JOB DESCRIPTION PACK

Play Lead



**Works alongside:** The Community and Cultural Commissioning Team

**Working Hours:** Part-Time 21 hours a week (3 days) – including every Sunday 10 -4

**Salary:** £29,000 (pro-rata) £17,400 actual

**Location:** 28 Commercial Street, London, E1 6LS

**Contract:** Permanent

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1. **A Letter from the Head of Services & Service Design**

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Hello and thank you for your interest in this role,

We are so excited to recruit a Play Lead -a role with the potential to make a real difference to children and families who live in this area, who have told us how desperately needed free, high quality play experiences are around here.

Last summer we experimented with running playdays outside of our building and were overwhelmed with the response. It’s clear that people who live round here value the opportunity to access freely chosen, free to access play, that is exciting, challenging and welcomes them into the space.

And that’s where this role comes in – we need a creative, ambitious, welcoming and inclusive play lead to support us to offer enriching, visually exciting play opportunities that are well used by local families, and that are high enough quality that people travel to attend them too. Across your term time working week you’ll run 3 sessions, a Sunday Stay and Play, a afterschool stay and play session and a parent and toddler play session, weather permitting outside. In the holidays we’d want to see 3 play sessions a week that welcome the whole family.

When you aren’t running sessions you’ll be building relationships, promoting the service and collaborating with children and adults to meet their play needs. You will be our first play focused role – so you’ll work with children and families to shape a unique play offer that meets local needs.

We are looking for someone who really enjoys collaborating with children and their parents, and who will recruit local parents as (paid) play support workers, inspiring them to develop their play practice, who will work in partnership with other local play providers, and who will be a strong advocate for the value of play.

Families have told us they want wild (but safe) play experiences that respond to what the children using them are inspired by – that reflect community concerns and offer children freedom, choice and the chance to experiment. In this role you could be the creator of joyous spaces.

We believe that play is essential to a good life, for adults as well as children. If you share that belief, and want to work in social justice obsessed organisation, full of supportive and creative people, this could be the job for you. We can’t wait to see your application.

Best Wishes,

Ed

1. Organisational Overview



**About the organisation**

**Toynbee Hall** is community organisation that is working to build a fairer and happier East London in partnership with people who live here. Based in the East End of London, we work alongside people who live here, to tackle unfairness and make this a place where everyone has an equal chance to thrive. We take an asset based approach to our work, and believe everyone has something valuable to offer in the fight for a fairer London. What we learn from our work in London we use to influence change across the UK.

Toynbee Hall sits on Commercial Street, in Tower Hamlets and right on the edge of the City of London. It is an area that has seen a huge amount of regeneration over the past decade, and that regeneration hasn’t come without cost to local residents. Increasingly public space is co-opted by commercial ventures, and shops and businesses catering for people who live around here have been priced out, replaced by those catering for higher waged office workers who commute in. And yet a supportive, connected, community rich in culture and tradition continues to thrive in the area. Undertaking grass roots work to support each other and preserve what it is that makes this area unique.

This role sits in the Services team. Much of what we do in the services team supports work local people are already doing, or want to do – offering space, resources and development support where we can. We also run advice services, conversation classes and befriending support – in areas where people tell us there is a need and don’t want to coordinate this themselves. Across our Community centre, befriending, older peoples outreach, Heritage and Youth services, thousands of people across Tower Hamlets and the City of London get involved in things that add to their happiness and actively seek to close gaps that structural inequality creates.

Our building is a beautiful (and potentially imposing) listed building set back from the road, with a paved area and green space in front of it. The spaces within are a huge asset used to raise money for the work we do, and host community events. But it can also be a barrier – it takes courage to walk through our historic entrance. Which means that how we use our outside space is crucially important to ensuring that local people know about what we do and feel welcome here. The Play Lead role will contribute to this sense of welcome and ownership.

We try hard to make Toynbee Hall a great place to work – and you would be joining an outstanding, diverse team who have supported each other and shown great innovation and resilience over the past year and for many years before. We hope you are excited about applying for this role and to be part of our team.

