

Tower Hamlets Play Innovation Labs 2024 Overview



Context

Save the Children's work in Tower Hamlets aims to improve outcomes for young children living in poverty in Tower Hamlets by empowering parents to support their children's early learning, chances to play and to develop.

We know that the best way to support children and their families in Tower Hamlets is to work alongside others. We aim to make change by working in partnership with early years services and families, innovating with local partners, and influencing practice by sharing learning and applying expertise.

Save the Children has recently entered a partnership with Lego and three other organisations to look at the **Power of Play** for young children living in Tower Hamlets. Play is how children naturally learn and there is a lot of evidence to show that play helps children obtain the skills they need to do well in their early years and beyond.

[Why Play? \(learningthroughplay.com\)](https://www.learningthroughplay.com)

Through our project with Lego, we will be working with 3 Tower Hamlets based organisations who work with children and their families to develop *Play Innovation Labs*

What is a Play Innovation Lab?

Led by local Tower Hamlets organisations a Play innovation lab will help promote the power of play by offering 2 workshops that will aim to ask children and their families their thoughts on innovative ways to encourage learning through play for young children in Tower Hamlets. After the workshops, the organisation will develop and deliver an innovation project based on the ideas generated.

What is the innovation process?

The innovation process aims to work collaboratively with families to design and deliver a solution to a local need. As a Tower Hamlets based organisation, you may have already identified areas of potential support in encouraging learning through play but found that it is not yet possible to work on your solution due to limited resources, time, capacity or not being sure what the right solution is.

The innovation process will allow you to work with local families to identify what is needed, and how we might resolve this need.

Similar projects have previously been successfully delivered in Tower Hamlets, London and in Margate, Kent. Examples of these projects can be provided if helpful.

Key terminology

An **'innovation'** in this context refers to a product or service (or an adaptation of an existing product or service) that can be measured in some way to understand its impact. The aim of these innovation projects is to test and learn from a new approach to addressing a gap in existing local services, as well as to trial a new approach to service design and delivery that is community-led and supports long-term shifts in the local early years system.

'Family Voice and Participation' is at the core of our work at Save the Children UK, and we hope this value is reflected in our delivery partners. This refers to a focus on hearing from children, their parents/carers and other close adults to direct what our work looks like. Whilst we recognise the expertise of practitioners, we value hearing directly from families. Therefore, the innovation projects developed in the labs will come directly from the views of children and their families and co-designed with them. You can read more about co-production and co-design [here](#) and [here](#).

Application process and budget

Delivery partners will take the lead on this project, with support and guidance from SCUUK.

We will share a project proposal form for you to express your interest via email – this must be submitted by **Tuesday 2nd April 2024**. Following submission, proposals will be reviewed by Save the Children's area team and members of our local Advisory Group, who will select the preferred delivery partners. Successful partners will be notified no later than **no later than midday Thursday 11th April 2024**.

Your proposal will be assessed based on:

- Commitment to co-designing the innovation project with families
Efforts made to consider Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, to make the project accessible to families from all backgrounds and needs
- Viability to deliver the project within the expected budget and timelines
- Demonstration of safeguarding considerations within this project and your wider organisation

- Robust plans to monitor and evaluate the project

All successful applicants will go through a Save the Children due diligence process before funding is released. If at this stage, you have any questions or concerns about the process please contact Sabrina Simpson for support.

We do not want this to be a barrier to you applying and will support you in finding solutions.

This project must be delivered between **April and December 2024**, and we recognise that delivery partners time and resources are precious. Therefore, we will offer funding and support to run co-design workshops with **10 families**. This funding will include acknowledging families time and attendance at the workshops, providing creche facilities, covering your organisational staff costs in the delivery time for the workshops and scope for translators for workshops to support inclusion and accessibility. As a guide, we suggest costs of no more than **£2500** to run the two co-design workshops.

You will then be entitled to an additional **£15K** to plan and deliver an innovation project including monitoring and evaluation activity.

Proposals must include an **estimated** spend breakdown using the template provided in the submission form.

