

2022 - 2025

# Neath Port Talbot Play Sufficiency Assessment

June 2022



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## 1.0 Introduction and context

### THE VALUE OF PLAY

#### Why we think play is important

Article 31 of the UNCRC recognises “the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.” Play is an important part of children, young people and family’s lives. It lets children explore their world, discover who they are and make friendships. It helps children develop the skills they need for life, including socialising, problem solving, language development, creativity, communication, negotiation and listening. Neath Port Talbot Council understands and appreciates what play can do for children. In collaboration with our partners we are committed to ensuring that all children and young people living in

Neath Port Talbot can access quality play provision that is creative, exciting and stimulating.

Giving all children and young people who live in Neath Port Talbot equal access to high quality play opportunities can help to address the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences including poverty. It can enable children to be healthier and happier, supporting their physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

Play encompasses a wide variety of things to do, recreation and fun are an important part of children and young people’s lives. It is important that children are able to choose how and where they play. Children and young people are safely enjoying playing in our network of play areas, parks, green spaces, open space and seaside. They benefit from a wide variety of indoor play spaces including family

centres, soft play areas or youth clubs. Neath Port Talbot’s children can play in their homes, childcare settings or schools.

In Neath Port Talbot we understand that quality play provision is about providing safe but challenging play in rich and stimulating environments. That play should be fun, enabling children to explore and learn. We appreciate that children and young people of different ages, ability and stages of development will want and need different types of play provision and there cannot be a one size fits all approach.

Working with children, young people, parents, carers and stakeholders, this Play Sufficiency Assessment has been an opportunity to collaborate and co-design a shared Action Plan for the future. This assessment and Action Plan will enable us to celebrate and shout about what play can do

## 1.0 Introduction and context

for our children and young people, connecting families to the play provision they want and need.

The COVID 19 pandemic has been challenging for the children, young people and families living in Neath Port Talbot and illustrated why play is important to our children's health and well-being. Research by Mind Cymru reported that three quarters of young people (74% of those aged 13-24) said that their mental health has worsened during the period of lockdown restrictions from early April to mid-May 2020<sup>1</sup>. Play is important because it "helps children recognise and express their emotions and develop positive relationships with peers and family members. It helps them to deal with anxiety and boredom and build their ability to concentrate and focus on what's important to them."<sup>2</sup>

In focus groups with children and young people to support this assessment some of them talked about "forgetting how to play" because of the COVID-19 pandemic, that they had "got used to being at home and not seeing [their] friends." Research suggests that the pandemic has "impacted on the lives of young people in ways that are both profound and somewhat contradictory. At one level, there were widespread concerns about a lost period of adolescence, missed education, and potential scarring effects for future education and work. Alongside this, however, young people spoke of having made unexpected positive changes to their lives. Indeed, many used the time afforded to them by the pandemic as an opportunity to invest in their selfcare, well-being, and their relationships."<sup>3</sup> The Play Safety Forum (including Play Wales, Play England, Play Scotland and Play

Northern Ireland) concluded that the "little consideration appears to have been given to children's welfare outside of the impact on education. Play, as has often been the case, has been forgotten or side-lined, yet there is copious scientific evidence of its importance for development."<sup>4</sup>

Above all, play and recreation provide children with the chance to have fun, "play involves children doing as they wish in their own time and in their own way. It has the key characteristics of fun, uncertainty, challenge flexibility and non-productivity."<sup>5</sup> We want the children and young people of Neath Port Talbot to be able to have fun and experience all the many benefits of play regardless of their age, postcode or ability. We want play to be equal and accessible for all.



## 1.0 Introduction and context

### About the Play Sufficiency Assessment

The Welsh Government, Play Wales and their partners want “Wales to be a country where children are increasingly seen outside enjoying the benefits of play. We want to create a play environment which provides time, space and the permission for children to play.”<sup>6</sup>

To support this aspiration a section on Play Opportunities was included in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, which requires:

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.



## 1.0 Introduction and context

Whilst carrying out these duties, a Local Authority must consider the needs of:

- a. Children and young people who are disabled
- b. Children and young people of different ages

To shape and inform the assessment there is a requirement to consult:

- a. Children,
- b. Parents,
- c. Individuals and organisations with an interest in play, as the local authority considers appropriate.

Play Sufficiency Assessments are completed on a 3-year cycle, this assessment will cover the period from 2022 – 2024. To support consistency of approach across Wales a toolkit has been made available, alongside the “Wales – A Play Friendly Country: Statutory Guidance.” These documents set out how Local Authorities should conduct the assessments and the 9 matters that need to be considered:

- 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

## 1.0 Introduction and context

### The Future of Play in Neath Port Talbot

The Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan 2022-2027: Recover, Reset, Renew includes a pledge to “enhance play and leisure opportunities for young people.” This supported by an additional £640,000 investment to improve community infrastructure including upgrades to play facilities. The Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) will play a key role in delivering on this pledge. It is made up of a range of stakeholders that design and deliver play for children in Neath Port Talbot. This assessment will inform their decision making to sustain and enhance play for the benefit of local families. Based on the findings of the assessment a one-year Action Plan has been developed which focuses on:

- Ensuring all children and young people can access play that meets their needs.
- Helping families feel safe in outdoor places for play.
- Creating play recreation places for young people.
- Enhancing the quality of play provision.
- Enabling children and young people to return to play post COVID.
- Supporting schools.
- Making sure information and support around play is easy to find.
- Play supported by policy.
- Celebrating play and what it can do for children, young people, families, and communities.



## 2.0 How we did the assessment

### HOW LISTENING HAS INFORMED THE PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

The methodology outlined below was based on our experience of carrying our previous Play Sufficiency Assessments, the statutory requirements, and Play Wales Guidance.

#### Baseline Assessment:

The baseline review was the foundation phase of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and was critical to ensuring the process was based on a comprehensive understanding of existing provision and existing and future need. This process commenced with a review of the previous Play Sufficiency Assessments in order to identify and obtain the data required for this process. In addition, the baseline review process was used to research

and identify all relevant national, regional and local policies and strategies which will form the basis of the policy review to support Matter I: play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas. This phase also looked at existing funding models to consider best use of available resources to support the play agenda.

#### Stakeholder Engagement:

A programme of stakeholder engagement including workshops, meetings and interviews took place throughout the lifetime of the assessment. This enabled a collaborative process and the sharing of information and ideas. This phase commenced with a workshop that brings all stakeholders together to launch the process and collaborate on a shared vision for play and the provision of play in Neath Port Talbot.

#### Community Engagement:

We prepared and delivered a programme of community engagement. This that ensured the voice of children, young people, parents and carers, and the community are embedded in and influenced the process. This programme used a diverse range of approaches including focus groups, community events, questionnaires, online activities and social media. We particularly focused on hearing from those who are seldom heard such as children living in areas of deprivation and with disabilities.

#### Needs Assessment:

This was an identification and audit of all play provision (including indoor and outdoor space) to evaluate provision in terms of quantity, accessibility, quality and value. This process, alongside population data, enabled us to undertake a needs assessment to ascertain the requirements for play within the area and define a vision



## 2.0 How we did the assessment

and criteria for play within Neath Port Talbot.

### SWOT and Gap Analysis:

Using the information gathered in previous phases we undertook a preliminary SWOT analysis of all the matters associated with the Play Sufficiency Assessment. This formed the basis of the workshop with stakeholders and resulting Action Plan. It enabled us to clearly identify realistic and achievable aspirations for the future that will benefit the children and young people.

Fundamental to the Play Sufficiency Assessment process is identifying and understanding gaps in provision, and the Action Plan explores how these can be realistically addressed. To support and enhance the SWOT analysis process we brought together the qualitative and quantitative data resulting from the implementation of

the engagement plan and provision audit, which enabled us to deliver one of the core objectives of the Play Sufficiency Assessment: “identify gaps in information, provision, service delivery and policy implementation.”

Gaps we explored included:

- Geographical Gaps - Where a geographical area has a general shortage of supply
- Diverse Needs Gaps - Where there is a shortage of suitable places to play for disabled children, or children with other specific needs or requirements, including those from particular faiths or community groups
- Access Gaps - Where there is a shortage of accessible play provision
- Age Gaps - Where there is a

shortage of play provision suitable to the needs and requirements of a certain age group (for example, school-aged children up to 18 years, if they are disabled)

- Type Gaps - Where there is a shortage in the type of play for which children, young people and parents may be expressing a preference
- Workforce Gaps - Where there are gaps/shortages in the play workforce
- Policy Gaps – What policies to support and develop play are missing?
- COVID-19 Gap – What gaps have arisen since the last assessment, which of these gaps are a result of the pandemic

## 2.0 How we did the assessment

### Action Plan Workshop:

The success of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process and the ultimate implementation and delivery of the Action Plan will be dependent on several Council departments, organisations and stakeholders working together. The aim of this session was to share the results of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process and resulting gap analysis and to work in partnership to create a robust and deliverable Action Plan.

### Play Sufficiency Assessment Form and Action Plan:

The completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment Form and Action Plan, bringing together the findings of the previous stages.

### Summary Report:

The Play Assessment and Recommendations took the form of an illustrated report that brings together the data and analysis from the previous stages to provide an overall assessment of play provision within Neath Port Talbot.

### Feedback:

It is important to feedback to those who participated in the community and stakeholder engagement to illustrate how their ideas and concerns have contributed to the Play Sufficiency Assessment. We contacted all participants sharing an infographic outlining how stakeholder and community engagement has informed the assessment and directing them to the full assessment which is available online.



