



OPAL Mentor – Play Scotland (East/North Scotland)

Job Description

Hours: 15 hours per week (negotiable)

Location: Scotland

Responsible to: Head of Projects, Play Scotland

Full OPAL training provided, to build on the successful candidates experience and expertise.

About OPAL

Come and join a dynamic national team of professionals dedicated to putting play on the educational radar and enhancing children's playtimes at school.

OPAL – Outdoor Play and Learning - CIC is the UK's leading, award-winning organisation providing school improvement through play.

Play is the universal language of childhood. It is through play that children learn, make friends and make sense of the world around them. Play helps to develop their brain, stimulates creativity and problem-solving, promotes resilience and social skills and maintains physical, mental and emotional health.

Children spend 1.4 years of their primary school attendance in play, and yet many schools have no strategic approach to play to meet the needs of children across all ages. The OPAL Programme is a mentor supported primary school-improvement programme, addressing all areas that schools must plan for to improve the quality of their play opportunities.

About Play Scotland

Play Scotland is the lead organisation for the development and promotion of children and young people's play in Scotland. We work strategically to make the child's right to play a reality so that all children can reach their full potential and be able to confidently inhabit an inclusive public realm, as well as help shape child friendly communities.

The work of Play Scotland is underpinned by the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 31, which states: "State parties recognise the right of every child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

For more about Play Scotland see www.playscotland.org

About the post

This is a fixed term post until the 31st of March 2025, with the likelihood of extension subject to funding. Start date is negotiable, available from January 2024. Salary scale £28,000 (pro-rata £12,000 p/a.)



15 hours per week, usually worked Monday to Friday. Reasonable flexible hours required. Travel within Scotland should be expected, there may be occasional evening meetings, and weekend events. Term time only arrangements will be considered.

Play Scotland has a blended working model. Regular attendance at the office should be expected. Play Scotland's office is currently in central Edinburgh, with good public transport links.

Annual Leave Entitlement: 32 days (pro-rata) (including bank holidays; Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day are mandatory days off)

About the role

Being an OPAL Mentor is multi-faceted and highly rewarding role, which will see you affecting change and transformation at organisational level to improve children's lives ultimately.

OPAL Mentors deliver the OPAL Primary Programme to schools under the agreed terms of a licence.

As an OPAL Mentor, you will be working independently with primary school staff, guiding them through the 18-24-month strategic OPAL programme. The main goal of the programme is to support the creation of a sustainable school play culture at the same time as enabling fantastic playtime provision for children.

You will be working across Scotland, facilitating eight compulsory and two optional half-day meetings per school, throughout every school's OPAL journey. Outside of the meetings, you will be available for online and telephone support, as per schools' individual needs. You will also be proactively contacting and seeking to meet prospective schools in your region. Therefore, a full valid driver's licence and access to a car, as well as a regular internet connection are essential. A laptop and/or mobile phone will be provided if needed.

As a successful candidate, you must:

- Have knowledge of play and playwork theory and previous experience of quality playwork-based practice, as this will inform the delivery of the OPAL programme and will be applied in each individual school context.
- Hold a relevant qualification.
- Have knowledge of how schools operate in the UK.
- Be able to communicate effectively with people from all walks of life, of different ages, abilities and backgrounds, at various hierarchical levels within a school.
- Be comfortable presenting to and training both small and large groups of people.
- Be highly organised.
- Be a self-starter and have a willingness to manage your own time.
- Take initiative in reaching out to prospective schools and be interested in developing your marketing and advertising skills.
- Have excellent spoken and written English.

This role does not involve working directly with children.



Following selection, successful candidates will be required to complete comprehensive training, which includes attending a pre-service course, followed by an initial period of assisted mentoring of three local schools.

All OPAL Mentors benefit from tailored on-going support, regular meetings sharing best practice and access to the latest research, guidance and resources that underpin and continuously develop the quality of our work.

Appointment as an OPAL Mentor will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure check and two satisfactory references.

Please also see the person specification.

Application forms should be emailed to info@playscotland.org by 4th December 2023. Interviews will likely be held on the 12th of December 2023.

If you have any questions about this role or would like to arrange an informal conversation prior to applying, please contact Cherie Morgan (Head of Projects) at cheriemorgan@playscotland.org

OPAL and Play Scotland are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all those affiliated with the organisation to share this commitment.