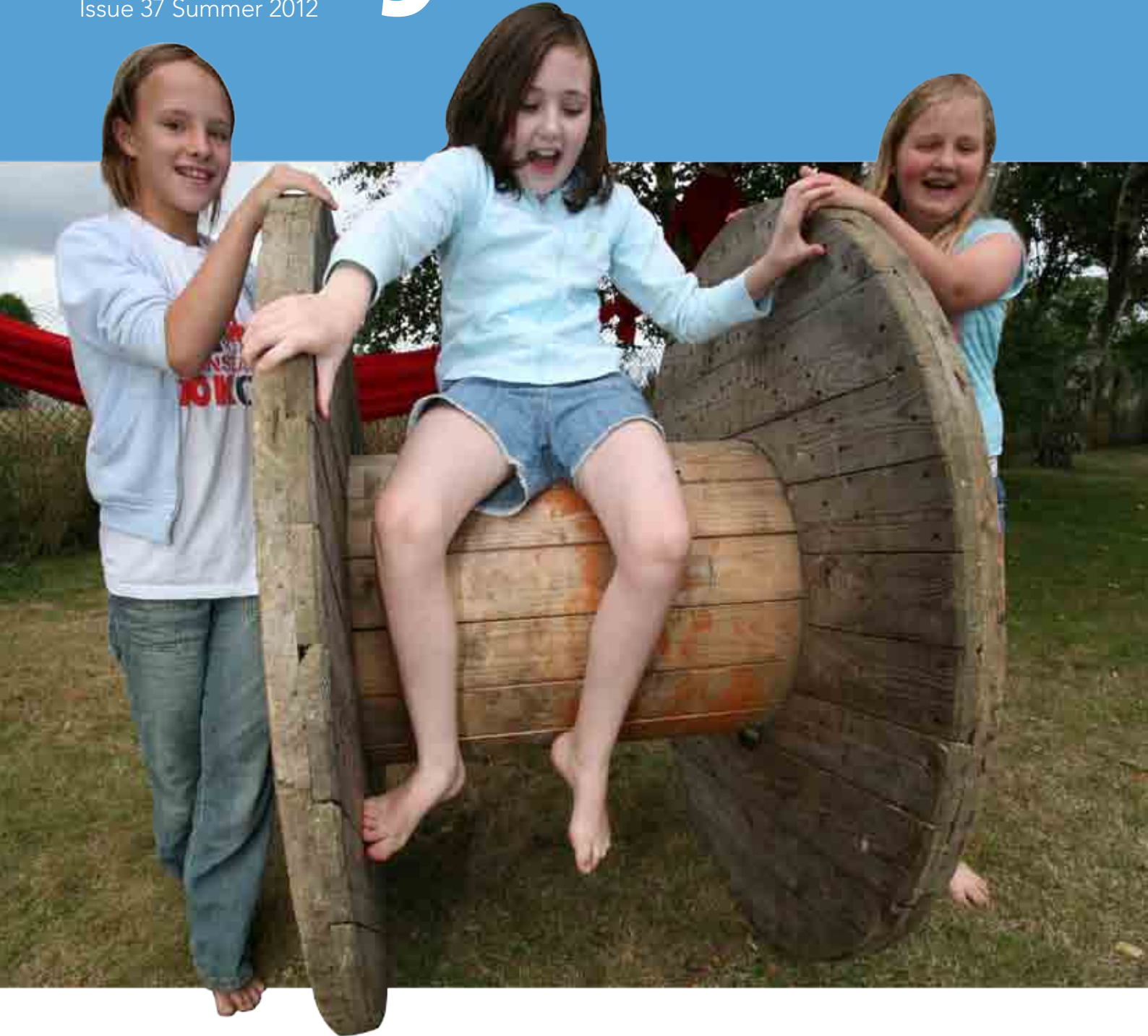


Play for Wales

Play news and briefing from the national charity for play

Issue 37 Summer 2012



Play:

What is good enough?



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Thank you

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to this magazine – we couldn't do it without you.

This issue of *Play for Wales*, as well as previous issues, is available to download from our website news section at www.playwales.org.uk

Guest Editorial

In the Welsh Government it is our belief that every child in Wales is entitled to the best start in life and the best possible chance to grow up free from poverty and harm.

Wales is leading the way on children's rights – on 1 May 2012 new legislation came into force, placing a duty on Welsh Ministers to consider the rights of children in decisions we make on policy and legislation. It will underpin all the work we do to enhance the lives of children, young people and families and strengthen our approach yet further.

We are the first country in the UK to take this approach and one of only a handful in the world. Our legislation means that if children feel their rights are not being taken into account, it gives them, or someone who can act on their behalf, the opportunity to challenge the Welsh Government.

We also strongly believe in the importance of play in children's lives and the benefits it gives to health, happiness and wellbeing. We have always supported Article 31 of the

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and children's right to access a range of play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.

Wales is again taking the lead – in the global sense. We believe that we are the first Government in the world to legislate for children's play opportunities.

In 2002, because of our belief in the value of play and concern about the loss of play opportunities, the Welsh Government published a national Play Policy. 10 years on, we maintain this commitment. The Play Sufficiency Duty places a duty on local authorities to assess the provision of play and recreational opportunities in their area. The assessments will be used to develop local authority action plans to improve play opportunities for all children living in Wales; and will enable us to gain an understanding of play opportunities across the country.

