

NEW VOLUNTEERS HANDBOOK

Working with MUD at our projects and post Covid-19

About Us

Manchester Urban Diggers (MUD) is a not-for-profit social enterprise founded in 2019 by Jo, Sam and Mike.

MUD's largest project is Platt Fields Market Garden (PFMG). Established by Jo and Sam in 2017, it is a nature friendly community market garden located in Platt Fields Park. We grow all of our produce using a range of organic techniques and share our crops with volunteers as well as sell vegetable boxes to subscribers of our CSA (Community Supported Agriculture).

We now have several projects across the city including;

- The Landing in Stockport,
- Pankhurst Plot in Chorlton
- Mona Street in Salford
- Ridgeway Street in Miles Platting

As well as our Gleaning operations around Greater Manchester when funding allows!

We provide hands-on experience of growing using organic farming methods through: School visits, volunteering, CSR days, workshops, and events. We invite groups of volunteers from different organisations and individuals to come and help in our gardens. We also work in partnership with third sector organisations, running courses or providing experience in horticulture for people who may have specific needs. Our volunteers provide a huge amount of help to us and are crucial to our success.

How Covid-19 impacted us?

When the pandemic started, we had to close our gates to the public for a while and stop any community engagement on the market garden as well as at our other projects. Our sole focus was growing food in a way that meets any local demand during these times. Now that restrictions have been lifted we are starting our community work again and selling produce on Saturdays.

We are trying our hardest to adapt quickly to the ever changing guidelines and will keep you up to date as promptly as possible. Please be patient with us during this time.

Who can volunteer?

Anyone is welcome to come and volunteer with us at our projects.

Under 18s must be accompanied by a responsible adult or guardian.

Volunteers can expect to try their hand at lots of digging, planting, harvesting, watering and everything else you might expect when out gardening.

We will provide training to volunteers in any tasks they might be unsure of, so do not worry if you haven't worked specifically with a market/kitchen/community garden before.

Some gardening tasks can be physically demanding and you will be exposed to the elements.

It is important that you let staff know if you injure yourself or begin to feel unwell during the day.

What are the safety procedures for volunteering?

First and foremost, you must not come to any gardens/projects if you are feeling at all unwell, or are showing any symptoms of Covid-19, or if you have been in contact with anyone who has symptoms (High temperature, new continuous cough).

Health and Hygiene -

- On arrival to projects, we ask you wash your hands at a suitable wash basin or you will be provided with hand sanitiser at the start of sessions and throughout the day.
- Each volunteer should have one set of tools to use for the day and must be cleaned thoroughly at the end of each day.
- Hands must be washed/sanitised regularly, before and after eating or smoking, before and after using gloves and tools and before and after using any buildings/structures.
- If you prefer to use gardening gloves, we have some new ones we can provide. These will be washed at the end of every day. Please also bring hand sanitiser if you have any as supplies are short and in high demand.
- Please avoid touching your face and cover your mouth when you sneeze using a sleeve or tissue and bin it right away afterwards.
- Please bring your own food and drink and do not share it with others. Water will be available on site at PFMG but may not be available at other projects.

Safety -

- You will possibly be using sharp tools and other equipment. If possible, wear suitable clothing and footwear for gardening. We do have overalls & steel toe cap boots available to borrow so do not worry if you don't have these - just ask when you arrive on site.
- You may be lifting heavy objects. If you are unsure as to how to safely lift heavy items, ask a supervisor for assistance & training.
- There are sharp objects, trip hazards and uneven surfaces on all of our projects. Please be careful when you are navigating our sites and ask for help if you need some. It is **all of our** duties to pick up hazards that have been left around the garden.

Movement around the projects -

- The government has advised that we keep space between each other when possible, please respect other people's personal space & wishes.
- Volunteers must endeavour to wear face masks when inside buildings if they have no medical reasons not to.

Mental health and wellbeing -

- We encourage our gardens to be a place to escape everyday worries and make the most of being in nature.
- Physical exercise can have a huge positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. Work up a sweat but remember to go at your own pace and if you need to rest please do so at any time.
- Hot weather - remember to drink plenty of water.

Anyone not following safety procedures will be asked to leave the project immediately.

What will I need to bring for the day?

We can provide gardening gloves and tools but you are welcome to bring your own, please do not share them with anyone else. You will need to bring with you your own packed lunch, cutlery and drinks flask or water bottle.

We will be able to provide coffee, tea & refreshments at some sites (e.g. PFMG) but please ask before coming as each site will be different.

What can volunteering at our projects offer you?

We hope that time on the land and having some 'green time' will bring a sense of wellness, and the knowledge that you are helping to grow and harvest food for people during a time of crisis will bring a sense of strength and purpose.

We cannot guarantee that there will be surplus veg to take home with you, but if there is then volunteers will be invited to take some home.

Each of our volunteers are an essential part of producing food for this time and we greatly value the input of each and every volunteer, and the help you can give us during and following this pandemic.

How do I apply?

If you have read through the information and think you're the right fit then click the links below:

[registration form](#)

Fill out the registration form to acknowledge you have read and understood this handbook. We need your details for track and trace purposes but will delete them and anonymise your data if you finish volunteering with us. Please let us know if you wish us to remove your data from our database.

Once you have registered, you will be added to our database of volunteers so please remember to add your availability and which projects you would like to help with. When completing this please only sign up to days you can commit to. It is crucial that we know exactly who is coming each day. Of

course, health comes first and if you are unwell we ask that you let us know as soon as possible before the day.

After you have registered

We will contact you by email when we have volunteer slots available. We may have a waiting list so please forgive us if it's a while before you get a slot.

Thank you from all of us at MUD. With your help and support we can keep producing the good food we all need.

For any questions regarding volunteering please email volunteer@wearemud.org