



PLAYBOARD NI

Trustee Information Pack



PlayBoard NI

The Lead Organisation for Children and Young People's Play in Northern Ireland

Voluntary Management Board Opportunity

Thank you for your interest in applying to join Playboard's Board of Directors as a Trustee. We do hope that your interest at this stage is further enhanced by this information pack, which is designed to provide you with background information on PlayBoard and the role, responsibilities and commitment of its Trustees.

The position of Trustee offers a rewarding experience and the opportunity to make an important contribution to the play sector regionally, nationally and internationally and to make a real difference to the lives of children and young people.

If you think you have the skills we are seeking and if you are interested in working for a cause that prioritises children and their lives, please complete the application form and **return to Lauren.Robinson@playboard.co.uk**.

We are currently seeking to fill up to three Trustee positions. We are particularly keen to hear from individuals who may also be interested in taking on the roles of **Chair** and **Vice Chair of the Board**.

This is an exciting opportunity both for those wishing to contribute as Trustees and for individuals with the leadership skills, experience and commitment to help guide the Board and organisation through its next stage of development as an office bearer.

If you have the skills, experience and motivation to take on one of these important roles, we are confident that you will find it highly rewarding. You will have the opportunity to help children and young people develop and thrive through play, contribute to the organisation's wider social impact, and play an important part in ensuring that the organisation continues to thrive.

We particularly welcome applications from individuals with experience in one or more of the following areas

- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ HR
- ✓ Play delivery or development

- ✓ Minority ethnic issues
- ✓ Media and marketing
- ✓ Public sector
- ✓ Primary Education
- ✓ Third Sector
- ✓ Childcare
- ✓ Youthwork
- ✓ Business development
- ✓ Special Educational Needs

Recommendations for new voluntary Board members will be submitted to the Board of Directors for consideration. Newly appointed Trustees will subsequently be put forward for approval and voted onto PlayBoard's Board of Directors at its AGM in November 2026.

If you are interested in this role, we would love to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Herron
Chief Executive Officer





PlayBoard Voluntary Board Member Information and Application Pack

PlayBoard is an independent charity and the lead organisation for the development and promotion of children and young people's play in Northern Ireland.

Since its establishment in 1985, PlayBoard has been committed to supporting children and young people's play through a combination of:

- Service delivery and development
- Campaigning and lobbying
- Research, evaluation and awareness raising
- Working in partnership with others to put play on the agenda of policy makers and resource providers
- Promoting best practice in play and playwork
- Delivering play programmes.

A membership organisation, PlayBoard works closely with and provides support to over 1,900 members, all of whom are committed to helping us to achieve our goal of developing quality play opportunities that improve children and young people's lives across Northern Ireland.

As a rights-based organisation, we strongly believe that play is an intrinsic aspect of children and young people's lives. PlayBoard works from the premise that play is fundamental to a healthy and happy childhood. Play challenges and informs our understanding of children and young people because it views them as competent and confident human beings.

This position is further endorsed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). Article 31 declares:

"States Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate fully in cultural life and the arts. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity".

ADVANCING ALL WE STAND FOR, BY LEADING THE PLAY AGENDA

PlayBoard NI

The Lead Organisation for Children & Young People's Play in Northern Ireland



PlayBoard's Outcomes:

Outcome 1

The knowledge, conditions and actions unpinning policy will be better informed about the importance of resourcing and planning for play. This will result in improved outcomes for children and young people.

Outcome 2

The knowledge base for play will be enhanced where this will inform better planning and improved service delivery. Evidence will shape and inform policy decisions and spend.

Outcome 3

The play volume will be turned up! More people will be aware of the benefits of play and this in turn will drive demand for better improved services.

Outcome 4

Improved play practice and quality play experiences for children.

Outcome 5

Professional recognition for playwork across the children's sector.

Outcome 6

Improved play practice and better opportunities for children.

