

Head of Community Food Growing

Job Description

Charity's mission statement: *Paradise Co-operative exists to enrich the lives of local people. Together we: learn through nature and work with the land*

Background: The Paradise Co-operative is a registered charity who stewards just under an acre of land in Wandsworth, SW18. Around half of the land is dedicated to food growing. We have 2 x polytunnels, raised beds, compost bays and an orchard with beehives. The rest of the site holds a wildlife pond, yurt, and open learning space. The site does not use any chemicals and the trustees want to further the biodiversity on site and for it to be largely self-sufficient.

We are also committed to learning through nature. Our site hosts weekly outdoor learning sessions for local primary school children, led by our Head of Education as well as drop-in sessions on Saturdays for the community and some activities on Sundays.

We are thrilled to have been awarded three years of full funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to hire a leader to work with the team at the Paradise Co-operative in expanding our efforts in sustainable food growing.

About this role: This role is for 3 days a week, ideally Monday, Thursday and regular Saturdays or Sundays, although there is some flexibility to this in different seasons and we are open to discussing the working pattern with the successful applicant. Working is mainly onsite on our garden in SW18. There is opportunity for homeworking for planning & preparation tasks. The role will report to one of our trustees and be part of a supportive small team including our Head of Education, Assistant education coordinators and Head of Operations.

£19.80 per hour, 7 hours a day for 3 days a week (46 weeks a year). This is a contractor (self-employed) position.

Responsibilities:

- Planning the food growing system and vision for that part of the site
- Overseeing the transition of our site to a productive and sustainable food-growing site which supports a sustainable and biodiverse eco-system as per the agreed vision.
- Carrying out gardening tasks and maintenance throughout the year so the food, ecosystem and community can flourish.
- Developing a community supported model around sustainable food growing and education. Currently that includes welcoming and leading community drop-in gardening sessions with on the days we open to the public (currently Saturday mornings). In the future we hope to expand this to other targeted groups from the community as we grow.
- Delivering gardening activities with groups of primary aged children as part of our school sessions on Thursdays (working closely with our Head of Education)
- Oversee the organisational system that is currently in place for all aspects of the site including orchard, hedgerows, bee-hives, wildlife pond and nature areas – as well as the good growing sites
- Working closely and collaboratively with the other roles in the team (Head of Education, Head of Operations) to deliver the charity's aims to learn through nature and work with the land. This might include working at other venues in Wandsworth, as opportunities arise.

Skills

Essential

- Formal qualification or strong practical experience in an aspect of regenerative agriculture. These might include biodynamics, permaculture, forest gardening, no-dig gardening, seed saving and organic plant breeding. This could be at scale on a farm or market garden or nurtured at a smaller scale.
- Self-organising, proactive, and flexible
- Ability to work by themselves, for instance on weekdays, and work to support and collaborate with team members
- Good interpersonal skills that include active listening, self-awareness and open-mindedness
- A passion for the ethos of community food growing – and a willingness to work with this balance between people and land
- Experience of working with volunteers and community supported agriculture.

Desirable

- Experience of delivering gardening sessions with children or young people
- Knowledge of relevant Health and Safety working practices

Safeguarding

The Paradise Co-operative is committed to the development of children in a safe environment where they can grow and learn. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe, and to practice in a way that protects them. All applicants must comply with our charity's safeguarding policy and safer recruitment checks. Safer recruitment checks All candidates are asked to comply with our Safer Recruitment Procedure. This includes:

Owing to the nature of this role that will be working with children and young people, all candidates are asked to comply with our Safer Recruitment Procedure. This includes

- Providing a completed self-disclosure form if invited to interview
- Provide proof of identity and proof of address
- Provide 2 references for us to contact prior to a formal offer being made, one of which must be from your current or most recent employer
- Undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check at Enhanced Level

To apply

Please send your CV and a brief cover letter / short video of no more than 2 minutes explaining your interest and suitability for this role to paradisecoop.hr@gmail.com. Photos and a short video of our site can be found on our website www.paradisecooperative.org. We are open on Saturday mornings from 10 -12 if you would like to visit the site before applying.

First interviews will be held online on an ongoing basis as applications come in, so please contact us if you're interested in the role but face barriers to applying. Second interviews will be in person outside at the site with appropriate social distancing measures in place.

Application process The Paradise Co-operative is committed to promoting an inclusive and diverse community for all team members and volunteers. Please contact us if you require any adjustments in applying for this role or require the job advert in larger font or alternative formats.