We anticipate that this part of the duty will be commenced in November this year. These developments require close working relationships between Government, local authorities and the play sector. I am pleased that we are working with Play Wales to develop a toolkit that

will aid local authorities in completing these assessments.

The next step will be for us to consider the assessments and action plans. We aim to commence the second part of the duty in Spring 2014, which will place a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities in their areas.

We want to create an environment where children's presence playing outside in our communities is welcomed and celebrated, with safe places for them to play now and in years to come. We recognise the importance of working with local authorities and all other stakeholders to achieve our vision for play.

Although our policy for play at a national level is of the utmost importance, we also place great value on play at a local level. In Wales, we have made great efforts to work together to create a society that respects children and their right to play, and provides child friendly and play rich communities. We all have a role in protecting children's rights and improving children's opportunities to play.

Gwenda Thomas AM, Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services



News

Free Range Kids campaign

To date more than 3,000 people have signed the Free Range Kids campaign pledge calling for the introduction of 20mph limits in residential areas and greater investment in walking and cycling routes, particularly to school. If you believe that 20mph limits would be good for children where you live please add your name to the pledge: www.sustrans.org.uk/freerangekids

If you've already signed the pledge, many thanks – your voice gives the campaign credibility and at the

end of the year BBC TV's Miranda Krestovnikoff, the Free Range Kids ambassador, will deliver all the pledges to Downing Street.

In May, Sustrans held a Parliamentary reception, supported by Dawn Primarolo MP, which saw the charity and supporting organisations, presenting the case for a better deal for children to MPs and local authority transport, health and education officials with a view to raising awareness and sharing good practice.



Playing Fields Challenge

Local Authorities and Town and Community Councils in Wales have responded with enthusiasm to Fields in Trust's (FIT) Diamond Jubilee legacy programme The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.

The goal of the Challenge is to safeguard 2,012 outdoor recreational spaces to mark both the Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic and Paralympic Games with a target of 100 spaces in Wales. So far 86 sites ranging from playgrounds, country parks, sports pitches, nature reserves and woodland have been nominated for protection and there is still six months remaining.

Rhodri Edwards, Development Manager at FIT Cymru said: 'We're delighted with the response we've had to the Challenge and are confident we will reach our goal of 100 before the end of the year. More than half of County Councils have nominated sites already and there is still plenty of time to get involved.'

www.fieldsintrust.org or
www.qe2fields.com



Active Travel White Paper

Proposals for Legislation on Active Travel (routes for walking and cycling)

On 12 July 2011, the First Minister made a statement on the Legislative Programme for the Welsh Government. In that statement he announced his intention to legislate to introduce a duty on Local Authorities to provide and maintain cycle paths in key areas.

On, 9 May 2012, Carl Sargeant, Minister for Local Government and Communities, issued a White Paper to seek views on proposals for an Active Travel (Wales) Bill. Play Wales contributed to the development of the White Paper through a stakeholder engagement process facilitated by the Welsh Government.

The proposed Bill will require local authorities in Wales have a duty to:

- identify and map the network of routes within their areas that are safe and appropriate for walking and cycling;

- identify and map the enhancements that would be required to create a fully integrated network for walking and cycling and develop a prioritised list of schemes to deliver the network;
- deliver an enhanced network subject to budget availability and following due process;
- consider the potential for enhancing walking and cycling provision in the development of new road schemes.

The consultation will end on 14 August 2012 and the Bill is expected to be introduced to the National Assembly for Wales in spring 2013.

<http://wales.gov.uk/splash?orig=/consultations/>



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

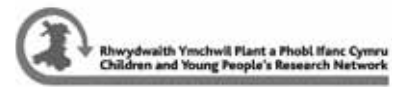
Child Research Group receives grant

The Child Health and Environment Research Development Group has received funding from the Wales Children and Young People Research Network (CYPRN). The focus of the Group will be to research and gather data that can be used to design high quality applications to national funders to examine factors influencing

all aspects of physical activity in childhood, including the local environment such as local parks, playgrounds, schools and local green spaces. Changes to the environment are expensive; therefore the Group can develop the high quality evidence necessary to inform both health and planning sectors.

The research group is being led by Dr Sarah Rogers from the College of Medicine at Swansea University; Play Wales is a partner organisation.

www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?orgid=970



'Let Our Children Take a Risk'

In a recent blog Judith Hackitt, Chair of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) calls for children to be allowed to take risks. In the blog, *Outdoor play – let our children take a risk*, Judith writes:

'In HSE, we are focused on health and safety in the workplace, but it is clear that attitudes to risk are formed long before young people enter the world of work. Play – and

particularly play outdoors – teaches young people how to deal with risk. Without this awareness and learning they are ill equipped to deal with working life. We simply cannot afford to exclude outdoor play and learning from our children's education.

'We should not deny [children] the opportunity to learn by taking risks. Seeking to protect them from every

conceivable hazard, rather than sensibly managing the genuine risks they face, ultimately leaves them in harm's way, not to mention robbing them of memories that last a lifetime.'

www.hse.gov.uk/news/judith-risk-assessment/kidsoutdoors070612.htm

Children's Rights Scheme

The Rights of Children and Young People (Wales) Measure strengthens and builds on the rights based approach of the Welsh Government to making policy for children and young people in Wales.

We are the first country in the UK to enshrine the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in domestic law.