Outcome 7

Better play experiences and opportunities for all children in particular children with disabilities or additional needs.

Outcome 8

PlayBoard will achieve cross sectoral apperception and investment in play.

Outcome 9

Increased profile for PlayBoard and greater opportunities for play in the Republic of Ireland.

Outcome 10

PlayBoard will be a strong, confident, fit for purpose organisation with strengthened profile and reach.

Outcome 11

PlayBoard will be outcome informed and outcome based in its decision making.

Outcome 12

PlayBoard have strong leadership, management and decision-making structures.

We will deliver on our outcomes by the following four aims:

1. Being the authoritative voice for play
2. Promoting quality in play and playwork practice
3. Increasing and improving opportunities and conditions for play
4. PlayBoard's organisational growth and development.

Each work stream has three focused objectives which include:

- ✓ Advocating for play
- ✓ Building our evidence based on practice and experience
- ✓ Strengthening our Voice
- ✓ Developing and delivering a quality framework suitable for a number of sectoral contexts
- ✓ Promoting and developing the Playwork workforce
- ✓ Delivering playwork
- ✓ Working with councils, schools and childcare settings to enhance understanding and knowledge of play and playwork
- ✓ Developing strategic alliances, collaborations and new partners to promote the health and inclusion benefits of play e.g. PHA, disability sector
- ✓ Enhancing our cross-border profile to share learning and develop new relationships and partnerships
- ✓ Advancing PlayBoard's economic growth
- ✓ Developing PlayBoard's competence, capability and capacity
- ✓ Enhancing Organisational leadership, culture and growth.

PlayBoard Board of Directors

The Executive Committee

- 1.0** The Executive Committee are both the Trustees of the Charity and Directors of the Company. In law, all the Directors are jointly and severally responsible for the conduct of the company and have a duty to care for it. All Directors are equal in the eyes of the law, regardless of their title or appointment.

The Executive Committee provides the overall leadership for the company, setting its strategic direction and major policies, appointing and supervising senior management, ensuring it complies with relevant laws and regulations and being accountable to its membership. The Executive Committee is ultimately responsible for the performance of PlayBoard.

The Executive Committee are elected from among PlayBoard's full members. The three Honorary Officers are invited to stand for election either from among PlayBoard's membership or from the wider field of association with membership organisations. Executive Committee and Board members are elected for a three-year term.

The Honorary Officers - Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Treasurer currently serve for a maximum term of three years with the option to extend to a second term totalling no more than six years.

2.0 Overall Purpose

The Board of Directors are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of PlayBoard, developing the organisations aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

3.0 Main Duties and Responsibilities of the Executive Committee

The main duties and responsibilities of Board members are as follows:

- Ensuring that PlayBoard complies with legislative and regulatory requirements, and acts within the confines of its governing document.
- Acting in the best interest of PlayBoard, beneficiaries and future beneficiaries at all times avoiding any personal conflict of interest.
- Determining the overall direction and development of PlayBoard through good governance and clear strategic planning.
- Maintaining sound financial management of PlayBoard's resources, ensuring expenditure is in line with the organisations objects and

investment activities meet accepted standards and policies.

- Interviewing, appointing and monitoring the work and activities of paid staff.
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of PlayBoard and its resources, striving for best practice in good governance.
- Acting as a counter-signatory on PlayBoard cheques and any applications for funds, if appropriate.
- To maintain absolute confidentiality about all sensitive/confidential information received in the course of Board of Director's responsibilities to PlayBoard.

4.0 Accountable to

As the Executive Committee are responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of PlayBoard, they are accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including: its membership, service users, funders, government departments, Charity Commission for NI and Companies House.

5.0 Role Purpose

The role of each Board Member is;

- To promote the aims, objectives and values of PlayBoard, keeping within its charitable objectives.
- To take part in formulating and monitoring progress against the aims of PlayBoard.
- With other Board members to ensure that the policy and practices of PlayBoard are in keeping with its aims and values.
- With other Board members to ensure that the organisation functions within the legal and financial requirements of a charitable organisation and strives to achieve best practice.
- To bring an external perspective on PlayBoard.