You can read more about what it is like to work at Toynbee Hall in [Our People report](https://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/05/02/2021/our-people-a-diversity-report-on-where-we-are-as-an-organisation/)

1. What is the role? (Job Description)

**The Role**

The Play Lead will join the communities and cultural commissioning team. Working alongside team members who support activity in the community centre, both those led by community members and those facilitated by specialists within the team. The community centre hosts a wide variety of activities on a weekly basis including older peoples fitness sessions, youth group meetings, art and drama activities, a mother and baby group, ESOL conversation club, IT support, and intergenerational activities. In addition the team leads the borough wide Linkage project, runs a befriending scheme and is coordinating community commissioning for the local Heritage Action Zone.

You will need to be experienced in play, and in working in a way where you share power and control with children and their parents. You will need to be able to work with and celebrate people who are unused to having a platform or being listened to without trying to shape their message or take credit for their achievements. The people we work with in the local community tell us they value working alongside people who share their lived experiences. As such we particularly welcome applications from systematically marginalised communities, Black people and People of colour, Disabled people, those who identify as LGBTQIA, working class people and migrants. You’ll be part of a friendly, can do and social justice obsessed team who love to collaborate.

You’ll be our expert on Play, and will shape our work in this area – though you’ll have a keen collaborator in our Head of Services who is a qualified Playworker, and who like you is passionate about it.

**Responsibilities and Accountabilities**

As part of your role, you will be expected to:

**Plan and Run Engaging Play sessions**

1. Ensuring that play spaces are clean, and welcoming and that risks have been identified and mitigated ahead of sessions.
2. Running 3 sessions a week that are exciting, well attended and valued by those who attend them
3. Setting up visually exciting play sessions with play cues, and invitations to get involved that excite and inspire children and families.
4. Modelling good play work, supporting children and families to explore without dominating the space or removing autonomy from children.
5. Preparing a range of sensory experiences for sessions
6. Considering adaptations and adaptions to make sessions as inclusive as possible.
7. Clearing up after sessions, alongside children, young people and parents

**Building relationships within the local community**

1. Promoting our play offer to local families, and those who live outside the area
2. Keeping registers of sessions, and keeping in touch with people who attend
3. Maintaining database in line with our policy
4. Letting attendees know about future sessions and about wet weather arrangements
5. Collaborating with schools/ nurseries & local childminders to ensure local families needs are met
6. Building relationships with local shops/ businesses to keep a steady supply of loose parts play equipment available for play.
7. Working with children and families to evaluate impact of play, and make changes to our offer as needed

**Supporting Community Led Play**

1. Recruiting and training local people as casual play support workers
2. Delivering occasional ‘play practice’ session for parents/ families to help them understand play principles and how they can be applied in the home
3. Work with Toynbee Hall team and local parents to enable families to safely gain access to our play supplies when sessions aren’t running in order that they can freely use the outside space for play.
4. Work collaboratively with other play providers to advocate for play provision locally.
5. Use our communications channels to celebrate and promote the work we do

**General**

1. Engaging with and, where appropriate/agreed, lead relationships with key partners in the sector
2. Contributing to the overall development and implementation of Toynbee Hall’s strategy
3. Building good working relationships across the organisation
4. Attending and working at community events/meetings which will include regular evenings and weekend hours
5. Representing Toynbee Hall to external audiences
6. Developing an open and ‘critical friend’ dialogue within our programmatic work
7. Undertaking any other appropriate responsibilities that may arise

**Safeguarding and Safety**

1. Ensuring risk assessments and emergency plans are in place and reviewed for all events and activities, including online activities
2. Ensuring safe working practices
3. Ensuring that safeguarding incidents and accidents/ incidents are reported appropriately

**Managing Yourself**

1. Working to an agreed annual work-plan meeting targets and milestones
2. Prioritising and managing your own workload
3. Taking responsibility for your personal development and seek out opportunities for support and development

**Training**

Toynbee Hall provides all necessary induction and training, and encourages and, where possible, supports the upgrading of appropriate skills and qualifications. All employees will receive regular support and supervision.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Toynbee Hall takes an outcomes and theory-based approach to its self-evaluation and monitoring. This means that the organisation is committed to gathering evidence of its effectiveness, and to using this information to learn, improve and communicate. All Toynbee Hall staff members will be expected to support this approach and to take part where appropriate in monitoring and evaluation planning and practice.

