



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Play Sufficiency Assessment

## Toolkit

### PART ONE

How to use the Play Sufficiency Toolkit  
and prepare for the Assessment



# PART ONE

## How to use the Play Sufficiency Toolkit and prepare for the Assessment

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit has been prepared by Play Wales and the Welsh Government in conjunction with play providers across Wales to provide support to all Local Authorities in fulfilling their duties, as set out in the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012. The development of the toolkit was approved by the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services, one of the Welsh Ministers, as a means of supporting the implementation of this duty.

The toolkit should be used with reference to the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012 and associated Statutory Guidance, *Wales a Play Friendly Country*. These set out the details of the assessment and action plan that each Local Authority needs to undertake, every three years under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure (2010).

This duty forms part of the Welsh Government's commitment to promote play opportunities for all children in Wales. It also forms part of the tackling 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 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.

The tools provided are tried and tested templates based on the matters that need to be taken into account within the Statutory Guidance. The templates provided may be used as they are or as a guide to inform the development of more specific resources.

A proforma has been provided for the Play Sufficiency Assessment and for the Play Sufficiency Action Plan, which needs to be submitted to the Welsh Government by 31 March 2016. The other tools provided are to support local authorities in completing the assessment and action plan and should be used according to local requirements.

### 1.2 What we want to achieve: time, space and permission to play

We want Wales to be a country where children are increasingly seen outside enjoying the benefits of play. We want to create a play friendly environment which provides time, space and permission for children to play. This will need parents, families and everyone in the community to recognise that play is of great importance in children's present lives and for their future development. We wish to promote positive attitudes towards children's right to play freely in their communities. This will need all these groups, together with Local Authority elected Members and Officers; and other decision makers and providers across many policy areas, to work together to remove barriers to children's play and make a real difference for children in their own streets and communities.

It is important that Local Authority elected Members understand the broad range of policy areas that affect play and the matters that need to be taken into account in the assessment. They need to be fully engaged from the start of the assessment process and have ownership of the results.

The toolkit has been developed to provide practical approaches that might help us to assess and address barriers and create a better Wales where children can live and play. In order to grasp the opportunity this legislation gives us, and make it work for children, it is clear we need to use our existing resources either more effectively or differently.

## 2. How to use the toolkit

This toolkit has been prepared to support Local Authorities in conducting and completing the Play Sufficiency Assessment. It has been divided into four sections to enable ease of use.

### 2.1 Section of the Toolkit

#### **Part One: How to use the Play Sufficiency Toolkit and prepare for the Assessment**

Provides an introduction to the purpose of the toolkit and suggestions on how a Local Authority can prepare for conducting the assessment. Some tools are provided for the preparation process and these are included in Part Four which contains all of the tools referred to in the toolkit.

#### **Part Two: Undertaking the Play Sufficiency Assessment**

**Contains:**

##### **2a. The Play Sufficiency Assessment Proforma and**

##### **2b. The Play Sufficiency Action Plan Proformas.**

Local Authorities should use both of these proformas as this will enable the Welsh Government to compare the assessments and action plans of Local Authorities to develop a clear national pan-Wales picture of play opportunities.

**2a. The Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) Proforma** covers all of the matters that need to be taken into account in the Assessment, as set out in the Statutory Guidance. The proforma should enable each Local Authority to clearly set out its analysis of how well it is achieving sufficiency for each criterion and provide brief evidence for that judgement. The PSA proforma should not include raw data, but should indicate whether data is available, where it is held and links as appropriate. The full data should be used by the Local Authority for the purposes of improving play opportunities and be available to the Welsh Government on request. The Play Sufficiency Assessment also includes sections on shortfalls in sufficiency and identified action for the action plan.

**2b. The Play Sufficiency Action Plan Proforma** should be used to plan the actions that the Local Authority intends to take during 2016-17 regarding the actions identified in the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

It is expected that some of these actions will be incorporated within each Local Authority's Single Integrated Plan.

#### **Part Three: Additional Information and Tools**

The toolkit provides additional information which may be useful for Local Authorities in considering the issues relating to play and methods for conducting the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

#### **Part Four: Tools**

Contains the tools which are referred to in the other sections and are intended to support the assessment process.

## 2.2 How the toolkit was developed

A number of existing tools; quality assessment and assurance systems; and policy documents and strategies have been reviewed to inform the development of the toolkit.

The Welsh Government together with Play Wales has aimed to ensure that the development of this 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).
- South East Wales 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.
- Conwy Principal Play Officer (seconded from Play Wales).
- End Child Poverty Network.
- Participation Unit, based at Save the Children Fund.
- Cardiff Council Transport Policy Team.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf Play Sufficiency Workshop event.
- Di Murray, Playworks UK Consultancy and Training.
- Theresa Casey, President, International Play Association.

### 3. Preparing for the Play Sufficiency Assessment

A well-conducted Play Sufficiency Assessment will provide the evidence needed to identify gaps in provision and support the development of action plans to address these shortcomings.

Conducting the Play Sufficiency Assessments against the criteria of the Statutory Guidance will require skills and a partnership approach.

