

## Play Sufficiency Assessment

March 2016

Summary Document



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# Foreword

## Play Sufficiency Assessment

### 2016 Summary Document

Carmarthenshire County Council recognises the importance of play in the lives of children and young people across the county.

The Local Authority is committed to providing play opportunities and would like every child and young person to be happy, healthy and to enjoy their free time. We are committed to ensuring that every child and young person living in Carmarthenshire has access to exciting, stimulating and creative play experiences, by providing both supervised and unsupervised quality play provision that gives opportunity for challenge.

Carmarthenshire County Council recognises that play is an essential part of children and young people's lives, and appreciates that when playing children choose what they want to do themselves, how they want to do it and why they want to do it. Play is an integral part of healthy emotional and physical development, for society as well as children and young people themselves.

As a Local Authority and as decision makers we have a duty to address the play needs of the children and young people living within this county in order to ensure that they are not deprived of the essential experiences and opportunities which lay the crucial foundations for future learning, health and wellbeing.

This report is produced with the purpose of being an accessible summary document of the findings of the Carmarthenshire Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016 and includes:

- Why play is important
- Information regarding the Statutory Duty
- The methodology applied in conducting and completing the assessment
- The key findings of the assessment
- Ways forward



**Stefan Smith**

**Head of Children's Services**

# 1. Why play is important

Children's play should not be underestimated – through play children are developing crucial life skills, and preparing their brains for the challenges of adulthood. Play contributes to children's physical, mental, social and emotional health and wellbeing and their ability to learn and engage with education, and therefore contributes to the wellbeing of their families and to the community as a whole.

Playing has an impact on the physical and chemical development of the brain. The quality of children's play experiences has a direct impact on their brain development and their ability to learn. From age 2 to early adolescence, there is a rapid growth in the number of nerves and neural pathways within the brain, the extent of this growth depends on the quality of a child's experiences and environment and play contributes to this.

Play is an integral part of healthy emotional and physical development, for society as well as for children and young people themselves. High quality and accessible play opportunities help reduce the effects of poverty on the lives of children and young people and is also a means of reducing the inequalities between children living in families that can afford costly play activities and those that cannot and therefore reducing poverty of experience for all children. In its Child Poverty Strategy for Wales (2011), the Welsh Government recognises the right to play and its contribution to children's development and resilience. The strategy places emphasis on play as being essential element in children's development and can provide strong protective factor in children's lives. Play can shield children from the negative effects of poverty and allow children to develop their resilience to difficulties and uncertainties in their lives.

Play is a cherished part of childhood that offers children important developmental benefits and parents the opportunity to fully engage with their children. However multiple forces are interacting to effectively reduce many children's ability to reap the benefits of play. Consultations with parents of Carmarthenshire have shown us that fear of strangers and child abduction is having a very negative effect on their children's play experiences with many parents wanting to keep children safe indoors rather than allow them out to play.

However, research shows that good quality play experiences help improve children's mental health. The Mental Health Foundation reported that limited opportunities for children to play outside, or to attend supervised play projects, was a causative factor in the rise in mental ill health in children and young people. Over the last 4 years, the number of children referred to mental health services across Wales has more than doubled. Furthermore, children's sedentary lifestyle and lack of access to play opportunities is contributing to the alarming rise in childhood obesity, with 26.2% of 4-5 year olds in Carmarthenshire being overweight or obese.

## **2. The Play Sufficiency Assessment**

The Welsh Government has a vision of creating an environment in Wales where children and young people have access to high quality play opportunities.

To support this vision, the Welsh Government has included a section “Play Opportunities” within its Children and Families (Wales) Measure, which received Royal assent in 2012.

As a result of this, Local Authorities across Wales are required to assess, secure and publish information on play opportunities.

Chapter 2, Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure sets out the duty on Local Authorities as regards to Play Opportunities.

The duties are as followed:

- 1) A Local Authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children and young people in accordance with the regulations
- 2) Secure sufficient play opportunities for children and young people, so far as reasonably practical
- 3) Publish information about play opportunities within its area for children and young people
- 4) Keep the information published up to date

Whilst carrying out these duties, a Local Authority must also have regard to the needs of:

- a) Children and Young People who are disabled
- b) Children and young people of different ages

Carmarthenshire County Council submitted the first Play Sufficiency Assessment in March 2013.

The second Play Sufficiency Assessment was submitted to Welsh Government on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

Accompanying each Play Sufficiency Assessment is an Action Plan detailing how to secure sufficient play opportunities. Action Plans are submitted each year to Welsh Government and progress measured at mid-point and end of year.

A toolkit has been made available to Local Authorities to support them with the Play Sufficiency Assessment along with – “Wales – a Play Friendly Country: Statutory Guidance”. This guidance sets out how Local Authorities should conduct the assessments and the matters that need to be taken into account in assessing for sufficient play opportunities. The matters to be considered when completing the assessment are as follows:

Matter A: Population

Matter B: Providing for Diverse Needs

Matter C: Space available for children to play

Matter D: Supervised provision

Matter E: Charges for play provision

Matter F: Access to space/provision

Matter G: Securing and Developing the play workforce

Matter H: Community engagement and participation

Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

### **3. Methodology**

This section of the report summarises the method used in undertaking the play Sufficiency Assessment

➤ **Desk top analysis**

This analysis entailed reviewing the existing information held in relation to play opportunities via internet searches, Family Information Service database search and mapping of provision via i Local.

➤ **Stakeholder Engagement**

The Play Sufficiency Stakeholder Group consists of representatives from across departments within the Local Authority and some external partners. The group meets on a monthly basis and each member had responsibility for completing a section of the assessment that was relevant to their area of work.

➤ **Consultations**

For play opportunities to meet the requirements of children it is essential that they are consulted on what they want from play, recreation and leisure activities. The guidance notes from Welsh Government states that the assessments should obtain the views of children; parents and other stakeholders. Therefore, Carmarthenshire County Council decided to consult with the following:

- Children
- Young People
- Parents/Carers
- Schools
- Town and Community Councils

## 4. Consultation Findings

1,437 individuals took part in the consultations between August 2015 and January 2016.

### **Key findings from the children's consultations**

90% of children stated that playing or hanging out makes them feel happy, followed by 60% feeling excited and 49% being active. Only 3% reported feeling bored.

45% of the children feel that they can do what they like the best when playing out, with only 12% feeling they hardly had anything to do.

Chatting and being with friends (63%), running and chasing games (61%), out with family (55%) and ball games (55%) and climbing (54%) were the most popular activities to participate in when out and about.

The most popular places to play or hang out for children are the fixed play areas (49%), local grassy areas or fields (35%) or beaches, seaside and river (33%).

The greatest barrier to playing out was the weather (49%), darkness (41%), too busy with homework (31%).

When asked how we could improve their opportunities to play or hang out 32% said make their roads safer, 31% ask people not to smoke and 27% ask owners to clear dog mess.

### **Key findings of the young people questionnaires**

79% of the young people stated that hanging out made them feel happy, with 44% feeling active and 35% free. Only 5% reported feeling bored when hanging out.

42% felt that they could do the things they liked the best when they were hanging out.

When the young people had time to hang out 45% enjoyed chatting and being with friends; 38% played ball games and 32% spent time with family.

31% of the young people spent their time at the football field/sports pitch; 30% at the local grassy area/field; and 22% on the streets near their houses.

The biggest barriers to hanging out is the weather (35%), homework (27%), nothing to do (26%) and playing electronic devices (24%).

When questioned on how we could help them, 31% stated transport as an issue; 20% ask dog owners to pick up dog mess; 17% want us to find safer ways to cross roads/get around.



### **Key findings from the parent questionnaires**

38% reported that their children played out a few days a week with 19% stating that their children don't play or hang out outside. 42% felt that children had just enough time to play, but 31% felt they needed more time.

The main places for playing or hanging out were the house, garden, fixed play area or indoor play centre.

47% of the parents stated that the children and young people accessed a play opportunity via car or walking with an adult. 44% worry about their child's safety with 32% worrying so much it affected their children's opportunity to play.

76% of parents reported road traffic as being the main barrier to playing, 42% dog mess/litter/glass; 41% other adults. Many questionnaires and the focus group sessions show that parents feared strangers or paedophiles abducting their children and therefore this affected how much freedom their children had to play. The parents within the focus group meeting stated strongly that they had a fear of strangers and paedophiles and that this fear would have an effect on their children's play opportunities. These fears would prohibit them from allowing their children to play outside of the home boundaries i.e on the street and also the parents were scared of taking their children to a local park for fear of strangers watching their children.

### **Key findings from the Town and Community Council questionnaires**

The majority of the Town and Community Councils stated that children played at home, on the local playing fields, at the fixed play area or on the streets.

19% stated that play was prohibited or restricted i.e No Ball Games, kite flying due to high voltage cables.

59% reported that the main barriers to children playing were busy roads.

The barriers that the Town and Community Councils face in providing play opportunities within their areas are:

- No space available
- Cost
- Maintenance/Upkeep
- Lack of adults to supervise clubs

Most Town and Community Councils had no plans at present to increase children and young people's play opportunities in the areas.

### **Key findings from the school play survey**

90% of the schools who responded had grassed areas for the children to play. Some reported having climbing walls. In 95% of the school's sports equipment was the available resource during break times, with fixed play equipment (80%), surface markings (78%) and Toys (68%) being the most popular. Schools also reported having bikes and scooters as resources.

Most of the staff were out on the yard at break times in a supervisory role, with some joining in and facilitating play. 74% of the schools reported that resources would make break times more playful along with training (66%). The majority of schools reported that they would welcome lunchtime supervisor training in order to up skill staff in their roles within children's play.

Most schools did not allow children access to the school grounds (apart from after school clubs). If the buildings are accessed the charges relate to the Local Authority approved letting charges.

## 5. Matter A: Population

*“The Play Sufficiency Assessment should present data about the number of children living in the Local Authority to enable an assessment of their potential play requirements. The data should provide information about the numbers of children in different categories that may affect their play requirements. The data should also show if the area is classified as one of disadvantage/deprivation and whether a 5 year population projection is available.”*

### What we found:

Population information at mid-year 2014 estimates are available at Ward level from Ward Population estimates for England and Wales, mid 2014 (experimental statistics).

Age Group	Number of children
0-3	7,973
4-7	8,458
8-12	9,911
13-15	6,294
16-17	4,433
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37,069</b>

By breaking the above demographic information into Ward level it is possible to map the population of children and young people across the County in order to depict where the children live and furthermore there is data available related to language, cultural background and disability.

### **ACTION**

**The data collected will be used when planning for play provision and also to ensure that events and activities are located within the most accessible and appropriate areas**

## 6. Matter B: Providing for Diverse Needs

*“The Play Sufficiency Assessment should present data about how the Local Authority and partners aim to offer play opportunities that are inclusive and encourage all children to play and meet together.”*

### What we found:

In comparison to the previous assessment there is not much change in the quantity of play provision provided. Although the previous assessment has allowed for more effective partnership working, lack of funding for play development within the years following the initial assessment has resulted in no significant progress being made.

#### ➤ **Rurality**

Rural communities within Carmarthenshire such as Llanegwad, Cil y Cwm and Mynydd y Garreg have received support from the Play Sufficiency Officer in relation to developing play opportunities.

There are many different types of provision available rurally such as Mentrau Iaith provisions, Young Farmers Clubs, Groundworks Wales, Youth Clubs and the Family Centres.

However, since the previous assessment some of the provision targeting rural areas has been lost due to significant funding cuts – Mobi Youth provision, Mobile Play Bus, Purple Routes Open Access Play Providers.

Some of the comments that children and young people made related to living rurally are shown below:

“I live in the countryside so I don’t have much to do”

“There’s not a lot of things to do in Whitland”

“I live far from anything”

“There is nothing in New Inn”

#### ➤ **Language, Culture, Young Carers and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender children and young people**

There are a number of supervised clubs running across the county through the medium of Welsh. These are provided via the 35 Cylch Ti a Fi groups, 3 Menter Iaith

Schemes, Young Farmers Clubs and the URDD. Some of the parent's consultation responses stated:

"There needs to be more opportunities through the medium of Welsh i.e football sessions, Welsh language films in the cinema"

"There is a need for more opportunities through the medium of Welsh. My son enjoys playing football, but most coaches are non Welsh speaking"

There is a fixed play equipment area located on the Local Authority maintained Gypsy Traveller site within Carmarthenshire. However, residents feel that this is not adequate due to the varying ages of the children residing on the site.

The response rate for consultations with young carers and LGBT children and young people was poor and therefore more work needs to be done with these groups.

➤ **Disability**

There are clubs within the county that address the play needs of children and young people with disabilities. However, the location of these clubs mean that parents/carers are required to transport their children over a distance to access these clubs. Furthermore, parents/carers and professionals working with children with disabilities have expressed dissatisfaction with the fixed play equipment sites across the county. 11% of the parents/carers participating in the consultations stated having a child or children with additional needs.

"My child has additional medical and learning needs, there are no facilities"

"More disabled facilities"

"More disabled facilities in the local park"

"Make a disabled friendly play area"

The professionals stated that the fixed play equipment areas were not adequate in meeting the play needs of disabled children and young people. The sites are accessible, however once inside the parks the children and young people cannot participate in any form of play due to the unsuitability of the equipment.

**ACTION**

**Continue to support rural areas in developing play opportunities for the children and young people via funding, letters of support, signposting and advice and guidance**

**Support the play needs of disabled children and young people in relation to fixed play equipment and supervised clubs**

**Undertake additional consultations with the Gypsy Traveller community, young cares and LGBT children and young people to ascertain their play, leisure and recreational needs and to address accordingly**

**Continue to support the Welsh Language Holiday Clubs via Menter Iaith and continue to work in partnership in delivering play sessions during the summer holidays**

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## **7. Matter C: Space available for children to play**

*“The Local Authority should recognise that all open spaces within their area are potentially important areas where children can play or pass through to reach other play areas or places where they go.”*

What we found:

### **Open Spaces**

A Green Space Assessment was conducted by Carmarthenshire County Council in 2010. This assessment was based on 2001 Census data. Although the green spaces have been assessed in relation to being accessible there is nothing detailing whether the spaces are used by children for playing. The assessment also focuses on green space that is more than 0.5 hectares; however children usually play on much smaller pockets of land and on streets outside of their homes or lanes behind their houses. The Planning Policy Wales does not make reference to children's play on Brownfield sites; however the Local Development Plan encourages new developments on previously developed land.

Section 106 agreements are allocated when a development occurs of more than 5 dwellings. When housing developments are planned the developer is required to contribute via Section 106 to various community facilities, one of these being play, recreation and leisure.

### **Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces**

The authority is having to make significant cuts to its budget and is therefore encouraging community asset transfer of recreational facilities. The Local Authority is currently engaged in discussions with Town and Community Councils and various sports organisations in relation to the transfer of parks, playgrounds and amenity areas. The Local Authority is offering grant funding and advice to support the transfer of these facilities to local management and a number of transfers have already taken place. Many Town and Community Councils are currently providing play opportunities for children and young people within their areas in the form of fixed play areas, MUGAs

49% of the children who participated in the consultations stated that their favourite place to play or hang out was the local play area with swings, slides and other stuff to play on, with 35% favouring the local grassy area and 27% the football field or sports pitch.

31% of the young people stated that their favourite place to hang out was the football or sports pitch and 30% favouring the local grassy area or field.

Many Town and Community Councils are currently providing play opportunities for children and young people within their areas in the form of fixed play areas, MUGAs

etc and the consultations have highlighted the importance of these spaces within the community in addressing the play needs of children and young people. Therefore, it is extremely important that the Town and Community councils are supported in accessing funding to maintain these sites for securing play opportunities for the children and young people living in their areas.

➤ **Up to date register**

i Local within the public section of the Carmarthenshire County Council website plots on a map of Carmarthenshire the location of fixed play areas, skateparks, beaches, parks, open spaces, tennis courts and paddling pools. The Local Authority Parks Department has a comprehensive list of the locations of MUGAs, skateparks and shelters owned by the Local Authority.