1. Who we are looking for (Person Specification)

We are looking for someone who is excited by play. Who enjoys and respects children and is able to collaborate with them in creating playful environments. Ideally you’ll have playwork experience and understand that great playworkers provide opportunities then step back – but the experience need not be formal or workplace based. We are not looking for someone who centres themselves in play, but someone who understands the importance of child led play in developing skills and confidence.

You’ll also need to be organised and a great communicator as you’ll be setting up this project, promoting it, and building relationships locally to ensure it’s success. You’ll get loads of support from your colleagues, but essentially this will be your project.

A good candidate will meet most of the essential skills and some of the desirable skills. You do not need a university degree or any formal qualifications for this role. We would like to see you draw examples from your professional work and daily life that may meet the skills, with a lot of emphasis on practical experience (both professional and lived).

If you need support translating your own transferrable skills and experience to fit the below list, let us know and we can arrange an information session.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **We are looking for someone who can show us:** | **Essential /Desirable** | **Why we need it** | **Where we will expect to see evidence of it** |
| Shared experiences with people who live around here, | Essential | Toynbee Hall is based in an area of rich diversity, and many people who live around here experience disadvantage because of structural and societal unfairness.  Our experience has shown us that shared experiences with people who live around here, as well as a deep grassroots knowledge of the area will make it much easier to build trust and partnerships. | Reflective Question number 3 |
| A respect for and interest in children. Particularly in supporting them to explore, experiment and enjoy themselves. | Essential | Because this project is about offering joyful play experiences to children. | Reflective Questions 1 and 5 and the Stage 2 activity |
| A practical experience of providing safe and exciting play for diverse groups of children | Essential | This role is centred around play. You will need to understand Play Principles and show us how you’ve implemented them to be successful in this role. | Reflective Question 1 and the stage 2 activity |
| The ability to set up a visually exciting, welcoming and inspiring play space, utilising loose parts | Essential | Our pilots last year convinced us that loose parts play was likely to be the most effective type of play in the space we have. With this kind of play set up makes a huge difference. | Reflective Question 5 and the Stage 2 activity |
| An understanding of safety and safeguarding when considering play activities and working with children and their families | Essential | Play is all about risk and managing it. We need to know that our play leader understands and has the tactical ability to do this when planning and running sessions. This area includes both ensuring sessions provide physical safety and that safeguarding considerations are planned for | Reflective Question number 1 |
| A strong communicator with the ability to form trusting relationships with families quickly | Essential | Families will need to trust you to want to get involved and be prepared to stay in contact with the project. You will need to be able to communicate what the service is (family play opportunities) and is not (childcare) in a friendly and clear way. Speaking one or more community languages would be beneficial to this. | .Reflective Questions number 2 and 3 and the Stage 2 activity |
| Able to work independently and within a team | Essential | The person doing this job will be expected to lead tasks by themselves once they are briefed. Additionally, they will need to deliver with other staff members, successfully navigating different working styles | Reflective Questions numbers 2 and 4 |
| Experience in building non-judgemental relationships with a variety of different personalities and backgrounds | Essential | The person doing this job will need to be able to gain the trust of young people coming from different backgrounds we currently work with and make an engagement plan to build new relationships with young people in the local neighbourhood, to access our youth programme | Reflective questions number 2 and 3 |
| Strong organisational skills | Essential | The person in this role will need to be able to balance spending their time delivering direct sessions and planning, designing and monitoring activities. This means the person will be able to organise their time & workload well to manage these different elements. | Reflective Question number 4 |
| Experience in successfully engaging and recruiting local people to projects | Desirable | The person doing this job will need to develop a clear vision for reaching families and be able to articulate and deliver the approach that will bring families to our play opportunities . Over time they will also need to develop a pool of local parents as casual play support workers. | Reflective question number 2 |
| Experience in creating social media content to tell a story and build an audience | Desirable | We know social media can be a great tool to engage and mobilise local people if used effectively and will play a large part in the way we communicate with families. | Reflective question number 2 |
| Good understanding of Safeguarding, health and safety in the workplace, data protection principles and equal opportunities | Desirable | A good knowledge and ability to work within guidance in these areas is a core part of keeping people safe in the projects | Reflective Question number 1 |

1. How to Apply

The application process is broken down into two stages. If you have any questions about the role, process or need additional guidance to complete this application, please contact [application@toynbeehall.org.uk](mailto:application@toynbeehall.org.uk).

