

# An Executive Summary of the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2025

The State of Play in the Vale of Glamorgan



COMPLETED BY THE VALE PLAY TEAM  
VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

This document is also available in Welsh

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# 1. Local Authority Summary Statement

The Welsh Government is the first in the world to legislate for children's play, formally recognising play as a fundamental right. The Vale of Glamorgan Council and its partners fully support this commitment.

Together, we aim to create a play-friendly Vale - one that offers children the time, space, and freedom to play on their own terms, while fostering positive community attitudes toward play as a vital part of everyday life.

Our engagement with children and young people has once again highlighted how much they value having the time, space, and freedom to play and enjoy leisure activities. They particularly appreciate opportunities to have fun with friends, explore outdoor spaces, and take a break from the demands of daily life. Parents and carers also recognise the importance of play, noting its positive impact on mental health, skill development, and social interaction.

While there is a strong desire to expand play opportunities as a source of fun and enjoyment for children and young people, professionals in the Vale are increasingly recognising the wider benefits that play brings. These include improved health and wellbeing, the development of resilience and life skills, stronger family and community connections, and a valuable outlet for managing stress and anxiety.

Although it remains important to value play for its own sake, the broader impact of play on individuals and communities is helping to drive greater interest and investment in play across the Vale. This cross-cutting value is reflected in key strategic documents, such as the Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan and the Public Service Board's Good Food & Movement Plan.

# VISION FOR PLAY IN THE VALE: A PLAY FRIENDLY VALE

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

The right for all children to have rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities and to participate in cultural life and the arts

## What we want to see

1

Children and young people are at the heart of decisions about play in their communities — their voices shape the spaces and opportunities they use

2

Our communities are fun, friendly, and safe places where all children and young people can play and feel welcome

3

From parks and woodlands to playgrounds and urban spaces, the Vale offers children and young people exciting places to play, explore, and connect

4

We work with community members to grow playful opportunities that bring children and families together through fun, creativity, and connection

5

We are building a community of skilled and passionate people — from children to parents, volunteers to staff — all working together to support playful experiences for every child.

6

Everyone in our community understands and celebrates the powerful benefits of play for health, happiness, and wellbeing

Person centred offer

Inclusion

Collaborative working

Sustainability

Targeting Inequalities

## Our priorities

- Work alongside children, young people, and communities to raise awareness of existing play opportunities and to co-develop new, community-led initiatives where gaps are identified
- Help families find local, free or low-cost play options — from organised, staffed sessions to casual self-directed play
- Use data and community insight to identify and address barriers to play for children, young people, and families — particularly those affected by factors such as disability, geographic isolation, or financial disadvantage
- Professionals involved in the planning and design of communities — and those making key decisions about what happens within them — understand the contribution they can have in creating child-friendly environments in partnership with children, young people, and families
- The delivery of a leadership training and mentoring pathway that equips volunteers, parents, staff, children and young people to support fun, inclusive play within their communities

### The way that we will work

Taking an **integrated** approach — thinking about the needs of our residents and working with our partners.

Working in a **collaborative** way — recognising we can achieve more and deliver better services by working as part of a team.

**Involving** the population in decisions — engaging with our residents and customers, and ensuring that we are listening to a wide range of views to inform our thinking.

Understanding the root causes of issues and **preventing** them — being proactive in our thinking & understanding the need to tackle problems at source.

Looking to the **long term** — planning for the future and taking a strategic approach to ensure projects are sustainable and that we understand the future need and demand.

The completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment has highlighted:

- Assessing and securing sufficient play opportunities is a complex task, as each child is unique and has an individual perspective on what makes play meaningful. These experiences are shaped by a variety of factors, including their home environment, location, demographics and how their parents or carers perceive play and safety within the community.
- The 'Play – Have Your Say' survey found that 88% of children and young people gave positive feedback about opportunities to play or spend time with friends in the Vale—an increase of 7% since the previous survey, which was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this reflects a generally positive trend, 59% still felt there was room for improvement in their play opportunities. Adults reported lower satisfaction levels than children and young people, highlighting the importance of directly engaging young voices in discussions about play, as their perspectives often differ from those of adults.
- Having enough time to play is a key priority for children and young people. Survey results show that 73% feel they have “loads” or “just about enough” time to play or spend with friends, while 27% would like “a bit more” or “a lot more” time. These findings highlight the importance of protecting and promoting free time in children’s daily lives.



- Children, young people, and families in the Vale value the area's rich natural and built environments, which offer diverse opportunities for play. When given the freedom, children can transform almost any space - beaches, woodlands, parks, open areas, and fixed play areas - into a place for play. Various projects have been undertaken to enhance these spaces. The quality, age-appropriateness, and proximity of fixed play areas, along with access to open spaces, significantly influence residents' satisfaction with local play opportunities.
- While access to outdoor play spaces is a strength, there are limited affordable and suitable indoor options available for children, young people, and families - particularly during periods of poor weather. Addressing this gap is essential to ensure year-round opportunities for play and social interaction.
- Schools are widely regarded as safe and trusted community spaces. However, they are not always accessible for play and leisure activities outside of school hours. To address this, a coordinated mapping exercise could help build a clearer understanding of current access and opportunities within school settings. This would enable a more targeted approach to improving community use, including through initiatives like the Play Friendly Schools programme.
- The local authority and its partners are committed to meaningful community engagement and have used a variety of approaches to support this. However, reaching all groups—particularly those who are seldom heard—remains a challenge. The Vale benefits from a diverse and well-established partnership network, which can be further strengthened to enhance inclusive consultation and engagement efforts.
- The benefits of undertaking play value assessments of play and open spaces is recognised. However, limited capacity and resources have hindered the ability to implement these assessments in a structured way. Addressing this gap remains a key area for development.
- Families continue to feel the effects of the rising cost of living, making it essential to ensure access to free and affordable play opportunities. A variety of projects and resources have been developed to support this goal and to raise awareness among families about low-cost and no-cost activity ideas. Attendance at supervised play sessions tends to be higher when activities are designed for the whole family, rather than solely for children or young people. This trend highlights the value of investing in family-focused provision and expanding related resources.



- A collaborative approach has been adopted to deliver training and continuing professional development opportunities, aimed at strengthening the playwork workforce and enhancing skills and expertise. A key ongoing priority is the development of the play infrastructure - expanding capacity and upskilling both new and existing individuals to improve the quality and availability of play provision.
- Given the limited financial resources, it is essential to strengthen partnerships with local groups and residents to recruit volunteers to help expand community-based services. To enable this, a key priority will be delivering a tailored training and mentoring programme to build the knowledge, skills, and confidence of those stepping into volunteer roles.
- Disabled children and young people often face additional barriers to accessing play opportunities. In response, there has been a focus on meeting their individual needs through inclusive and tailored approaches. Ensuring equitable access to play will remain a priority moving forward.
- Progress has been made in demonstrating the broad, cross-sector benefits of play—particularly its positive impact on health and wellbeing. This work will continue through mechanisms such as the Play Sufficiency Monitoring Group and its associated reporting processes, which help ensure accountability and ongoing development.

Please see the Play Action Plan 2025 – 2026 for all actions identified for development following the Play Sufficiency Assessment process.