Save the Children UK reserves the right to accept a proposal in part, rather than in full. We may 'part-fund' your innovation project if running costs total more than £15K. We may also 'part-fund' workshop running costs dependent on costings.

Roles and responsibilities

We will rely on local partner organisations for delivery of workshops and the innovation project, so that it is locally owned. Innovation projects ideas will be agreed with our Advisory Group.

Save the Children proposes the following roles and responsibilities:

The **delivery partner organisation(s)** will lead on the following:

- Planning and delivering of workshops and participation activities to design, develop, and generate ideas that respond to the needs expressed by local families around learning through play. **April- May 2024**
- Short proposal/description for Learning through play innovation project submitted **June 2024**
- Delivery of a learning through play innovation project. **July- November 2024**
- Liaising regularly with the Tower Hamlets project team and our Advisory Group (comprised of local practitioners), and other relevant local stakeholders to share progress and learning – this will take up approx. 3 hours a month. **May- December 2024**
- Conducting monitoring and evaluation activities.
- Management of funding provided within the agreed timeframe.
- Delivering the project in a way that reflects Save the Children's mission to embed work in

family voice, promote equity, and safeguard children and vulnerable adults

- Share your expertise in family voice, hearing from children, monitoring and evaluation, local needs, diversity and inclusion and your service area with SCUK and our partners

Save the Children will provide:

- Funding (part or full) to plan and deliver 2 co-design workshops with families.
- 15K(part or full) to deliver a learning through play innovation project across July- November 2024.
- A grant agreement contract (on Save the Children UK’s terms) and any legal advice on this as required.
- Access to a network of local partners working towards improving outcomes for children in their Early Years. This network can guide and support the project to maximize impact.
- Support with capacity building during elements of the innovation project such as gathering family voice, diversity, and inclusion, monitoring, and evaluation.

Timescales

March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July - Nov 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024
Application and selection period for Play Innovation lab	Partnership agreement and ways of working agreed between SCUK and delivery organisations	Co-design workshops undertaken with families	Each lab submits a short proposal/description for Learning through play innovation project	Innovation project delivery	Final evaluation of learning through play projects	Planning for sustainability of innovation projects

Monitoring and Evaluation

Co-design workshops

You will be required to monitor and evaluate the impact of the co-design workshops on children and their families. We will provide the templates for this.

Learning through play innovation projects

You will also be required to submit a final report at the end of the project to summarise your impact and learning for your innovation projects. We have templates available to support with this.

As noted above, delivery partners will be supported by our Tower Hamlets project team to design and implement a robust and ethically approved plan for project monitoring and evaluation, including clear timelines and for reporting. We encourage openness about your current experience with monitoring and evaluation so we can share our expertise if this is of interest.

Sustainability and Legacy

Innovation projects should be set up in a way that ensures sustainability, with a clear vision for how the project will inform and contribute to the future plans of the delivery partner and the wider early years community. Post workshops, when submitting your innovation project plan, it would be helpful to have a plan in mind for the next steps for your project following SCUK funding. Throughout the innovation process, we will provide opportunities to connect and share learning with other local organisations working with families.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Save the Children UK sees diversity as a strength that we need to embrace. We have a duty to listen to and involve children and families in our work to ensure that our approaches to change are relevant and driven by lived experience and local need. No one should be left behind.

We are keen to partner with those who share this commitment and would like to see proposals that are accessible to, and inclusive of, children and families from all backgrounds, and that advance equalities for marginalised and minority groups. You can read more about Save the Children's approach to diversity and inclusion [here](#).

Support for Applicants

We are open to a wide range of applicants - from existing Tower Hamlets statutory services to voluntary organisations, community groups and collectives

We are keen to support applications and make sure all relevant information is available to those looking to apply. Therefore, we will be hosting online information drop-in sessions on Microsoft teams. This 15-minute session is for you to talk through your potential application and ask any additional questions you may have. If you are interested in attending, please contact Sabrina for an invite.

Session one options:

Thursday 21st March- 12-12:15pm or 12:15-12:30pm.#

Session two options:

Friday 22nd March- 09:30-09:45am or 09:45-10:00am.