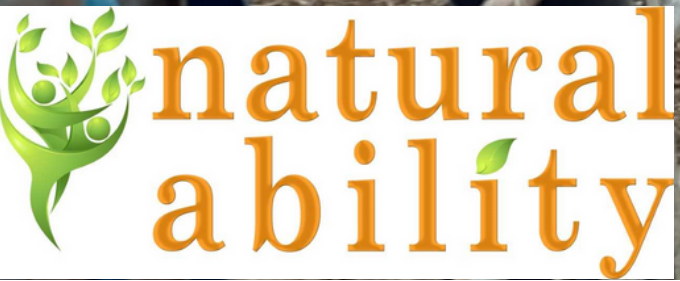


Respectful, Responsive, Unique Services for People with Learning Disabilities

# Volunteering with Natural Ability



# Become a volunteer with Natural Ability

Thank you for considering  
volunteering with  
Natural Ability

Natural Ability recognises the value of the volunteers who support our organisation and the important role they play. Our ambition is to make sure that anyone who donates time and skills to support us feels valued, supported and proud to be part of Natural Ability. This brochure will explain the things you need to know about volunteering with us.

We hope you find it helpful!

# About Us



Natural Ability is a Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee, set up in 2009 by a group of friends, some of whom are parents of people with learning disabilities.

Natural Ability offers choice for people who enjoy being outdoors and active by providing opportunities for people to live, learn and work in a rural environment, thereby improving their physical health and emotional well-being. We build on people's strengths and aspirations, helping people to learn rural skills, undertake meaningful work, make friends and be valued for the part they play in their community.

We believe that everyone should have ambition and opportunities for lifelong learning, the chance to progress and have pride in their achievement. We support people to learn through challenging and well-managed risk, doing real work, having fun and having a sense of personal autonomy.

We support people to live as independently as possible, empowering them to achieve goals that are personalised and defined by them.

We work with adults with learning disabilities and are aiming to broaden our services to include people with dementia and mental health issues.

Based in Hexham, Northumberland but operating throughout the region, we currently provide four main services: Independent Supported Living, Day Farming, a Handy Person Service and our new centre based day service The Orchard.

# The Orchard



The Orchard is our new centre based day service located at West Orchard House, Allendale Road in Hexham. The Orchard provides centre and community based day activities for adults with learning disabilities and adults with Autism. The day activities currently operate Monday and Wednesday between the hours of 9:30am and 4:30pm but will grow to 5 days per week as the centre develops.

The Orchard team deliver a programme of modules, including seasonal variations, to ensure there is a wide level of learning, knowledge and practical skills, therefore combining the varying interests of those attending the centre.

The centre day is split into three sessions - focus and learning; creativity and energy and health & wellbeing and social interaction. The activities delivered focus on the following modules and topics:

- |                      |                                    |                              |          |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Safety               | Health & Wellbeing                 | Living & Independence Skills |          |                        |
| Social Interaction   | Digital Skills                     | Creative Skills              | Graphics |                        |
| Design               | Arts                               | Drama                        | Media    | Nature & Environmental |
| Community Activities | Functional Skills & Qualifications |                              |          |                        |



# Day Farming

The Natural Ability Day Farming Service offers people the chance to do meaningful work in a rural environment and benefit from the improvements in physical and emotional health that being active outdoors has proven to bring.

We operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays with transport provided from a central point in Hexham. Individuals can attend independently or with their own support staff. We provide three main types of activities:

- Farm days provide opportunities for people to learn about farming and good animal care.
- Gardening days teach horticulture skills - planting, growing and harvesting - and how to cook the produce we grow.
- Walking days are a chance to make friends and learn about nature, the environment and local history.

A team of Activity Supervisors works with attendees, farmers and members of the community to prepare a programme of interesting, educational and fun activities throughout the year.



# Handy Person Service

The Natural Ability Handy Person Service provides a valuable service to individuals, community groups and businesses. Our Supported Workers receive a living wage and have the same rights and responsibilities as other employees.

The Handy Person Service team is supervised by an Activity Supervisor who is an experienced tradesperson. The Activity Supervisor, together with the team, assesses and plans jobs, orders materials and develops quotes for customers.

The work carried out by the team is to a high standard and varied, ranging from landscaping, maintenance and litter picking to assembling furniture and painting.



# Independent Supported Living



The Natural Ability Independent Supported Living Service enables people to live as independently as possible. We give people choice in their lives, offering them the chance to live where they want, how they want and very importantly, with who they want.

We work with people, their families and supporting professionals to develop bespoke services which are truly person-centred. We encourage people to be active and healthy, make friends and to be a valued part of their community.

We support people to develop daily living and social skills and we offer travel training. We provide help with personal care and medical needs and we promote positive behaviour. We aim to improve an individuals self-esteem and confidence.

A dedicated team of Support Workers work with people within their own homes, empowering them to live safe, happy and fulfilled lives.



# Volunteering with Natural Ability

## What is A Volunteer at Natural Ability?

A volunteer with Natural Ability is someone who wants to support us and who offers their time, skills and expertise free of charge, in order to help the people we work with and advance the work we do.

There are a number of voluntary roles available at Natural Ability:

Supporting within The Orchard

Supporting our day farming activities.

Helping at social events.

Helping Natural Ability to raise funds to support the work we do.

We will not ask any volunteer to carry out a role which should be assigned to a member of staff.

## Why Volunteer?

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it gives a chance to give something back to the community, to make a difference or support the people around them. For others it is an opportunity to gain new skills and experiences or share the skills that they have.

It's an opportunity to meet new people, make friends, connect with your community and even advance your own career.

Volunteering can improve self-esteem and self-motivation, and improve your physical and mental health.

Don't ask "why volunteer?", ask "why not?".





# How we Recruit

All volunteers will be asked to complete an application form which is tailored to their chosen volunteer role. Some roles will require more specific skills or experience and will require an informal interview. We may also need to request references and you'll be notified during recruitment if this is required for your role.

As some roles do require specific skills or experience, not all applicants will be successful. We will provide useful feedback and suggest alternative roles where possible to match your interests, skills and suitability.

We will always aim to place volunteers into the role most appropriate for them.

Some roles may require you to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This will be free of charge. Any volunteer required to complete a DBS check will be notified in advance. Only relevant offences will be considered when evaluating an applicant's suitability and data obtained from DBS checks will only be available to appropriate members of staff.

To volunteer with Natural Ability you must be aged 18 or over.

## What You Can Expect From Us

We will give you a clear and defined role, we will also offer flexibility within our volunteering opportunities and take into account any caring and other commitments that you have.

We will provide an induction to the work of Natural Ability and to your role. We will give you the appropriate training and tools to enable you to carry out your role effectively. A named supervisor will support you, monitor your volunteering and discuss development opportunities. We will give volunteers a voice within the organisation – we'll ask for your views and ideas.

We will cover reasonable out-of-pocket travel expenses. We will have adequate insurance to cover you while undertaking voluntary activities.

We will resolve any concerns you have promptly and fairly. We will provide references for people who have actively volunteered their time for us. We will celebrate your successes and recognise your achievements.

## What We Expect From You

You need to commit to the actions you agree to, however big or small they may be, and carry them out to the best of your ability.

You will support our values and act as an ambassador for our organisation. You will treat people with respect and always act as required by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

You will need to be professional and adhere to our Confidentiality Policy and our Professional and Personal Boundaries Policy. You will always work within our Health and Safety Policy and relevant Risk Assessments. You will follow all other policies and procedures of the organisation relevant to volunteers.

You will bring any comments or concerns you might have to the attention of your supervisor or a member of the management team.

# How We Will Support You



## Induction

We want you to feel happy in, and prepared, for your volunteering role. As a volunteer with Natural Ability your supervisor or an appropriate manager will meet with you to provide you with an induction to our organisation. During the induction you will be given an introduction to the organisation and you will have time to talk about the role you are being asked to undertake. The Job Description which will detail the specific role you have volunteered to undertake, will be discussed, you will be asked about your development needs and a Volunteer Development Plan will be completed.

As part of the induction your supervisor will also issue you with a number of policies which you will be asked to read and then sign to confirm you have read them.

## Training

Your training will vary depending on your role . You will receive any training which is relevant to your role and may also be asked to complete mandatory on-line training.

As your volunteering progresses, we also offer relevant development opportunities for those who want them.

# Support and Supervision

Providing support and supervision to our volunteers is very important to us. We want you to feel comfortable and confident in your role, so you'll have a named supervisor for ongoing support during your time with us.

Your supervisor will be approachable and available if you have any needs, concerns, questions or ideas. Support can be offered in person, on the phone or online, depending on the nature of your role.

There'll be opportunities for catch-ups with your supervisor to review your volunteering and to update you on what's happening at Natural Ability.

We'll be staying in touch with regular emails and newsletters. Once a year you will be asked to meet with your supervisor to talk about your achievements, performance within the role and aims for the following year.



# Come and volunteer with us



If you want to find out more about Natural Ability you will find information on our website [www.naturalability.org](http://www.naturalability.org) or [facebook.com/NaturalAbilityUK](https://facebook.com/NaturalAbilityUK)

If there is anything you would like to discuss please phone the Natural Ability office on 01434 618149 or email [recruitment@naturalability.org](mailto:recruitment@naturalability.org)