



THE BIRCH COLLECTIVE

Connecting people to the natural world as a source of resilience and inspiration

The Birch Collective (Maternity Cover) Project Lead and Facilitator - Role Description -

Organisation:	The Birch Collective CIC
Place of work:	Office: 30-64 Pennywell Road Bristol BS5 0TG and on site locations across Bristol
Hours of work:	15 hrs per week (2 days) This may include occasional extra paid days of work
Days of work	Wednesday/Thursday, some flexibility possible
Contract Type:	This is a fixed-term contract to provide maternity cover and will end on the earlier of: (a) 18 December 2026, or (b) the date the postholder returns to work from maternity leave.
Annual leave:	28 days pro rata (inclusive of bank holidays)
Probationary period:	3 months
Salary:	£34,000 pro rata (PAYE salaried employment including paid holidays, NI contributions & optional pension contribution via the NEST scheme.)
Application process	Application deadline: 9 February 2026 Interview invitations sent: 13 February 2026 Interviews: 2.5 hours on 16 or 18 February, at Strawberry Lane Community Gdns Decision announced: 23 February 2026 Role commences: 18th March 2026

About us

The Birch Collective works with young people and adults who are experiencing mental ill-health, social isolation, or difficult transitions. Through nature-based creative and land-skills groups, we support participants to build resilience, find motivation, and reclaim a sense of purpose and empowerment in their lives.

We believe deeply in the healing and transformative power of nature. Over the years we've evolved and expanded our offerings. We now run a wide range of programmes including:

- Fresh Air Thursdays: weekly land-skills and wellbeing sessions combining gardening, food-growing, natural craft (e.g. willow or clay work), wood carving, natural building, fireside cooking and other seasonal nature-based activities. These sessions offer a relaxed, supportive space to connect with people and the outdoors, for 16-25 year olds.
- Camp Birch / "Seeding Change: Plant Your Future": immersive multi-night residential camps for 18-25-year-olds (free or pay-what-you-can), designed to reconnect participants with nature, build confidence, community and peer support - often forming a turning point for people feeling stuck, isolated or in need of fresh purpose.
- 1:1 Nature-Based Mentoring: personalised mentoring in nature for individuals recovering from mental health crises or living with persistent mental health needs. This includes work commissioned by the NHS.

- **Therapeutic Forest School & Group Work:** in partnership with organisations such as educational institutions and support providers, we also work with young adults with profound disabilities, ESOL students, asylum seekers and refugees - offering a nature-based programme tailored to their needs, background and context.
- **Partnership & Bespoke Programmes:** we collaborate with other organisations (e.g. youth agencies, colleges, charities) to deliver bespoke nature- and community-based workshops, designed to meet the needs of different groups.
- **Steering Groups & Co-Design Opportunities:** we provide participatory workshops and steering-group sessions where participants help shape the direction of Birch Collective - giving their voices real influence over what we do and how we grow next. This supports a sense of ownership, belonging and community.

Together, our programmes aim to build community and foster belonging, connection, purpose, and resilience. We co-design much of our work with participants, creating spaces where they can grow practical and interpersonal skills - for example by delivering mini-workshops themselves, taking on peer-support roles, or volunteering with us.

Our team brings together diverse expertise - psychotherapy, eco-therapy, forest-school education, community music, heritage craft, forestry, ecologically-sensitive food growing and more - enabling us to respond flexibly and creatively to participants' needs.

Established over 5 years ago, the Birch Collective continues to evolve. In 2024–2025 we worked with nearly 200 people across our programmes, many of whom were not in education, training or work, offering non-stigmatising, community-based support rooted in nature. For more information, please visit our [website](#).

Role Outline

This is a 9-month, 2-days-per-week role supporting the delivery and smooth running of Birch's core nature-based programmes during a period of maternity cover. You will work closely with the Directors and team to ensure high-quality facilitation, consistent participant experience, and the continuation of our partnerships and community-based work.

We are looking for someone with strong nature-based facilitation experience, confident programme delivery skills, and the ability to hold both group work and 1:1 work outdoors. The role is hands-on, varied, practical, participant-led and rooted in land-based wellbeing practice. You will bring warmth, creativity and confidence in outdoor therapeutic practice and nature-connection work.

You will take full responsibility for one of Birch's core programmes, including planning and scheduling all sessions, coordinating resources and logistics, and ensuring high-quality participant experiences throughout. This will involve forward planning, anticipating challenges and adapting to changing needs, while contributing to the continued development of programme content and structure.