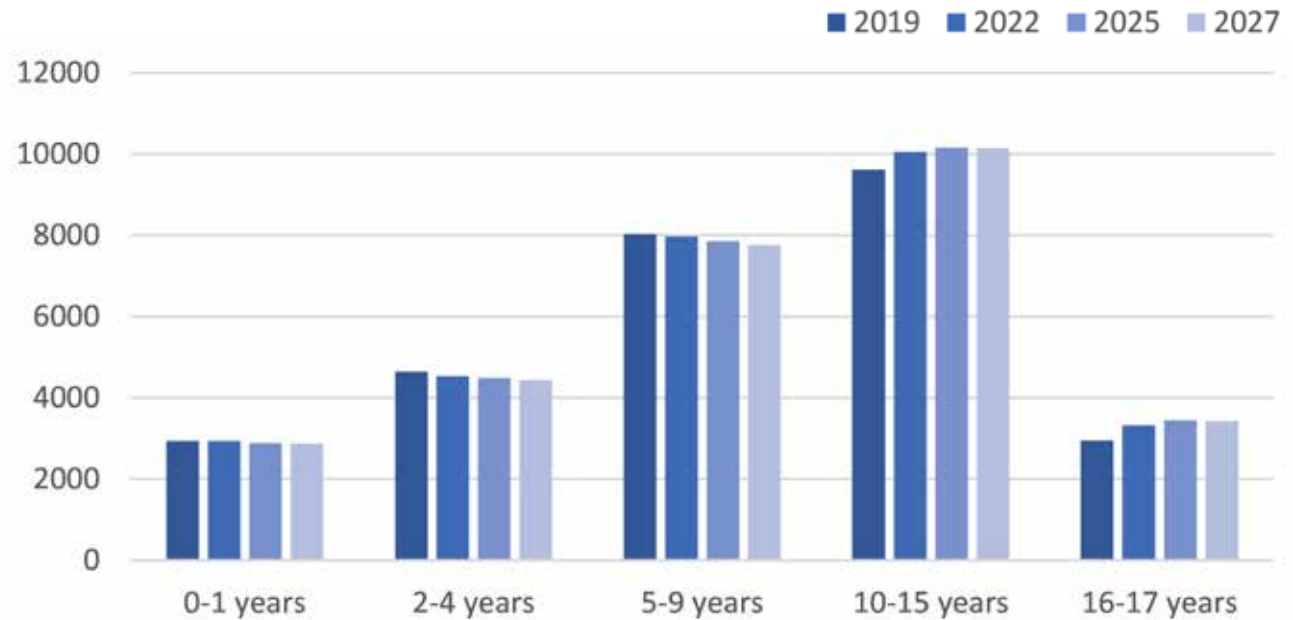
## 3.0 Conversations about play

### WHAT YOU TOLD US

#### The Play Population

In some ways the Play Sufficiency Assessment is about supply and demand. What play provision is available (supply) and what is the audience of play in Neath Port Talbot (demand). As part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process, we are required to understand how many children and young people are living in Neath Port Talbot. Figure 1 below uses mid-year population estimates to illustrate the current and projected population.

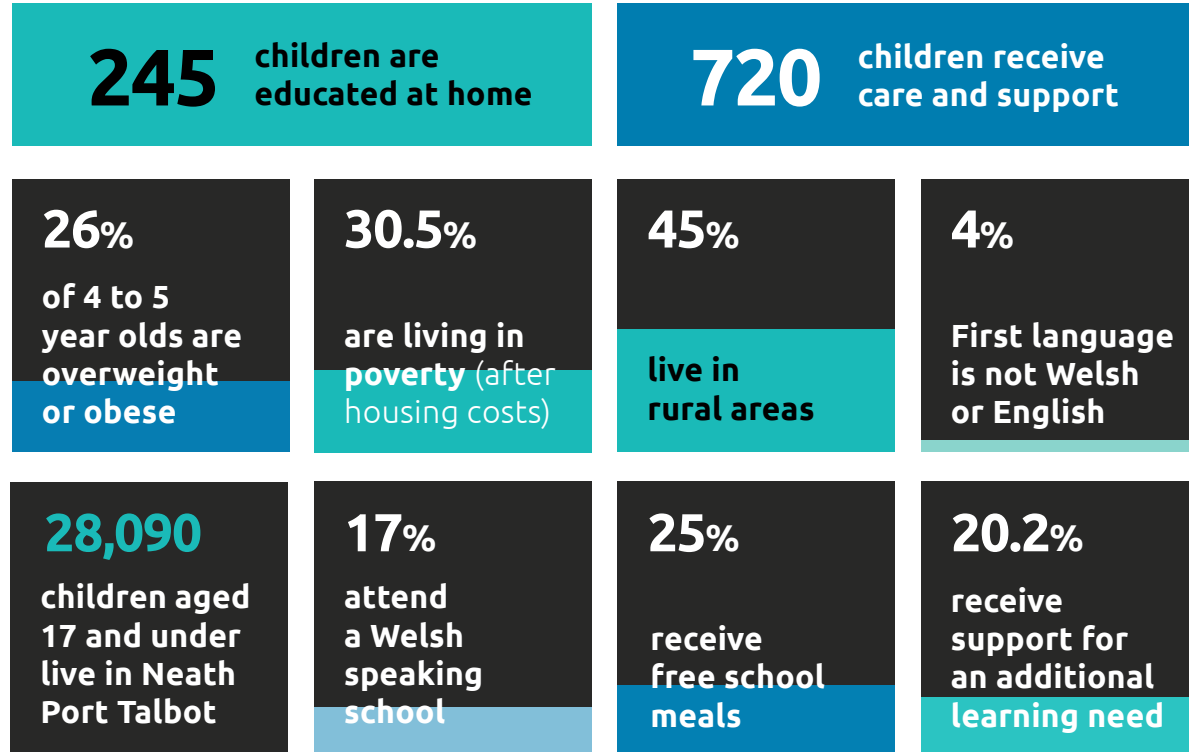
Figure 1:  
The Play Population in Neath Port Talbot



### 3.0 Conversations about play

Based on mid-year population estimates Neath Port Talbot has a population of 28,090 children aged 17 years of age and under. This population is projected to increase a further 0.14% by the time of the next assessment in 2025, suggesting that the number of children in Neath Port Talbot will remain relatively consistent. To help the Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) make decisions about play, and to help us move towards the aspiration of equality of access, we have mapped the population by ward. We have also used other key data sets which help us better understand children and young people with diverse needs.

Figure 2: What We Know About Children and Young People in Neath Port Talbot.



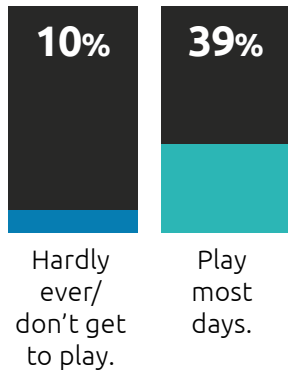


## 3.0 Conversations about play

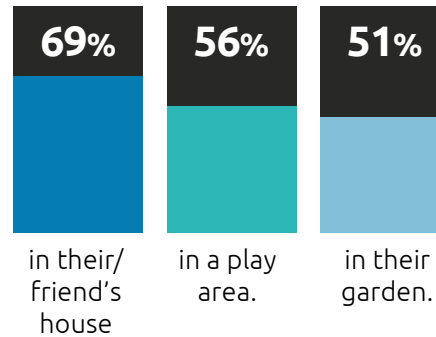
### Big Play Survey

218 primary school aged children completed our big play survey. They told us:

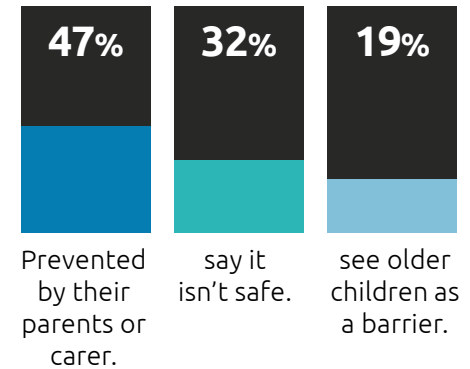
#### Frequency of play:



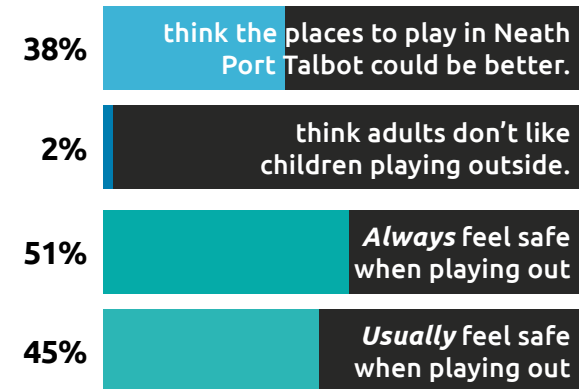
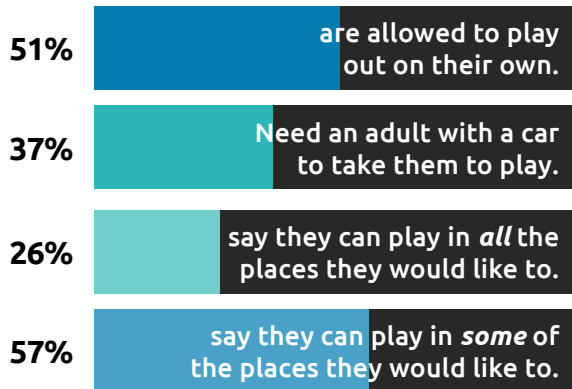
#### Favourite place to play:



#### Reasons children can't play where they want:



### Results:

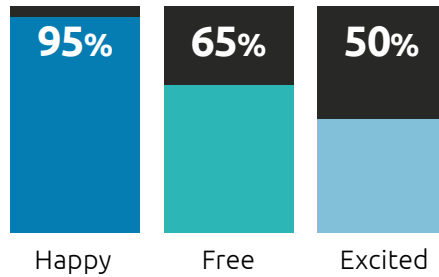


### 3.0 Conversations about play

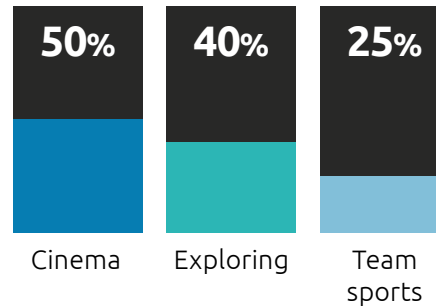
#### Young People Survey

105 children aged 12 to 17 completed our survey. They told us:

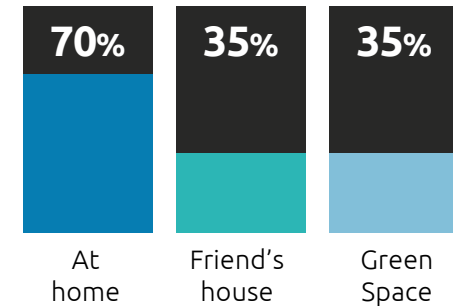
#### What they feel about how they spend their time:



#### Popular activities:



#### Favourite places to hang out:



## 3.0 Conversations about play

### Listening to Children and Young People

To understand the survey results and find out more, we spoke to **117** children and young people aged 6 to 18 about play. These conversations highlighted the following themes. Quotes are taken from focus groups, survey responses and comments on display materials.

**"It's too dangerous now because of older kids abusing everything and swearing and smoking. I am not safe"**

- Survey Respondent, age 12

In focus group discussion with children (aged 14 and under) they explained that they often do not feel safe because of older children / teenagers in public spaces. Children spoke of wanting to use multi-use games areas (MUGAs) or play areas but being unable to do so because

teenagers were there. Others spoke of park misuse by teenagers, for example vaping and drinking, resulting in them not wanting to use those spaces anymore. There is a perception that parts of Neath Port Talbot are not safe to play, which is a considerable barrier to children playing.

**"Most places are either for younger children or are dangerous."**

- Survey Respondent, age 15

Young people also do not feel safe and are also concerned about the behaviour they see in parks and open spaces: "there is one park in my village, but it is vandalised all the time and drug users sit there." Additionally, young people feel underserved in terms of provision and things to do: "there's nowhere safe for teens to hang out. Places to go cost money and not everyone has enough."

**"I think during COVID I lost my social skills; I feel awkward when I go out now. It is much easier to just stay at home and spend time with friends on my Xbox."**

- Focus Group Participant, age 16

Children and young people did miss the opportunity to play and hang out with friends during the pandemic, describing it as impacting on their ability to make and retain friendships and affecting their social skills. While some enjoyed time with family and were able to see friends in outdoor spaces, others described feeling trapped and lonely.

**"If you like sport there is loads to do and lots of clubs. But I don't like sport, if you don't like sport where I live there is nothing to do."**

- Focus Group Participant, age 14

## 3.0 Conversations about play

In focus group discussions there was a clear split. Those children who played sport felt there was plenty for them to do. Children without an interest in sport felt underserved in comparison.

**"Most of my friends live far from where I live so socialising after school is difficult. If we could create more safe ways to travel independently such as having public transport buses or times for youths only."**

- Survey Respondent, aged 14

Those who live and go to school in the same community benefit from being able to play with school friends. Children and young people who have longer journeys to school or do not know other children in their local area find it more challenging. The survey results showed a reliance on adults with a car to take children to play and this was reflected in qualitative engagement discussions. When

talking to young people there was a perception that you need to go to Port Talbot or Neath or even further to Swansea or Cardiff for things to do. Public transport is believed to be expensive, and some young people also feel unsafe using buses and trains.

**"Young people are often looked down upon by adults for just having fun."**

- Survey Respondent, aged 15

**"Sometimes we're at the beach, just sitting and chatting and we'll get the side eye from adults. Like we shouldn't be there."**

- Focus Group Participant, aged 13

While some children and young people spoke about playing in their local streets and parks, others felt they couldn't play in their local communities because of adults. Teenagers feel their behaviour is "seen as anti-social no matter what we do. Where are we meant to be hanging out?" The strong preference for spending time at their own home or a friend's home is seen as one of the ways to avoid judgement from adults.

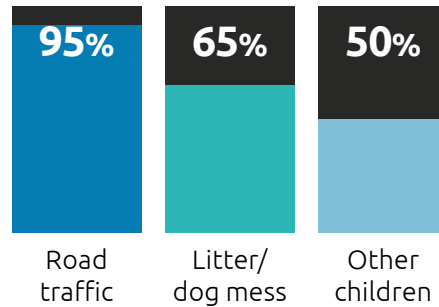


### 3.0 Conversations about play

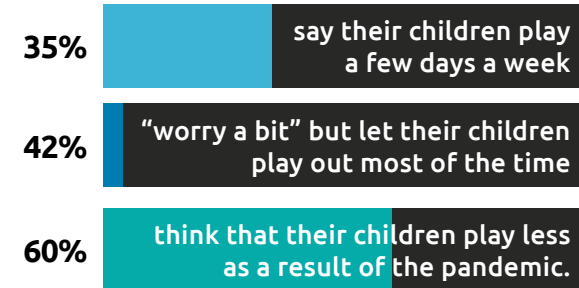
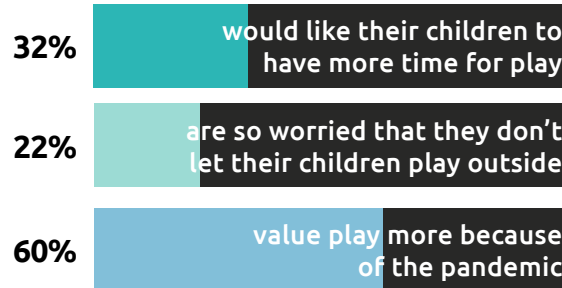
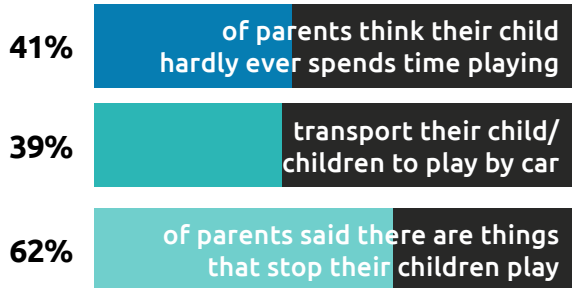
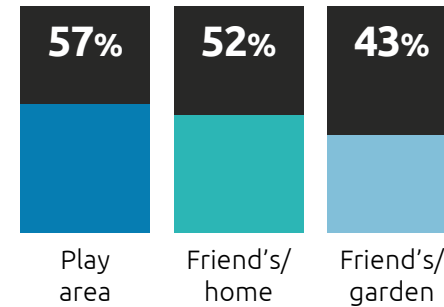
#### Talking with Parents and Carers

222 parents and carers completed our play survey. In summary:

#### What stops their children from playing:



#### Where they think their child's favourite place to play is:



## 3.0 Conversations about play

To understand the survey results and find out more, we spoke to 142 parents and carers about play. As part of this process, we had specific focus groups for families living in rural areas, low income families, families who use or would like to use Welsh language play provision and families of children with additional needs. These conversations highlighted the following themes. Quotes are taken from focus groups, survey responses and comments on display materials.

**"If it is raining or cold (which in Port Talbot is often), there are no places for teenagers to hang-out. If they hang-out in the park, then people complain, if they walk the streets then they are called 'gangs'. They seem to have a bit of a bad deal."**

*- Family Play Survey Respondent.*

Parents and carers agree that there is limited provision for young people. In focus groups they referenced the lack of things to do for young people citing youth clubs, skate parks and safe places where teenagers can come together as potential solutions. They also acknowledged the challenge of young people coming together potentially being misinterpreted.

**"Advertise and show to families what's available within areas, again especially to families with children who have additional needs."**

*- Additional Needs Focus Group Participant.*

Parents and carers think it is hard to find out about places to play in the local community. Focus group participants were not aware of the Family Information Service or Dewis, instead relying on word of mouth and / or social media to find play opportunities to enjoy as a family. A one stop where you could find things

to do was considered a key resource by focus group participants.

**"My son doesn't feel safe going out. Too many issues in our area of drugs etc. pandemic has not helped his confidence is shattered. He does not mix with his friends outside of school and although confidence is building, he is now often excluded."**

*- Family Play Survey Respondent.*

Parents and carers expressed concern about the legacy of the pandemic and the impact it has had on their children. They spoke about children who had "forgotten how to play with friends" or "struggled to settle in at play group." The impact on confidence and the ability to socialise was also a concern. As with children and young people, a number of parents and carers raised concern about safety in public spaces, raising concerns about anti-social behaviour.

