

Brief to tender for managing and leading Unplug and Play 2020



Castle Bromwich
Historic Gardens

Due to the success and rapid growth in popularity of our Unplug and Play family activities 'brand', we are now seeking to contract an individual, or small team, to lead, manage - and possibly develop - the delivery for 2020 and possibly beyond.

About Unplug and Play

Unplug and Play is the generic name we give to all our family friendly activities using our 10 acre site.

Its core is 40 separate days – mainly during school holidays – of drop-in 'gently led' crafts and outdoor activities using our garden/woodland assets.

The philosophy behind it is to provide reasonably priced access to 'the wild', 'the outdoors' and to creative activities for children (usually between 3 and 10 years) **and their adults.**

Our values are

- To promote love and knowledge of nature and outdoors
- To help and encourage adults and children to explore together
- To support creativity in all senses
- To use, where possible, recycled and sustainable materials – leading by example
- Low cost; 'you could do this at home too'
- Inspire people to garden and grow food.

The programme has developed organically over the last 3 years, led by a staff member and a small team of volunteers - all of whom have different levels of skills and availability.

We have seen a doubling of our overall family audience in the last year - not just Unplug and Play, but largely due to its popularity.

The next stage – a response to growth

We know that our current staff time needs to be dedicated elsewhere – but Unplug and Play is a key and core offer for us.

Volunteers, in general, are keen to help out, but often less confident or willing to do the planning and preparations. Most of our current volunteers have learned on the job, none has a background in arts, craft or outdoor leadership.

Time and other limitations mean that the 'offer' to our users sometimes 'shrinks' to a couple of basic paper crafts and a self-led trail of some kind.

In order to continue to provide a **really good quality experience** we need some professionally informed leadership and management.

What we're looking for:

A manager who would

- be able to plan and identify themes and activities which make the best use of the seasons and our physical assets;
- be able to plan and prepare a flexible programme, in advance, across the year;
- prepare, with the team of volunteers, materials and outdoor 'set ups' – and stay within budget;
- create a balance of indoors and outdoor activities; helping with any site improvements (we want to do much more - given funding).
- work with existing staff and volunteers to develop the pool of volunteers and their skills
- deliver an achievable programme that continues to attract and intrigue our 'growing' audiences.

When

Currently Unplug and Play is concentrated during school holidays – but not limited to those days.

Specific drop-in crafts activities are delivered between 12 and 3pm – although we try to encourage families to stay the whole day by creating attractive self-guided trails and things to do outdoors.

Many of our other events are also family oriented and there are opportunities to develop activities across the year, and for more specific targeted days – like forest school or events coinciding with national celebrations like Book Day, the Big Draw, Big Garden Birdwatch etc.

Equally, 'drop-in' days work well for our current audiences, but pre-bookable sessions may also be an exciting departure.

Opportunities

This contract might be ideal for people who already have some Forest School or Early Years experience or qualifications and are looking to operate in a wider setting or work with a broader audience.

We equally privilege creativity, wildlife and the outdoors, so experience in Community Arts is also of interest.

This contract will be a fee for management and delivery across the, equivalent of, approximately 50 days during a 12month period. The manager is expected to be actively present at the majority of the main Unplug and Play days. These days can be flexible as long as the delivery team of volunteers is also co-ordinated and supported.

Please note that depending on the event, time of year and weather attendance can vary from 3 children and their grown ups to 90 children plus adults.

Fee and application

The fee for the contract (individual or small company team) is £4500

To apply please send a covering letter and cv – if appropriate – outlining your experience and what you think you can bring to the programme.

We welcome phone conversations and visits to the Gardens for further discussion.

Easter is already planned, but ideally the contractor would be in place during that period.