6.0 Expectations of Board members

Board members will be expected to:

- Attend and participate in meetings on a regular basis, and special events as able.
- Participate on committees of the Board as necessary.
- Represent PlayBoard's vision, values, strategy and policies when performing your responsibilities in the organisation.
- Be alert to community concerns that can be addressed by PlayBoard's mission, objectives, and programmes.

- Carry out any tasks you agree to take on.
- Offer to lead if you have special skills.
- Be supportive of the Board and respect confidentiality.
- Act as an external ambassador for PlayBoard when required.
- Help communicate and promote PlayBoard's mission and programmes to its membership and stakeholders.
- Understand the policies and procedures of PlayBoard.

7.0 What difference will you make?

This is an opportunity to be involved in a well-established organisation that has made an impact throughout Northern Ireland and beyond. You would be joining a well-established, welcoming and committed Board and a supportive, focused and caring organisation that holds children and young people at its core. You will play a pivotal role in shaping the strategic direction and future development of this successful charity.

8.0 Practicalities

Where the board meet:	PlayBoard office: 7 Crescent Gardens, Belfast BT7 1NS
Time of meetings:	Currently on a Wednesday @ 4pm in PlayBoard office, however members may join on teams/zoom if required.
Time commitment:	Six meetings per year, which can last up to two hours. There are also opportunities to serve on our Finance and Personnel subcommittee who meet four times per year or other as and when needed e.g. time limited/task focused sub-committees.
Expenses:	This is a voluntary role. Board members will be reimbursed for travel and subsistence costs when carrying out PlayBoard business.

TRUSTEE

Role Description

Overall Purpose

Trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of PlayBoard, developing the organisations aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Ensuring that PlayBoard complies with legislative and regulatory requirements, and acts within the confines of its governing document;
- Acting in the best interest of PlayBoard, beneficiaries and future beneficiaries at all times avoiding any personal conflict of interest;
- Determining the overall direction and development of PlayBoard through good governance and clear strategic planning;
- Maintaining sound financial management of PlayBoard's resources, ensuring expenditure is in line with the organisations' objects, and investment activities meet accepted standards and policies;
- Interviewing, appointing and monitoring the work and activities of paid staff;
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of PlayBoard and its resources, striving for best practice in good governance;
- Acting as a counter-signatory on PlayBoard cheques and any applications for funds, if appropriate;
- To maintain absolute confidentiality about all sensitive/confidential information received in the course of Board of Director's responsibilities to PlayBoard.

Accountable to:

As the Board is responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of PlayBoard, they are accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including; service users, members, funders, government departments and Companies House.

PLAYBOARD NI TRUSTEE

QUALITIES

- Be constructive and non-judgemental about other Board of Director's opinions in discussions.
- Be able to act reasonably and responsibly when undertaking Board duties.
- Be able to maintain confidentiality on sensitive and confidential information.
- Be empathetic to the values and ethics of PlayBoard.
- Be committed to preparing adequately for all meetings and to attending them regularly.
- Have the ability to advocate the needs of PlayBoard and not his/her own nominating body or agenda.
- Have a willingness to serve on at least one sub-committee.
- Have a willingness to attend occasional events, meetings on behalf of PlayBoard.
- Be committed to the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence.

PREFERRED SKILLS and KNOWLEDGE

- Previous experience of committee work.
- Awareness of the policy framework within which voluntary organisations operate.
- Good communication skills.
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.
- Advocacy and negotiation skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to build sustain and influence relationships with external contacts and agencies with a wide range of interests.