## 3.0 Conversations about play

**"Community inclusion for additional needs young people, please understand that ASD is not a one size fits all diagnosis."**

*- Additional Needs Focus Group Participant.*

Families of children with disabilities and / or additional needs felt there is not enough provision for them in Neath Port Talbot. They were not adverse to integrated play settings or spaces, but felt it was important to have spaces or times specifically for their family to play with other families who understand and appreciate their needs and experience. They also want to see an acknowledgement that "a basket swing doesn't make a play area inclusive. Different children, different families need different things."

**"There is nothing to do in Cimla. Nothing, I'm working so my son stays at home which is isolating him."**

*- Rural Communities Focus Group.*

Parents and carers living in rural areas think that they are underserved in relation to play "everything is in Neath or Port Talbot. I don't drive so how are we meant to get there." They are concerned that community infrastructure such as schools and facilities are being removed from their local community which is impacting on children "he doesn't have any school friends that live near him. When we went to school everyone in the same village went to the same school. Now when he comes home, he can't just go and call on a friend. In the school holidays I must take him to see friends, which I can't always do."

**"Updating the playgrounds in the local park. I took my children to Hendy Park in Llanelli during pandemic, and it was amazing. Our local park is boring and can easily fit more equipment. The skate ramp is not even being used for what it is supposed to due to the height of it."**

*- Family Play Survey Respondent.*

There is a perception among parents and carers that local play areas at best are not fun or at worse are unsafe and unusable. There is a belief that most of the park provision is for young children and "that they are pretty boring the parks by us if I am honest." Participants also spoke of concerns around levels of litter and antisocial behaviour in public spaces which is a barrier to using them for play.

## 3.0 Conversations about play

"Provide more free access opportunities. Lots of families in our area do not have the money to spend on activities for their children, and it is these children who miss out."

- Deprived Communities Focus Group

There is an increasing concern about the cost of play, particularly for activities and play sessions. Play in the context of the cost-of-living crisis was also discussed with some participants expressing concern about rising costs resulting in decisions that may impact on play – "we have to think about when we can afford to use the car, which means have to think about how often we go to play group."





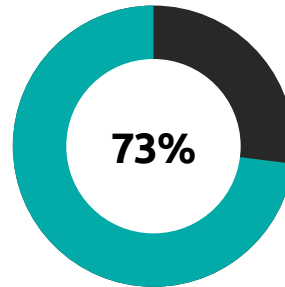
## 3.0 Conversations about play

### Talking to Stakeholders

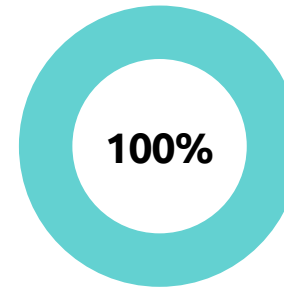
In order to complete the Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit (appendix 1) and to create a realistic and deliverable Action Plan for the future we collaborated with stakeholders from across the Local Authority and other sectors. This process enabled us to complete the assessment and explore strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These conversations highlighted the need to embed play in a wide range of strategies and policies so that it receives the support and funding it needs to be sustained and enhanced for the benefit of our children, young people and families.

### Listening to Schools

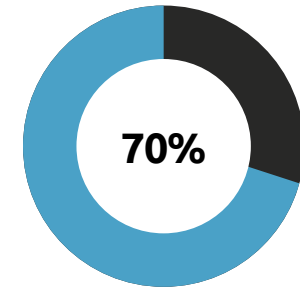
We asked all schools in Neath Port Talbot to complete a short survey; **12** schools completed the questionnaire (a response rate of 20%). They told us:



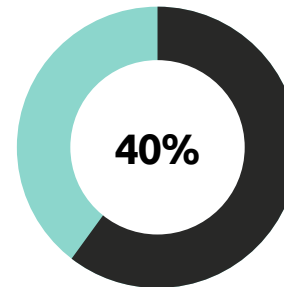
say play is very **important** in their school.



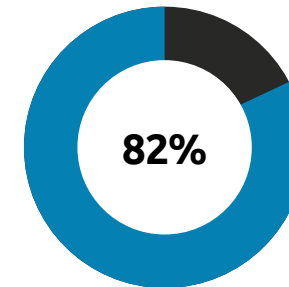
of schools **promote play** in school.



say lack of **resources** is the biggest barrier to play.



say staff play **training** could help them to deliver more play in school.



do not have a staff member appointed to lead on **play promotion**.

### 3.0 Conversations about play

#### Listening to Town and Community Councils

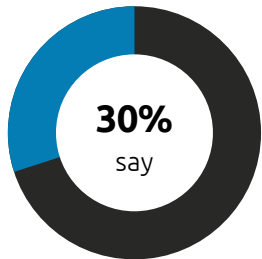
We asked all Town and Community Council's to complete a short survey, **13** participated a response rate of 65%.



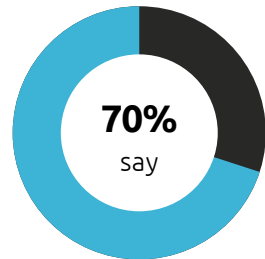
**planning projects** to increase play in their community.



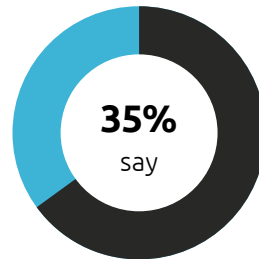
**engage** with children, young people and families when making decisions about play.



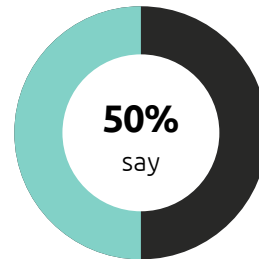
use of outdoor play **spaces stayed the same** during the pandemic.



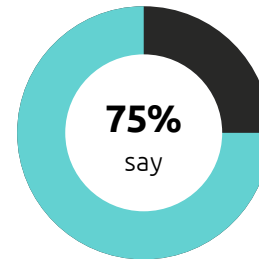
play is a **priority** for their organisation.



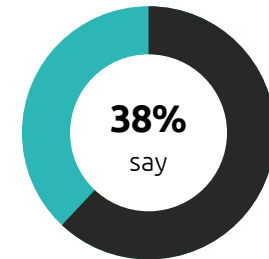
**litter is the biggest barrier** to play in their community.



use of indoor play **provision has decreased** as a result of the pandemic.



**places** for young people to spend time and hangout are **missing from their community.**



**inclusive play** for children with disabilities or additional needs is **missing from their community.**

## 3.0 Conversations about play

### Engaging the Play Workforce

We spoke to staff who deliver play and / or recreational activities in a range of settings including stay and play sessions, childcare settings and youth clubs. They explained that they enjoy their roles and enjoy working with children and young people. However, they expressed concerns about play work being undervalued and that “factors like only earning just about minimum wage and short term funding, meaning I don’t know how long I’ll have a job, aren’t great. If I want to buy a home, I doubt I’ll be able to do that and be a play worker.” There is concern about how we can create pathways to recruit, develop and retain the play workforce to address the gaps this assessment has identified.

### Action Plan Workshop

The Action Plan Workshop was attended by 32 people from across the Local Authority, community groups and third sector. All those who attended were passionate about play and working to achieve change that will benefit children, young people, families and communities.



## 4.0 Places to play

### WHERE CAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLAY IN NEATH PORT TALBOT?

#### Introduction

Children and young people want and need safe spaces to come together. Places that are creative, imaginative, accessible and enable them to spend time with their friends. This section of the report summarises the existing spaces where children and young people can play, enabling us to identify gaps in provision.

#### Play Outdoors

Outdoor play spaces were in the top three favourite places to play and hang out with friends for both children and young people. 57% of parents and carers thought one of their children's favourite places to play was a park or play area. When we talked to children and young people

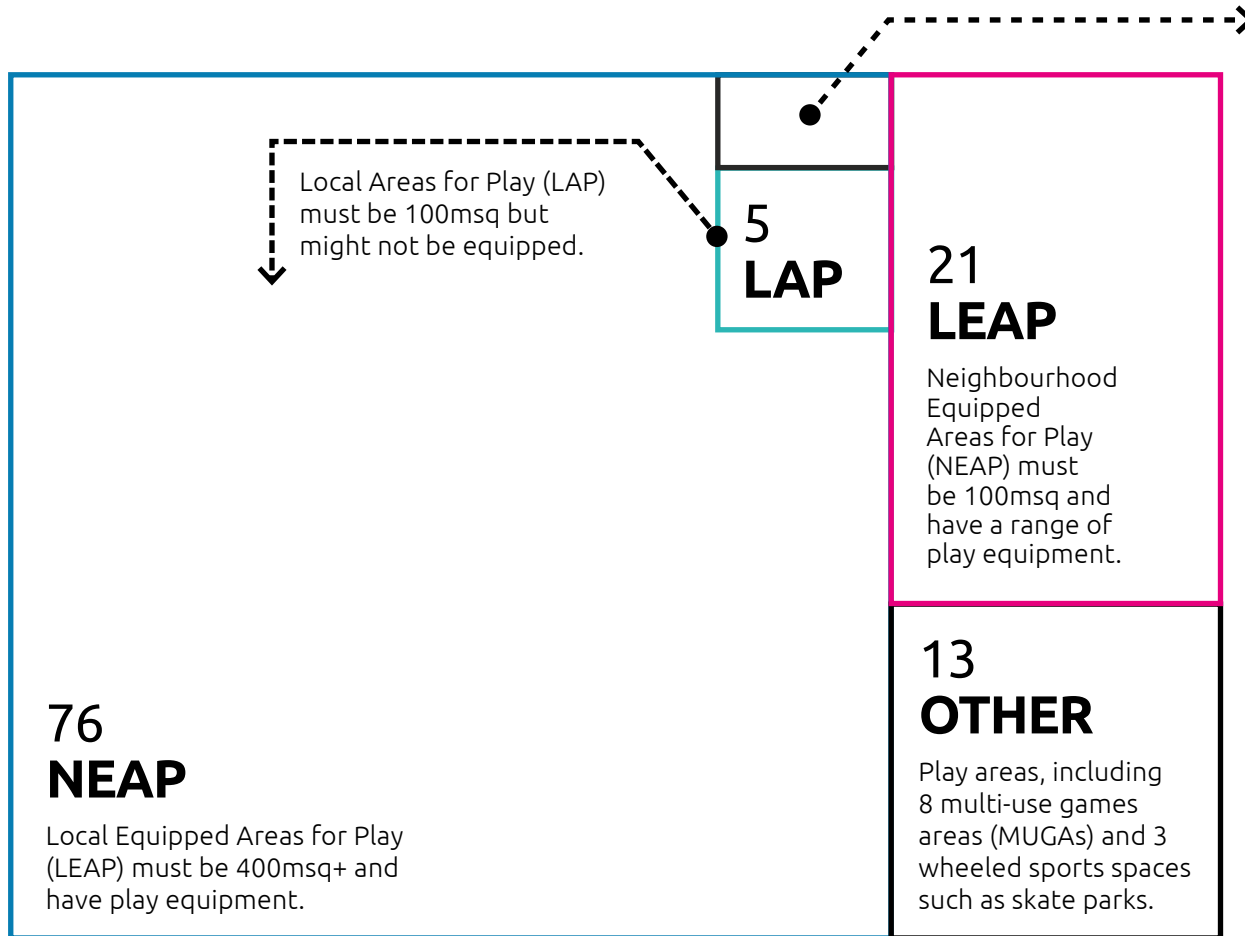
about play they described spending time in local parks, green spaces, at the beach and in other outdoor spaces like the street they live on or their local high street.