The Welsh Government Children's Rights Scheme sets out the arrangements that Welsh Ministers has in place to make sure that they, and Welsh Government staff, comply with the duty placed on them by the Measure – to have due regard to children's rights when working on or developing proposed new legislation, proposed new policies and any review of, or change to, an existing policy.

The Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services, Gwenda Thomas AM said:

'Our aim is to achieve a culture in the Welsh Government where there is a full appreciation of children's rights, and that we consciously consider them in all our work.'

<http://cymru.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/rights/?lang=en>



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Margaret Jones

Margaret Jones MBE passed away recently, after a long illness.

In an extensive and distinguished career Margaret established the YMCA Wales Community College as a provider of Further Education and Lifelong Learning. Her leadership allowed the College to become the success it is today, offering opportunities to those who don't wish to follow traditional learning routes.

A gentle demeanor concealed her wicked sense of humour as well as extraordinary passion and commitment to what she did. Her tireless work leaves behind a great legacy for Wales.

We extend our condolences to Margaret's family, friends and colleagues.

Child Safety Report

The Child Safety Report 2012 shows that Wales has made important improvements to injury prevention since 2009 – but there is still work to be done.

Child Safety Report Cards are developed by the European Child Safety Alliance to provide overviews that summarise countries' levels of safety provided to children through national policy. The Report Cards aim to highlight the strengths and weaknesses in each country.

The report shows that on a scale of 60 for proven methods of reducing

accidental death and injury, Wales scored 30.5, up from 29.5 in 2009 – compared with Scotland's 39. Overall, Wales received a 'fair' score.

Wales scored one star (out of a possible five) for cycling safety and two stars for pedestrian safety. The report states: 'Wales has done a good job of addressing safety issues for children and adolescents on the road, however the absence of a current national road safety strategy resulted in lower scores for road traffic safety ... stronger leadership and ownership would improve prevention measures and outcomes

for children and young people in Wales'.

In response to the Report Card a Welsh Government spokesperson said:

'In terms of road safety, we have seen significant improvements in the last decade, with a 54% reduction in instances of children being killed or seriously injured in 2011. However, we recognise more needs to be done.'

www.childsafetyeurope.org/reportcards/index.html

Children & Nature Research

A new report by the RSPB draws together the main findings and recommendations from research conducted over the last decade into the diverse benefits of contact with nature and outdoor experiences for children.

RSPB also commissioned research asking which of twelve outdoor experiences the British public remembered having as a child – the list included climbing trees,

swimming in a river and collecting insects. Climbing trees and playing conkers took the lead – both were remembered by 70% of the public surveyed (sample size: 1012 – 50 of which were in Wales).

The report states that there is 'evidence of a sharp decline in children today' experiencing nature and the outdoors. RSPB's research found that in Wales, 92% agreed that it is important that children

have these types of experiences everyday.

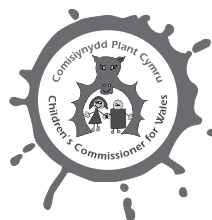
Every Child Outdoors Wales report is available to download at: www.rspb.org.uk/wales



Children's Commissioner Campaign

The Children's Commissioner for Wales, Keith Towler has launched a new campaign to put a stop to the negative labels that children and young people are faced with every day. The 'See Me/Dyma Fi' campaign will aim to combat these negative stereotypes and help improve attitudes towards children and young people in Wales.

Keith Towler said, 'We have a real opportunity to promote positive images of children



and young people, to represent them in a responsible and balanced way in all the work that we do and to become an example to other countries in the UK and across the world.'

The campaign website features editorial guidelines, a gallery of copyright free images, and a chance for children and young people to have a say on the issues that affect them.

www.seeme-dymafi.org.uk

Social Media



www.facebook.com/PlayWales



twitter.com/PlayWales

Wales a play friendly place

Wales – A Play Friendly Place

is a Play Wales campaign to help build a network of support for play across Wales. Communities can also use it to establish their own local campaigns for children's play and be part of a national movement at the same time.

Share what's happening locally which is either protecting or prohibiting children and young people's right to play on Facebook campaign page.

Here are two examples of projects contributing to making Wales



Vale Summer Playscheme

In a demonstration of their commitment to inclusivity, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's play development team has fought hard to provide inclusive play opportunities for local children this summer.

For a number of years, the team has been at the forefront of delivering inclusive playschemes for both disabled and non-disabled children. However, when Cymorth funding ceased earlier this year, the Vale's play projects were put in jeopardy. Cutbacks were made, and funding was only available to run playschemes for disabled children via the Families First Disability Strand element.

A pilot playscheme for disabled children only was held in June 2012 to see how this would work, but feedback from parents and staff highlighted that an inclusive playscheme would have been much more beneficial and enjoyable.

The play development team worked with internal and external partners to highlight the need to continue

to provide inclusive playschemes, and thankfully, funding has been allocated to enable inclusive playschemes to continue this summer, albeit on a limited basis.

The Vale Council is supportive of the forthcoming Play Sufficiency Assessments and sees this as a positive step to highlight the need for more investment in play opportunities.

For more information about the playschemes, contact Joanne Jones on 01446 704809 or visit www.valefoglammorgan.gov.uk/sportsandplay



<http://on.fb.me/playfriendlyplace>

Pop-Up Play Shop!

The Pop-Up Play Shop has successfully won the case for a council tax-free project in Cardiff City Centre. Pop-Up Adventure Play's Morgan Leichter-Saxby said:

'We would like to thank the local residents, shopping centre community and playworkers across the UK for showing support for the Play Shop'.