## 2. Methodology

While the Council's Play Team led the Play Sufficiency Assessment, it is recognised that a wide range of stakeholders—including other Council departments, public services, community and voluntary organisations, and residents—each play a vital role in assessing and securing sufficient play opportunities. Play Wales remains a key partner, offering expertise and support that enhances the Council's efforts to improve play opportunities for children and young people.

To support this collaborative process, a variety of methods were used to gather information, several of which are outlined below. As with previous assessments, the level of engagement varied across partners, which is reflected in the differing depth of information provided throughout the assessment,

From the outset, it was made clear that no additional financial or staffing resources were available to support delivery of actions. As a result, any required funding would need to come from existing budgets or newly identified sources. Agreed actions were developed with this in mind, focusing on maximising impact through the sharing and efficient use of current resources.

### **Continuous Process of Partnership Development and Reflection**

The Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) is recognised as an ongoing and evolving process. It involves continuous partnership development, consultation, insight gathering, and reflection to ensure that annual action plans respond to the needs of children, young people, and the wider community—while remaining realistic within available resources.

The lead-up to completing the PSA documents helped sustain meaningful conversations about play with existing partners and residents, while also initiating dialogue with new stakeholders who previously had limited involvement. This process has contributed to strengthening partnerships, generating fresh ideas, and encouraging the sharing of local knowledge.

### **Play Sufficiency Assessment Workshop**

A diverse group of internal and external stakeholders were invited to a workshop designed to support the development of the 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment. The workshop aimed to:

- Provide an overview of Play Sufficiency, updating participants on the process and outlining next steps for the 2025 assessment
- Facilitate discussions on key factors affecting children's play opportunities
- Contribute to a SWOT analysis for each of the four PSA themes
- Explore the role of different professionals in shaping play opportunities within communities
- Identify potential actions for inclusion in the Play Action Plan

A total of 31 individuals from 27 different Council departments and external organisations registered to attend the workshop. Although only 19 were able to participate on the day, the event proved highly valuable - sparking energetic discussions and generating a wealth of insights and connections.

In the lead-up to the workshop, stakeholders received a series of informative emails designed to:

- Raise awareness of Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Provide context to support the SWOT analysis
- Explain the PSA process
- Share the Play Wales film *This is Why Play is So Important*

<https://play.wales/play/film>

### **Written Input**

All stakeholders were invited to contribute to the criteria template, with guidance to focus on areas most relevant to their service. However, recognising the cross-cutting nature of the criteria, they were also encouraged to provide input wherever they felt it was appropriate. The evidence gathered helped inform the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings and highlighted gaps to be considered for the action plan.





### **Town & Community Council Engagement**

With strong community ties, the 27 Vale Town and Community Councils are well positioned to act as play champions within the areas they serve. Their ability to consult directly with residents, advocate for play, and consider its impact in local decision-making makes them valuable partners in the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) process.

All councils were invited to attend the overarching PSA workshop, with Wick Community Council participating. Following this, the PSA Lead Officer attended a Town and Community Council Liaison Committee meeting to encourage completion of a targeted survey exploring local strengths and challenges related to play. Contributions were received from Ewenny, Llancarfan, Llandough, Pendoylan, Penllyn, St Nicholas with Bonvilston, Welsh St Donats, and Wick Community Councils.

Representatives were also invited to a dedicated PSA workshop facilitated by Play Wales. Ewenny, Pendoylan, and Wick attended and expressed interest in further developing play opportunities in their communities. In total, eight councils directly contributed to the PSA process, with Dinas Powys Community Council and Barry Town Council involved indirectly through collaborative events and play sessions.

### **Theme/Project Specific Working Groups**

Where appropriate, project or theme-specific working groups have been established. Notable examples include the Street Play working group and the Places Where Children Play meetings, which bring together representatives from play services, planning, Active Travel, parks, and the Public Health Team. These groups support collaborative approaches to enhancing play opportunities across the Vale.

### **Insight and Consultation**

In addition to the dedicated play consultation undertaken to inform the 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA), valuable insights were also drawn from broader, non-play-specific engagement activities. These included findings from the Wellbeing Assessment, Section 106 and planning consultations, Active Travel consultation, and the Placemaking project.

For details on consultation and engagement specifically involving children and young people, please refer to Section 3.

## Partners Involved

The PSA Lead Officer, having been involved in the completion of previous Play Sufficiency Assessments (PSAs), has developed strong links across a range of sectors within the Vale that influence children's play. As noted earlier, both internal departments and external organisations were invited to contribute directly to the current PSA. In addition, several partners provided indirect input through related work and ongoing collaboration.

As the PSA is an ongoing process, insights gathered over the past three years—from meetings, discussions, and partnerships—have also informed the development of this document and the accompanying action plan.

Organisations and departments that contributed through any of these mechanisms include:

• Play Team	• Active Travel	• Childcare and Early Years
• Communications Team	• Creative Communities Team	• Corporate Strategy & Insight Team
• Equalities Team	• Families First Lead	• Cardiff & Vale Public Health Team
• Family Information Service	• Flying Start	• Highways
• Child Health & Disability Team	• Youth Service	• <u>Keycreate</u>
• Legal	• Libraries	• Menter Bro Morgannwg
• Parks	• Planning	• Arts Development
• Play Wales	• Playground & Landscaping Team	• <u>Recreate Scrapstore</u>
• Strategy Team	• Sports Development Team	• Social Services
• Young Carers Team	• Vale People First	• Education Department
• Glamorgan Voluntary Services		
• Individual schools: Oakfield, Holton, Jenner Park and St Helens Primaries; Whitmore High		
• Town & Community Councils: Ewenny, Llancafarn, Llandough, Pendoylan, Penllyn, St Nicholas with Bonvilston, Welsh St Donats, Dinas Powys and Wick Community Councils; Barry Town Council		

Although other internal departments and external organisations were invited to participate in the process, some did not provide input. There are currently no dedicated play associations operating within the Vale of Glamorgan.





### 3. How engagement with children and families has informed the Play Sufficiency Assessment

The views of children, young people, and families were gathered through a range of engagement methods and have played a key role in shaping the assessment and informing the priorities outlined in the action plan.

While consultation is essential to effective planning, it is not always possible to implement every suggestion made by residents and partners. As a result, decisions must be guided by what is achievable and sustainable within existing financial and physical resources. They should also align with the Council's corporate and wellbeing priorities.

Consultation and insight gathering mechanisms have included:

#### **'Play Have Your Say' survey for Children and Young People**

The Play – Have Your Say survey is a national tool designed to give children and young people a voice on whether they feel they have the time, space, and permission to play as they would like. In the Vale of Glamorgan, the survey was used to support local consultation, providing valuable insight into where children play, the types of play they engage in, and what they perceive as positive or challenging about their local play environments.

To ensure accessibility, the bilingual survey was made available both online and in paper format. To maximise reach, the Vale's partnership network was actively encouraged to promote the survey. This included schools, Glamorgan Voluntary Services, Menter Bro Morgannwg, Town and Community Councils, and Public Service Board partners such as Public Health, the Fire Service, NHS, Natural Resources Wales, and the Police. Internal Council departments also supported dissemination, including the Play Team, Youth Service, Family Information Service, Flying Start, and teams working with targeted groups such as the Child Health and Disability Team and the Young Carers Team.