➤ **Play Space Assessments**

At present a Play Space Assessment tool as detailed within the toolkit is not currently being used within Carmarthenshire. At present, the future ownership of the play spaces is under review. Expressions of Interest from communities for taking over ownership of assets are due in by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. As soon as the Assets have been transferred and ownership agreed, there is potential for communities to be supported in maintaining their play spaces, and therefore as part of this support, play space assessments should be included.

➤ **Smokefree Playgrounds**

All Local Authority owned playgrounds at present have had smokefree playgrounds signs installed. However, the consultation responses from children and parents is that adults smoking within play spaces and smoking related litter remains to be a problem within fixed play equipment sites. Therefore, more work needs to be done in promoting the smokefree initiative within Carmarthenshire potentially in partnership with Healthy Schools and Hywel Dda Public Health team.

➤ **Access Audits**

Access audits are completed in relation to spaces being DDA compliant, however the detail of the Access Audits within the toolkit is not applied within Carmarthenshire.

➤ **No Ball Games sign / Play Priority signs**

The Local Authority has removed all signs related to No Ball Games, however due to budget cuts and lack of funding there are no Play Priority Signs. However, the Housing Department continues to use No Ball Games signage to address issues within their housing estates. More work needs to be done between the housing officers and Play Sufficiency Officer to address the issues related to children's play within housing estates.



## **ACTION**

**Up-date and review the focus of the Green Space assessment**

**To ensure that information regarding the location of play facilities is kept up to date**

**The application of Play Space Assessments in the evaluation of play spaces**

**Section 106 agreement contributions to consider play opportunities other than fixed play equipment**

**Further promote smokefree areas and the dangers of passive smoking to children's health and wellbeing**

**Work in partnership with the Housing Department in reducing the use of No Ball Games signs across the county**

**Ensure that communities, children and young people are consulted with and supported in the asset transfer process and in the event of assets being transferred**

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## 8. Matter D: Supervised Provision

*“The Local Authority should aim to offer a range of supervised play provision.”*

What we found:

### ➤ **Supervised Provision**

The Play Sufficiency Assessment takes into account the following types of supervised play provision:

Holiday play schemes  
Adventure playgrounds  
Play rangers  
Mobile provision  
Clubs and youth groups  
Organisations which provide resources to these settings

Supervised provision across the County is provided for a range of ages, through the medium of Welsh and English. There are a variety of holiday playschemes, after school clubs and youth clubs within the county. However, further work is needed in developing a Quality Assurance Scheme for play providers to be part of and adhere to.

Unfortunately, since the initial assessment due to significant cuts to budgets the mobile play bus, Mobi Youth bus, toy library and Purple Routes Open Access play provision have been lost in Carmarthenshire.

At present there is no allocated budget to develop more supervised play provision within the county.

### ➤ **Structured recreational activities for children**

Children and young people in Carmarthenshire have access to a variety of play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities to enhance their health and wellbeing.

Active Storytime has been funded via previous Play Sufficiency Grants in order for children to develop fundamental physical skills through play.

The Sports Plan for Carmarthenshire makes clear links with the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan in providing play opportunities for children and young people.

**Action**

**To ensure quality supervised play provision via a Quality Assurance programme when developed. And provide advice and support to settings in how to provide a rich, high quality play environment**

**Funding allocated via sports and recreation to consider play opportunities as potential funding projects**

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## 9. Matter E: Charges for play provision

*“The Local Authority should consider which play opportunities involve a charge and the extent to which the Local Authority takes these charges into account in assessing for sufficient play opportunities for children living in low income families as set out in the Statutory Guidance.”*

What we found:

There is play provision within the county that does not incur a charge. The Local Authority provides Open Access Play sessions from the Integrated Children’s Centres. Groundworks Wales also provides free Open Access Play within the county. Both of these types of provision are delivered within areas of high economic deprivation and/or within rural areas of the county.

There are also a number of holiday clubs and afterschool clubs running within the county, but these incur a cost to families. The clubs running for children and young people with additional needs incur a very nominal cost, and this money is used to purchase resources, and pay for activities and events.

Unfortunately, within the current economic climate it is extremely difficult to provide no cost provision, however there are concessions available for families.

### Action

**Continue to refer to the demographic information related to deprivation, rurality and disability when any new provision is planned across Carmarthenshire**

**Investigate the possibility of recording in more detail the cost of provision and ensure that information related to cost of premises and cost of provision is requested**

**Continue to support communities in accessing funding streams and signposting to services such as CAVS for information regarding available grants. Provide letters of support and advice and guidance to communities expressing an interest in setting up play provision within their areas**

**Support Groundworks Wales in identifying areas for delivery of no cost open Access Play provision (based on rurality and economic deprivation)**

## 10. Matter F: Access to Space/Provision

*“The Local Authority should consider all the factors that contribute to children’s access to play or moving around their community.”*

What we found:

The Road Safety Unit facilitates a great deal of initiatives that allow children to move around their communities via walking or on bicycles. Records are kept of the 20mph zones, and school safety zones. However, at present access to play opportunities is not directly considered and measured. Where there are improvements to walking and cycle paths, there is currently no specific focus on access to play opportunities. Although a great deal of work is being completed to improve road safety, there isn’t specific consideration being given to play opportunities at present.

Welsh Government will be reducing budgets for transport within the coming financial year which will have an adverse effect on children and young people who rely on public transport for accessing play opportunities.

When the children were asked what would help them play/hang out more often 32% stated ‘Find safer ways to cross roads to go out/get around’ and 15% stated transport to get there. 31% of young people stated transport and 17% fins safer ways to cross the roads to go out. 76% of the parents stated that road traffic made it difficult for children to play/hang out.

### ➤ **Information; publicity; events**

The Local Authority ensures that all events are publicised as widely as possible to ensure that families are aware of what is going on across the county. A variety of avenues are used to publicise the information such as Twitter, Facebook, the FIS website, Carmarthenshire Youth Council website and press releases.

### **ACTIONS**

**Ensure that the Family Information Service website has a clearly defined play section on the website which is regularly reviewed and updated**

**Ensure that the Assistant Information Officer is updated via the Family Information Service and / the Play Sufficiency Officer of any Play and/or recreational activities within the county that are not already included on i Local**

**Continue to use avenues such as social media (Twitter and Facebook) to advertise and promote play opportunities and events**

**Continue to engage with the media to promote and publicise play related events**

**Produce a timetable for the year (April to March) for updating the play section of the FIS Website with monthly themes and helpful hints and tips for parents/carers**

**Promote play opportunities at planned events by partner agencies to highlight children's rights to play and the importance of play to children and young people**

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## **11. Matter G: Securing and Developing the Play Workforce**

*“The Local Authority should provide information on the organisational structure of the policy area which manages the play agenda and the play workforce.”*

What we found:

At present the Local Authority Family Information Service, Childcare and Play Team have ring fenced a budget for a termly training programmes. The training programmes include mandatory training such as First Aid, Food Hygiene etc for registered childcare settings. Two play training courses per term are included as part of the training programme for registered and non registered settings. Unfortunately there are limited spaces on the courses.

In light of the new national minimum standards for registered settings there will potentially be a need within the county to upskill the early years, childcare and play workforce. A scoping exercise will provide an indication of the existing qualification levels of the workforce and an estimate of the numbers needing to be up skilled via transitional qualifications.

### **ACTION**

**Annual workforce scoping exercise completed to keep an up to date register of information related to the play workforce.**

**Funding required to provide transitional qualification from Early Years to Playwork for playworkers across the county ( i.e 6 playworkers would cost £5000)**

**Family Information, Childcare and Play Team to offer 2 play courses each term as part of the Training Programme**

## 12. Matter H: Community Engagement and Participation

*“The Local Authority should consult widely with children, their families and other stakeholders on their views on play provision. It should also promote wide community engagement in providing play friendly communities.”*

What we found:

Various groups across the county consult with children, young people and families. Children are consulted with via school councils, Open Access Play sessions, Family Centres, Youth provision. Parents and Carers are consulted with via schools, Family Centres (Llais rhieni), and Snap Surveys online.

Furthermore community engagement work takes place as part of the Communities First Project, and a representative of this programme attends the Play Sufficiency Stakeholder Group Meetings.

