be spiky so gloves will be provided and guidance about care required will be given.

Activity No. 4	Apple and fruit picking
Activity Overview and Purpose	Within the community orchard are numerous apple and fruit trees. Service users can join in with a range of tree care activities to contribute to the growing of the fruit and, when ready, can participate in picking and enjoying the crops. Tasks include watering, weeding, tree care and fruit picking.
Learning Outcomes	To learn about the care needed to grow fruit trees at each step of the process.

Activity No. 4	Apple and fruit picking
Adaptations	Eco-grid access is not available for this activity so service users wishing to engage in this activity will need to be mobile and able to stand in order to care for the trees. Trees closer to the gate can be accessed more easily for those who cannot walk as far or stand for as long.
Monitoring	To observe level of confidence and engagement in the tasks. Observe how far the service user is able to walk through the orchard and how long they can stand for when engaged in the task.
Risk assessment	The orchard does have some uneven ground so care must be taken. The chicken will also have access to the orchard so care must be taken not to trip on them if they come close.

Activity No. 5	Pond Dipping
Activity Overview and Purpose	Dip nets into our natural pond and empty contents into a tray to learn about the creatures that live within the pond and how the ecosystem works
Learning Outcomes	Learn about natural pond ecosystems and gain confidence at having direct contact with nature.
Adaptations	Eco-grid access is not available for this activity so service users wishing to engage in this activity will need to be mobile and able to walk to the pond area of the farm. Assistance can be provided to those unable or not confident enough to dip the net into the pond.
Monitoring	To observe level of confidence and engagement in the task and ongoing learning from the experience.
Risk assessment	There is uneven ground on the lead up to the pond so care must be taken. The pond is natural and does not have fencing around it but staff will be on site to guide where is safest to access the pond from a safe distance.

Activity No. 6	Bird spotting
Activity Overview and Purpose	Willderland Farm is home to a number of local and migratory bird species, not least our Turtle Doves that visit each year. The wild birds can be identified from their calls and from observation. Service users can also participate in feeding the wild birds.
Learning Outcomes	Learning the calls and appearance of different birds. Learning which birds use the site at different times of year and what we can do to help encourage them.
Adaptations	Bird spotting can take place across the site so is available to all service users.
Monitoring	To observe level of knowledge and engagement in the activity our time.

Activity No. 6	Bird spotting
Risk assessment	This is a flexible activity which is highly adaptable to need so risk is minimal.

Activity No. 7	Wild plant identification
Activity Overview and Purpose	Throughout the Willderland Farm site numerous varieties of wild plant grow. These can be identified with the support of volunteers to teach the names and purpose of each identified plant.
Learning Outcomes	To learn about the importance of wild plants, their names and contribution to the farm site.
Adaptations	Wild plants grow throughout the site so can be spotted and identified by services users of any ability. For those with sensory impairments, touch and smell-based identification can be facilitated.
Monitoring	To observe level of knowledge and engagement in the activity our time.
Risk assessment	This is a flexible activity which is highly adaptable to need. Risk is minimal although uneven ground is present in some areas of the site, so those looking for plants and flowers in these areas should have good mobility.

Activity No. 8	Educational talks and wildlife quizzes
Activity Overview and Purpose	A range of educational talks and quizzes, pitched at levels suited to specific service users, can be provided within the indoor, seated area of the farm.
Learning Outcomes	Learning about a range of environmental and agricultural topics related to the farm and local environment and testing learnt knowledge through the use of fun quizzes and activities.
Adaptations	This is a seated, indoor activity which can be adapted to the level of learning ability and knowledge of the service users involved.
Monitoring	Ability to retain information delivered and ability to answer quiz questions.
Risk assessment	Seated indoor activity with minimal risk.