Due to the success of the first shop, further plans are now underway. Pop-Up Adventure Play is looking to partner up with other organisations to make the second round of Play Shop even more successful.

www.popupplayshop.org

Hearts and Minds:

Time, Space and Permission to Play

The Welsh Government is working closely with Play Wales to develop resources for a toolkit which will support local authorities and their partners to conduct Play Sufficiency Assessments, in accordance with regulations.

Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a duty on local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their area. The Play Sufficiency Duty comes as part of the Welsh Governments' anti-poverty agenda – which recognises that children can have a poverty of experience, opportunity and aspiration, and that this kind of poverty can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds across Wales.

This Duty has the potential to make real and meaningful changes that support children's right to play as well as providing them with a wealth of opportunity and experience.

Using broad brushstrokes we can describe our society as one where we less and less see children's presence outside on the street as legitimate behaviour. Compound this with the domination of cars and their drivers, and the world outside the front door doesn't look particularly attractive for anyone who wants to play there ... and children regularly tell us that outside is where they want to play. The toolkit is designed to focus on the translation of policy and law into real differences for children in their own street and community.

The barriers to children and young people playing out can be divided into 'attitudes' and 'environments'. These categories are not mutually exclusive and the issues raised are inter-related; they cut across departmental boundaries. Ideally, children and young people will have the confidence to play and hang out in all areas of their lives. So measures to increase opportunities for play require a concerted joined-up approach between agencies, policy makers and providers as well as those working face to face in communities with children and young people and their parents.

Working in partnership

Conducting the Play Sufficiency Assessments against the criteria of the Statutory Guidance will require a partnership approach and skills. The data collection and analysis will require input from a range of partners with specific functions including:

- **Local authority staff:**
 - Play Services team
 - Children with disability support
 - Geographical Information Systems (GIS)/mapping team
 - Planning
 - Research
 - Marketing
 - Transport
 - Environmental services/parks
 - Leisure Services
 - Youth Services
 - Family Information Service
 - Participation Workers
 - Early years, childcare and family support
 - Community development/partnership officers

- Education Estates

- Regional Voluntary Play Association
- Voluntary and community sector play providers
- Town and Community Councils

The toolkit will provide practical and policy approaches that might help us to assess and address barriers and create a better Wales for children and young people to live and play in. In order to grasp the opportunity this legislation provides, and make it work for children, it is clear we need to use our existing resources either more effectively or differently.

Playing and hanging out is not just about a destination; it is about the journey through and around the environment and the community. We need to change environments throughout our communities to create a play friendly Wales; this requires supporting the change of attitudes and mindsets – with both an educational and a 'regulatory' approach.

When the application of the Play Sufficiency Duty on local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities is effective, many more children and young people playing out will be visible in our communities; by their very presence contributing to the wellbeing of our society.

How the Toolkit is being developed

A number of existing tools, quality assessment and assurance systems, policy documents and strategies have been reviewed to inform the development of the toolkit. The tools provided are tried and tested templates based on the matters that need to be taken into account within the Statutory Guidance.

We have aimed to ensure that the development of the toolkit has been an inclusive process. It has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners including:

- All Wales Strategic Play Network (local authority and voluntary sector play officers)

- Gwent Chief Leisure Officers Group
- Delegates at Welsh Government consultation events in Llandudno, Merthyr Tydfil and Swansea
- Flintshire Lifelong Learning and Environment and Regeneration Officers
- Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
- Conwy Principal Play Officer (seconded from Play Wales)
- End Child Poverty Network
- Participation Unit

A well-conducted Play Sufficiency Assessment will provide local authorities with the evidence needed to identify gaps in provision

and develop action plans to address these shortcomings. This will help local authorities to meet their duties to secure sufficient play opportunities for children, so far as reasonably practicable.

Many local authorities in Wales have developed play policies and strategies which are based on the national Play Policy and the Play Policy Implementation Plan respectively. As a result, many areas already have the foundation for creating local policy and strategy which develops cross-departmental working practices, policy development and implementation procedures to enhance children and young people's opportunities to play.

Play Wales has also produced resources to help local authorities and their partners to prepare for Play Sufficiency Assessments. *Preparing for Play Sufficiency Assessments* information sheet and accompanying documents are available to download at: www.playwales.org.uk

Opportunities & Challenges

an interview with
Peter Gomer

In May, the Welsh Government facilitated Play Opportunities Engagement Events for local authorities and partner stakeholders. The events contributed to further engagement and consultation on the commencement of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure, Play Opportunities Duty.

Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Play Wales shared a platform at these Stakeholder Engagement Events.

Our Assistant Director, Marianne Mannello chatted to Peter Gomer, Interim Policy Adviser (Leisure, Culture, Tourism and Heritage) with WLGA about the commencement of the duty.

Marianne: What sorts of opportunities do you think this legislation will bring local authorities?

Peter: Although the Welsh Government has a Play Policy since 2002 and a Play Policy Implementation Plan in place since

2006, it became evident from the engagement events that many local authorities have not developed a play policy. Where they have formed a play strategy it seems very much focused around fixed playgrounds and holiday playschemes. For many years playgrounds were the focal point as opposed to free play,

adventurous play and so forth.

The new Play Sufficiency Assessment and Statutory Guidance will show that those who have developed a policy and/or strategy will clearly recognise the benefits of having created one – others may find the assessment and guidance daunting.