TIME COMMITMENT

- An estimated time commitment for the role is **two hours per meeting x 6 meetings per year.**

Our Impact and Recent Highlights

Aim 1: Being the authoritative voice for play

- Providing strategic representation across more than 30 networks, forums and partnerships at regional, national and international level.
- Engaging directly with government, political representatives and sectoral partners to influence policy and practice relating to play, school-age childcare and the development of the Early Learning and Childcare Strategy.
- Contributing to national and international developments in inclusive play, including work to inform international standards for inclusive play spaces and rights-based approaches.
- Launching *Playing Out: Understanding Play Deprivation in Northern Ireland* at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, strengthening the evidence base around the barriers children face in accessing their right to play.
- Representing PlayBoard and the play sector at UK level, including presenting to the House of Commons All-Party Parliamentary Group on Play.
- Using International Day of Play to raise the profile of children's right to play through engagement with children, schools, organisations and political representatives across Northern Ireland.
- Growing PlayBoard's membership to 1,956 members, including 140 outside Northern Ireland, further strengthening the collective voice and reach of the organisation.

Aim 2: Promoting quality in play and playwork practice

- Supporting the development of a skilled and knowledgeable playwork workforce through training, continuing professional development and workforce development.
- Contributing to the development of Playwork National Occupational Standards and supporting the continued professionalisation of playwork across the UK.
- Responding to workforce needs through the development of new training opportunities, including an Introduction to Playwork pilot with the potential for future accreditation.

- Delivering the Department of Education Inclusive Play Programme, with early activity including training for 133 staff and an average 37% improvement in participants' understanding of play.
- Continuing to develop and deliver programmes including Playful Minds, alongside training and support for practitioners, parents and organisations.

Aim 3: Increasing and improving opportunities and conditions for play

- Working with councils across Northern Ireland to improve the quality, accessibility and inclusivity of play opportunities and inform investment in play spaces.
- Supporting strategic and practical approaches to play development, including advice on play provision, inclusive play and the development and redevelopment of play spaces.
- Delivering community and family-focused play programmes in partnership with schools, councils and voluntary and community organisations.
- Creating opportunities for children and young people to participate directly in play and influence the development of play opportunities.
- Strengthening PlayBoard's research and evidence base around play and play deprivation to support advocacy, policy development and strategic planning.
- Developing PlayBoard's cross-border reach through partnerships, training and emerging opportunities in the Republic of Ireland.

Aim 4: PlayBoard's organisational growth and development

- Strengthening PlayBoard's organisational sustainability, capacity and leadership to support future growth and impact.
- Growing and developing our membership, strengthening PlayBoard's collective voice and extending our reach across Northern Ireland and beyond.
- Investing in our workforce through recruitment, professional development, knowledge sharing and cross-team working.
- Developing strategic partnerships across the voluntary, community, education, childcare and public sectors to extend the reach and impact of our work.

- Expanding our research, programme development and cross-border activity to create new opportunities for collaboration, influence and sustainable growth.

These achievements provide a strong platform for PlayBoard's next phase of development. Through our Strategic Plan 2026–2029, we aim to build on this work, strengthen our impact and sustainability, and further establish PlayBoard's position as the authoritative voice for play.

An important element of our continued development is strengthening PlayBoard's reach and influence beyond Northern Ireland. In recent years, we have developed our presence in the Republic of Ireland through a range of strategic and delivery partnerships, including play strategy development with Kerry County Council and training programmes with Cobh Youth Services and Dublin City Childcare Committee.

Working in all-island partnerships, we continue to develop relationships and engage with political representatives, government officials and practitioners across the children's sector, creating opportunities to advocate for play, share expertise and extend PlayBoard's impact on an all-island basis.

Closer to home, a key strategic ambition remains securing greater recognition and investment in play in Northern Ireland, including the development of a dedicated Play Strategy and Play Sufficiency Duty. These ambitions reflect PlayBoard's commitment to ensuring that children's right to play is embedded within policy, planning and decision-making.

Looking Ahead: PlayBoard's Strategic Direction 2026–2029

PlayBoard's vision is '**A society where the right to play is both valued and realised**'.

PlayBoard will continue to champion children and young people's right to play, influence policy and practice, strengthen the playwork workforce and deliver high quality, inclusive play opportunities across Northern Ireland.

PlayBoard's Strategic Plan 2026–2029 will provide the framework for the next phase of PlayBoard's development. Building on more than 40 years of experience, it reflects our ambition to strengthen PlayBoard's leadership and influence, improve opportunities and outcomes for children and young people, and ensure the organisation remains strong, sustainable and equipped for the future.

The strategy reflects a commitment not only to delivering high-quality programmes and services, but to influencing the wider systems, policies, environments and attitudes that shape children and young people's opportunities to play. It places particular emphasis on meaningful participation and co-creation with children and young people, equity and inclusion, workforce development, and long-term organisational sustainability.

Our work over the next three years will be shaped by five interconnected strategic aims:

1. Leadership, Systems and Influence

PlayBoard will strengthen its position as a trusted leader, advocate and convenor for children's right to play. We will work proactively to influence policy, planning and decision-making, build stronger relationships across government and sectors, ensuring that children and young people actively participate in the decisions that affect their opportunities to play.

2. Excellence, Workforce and Practice

We will strengthen quality, innovation and leadership in play and playwork practice, supporting the professional identity, confidence and long-term development of the playwork workforce. Through learning, professional development, evidence and innovation, PlayBoard will continue to promote high-quality, inclusive and rights-based practice across sectors.

3. Equitable and Sufficient Play Opportunities

We will work to ensure that children and young people have equitable access to meaningful and sufficient opportunities for play. This will include addressing the barriers and inequalities experienced by different children and communities and working collaboratively with councils, communities and partners to create more inclusive, accessible and responsive opportunities for play.

4. Culture, Awareness and Participation

We will work to build a more play-positive culture in which the value of play and children's right to play are better understood, recognised and supported. PlayBoard will strengthen its public voice and advocacy, challenge attitudes and barriers to play, and support meaningful and ongoing participation by children, young people and families in shaping play environments, opportunities and decisions.

5. Organisational Sustainability and Development

We will ensure that PlayBoard has the strong organisational foundations required to deliver long-term impact. This will include strengthening financial sustainability and resilience, diversifying income, investing in our workforce, and continuing to develop our leadership, governance, organisational culture and capacity for future growth.

Our priorities for the coming period

The next phase of our development will focus on translating these strategic ambitions into meaningful and measurable change. Key priorities will include strengthening PlayBoard's influence across policy and decision-making; increasing the visibility and recognition of children's right to play; embedding meaningful participation and co-creation with children and young people; strengthening the playwork workforce and professional practice; addressing inequalities in access to play; and building the organisational and financial resilience required to sustain PlayBoard's impact over the longer term.

A significant ambition will be to secure stronger strategic recognition of play within Northern Ireland, including continued advocacy for a Play Strategy and Play Sufficiency Duty, helping to ensure that children's right to play is more consistently reflected within government policy, planning and investment.

PlayBoard will continue to strengthen collaboration and partnerships across sectors, recognising its important role as a connector and convenor, bringing organisations and stakeholders together around a shared agenda for children's play. This partnership approach is identified within the new framework as fundamental to achieving sustainable, system-level change.

Alongside our external ambitions, we will maintain a strong focus on PlayBoard's own sustainability and resilience. Long-term financial planning, diversified income, workforce stability and organisational capacity will be increasingly important in ensuring that PlayBoard remains a confident, resilient and sustainable organisation capable of delivering lasting impact for children and communities.

The Board of Directors will have a central role in this next phase of PlayBoard's development, providing strategic leadership, oversight and constructive challenge, and ensuring that the organisation remains focused on its vision, sustainable in its approach and ambitious for the difference it can make for children and young people.

PlayBoard Organisation Chart