You'll be comfortable taking initiative, enjoy working in a team, and committed to supporting the continued growth of our programmes for young people and adults. This is a fantastic opportunity to make a meaningful impact, work closely with a passionate team, and enjoy a hands-on, creative role in nature-based wellbeing.

Key Responsibilities

Programme Delivery & Project Management

- Project-manage Fresh Air Thursdays, including session planning, coordinating staff/volunteers, and ensuring smooth weekly delivery.

- Delivering nature connection and arts/crafts/nature-based creative practices, including 6 week courses, one off events and regular drop in programmes.
- Facilitate seasonal Forest School sessions for students at the city of Bristol College in the ESOL department, ensuring activities are safe, engaging, and accessible.
- Deliver/hold 1:1 nature-based mentoring as needed.
- Hold participant-led approaches within all programmes, supporting young adults to take ownership, design activities and develop peer-leadership skills.
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation is implemented across the programmes you manage.
- Ensure data and photos from sessions are captured, processed and shared in accessible, meaningful formats, on our internal systems and social media.
- Joint responsibility for maintaining and improving the site, and the tools and resources stored there.
- Liaising with partners to ensure relationships are built and maintained
- Responsibility for participant engagement and experience, in conjunction with Marketing Officer.

General

- Attend team meetings, reflective practice and supervision.
- Uphold Birch's safeguarding, risk assessment and wellbeing standards.
- Work collaboratively and flexibly within a small team environment.
- Contribute creative ideas, problem-solving and responsiveness to emerging programme needs.

What We're Looking For

Essential Skills & Experience

- **3+ years of lead delivery** in at least one of: horticultural therapy, eco-therapy, social forestry, nature-connection work, or similar therapeutic outdoor practice. This includes having strong practical skills in arts/crafts/nature-based creative practices, e.g. green woodwork, basketry, natural dyeing, textiles, clay, gardening/allotment/organic horticulture/permaculture knowledge.
- Confident outdoor facilitation skills - able to make people feel safe, comfortable and included, and to hold sessions that have direction while still offering choice, flexibility and participant autonomy.
- Experience working with people from diverse cultural and life backgrounds. An understanding of how to work safely and empathetically with trauma, mental health challenges and neurodivergence.
- Demonstrated project-management skills and strong organisational skills
- Experience working with adults or young adults outdoors, especially those facing barriers, mental-ill health or isolation.

Desirable

- Experience of participant-led practice, youth participation or co-design.
- Forest School qualification.
- Outdoor First Aid.
- A driving licence
- Access to a laptop for planning/admin.

As Part of The Birch Collective You Will:

- Join a small, welcoming, and collaborative team, working in a trauma-informed way.
- Have the freedom to shape your role and bring your creativity and land-based skills into our programmes.
- Make a direct contribution to nature-based mental health support for young people and adults.
- Benefit from reflective supervision, both internal and external, to support and enhance your practice.

- Access to pro-rata holiday leave and a paid allowance for non-essential training—opportunities to develop skills that enhance your role, bring personal enjoyment, and support your growth, but are not strictly required for your core responsibilities. (Essential training, which directly relates to mandatory requirements for your role, is covered by a separate budget.)

Apply for this job:

Stage 1 (optional):

We are holding a drop in hour **Thursday 5th February 4-5.30pm** at **Strawberry Lane Community Gardens** where you can meet us and have an informal chat. Please email harri@thebirchcollective.co.uk for address/directions if needed.

Note that we take the month of January off. We will answer emails but may take up to 7-10 days to reply.

Stage 2: Application:

To apply email harri@thebirchcollective.co.uk the following:

- Your CV (max 2 pages) including name, address, contact number, employment and education history
- Depending on your communication preferences, we would like either a cover letter (max 2 pages), video or audio (max 5 minutes). Within it, please explain why you would like to work with us, outlining relevant skills and experience in relation to the desirable and essential criteria.
- Two referees, one of which should be your most or recent employer. We will only take up references for candidates chosen for the interview.

Closing dates for applications: **9th Feb, 5pm**

Stage 3: Interviews:

If invited for an interview, it will take place on **Monday 16th or Wednesday 18th February** at **Strawberry Lane Community Gardens**. Unfortunately we are not able to offer different dates for interviews.

You will be invited for a 2.5 hour interview, which will include a 1 hour interview with the team, and a 1-1.5 hour practical session with up to 4 participants. You will be asked to prepare an activity to run in the practical session. Please use the 'essential skills' section for guidance. If you require very specific tools and materials, please enquire as we may have them on site.

Start date: Wednesday 18th March 2026