Most local authorities will see this new duty as a helpful way forward as they plan to develop more play opportunities. I'm pleased that the Guidance recognises the role of all partners within the community to work together but the Guidance may need to more strongly state the requirement of working in partnership with the voluntary sector.

Marianne: I have found from the State of Play reviews that Play Wales undertakes that most local authorities have developed play strategies during the last decade and many do mirror the national strategy. However, the easiest actions to implement within the strategies were those around traditional fixed equipped play areas, staffed play provision and holiday playschemes. Although the strategies included actions for transport, health and safety and planning, it hasn't been easy to implement them. Do you think the broad and inclusive nature of the Statutory Guidance will make it easier for Local Authorities to make progress in these other areas?

Peter: There is a mixed bag of understanding. When Core Aim 4 Groups were developed as part of the Children and Young People's Plan, a number of authorities at that time clearly recognised that one of the areas weakest in their authority was play provision. And, so, many local authorities did plan for and deliver more play provision in their core aim programme.

There is a need to recognise the historical way in which local authorities have traditionally improved playgrounds and introduced play areas. This has tended to be as a result of pressure from communities and planning agreements (106 Agreements) with housing developers. There was little or no identification of prioritising need. New strategies emerging from the Sufficiency Assessment should address this in the future and result in a much more thoughtful approach as to how and where play is provided. I am hoping that it will contribute to an approach that is less centred on the 6 Acre Standard from the planning perspective, because these standards aren't

useful for local authorities unless they are clearly used alongside other needs identification tools such as demographic profiles of the age of the population within ward or community boundaries.

Marianne: Do you think the Assessments provide the opportunity for better planning that is based on need rather than on a traditional demand approach?

Peter: Up until now, I wasn't convinced that there was a mechanism in place for planning for the future of demographic profiles of the age of the people likely to come into a catchment area, for instance. As part of Sufficiency Assessments local authorities will need to use demographic profiling and Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping.

The legislation will bring a more scientific approach to delivery. Once the local authorities have undertaken the Sufficiency Assessments, they will have a much stronger feel about how they are going to develop their play provision. The process will help them have a better understanding of the sector, for instance, community groups and church groups who provide play opportunities. Local authorities can better liaise with those groups to find out what already exists.

Marianne: I suppose this gives those groups the opportunity to receive better support and up to date information about play and playing.

Peter: That's a very good point. One of the concerns is that this measure could cost a lot of money but we don't know that yet. If we can harness good practice, support and use the guidance, it's sometimes easier to support the voluntary sector to provide play opportunities for children in their communities.

Marianne: I remember working with you when you were a Chief Leisure Officer in Caerphilly, where many considered you to be a champion for children's play. What would your response be

to the Guidance and to the Duty if you were still a local authority officer?

Peter: In the main I would have welcomed the Statutory Guidance as it will keep play high up on the agenda in local authority thinking and in corporate planning, for instance.

My one fear would be that the legislation has gone too far in trying to encompass the recreational element of leisure, culture and the arts. In many areas, these are well catered for with groups setting standards to achieve good practice. I am a little worried that people will focus so much on getting the recreational element into their plans and we could actually lose the one area in which we do really need to focus on which is the freely chosen play element.

I feel it would have been better not to have the recreation and leisure element, especially in the first round of assessment. It would have been better if we could have concentrated on play and playing as we understand play for play's sake being freely chosen rather than things such as swimming lessons and arts classes. I am worried that assessing the recreation element may divert people's thinking – people will not understand that this is about 'freely chosen play' and that is a worry.

Marianne: Do you think that this presents an opportunity for us to work collaboratively to get a balanced message across to local authorities and organisations to work together to understand that the legislation is intended to enshrine play?

Peter: Yes, there is a role for us to produce information that is readily available for local authorities so that they stay on track. Our role is to ensure that the key 'play element' is very well captured.

We can help local authorities to use existing knowledge and put it into an intelligible form that can be used across Wales rather than each authority going down its own route in terms of what they do. I hope the toolkit Play Wales is developing will help with that.

What Play Sufficiency means for Different Sectors

Playwork Perspective

The statutory duty to ensure sufficient play opportunities is another coup for Wales and a huge achievement for all those who have advocated for children's right to play. It is a further policy milestone in a strategic framework that recognises children as human beings not just human becoming and values their disposition to play as an important and worthwhile pursuit.

The Duty will obligate all those responsible for play, leisure and recreation opportunities to make due consideration of the play needs and playful behaviours of children. In doing so ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable within the parameters of the environment and remit of the organisation, that sufficient provision is made for children to actualise their right to play and be playful.

The Duty is not about making every setting and environment a playwork one, but about ensuring that every setting, environment and policy affecting children, recognises, values and provides for their right to play.

Ben Tawil, Senior Lecturer in Childhood Studies at Glyndwr University

Health Perspective

We know that play is essential for young mammals to acquire survival skills. It's perhaps not surprising, therefore, that play is also essential for human health.

This works at three levels. First, there are the immediate physical health benefits for the young person. Physical activity builds strength and agility, it increases resilience to physical ailments, and it can reduce the risk of obesity. In an increasingly 'obesogenic' environment - where its now almost easier to over eat and become inactive than the opposite - everything we can do to reduce childhood obesity must be good.

