



Trainee Role Description – Community Learning and Volunteer Support - 2 posts (Wednesday or Friday)

We grow organic produce at Hawkwood, OrganicLea's 12 acre community market garden and plant nursery, and distribute it through our own Box Scheme, plus some local shops and restaurants. In our ½ acre glasshouse we grow heritage tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, chillies and seedlings for sale to local people and community groups. In 2025 we produced over 11 tonnes of produce, including 1.5 tonnes of salad leaves, featuring 136 different varieties of leaf. We work with hundreds of learners and volunteers each year.

We have a passion for horticulture and food and for helping people learn and realise their potential. The trainee will learn skills required to support learning and volunteering opportunities in urban food growing that encourage participants from all walks of life. The trainee will gain experience in supporting volunteers in a community horticultural setting, supporting the delivery of our varied training programme and practical gardening and cooking activities throughout the seasons. Trainees will have the opportunity to develop and deliver their own project, focused on an element of volunteering, learning or community engagement, during the course of the traineeship.

Details of the role

- Unpaid voluntary role
- Traineeship days: Wednesday or Friday, 9-5 [Please share which day you are interested in]
- **Dates: Wednesday 8/Friday 10 April to Wednesday 16/Friday 18 December 2026**
- Based at: Hawkwood Community Plant Nursery
- We invite all trainees to help out at one of our seasonal Open Sundays that take place on Sunday 26 April, Sunday 31 May and Sunday 27 September.

Trainees are supported by:

- monthly check-ins with an OrganicLea mentor
- 4 Learning workshops with other trainees and mentors designed to achieve an AQA certificate 'Supporting Volunteers in a Community Setting'.
- a guided visit to another organic farm site or project.
- general volunteer monthly summer-time topic tutorials which happen over several months in the summer (Wednesday/Friday) at the end of the working day
- travel expenses, within London, when requested
- bicycle repairs and servicing while-you-work for cyclists
- a seasonal, vegan lunch on Wednesdays and Fridays
- fruit and veg box scheme membership at discount, farm stall discount

To apply please:

1. Complete and return the OrganicLea application form and monitoring form, available on our website. (Support available for people with additional needs is described at the beginning of the form.)

2. Indicate clearly which role(s) you are interested in (expressing preference for Wednesday or Friday with this role). If you would like to apply for more than one role please list your preferred 2 or 3 in order.
3. Send to: elise@organiclea.org.uk or post to the following address: Elise Yarde, OrganicLea, 115 Hawkwood Crescent, Chingford, E4 7UH.

If we ask you to join us for an interview to discuss your application, we'll provide information about what we'll talk about in advance of sitting down with you.

Deadline for applications: Midnight of Monday 9 February

Interview date/s: Wednesday 25 February or Friday 27 February at the Hawkwood site

For more information about the role, start by contacting Elise at: elise@organiclea.org.uk (Tuesdays and Fridays are good contact days).

Come and find out more about all the traineeships: Some members of OrganicLea Coop will host an open afternoon from 4-6pm on Wednesday 4 February at the Hawkwood site. This is an opportunity for questions from anyone wishing to find out more about any of the traineeships and visit the site to understand transport links / viability. Email elise@organiclea.org.uk to let us know you plan to come to this. The event will start with a guided site tour and a more formal presentation at 5pm.

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Specific role details

Main objectives

- To learn about and provide support for the volunteer programme at Hawkwood
- To learn about and support our learning and training opportunities
- To assist with the delivery of our entry level activities, including our Buddy Scheme which provides achievement-based learning for volunteers with additional needs
- To provide support for fruit and vegetable production at Hawkwood when required

Main Activities

Delivering learning opportunities and supporting volunteers

- Work with the Community Learning and Inclusion team to ensure all volunteers on site are safe, fully inducted, welcomed, valued and supported
- Support the delivery of learning opportunities including Level 1 horticulture courses, English for Action learning in horticulture or cooking and our Health and Wellbeing courses
- Participate in the Buddy Scheme to support volunteers with additional support needs, particularly those experiencing mental ill health, physical difficulties, language barriers and adults with learning disabilities; and support others who choose to be a Buddy
- Support a range of work experience placement activities for a range of young adults especially those who are attending from the local College's ESOL programme.
- Lead tasks and inductions with volunteers

Growing

- Assist with all aspects of vegetable production (especially between 9am-11am before volunteers arrive) including: formulating propagation media, raising plants from seed, planting, harvesting, weeding and maintaining salad crops, vegetables, green manures and companion plants

- To support others to take part in OrganicLea's work with plants and food growing

Person Specification

Essential

- Commitment to learning for all, particularly through non-classroom opportunities
- Interest in developing an ability to supervise and explain gardening tasks to volunteers, especially those who experience barriers to getting involved or learning
- Happy to work mainly outdoors throughout the year
- Interest in food growing with groups of people
- Commitment to empower others through activities such as food growing
- Patience and understanding, especially when working with groups who are very new to outdoor activity or learn in different ways
- Commitment to, and understanding of, the diverse communities of Waltham Forest/ London