

# PLAYFORDS EXPERTISE IN ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS





LV Switchpanel Upgrade and Transformer Upgrade by Playfords for Royal Free Hospital London.

PLAYFORDS, A LEADING BUILDING SERVICES CONTRACTOR, IS APPROACHING ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY IN A NEW FORM, READY TO SEIZE NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN THE POST-COVID MARKET.

# EXPERTISE IN ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS

PROJECT MANAGED BY: **NEIL STOWE**

Playfords has over nine decades of experience and expertise in the fields of electrical & mechanical services, renewable energy, voice & data cabling and audio-visual & IT networking – the complete solution for M&E services installations for all buildings.

The company, established in 1925, is based at Huntingdon in Cambridgeshire, with a regional office in Durham serving northern England and Scotland, and in Dartford, Kent, serving southern England.

Playfords reputation for innovative and problem-solving engineering solutions demonstrated on projects has earned the company numerous

plaudits and built long-lasting relationships with prestigious clients throughout the UK across a range of sectors from health and education to retail and industry.

In January 2021, the traditional family-owned business reached a major milestone - a management buyout bringing with it a new board of directors as well as a new company structure.

"The MBO heralds a new era for Playfords Ltd which is approaching 100 years in business in 2025. This has provided the business with an appropriate leadership structure to make possible the retirement of our existing shareholders and to continue to drive Playfords forward into the

future," says Managing Director James Tuohy.

"The company's focus will remain unchanged," he continues. "We will concentrate our efforts on project delivery and on developing every area of our business in each region where we operate, further enhancing the services for our customers."

## CONSISTENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Playfords core business is commercial electrical contracting, and its specialist skills are applied predominantly in critical infrastructure works. However, the company has a sound track record across other industries and the range of completed projects is wide and varied. >>

Examples of prestigious projects include the replacement of the electrical, mechanical & plumbing services at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London; and the electrical, mechanical and plumbing services for the prestigious Royal Opera House Open Up project in the heart of London's Covent Garden, representing a show-case product of the company's skills.

Following the successful completion of the Open Up project, Playfords secured further works within the building for the completion of the new external facade lighting installation and extensive new LED RGB Dali controlled lighting installation.

"A lot of our projects are 'hidden away', such as the infrastructure projects in



James Tuohy, MD, Playfords. ⤴

**EDMUNDSON ELECTRICAL**

The UK's market leading supplier of electrical product to trade and industry.

Proud supporters of

**PLAYFORDS**  
BUILDING SERVICES ENGINEERS

**For your local service**

<b>EDMUNDSON BURY ST. EDMUNDS</b> Unit F2, Dettingen Way Blenheim Industrial Park Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3TU Tel: 01284 760393 Email: bury-st-edmunds@eel.co.uk	<b>EDMUNDSON PETERBOROUGH</b> Barber House Storey's Bar Road Peterborough, Cambs, PE1 5YS Tel: 01733-898444 Email: peterborough.240@eel.co.uk
--	--

240 locations across the UK – for your nearest branch location go to [www.eel.co.uk](http://www.eel.co.uk)

commercial buildings, factories and hospitals, which may be not as obvious, but which have a massive impact," says James Tuohy. The high quality of works can be seen for example in the completion of an M&E solution package, including electrical, mechanical, CCTV, access control, fire and intruder alarm systems, for the Jack Hunt Secondary School.

Playfords were also recently engaged as the Principal Contractor to deliver the construction of a new HV/LV sub-station on the roof of the A Block building at Hammersmith Hospital. For this key hospital service within central London, the emphasis was on providing all the required work scope with minimum impact on day-

to-day operation. Playfords, as the principal contractor, was responsible for all the health and safety management and site co-ordination, along with management of all the specialist sub-contractors.

"What distinguishes us from our competitors is that we manage the projects completely in-house," Mr Tuohy points out. "We have very personal relationships with our clients, who value our consistent management of their works, as well as the engineering advantage we bring to them."

**ON A FIRM FOOTING**

He affirms that following the completion of the MBO, the business is entering the new stage in its development in healthy shape despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Being a recognised contractor for critical infrastructure, including the NHS Trusts, factories and distribution centres, which required work continuity, the company could retain its workforce and keep the business going.

