



**We are seeking a consultant for
a focussed evaluation of PlayCan – inclusive outdoor play in East Lothian**

Brief issued 5th February 2024

East Lothian Play Association SCIO (ELPA) and Can Do are seeking a consultant to carry out a focussed evaluation of our partnership project, PlayCan. The project has run for approximately 18 months, and we are keen to identify the best way forward to meet our shared aim - to offer outdoor community-based play in a way that meets the needs of disabled children and their families.

Key details

- A short report and recommendations is required by end of March 2024 (or sooner if practicable)
- The consultant will be provided access to previous reports, survey results and information gathered during monitoring
- We anticipate the consultant would make at least one in-person visit to a PlayCan session
- Interviews, meetings or other contacts may be online or in-person.
- The maximum budget for this piece of work is £1000 inclusive of all costs.

Expressions of interest

To express interest in this role, please write to Theresa@elpa.org.uk by 9am on Monday 19th February 2024. Please read the information provided below carefully and find out more on our websites and social media.

We would like to know:

- your initial approach to the brief including a draft time frame
- your anticipated fees/costs
- your previous experience and expertise making you suitable for the role
- contact details of two people/organisations who can be approached as referees.

Background to the PlayCan project

PlayCan is a partnership between East Lothian Play Association and Can Do which brings together the skills, knowledge and networks of each organisation to offer inclusive, outdoor community play. It is funded by [Thrive Outdoors](#) as part of their ASN pilot.

We run a play session each Sunday afternoon in a park or green space in East Lothian. The sessions are open access (children and families are free to come and go), free to attend and provide children and families with opportunities to engage in play, facilitated by our "play ranger" team. The play rangers work to create spaces where children and families feel safe and comfortable to play. They take along a range of open-ended materials (loose parts) and other items that enhance the playability of the various community spaces. Water play, hammocks, musical instruments and sensory play resources have been especially popular.

The team works to the playwork principles. We seek to support children's right to play (article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNCRC) and also article 23 - the right of disabled children to participate fully in the community. We use a risk-benefit assessment approach to enable children to encounter and benefit from a variety of risky and challenging play, at levels which are appropriate to them.

The focus of the evaluation

PlayCan sessions are often well attended and are enjoyed by families passing through. However, we are aware that there are barriers to outdoor play for disabled children and children with complex health needs that PlayCan hasn't yet found a way to overcome. As a result, we want to look at adapting the model in practical ways that help to overcome these barriers.

The focus of the evaluation is to reflect with the partners, staff, children and families to identify practical measures that could be trialled. If they prove helpful, we can look for ways to ensure they are implemented on a longer-term basis.

About the partners

Can Do is a parent-led charity which delivers playschemes, youth clubs and a busy annual programme of activities for youngsters with additional support needs. ELPA delivers community-based outdoor play using the Play Ranger model, support to play in schools, training, and play campaigns and information.

Can Do and ELPA have developed this proposal as we have a shared desire to:

- Increase opportunities for children with additional support needs for outdoor play, in local community spaces, with friends and siblings
- Find out what works to enable children and families to play outdoors (e.g. locations, facilities, staff skills, support)
- Involve children and families with ASN in developing plans and ideas
- Develop the wider capacity in East Lothian and beyond to deliver inclusive play provision.