Second, play contributes to wellbeing. This is a much wider concept than physical health, but there is now strong and growing evidence that people of all ages have better physical health - they are content and fulfilled in their lives. Children doing what children do naturally - play - will tend to be fulfilled, and will acquire along the way that goal of the ancient philosophers - a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Finally, there's the health of society to consider. No man is an island, and people living in a community where young people are regarded as a nuisance or even a threat will not be a healthy community.

So play contributes to individuals' physical and mental wellbeing, and society's health. A no-brainer!

Marcus Longley, Director of the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care and Professor of Applied Health Policy, University of Glamorgan

Design Perspective

We have an opportunity to introduce play opportunities and equipment into city centre retailing streets and pedestrianised areas. We should apply the principle of 'play routes' or 'play map' rather than restrict play to a discrete area. It is time we realised that what town and city centres offer for children is insufficient - the spaces are for them too.

Residential streets also have a vital role in providing play opportunities. My research illustrates that home zones deliver a significant change in street use that is in favour of children. It is not sufficient just to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph. We must ensure that Councils do not just count traffic humps to demonstrate that they are delivering play environments.

It is important that the legal title for shared space residential streets is used in the guidance: home zones.

We have asked colleagues in Wales and beyond to provide an insight into what ensuring sufficient play opportunities means to their work sector.

Their absence in Wales places a significant limit on opportunities for children.

The impact of innovative designs on activity in residential streets:
www.cf.ac.uk/cplan/resources/Life-in-their-street-Biddulph.pdf

Mike Biddulph, Senior Lecturer in Urban Design, Cardiff University

Social and Spatial Perspective

Social and spatial dimensions need to underpin not only the process of assessment and securing of sufficient play opportunities for children in Wales but also the reality of how this policy is expressed and implemented for children's daily lives in the future.

The social dimension relates to the need for many different people to become engaged in understanding more about play. Thus parents, teachers, head teachers, school governors, early years educators, social workers, planners, landscape architects, park staff and local community groups are some of the different communities who will need to change their understanding of and attitudes towards play. As the understanding of play increases within and between such communities, and thus within neighbourhoods, this will lead to a different appreciation of the spatial dimension which provides the physical setting for outdoor play opportunities.

It will then become evident that places to play in the outdoor

environment should not be limited to those spaces which are designated for play such as playgrounds. Communities should increasingly expect that a network of outdoor spaces will provide play opportunities. This network should include school playgrounds and playing fields being available out of school time, thus becoming a hub for community play and activity. In housing areas the landscape should be designed, improved and managed so that children feel excited, challenged and safe to play – currently a challenge for both residents and housing providers. And gluing this physical network together will be the streets where car users should be prepared to slow down and enjoy children walking to school, playing, exploring their local environment or hanging out.

If these two requirements of social acceptability of play and spatial provision of play opportunities in the external environment become part of the result of the Duty this should lead to what I call 'playful landscapes', rather than (just) designated outdoor play spaces called playgrounds.

Helen Woolley, Chartered Landscape Architect and Reader in Landscape Architecture and Society, University of Sheffield

Transport Perspective

An environment that encourages play starts right at the child's front door. The journey to school or to a recreational activity offers a play opportunity in itself – hopscotch

on the pavement flagstones or balance walking on a low level wall – are play experiences missed by children who are habitually driven in a car for all their local journeys. Independent mobility for children of an appropriate age is a fundamental part of their learning development; walking and cycling offer healthy, accessible and low cost options for short journeys. However parental concerns about road safety mean children are often restricted from walking and cycling independently. When children are asked how they would prefer to get to school typically 48% say they'd like to cycle, whereas only 2% actually do.

Local Authorities, as part of their Play Sufficiency Assessment plans, will be asked to assess and provide safe walking and cycling routes and introduce new 20mph limits where appropriate. Reducing speed of traffic is an effective way of increasing informal play opportunities and children's ability to move around their community. This new duty is very complimentary to another White Paper which is currently in consultation, The Active Travel (Wales) Bill, which is aimed at tackling the major barriers that prevent people from walking and cycling.

Jane Lorimer, Deputy Director, Sustrans Cymru



Planning Cities with Children in Mind

Planning Cities with Children in Mind is a background paper by Roger Hart for UNICEF's *State of the World's Children 2012: Children in an Urban World* report.

The paper seeks to address how we can introduce a better understanding of children's needs and perspectives into the governance, planning and management of cities. It considers models, from rich and poor nations, of how to identify children's needs and how we can improve governance and planning and find better ways to work with communities, including children themselves, to solve them.

The first part of the paper explores what children need from cities; here are excerpts from the Playful City section:

A Playful City

Children need adequate space and play materials in and around their homes. Unfortunately, there is not a broad understanding by caregivers, and by most professionals, of the great importance of play. The dimension of play that most people understand is its value for healthy physical exercise and the growth and development of physical skills. Less obvious to many adults is the value of play for the development of children's thinking and creativity and to the learning of social skills of cooperation, sharing, and caring. Also, play can offer an important means for children to establish a sense of control over difficult circumstances. In all cases, the important principle is that children have settings that allow for play to take place, not that it be planned or scheduled.

