



Board Guidance For Applicants

Who is Project Play?

Project Play is a grassroots NGO working in Calais and Dunkirk, northern France. Our team of volunteer play workers provide play and education sessions for refugee children. We are a mobile service working across informal living sites, accommodation centres, day centres and safe houses. We run sessions which include games, arts, songs, crafts, music, drama and sport - bringing silliness, smiles and joy in response to the difficult life experienced by children on the move.

We are the only children's service in the area providing consistent, evidence-informed play. Our sessions provide regular moments of relaxation and fun to help mitigate the effect of the challenging conditions these children face whilst supporting their ongoing development.

Project Play was founded in 2018 due to the complete lack of services for the children on the move living in Dunkirk. Founded as a grassroots organisation, by a handful of volunteers, it has grown to what it is today. It has provided over 7000 children with over 2500 hours of play!

We are lucky enough to work in a network of other organisations, some of which we share a warehouse space with. This provides us with support and access to shared resources.

What is Project Play's current position?

Project Play was founded by friends who saw a need. They didn't think it would grow into what it has today! We are lucky enough to have many amazing volunteers and supporters who have kept us going and growing.

It costs us around £98,000 to run each year. Project Play has enough funds to last through to the end of 2024 and is now looking to fundraise for 2025.

The current funding scape is complex with the cost of living crisis stunting crowd donations and covid causing more organisations to be applying for fewer funding pots. We are funded by a range of grants, private donors and crowdfunding. We hope to make this more robust going forward. This may include paying a professional fundraiser or having board members taking on more explicit roles.

We have a lovely accountant who keeps our books balanced and a robust accounting system so that we can be easily audited.



In 2019 we registered in France (association number: 1168435). We have to complete one piece of formal paperwork annually (it's called a Process Verbal) at the AGM. Our French remote team currently does this.

Additionally, Project Play is umbrellad by [ForRugees](#) (charity number: 1168435) which allows us to claim gift aid and to have a British based fiscal sponsor. We are hoping to register in the UK soon. We are a member of the Calais Appeal - this a coalition of different organisations working on the French/ UK border who provide support to us.

We have recently joined the Keeping Children Network - an international organisation raising safeguarding standards globally. When they recently audited our policy and procedure, they gave it glowing praise. We are committed to providing children with the best safeguarding provision possible and always endeavour to raise safeguarding standards in the organisations around us.

Who are the current team?

The original board consisted of three co-founders (Col, Claire and Rachel) alongside two colleagues from another organisation on the ground (Refugee Women's Centre - Tiph and Katie B). These 5 managed the project from 2018 to 2022 both from France and later remotely (the UK).

The current board consists of one founder (Rachel) and three others. Katie H, who volunteered with Project Play in 2021 and is undertaking a PhD looking at human rights and surveillance in border spaces. Katie has been on the board since 2021. Julie and Juliette, who are both previous coordinators for the organisation, have joined this year. Currently, we remotely manage the ground team providing oversight, strategy and advice alongside managing more administrative tasks such as insurance, cash flow and fundraising.

Rachel - Director

Katie H - COO and Head of Advocacy and Communications

Julie/Juliette - Head of French Advocacy

Julie/Juliette - Head of Compliance

This ground team consists of 4 - 5 coordinators who are paid contractors. The roles are: welfare and volunteer coordinator, advocacy coordinator, activities coordinator and safeguarding coordinator. These team members are with us for 10-14 months and facilitate play sessions alongside coordinating their area. They are complimented by 3-5 volunteers. The team live together in a large house in France. We rent this building and also some space in a shared warehouse. We also own two vehicles.



Each ground coordinator has a member of the remote coordination team who provides them with 1-2-1 support, advice and strategy. We also meet a whole team monthly to update each other and are available on call for ad hoc questions and guidance.

The remote team will remain in their roles - with the goal of being paid for their time.

What do we need from board members?

Northern France is a complex space - culturally and politically. The current board have all volunteered on the ground and have expertise in their chosen areas. They provide the ground team with valuable knowledge and support; they understand the complex and sensitive space that is a grassroots organisation in a border zone. However, it is not sustainable for them to keep running the organisation in this way - their roles are voluntary, very demanding and challenging to fit in alongside other commitments. They require support and the organisation needs to build capacity.

This is where you come in! By having a formal board, some decision making, fundraising and network building will be removed from this team. They can therefore remain as a remote management team but do so with guidance and support from others with varied expertise (the new board).

The Calais context is very specific. Having a blend of those with a longer term understanding of the space and organisation complemented by those with more varied experience should support the charity to become more resilient.

We are looking for friendly team players who are passionate about our cause!

How will we recruit?

We are going to conduct rolling recruitment until we have the team we want. We are looking for 5 - 8 people. We hope this will take around 3 months and are aiming to gather a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds.

We will ask to meet (remotely) to discuss why you want to join the team, what skills you will bring to the role and tell you more about our work. This would be with 2 or more of the current board/ remote coordination team. We will let you know our decision in a timely manner. You may also chat to one of our ground team to learn more about our work.

Project Play follows a strict safer recruitment procedure. We will ask you to provide a DBS check alongside two professional references. If you can't do this for any reason, let us know and we will see what we can do. Please don't let this deter you from applying as we know it's not possible for everyone.



You must be:

- Over the age of 21
- Not been previously disqualified as a trustee or company director, be an undischarged bankrupt or have unspent criminal convictions
- Be a good team player
- Be passionate about the power of play!

We are looking for anyone who has a passion for our work and thinks they can contribute to it. This may be through expertise in safeguarding, playwork, advocacy or fundraising. Or be because you have a particular language, lived experience of displacement or have worked in a border zone before.

We need energy, passion and people who want to make a difference. Being a tiny grassroots organisation means your impact will be felt!

What happens if I join your team?

Firstly, we will perform our safeguarding clearance including asking you to complete the NSPCC's Safeguarding for Board Members' training and gather your references (if possible).

Once this is completed, we will onboard you. This will consist of various training including that on our context, structure and current financial standing alongside meeting the team. We may arrange a trip to see the team if this is appropriate at the time or you will chat to them remotely. We will take you through our policies and procedures.

Once you and your colleagues are on-boarded we will have a formal AGM and change our statutes so that you are officially on the board! You will then be able to get meeting and helping in your desired areas. We are hoping for this to be completed in September as we know the summer is busy for people.

What is the meeting schedule like and do I have to attend them all?

The minimum expectations are:

- Travel to Calais and meet the team annually- to best understand the space we work in and build relationships with those on the ground
- Attend a remote meeting each quarter - during these meetings, the ground and coordination teams would present updates and you would offer feedback
- Attend the AGM were the focus for the coming year are established. This may be in person.



- Attend board meetings - the regularity of these will be set by the board
- Offer support and guidance to the coordinators on an adhoc basis

A minimum of 3 board members must be present at each meeting for the meeting to go ahead. One member will be elected chair and another vice-chair. The board may meet to:

- Review the accounts and fundraising forecast
- Approve a new policy or procedure
- To respond to a specific incident or issue
- Offer support the ground or remote coordination team

The board will be provided with or develop:

- Minute keeping guidance
- Planning board agendas guidance
- Reporting and communication guidance
- Reserves guidance
- Guidance on legal obligations

As this is the first time we have had an external board, we will creating some guidance materials collectively and we would love individuals who would be happy to help with this. To register in the UK we will need to create a Governing Document which would help to outline some of the trustees roles.

In addition to the tasks above, you would be able to lead a committee on a certain topic, such as communications, safeguarding or grant applications - working with others to improve and direct an area.

What are my legal obligations?

Project Play registered in France in 2018. Our organisational number is W594012083. This means that we have to adhere to French law and submit a report once a year. This report is written during our AGM (each September).



We are an association with open membership. This means that all of our volunteers, or any member of the public, can pay 5 euros to join us. This commits them to our charter - and allows them to attend and vote at our AGM.

Currently, we do not have to submit our accounts to the French authorities. However, we do use Quickbooks and have an accountant to ensure we could be audited if required.

Additionally, Project Play is looking to register in the UK as an Association CIO. If and when we do, trustees will be obliged to adhere to the Charities Commission legal obligations.

These are:

1. Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit.
2. Comply with your charity's governing document and the law.
3. Act in your charity's best interests.
4. Manage your charity's resources responsibly.
5. Act with reasonable care and skill.
6. Ensure your charity is accountable.

When you and your co-trustees make decisions about your charity, you must:

- act within your powers
- act in good faith, and only in the interests of your charity
- make sure you are sufficiently informed, taking any advice you need
- take account of all relevant factors you are aware of
- ignore any irrelevant factors
- deal with conflicts of interest and loyalty
- make decisions that are within the range of decisions that a reasonable trustee body could make in the circumstances

More information can be found here:

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/governance/responsibilities-for-boards/>

There is a great free course which explains the role of the board, it's obligations and also guidance how to be effective and manage dynamics here:

<https://learning.icaew.com/d2l/home/7418>

How do I leave?



You are required to hold the role of a minimum of 1 year. However, we are looking for people who wish to remain longer. There is currently no maximum term.

When you want to leave, you will need to email the chair to let them know your intentions. Your notice period is two months so that there is time to find your replacement. If the board falls below 3 trustees the service will be suspended until a new board had been recruited.

Can I be terminated from the role?

Yes, if you are not fulfilling your obligations or you are involved in an incident which makes you inappropriate to have in the role. This would occur through a vote of no confidence by the other board members.

Will I be paid?

The role is unpaid. You may be able to be reimbursed for travel expense and trainings.

Why should I join Project Play?

The Project Play family is a dedicated team of people who think that children on the move deserve more. Our existence is testament to solidarity - turning up to change a situation you don't agree with.

The children we work with are like children around the world - funny, shy, loud, quiet, creative, sporty, dramatic, hilarious - individuals. They deserve better. We want them to form positive memories and have a space to work out who they are, develop friendships and skills.

Project Play has made it through the last five years through a lot of hard work (and a few tears (mainly Rachel's)). We don't want to exist anymore - we believe the state should provide these children with their basic rights - but until they do, we want to be there. Playing more. Shouting louder. We need some fresh energy and skills to take us onto our bigger, better next chapter.

If you think you would like to join our incredible team - please email with a brief outline of why you would like to join the team - coordinatorrecruitment@project-play.org.

We can't wait to hear from you.