

## Volunteer Role Descriptions



### The Background

*At Birkhill House* is a newly established animal assisted activity/therapy venture near Earlston in the Scottish Borders, which also offers an array of modern and traditional crafting opportunities. The focus at Birkhill House is on wellness and mindfulness – taking a moment out to be compassionate and nurture the creative side in all of us.

Set on nine acres of beautiful land about 30 miles south of Edinburgh city centre, and with a rich farming and equine history, the property is now a busy small-holding, whose residents include Huacaya alpacas, Castlemilk Moorit sheep, pygmy & Golden Guernsey goats, 14 beautiful domestic Ragdoll cats, a gaggle of small dogs, a plethora of hens and a friendly pair of peacocks.

*At Birkhill House*, we recognise the value of volunteers and the benefits to us as well as to the volunteer from being able to help us with our animal care. Both of our animal focused roles can be done safely with social distancing in place and we are looking to fill our morning volunteer sessions during the week. You can also combine these roles and do both – speak to Lara to see what can be offered. If you want the feel-good factor of helping our animals, being outside and learning new skills, come and join us!

### Field Animal Care

**Monday 9am-2:30pm, Tuesday 12noon-5pm, Wednesday 1-5pm, Thursday 9am-2:30pm, Friday 9am-2:30pm, Saturday 10-11am, Sunday 10-11am.**

Weekday roles will involve shadowing our animal care assistant and will take place during her working hours. We're looking for volunteers to come in for a session during those hours:

- Tasks include some feeding, poo scooping, enclosure cleaning, laying new straw, cleaning bowls and troughs, and doing halter work with our alpacas.
- There will be other tasks which may vary seasonally, these will be noted for you at the start of each session.

We are also keen to have volunteers coming in for a shorter session on the weekends to assist with poo scooping in the alpaca paddocks.

- All of our animal care volunteers are asked to commit to at least one regular session per week.
- Full training and tools will be provided.
- Necessary gear is wellies, old clothes, and layers (it's an all-weather role!) will be needed, as well as heavy gloves.

### Cat Care

**Mondays, Thursdays & Fridays 9am-11am**

- Our cat care assistants are asked to sign up to one regular session per week working in Birkhill's cattery as well as our TBRCC rescue shelter.

- Tasks include some feeding, poo scooping, litter tray cleaning and grooming. There may be other tasks which will be noted for you at the start of each session. Full training and tools will be provided.
- Necessary gear is old clothes, and layers will be needed, as well as heavy gloves.

### **Creative Assistant**

Our crafting kits help fund the programmes that we run and keep our animals fed and healthy. We always need help preparing and packaging our kits and keeping our shop and materials areas tidy and organised, but particularly in the run up to the holidays and in advance of shows and markets.

- Tasks include preparing materials, packaging kits, weighing and packaging parcels of fibre and sorting donated materials.
- We are always seeking to expand and develop our kits and products, so the tasks will vary enormously.
- Hours can be reasonably flexible.

### **Horticultural Assistant**

The natural dye garden here At Birkhill House is being developed using a no-dig ethos, so we desperately need weeders and bed makers, particularly during the the growing season.

- Tasks include weeding, creating no-dig flower beds, cutting and drying flowers and seed heads.
- Necessary gear is old clothes, and layers will be needed, as well as heavy gloves.
- Hours can be reasonably flexible.

### **Further Information:**

Volunteers will be interviewed and given a full induction.

Enthusiasm and interest in animals and their care, as well as a willingness to 'get your hands dirty' is more important than experience, as training will be provided.

Please note that if an applicant has a support worker, we ask that they attend their volunteering sessions with their regular support worker.

Applicants should be aware that the animal care tasks are physical. All are welcome to apply, but applicants should consider whether the physical nature of the work will suit them, as there will be a necessity to undertake a variety of tasks, and many are strenuous.

These roles are likely to be unsuitable for anyone who may be pregnant, as birthing mammals and cat litter can pose a risk to people in pregnancy. Pregnant volunteers who choose to go ahead will undertake these roles at their own risk.

Although volunteers will be provided with instruction and training, we will also expect that they work in a proactive way and use their initiative when required.

For all volunteer roles at the Birkhill House, your first point of contact is the owner and manager Lara Armitage on:  
07779 339 653 or lara\_armitage@hotmail.com