Not everything was plain sailing, though, admits Mr Tuohy. "At the beginning, it was really tough to adapt really quickly to new working procedures. Still, the pain we felt in the middle of last year, trying to figure out how to operate on-site under the new measures such as social distancing and limited workforce while achieving the tasks safely and efficiently, really helped us in the second half of the year when it became second nature. Now we are back up to some 95% of pre-Covid productivity and I'm proud to say that the staff have done an excellent job."

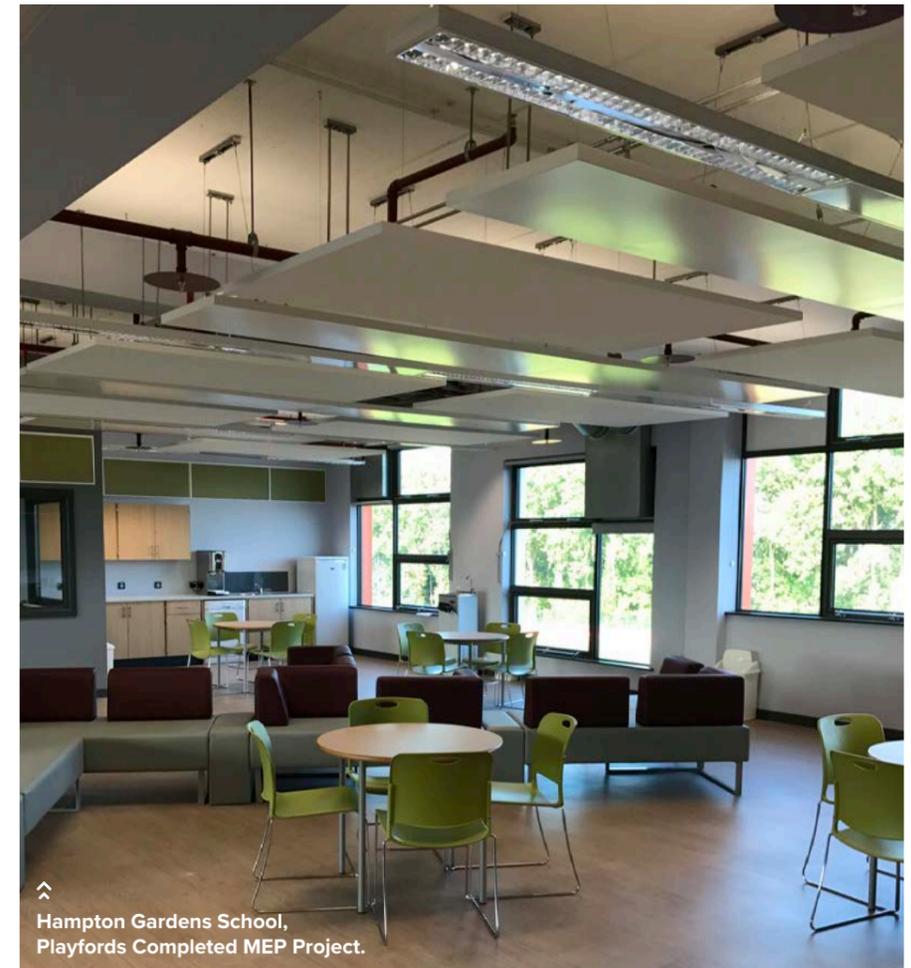
Speaking about the employees, he mentions that many staff have impressive service records with the

company, having worked for Playfords for decades, some straight from school. As a good employer, Playfords is committed to investing in its workforce and provides first-class training for all employees. The company also runs a highly successful programme for taking on and supporting young apprentices, many of whom have progressed into permanent key roles within the business after completing their qualifications.

"We try to take on a new group of apprentices every 12 months and the highly uncertain 2020 was no exception. Developing these people from the ground up is invaluable for us and I am very passionate about our apprenticeship scheme. It opens the door to countless

opportunities - we have people in the management team who have progressed all the way with us from being an apprentice."

The company is approaching its 100th anniversary, a key milestone, says James Tuohy, reflecting that although the company has grown considerably over the decades, it has retained its family culture, a much-valued attribute and a good basis for further growth. "By 2025, we are targeting an increase in revenues of 25%. This is a big jump, but the marketplace is there, the economy is there and I think we can achieve that. Let's celebrate our 100th anniversary with some success. I'd love to see Playfords absolutely flying in 2025." ⤴



⤴ Hampton Gardens School, Playfords Completed MEP Project.



**PLAYFORDS**

[WWW.PLAYFORDS.CO.UK](http://WWW.PLAYFORDS.CO.UK)



PRODUCED BY:

