

Play for Wales

Issue 42 Spring 2014

Play news and briefing from the national charity for play



Playing in the public realm



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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 at www.playwales.org.uk

Editorial

Spaces that are good for children are often good for adults too. In its 2007 report, *Seen and Heard: Reclaiming the public realm with children and young people*, Demos (a politically independent think tank focused on public interest research) reinforces the message that 'the interests of children and the interests of the community at large, are not opposed but closely aligned and mutually dependent'. The value of outdoor space for children's play as part of planning and regeneration policy has been recognised in other European countries such as the Netherlands (see Child Friendly City – Rotterdam article on page 8).

Here in Wales, we welcome the decision by Vaughan Gething AM, Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty, to 'continue to improve opportunities for all children and young people to play'. In a recent statement, he announced that he and the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty have agreed to make the necessary preparations for the commencement of section 11(3) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010; what has become known as the 'play duty'.

'Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people.'
Enrique Penalosa (former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia)

This will place a duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to their play sufficiency assessments.

Wales is leading the way globally in terms of legislating for children's play. However we need to recognise that we have some considerable way to go to improve the environment for children. We also need to give some thought to how we, as a nation, are perceived internationally.

When the UK State Party last gave evidence to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, Keith Towler, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, was present to observe the proceedings. Keith reported that during one of the sessions the line of questioning to UK Government officials moved from youth offending to focus on the way the UK media reported on and portrayed children and young people.

This prompted a question from a Committee member who asked

'Could you explain why it is, that in the UK, you dislike your children so much?' Although Keith doesn't report what the officials said in response he does say it illustrated for him that the international reputation of the UK could be improved in relation to its commitment to children's rights.

It is time for us to consider what Wales could look like for our children and their children. Is it unreasonable to dream that it could be a country where parents will feel their children are as safe as their grandparents used to be, playing in the street and roaming widely, exploring their world, rather than a country where we can be seen 'as disliking our children'? Do we really want our grandchildren to be having the same conversation a generation from now, still lamenting the loss of children's freedom to play?

Children and young people across Wales are asking for more time, space and permission to play in communities that care for them ... that's not too much to ask, surely?

Mike Greenaway, Director

News

Commencement of the second part of the Play Sufficiency Duty

Written statement by Vaughan Gething AM, Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty (13 February 2014).

I am pleased to inform Assembly Members of the further delivery of our manifesto commitment to 'continue to improve opportunities for all children and young people to play in safety and in particular to support improved access to play for children with disabilities'.

At the end of January [2014] the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty and I agreed to make the necessary preparations for the commencement of sections 11(3) and 11(4) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. Section 11(3) will place a duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children in

their areas, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to their play sufficiency assessments. Section 11(4) will require Local Authorities to publish information about play opportunities in their areas and keep this information up to date.

We also agreed that the commencement should be accompanied by Statutory Guidance to support Local Authorities in complying with this duty. Section 70 of the same Measure will also be commenced to bring fully into force the Welsh Ministers powers to issue guidance under the Measure.

This will complete the commencement of section 11, Play Opportunities of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

www.wales.gov.uk



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Welsh Government is currently consulting on the Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Play Opportunities. The main aim is to ensure that those affected by this guidance have opportunities to offer their views regarding its contents, and to suggest additions and amendments.

Deadline for responding to the consultation: 30 May 2014

<http://bit.ly/1guD8wV>

Playday 2014

If you already know how you're celebrating children's right to play on Wednesday 6 August, tell us about your plans by registering your event on the Playday website. As well as helping to build a picture of Playday across the UK, you will have the option to publish your event in the online directory to help increase publicity and attendance.

Official Playday 2014 posters and flyers are now available. Whether you're holding an event and want to tell people all about it, or you would like to simply support the campaign by displaying the posters in your workplace, you can download and print them from the Playday website.

There's also lots of advice, guidance and inspiration to help make your celebration a huge success; from a quick planning checklist and fundraising advice, to top tips from Playday organisers and photography guidance.

