



Hopefield Animal Sanctuary, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 9BZ

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Registered Charity Number 1181186

"Saving Animals Together Since 1983"

Animal Caregiver Team Leader Job Description

Location: Brentwood, Essex

Salary: £28,000 per annum

Hours: 8.00am to 4.30pm, 5 days a week

Working Pattern: Rota-based, generally Monday to Friday with occasional weekend work to cover holidays and other operational needs

Contract: Full-time, permanent

IMPORTANT: THIS IS NOT AN ENTRY-LEVEL ROLE. Only serious applications will be considered. Applicants must be able to demonstrate substantial hands-on experience with large animals, including equines, together with practical experience of managing people.

About Hopefield Animal Sanctuary

Hopefield Animal Sanctuary is a long-established charity based in Brentwood, Essex. For more than 40 years, we have provided a safe, permanent home for rescued, neglected and unwanted animals. What began with the rescue of horses and goats has grown across our 53-acre site, which is now home to more than 600 animals, including farm animals, equines, birds, reptiles and, more recently, exotic species.

To help fund our vital work, the sanctuary opens to the public. This allows us to share our animals' stories, encourage compassion and show visitors that animals are not disposable commodities. Our animals will always be our first priority; however, the successful candidate will also understand that providing a safe, welcoming and high-quality visitor experience is essential to the sanctuary's future.

The opportunity

This is a rewarding opportunity for an experienced animal-care professional and practical people leader. You will coordinate the day-to-day work of our Animal Caregiver team and dedicated volunteers, supported by a Senior Animal Caregiver, and Volunteer Experience Lead, while maintaining consistently high standards of welfare, safety, cleanliness and teamwork.

You will remain hands-on and willing to help wherever needed, but your main priority will be supervising people, organising the day's work and ensuring that everything is

completed safely and to the required standard. The role would particularly suit someone with yard-management experience who is confident working with large animals and leading a busy team.

For the right person, there is scope to continue developing within Hopefield. Someone who demonstrates commitment, sound judgement and strong leadership may have the opportunity to progress into a management role in the future.

Key responsibilities

Leadership and team development

- Lead, organise and supervise the daily work of Animal Caregiver team.
- Allocate duties clearly, set priorities and make sure all essential tasks are completed safely, efficiently and to a consistently high standard.
- Provide clear direction, constructive feedback and practical support, helping staff and volunteers to develop in a positive and accountable way.
- Promote strong communication, effective handovers and a respectful, supportive working culture.
- Remain calm, fair and decisive when responding to changing priorities, welfare concerns or difficult situations.

Animal welfare and care

- Monitor the health, behaviour and general wellbeing of animals across the sanctuary, ensuring any concerns are recognised, recorded and escalated promptly.
- Oversee animal health, treatment, weight and monitoring records, support veterinary visits, and make sure veterinary instructions are followed by appropriately trained team members.
- Supervise and assist with daily animal-care duties, including cleaning, feeding, watering, mucking out, enrichment, weighing, monitoring and routine care.
- Check that animal accommodation, enclosures, fields, yards and equipment are clean, secure and appropriate for each animal's needs.
- Model compassionate, patient and welfare-led handling at all times.

Site, visitor and operational standards

- Ensure the sanctuary is clean, safe, presentable and ready to welcome members of the public by 10.00am on visitor days.
- Maintain the right balance between protecting animal welfare and supporting a positive, informative visitor experience.
- Assist with routine health and safety monitoring, report hazards or defects promptly and help ensure agreed procedures are followed.

- Support preparations for sanctuary events and help the wider team respond to operational needs when required.
- Monitor the use of feed, bedding, cleaning materials and other supplies, taking practical steps to reduce unnecessary waste.

Small-animal boarding

- Oversee the animal-care operation of our small-animal boarding service within the pets section, including care routines, cleanliness, welfare checks, records and staffing standards.
- Work with relevant colleagues to help establish an organised, safe and high-quality service from the outset.

About you

You will be an experienced, dependable and practical leader who genuinely cares about animal welfare and understands how to get the best from people. You will be prepared to set standards, hold others accountable and lead by example - including getting stuck into physical animal-care work when the team needs you.

Essential experience and qualities

- Substantial hands-on experience caring for large animals, including equines.
- Practical experience of supervising or managing people in a working environment; this must include directing day-to-day work, not simply acting as the most experienced person on a team.
- Experience of maintaining high animal-care, yard or site standards; yard-management experience would be particularly relevant.
- A good working understanding of animal welfare, daily health monitoring and when to escalate concerns.
- A hard-working, hands-on and solutions-focused approach, with a genuine willingness to muck in and the resilience to stay composed under pressure.
- High personal standards, excellent attention to detail, reliability and the confidence to expect the same standards from others.
- Strong communication and organisational skills, with the ability to lead staff and volunteers constructively.
- An understanding of the relationship between excellent animal care and a safe, welcoming visitor experience.
- The ability to carry out the physical requirements of the role, work outdoors in a range of weather conditions, and supply suitable steel toe-cap safety boots; reasonable adjustments will be considered where appropriate.
- Flexibility to work occasional weekends when needed to cover holidays, events or other operational requirements.

Desirable

- Experience in a busy animal sanctuary, rescue centre, equine yard, farm, zoo or similar environment, ideally working across more than one animal group.
- A relevant animal-care, equine, management, first-aid or health and safety qualification.
- Experience of training volunteers or leading a mixed staff-and-volunteer team.
- Experience supporting or overseeing an animal-boarding service.

Benefits

- Company pension and sick pay.
- Discounted food in our cafe and a discount in our gift shop.
- Free on-site parking.
- Uniform provided.
- The chance to play a meaningful part in the lives of hundreds of rescued animals, with potential for future progression for someone who consistently demonstrates the required commitment and leadership

To apply, please email a cover letter (essential) and a copy of your CV (also essential) to office@hopefield.org.uk