



## **Background to Rhubarb Farm work with young people**

Rhubarb Farm has been working with teenagers since 2011 when funded by Derbyshire County Council to provide engagement activities for NEETS and young people still at school, who are either struggling with attendance or behaviour or having difficulties in the community.

This work continues to this day but now referrals are direct from secondary schools in both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, pupil referral units and the DCC Virtual School.

The young people we take are from 11 to 16, and they attend the Farm for a maximum of 2 days per week between 9 and 2.30. They usually come by taxi to the Farm.

The Farm also takes teenagers who have left school and are NEET or have mental health or learning disabilities.

The Youth Worker will work face-to-face with different groups of young people on 3 days per week during term-time. Each young person comes for a full day per week. Some of them have quite serious emotional and personal issues, but Rhubarb Farm's aim is to engage them in positive, productive activities and inspire their motivation, interest and desire to learn.

The variety of practical activities that Rhubarb Farm can offer is very beneficial because, with short attention spans, the young people need to be able to change tasks fairly frequently, variety makes their placement more interesting and they can cope with it better. They do tasks such as planting, transplanting, preparing soil, building paths, moving brash, moving stone, mowing the grass, cutting hedges, breaking up pallets as well as poultry care, cookery, woodwork and craft activities.

A key to their engagement is also being able to see a particular activity or project from start to finish. Although this can be difficult horticulturally, there are other projects that they will be able to do that they can get the satisfaction of completing.

Working in an adult environment is also a positive benefit for the young people, and the Farm has had many successes with young people becoming engaged, motivated and wanting to get better educational qualifications and/or work. Some have even supported older volunteers and helped them change their lives for the better, which demonstrates the effectiveness of Rhubarb Farm's approach to supporting all ages, issues, needs and abilities.

The Youth Worker will work out in the open a great deal of the time so should be happy in an outdoor setting, as well as interested in horticulture, practical skills and other outdoor activities, or willing to learn. Wellies or work boots will be standard work wear!



Some office work at the end of the day is required in the writing of reports each time a young person attends, using the Farm's online contact management system.

The Youth Worker will be expected to liaise on a regular basis with schools concerning new referrals, sickness, behaviour and other issues, and in some cases may have to visit school for review meetings. Having a positive and co-operative working relationship with all our local schools is key to Rhubarb Farm's work with young people.

When young people do not turn up as arranged, as happens from time to time, the Youth Worker will be expected to work on site alongside other staff and volunteers.

Rhubarb Farm is looking to extend its youth work opportunities by developing Forest School activities, using woodland close to the site.

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[www.rhubarbfarm.co.uk](http://www.rhubarbfarm.co.uk)

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