A total of 615 children and young people completed all or part of the survey—an increase from previous assessments. However, this still represents a relatively small proportion of the overall population of children and young people in the Vale.

The survey results highlight the challenges in assessing and providing sufficient play opportunities. Each child and young person has a unique perspective on what makes play valuable, shaped by factors such as where they live and how their parents or carers perceive play and safety in their communities.

This diversity is evident in the survey responses. For instance, when asked “What is good about your area for playing?”, participants gave 49 different types of answers. The top five responses were:

- 14% - Being able to play with friends / make friends / play with others
- 13% - Good parks / variety of equipment / safe equipment
- 11% - It’s fun / exciting / can mess around
- 10% - The sports facilities / football pitches / skate parks
- 9% - There’s lots of space

*“Its fun being with my friends”*

*“I like that there are lots of different parks in Penarth and also we can go to the beach and the woods and Cosmeston lake. I like that there are cafes and toilets at the parks”*

*“No busy road. I can get home quickly”*

*“Most of the time there is lots of space for us to play and mess around”*

*“That I can be who I want to be”*

*“I get to play what I want”*

*“its safe and makes us feel safe so we can enjoy ourselves and have fun while playing”*

*“Big open spaces to free play, be imaginative and feel safe”*

*“I feel safe in my street”*

*“We can go and play but also sit and chill”*





The top 5 responses to 'What's not good about your area for playing and hanging out and needs to be made better' were:

- 17% - lack of indoor facilities for when there is wet weather
- 16.5% - lots of litter
- 9.5% - outdated equipment in play areas
- 9% - busy roads / lots of traffic / speed of traffic
- 8.5% - lots of dog poo

*“cleaner grass with no dog poo”*

*“Nothing for teenagers to do other than hang around in parks where there's nothing to do if you're not sporty. Would like more indoor places like a cinema”*

*“The parks are a bit old and need new equipment. And there isn't always much equipment for my age”*

*Sometimes it's too young but sometimes it's too hard for me and is for older children”*

*“Would love more opportunities to meet up with friends from school outside of school as friends in class live across the Vale”*

*“We always want to play football, but when it's muddy, there's no where to play...all cages are locked up, the school ones aren't open, and hardly any other football areas to play in that aren't grass”.*

The top 5 things children and young people like to do when they are playing is:

(1) playing on games console/computer	(2) running and jumping around	(3) playing on park equipment
(4) painting, drawing, colouring	(5) sports	

A full report regarding the survey responses is available.

### **‘Play Have Your Say’ survey for Parents/Carers**

Parents and carers are recognised as key influencers in determining how, when, and what play opportunities children and young people can access. It is therefore essential that they understand the importance of giving children the time, space, and freedom to choose how, where, and when they play. While adults are often asked to speak on behalf of their children, their perceptions do not always align with the views of children and young people, who frequently respond differently to similar questions.

To explore these differences, a ‘Play – Have Your Say’ survey was conducted with adults, mirroring many of the questions asked in the children and young people’s survey. A total of 88 adult responses were received—significantly fewer than in the previous assessment. In addition to the survey, in-person discussions were held at events and sessions, offering adult residents the opportunity to share their views on play in the Vale.

The findings show that most parents and carers recognise the value of play, citing benefits such as fun, relationship-building, confidence, creativity, relaxation, resilience, and problem-solving. Many also expressed appreciation for the natural environment in the Vale and gave positive feedback on some fixed play areas. However, as in the previous assessment, adults tended to be more critical of available play opportunities than children and young people, particularly regarding fixed play areas. While children did mention these areas, their responses were generally more positive and also highlighted a broader range of spaces where they enjoy playing.

### **Consultation and Engagement at Play and Non-Play Events and Activities**

The delivery of play sessions and events has proven to be an effective way to consult with children and families. These engagements continue to inform future activities and actions. Targeted community projects—such as those linked to the Play Friendly Schemes at St Helen’s and Oakfield Primary—have benefited from dedicated funding. These initiatives have enabled ongoing engagement, with the Play Team building strong relationships with staff and residents to tailor projects to the specific needs of each community.

These projects also support insight gathering through tools like the ‘Your Playtimes’ survey, which invites children and staff to share their views on playtime experiences.

Recognising that not all residents attend play-specific activities, consultation has also taken place at broader community events such as fetes and school sports days. These settings attract a more diverse audience and help capture a wider range of perspectives. A variety of engagement methods were used, including secondary-age young ambassadors interviewing primary school children about what they enjoy when playing, where they like to play, and what barriers they face.



### **Disabled Children and Young People**

Ongoing consultation with disabled children, young people, and their families is carried out through initiatives such as the Families First Holiday Club and Teenscheme. Feedback is gathered during these sessions to evaluate the success of the provision and ensure it continues to meet the needs of both children and their families.

To gain deeper insight, a targeted survey was distributed to families of disabled children. This was shared via the Play Team and partner organisations, including the Child Health and Disability Team and The Index—a database maintained by the Family Information Service specifically for families of disabled children and young people. A total of 88 responses were received. The feedback from this consultation, along with insights from partners such as the Child Health and Disability Team and the Early Help Team, has been instrumental in shaping current provision. It has also helped identify gaps in services, which are now being considered as part of the ongoing action plan.

### **Utilising Non-Play Specific Insight - Insight Database**

Since the last Play Sufficiency Assessment, the local authority has undertaken a wide range of consultation and engagement activities across various departments. These efforts have generated valuable insights that inform both the current PSA and future planning. For example, the Youth Service's Make Your Mark campaign captured the voices of over 4,000 young people. More recently, staff visited all secondary schools in the Vale to gather young people's views on the Placemaking plans being developed for the four towns—plans that directly influence leisure opportunities, social spaces, and access to activities.

The Vale Play Team works with the Strategy & Partnership Team to align with engagement activities led by the Public Services Board, particularly in the development of its Well-being Plan. This includes drawing on data from the Let's Talk About Life in the Vale survey, which invited residents to share their experiences with public services, their priorities for the future, and ideas for improving community involvement in decision-making.

The Play Team also actively participates in the Public Participation Practitioners Network, which facilitates the sharing of consultation data and insights across internal partners. Additional sources of insight include surveys conducted by the Family Information Service, as well as feedback from Active Travel, S106, and planning consultations. These diverse data sources are being compiled into an Insight Database to support the identification of future play priorities.

As part of the consultation process, Town and Community Councils were invited to share relevant insights from their own community engagement. While the feedback received so far has been limited, it is hoped that this will increase as partnerships continue to develop.

## 4. Maximising resources

### Budget Context and Challenges

At the time of completion of the last PSA in 2022, the Council was undertaking a major budget review across its service areas due to the unprecedented financial challenges being faced. The play budget has been maintained for the 3-year period since then, which can be seen as positive at a time when the Council's resources were diminishing. The Council's core financial allocation for play does not provide a delivery budget. However, it does provide a contribution to the employment of the Principal Healthy Living Officer, part of whose role involves overseeing play development and leading on the Play Sufficiency Assessment. It also provides a contribution to the Senior Healthy Living Officer (Play Development Officer) role, with the remainder of this post funded via Families First funding and through the recharge of some services provided by the Officer.