Consultations with parents for the purposes of this assessment have shown that many parents have a genuine and very real fear of strangers and paedophiles and these fears are prohibiting parents from allowing their children the freedom to play independently without adult supervision. Furthermore, some parents have stated that they fear taking their children to local parks as they are scared that ‘strangers’ or ‘paedophiles’ are watching their children. Therefore, work needs to be done with parents/carers within the community in order to educate them in how to keep their children safe without impinging on their rights to play and freedom.

### **ACTIONS**

**Continue to engage further with parents and carers in addressing the fear they have in relation to stranger danger within Carmarthenshire**

**Distribute the Community Toolkit: Developing and Managing Play Spaces to identified areas within the County**



### **13. Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas**

*“The Local Authority should examine all its policy agendas for their potential impact on children’s opportunities to play and embed targets and actions to enhance children’s play opportunities within all such policies and strategies.”*

What we found:

The Play Sufficiency Stakeholder Group was developed in acknowledgement of the importance of cross departmental partnership working when assessing and securing children’s play opportunities. As a result of the initial Play Sufficiency Assessment partnership working has improved greatly and links are now being seen between differing policy areas and play sufficiency. However, there are a number of policies that do not specifically refer to play directly. Although there is an acknowledgment of the importance of play within these policy areas, it is extremely difficult and more often than not impossible to re align existing budgets across policy and agendas for the purpose of securing sufficient play opportunities as identified through the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

#### **ACTIONS**

**To work in partnership with the schools in supporting them to open up school grounds out of teaching hours; and providing staff play training and support in play policy development**

**Continue to work in partnership with the Planning Department to ensure children’s opportunities for play are protected and considered within any new developments across the county**

**Continue to work in partnership with traffic and transport in ensuring accessible and safe ways of accessing play opportunities**

**Continue to liaise with Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager in ensuring that all relevant sections of the reviewed Integrated Community Strategy have a consideration to play opportunities**

**Work in partnership with the Hywel Dda Public Health Team to provide play as a means of contributing to the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families**

**Family Support Initiatives to recognise the importance of play in children’s lives and the benefits to their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing whilst also mitigating the negative effects of poverty and deprivation**

## 14.

## Conclusion

The Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016 has highlighted many good practice examples of how children's play opportunities are being addressed across the county. Within each of the Matters, the Local Authority and partner organisations are striving to meet the criteria and are aware of the importance of these criteria in meeting the play needs of the children.

The main barrier to addressing the play needs of children and young people is the absence of any allocated funding stream to further secure sufficient play opportunities. Where departments are providing play opportunities, it is through very limited financial capacity and are struggling to maintain the existing provision let alone developing new play opportunities. The assessment has highlighted many priorities to take forward for 2016/2017 to address the play needs of children and young people, these priorities are detailed within the Action Plan 2016/2017.

The consultation results have shown common barriers for children/young people; parents and carers. These barriers have been detailed within the Action Plan:

- Smoking and smoking related litter
- Road Safety/Transport
- Dog fouling
- Fear of strangers / paedophiles

At present, due to budget cuts and financial constraints, the main priority at present will be to maintain existing provision provided by the Local Authority and to support communities in taking over responsibility for their play opportunities. Furthermore, in light of play opportunities diminishing within communities there are other facilities within the community, namely school grounds that have the potential to address children's play needs. The majority of the school consultation responses stated that they did not allow access to school grounds outside of teaching hours. Therefore, this is an area that needs to be further investigated with school representatives.

Therefore, the Play Sufficiency Assessment for 2016 has provided a platform from which evidence is available for the development of new play opportunities and the protection of existing opportunities.

## 15.

### Way Forward

The Play Sufficiency Action Plan 2016/2017 has been developed based on the 'Identified Actions for the Action Plan' section of the assessment form. These actions were identified by the members of the Play Sufficiency Stakeholder Group and the final Action Plan was agreed by members of the group and through the political processes of the Local Authority.

In terms of funding for addressing the actions, partners need to work collaboratively in accessing funding for play and play related initiatives. Work has commenced on this via the financial contributions to play and leisure through Section 106 agreements. There is also opportunity to work closer with schools and communities in addressing play opportunities through low cost/no cost processes.

The Play Sufficiency Stakeholder Group will continue to meet on a termly basis to monitor the progress of the Action Plan. The Actions will be updated based on the progress made.