The Open Space Assessment undertaken in 2013 uses the Fields In Trust (FiT) benchmark standard to understand if there is enough spaces to play on a ward level. The FiT standard says there should be 0.25ha of designated play space (including play space) and 0.55ha of information play space per 1000 children. The assessment uses a total figure of children's play space of 0.8ha for children's play space. As shown in figure 2 all the wards in Neath Port Talbot meet this threshold.



Figure 2. Children's Play Space

## 4.0 Places to play



**3 destination play spaces**, which can attract children and young people from a large catchment area. They are **Skewen Park, The Gnoll** and **Margam Park**.

The Gnoll and Skewen Park have equipment specifically for children with disabilities. Other parks have inclusive play facilities for example basket swings.

**57** play areas were assessed to have provision for children aged 13 or over.

Play value is how we assess if a playspace is a rich and engaging space for children and young people. The highest score can achieve is 28.6. The average score in Neath Port Talbot is 13.47. The highest scoring play space is Coed Darcy with a score of 27.48. 39 parks and play areas have a below average play value score. The highest score that can be achieved is 62.



←----- There are **118 outdoor** designated **play spaces** in Neath Port Talbot ----->



## 4.0 Places to play

In terms of quantity the Fields in Trust (FiT) benchmark has been used to show there is sufficient provision on a ward basis. However, in the period since the last play space assessment the average play value score has decreased from 18.8 to 13.47. In addition, 2 play areas have been removed since the last assessment.

In qualitative engagement, such as focus groups, parents, carers, children and young people have all expressed concerns about the quality of outdoor play provision, the standards of maintenance and their safety in public spaces. It is important to note that austerity and funding cuts have impacted on the Local Authority's ability to maintain and enhance outdoor play provision. It is interesting to note that the highest scoring park benefited from Section 106 funding and was designed and delivered as part of housing development, which is a key

funding mechanism for play. Funding has also been invested from a range of sources including the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant and Neath Port Talbot Council's Capital Investment Programme.

### Play Indoors

It is challenging to identify and understand all indoor play provision available in Neath Port Talbot. For the purposes of this assessment, we have used the information available through the Community Directory Dewis, which requires providers to register and share their information. On this basis we have identified 158 supervised settings including childcare providers, stay and play sessions, parent and toddler groups and youth clubs.

The Local Authority directly provides play provision through a number of stay and play sessions and youth clubs. Teams within the Authority

can provide one to one support for families that help them to play and to understand the value of play.

The Local Authority invests in supervised play provision by providing support, training and funding for providers including childcare and schools. For example, the Flying Start & Early Years Team's joint training programme ensures childcare providers meet their mandatory training requirements such as first aid and food hygiene. There is also additional training that supports providers to develop their delivery of play; previous training has included messy play and loose parts.

Funding support is available to develop and enhance play provision. The Flying Start programme has clear guidance around the delivery of play, including a requirement for outdoor play space, and as a result support can be provided around training and resources.

## 5.0 Maximising resources for play

### FUNDING PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

Neath Port Talbot Council does not currently have a ring-fenced budget for play. Funding from a range of sources contributes to play. For example Pathfinder Early Years Integration funding has enabled the recruitment of 2 play workers to deliver a physical literacy through play project based around targeted stay and play provision. Families First Funding is used to enhance a robust and far-reaching youth services provision.

The Summer of Fun and Winter of Well-being Funding provided by the Welsh Government to address the impact of the pandemic was used to support a range of play and recreation activities to reconnect the children and young people to play and their community.

In 2021/22 Neath Port Talbot benefited from just over £757,000 of investment in play, primarily from Welsh Government grants.

Financial Year	Play Provision (Revenue/Capital)
1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022	<p><b>Capital: £190,339</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in outdoor spaces for play</li> <li>Youth Club Facilities</li> </ul> <p><b>Revenue: £44,999</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play Sessions</li> </ul> <p><b>Summer of Fun: £204,000</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for activities, trips and additional provision</li> </ul> <p><b>Winter of Well-being: £258,725</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport to play</li> <li>Sessional Play</li> <li>Play Spaces</li> </ul> <p><b>Playworks Holiday Project: £41,882</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holiday play investment</li> </ul> <p><b>Child Development Fund: £17,239</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A programme of activities designed to provide social and interaction opportunities.</li> </ul>

## 5.0 Maximising resources for play

The table overleaf details funding streams that have supported play in Neath Port Talbot. There are other programmes that have and continue to support play in Neath Port Talbot. With funding come from departments including Education, Social Services and Planning.

A key source of monies for capital investment in play is the Members Community Fund has enabled investment in play provision. Each ward member has a fund allocation, they can use in their area. It can be used as match funding and / or as part of a wider project alongside other funding sources such as Section 106.

During the lifetime of the first Tranche of Members Funding Section 106 Planning Gains, and other opportune

sources of Grant aid, yielded, between April 2019 and March 2021 £474,516 across 16 play projects.

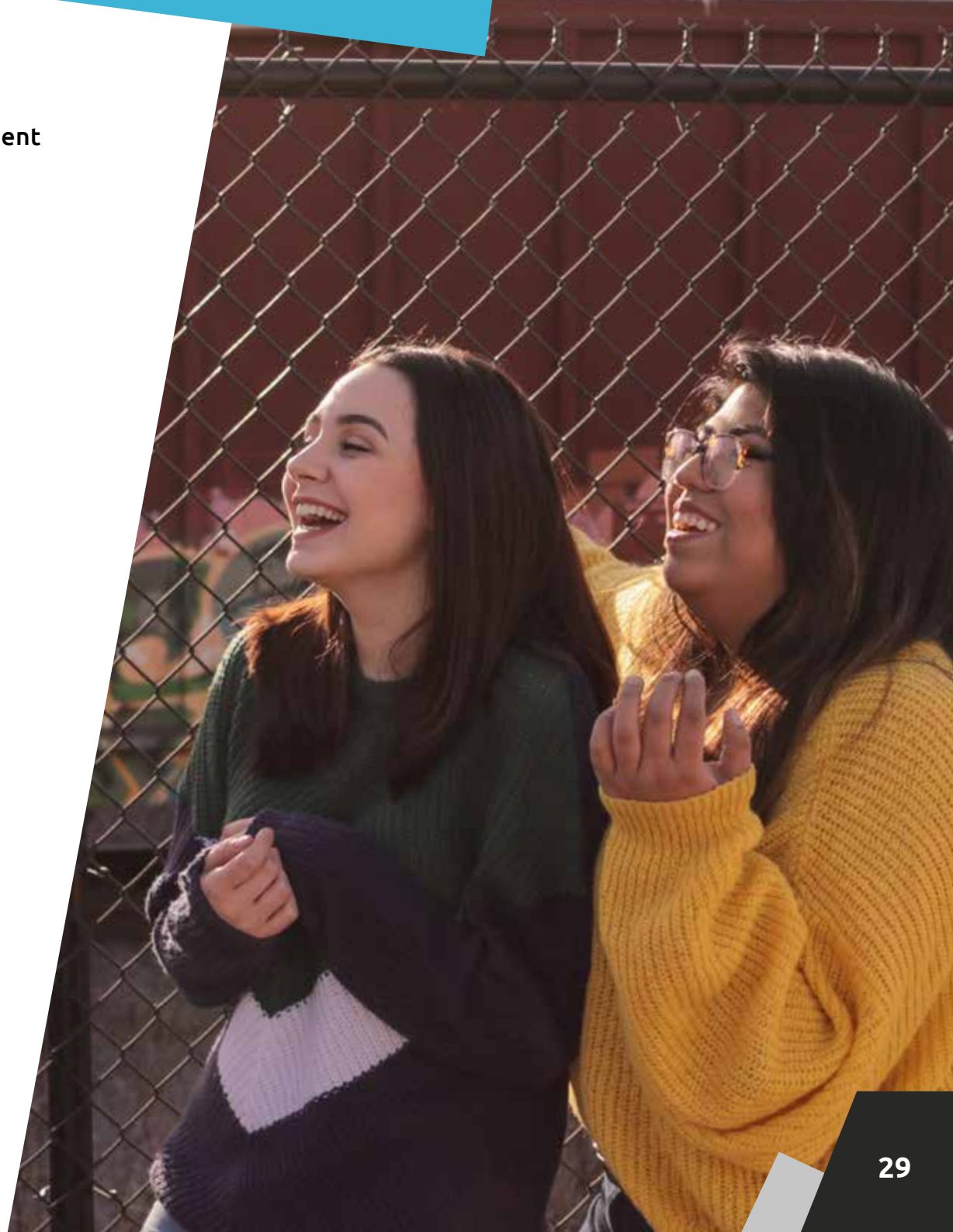
The period covering the 2nd Tranche of the Members Fund, culminating in May 2022 yielded another 20 play projects benefiting from Grant aid to the value of £559,280.