With ongoing financial challenges faced by the Local Authority and partners, difficult decisions have to be made regarding how the limited financial resources are spent. It is recognised that play has a cross-cutting positive impact on other agendas. However statutory services such as Education and Social Services are seen as a priority over non-statutory services such as play. This may impact on the resources available to Play Services. Funding has been identified to secure the play infrastructure and programme for the 2025 – 2026 period. However, it is unclear what financial resources will be available in future years. Alternative methods of delivery such as the identification and training of volunteers through the Play Friendly Schools programme is being looked at in an attempt to support developments. However, with the limited capacity within the paid play workforce within the Vale, this will be a long-term process which will be reliant on engagement and continued interest from community members.





### **A Collaborative Approach to Supporting Play in the Vale of Glamorgan**

There continues to be a focus on internal Council departments and external organisations working together to maximise the financial, physical and staffing resources available. This has been supported by involving a range of individuals in working groups and establishing cross sector panels when considering the use of some play funding pots secured. For example, when the Play Capital funding pot was announced, a panel was created including representatives from Play, Planning, Landscape Architects, Parks and Open Spaces. This brought a wealth of information together to inform decision making. This included knowledge around other funding pots that could compliment the proposed projects and existing / planned projects that could either link to or duplicate proposed plans.

S106 funding continues to support play and leisure. Examples include improving community assets such as fixed play areas, sports facilities and open play spaces. S106 funding is welcomed and is often the only way facilities can be improved. However, it does create some issues with some residents querying why certain parks and spaces are being upgraded whilst the spaces in their communities are not. Since the last PSA, more informative promotion of this funding has been undertaken to educate the public on where this funding has come from and the limitations on where it can be spent.

The attempt to maximise resources also extends past financial resources. It includes the sharing of training, specialist play equipment, specialist disability equipment and facilities. For example, the Play Team have delivered 'Risk Benefit Assessment Training in the Early Years' to staff within Flying Start settings.

### **Welsh Government Funding Supporting Local Opportunities**

Welsh Government grants have been welcomed and used to support access to and enhance play opportunities. These include:

- Playworks Holiday Project – an initiative to support increased open access play opportunities for children and young people during the school holidays, whilst also providing healthy snacks. 306 sessions and events were delivered across school holidays and some weekends between Summer 2022 to March 2025. In 2024 – 2025 more than 2100 children/young people and 1110 adults participated in the free activities. The funding also supported the training of staff.

The Playworks Project was led by the Vale Play Team with partners including KeyCreate, Bridge Between Community Centre and Uniting Church, Butterflies Playgroup, Barry Town Council, 8 Vale libraries, Rotary Club of Barry and Flying Start. This investment has been invaluable to deliver school holiday provision. However, the allocation has remained stagnant so there is a challenge in maintaining the level of delivery with increased costs faced.

- Families First Funding – supporting delivery of the Families First Holiday Club (disabled children up to age 11) and Teenscheme (disabled children aged 12 – 18). Both support playscheme opportunities during school holidays whilst also providing respite support for families, supporting the work of statutory services such as Social Services and Early Help Team - demonstrating the cross-cutting impact play services can bring.
- Early Years & Childcare Capital funding – improving Palmerston Community Learning Centre premises where the CIW registered playscheme is delivered. Also supporting childcare settings which support children to play.
- Childcare and Play Grant – funding the Community Play Officer post which is supporting community play provision.
- Summer of Fun 2022 - a fun-filled programme of free play, sports and cultural activities aimed at children and young people up to 24 years and their families to support the mental, social and physical wellbeing of children and young people - helping them to continue their recovery from the Covid restrictions. Also supporting families impacted by the cost-of-living crisis by providing free activities over the summer holidays. Some targeted provision was also provided. 946 sessions delivered in more than 147 activities with 130 partners involved. 19,571 attendances in activities across 23 different areas of the Vale.
- Play Capital Funding 2025 – the funding allocation will support:
  - Upgrading of Palmerston children's play area in Barry
  - Upgrade existing play area near Conybeare Road in Sully
  - Upgrade Eweny play area
  - Generator purchase for use at events
  - Installation of an inclusive seesaw and safety surface in Llantwit Major park
  - Improved surfacing and access to playground on Caerleon Road, Dinas Powys
  - Play equipment for Bwrlwm Welsh language playschemes
  - Play equipment and event shelters for Vale Council open access play programme
  - Skateboard ramp in Wick
  - Transportation and erection of Play Cubes to identified venues to support community play



## 5. Monitoring

### **Lead Strategic Responsibility for Play in the Local Authority**

The Lead Director for Play is the Director of Housing & Environment Services. The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing serves as the portfolio holder for play within the Council's Cabinet.

### **Strategic Alignment**

The cross-cutting impact of play is recognised by inclusion within key strategic documents including:

- Vale 2030 - Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan
- Public Service Board - Good Food & Movement Plan

Play positively contributes to a range of objectives and actions within these strategic plans and contributes to broader objectives such as health, wellbeing and community development. There are also a range of objectives and actions within these plans that positively impact on children and families' ability to play. However, the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan are not explicitly listed amongst the plans contributing to Vale 2030 or the Good Food and Movement plan. This indicates a need to strengthen awareness and integration of the Play Sufficiency Assessment across internal and external partners and plans.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment supports the Well-being Assessment which recognises the importance of play to children and young people's physical, mental, social and emotional health and well-being.

Vale Play representatives have been involved in the creation of the recent iteration of the Public Service Board Good Food and Movement Plan (2024-2026). Together with Public Health representatives, they have advocated for the inclusion of play within this plan. Play will continue to be represented on the Good Food and Movement Implementation Group, whose role includes progressing and reporting against actions in the plan.

With the support of Play Wales and Welsh Government, conversations have taken place with Cardiff & Vale Regional Partnership Board representative to seek to ensure that the play agenda is considered in broader regional planning and provide an avenue for the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Actions Plans to be reported. Actions to progress this are to be implemented.

### **Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms**

Progress against play actions is monitored and reported through several channels:

- Quarterly reports to the Scrutiny Committee and senior management as part of corporate performance plan reporting
- Annual Play Review, shared with: Scrutiny Committee; Cabinet; Senior management; Internal departments; External partners
- Play-related outcomes are included in: Corporate Equalities updates; Reports on cost-of-living support projects; Corporate annual reporting processes; Cardiff & Vale Good Food and Movement reporting

A Play Sufficiency Monitoring Group is being established to:

- Oversee progress on the Play Action Plan
- Review and update actions to ensure continued relevance
- Ensure effective reporting and accountability
- Support completion of future Play Sufficiency Assessments

Membership will include representatives from:

- Vale Play Team
- Community organisation representation
- Planning
- Parks & Open Spaces
- Public Health
- Active Travel
- Strategy and Insight
- Early Years
- Learning and Skills
- Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing

To maintain effectiveness, membership will be capped. However, mechanisms will be in place to ensure broad partner input into reporting and future assessments. The group will be chaired by the Operational Manager for Leisure, who holds responsibility for play. Membership will be reviewed to ensure effectiveness.





## 5. Conclusion

The completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment has highlighted that, despite limited resources, there are positive play opportunities available across the Vale of Glamorgan. However, access to these opportunities is influenced by a range of factors, including a child or young person's place of residence, demographic background, the attitudes and priorities of parents, carers and other adults regarding the value of play.

