

Othona West Dorset - Caterer job description

At Othona each long-term Core member has a lead specialist role. The Caterer's is described below.

Overview

Food has a central place in the life and 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 of community. We sit down to share a common meal at Othona – not a variety of menu options. But of course there are individuals whose allergies or other special requirements need to be catered for.

We have a reputation for good, simple, home cooked food and the use of local or home grown produce where possible. We have a polytunnel for growing salads, raised veg beds, an orchard and a soft fruit cage and grow our own fruit and vegetables when we can. Your active interest in the garden and a keenness to help with growing would be a bonus.

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 (food hygiene, menu planning, ordering 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.

If you are looking to live and work in a community-oriented environment and enjoy cooking, this role could suit you, whether or not you are formally trained. We hope you would enjoy the challenge of planning menus that balance these criteria with the constraints of a fairly tight budget.

The kitchen at Othona is more like a large family kitchen than a standard commercial operation, but we still need to adhere to high standards of food hygiene and safety and the way the kitchen is run has secured us 5 star food hygiene status with the environmental health department. This is something we are keen to retain and you would lead on ensuring we are able to do so. We also take increasing notice of the environmental impact of our catering and consideration of this is also part of your role.

You will be responsible for a fair amount of cooking and food preparation, but other core members and volunteers also cook on a rota basis.

Please note: 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.

Our catering co-ordinator has three key areas of responsibility, each 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, taking a full role in sharing core tasks including hosting and facilitating events and practical aspects of running the centre.

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. 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. Work as part of a team to build community and support the smooth running of the centre and its activities including hosting and facilitating events, assisting with housekeeping and other practical tasks as appropriate
2. Plan varied menus within agreed budgets and ethical guidelines, with a significant proportion of vegetarian main meals and with alternatives available to meet specific dietary needs (including vegetarians and vegans when meat or fish is served).
3. Ensure good health and safety practice, cleaning and hygiene in the kitchen and related areas and keep appropriate records (see separate appendix).
4. Manage stock, ordering and buying according to good practice, health and economy, avoiding wastage, including using local and home grown produce where possible.
5. Co-ordinate the cooking and use of the kitchen.

Skills and Experience specific to the caterer's role

Cooking and Catering

- have a love of cooking and of simple wholesome food
- be interested in nutrition and able to plan the menus balancing cost, environmental and health considerations and building on some established menu favourites and proven ways of working.
- be capable of preparing and cooking for up to 40 adults and children

Managing Health, Hygiene and Safety in Kitchen and associated areas

- understand and implement good health, hygiene and safety practices in the kitchen, in your own work and that of others, including undertaking appropriate food hygiene training if not already accredited
- be prepared to supplement your qualifications beyond the basics of food hygiene, as agreed with the centre managers
- be able to support others in appropriate cooking and cleaning skills and safe systems of work

Planning and organising

- identify key tasks, decide priorities and organise your workload
- involve and motivate others, (including those who less experienced) in the life of the kitchen
- create and maintain records to provide accurate information easily accessible to yourself, colleagues and the environmental health department

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.

The salary offered is **£9,536.90**.per annum, plus full board and lodging in a self-contained flat. You can expect two days off a week (on a variable rota) and 28 days annual leave allowance