The total investment, resulting from the work of the Council's funding team, was **£1,033,796**.

## 6.0 Accountability for play

### WHO MAKES DECISIONS ABOUT PLAY?

The Play Sufficiency Assessment process requires the Local Authority to explain who will be accountable for the monitoring and delivery of the Play Sufficiency Assessment's Action Plan.



## 6.0 Accountability for play

Remit	Responsible	
<b>Lead Director</b>	Andrew Thomas, Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning	
<b>Lead Members</b>	Councillor Nia Jenkins, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture	
<b>Play Strategy Implementation Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Families Team</li> <li>• Early Years and Childcare Team</li> <li>• Flying Start</li> <li>• Early Years Integration Pathfinder Programme</li> <li>• 30 Hour Childcare Offer for Wales</li> <li>• Youth Services</li> <li>• Family Information Service</li> <li>• PASS (physical activity and sport service)</li> <li>• Disability Sport Wales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countryside and Wildlife</li> <li>• Country Parks and Cemeteries</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• Road Safety</li> <li>• Welsh in Education Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Sandfields West Children’s Community</li> <li>• Hwb Cymru</li> <li>• Interplay</li> <li>• Tai Tarian, Housing Association</li> </ul>

The Play Strategy Implementation Group, chaired by the Children and Families Team Manager, is responsible for delivering and monitoring the action plan resulting from the assessment. The group includes representation from key Local Authority departments and the third sector. In response to this assessment the membership, role and remit of this group will be reviewed.



## 7.0 What we have found out

### WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT FROM THE PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

#### Introduction

Appendix 1 of this summary report is the completed Play Sufficiency Assessment Form. This form uses a RAG (red, amber, green) assessment to evaluate Neath Port Talbot's provision of play against a range of criteria within the 9 matters that make up the assessment. This process was done in collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure a fair and robust process to the assessment.

#### SWOT Assessment

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the 9 matters which make up the assessment enabled us to use the toolkit alongside the results of the community and stakeholder engagement to identify priorities for change.



## Matter A. Population

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Play provision is in areas of high / higher population density.</p> <p>Data has been used to understand the population of children and young people across the County.</p> <p>Population and PLASC data have informed this assessment. This data can be used to support decision making around play.</p> <p>Early Years Integration and other approaches are supporting and enabling the sharing of data between partners.</p>	<p>There is limited data available in relation to children with disabilities and other needs such as young carers.</p> <p>Health data is not being used to its potential to shape investment in play.</p>	<p>To create and update a Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) data dashboard to understand and use relevant data around play. This data dashboard could also inform medium to long term planning.</p> <p>To continue using population data, alongside stakeholder and community engagement, to inform decision making and investment in play.</p> <p>Increase capacity by training more members of the PSIG and play workers to use available data sets and mapping.</p>	<p>Limited capacity to collate, analyse and use data in a meaningful way.</p>

## Matter B. Providing for diverse needs

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Neath Port Talbot and others provide opportunities for integrated supervised and free play provision.</p> <p>Funding programmes have used needs assessment processes to use data to identify and address gaps in provision for children and young people with diverse needs.</p> <p>There is provision throughout the County serving family's living in rural areas and areas of deprivation.</p>	<p>There is limited Welsh Language play provision and parents who do not speak Welsh have concerns about attending.</p> <p>Projects and programmes that serve children, young people and families with diverse needs are heavily reliant on funding and therefore may not be sustainable.</p> <p>Specialised / provision for diverse needs is located primarily in Neath and Port Talbot – families in other areas need access to a car to attend which is a barrier.</p> <p>Not all families want an integrated approach, a number of engagement participants expressed a preference for targeted play provision that is specifically for them.</p> <p>Rural communities find it harder to access play provision.</p> <p>There is a shortage of provision for older children, which is impacting on accessibility of provision for young children.</p>	<p>Listen to children, young people and families with diverse needs and involve them in developing play provision to meet their needs.</p> <p>Identify and collaborate with groups and organisations that work with families with diverse needs.</p> <p>Explore how play can support and deliver the ALN reform agenda.</p> <p>Share learning from funded projects for example Early Years Integration Pathfinder Programme play workers</p> <p>Work with Dewis and the Family Information Service to make it easier for families to find provision to meet their needs.</p>	<p>Failure to address identified gaps resulting in disengaged communities.</p> <p>Duplication of provision, rather than a effective, collaborative strategic approach to change.</p> <p>Increased competition for funding.</p> <p>Short term funding means projects and interventions are not sustainable.</p>

## Matter C. Open Spaces and Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Policies and strategies support the protection and enhancement of open space.</p> <p>There are a wide variety of types of open spaces across Neath Port Talbot. The Well-Being Plan puts a focus on the importance of Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>Section 106 and capital investment is being used to enhance and create spaces for play, based on play value assessments.</p> <p>There are a variety of designated play spaces, that provide a wealth of opportunities for outdoor play.</p> <p>Town and Community Councils engaging families and considering play value when making decisions about play.</p> <p>When funding is available it is invested in the context of the Play Sufficiency Assessment to improve play quality and value, addressing gaps in provision.</p> <p>The quantity of provision has remained stable since the previous assessment – all wards meet the FIT benchmark standard for quantity of provision per 1000 children.</p>	<p>Families are not always aware of the open spaces they can use for play in their community – citing concerns about safety and access.</p> <p>In focus groups with children and young people, they expressed concern that COVID 19 had resulted in them forgetting how to play outside and how to play in their community.</p> <p>Limited provision for older children and young people.</p> <p>Young people using play spaces that are for younger children is making those young children anxious and scared to use the play provision that is for them.</p> <p>Children, young people and families do not feel safe in some play area and parks. They are concerned about vandalism and the standard of maintenance.</p>	<p>Reconnect families to the open spaces where they can use their imagination and play safely.</p> <p>Open access play sessions to bring children and young people back to outdoor play.</p> <p>The Let’s Talk report has shown that children and young people think play is important.</p> <p>To work with the parks team to improve the quality and value of play space based on the findings of the play space assessments. Delivering on the corporate plan pledge to enhance play and leisure opportunities for children and young people.</p>	<p>Children and young people playing in open spaces are sometimes misinterpreted by adults as anti-social behaviour resulting in them being moved on.</p> <p>Parents and cares are concerned about health and safety in areas that are not designated as being for play.</p> <p>Ongoing budget restrictions as provision of outdoor space is not a statutory duty.</p> <p>Further reduction in budgets for parks and play areas.</p> <p>A perception that parks and play areas are not safe spaces for families to enjoy.</p>

## Matter D. Supervised provision

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>A range of Local Authority teams including NPT PASS, Parenting, Youth Services and Education (through schools) provide a wide variety of play opportunities for children and families.</p> <p>The childcare sector is participating in training to deliver quality play settings.</p> <p>Summer of Fun and Winter of Well-being funding has been invested in supervised play opportunities with a focus on bringing families back to play after the pandemic and addressing gaps in provision.</p>	<p>The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has highlighted gaps in provision including wrap around provision and Welsh Language childcare.</p> <p>It is harder for families living in rural areas to access supervised play provision.</p> <p>There is not currently a mechanism for assessing play settings for quality.</p> <p>Not all settings / providers share information about their setting with Dewis.</p>	<p>A collaborative quality mechanism for childcare and play.</p> <p>Encourage and enable providers to participate in training and professional development with a focus on quality.</p>	<p>Further reductions in budget / funding for play and play settings.</p>



## Matter E. Charges for play provision

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Summer of Fun and Winter of Well-being Funding was used to create a wide variety of free to access play provision that benefited families.</p> <p>Summer of Fun 2022 will enable more free provision to be created and delivered.</p> <p>There is a range of free and low-cost play provision in Neath Port Talbot.</p> <p>Data enables the PSIG to make informed decisions that take into consideration poverty and deprivation levels across the County.</p> <p>The Family Information Service is working with providers to ensure information on all free and low-cost provision is easily accessible.</p> <p>Families value and understand the importance of play.</p>	<p>The reliance on cars to access play provision, increases the cost of play for families.</p> <p>Paid for activities including sports and arts clubs often require block booking / payment in advance which is a barrier for low income and deprived families.</p> <p>Families are perceiving play as expensive.</p>	<p>Family Information Service and Dewis connecting families to play opportunities.</p> <p>Collaborative outreach in partnership with schools, Town and Community Councils, Play Groups and others to enable families to find free and low-cost play provision where they live.</p>	<p>The cost-of-living crisis is putting access to paid for play in the context of family's expenditure, parents and cares are having to make difficult decisions about priorities.</p> <p>If the cost of play is perceived to be increasing some families may disengage.</p> <p>Free provision is reliant on grant funding and therefore sustainability is depending on continued funding.</p>