Analysis of the individual criteria within the assessment document indicates that progress has been made in several areas. However, this progress continues to be constrained by limited resources. A range of actions—both resource-dependent and resource-neutral—can be implemented over time to enhance play sufficiency across the authority. It is important to recognise that this is a long-term process requiring sustained commitment and collaboration.

As part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process, a one-year action plan has been developed to progress identified priorities. A key consideration in selecting actions for inclusion was ensuring they are achievable within the available timeframe, funding, and resources. Given the ongoing financial pressures faced by the local authority and its partners, budgets allocated specifically to play will be limited.

Despite these constraints, strong collaborative working between partners remains a strength, and it is hoped that this continued cooperation will help identify and leverage resources to support priority actions. While some actions in the plan are designed for short-term implementation, others will require a longer timeframe. As with previous play action plans, this document is intended to be a dynamic, working document that will be reviewed and updated as needed.

Moving forward, there will be a continued focus on targeting resources to support access to play for children and young people who face the greatest barriers. This includes those affected by socio-economic disadvantage, rural isolation, and those with additional needs.

Efforts will also be directed toward supporting organisations and community volunteers to enhance the quality of play opportunities within their local areas. This will be achieved through a structured programme of play training and continuing professional development, alongside initiatives such as the Play Friendly Schools programme.

The local authority and partners will continue to promote inclusive access to play by delivering free, staffed play provision and encouraging no-cost or low-cost play opportunities that families can enjoy together. This includes the delivery of free playschemes and events, as well as the promotion of the Street Play initiative to support doorstep play.

Further consideration will be given to developing mechanisms for assessing the play value of spaces. These assessments will support a more strategic approach to improving existing play environments and guiding the development of new spaces that better meet the needs of children and young people.

# Appendix: Theme Analysis

## Population:

**Matter A:** The number of children in respect of each age range within its area

**Matter B:** The needs of children from different cultures and backgrounds within its area

**Matter E:** Whether there is a charge for play provision and where there is a charge

## What children and young people have told us:

- Satisfaction levels are impacted by where they live. Some children based in rural areas sited a lack of availability of different activities and facilities as a barrier. However, some identified they had better access to more open spaces where they had the freedom to play. Some children in more urban areas of the Vale, for example those who lived away from the coastline or green spaces also identified challenges with lack of opportunities.
- Age related factors were identified as impacting on access to play. Some felt the fixed play areas were more suitable to younger children e.g. under 8's. Some young people highlighted challenges with identifying spaces where they could just hang out, feel safe and feel like they had permission to be.
- 25% of children who identified themselves as disabled indicated their opportunities for playing and hanging out were great and couldn't be made much better. This is significantly lower when comparing to the answers from all respondents which was 41%.
- Access to affordable, indoor activities was a barrier to some children and young people. The cost of accessing the activities was a restricting factor.

*"Big open spaces to free play, be imaginative and feel safe"*  
*"Equipment is not disability friendly"*

## Places where children play:

**Matter C:** The space where children can play, including open space, and any other space

**Matter F:** Traffic measures that are used to promote access to play

**Matter I:** The extent to which education and local development planning policies take into account the need to enhance play opportunities for children

## What children and young people have told us:

- 68% of children and young people play or hang out with friends outside most days or a few days a week. However, 32% indicate they hardly ever or never play outside with friends. The majority of these children report lower play satisfaction levels.
- They value the area's outdoor natural spaces – they enjoy using the open spaces, grassed areas, woodlands and beaches to play.
- Fixed play areas (ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>) and sports facilities (ranked 4<sup>th</sup>) are important to children. The quality, age-appropriateness, and proximity of fixed play areas to where children and young people live significantly influence their play satisfaction levels.
- There are limited affordable, suitable indoor options available for children and young people outside of their homes - particularly during poor weather. This was ranked as the top thing that is not good about playing or hanging out in their area.
- Only 27% of children and young people can play in all of the places they would like to. 31% can only play in a few places or can hardly play in any of the places they would like.
- Traffic and busy roads are an influencing factor when identifying what is good and bad about an area for playing. Some children have identified the lack of cars where they live as a positive. For those who live near busy roads, they have identified this as a challenge (ranked 4<sup>th</sup>).
- The cleanliness of places where they play is important to them. Lots of litter (ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>) and lots of dog poo (ranked 5<sup>th</sup>) were identified as negative things about spaces near them where they could play.

*"Love exploring the outdoors, there's loads of outdoor space where I live"*  
*"There's nowhere to go if it is raining. There's too much traffic"*







### Supervised provision:

**Matter D:** Supervised play provision

**Matter G:** Playwork training and workforce development

### What children and young people have told us:

- 70% felt their opportunities for playing and hanging out were great or good. 30% felt it could be made a bit better, was not good and needed to be made better or was rubbish.
- 45% of those who completed the 'Play Have Your Say' survey stated they always feel safe when playing or hanging out. 44% usually feel safe, whilst 4% never feel safe. 7% do not play outside. Within the survey they identified factors around safety as something that affects their opportunity to play in their area. This included not feeling safe, scary adults and teenagers, drugs and alcohol, and bullying. Children who attend supervised play and youth sessions feel safe as there is an adult present should they need support.
- There are a range of supervised spaces where children play and hang out. These include playschemes, Youth clubs, sports and dance clubs, uniformed groups (e.g. Scouts, Brownies), soft play and play centres. With the exception of Council run provision and a few voluntary groups, the majority have a cost to access.
- 76% felt they had enough time to play during their school break time and lunchtime, with 24% not satisfied.
- Being able to play with friends, make friends and play with others is the top thing they rank about what is good about playing in the area.

### Policy synergy, engagement, advocacy and information:

**Matter F:** Measures used to promote access to play, including the provision of information, publicity and events

**Matter G:** Training opportunities for the play workforce

**Matter H:** The level of community engagement and participation

**Matter I:** The extent to which other policies of a local authority take into account the need to enhance play opportunities for children

### What children have told us:

- They enjoy spending time playing with their friends and families. Events including play activities supports them to do this. Events can often be focussed in main towns which can make them less accessible to those that live in more rural areas.
- Some children and young people do not know about the free play opportunities available through projects like playschemes and youth activities so we need to consider how we promote these opportunities so the information reaches them.