Playday 2013 was celebrated by around one million individuals across the UK; we need your help to make sure that Playday 2014 is even bigger and better!

www.playday.org.uk



Play now – concentrate later!

PRIFYSGOL
glyndŵr
UNIVERSITY

Play by definition, is a flexible and unpredictable behaviour with both immediate and deferred benefits. Some of those benefits can be difficult to measure and therefore hard to evidence for funding agencies. Researchers at Glyndŵr University have undertaken a series of research projects measuring the physical and behavioural effects of play. The research has shown that playing with loose parts during school lunchtime can contribute to the 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous daily physical activity recommended for school children to benefit their health. In addition, loose parts play can increase concentration in the classroom, however this was a small study.

As a result, researchers are undertaking a national study to investigate the effects of loose parts play on concentration in the classroom. They need your help to achieve this. A number of playworkers have already signed up to help – if you think you will be able to help or want more information please contact Sue Taylor: s.taylor@glyndwr.ac.uk

St David Awards – playwork nomination

Torfaen County Borough Council's Play Service Manager, Julian Davenne has been shortlisted for an inaugural St David Award. Julian was a finalist in the Citizenship Award category for his work as a community volunteer in Torfaen.

Julian has been a community volunteer for many years and has subsequently either established or worked for nearly every club for disabled children and young people in Torfaen. He provides and inspires other people to provide life-changing services for children and young people through playschemes, art and crafts and physical activities.

This improves the lives of thousands of children and young people every day, as well as the lives of their parents, carers, families and wider communities.

First Minister Carwyn Jones announced in the Senedd on 27 February 2013 his intention to recognise and celebrate the exceptional achievements of people from all walks of life in Wales by instituting a national awards scheme – the St David Awards. The awards are given to people who make a real difference to the quality of life in Wales.

www.stdavidawards.org.uk

Project Wild Thing – the latest

PROJECT
WILD
THING

RECONNECTING KIDS WITH NATURE

The Project Wild Thing campaign is supported by a growing movement of people and organisations committed to getting children back to nature. The Wild Network is open to all. It's for everyone who believes that children should be able to roam free, play wild and connect with nature. Sign up at www.projectwildthing.com/join

Over the coming months the Wild Network will be developing policy ideas to help break down the barriers preventing young people from engaging with nature. Anyone is welcome to get involved with this work. Interested? Email policy@thewildnetwork.com

There are plenty of screenings of Project Wild Thing happening around the country. A series of 'wild' screenings of Project Wild Thing will take place in unusual locations on 10 – 11 May to coincide with National Children's Day UK.

For a list of screenings visit: www.projectwildthing.com/film

Community screening packs

Working in partnership with Learning through Landscapes (LTL) Cymru and Play England, Play Wales has produced packs to support community screenings in Wales. The free pack, available for community screening organisers, includes Project Wild Thing promotional materials and a question and answer guide, a No Ball ball, a Play Wales t-shirt and poster, and a DVD of extra clips from the film with supporting material for a discussion workshop.

If you are interested in arranging your own community screening for friends or colleagues email wildscreening@greenlions.com and then get in touch with Play Wales to receive your pack – while supplies last.

The Land – documentary film

As we reported in a previous issue *The Land* is a new documentary film about The Land adventure playground in Wrexham – and is now nearing completion.

American director, Erin Davis spent three weeks at The Land in April 2013. With a small crew she became embedded in the playground – getting to know the children, the staff and learning about the practice of playwork. The short-film is currently in post production and is expected to be ready in Autumn 2014. It will be screened at festivals, museums, play events and in educational settings to advocate for play and playwork.

Material from the footage has already been used in a radio documentary which aired in both the United States and Australia, leading to increased interest in The Land and its practices.

Within the playground's fence children are provided with everything they need to do anything they want – namely space, time, freedom and loose parts.

www.playfreemovie.com



For more information about The Land adventure playground visit their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/playon.plasmadoc

The Land also features in the Sport and Recreation Alliance's recent list of 'Top 10 best free adventure playgrounds in the UK'. The Alliance said:

'From inner cities to national parks, adventure playgrounds are a vital part of any green space. We know that getting children to express themselves through play outdoors is fantastic for their development and what's more – it's a whole lot of fun.'

See the whole list at: www.sportandrecreation.org.uk

Big Street Survey – resource for schools

Sustrans' Big Street Survey is an exciting new resource enabling pupils to investigate the area around their school and create a manifesto on how to make their streets safer and greener.

Working both inside and outside the classroom, the resources provide pupils with the opportunity to explore what they like and dislike about their neighbourhood, before using their manifesto to lobby decision-makers and elected representatives at national and local level to make their changes happen.

Some schools have organised forums to discuss their work

with local experts and decision-makers – others have received visits from their MPs – for examples visit the Sustrans website.

Designed by a Sustrans schools officer and qualified Geography teacher, alongside other Sustrans education officers, it meets numerous curriculum objectives, with various cross-curriculum opportunities, both for older primary pupils and younger secondary pupils. The resources include guidance notes, pupils' handbook and PowerPoint presentations.

www.sustrans.org.uk



Social Media



www.facebook.com/PlayWales



twitter.com/PlayWales

The European Network of Child Friendly Cities



The European Network of Child Friendly Cities (EN CFC), founded in 2000, is dedicated to promoting the rights and interests of children and young people in their local communities.

The aim of the Network is to improve the lives, opportunities and environment for children. It aims to do this by bringing together human competencies, knowledge and experience held by children's charities, networks, civil society and local authorities in Europe. It also seeks to raise social and political awareness around the importance of child development for general socio-economic welfare. Building child-friendly cities is an essential part of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in a local governance setting.

The Network observes five general guidelines and encourages national and local networks to translate these into specific local policies addressing local points of focus:

- **Holistic approach:** Child friendliness requires an holistic approach and is representative of the entire city in all its aspects and not a quality limited to the development of specific provision.
- **Integral approach:** All areas of life within the urban area should be child friendly: education, mobility, urban planning, care services, health, environment, leisure, sports and several others.
- **Intergenerational approach:** Child friendliness does not imply that children require their own city but it does imply that children are recognised as citizens that are a part of the entire city. Children should not be socially isolated.

- **Importance of participation of children and young people:** Regardless of their age children and young people should be fully recognised as citizens who can contribute in their own way towards the quality of urban life.
- **Dynamic trade and a continuous challenge:** Rather than a permanent label or brand, child friendliness is above all a constant ambition that a city continuously endeavours to achieve.

Children's rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out 42 articles that define how children and young people should be treated and how governments should monitor the UNCRC. The Welsh and UK Government have signed up to the convention. There are three articles in particular that are useful to consider when providing for children's playing in the public realm:

- **Article 31: The right to leisure, play and culture** Children have the right to relax and play and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities. The United Nations has published General Comment Number 17 on Article 31.
- **Article 12: Respect for the views of the child** When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to

say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

- **Article 15: Freedom of association** Children have the right to meet together.

A General Comment is an official statement that elaborates on the meaning of an aspect of the UNCRC that seems to require further interpretation or emphasis. The aim of a General Comment is to raise the importance of an Article and increase accountability among countries that have signed up to the Convention.

General Comment Number 17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (Article 31) identifies a range of challenges to be addressed if children are to realise their Article 31 rights. In particular, it cites a resistance to children's use of public spaces as a challenge.

'Children's use of public space for play, recreation and their own cultural activities is also impeded by the increasing commercialisation of public areas, from which children are excluded. Furthermore, in many parts of the world, there is decreasing tolerance of children in public spaces. The introduction, for example, of curfews on children; gated communities or parks; reduced noise-level tolerance; playgrounds with strict rules for "acceptable" play behaviour; restrictions on access to shopping malls builds a perception of

children as "problems" and/or delinquents. Adolescents, in particular, are widely perceived as a threat by widespread negative media coverage and representation, and discouraged from using public spaces.'