Many Local Authorities in Wales have set up Play Monitoring Groups, which were established to contribute to the first Play Sufficiency Assessments and Action Plans. The current Statutory Guidance Wales a Play Friendly Country states that:

*“This group should support the lead director, the lead member for children and young people’s services (point 4.2) and the designated lead for the managerial and delivery functions (matter G) to fulfil the duty under the Measure and thereby secure sufficient play opportunities for children in its area. It should also invite the active involvement of Play Champions to promote engagement and support in achieving sufficient opportunities for children to play” (page 8).*

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’s opportunities to play

The Play Sufficiency Assessment will need to demonstrate consideration of the range of factors that affect children’s opportunities to play.

It will include:

- Demographic profiles of the area
- An assessment of:
  - open space and existing and potential play space;
  - dedicated play provision;
  - recreational provision
- Other factors that promote play opportunities including planning; traffic; transport; information and publicity, as well as workforce development.

#### 3.1 Engaging with elected members

An important first step is to identify the lead elected cabinet member who is responsible for Play Sufficiency in an area. Providing a briefing for elected members will help to raise the profile of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process among Councillors. The briefing will provide an opportunity to identify the range of other factors and decisions that impact on children’s opportunities to play in their communities.

#### 3.2 Play Sufficiency Assessment Stages

##### Stage 1: Preparation

- Liaise with the Lead Member for Children and Young People/Cabinet
- Agree the Assessment methodology
- Decide who will lead the Assessment
- Identify contributors

- Identify membership and establish a Play Sufficiency Working Group
- Establish partnership roles and responsibilities and timeline
- Identify and recruit key partners
- Agree principles
- Identify financial resources/support

#### **Stage 2: Conducting the Play Sufficiency Assessment**

- Undertake assessment and identifying options of actions, using the Play Sufficiency Assessment Form
- Audit and map existing spaces and provision for playing
- Survey children and parents
- Identify and agree strengths and shortfalls in provision

#### **Stage 3: Producing the Play Sufficiency Assessment**

- Write the assessment
- Review and sign-off of the Play Sufficiency Assessment Form by the Play Sufficiency Working Group
- Play Sufficiency Assessment agreed by elected members

#### **Stage 4: Producing the Action Plan**

- Analyse and prioritise future actions
- Review and sign-off of the Play Sufficiency Action Plan Form by the Play Sufficiency Working Group
- Play Sufficiency Action Plan agreed by elected members

#### **Stage 5: Submit the Play Sufficiency Assessment Form, and Play Sufficiency Action Plan form to Welsh Government**

#### **Stage 6: Submit the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Play Sufficiency Action Plan to the Local Service Board for inclusion in the Single Integrated Plan**

#### **Stage 7: Publish Play Sufficiency summary on local authority website**

### **3.3 Conducting the Play Sufficiency Assessment**

#### **Options Analysis**

An options analysis will enable the measurement of an organisation's ability to conduct the Play Sufficiency Assessment and identify the most appropriate approach to take.

*Please refer to Tool 1 – Options Analysis*

#### **Lead Officer**

The next step is to identify an officer of appropriate seniority to lead the process and to ensure that the wide range of partners are involved and engaged. Being clear about the expected level of involvement will be critical. Broadly, these are the roles that partners may be asked to take:

- Provide information that the partners already collect
- Provide information that is currently outside their normal day-to-day responsibility
- Be consulted about key issues
- Be part of the assessment process, for instance, as a steering group member

In order to conduct and produce a good Play Sufficiency Assessment there is a range of skills and in depth understanding required, which includes:

- Local people, policies, plans and delivery mechanisms, child and family population and needs, play and play provision, spatial planning, transport planning, open space planning, community safety, public health.
- Technical procedures such as survey research, sampling and analysis, geographical mapping systems, performance measurement and management.

In order that the role of the officer responsible for co-ordinating the Play Sufficiency Assessment is clearly understood it may be usefully outlined by a job description.

*Please refer to Tool 2 – Lead Officer Model Job Description*

### **3.4 Working in partnership**

While it is essential that one department and a dedicated officer take overall responsibility for managing the Play Sufficiency Assessment, the data collection and analysis will require input from a range of partners with specific functions including:

- Local Authority staff
  - Play Services
  - Children with disability support
  - Geographical information Systems (GIS)/mapping
  - 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

Establishing a Play Sufficiency Working Group will ensure that up to date information and data contribute to a comprehensive Play Sufficiency Assessment. It will also ensure that a realistic action plan is developed.

Terms of Reference will help describe the purpose and structure of a Play Sufficiency Working Group.

*Please refer to Tool 3 – Play Sufficiency Working Group Model Terms of Reference*



**Skills Audit**

It is important that the Local Authority identifies the most appropriate officer in each department or partner organisation to contribute to the task of the Play Sufficiency Working Group. A Skills Audit table breaking down the assessment process for each Matter is provided to suggest the knowledge and skills required for each section.

*Please refer to Tool 4 – Model Skills Audit Template*