# Population

## Strengths

- Relatively even distribution of play spaces among wards in the Vale based off population figures.
- Wealth of demographic and community based data within wellbeing assessment and census.
- General play needs of children are understood.
- Focus of open access provision is in areas of deprivation so there is knowledge of the play needs and barriers faced.
- Play is an international language - Council run provision is delivered on an inclusive basis.
- Council provides a service supporting disabled children during school holidays - based on bespoke needs gained as a result of good relationships with parents and professionals.
- Separate provision for disabled children and those with additional support needs has been delivered, but it was established that inclusive provision was more beneficial to participants, staff and families.
- Vale Inclusive Play provision is currently supporting children who identify as non-binary.
- Excellent play service team and service offer in the Vale
- Data and insight - lots of data available to support decisions - need to use effectively and collaboratively e.g. Let's Talk results, schools, consultations
- We want to have the conversations, some barriers getting to the right people
- Renewing the Equality Impact Assessment in the Vale to make easier for services
- Corporate Plan 2025 - 30 & Strategic Equality Plan: People and Places are key objectives but need to ensure children and play are referenced specifically
- WESP - welsh speakers high on agenda - schools, Mudiad Meithrin, Urdd, Menter Bro Morgannwg etc.
- Demand and work being done - but thinly spread, could be more
- Partnership working with existing community groups (Flying Start) - Bridge Between, Bethel Tots

## Weaknesses

- Whilst there is a wealth of demographic & community data - as funding to deliver play is externally funded, the target for funding may not fit with what the demographic and community data is telling us are the priorities.
- Limited data available to undertake geographical comparisons based on play need (as opposed to e.g. deprivation)
- Due to limited resources, unable to facilitate regular term time provision within identified areas of deprivation
- Health & education capture data on disabled children & their support needs, but it is not readily available to play providers
- Despite inclusive nature of LA run provision, not all premises & spaces provided at low/no cost are accessible to the needs
- Due to inclusive nature of the Vale Inclusive Play Provision (formerly FFHC), this is often seen as answer to supporting families of disabled children in relation to their own childcare and/or respite needs, instead of the play needs of the child. Lack of provision for children with additional needs
- Minimal fee for Council play provision means the service is often used as cheaper alternative to childcare/respite for children with trauma, without consideration for the benefits/suitability for the children
- Availability of Facilities & Funding in recognition of the benefits of play provision
- Untapped collaborative opportunities & partnership working within council's services
- Lack of understanding of play value of open spaces and play areas to understand if they are meeting the needs
- Clear understanding of current condition of play areas and play spaces in the context of future investment needs to maintain and develop provision and address shortcomings in provision
- Decline in birth rates, reducing social interaction and use of play spaces
- Budgetary restraints Vs Obligations
- Welsh: Council ask Menter to provide play opportunities & provision under the WLPS, Menter say well attended and huge demands but we can offer no more funding; no budget for welsh youth clubs / provision for older children
- Placemaking has identified gaps in youth provision, particularly for 12 - 16 years - recent Cowbridge & Llantwit Comprehensive consultation
- Needs of children and young people in areas of deprivation may be different
- High proportion of ALN / ND children
- Rural areas - lack of transports; poverty; Isolated, lack of provision for population
- Lack of understanding of the distribution of need
- Make spaces for girls - spaces for different groups
- Lack of holiday Childcare

## Opportunities

- To engage, influence and collaborate
- Engaging with other staff networks (as with GLAM) - diverse (global majority) & Abl (Disability)
- Better promotion of provision - groups we seldom talk to - reach out
- Collaboration - who are the council already talking to?
  - Placemaking project
  - Youth Service
  - Schools
- Equality Consultative Forum (ECF)
- Including children and play on corporate policies and plans
- National plans e.g. Cymraeg 2050 - Welsh Language opportunities
- Potential to influence and inform placemaking plans which will be reviewed and updated annually like the Play Sufficiency Assessment - ensure these inform / reference each other
- Age friendly plan / County of Sanctuary
- Changing population - more diverse
- Play Friendly Schools programme aims to support wider community buy in which will hopefully support more provision in geographical areas including area of deprivation, rurality etc.
- Opportunity to link to existing (non-play) community organisations / groups to offer training to increase knowledge & skills to support play in identified communities.
- Raise awareness amongst other partner groups that the Vale Play provision is inclusive.
- Processes and policies in place to support disabled children could be shared amongst professionals across all sectors as one individual document, in order to provide the best possible services.
- Link to representative youth groups through e.g. Youth Service links.

## Threats

- As services are externally funded with specific aims, it is often difficult to justify value for money when focusing on rural areas which have lower participation numbers.
- Community engagement & active involvement is essential to develop new sustainable opportunities in communities.
- LA run play provision is delivered on fully inclusive basis, segregated provision is not provided for specific groups.
- Communication sometimes difficult with families where English is not first language - a lack of understanding of inclusion & services provided can impact negatively on families.
- Families of disabled children have to fill in numerous documents for different services so quality of information provided for play often diluted due to time/form fatigue.
- Whilst LA offer inclusive provision, unable at times to offer support to children who display behaviour that challenges.
- Due to lack of other provision to support respite for children exhibiting aggression, there sometimes is a lack of information provided by parents around child's needs so they are more likely to obtain a space at provision - this impacts on delivery of scheme, on staff, other children and the child themselves where the setting is not appropriate for a child.
- Declining birth rates - less children - but mapping and analysis required to understand this fully
- Consideration (rather than threat) - more ND / ALN children, more children from global majority / ethnic backgrounds etc.
- Increased older population - is that a threat to funding and focus on younger people
- Older people more likely to contribute regarding consultations/voice
- Adults don't always know what children and young people need - best to ask them directly



# Places Where Children Play

## Strengths

- There are existing routes to play areas - they may not be up to standard but they exist.
- The pilot school street closure at Fairfield Primary was successful and we have requests to expand to other schools.
- We have a successful model for delivering cycle training for free to children. 70 pupils learnt to ride/improve skills this year at Barry Bike Club.
- Many play spaces are adjacent to amenity greenspaces, these provide for additional uses as well as improved supervision of children.
- Priority junctions/blended junctions have been implemented in Rhooose and are supported by the IA if conditions allow - as funding comes in they can be implemented in more locations.
- Positive Play Streets pilot (street closures) in 2 Barry streets - led by residents. Play Streets policy now confirmed to enable future street closures to take place.
- Road Safety Officer provides training in schools across the Vale to equip children to cross the road safely.
- Vale Play Team have bilingual "Children Playing" signs which are displayed when play sessions are delivered in communities. These are available to other organisations to use.
- Alleygators Pilot delivered to promote safe play in gated community spaces (lanes behind houses).
- Some Council & community venues e.g. Palmerston Community Learning Centre are receptive to spaces being used for play
- Up to date systems / databases of both the quantity and quality of play spaces (although these require review to be kept up to date) - *does this mean fixed play spaces?*
- Community involvement in raising awareness and identifying where is needed enhancement
- The open space assessment covers a variety of open spaces beyond designated play areas including informal recreational spaces that can be used for play
- Redesign of places that are not "typical" play spaces to function as community play spaces such as roads for play and civic spaces
- Using new/different venues - multi-use community centres / learning centres/schools
- Corporate plan - places objectives we want to make the most of our places
- 104 play areas in the Vale
- Cultural opportunities - Libraires, Art Central, Galleries, Museums
- Good number of outdoor space / free!