It also notes that: *'the exclusion of children has significant implications for their*

development as citizens. Shared experience of inclusive public spaces by different age groups serves to promote and strengthen civil society and encourage children to recognize themselves as citizens with rights. States are encouraged to promote dialogue between older and younger generations to encourage greater recognition

of children as rights holders, and of the importance of networks of diverse community spaces in local areas or municipalities which can accommodate the play and recreational needs of all children.'

www.childfriendlycities.eu

www.playwales.org.uk/eng/generalcomment

CASE STUDY

Child Friendly Leeds



Leeds City Council has set itself an ambition of being a good city for children and young people to grow up in – to study, work, and play. The commitment is founded on the global movement of Child Friendly Cities and driven by the voices of children and young people in Leeds.

Leeds City Council launched its 'Child Friendly Leeds' vision nearly two years ago to make sure children in the city have the best possible start to life, and since then has been approached by cities from across the world for advice. Leeds' vision of a child friendly city is a place where children are valued, supported, enjoy growing up, and look forward to a bright future.

The campaign was initiated by the council's two key leaders in children's services – Councillor Judith Blake and director of children's services, Nigel Richardson, who have both worked hard to instil the values and ethos, not only throughout the council, but also across the city as a whole.

The council has listened to the children and young people in the city, to find out what they need most to make their lives better. A list of children and young people's top '12 wishes' was compiled from the results, which includes:

- Children and young people find the city centre welcoming and safe, with friendly places to go, have fun and play

- Places and spaces where children and young people spend time and play that are free of litter and dog fouling.

The council is working to realise the wishes and is keen to get everyone on board with its vision — businesses, organisations, charities and above all, families. A recent partnership with the city's local newspaper – *Yorkshire Evening Post* – is going a long way to raise awareness and spread the council's message even wider.

Councillor Judith Blake, deputy leader of Leeds City Council said:

'If we are able to give children and young people the best possible start and make the city the best place to grow up then we will have a sustainable, prosperous and economic future in Leeds.'

www.leeds.gov.uk/childfriendlyleeds

Twitter: @Child_Leeds

Child Friendly City – Rotterdam

In the Netherlands a monitor system published in 2005 found that Rotterdam was the country's least attractive city to grow up in. The monitoring system was developed to improve youth policy at local level, by showing existing data of the position of children in communities.

Our friend, Froukje Hajer, a children's rights and play and environment specialist, updates us on the experience in Rotterdam.

Rotterdam has established a Child Friendly City programme to improve its child friendly image and keep families in the city; for economic reasons cities need inhabitants – especially families.

As in most of the Dutch cities, families with children moved to smaller towns and cities in the region to let their children grow up in more attractive neighborhoods. In 2006, city alderman, Lukas Geluk, concerned about the impact of the migration on the city's economy and vibrancy, developed a programme to create a Child Friendly Rotterdam, with the hope that more parents would choose to stay in the city to raise their families.

The Child Friendly Rotterdam programme aims to:

- Enhance the city as a residential location
- Keep families in the city
- Strengthen the economy
- Improve the quality of life for children from 0-18 years old.

An urban planning method, which provides a new way of looking at the city, has been introduced. Building Blocks for a Child Friendly Rotterdam consists of a practical

package of four Building Blocks that can be used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of urban neighbourhoods. Through the method, Rotterdam aspires to become a sustainable city where children, both literally and figuratively, have room to grow.

The Building Blocks include:

- Child friendly housing that recognises that single-family houses with gardens and child friendly apartments are ideal for bringing up children. The conditions for child friendly homes were formulated in partnership with housing corporations and project developers.
- Public space that is geared to the specific needs of children. This building block addresses conditions for play areas, outdoor play areas and the use of the space between front door and street level. One of the conditions includes the provision of pavements suitable for playing (three to five metres wide) on at least one side of the street (preferably the sunny side of the road).
- Facilities such as extended schools and a safe school environment in terms of school playground layout, accessibility and ratio between surfaced area and greenery contribute

to a lively neighbourhood and social cohesion.

- Safe traffic routes, which are child friendly, encourage children to explore the city and engage in city life more independently.

Reflecting on the progress in Rotterdam, Froukje said,

'It is pleasing to see that aldermen in Rotterdam have made a commitment to make Rotterdam a Child Friendly City. They have made good progress since the city hosted a Child in the City conference in 2008.

The programme has resulted in a more positive approach to children's use of and presence in public space. My hope for the future is that there will be greater integration between the structural projects and social policy. The playwork and youth work sectors in the city can help to incorporate the visions of children and parents.'

More information:
<http://bit.ly/1fZMg0H>

Playing in the public realm

Children and adults have different conceptions of what constitutes valuable play space. Lester and Russell summarising several studies¹ note that adults' desire for safety, order and visibility strongly contrasts with children's desire for disorder and loose materials. Where adults see a redundant unsightly piece of waste ground in need of redevelopment, children see spaces that offer freedom to have adventures, to explore, to think, to make dens and hang out. These spaces share the qualities of nearness, wildness, secretiveness and possibility yet these would appear to be far from the minds of adult planners.

Benefits of play

In their review² of the research around children's play, Lester and Russell highlight that a key finding from recent evidence is that children's play 'provides a primary behaviour for developing resilience, thereby making a significant contribution to children's wellbeing'.

Resilience can be thought of as the ability to 'roll with the punches' and rise above adversity and resist serious challenges, stress and risks. It is a complex and dynamic concept involving not only psychological qualities of the child but also the child's family, social networks and neighbourhood.

Play and public space

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation³ found that a focus on play and public space was a key factor in making new and regenerated communities attractive to families. The Commission for Architecture in the Built Environment (CABE)⁴ drew similar conclusions from its research into the views of residents of new housing.

The value of outdoor space for children's play as part of planning and regeneration policy has been recognised in other countries. For example see Child Friendly City – Rotterdam article on the previous page which describes how urban design is underpinned by planning guidelines which are based on the principle that all public space is a potential play area and that all

new and renovated developments should allow a clearly defined amount of safe, easily accessible, attractive space for children to play.

Wales – a play friendly place?

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.

The Statutory Guidance is broad and recognises that the provision of quality play opportunities can also significantly contribute to this agenda for the whole community including:

- Community safety – by providing safe environments for children and all other citizens.
- Sustainable development – by providing environments that attract families to work and live in areas that meet the needs of the whole family over a period of time.

Developing space for play

Design Commission for Wales emphasises the need for local

authorities to clearly communicate what they expect from developers of new housing developments. Through the Play Sufficiency Assessment process, planning and design officers in a number of local authorities have articulated their commitment to ensure that the integration of designated open spaces, such as those for playing, be considered at the outset of the design process. We are starting to see how planning policy can be improved to allow better access to local play opportunities.

Playing in the community

Communities can benefit through better social contacts including diverse groups and different generations. This has the potential to increase participation and counter negative stereotypes. As Valentine⁵ stresses, we must move away from strategies that view 'children as a problem that either need to be corralled for their own safety, or contained for other people's safety'.

1 Lester, S. and Russell, W. (2008) *Play for a Change: Play, Policy and Practice: A review of contemporary perspectives*. London: National Children's Bureau.

2 *ibid.*

3 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2006) *A Good Place for Children? Attracting and retaining families in inner urban mixed income communities*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

4 CABE (2005) *What it's like to live there*. London: Commission for Architecture in the Built Environment.

5 Valentine, G. (2004) *Public Space and the Culture of Childhood*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

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. Share what's happening locally which is either protecting or prohibiting children's right to play on the Facebook campaign page. Here is an example of a project that is contributing to developing friendly places for playing children.

Residents in Windsor Road, Abergavenny have moved their cars from the street in a series of road closures that have seen local children playing near their homes.

Based on the Bristol Playing Out model and inspired by a friend who had organised street closures for play in Worthing, local mum Chloe Charrington, approached Monmouthshire County Council in an attempt to initiate street play in her neighbourhood.

Windsor Road residents have now closed their road for after school and weekend street play sessions on a number of occasions. The emphasis is on free, unstructured play and the children usually bring out their own toys – skipping ropes, bikes, scooters, and chalk.

