

# Caterer

## Core Roles and Competences

Each long term Core member has a **lead specialist role**. The caterer's is described below. This is a deliberately wide-ranging job description and can seem daunting. We know that few applicants are likely to come equipped with *all* the skills and experience we mention. We are happy for a successful applicant to grow in and into the job. So please do not be easily put off by the apparent range of the work and its demands.

## Overview

The role of caterer at Othona is really vital and can be very fulfilling. You'll need some competence both in cooking and in running a kitchen (menu planning, ordering, food hygiene and so on). But just as important, you need the personal qualities to be well organised without being inflexible, to cope calmly in changing circumstances, to work cheerfully in a changing team. So emotional intelligence and an interest in people will need to underpin your technical skills.

One day you may be preparing meals for a group of 20 people. The next you may be encouraging an inexperienced core member to create a simple supper for 6 people out of leftovers. And the following morning, you may need to plan a menu in advance for a packed house of families with children (numbers up to 40 maximum).

You will be responsible for cooking many of the main meals, lunches and suppers. Other resident core members share in the cooking on a rota basis. Help is available in the kitchen, especially from our 'super-volunteers' who you will need to oversee, train and accompany on occasion.

This role could suit you if you're an experienced cook now looking to live in a community-oriented environment, or perhaps if you're newly qualified and seeking all-round experience and responsibility. Alternatively you may not have any formal training but love cooking, planning menus and working with people.

The kitchen at Othona is more like a large family kitchen than a standard commercial operation. It is not shut away from the rest of community life, so working in it one need not feel isolated. The way it is run has secured us 5 star food hygiene status with the environmental health department.

Food has a central place in the ethos of Othona. We encourage everyone to value and enjoy preparing food and eating together, not only as a pleasure in itself but also as a powerful symbol (a 'sacrament') of community. (In practice this does not mean everybody competing to cook – but it does mean we welcome the involvement of even our newest visitor in preparing vegetables or washing up.) We have a polytunnel for growing salads, raised veg beds, an orchard and a soft fruit cage. Please note that Othona often serves vegetarian meals but also meat and fish; you will need to handle and cook the full range of foodstuffs, whether they are part of your own diet or not.

We have a reputation for good, simple, home cooked food and the use of local or home grown produce where possible. As a creative menu-planner we hope you will enjoy the challenge of balancing these criteria with the constraints of a fairly tight budget. West Dorset has a wealth of local food producers with Bridport named a

'beacon' town in this regard. We also take increasing notice of the environmental impact of our catering.

The salary offered is £8,997.08 per annum, plus full board and lodging (in accommodation consisting of at least a one bedroom flat), with Council Tax paid. You can expect two days off a week (on a variable rota) and 28 days annual leave allowance.

To summarise, our caterer has three aims of equal importance:

- to manage the provision of balanced, nourishing, tasty food for visitors and core, within a limited budget
- to manage the kitchen and its systems and maintain high standards of hygiene and safety
- to build community with core colleagues, volunteers and visitors by encouraging and helping them to participate in cooking and related activities.

Othona is a spiritual community, but without lots of pious talk or formal religion. We do ask of core members that you're committed to spiritual growth in yourself and others.

*Othona West Dorset is a centre dedicated to human wellbeing – of body, mind and spirit. We have found that individual wellbeing grows through an experience of community with others and of connection with Spirit/God. We welcome people of all faiths and none. Only together can we hope to build a sustainable future of justice and peace. Down-to-earth and open-hearted, Othona has its roots in the inclusive Christian tradition, and now draws on a wealth of other inspirations too.*

## **Key Responsibilities**

1. Renew and improve Othona's menus, within agreed budgets and ethical guidelines.
2. Offer varied menus with a significant proportion of vegetarian main meals and a vegetarian alternative when meat or fish is served.
3. Manage cleaning and hygiene in the kitchen and storage areas, and of the utensils and equipment.
4. Ensure good health and safety practice in the kitchen and related areas and keep appropriate records (see separate appendix).
5. Manage stock, ordering and buying according to good practice, health and economy, avoiding wastage.
6. Co-ordinate the cooking and use of the kitchen, encouraging the safe and enjoyable participation of visitors, core colleagues and volunteers in cooking and related activities.
7. Liaise day-to-day and at policy level with those responsible for food that is grown on site and have hands-on involvement with the garden as appropriate..
8. Manage the catering operation so that Othona meets its catering budget.

## **Skills and Experience**

### **Cooking and Catering**

As caterer you should

- have a love of cooking and of simple wholesome food
- be interested in nutrition and able to plan the menus balancing various criteria
- be capable of preparing and cooking for up to 40 adults and children

### **Managing Health, Hygiene and Safety in Kitchen and Storage areas**

You will need to

- understand and implement good health, hygiene and safety practices in the kitchen, in your own work and that of others
- be prepared to supplement your qualifications beyond the basics of food hygiene, as agreed with the Warden
- be able to train others in appropriate cooking and cleaning skills and safe systems of work

### **Planning and organising**

You will be responsible for planning and organising the work, equipment and systems in kitchen and storage areas, and ensuring the work gets done on time. The way you work will inevitably influence the atmosphere in kitchen and dining room. You must be able to

- identify key tasks, decide priorities and organise your workload
- involve and motivate less experienced people in the life of the kitchen
- create and maintain records to provide accurate information easily accessible to yourself and colleagues
- use your IT skills and train in new ones as necessary so as to bring the best digital resources to bear on the catering role
- stay calm and positive

### **Resilience**

As caterer in a community setting you will need to be comfortable taking responsibility, with an appropriate level of supervision and guidance. Sharing your life with colleagues and visitors as well as carrying out the work needs physical, mental and emotional resilience. Even when under stress, you should aim to take a positive view and keep a sense of perspective.

# Appendix: Health and Safety – Catering

The caterer will have specific responsibility for the following health and safety tasks:

## GENERAL

- ❖ Keep appropriate records demonstrating that checks have been done in accordance with the H&S procedures document

## KITCHEN SAFETY

- ❖ Ensure that the extraction system maintains the temperature at a suitable level
- ❖ Ensure adequate lighting
- ❖ Ensure that all equipment is guarded adequately
- ❖ Ensure that all equipment guards are in correct working order
- ❖ Ensure that all kitchen users wear required (safety) footwear
- ❖ Ensure that knives are stored safely in kitchen drawers
- ❖ Ensure that the first aid box is properly stocked and readily accessible
- ❖ Ensure that the fire extinguisher and fire blanket are readily accessible
- ❖ Provide suitable facilities for washing and drying hands
- ❖ Ensure adequate and suitable arrangements are in place for the control of insects and vermin
- ❖ Ensure that safety steps are available to clean high areas
- ❖ Ensure that safety procedures for handling hot liquids are in place
- ❖ Ensure that all kitchen staff are familiar with the emergency gas cut off procedure in the kitchen and where the gas supply enters the house
- ❖ Ensure that spillages are cleaned up immediately

## STORAGE AREAS

- ❖ Keep pantry and larder tidy and floors free from obstruction
- ❖ Ensure all goods and items are stacked neatly and safely
- ❖ Ensure all stored items are easily retrievable

## Appendix 2 – Tasks and Competences

The following common tasks are all essential to the running of the Centre and will be carried out by a combination of long and short term core members and local volunteers. They offer variety and sometimes the opportunity to use (or develop) special skills or pursue a personal interest.

### Common Tasks

These tasks are shared between core members, often on a rota basis:

- cooking
- cleaning
- worship leading (with support/training as appropriate)
- hosting (event liaison with facilitators and visitors)
- rubbish and recycling

Other tasks related to the running of the Centre may arise, which by agreement the core member may wish to pursue in addition to their lead role.

## **Common Competences for all Core Members**

### **Commitment to the Work and Ethos of Othona West Dorset (OWD)**

The core members are at the heart of the Othona Community at Burton Bradstock, along with the Local Committee which supports the core in their work. Core members need to be committed to the work of the community, its ethos and values. They work actively to live these out in their everyday life, and to further them. All Core members need to be committed to take part in regular group meetings with an external facilitator, which support our life and work together.

The competences below provide good examples of what is required in practice of Core members. The programme explains what Othona is about. Our policy statements show how the Othona Community at OWD seeks to realise these values in the way it manages people, its policies of equal opportunities and the green policies for house and grounds, and in its open Christianity.

### **Interest in and Skill with People**

The heart of Othona is people – core colleagues, visitors and all those with whom we interact. People come because they know they will be welcomed, accepted and valued for who they are. Our role is not to be therapists or counsellors, but we do need to be interested in people and willing to listen and share. We also need to be aware of our own responses and feelings, and especially of the impact of our own behaviour on other people.

### **Flexibility**

Othona core members live and work together, and are host to an ever-changing number of visitors. Core members have to be flexible, able to adapt to varied and changing circumstances and people.

### **Responsible Teamwork**

The main purpose of Othona is to provide visitors with a taste of life in community. The core members need to be able to live and work together co-operatively, and provide support (and challenge). This is important not only to carry out our work but equally so we can enjoy our life together, relax and have fun.

### **Spiritual Practice**

Othona is a Christian community of a very open sort: based in our Christian heritage and open to a wider future. It is an approach to spirituality where you may experience the fellowship of the spirit in everyday life. Although core members do not have to be Christian, and may be of any faith tradition or none, we expect that they will respect the importance of Christian tradition and the values that are at the heart of Othona. They adopt the Othona 'Rule of Life' as a framework for shared life, and participate actively in the spiritual aspects of community life including leading and joining in chapel services.