## Weaknesses

- Inclement weather - for example flooding can close off footways to parks etc.
- Trend of developers implementing lots of tiny play spaces which account for required area but are uninspiring & unexciting & doesn't warrant regular use. e.g. Ogmere-by-Sea.
- 23 of 24 wards in the Vale suffer from a deficiency in Children's play space judged against the FIT standards.
- There are no ball games & other similar signs in areas across the Vale - no permanent positive signage encouraging play and leisure.
- Lack of capacity to undertake access audits or audit spaces for play value.
- Lack of knowledge of what play looks like in schools and subsequently what the play needs are.
- No Vale policy in relation to standardised use of school grounds for play/leisure outside of school time - result is it really depends on the school ethos as to whether they are community focused.
- Needs accurate, robust quality assessments - no strategic approach to tackling poor quality spaces
- Section 106 funding only in areas that are developed. Neglect in rural areas where there is also lower populations
- 23 of 24 wards in the Vale of Glamorgan are deficient in the required provision for play spaces
- Action Plan required below SPG level
- Need for design of new developments to be more pedestrian use friendly and encourage play uses on the street - home zones
- Green spaces are not assessed for play value - improves design aspects to encourage play
- Neighbourhood Play Spaces not assessed
- Access audits required to assess how children can reach their local spaces and whether they are open to the public: gated play areas in Barry in high crime areas but are not accessible to all children
- Fixed play provision standard required
- Costs to physically accessing places
- Public transport / transport cost etc
- Safe routes to play - traffic?
- Not having facilities / spaces for 12 - 16 year olds mean they use parks aimed at Under 12s which puts younger children off using them
- Lack of indoor play spaces
- Costings to hire facilities

## Opportunities

- School Street closures - had 1 pilot at Fairfield Primary and want to expand to other schools in the Vale - creating a safer environment in front of schools.
- Ensure developers include good AT infrastructure when building developments.
- Bring all the routes on the Active Travel Network Map up to standard for walking/cycling.
- Playground road safety/cycle tracks give opportunity for pupils to learn through play in school - extend to community spaces.
- Sites brought forward through Replacement Local Development Plan are larger in size providing opportunities for additional & larger areas of play.
- More streets can be brought onto the Play Streets project - resident led.
- Develop a digital map of spaces to play - which also includes info around accessibility of equipment in fixed play spaces.
- Discussions currently taking place with University Health Board around communication boards in some parks to support disabled children.
- Play Team's bilingual "Children Playing signs" could be used by partners.
- Potential to develop more community focussed spaces to play through Alleygators project (if funding was available).
- Development of Loose Parts Play pilot within schools will allow Play Team to engage with schools & discover their play needs.
- Ensure schools are aware of the importance of play & the need for all children to be given time, space & permission to play during school day.
- School playing fields can be made better use of - being open to booking systems to allow public use
- Make spaces better and improve them for specific groups
- Play equality and value assessments
- Placemaking plans can identify provision
- RLDP provide updated framework and key sites are large for this plan period so can provide significant provision to meet deficiencies
- Get green infrastructure plan adopted - key for integrating open spaces and their uses
- Section 106 funding
- Open space and play strategy to direct funding - Equality and Value, Placemaking plans
- Development, regeneration and windfall sites

## Threats

- Active Travel/SRiC funding is being cut which reduces our ability to construct/improve routes.
- Working with schools to develop Active Travel School Plans to develop school streets - schools have higher priority work/resource issues.
- Resource issues - having staff available to dedicate to projects.
- It is difficult to improve some infrastructure - there could be no opportunity for a footway in rural areas for example.
- Risk that designated spaces are not maintained and so damage the value of the space. e.g. Caerleon Road (south) is unmaintained and impedes open space that could otherwise be used for playing.
- The public do not understand what a priority/blended junction is and think we are putting vulnerable people at risk.
- Need for capacity and digital software which can support the Places to Play digital map.
- No funding available to deliver e.g. Alleygators project (which seeks to turn lanes behind housing into usable community spaces).
- Funding / Resources
- Anti social behaviour - linked to poor maintenance or spaces fall out of their designated "play use" e.g. Caerleon Road, Dinas Powys - disused play area hinders use of surrounding amenity space; Discourages use
- Poor design can lead to lack of use where improper design leads to boggy ground



# Supervised Provision

## Strengths

- Free open access provision provided during school holidays funded through Welsh Gov Playworks funding.
- Vale Inclusive Playscheme (FFHC) providing supported access to play for disabled children aged 4-11 years during school holidays.
- BWRLWM Welsh language scheme delivered by Menter Bro Morgannwg - free open access provision funded by Council
- There is a recognition amongst many organisations and residents of the benefits of supervised play provision
- Supervised provision delivered exposes participants to range of play types.
- Council run open access provision is free
- Vale Family Information Service keeps accurate & up to date records on registered and unregistered childcare & play settings via Dewis Cymru.
- FIS e-news, social media posts and activity programmes promote a range of play opportunities
- Play To Go Project/Menu offering free resource hire to community groups & play groups - expanding the potential play types available within settings.
- Keycreate community organisation offer family-based weekend play sessions targeting families with disabled children. Play Team support through provision of a qualified playworker. Also supports transition to FFHC.
- Vale Play Team & Clybiau Plant Cymru partnership for playwork training delivery - supporting organisations to meet CIW regulations & offering training to community volunteers.
- Unregistered Council play provision is delivered according to CIW standards.
- Parks & Open Spaces enable use for non-profit making events and activities free of charge. Play Team make use of this access to deliver free events, Play Ranger sessions and sports sessions in local parks and open spaces, as do other organisations.
- Positive link between sports & play services - good understanding that play is the starting point for future sports and physical activity participation with informal sports activities offered within supervised (Council run) play provision.
- Vale Play Team now have a CIW registered open access playscheme at Palmerston Community Learning Centre.
- When play funding becomes available & offered to external partners, there is an expectation those partners will meet certain criteria regarding standards & expectations.
- Playworks funding supports play training as well as Childcare & Play Grant. The playwork workforce have access to training and qualifications in playwork.
- Quality Assurance Scheme in the Vale managed by Early Years, Childcare & Play.
- Flying Start: Curiosity Approach in childcare settings; Stay and Plays for Under 5s in partnership with other organisations; Use of beaches and parks; Walk and Talk sessions for all in the Vale; Expansion of Flying Start across the Vale and more early intervention; Rainbow Group for Under 5s with additional needs in Barry & St Athan; 1 to 1 support to play with parents
- Community Play provision in rural areas delivered by volunteers
- Working with partners who have their own volunteers
- Some children are grateful for adult supervision (bullying etc)
- Training for older children to become playscheme leaders in both English & Welsh through Vale Play Team and Menter Bro Morgannwg

## Weaknesses

- Would benefit from wider promotion of free play provision, using range of promotional methods - with all partners supporting promotion & sharing of info with families linked to their services.
- Demand for Families First Holiday Club exceeds resources.
- Due to lack of funding, there is no regular term time open access staffed play provision - so it is more difficult to build a relationship with communities & promote/encourage them to attend school holiday provision - parents less likely to send children to an activity if they do not know the people delivering.
- As staffed play provision is externally funded, need to ensure meet delivery criteria, e.g. targeting certain groups /communities. This means not always able to deliver in all desired locations - so having to manage expectations of communities/CILs etc.
- It can be difficult gaining access to community venues such as community centres & schools to deliver play provision - this means that location of provision can often be dictated by venue availability as opposed to play need.
- Not a high level of awareness around the Play To Go menu.
- No staffed play provision available for children/YP with high behavioural support needs - FFHC only able to cater for certain level of need.
- Due to lack of funding, previous projects such as Healthy Active & Indoors /Outdoors, Woody Wanderers, Forest Schools etc are not taking place or if they are, they are very sporadic.
- Charges in place for use of most school grounds/premises, & community facilities. Charges incurred by internal departs & external providers. Some examples of free access.
- The LA does not have the capacity to regularly monitor and check unregistered play provision delivered by partners in relation to standards.
- The LA does not have an internal staff development budget ring fenced for play including playwork - reliant on annual Playworks and Childcare & Play Funding.
- CPD opportunities are available to play staff, however the opportunities are not always accessible to playwork workforce due to their other term time roles. Training is usually focussed in Barry.
- Playwork is not included in local Workforce Development strategies.
- Workforce issue identifying qualified play staff
- As budgets decrease, less focus on rural areas
- Lack of transport in rural areas
- Relying on volunteers (some then bring own children and focus on them)
- Used to have a Play Wales officer that supported community play but no longer funding available
- Schools operate differently across the Vale e.g. church schools in rural Vale less open to play / community provision - can be a barrier
- School playing fields provide opportunity for play space. However, schools concern about use of facilities and booking systems are needed.
- Older children don't want 'supervision'. Would like open outdoor space with a shelter. Need to socialise
- Not enough provision for all groups in all areas. Access to all.
- Age restrictions -families with multiple children - somewhere to meet all needs?
- Location - access

## Opportunities

- Play Friendly Schools programme - aim of this project supporting year round out of school provision - aim to identify and train community volunteers to facilitate.
- Rebrand of the Play To Go project to increase awareness and use.
- There are various open access play projects that could be made available such as Woody Wanderers (outdoor play) and Healthy Active & Indoor/Outdoors (finance dependent).
- LA Play Team to offer Loose Part Play pilot to improve supervised play provision within schools during the school day.
- Partnership working with Recreate Scrapstore to promote low-cost/no-cost play opportunities to families and settings.
- Funding opportunities that become available will focus upon supervised play provision during term-time as this is currently unable to run.
- Community Councils and volunteers are an untapped resource
- Provide more opportunities for partnership working e.g. Flying Start: working with other parent and toddler groups/agencies such as community groups / community councils; educate / give knowledge that outdoor play is safe; share experiences
- Ensure database is up to date with events etc.
- Flexibility of community groups / community schools to get involved

## Threats

- Current funding stream for staffed open access provision delivered by the Council is secured on an annual basis, so no long term security.
- Lack of appropriately qualified staff available to meet CIW regulations - less people going into playwork as a profession due to limited work opportunities available (due to lack of ongoing funding available). It is always a challenge to meet CIW staffing requirements for e.g. a time limited holiday club such as FFHC.
- Limited access to suitable community facilities - those that can be accessed sometimes come with restrictions on use e.g. what activities can be undertaken.
- Staff retention: time and money is invested into training staff who then move onto other permanent roles. Constant cycle of training
- Some organisations delivering unregistered community provision do not necessarily meet the same standard that the LA would provide.
- Lack of staff available when needed, due to the pressures of those working in other roles requiring a break.
- Pressures on schools mean that they no longer have capacity to backfill staff to attend playwork training.
- The NMS Exceptions Order creates opportunity for organisations to run unregistered provision
- Public Transport
- Lack of Knowledge on the benefits of play both by residents and decision makers/budget holders



# Policy Synergy, Engagement, Advocacy & Information

## Strengths

- Play positively contributes to objectives/priority workstreams in Wellbeing Plan.
- Progress against actions identified in Play Action Plan are reported in corporate KPI/action reporting processes.
- Local Families First programme recognises importance of play & provides funding to support play provision for disabled children & young people (Vale Inclusive Play/Teenscheme).
- Children & Communities plan recognises positive impact of play on children & families – financially supporting a play role.
- Partnership working between some internal departments & external orgs, supporting accessible play opportunities to be available within events.
- Play Team & partners link to national campaigns e.g. National Play Day & Playful Childhoods to promote positive attitudes to play.
- Good information on website & social media promoting Play. Vale FIS shares info on social media pages & via ebulletins to childcare providers and The Index register mailing list.
- Street Play process implemented as partnership between Play Team, Highways & Legal with support of community partners & Play Wales.
- Training needs for Early Years & Childcare workforce is discussed & provided for through EYDCP group.
- Sports and Play eNewsletter sent out to schools, partners and families, and shared on social media with updates on the play offer in the Vale
- Vale Play Team survey the play workforce to capture the training needs of the team and provide training opportunities accordingly.
- Vale Play Team has signed up to Noodle Now, an online training platform offering the play workforce the opportunity to increase CPD
- Very high demand for service: Free activities, Safe places, open access
- Community Engagement / Commitment to facilities: People care
- Corporate Plan Obs: Give every child a good start in life, Health & wellbeing
- Active health and safety
- Collaboration on Section 106 to strengthen opportunity
- Promotion: Social Media advertising; Dewis Directory
- Placemaking: Opportunities for play spaces to be developed in Placemaking plans; Policy synergy; engagement opportunities
- Necessary training for professional development is available
- Improvements to play spaces through funding is advertised
- Engagement - opportunities to collaborate with placemaking/youth teams
- Strategic Equality & Corporate Plans – objectives reference "good start" children and places
- Age friendly – not just "old age"
- County of sanctuary – safe place for all, including children
- Welsh Language promotion strategy – many actions regarding children – WESP
- Schools – relationship with parents
- Family Information Service
- Social Media
- Representation on Equality Consultative Forum
- Community links & partnership work

## Weaknesses

- There is not currently a named person who sits on the Public Service Board who is responsible for monitoring and championing the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan.
- One of the key objectives of the current Well-being Plan is to ensure children in the Vale have the best start in life – play is an integral part of this but is not referenced in the plan (and neither is the Play Sufficiency Assessment/Plan).
- Play workforce does not have access to the extensive training offered to Social Services, Health and Education Staff.
- Lack of web information regarding free to use play facilities
- FIS can ensure they are passing play info to families in a timely manner. They sometimes miss the sports activities unless they check social media daily.
- Provision very short of demand
- Staff retention
- Hard to measure / monitor use
- Funding / budgetary restraints
- Access to and sustainability of facilities
- Raising awareness with local town / community councils to understand the value / impact of play: health and wellbeing
- High level LDP policy exists however policy is revised at the lower levels SPG and below
- Is there someone (e.g. Cabinet Member) on place making organisations championing play?
- Other priorities and focuses for the local authority
- Sharing message / awareness with residents (i.e. those not aware / familiar with play work)

## Opportunities

- There are discussions around a play representative being invited onto the Cardiff & Vale RPB to ensure the voice of the play sector is heard – the Vale representative would deputise for this.
- FIS have a mailing list for 'Family & children services' on Granicus with over 3k subscribers. This could be utilised to promote play opportunities.
- Play Friendly Schools Programme seeks to engage schools and the wider community in play, to enhance play opportunities for children in the Vale.
- Play Friendly Schools Programme seeks to support schools with the development and implementation of a Play Policy.
- Promotion / Provision of Information: Maximising Use. Set up a professionals mailing list within FIS to notify them of sport and play activities with some prior notice.
- Online
- Community Groups
- Schools
- Grant funding
- Casual staffing via internal staff
- Better use of council assets – schools

## Threats

- Families First & Children & Communities Grant funding is not secured on a long term basis so long term planning is difficult.
- Uncertainty of funding each year makes it difficult to strategically plan training, and pay for the training requirements to meet CIW registration.
- Limited capacity and resources – with the budget challenges currently being faced by the Local Authority and Welsh Government, as a non-statutory service, play may be vulnerable