A recent playing out session saw children scooting, cycling, playing rugby and football and covering the road in chalk. One child spent the

majority of the two hour session drawing a little pattern in a wiggly line from one end of the road to the other, and the other children ran or biked along it. Big, chunky chalk was a great success!

The events have been led by neighbours for neighbours and are only publicised within the immediate streets. The road is closed to through traffic, with volunteer stewards at each road closure point to redirect through traffic and escort residents' cars in and out safely. Parents and carers are responsible for their own children.

To support the initiative, Monmouthshire County Council uses the 1847 Town Police Clauses Act to allow for multiple road closures for play. This approach for Temporary Street Closure Orders is used successfully by a number of local authorities in other parts of the UK. In Abergavenny, an application is completed and submitted for each closing.

To make it happen, Chloe provided the council with a local map showing where the road closure would take place and gained the permission and support of all residents by

knocking door to door, along with her children. Local residents help with the printing and distribution of flyers and signs and a local neighbour has helped to source official Road Closed signs.

Over the past few decades it has become generally accepted that 'roads are for cars' and the idea of streets as play spaces has all but disappeared. As part of the Play Sufficiency Assessments, children and young people living in Wales and their parents have told us that they encounter many barriers to playing out with friends (most notably parked cars and traffic intensity and speed, fear of strangers and unwelcoming attitudes and environments).

We need to change the environment throughout our communities to create a play friendly Wales; and this requires supporting the change of attitudes and mindsets. Strong local neighbourhoods can mitigate parental fears about children playing out by providing a sense of community and security.

The street play sessions give children the space and permission to play in the street, whilst adults have a chance to meet and get to know their neighbours better. When you know who your neighbours are it becomes much easier to let your own children to play out.

on.fb.me/playfriendlyplace

House of Lords persuades UK Government to see sense

In January 2014, Home Office ministers dropped their attempt to replace Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) with new Injunctions to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance (IPNA) in the face of widespread criticism and one of the biggest anti-government defeats in the House of Lords.

During an Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill debate at the House of Lords peers voted 306 to 178 to reject Injunctions Preventing Nuisance and Annoyance.

As part of UK government's Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill IPNAs would replace ASBOs in England and Wales – which could be imposed on anyone over the age of 10 who engaged in 'conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person'.

In July 2013, Play Wales, along with Play England, co-ordinated a letter published in *The Times* (16 July 2013) where we and a large number of supporters voiced concerns that proposals to alter the definition of anti-social behaviour posed a real threat to the quality of life for children across England and Wales.

We were deeply concerned by the proposed changes to the

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill. The new injunction was proposed to be enforceable from age 10 upwards and required significantly less proof to enforce than with the previous 'ASBOs', yet could be punishable with imprisonment if broken. The Association of Police Officers shared this concern, suggesting that the new threshold was too subjective and could unnecessarily criminalise children for simply being children.

Not only would the legislation directly contradict the United Nations call to support children's right to play, it would also merely serve as another barrier stopping children from playing outdoors with their friends in the street, the park or other public spaces, further jeopardising the physical and mental health of children.

We are delighted that the House of Lords has urged government to rethink the proposals.

Efforts to genuinely tackle anti-social behaviour must be reasonable, proportionate and effective. What was proposed were not.



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Street Life Conference

The Street Life Conference, organised by the Play Officers North Wales group, was in response to the elements of the Play Sufficiency Duty that specifically make reference to

children's increased presence on residential streets as places to play and hang out. Over 60 delegates from across North Wales attended the event earlier this year comprising representatives

from a range of sectors including the police, planning, highways, transport, play, countryside, parks and community safety.

Continued on page 12

Street Life Conference – Continued from page 11

Mike Barclay, who delivered a deliberately provocative presentation entitled 'Keeping children ON the streets' said:

'Streets are places where all kinds of people interact, where they get to know and be known, where attachments are formed and belonging develops. People's access to and use of residential streets will affect their ability to navigate themselves to other health sustaining resources and therefore has the potential to benefit a range of other agendas, including: active travel, physical and emotional wellbeing, community cohesion and perceptions of safety.'