Children strive to gradually expand their competence outside of their homes by exploring, playing, and experimenting with a gradually larger and more diverse physical and social world. They seek out manageable challenges in

their everyday environment that enable them to exercise their competence through play. But as cities become more 'developed,' it seems that children's lives become increasingly contained and controlled. There has been a dramatic erosion of children's independent mobility in many cities of industrialised countries due to a combination of factors ranging from parents' fears of safety from strangers and the dangers of traffic to the seductive forces of new electronic technologies inside children's homes. Policies and programmes have responded by providing a plethora of after-school programmes to fill the gap, but this kind of programmed activity is not a substitute for the benefits of children's unstructured play.

This reduced freedom of the city contrasts greatly with so many of the poor neighborhoods of the developing world, where children have great freedom to roam but do so at high risk of serious health problems from an unhealthy physical environment.

The contrast between these two different types of infringements of children's right to play can also often be seen close together in the same city in the developing world, with poor children running

freely together through uncollected garbage and jumping over drains of raw sewerage while other children remain alone trapped behind the high fences and secured gates of their upper class homes.

Councils usually think of satisfying children's play needs through the provision of playgrounds, even though children do not have such a restricted vision of play. When they do play in playgrounds, they break out of the narrow range of goals intended by the planners and designers and discover or create affordances in the equipment for additional kinds of activities. The goal of planning and design should be to provide physical settings that afford young people the chance to find and create the widest possible diversity of activities as they develop.

Planners need to think of a spatial hierarchy of types of play spaces in order to afford play opportunities for children of all ages. There is a need for some kind of small safe, transitional play space outside of the home, shared with neighboring children as they are not yet ready for full exposure to the bustling complexities of the city. The ideal kind of play space between homes is neither truly 'public' nor 'private;' some have suggested the term 'parochial space'. As children become more confident and wish

to extend their range, they simply want to find places that are close to home, physically diverse, have other children to play with and where supportive adults are available nearby, but not hovering.

The latter part of the paper explores issues relating to improving governance and planning for children. Here are excerpts from the Community-based assessment, Planning and Design section:

Community Involvement

Children can often be seen hanging around new development projects, wistfully observing the work, when they might have been usefully directly involved. In a community where residents are involved in the creation and management of their community environment, an informed community worker can make a great contribution by helping adult residents discover the great capacities of young people to take part.

Opportunities to be involved in improving the physical environment are an ideal way for children to feel

that they are making a meaningful contribution and to feel recognised as community members. The public spaces of any community are the most obvious territory for children's involvement and this is a domain where [local] government can easily help support community action.

Research by children can be the basis for environmental action for children in any community. Mapping is a particularly useful way for children to discover how neighborhood issues – such as the lack of safe, healthy, play spaces for children – are related. When children make presentations of such research to local council leaders or environmental planners, they typically achieve more genuine dialogue than when they simply make declarations of what needs to be improved.

Roger Hart concludes the paper with: We need to make sure that children of all ages are kept in mind in all efforts to improve conditions to fulfil children's rights, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In doing so, we should also follow the progressive principles of children's evolving capacities and



their rights to participate that are at the heart of the UNCRC – to improve children's rights we must work both for them and with them.

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State of the World's Children 2012 report is available at:

www.unicef.org/sowc/index_61804.html

unicef 

Making community events

more playful

Exciting events are taking place in Britain this summer, with many communities getting together and celebrating by organising street parties or other community events. These are ideal opportunities to meet with other people of all ages in a fun and friendly way within the neighbourhood and to promote the importance of play at community events.

When children are given the opportunity to play out they meet

and get to know other children and adults in the neighbourhood, building familiarity, trust and a community spirit. This helps parents to gain confidence to allow children to play out at other times of the year.

We hope that the excitement coming to communities across the UK this year is not limited to the summer months. We envisage that after the bunting comes down, there will be increased awareness that, with a can do attitude and a bit

of community cohesion, our streets can be places of playful activity throughout the year.

Play Wales has produced resources to support communities to make community events more playful. *Play Wales: Making Community Events More Playful* information sheet and event poster can be downloaded at: www.playwales.org.uk

What does enough play look like?

Caitlin's Story

Caitlin Rowley, aged 12, tells us about her memories of attending the Play Policy Implementation Plan (2006) launch when she was younger, and what sufficient play opportunities means to her.

I remember when I was six I went to a play day at St. Fagans Museum in Cardiff. It was to hear about some government documents about play and there were speeches about play. I don't remember a lot about what the adults said that day, but I remember it was fun.

I remember playing with older and younger kids. The older ones pushed us younger ones in a wheelbarrow and we all played mob together around the garden. I don't remember a lot of organised things at the event but I do know there was lots of stuff like nets and cardboard tubes and we had fun with them. We made dens under a tree with the nets and rolled in the tubes. We had chalk and it was good that we were allowed to draw on the pavement under the tree and I hung upside down in the tree!

I think it's really important for the government and other adults to listen to what people have to say about play because it is important for children to be allowed to play.

When I was asked to write this article, I didn't really know what sufficient meant. I looked it up and one of the definitions was 'enough'.

I'm not sure what 'enough' play looks like, but what I do know is that kids should be involved in helping to make decisions. If we had more places to play and be ourselves, than maybe adults who think we are up to no good will have a different view about us. Maybe they will remember what they liked to do when they were younger.

Where I live there was a park which was taken apart unexpectedly. Many people were upset by it because it was one of the only places we were using to play. I think it would have been better if the adults who decided to take the park apart came and talked to us in school about it.

Even if they couldn't make a new park, they should have told us why they were taking it away. Maybe one day there will be a place for people my age to hang out and play again.



