



Play and Wellbeing Practitioner Application Pack

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining our friendly and dynamic team. The pack contents are:

- About Play Midlothian
- The Play and Wellbeing Practitioner Role at Play Midlothian
- Organisational Structure
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- What We Offer

We hope this pack provides all the information you need to decide if you wish to apply for the role. However, if you have any questions, please do contact Susan McIntyre at susan@playmidlothian.org.uk or on 07792 402 316.

About Play Midlothian

Play Midlothian is a registered charity (no. SC025474) working to enable every child in Midlothian to thrive through play by creating opportunities, removing barriers and addressing inequalities. We focus on play because we know how much this benefits children's health, wellbeing and development. It is important for their lives in the here and now, as well as for their future life chances.

We provide services for children and young people (aged 0-14) and families and build the capacity of communities to support play (including training and development opportunities for other settings, including schools). We are a partner in the cross-sector Midlothian Play Strategy, which takes a strategic approach in planning for and promoting play locally.

Our current main services for children (and where applicable their parents) are:

- Play in Mind, which provides adventurous play and relaxation in woodlands for children aged 7-14 with emerging mental health challenges, to reduce stress and build resilience, with occasional blocks of sessions for the whole family.
- Play for All, which supports disabled children aged 0-14 and their families to access play, through group play sessions and 1-to-1 support in homes or parks, helping families meet their child's different needs and be included.
- Out2Play, which encourages children primarily aged 5-12 (but also older or younger with a carer) to play out close to home in greenspaces within five locations, by reducing safety concerns about playing out (such as local ASB or bullying) and tempting children away from screens with interesting play resources.

We have an office base at the One Dalkeith Business Hub in Dalkeith, but deliver services throughout Midlothian, and if commissioned, beyond.

The Play and Wellbeing Practitioner Role at Play Midlothian

This role is central to ensuring our play sessions are of a high standard, enabling children to play freely, and helping the other adults involved in their lives to learn about play, while demonstrating an enthusiasm for Play Midlothian's aims and values.

Play Midlothian uses a range of delivery models, but all services have playwork practice (please see for example <https://www.playscotland.org/schools-childcare/playwork-professionals>) and self-directed play at their core, in particular use of loose parts and play with natural materials. Note that a playwork qualification is not a requirement. It is essential that the successful applicant enjoys all types of play, doesn't feel a need to structure play or overly structure the play environment, and can respond flexibly to the needs of participants – both children and adults. We particularly focus on aspects of play children may otherwise have less access to, for example, outdoor play, and do not usually provide for digital play, which children typically do experience.

Regardless of target group at each service, the goal is always ultimately to ensure children have access to the opportunity to play in their own ways, for their own reasons, in interesting environments – because we know that when this happens, fantastic outcomes naturally arise.

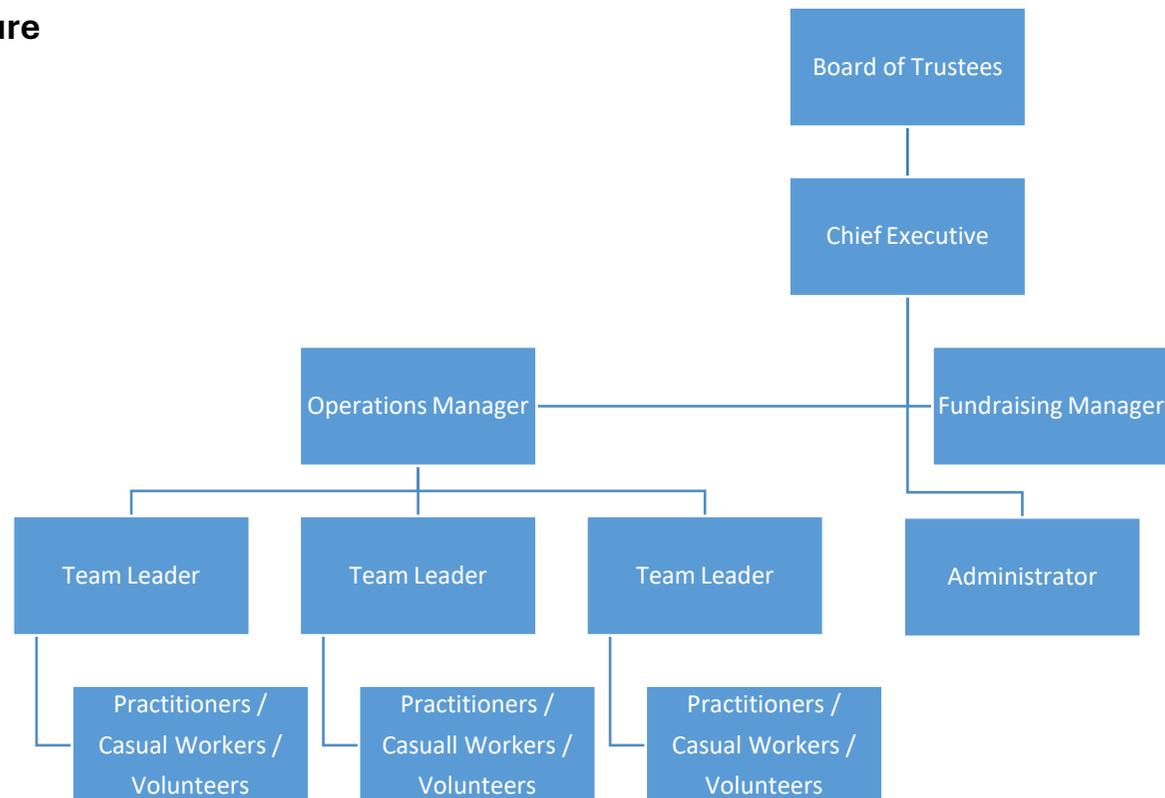
The postholder should also enjoy working as part of a team and be able to build productive relationships with our participants, colleagues and other stakeholders. The postholder will be directed day to day by a Team Leader, and work as part of a team alongside another Play and Wellbeing Practitioner, casual workers, and at times volunteers.

Play Midlothian’s services take place in a variety of community settings around Midlothian. Some are indoors, though a high proportion of our current sessions are exclusively outdoors, all year round, therefore the role will particularly suit applicants with a fondness for the outdoors. Travel and transportation of play resources to multiple sites across Midlothian is required for successful delivery of our services (travel undertaken during work is considered work time, and necessary and reasonable expenses are claimable).

Most of our sessions take place after school hours (including at times in the evening) and at weekends (chiefly Saturdays, though this may extend into Sundays) – though we do aim to share out weekend working on a rota pattern so that everyone gets predictable weekends off. Therefore, it is important that candidates have the availability and flexibility to work in this way, adapting their working hours to our session schedules.

For the right candidate, this will be a highly rewarding and stimulating role, offering plenty of variety in their work, while enabling their passion for children’s play to shine through. There is a strong culture of teamwork and support within Play Midlothian, so please do not feel daunted by areas of work you have yet to develop into – what matters most is a growth mindset and a willingness to learn.

Organisational structure



Job Description

25 hours per week

£24,479 - £25,977 pro rata (35 hour FTE)

Please note that appointments are made to the first point on the salary scale. Progression through the scale is based on time served and performance.

Responsible to: Team Leader

Job purpose: To deliver high quality services, enabling children to thrive through play

Line manage: No line management responsibilities

Key job outcomes:

Children and young people benefit from enriched play environments at our sessions. Ensures maximum flexibility, including use of loose parts, and that resources enable varied play types. Supports children in the creation of their space to play. Transports, sets up, stores and cleans resources.

Children and young people are enabled to play in their own way, for their own reasons. Facilitates all types of play. Chooses an intervention style that enables children to extend their play. Reflects on own practice and impact on play.

Service users (children, young people and adults) receive high quality support, tailored to their needs. Provides support to service users and builds appropriate relationships. Contributes to and implements team strategies to manage challenges.

The risks and developmental benefits of play are appropriately balanced during sessions. Follows approved risk-benefit and site risk assessments. Uses good judgment for dynamic risk-benefit assessment during sessions. Provides first aid.

Play Midlothian has a good understanding of the participant experience of our services. Observes and listens carefully at sessions. Seeks feedback from children and adults informally and using supplied methods. Assists with maintaining records as required.

Other responsibilities:

Any other duties relevant to the responsibilities of the post and which may be delegated by Play Midlothian management.

Person Specification

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some prior experience of supporting children’s play• Membership of the PVG scheme for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A qualification in playwork• A driving licence

Key skills and competencies

Playful: Enjoys play and is able to be involved in all types of play without taking over. Can respond flexibly and creatively to children’s play cues.

Reflective practice: Can reflect on what is happening and why. Able to explore alternative explanations, problem solve, and learn through trying out approaches.

Communication: Able to build constructive relationships with children, young people and adults of all backgrounds and abilities.

Flexibility: Confidence and willingness to work across a range of different services with different target groups and goals, through the focal point of play. Flexible approach to work hours.

Resilience: Stays calm and can think on their feet under pressure. Not fazed by behaviour that challenges or is unexpected. Able to overcome setbacks.

Teamwork: Able to work well within a team.

Values-led: Has an enthusiasm for Play Midlothian's aims and shares in our values. Can apply these values to all their work.

What We Offer

- A varied and rewarding role, with the chance to make a real difference to children and families.
- A supportive and welcoming working environment.
- Opportunities for training and professional development.
- Enhanced sick pay.
- Holiday entitlement of 32 days (pro rata) per year, rising one day per anniversary of employment to a maximum of 37 days. This is inclusive of bank holidays, which can be taken flexibly.
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – a work-based, confidential employee benefit providing support and resources for personal and work-related challenges that affect employees' health, wellbeing, and performance.
- Hybrid Working Policy. Please note: play sessions are always in person at set locations. Planning, admin or online training associated with the role can be done at home if preferred.