

Play Association Tower Hamlets to Close

With great regret and heavy hearts, the Trustees of Play Association Tower Hamlets (PATH) have taken the difficult decision to close the charity and end all activities.

PATH has been serving the community and supporting the children of Tower Hamlets for over 19 years, but the charity will close by February 2021 following an orderly, planned closure process.

Since launching in 2001, PATH's mission has been to put children and their Right to Play at the heart of the community in Tower Hamlets. It has done this by campaigning and lobbying for more and better play opportunities; by providing information, resources and play training for those working with children across the borough; by working with council and community partners, stakeholders, parents and children to identify and meet local play needs; by successfully fundraising to pilot and deliver innovative, inclusive community-led play projects; and by consistently being a strong advocate for the play sector in Tower Hamlets

Sadly, over the last decade, political commitment and support for play services has waned considerably. Austerity measures have seen it slip down funding priorities for both government and long-standing funders. Over this period, PATH has seen priorities change and funding opportunities dwindle. With less funding each year, the organisation has adapted by downsizing and reducing operations to remain viable.

Throughout, PATH has continued to support play providers, provide vital play opportunities, and successfully deliver on project outcomes and obligations. This has only been achieved due to the incredible knowledge, skills, commitment, and sheer hard work of the staff past and present.

Over the past 18 months, Trustees and staff have worked closely to explore different organisational structures, new avenues and alternative scenarios that might enable PATH to continue to serve the borough and deliver on our objectives. Following this process of in-depth analysis, and with no realistic signs of improvement in the financial or political climate, the Trustees have decided to close the charity. This will be a planned process, rather than allow it to decline through unsustainable circumstances or end abruptly in unforeseen circumstances.

A key element of the planned closure is to use remaining assets of the Charity to directly support our member play projects in the borough, where dedicated, skilled Playworkers continue to deliver inclusive, free, creative, imaginative and varied play opportunities to the children of Tower Hamlets. A fitting legacy for Play Association Tower Hamlets.

The Trustees and Staff of PATH give heartfelt thanks to all the partners and individuals we have worked with over the last 19 years who have helped to increase playful moments and created happy memories in children's lives.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank each of our many funders and supporters over the years who have enabled us to enrich the lives of thousands of children.

From the Trustees of PATH