Caitlin, then aged six, with her brother Steve, at the launch in 2006

P³ Update Summer 2012

Since the spring update our Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³) qualifications have continued to be delivered throughout Wales.

The newest qualification – the level 3 – is currently being piloted in Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taff. The learners are now well underway and are providing Play Wales with excellent feedback.

Chris Winwood, Inclusive Playworker

The P³ training I have received has been the most comprehensive and valuable training I have received to date. The course combines an excellent mix of activities and learning which is applicable in my playwork sessions.'

Lauren, Adventure Playworker

'I am enjoying the course, the content is very interesting and provides me with useful information I can put into practice.'

Lewis Parfitt, Outreach Worker

'I have learnt a lot about playwork and developing myself towards being a leader.'

The level 2 qualification is currently being revised and improved and its registration renewed. This process will continue until the Autumn and will result in a qualification that reflects the accumulated feedback from learners, trainers, assessors and employers. Like the new level 3, the revised level 2 qualification is mapped against the National Occupational Standards (NOS) and will sit on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). It should be available from September 2012.

The transition from the existing level 2 to the revised version should be seamless and candidates currently part way through their level 2 qualification will be able to continue with the revised version without repetition.

Interest in P³ qualifications continues from play professionals around the world. Play Wales is currently working with our awarding body – the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) – to establish systems that will allow other centres, that meet the stringent quality control standards, to offer P³ qualifications. At present, we are working with colleagues from as far apart as Northern Ireland and Australia and well as those in Wales.

To find out more about P³ qualifications email Tillie Mobbs: tillie@playwales.org.uk

Would you like to be a P³ Trainer?

Are you an experienced and competent playworker with a passion for teaching others about play and playwork? Then why not consider becoming a P³ trainer?

During October and November Play Wales will be running a six-day Training the Trainer course in Cardiff. This challenging course will give participants the tools to deliver P³ training with confidence and to inspire learners.

Dates:

6, 13 and 20 October, and
3, 10 and 17 November 2012

Price: £450 per learner

Closing date for applications:
27 August 2012

More information and an online application form are available at: www.playwales.org.uk

Play and the Workforce – A Cross Sector Survey

Play Wales has been working with the Welsh Government and sector advocates to access funding from the European Social Fund Convergence Programme.

Over £15 million is available through programmes across Wales that are aimed at raising skills levels and tackling skills gaps.

As part of this work, we undertook

a Training Needs Analysis of those who require play and playwork qualifications across Wales to gather a picture of the extent of need within the sector.

Anecdotally we know this need is great and widespread, but sadly we only received 111 responses, only 79 of which were complete. What we needed was concrete, geographical figures. The figures we have are

skewed as responses are largely from full time workers whereas we know the majority of the sector works part time.

What we did get is confirmation that the majority of you can't access the qualification programmes you need.

We didn't get the information we need... so back to the drawing board!

book review

Playborhood: Turn your neighbourhood into a place for play

Michaela Evans, Neighbourhood Spaces Officer for RCT Homes, reviews *Playborhood*...

The author, Mike Lanza describes how innovative communities in Canada and the United States have created vibrant neighbourhood play areas. Lanza goes on to explain how he wanted his own family to grow up in a safe and adult supervised environment where play opportunities were a core part of everyday life. He states that everyday of their lives, children should be encouraged to play freely.

Lanza rubbishes dangers of free play by stating that crime statistics were previously much higher and there is no significant evidence to state that free play poses concerns. Lanza is critical of modern communities, who he accuses of taking backwards steps in terms of play facilities. He encourages parents to think specifically about their own communities and the role of families within the neighbourhood setting. Lanza advocates a change in local culture in order to spread the playborhood movement.

'Frank the builder builds community'

One case study looks at the work of Frank Shields (Chapter 9), a local builder who has turned his community in Seattle into a playborhood. During the summer months, Shields builds a three stories high water slide that lands into a five foot deep pool – despite fears raised by the Local Authority. Shields remains unrepentant in his approach to Health and Safety issues, claiming that with adequate adult supervision, no accidents or

injuries have occurred during this time.

Throughout the summer months the community comes together by organising events and activities and encourages all ages to take part. Shields explains how the neighbourhood culture has developed over the years and how the atmosphere has gradually changed into an inclusive community.

This is a very interesting and thought provoking read which forces the reader to consider the different elements of play and promotes the positives of creating playborhoods. It is truly worth a read as it considers elements of play that could be incorporated into local communities and brings an overall sense of community cohesion.

<http://playborhood.com>

© Mike Lanza



Get out and play!

This year's Playday theme is Get out and play! On 1 August and throughout the summer events will be taking place across the UK – with thousands of children and families going out to play – to celebrate children's right to play.

Whether you're organising a small community get together or a city-wide extravaganza, register your event via the Playday website. Publishing your event on the website will help to increase publicity and participation.

If you would rather not attract extra attention by publicising your event in the online directory, please still register your event to receive support.

For useful information to help with organising a Playday event download the *Get Organised!* guide that is available for free on the Playday website.

www.playday.org.uk

Neighbourhood Spaces is a five year Environmental Improvement Programme by RCT Homes (Rhondda Cynon Taff). The project aims to work with local people to identify needs and develop community spaces that meet the need of the community. Consultation is central to the project to ensure the right developments are made to benefit the community in the long term by working in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders. The project is not exclusive to RCT Homes' tenants, other community members are welcome to get involved.

www.rcthomes.co.uk