



Head Gardener *Job Description*

Service:	<i>Central team</i>
Job Title:	<i>Head Gardener</i>
Reports To:	<i>Head of Partnerships and Development</i>
Location:	<i>Hybrid working; between home, Young Somerset bases countywide and other community delivery locations</i>
Main Purpose of Post:	
About Young Somerset Young Somerset is one of Somerset's leading charities supporting children, young people and families to thrive. Through youth work, education, mental health support, employability and early years services, we help young people build confidence, resilience and brighter futures. Young Somerset Farm is an exciting new development that will create a unique outdoor learning environment where young people can engage with horticulture, agriculture, conservation and food production. The farm will provide therapeutic spaces, alternative education, youth work, volunteering opportunities and community engagement while producing fresh food for local communities. The Head Gardener will lead the development, operation and continual improvement of Young Somerset Farm. They will be responsible for creating and maintaining an inspiring, productive and environmentally sustainable growing space that supports the delivery of youth work, alternative education, mental health interventions and volunteering. The role combines practical horticultural expertise with leadership, project management and a passion for helping young people develop through outdoor learning. The successful candidate will ensure the farm becomes a thriving educational and community asset whilst producing high-quality fruit, vegetables, flowers and other produce.	
Main Responsibilities and Duties:	
Horticultural Leadership • Work with key stakeholders to develop a medium to long term vision for the Young Somerset Farm based on ethical and regenerative principles. • Develop and implement an annual growing plan including planning seasonal sowing, planting and harvesting. • Establish and maintain vegetable gardens, orchards, fruit production and cut flower areas. • Maintain high standards across all cultivated areas. Farm Operations • Manage the day-to-day running of Young Somerset Farm. • Oversee maintenance of all growing areas, infrastructure and equipment.	

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- Manage irrigation, fencing, storage and growing facilities.
- Ensure livestock (poultry/small animals) receive appropriate care and welfare.
- Maintain machinery, tools and equipment.
- Coordinate seasonal site development projects.

Supporting Young People

- Work alongside Youth Workers delivering activities on the farm.
- Create engaging horticultural experiences for children and young people.
- Support Alternative Education Provision.
- Help young people gain practical horticultural and employability skills.
- Promote wellbeing through nature-based activities.

Volunteer Leadership

- Recruit, induct and support volunteers.
- Develop opportunities for community involvement.
- Foster intergenerational volunteering.
- Coordinate volunteer rotas.
- Provide guidance, coaching and training.

Community and Partnerships

- Develop relationships with local growers, suppliers and horticultural organisations.
- Work closely with local schools and community groups.
- Build partnerships with garden centres, allotment associations and food organisations.
- Represent Young Somerset Farm within the local community.
- Support fundraising and promotional events.

Sustainability and Enterprise

- Maximise the productive use of the site.
- Develop opportunities for produce sales.
- Support creation of vegetable boxes, flowers, jams and seasonal products.
- Supply produce to Young Somerset cafés where appropriate.
- Minimise waste through composting and recycling.
- Promote environmentally sustainable practices.

Health, Safety and Compliance

- Ensure safe working practices across the farm.
- Complete risk assessments as required.
- Maintain Young Somerset safeguarding standards when working with young people.
- Ensure compliance with animal welfare legislation.
- Monitor biosecurity and environmental risks.
- Ensure equipment is safely maintained.

Leadership Responsibilities • Lead the overall development of Young Somerset Farm. • Manage volunteers and visiting groups. • Plan annual work programmes. • Monitor budgets and resource requirements. • Maintain excellent standards across the site. • Work collaboratively with Youth Support, Mental Health and Early Years teams. • Contribute to strategic planning for the future growth of the farm.
Additional Information The postholder must be able to demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm towards Young Somerset's four core values: Putting Young People First, Inspiring, Collaborating, Going Further. A basic DBS clearance is required as post holder will be responsible for overseeing financial controls. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Acts. The post holder will be required to maintain a suitable, confidential space to work from home. This is a full-time permanent post of 37 hours per week attracting a salary of £31,263.00. Hours for this role will be annualised reflecting the seasonal demands of the role. Holiday entitlement is 27 days, plus 8 Bank Holidays (pro rata for part time staff), with an additional 5 days after 5 years service (pro rata for part time staff). The postholder may be required to work occasional evenings and weekends to support wider business activity.
Qualifications Essential Qualifications • Qualification in Horticulture, Agriculture, Garden Management or equivalent practical experience. • Full UK Driving Licence.
Experience and Skills Knowledge • Extensive knowledge of horticulture and food production. • Understanding of sustainable growing techniques. • Knowledge of seasonal planting and crop management. • Knowledge of health and safety requirements. • Understanding of biodiversity and conservation.

Experience

- Experience managing gardens or horticultural sites.
- Experience supervising volunteers or staff.
- Experience planning annual growing programmes.
- Experience maintaining tools and equipment.
- Experience working with community groups.

Skills

- Excellent practical gardening skills.
- Strong organisational abilities.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Ability to motivate others.
- Problem-solving skills.
- Ability to work independently.
- IT literacy.

Personal Qualities

We are looking for someone who:

- Has genuine enthusiasm for horticulture with the vision to take a blank canvas field and develop it into a thriving outdoor space.
- Believes in the potential of every young person.
- Enjoys sharing knowledge.
- Is practical, resilient and adaptable.
- Takes pride in creating beautiful and productive spaces.
- Is creative and solutions-focused.
- Works collaboratively.
- Demonstrates excellent judgement.
- Leads by example.
- Shares Young Somerset's values and commitment to inclusion.

What Success Looks Like

Within the first 12 months the postholder will have:

- Established Young Somerset Farm as a safe, welcoming and productive environment.
- Developed seasonal growing areas and infrastructure.
- Supported the launch of youth work and alternative education programmes on the farm.
- Built an active volunteer programme.
- Established relationships with local partners and suppliers.
- Produced the first harvests for community use and sale.
- Created systems that enable the farm to become financially sustainable over time.