Other speakers included Carys Thomas (Sustrans), Mary Nicholls

(Welsh Government's Childcare and Play Policy Team), Eleri Thomas (Office of the Children's Commissioner) and Marianne Mannello (Play Wales). Delegates were encouraged to consider pragmatic solutions to increasing children's use of streets for play within their own sector.

Geraint Anwyl, former Chief Superintendent for North Wales Police, who chaired the event summarised the contributions of delegates:

'This energy charged conference has identified obstacles as expected, but more importantly, many enablers who can drive forward realistic and practical solutions. This will require

some critical reviews by all organisations of how they deal with their activities regarding public spaces and it will also require a coordinated partnership approach. The desire within the delegates present to progress these matters was clearly evident.'

Not only was the conference an excellent opportunity to plan and network with colleagues from other sectors, in some cases for the first time, it was a great opportunity for the Play Officers North Wales group to plan and deliver on shared objectives from within their Play Sufficiency Assessment Action Plans.

Commit to Supporting Quality Staff

SkillsActive's UK Strategic Lead for Playwork, Lesli Godfrey tells us about the new ActiveAmbition programme for playworkers and employers.

In April 2012, SkillsActive gained funding from the UK Commission on Employment and Skills to work with employers across all four nations on a programme called ActiveAmbition. The aim was to develop a protocol, or set of good practice principles, which employers could agree to and which would support staff development and increase standards in play settings.

SkillsActive, Play Wales and members of the Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales (PETC Wales) have been working together on the skills protocol, ensuring that it is relevant to playwork and fit for purpose. It is based on the UK *Play and Playwork Education and*

Skills Strategy 2011-16 which has a vision of 'a skilled, qualified and developing play workforce, whose practice is underpinned by the Playwork Principles, and who provide high quality, accessible play opportunities for children and young people'. The importance of a skilled workforce is also articulated through the Welsh Government's Play Policy, and more recently, the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 will increase demand for a suitably skilled workforce.

The protocol asks employers to commit to enabling their staff to access suitable qualifications and quality workforce development opportunities. It requires employers to plan for, and record, continuing professional development and to encourage staff to join the Professional Register for Playwork when it becomes available in Wales.

In return for making this commitment, organisations'

ActiveAmbition

A SkillsActive programme

logos will be displayed on the SkillsActive website, providing a public demonstration of their commitment to professionalising their staff, improving standards and raising aspirations through effective workforce development. Sign-up is free of charge. In addition, employers will be contacted by SkillsActive who will help to identify employers' staff training needs and source the tools they might need to fulfil their pledge.

This is a valuable opportunity for playwork employers to fly the flag for the service they offer and demonstrate to parents, new staff recruits and other children's workforce professionals, as well as funders and government, that they value their workforce.

www.skillsactive.com/welsh-playwork-skills-protocol

P³ level 3 – the latest

As we reported in a previous issue of *Play for Wales*, Play Wales has been awarded the contract to produce new level 3 learning materials for the Certificate and Diploma sections of the Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³) qualification. The Award section has previously been completed and successfully piloted.

The project is being carried out through SkillsActive under the Sector Priorities Funding Pilot 2 (SPFP 2) which is a joint funding programme using European Social Funds matched by Welsh Government to inform recommendations which will ensure that the delivery of post-16 skills provision is more responsive and aligned to the needs of employers.

We have completed the work on the Certificate learning materials – the second of three sections

that comprise the qualification. Our P³ level 3 writing team has already begun writing the Diploma learning materials which will be completed and ready for piloting by Autumn 2014.

Engagement events

At recent P³ engagement events held in Cardiff and Old Colwyn we unveiled the new level 3 Certificate learning materials. The events, which attracted playwork employers, trainers and colleagues responsible for workforce development, were an opportunity to gather useful and valuable feedback on the new learning materials.

Also, Di Murray's facilitated workshop on 'Inclusion within the context of Play Sufficiency' was well received by participants.

Awards

Finally, we're delighted that the P³ writing team was short-listed for the Playwork Writer Award at the 5th Annual Playwork Awards. Congratulations to the winner Joel Seath.

Wales' delivery of the P³ qualifications was also shortlisted for the Training Provider Award – well done University of Gloucestershire: Hilary Smith, Wendy Russell and Stuart Lester (Playwork BA). The Awards were presented at the 12th National Playwork Conference in March 2014.

For more information about P³ qualifications and courses email workforce@playwales.org.uk

www.playwales.org.uk/eng/p3

Playwork Approaches in Schools

Playworkers across Wales are forging good relationships with local schools by supporting the non-curriculum part of the school day and promoting the right to play with children, young people and staff. Play Wales recently hosted a seminar for playworkers in Wales to share good practice with regards to playwork approaches in schools.

The seminar opened with an overview of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and explored how Article 31 (which includes the right to play) supports the articles concerned with education. It also highlighted the potential of children being denied their rights under Article 31 as a consequence of an emphasis on formal academic success.

Sue Taylor and Ben Tawil from Glyndŵr University informed the seminar about a national study they are undertaking to investigate the effects of loose parts play during break time on concentration in the classroom (see news article on page 4).

The workshops provided delegates with the opportunity to hear more about:

- the *Right to Play* workshop we have developed for playworkers and others to deliver in schools
- our *Use of school grounds for playing out of teaching hours* toolkit
- the *Outdoor Play and Learning Programme* developed by Michael Follett. (www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk/)

Our trustee Ben Tawil, provided closing remarks from the day. Addressing delegates, he said,

'What we've talked about today is selling a message – moving people on in terms of their attitudes and opinions to children playing. We've looked at ways of enabling people that aren't playworkers to better meet children's right to play. It feels like we have a wealth of resources and we are at a real tipping point where others are getting on board and are changing the way they perceive children's play. We have a good opportunity to keep forcing change to ensure that more children have access to more space in which they can access their right to play.'

www.playwales.org.uk/eng/schools

Spirit 2014

14-15 May 2014
Holiday Inn, Cardiff

Now in its thirteenth year Spirit is a two-day conference filled with inspiring keynote speeches, lively discussions and practical workshops about children's play.

Keynote speakers

We are delighted to announce we will be joined by the following keynote speakers:

Sir Patrick Bateson - Emeritus professor of ethology at Cambridge University and author of *Play, Playfulness, Creativity and Innovation*

Vaughan Gething AM - Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty

Dr Ruth Hussey - Chief Medical Officer for Wales

Gerison Lansdown - International children's rights advocate who drafted the General Comment on Article 31 of the UNCRC

Helle Nebelong - Landscape architect and president of the Danish Playground Association

Dr Mike Shooter - Former President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists

Bernard Spiegall - PLAYLINK

Workshops

A variety of workshops will be offered over the two days - the only problem will be deciding which to attend!

Workshops will include

A richer play environment using swings and ropes

Are children bending gender?

An action plan for designing natural urban play spaces for all children

Rethinking the value of playwork

The playworkers travelling journal

Preparing for participation in play

Wild water play

Delegate rates

This year we are delighted to offer new lower delegate rates for **all** our members

Book your place by:	All members	Non members
30 April 2014	£225	£250
14 May 2014	£250	£275

A limited number of discounted places are available for unpaid volunteers/ full-time students in Wales - please contact us for details.

A social evening after the first conference day is included in the delegate fee.

Accommodation is not included. For special rates at the conference hotel (single room £86/double room £96) please contact The Holiday Inn, City Centre, Cardiff 02920 347206 (9am - 5pm) and quote 'Play Wales'.

Who should attend?

New and experienced playworkers, play professionals, play therapists, students, staff and managers of play provision working in after school clubs, adventure playgrounds, integrated children's centres, youth services, anyone working face to face with children or with a responsibility for children's play.

To book your place visit: www.playwales.org.uk/eng/spirit2014