**Stage 1**

Please complete the person details elements of the application form that you can find in the job pack on Toynbee Hall’s website. **Do not complete the personal statement or work experience sections.** You will be answering the below questions & attaching your CV instead.

In separate documents/ files, please answer the 5 reflective questions below. **Please review the personal specification before answering these questions as it contains guidance on which parts of the specification we will expect you to show evidence of in which questions.**

The personal specification is a list of skills and attributes someone will need in order to be able to do this job well. We have tried not to specify where you will have gained this experience because we want to see applications from anyone who has the ability to do this job. So if you can show that you meet the person specification by referencing experiences you’ve had in previous jobs, your personal life, through volunteering or working collaboratively in an informal way with friends and neighbours, then please tell us about that.

Please create a separate file for the answer to each question, labelling them Question 1, Question 2 etc.

1. Tell us about a time you have run a play session for children and their families. What tasks did you do from planning to the close of the session. Please tell us what you did, how and why, and what the results were. (please answer in 600 words or less)
2. Please tell us about a time when you needed to bring people together for an event. How did you go about letting people know it was happening and supporting them to attend? What was the result? (in 500 words or less)
3. Please describe to us what you have in common with people who live in Tower Hamlets, and what local knowledge you have and how this will help you run this service? (500 words or less)
4. Please tell us about your organisation and record keeping skills, by describing how you organise yourself ang giving us a practical example of when this has helped you achieve something. (500 words or less)
5. Please tell us why you think play is important, and your experience of the impact play can have on children and families.

Upon completing the application, please return to [application@toyneehall.org.uk](mailto:application@toyneehall.org.uk) along with all attachments. You will also need to include your CV **without** your name and contact information.

If you are shortlisted\*, you will be invited to Stage 2.

At this point you will also be asked if there are any adjustments you would like us to make to give you the best possible chance to do well. We are motivated to see you at your best so please let us know how we can support you to be as comfortable as possible in the next stage.

**Stage 2**

**You will be paid £150 (gross) to participate in this stage of the process. You will be onboarded as casual staff so that we are able to pay you.**

You will:

* Be sent a briefing on an activity to set up and deliver
* Be given time to reflect on how that workshop went and what you learnt from it
* Have a discussion with a panel of staff members to discuss your activity, and reflect on how you’ve experienced the day.
* Be asked to undertake a task that will help us understand how you would approach outreach in this role

**\*How we score and shortlist applications**

We score applications without the application form or CV, this means that we can’t make judgement of you based on your address, school or qualifications you don’t consider relevant enough to include in one of your answers. We also won’t know your name unless you choose to include it in a submission. We have included the option of video submissions in order to give everyone the option of responding however allows you to show your best self. Choosing to do a video submission may mean that we know or surmise more about you than in a written application. Everyone involved in selection for this job is committed to anti oppressive practice, and will commit to reflection and peer challenge to ensure that no one is disadvantaged as a result of this.

The reflective questions are by far the most important part of the application. We use a score sheet to fairly shortlist applicants. Basically we score against each of the essential criteria personal specification separately. You get 0 points if we don’t see any evidence at all up to 3 points if your answer is amazing. Should candidates score too closely together to be able to shortlist based on essential criteria, we will then do the same for desirable. And then use your CV to support our final filter.

The best way to ensure your application scores well is to use the star technique. STAR stands for:

Situation (what was happening)

Task (what you were supposed to do)

Action (what you did)

Result (what was the result)

This shows us that you don’t just know the theory of how to achieve something, but that you have experienced it and are able to express how effective (or challenging) it was.

We want you to answer the questions authentically and in a way that explains to us how you meet the personal specification. If you haven’t done exactly the thing we are asking for, but think you’ve demonstrated the skills you’d need somewhere else in your life mention that too. You don’t just have to think about work experience - anything you’ve done across your life counts.

Three different people will independently and without discussion score your application. Then once this is done they will meet to discuss and aggregate their scoring and agree who they want to meet. Normally the highest scoring candidates will be invited to the second stage.

1. Recruitment Timetable

Application Live: Monday 6th June 2022

Application Closes: Monday 27th June 2022

Shortlisted Applicants invited to interview: Thursday 30th June 2022

Interviews: Thursday 7th July

Start Date: asap (or after your notice period)