## Matter F. Access to space/provision

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Skills and capacity of the Road Safety Team is ensuring children and young people have the opportunity to learn road safety skills.</p> <p>Play is located in places where children and young people can access them by walking or cycling.</p> <p>A Early Intervention Information Development Officer has been recruited as part of the Family Information Service to work with providers and increase availability of information on Dewis.</p> <p>Strong social media presence and following.</p>	<p>Perception that road traffic is a barrier to play.</p> <p>Young people say they need access to transport to get to play.</p> <p>There is a mechanism for closing streets for play and activities such as street party's, but it is complicated and expensive.</p> <p>Families think it is hard to find out about play and would prefer a one stop shop.</p>	<p>Cilfrew village 20mph pilot and the lessons learnt can address parent / carer concerns about road traffic.</p> <p>The PSIG contributing to local travel plan and strategies to ensure play is taken into consideration.</p> <p>Active travel agenda – improving walking and cycling routes.</p> <p>Family Information Service (FIS) Outreach to connect family's to play opportunities in their community.</p> <p>Collaborative promotion and awareness raising with key partners e.g. early years and childcare.</p>	<p>Children in some communities do not think they play on the street and / or do not feel safe walking to the park.</p> <p>Children and young people rely on adults to take them to play.</p> <p>Providers are not sharing information with Family Information Service and Dewis.</p>

## Matter G. Securing and developing the play workforce

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Free training and professional development opportunities are available.</p> <p>Existing Flying Start and Early Years Training Plan provides training for childcare and play workers. Some training is available to volunteers.</p> <p>Play work training available from NPTC College Group and Adult Learning in Wales.</p>	<p>Limited understanding of the play workforce as it currently stands. This has impacts on planning and provision.</p> <p>Capacity and funding restrict the training offer.</p> <p>25% of childcare workers, whose job involves play do not have a formal play qualification.</p> <p>Schools say the need training to help their staff to deliver play.</p>	<p>Neath Port Talbot Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce Development Plan. Building on existing training plans and approaches such as ALN reform. Ensuring an overarching approach to upskilling the workforce and improving the quality of provision.</p>	<p>Funding is often short term and not guaranteed.</p> <p>Limited opportunities for work experience in play settings.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention to minimum wage play work jobs and roles.</p>

## Matter H: Community engagement and participation

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Engagement mechanisms including Citizen’s Panel, Youth Council and Bronze Ambassadors.</p> <p>The Early Intervention Information Development Officer is working to ensure correct and consistent information about play is available.</p> <p>Partners including schools and Town and Community Councils are committed to engaging when making decisions about play.</p> <p>Family Information Service Outreach worker working with local people and providers to engage and learn.</p> <p>Engagement with children and young people as part of Neath Port Talbot’s Let’s Talk Campaign.</p>	<p>Engagement is seen by communities as a boxing ticking exercise.</p> <p>Funding timescales do not always allow for robust community engagement.</p> <p>Engagement with service users is not undertaken consistently by projects and / or providers.</p> <p>There is not a clear strategy for engaging communities consistently in decisions about play.</p>	<p>Collaborative working with community groups and organisations that work with families.</p> <p>To support the Corporate Plan pledges around enhancing play provision there is an opportunity to develop more consistent engagement methods with children and young people around play and leisure.</p> <p>Partnership working with Local Area Action Coordinators to engage and work with communities to address play gaps in their area.</p>	<p>Capacity and resources to support meaningful community engagement are limited.</p>

## Matter 1: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan 2022-2027: Recover, Reset, Renew includes a pledge to “enhance play and leisure opportunities for young people.” This supported by an additional £640,000 investment to improve community infrastructure including upgrades to play facilities.</p> <p>Play Sufficiency Assessment will inform the Well-Being Assessment and Plan.</p> <p>Planning policy supports sustaining and enhancing play.</p> <p>Early Years Integration and subsequent funding for play workers.</p>	<p>Play is included in key strategies including the Corporate Plan. It is not clear how these objectives and aspirations will be delivered.</p>	<p>Play as a mechanism for delivering the well-being agenda.</p> <p>Refresh the Play Strategy Implementation Group membership.</p>	<p>If play is not valued by decision makers and embedded in policy it is a risk of further cuts in funding and capacity.</p>



## 7.0 What we have found out

### Gap Analysis

Following the assessment process, we have identified the following gaps in provision, which can be summarised as follows:

Type of gap	Identified gaps in provision
<b>Geographical Gaps</b>	Rural communities feel forgotten and underserved. There is provision in rural areas, alongside a perception that the majority of events and activities are in urban areas particularly Neath and Port Talbot.
	4 wards have no supervised play provision: Aberdulais, Blaengwrach, Dyffryn and Trebanos.
	20 wards have no provision for older children and young people (indoor or outdoor provision for age 13+): Aberdulais, Baglan, Blaengwrach, Briton Ferry East, Bryn and Cwmavon, Bryn-coch North, Bryn-coch South, Cadoxton, Cimla, Coedffranc Central, Coedffranc North, Coedffranc West, Crynant, Cwmllynfell, Cymmer, Dyffryn, Glyncoirwg, Glynneath, Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, Gwynfi, Lower Brynamman, Margam, Neath South, Onllwyn, Pelenna, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Resolven, Rhos, Sandfields East, Tai-bach, Tonna and Trebanos.
<b>Diverse Needs Gaps</b>	Supervised play provision for children and young people with disabilities is not meeting demand.
	Only 2 of the 118 play areas assessed have specialist equipment for children with additional needs and/or disabilities.
	16% of childcare places and 30% of supervised play settings are bilingual or Welsh Language. Parents and carers who don't speak Welsh would like more support to help them learn Welsh and find Welsh language events and activities.
	There is no play provision in the Local Authority's traveller sites.

## 7.0 What we have found out

Type of gap	Identified gaps in provision
<b>Access Gaps</b>	60% of parents say road traffic is a barrier to play.
	25% of young people said access to transport and 24% said safer routes would enable them to play more.
	Only 2 of the 118 play areas assessed have equipment for children with additional needs and / or disabilities.
	86 play areas had an accessibility score of less than 5 out of a maximum score of 20.
	Families are not sure where to find out information about play.
<b>Age Gaps</b>	There is shortfall in provision for children and young people aged over 13. 48% of parks and open spaces provided for this age group. By comparison 93% serve children aged 4 to 11.
	20 wards have no provision for older children and young people (indoor or outdoor provision for age 13+): Aberdulais, Baglan, Blaengwrach, Briton Ferry East, Bryn and Cwmavon, Bryn-coch North, Bryn-coch South, Cadoxton, Cimla, Coedffranc Central, Coedffranc North, Coedffranc West, Crynant, Cwmllynfell, Cymmer, Dyffryn, Glynccorwg, Glynneath, Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, Gwynfi, Lower Brynamman, Margam, Neath South, Onllwyn, Pelenna, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Resolven, Rhos, Sandfields East, Tai-bach, Tonna and Trebanos.
	90% of young people want to hang out more, but 40% think there is hardly anything to do in their area.
<b>Type Gaps</b>	Engagement with parents and the childcare sufficiency assessment suggests there is unmet demand for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holiday play provision</li> <li>• Youth Clubs</li> <li>• Supervised play provision for children with disabilities and / or additional needs</li> <li>• Low cost or free to access supervised play provision</li> </ul>
	Families would like to see the value of outdoor designated play spaces to be improved including more natural play provision.

## 7.0 What we have found out

Type of gap	Identified gaps in provision
<b>Workforce Gap</b>	There is no up to date play workforce audit.
	Availability of training is defined by funding rather than need.
	There is no quality assurance framework to ensure quality of settings and support professional development.
	SASS data to inform the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has shown that 44% of childcare staff are play practitioners of which 25% have no formal play qualification.
	40% schools who participated in the play sufficiency assessment survey said play training for staff could help them to do deliver more play in their school.
<b>Policy Gaps</b>	Play is included in key strategies including the Corporate Plan. It is not clear how these objectives and aspirations will be delivered.
<b>COVID-19 Gaps</b>	Support and guidance to help children, young people and families who have forgotten how to play to return to having fun.

## 8.0 Action Plan

### CLOSING THE PLAY GAP

#### Recommendations for the Future

The Play Sufficiency Assessment process provides a robust overview of play provision across Neath Port Talbot. The Action Plan is focused on achievable change, therefore there is not action for every criteria within the Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit, rather a focus on impact and is informed by the community and stakeholder engagement.

These themes have been informed by the evidence and engagement and developed in partnership with key stakeholders and seek to focus on what is achievable and realistic within existing budgets and resources.

- Ensuring all children and young people can access play that meets their needs.
- Helping families feel safe in outdoor places for play.
- Creating play and recreation places for young people.
- Enhancing the quality of play provision.
- Enabling children and young people to return to play post COVID.

- Supporting schools.
- Making sure information and support around play is easy to find.
- Play supported by policy.
- Celebrating play and what it can do for children, young people, families, and communities.

This Action Plan was developed through a collaborative process, the Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) were brought together in a workshop to co-design the Action Plan. The Action Plan is for the period June 2022 – May 2023 and will be delivered, monitored and evaluated by the Play Strategy Implementation Group. This group will also develop Action Plans for each of the years between now and the next Play Sufficiency Assessment in response to changing need and factors including funding and resources.

## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL GAPS</b>		
Addressing the perceived gap of provision in rural areas.	Raise awareness of existing provision in rural communities.	Focused outreach in rural areas. Collaborative working with Youth Services, Parks and other key departments.
	Encourage families to use green and open spaces for play.	Working with Countryside and Biodiveristy Team, Natural Resources Wales, Town and Community Councils, Local Area Coordinators and others to help families understand the spaces and places they can use for play.
5 wards have no supervised play provision: Blaengwrach, Coedffranc North, Dyffryn, Lower Brynamman and Onllwyn.	Liaise with Early Years and Childcare and Youth Service to understand gaps in provision. Work with Local Area Coordinators and other community-based organisations to explore opportunities and share details on existing provision.	Connecting rural communities with the play provision they need and want.
		Learn from successful approaches for example Early Years Integration Pathfinder programme.
Working with schools to address gaps in provision.	Concerns about Health and Safety prevent schools from opening their site out of hours for play. Explore ways in which these barriers could be overcome, for example Town and Community Council partnerships.	Identify schools in areas with low levels of play provision.
		Initial engagement with school.
		Wider partnership working with key Council Departments and Town & Community Councils.

## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>DIVERSE NEEDS GAP</b>		
Using data to understand need.	Population data, including the 2021 Census release, is used to understand need and inform decisions about play.	Resources and funding are focused on responding to need.
Supervised play provision for children and young people with disabilities is not meeting demand.	Co-design project with parents and carers of children with additional needs and disabilities to respond to gaps in provision.	Work with Interplay and Neath Port Talbot Special Need Support Group to listen to parents and carers.
		Identify funding that could be used to address gaps.
	Co-design provision with parents and carers.	
	Explore opportunities to use Section 106 and other funding to invest in increasing the availability of inclusive play provision equipment.	Continue to work with Planning and other Council Officers to ensure the strategic use of Section 106 funding.
Explore other funding opportunities.		



## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>DIVERSE NEEDS GAP</b>		
Welsh Medium Play Provision	Support Early Years and Childcare Unit to pilot Welsh in Childcare Award	Increase provision of childcare (including play provision) in the Welsh Medium.
	Enable playworkers to participate in training to learn Welsh.	More playworkers with Welsh language ability.
	Make it easier for families to find play that is provided in the Welsh language	Work with Family Information Service and Dewis to showcase provision in the Welsh Language
	Help parent and carers to choose Welsh language provision.	Promote Clwb Cwtsh, Cymraeg I Blant and other programmes that enable parents and carers to try Welsh.
Partnership working with Menter Iaith.		
Traveller Play Provision	Work with Travellers Education Officer to engage with the community to see if they want play provision	Working with Welsh Language schools to understand and showcase what support is available for families.
		Letting the community inform decisions about play that affect them.
Supporting Young People with Diverse Needs	Collaborate with Youth Services to engage with young people including the LGBTQ community, young carers and those with additional learning needs.	The play wants and needs of children and young people with diverse needs are understood.
		Young people play a role in shaping the provision that for them.

## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>ACCESS GAPS</b>		
60% of parents say road traffic is a barrier to play.	Learn from the Cilfrew Village 20mph speed limit pilot. How does this impact on play within the village?	Partnership working with Road Safety Team.
		Listening to the community in Cilfrew Village.
		Working with Cilffriw Primary School
25% of young people said access to transport and 24% said safer routes would enable them to play more.	Feasibility Study: Wheels to Play  Stakeholders at the Play Sufficiency Assessment workshop asked if a scheme be created to help children and young people access play? For example, a programme where activities such as litter picking or volunteering can be traded for a cycle hire, bus vouchers and / or railcard.	Identify potential partners.
		Explore funding options.
		Feasibility study
		Pilot scheme if viable
86 play areas were assessed to have issues that impact their accessibility.	Share findings of Play Space Assessments with Parks Team and collaborate on a strategy to address accessibility barriers.	Play spaces assessment process is used to inform investment in play space for the benefit of children, young people and families.

## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>ACCESS GAPS</b>		
Families are not sure where to find out information about play.	A communications and outreach strategy for the Family Information Service to include Children’s Play.	A clear strategy for the promotion of play provision
		Effective use of outreach.
		Collaborative working with play providers and partners.
		Increased awareness of the Family Information Service.
	All play settings / activities are listed on the Dewis database. Starting with all provision being provided by the Local Authority being on Dewis within the first 3 months of the action.	There is a “one stop shop” to find information on play opportunities in Neath Port Talbot.
		Family Information Service and Dewis have clear, concise up to date and relevant information on play.
Come and Play Events – Stakeholders at the Play Sufficiency Assessment workshop asked if a come and play events programme could be explored. This would involve working with Local Area Coordinators, Friends Groups and other community groups to deliver come and play events to bring people together in their local park or greenspace.	Families are re-connected with the provision in their area.	
Children and young people do not feel safe in some outdoor play spaces.	Work with the Community Service Partnership, Parks Team, and other partners to identify a strategy for addressing the perception that outdoor play spaces are anti-social behaviour hot spots and therefore unsafe.	Addressing parks and play areas that are perceived to be anti-social behaviour hot spots.
		Working with partners to address concerns.

## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>AGE GAPS</b>		
There is a shortfall in provision for children and young people aged 13 years and over.	Promote existing provision in partnership with Youth Services, PASS, Schools and other partners	Young people know the play opportunities that are available to them.
	Partnership project with the Youth Council to co-design a play opportunity, for example park enhancements or a session, with young people.	Young people inform the play provision that is provided for them.
	Prioritise future funding from WG to address play needs of diverse and older children	Identified funding would be used to address this need.
<b>TYPE GAPS</b>		
Address identified gaps in types of provision.	Work with Early Years and Childcare Unit and Youth Service to address gaps identified through Childcare and Play Sufficiency Assessment processes.	Collaborative working to address gaps and ensure effective use of available funding and capacity.
	PSIG to collaborate on Open Spaces Assessment and other work to support the Local Development Plan refresh.	
Families would like to see the value of outdoor designated play spaces to be improved.	Use the Play Space Assessment process to inform investment in play spaces.	The quality of outdoor play provision is improved through collaborative working and strategic investment of funding.
Natural Play	Identify existing natural play toolkits and develop if necessary to explore and encourage the creation of natural play spaces.	Natural play provision is seen as sustainable and suitable option for play in Neath Port Talbot.
		Promote natural play to decision makers.

## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>WORKFORCE GAPS</b>		
Play workforce audit.	Collaborate with Early Years and Childcare Unit and Youth Service to undertake a full workforce audit. Co-design a training plan in response to this audit.	More childcare staff with qualifications in play.
		Volunteers are able to access training.
		Awareness of training and its benefits increased in the sector.
40% of schools said play training for staff could help them to deliver more play in school.	Enable schools to participate in training provided through existing training programs e.g. Early Years and Childcare Unit training programme.	Schools are able to participate in the training they want and need.
	Explore opportunities to co-design a school specific training programme.	Engagement with schools.
		Funding analysis.
Quality Assurance Framework	Play Strategy Implementation Group to explore the feasibility of a Quality Assurance Framework for Play in Neath Port Talbot.	Training programme.
		Quality assurance framework.
		The quality of play is improved.

## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>POLICY GAPS</b>		
Policy and Strategy	Play Strategy Implementation Group to participate in the process to develop the Neath Port Talbot Culture and Leisure Strategy, Local Development Plan Refresh and other key policies.	Play is on the agenda.
Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG)	Refresh and reinvigorate the PSIG – agree on a vision for Play In Neath Port Talbot.	Broaden the membership.
		Update Governance and Terms of Reference.
		Quarterly meeting schedule with identified priorities.



## 8.0 Action Plan

Gap	Actions	Priorities
<b>COVID-19 GAPS</b>		
Children and young people are unsure about returning to play post the Pandemic.	Collaborate with schools, youth services and other partners to create a programme of events and activities to reconnect children and young people with play.	Effective use of Summer of Fun Funding and other capacity.
		Collaborative working.
	Family Information Service to share resources and information to address this barrier.	Reassure families and children post pandemic.
		Highlight events and activities.
Celebrating play and what it can do for children, young people, families, and communities.	A programme of events, activities, social media and online content to share and celebrate what play can do for children and families.	Enhanced Family Information Service.
		Strategic use of Summer of Fun and other funding.
		Raised awareness of play opportunities.

## 9.0 References

1. The Mental health Emergency (Mind Cymru, June 2020)
2. Children’s Mental Health Matters (Right to Play – accessed 18 February 2022)
3. To Lockdown and Back (Day, Percy-Smith, Rizzo, Erskine, Monchuk and Shah November 2020)
4. COVID-19 and Children’s Play, Play Safety Forum (accessed 18 February 2022)
5. Play: Health and Well-Being (Play Wales, May 2020)
6. Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit: Part One (Welsh Government)

### Figures

Figure: The Play Population <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/Local-Authority/2018-based/populationprojections-by-localauthority-variant-year>

Figure 2: What We Know About Children and Young People in Neath Port Talbot

- Neath Port Talbot Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2022
- Children receiving care and support by local authority and age group: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Childrens-Services/children-receiving-care-and-support/childrenreceivingcareandsupport-by-localauthority-agegroup>
- % of Children in low-income families: DWP Stat Explore
- ONS Mid-2020 Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales by Single Year of Age and Sex

**10.0 Appendix 1**

**PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT**