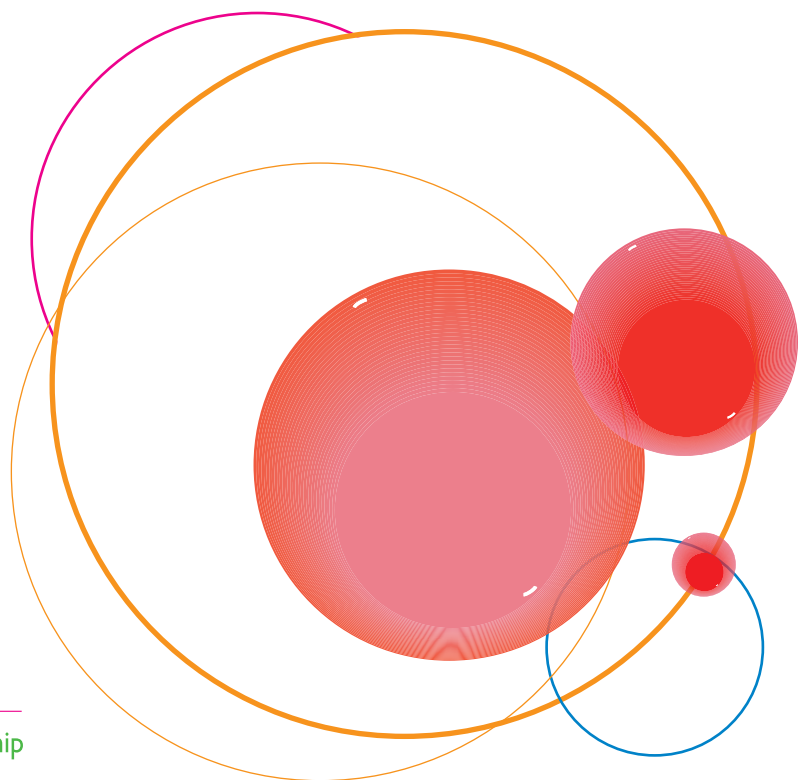


Play Sufficiency Assessment 2013 Summary Document



Introduction

Chapter 2, Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) measure sets out the duty on Local Authorities to undertake a Play Sufficiency Assessment at three year intervals. The Assessment is a necessary step to securing sufficient play provision within the County. It aims to identify gaps in play opportunities, and make recommendations that will meet the needs of children living within the County, and ensure that Carmarthenshire County Council fulfils its statutory play sufficiency duty.

This document provides a summary of the main findings and conclusions of the Play Sufficiency Assessment carried out in 2012/2013.

When discussing 'sufficient' we mean having regard to the quantity and quality of play opportunities. In relation to quantity, children should be able to play freely and take part in a range of recreational activities in their communities at times and in places that meet their needs. Quality play provision offers all children the opportunity to freely interact with or experience a rich play environment that meets the enjoyment, social and developmental needs of children. A rich play environment is one which is flexible, adaptable, varied and interesting. It maximises the potential for socialising, creativity, resourcefulness, challenge and choice.

The Assessment identifies gaps in play provision in relation to:

- Providing for diverse needs
- Space available for children to play
- Supervised provision
- Charges for play provision
- Access to space/provision
- Play workforce
- Community Engagement
- Policy and implementation agendas



The sufficiency duty applies to play opportunities for children aged 0-17 years old. The purpose of undertaking this Assessment is to enable Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children living within Carmarthenshire.

In carrying out the Play Sufficiency Assessment, several lines of research were followed:

- Analysis of demographic and socio economic data to give an indication of the profile of Carmarthenshire and the factors affecting access to play opportunities.
- Analysis of data held by various Local Authority departments and external organisations on the location of play opportunities.
- Consultations with parents/carers via a online questionnaire undertaken in January 2013
- Consultations with Schools
- Consultations with Town and Community Councils
- Consultations with Young People

- Focused consultations with the following Groups:
- WIMD area schools and after school clubs
- Multicultural network
- Young Carers
- Children with additional learning needs
- Gypsy Traveller children
- Play Workforce Survey 2012
- Childcare Sufficiency Assessment consultations with children and child care settings

The standard geography used for small area data in England and Wales are Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), which are built from groups of output areas used in the census. There are 112 of these in Carmarthenshire. Much of the data were collected at LSOA level and have been aggregated to Community Network Areas which are part of the Community Planning Process in Carmarthenshire. There are 6 Community Network Areas: Aman, Gwendraeth, Llanelli, Taf Myrddin, Teifi and Tywi.

Context

Carmarthenshire is the third largest county in Wales in geographic terms, covering some 2,371 square kilometres at mid – 2009, which is 11.5% of the total land-mass of Wales. It is a predominately rural county therefore population sparsity and geographical isolation can have important implications for service provision. Nearly three fifths (58%) of the population of Carmarthenshire live in ‘sparse’ or ‘super sparse’ areas. Three quarters (74%) of people in Llanelli community network area live in urban areas compared with only 9% in Tywi and nine in Teifi community network areas. In the context of play provision, relative sparsity can have implications for the nature and type of play opportunities, and accessibility to opportunities.



Figure 1: Carmarthenshire Community Network Areas

According to the 2011 Census information there are 37,642 children and young people between the ages of 0 and 17 years old living in Carmarthenshire. It is estimated that by 2020 there will be a total of 43,300 children and young people aged 0-19 living within Carmarthenshire.

	0-4 yrs	5-7yrs	8-9yrs	10-14yrs	15yrs	16-17yrs
Tywi	766	493	359	994	236	448
Teifi	622	331	261	668	151	283
Taf/Myrddin	1845	1143	701	1971	424	901
Llanelli	3761	1987	1333	3597	750	1500
Gwendraeth	1689	931	599	1699	406	819
Aman	1627	950	609	1713	398	677

Table 1: Numbers of children living within the Community Network Areas according to age range

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS - Current provision

The Assessment has highlighted that a great deal of provision is currently available across the county that contributes to providing play opportunities for children. These provisions have been mapped using a GIS Planweb system in order to see the geographical spread of provision across the county. The provision ranges from childcare providers, afterschool/holiday clubs, Open Access Play, recreation and leisure facilities, youth clubs, family centres, forest school and a scrap store. The opportunities that these provisions present to children across Carmarthenshire are valuable in contributing to their cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. Many of the play opportunities provided acknowledge the need for accessible and affordable play provision in order to reduce the poverty of experience many children encounter.

However, due to the geographical nature of the county and the diverse population, it is extremely difficult to cater to these needs through existing provision alone.



Case Study - Burry Port Park

Burry Port Memorial Park meetings started in July 2010 to try and raise funds for a new park and sport area in the town on the existing site. The Play Officer and Participation Officer attended the meetings to offer help to look at how the area was used for play and what consultations could be done with young people to establish their play patterns. This included mapping the play space in Burry port and consulting directly with young people through the open day.

The group organised many fundraising events to raise awareness, consult with community members and raise some funds. Meetings were held every 6 weeks to discuss and evidence business plan and funding applications. Each event had over 200 children and their families attending, from a Teddy Bears Picnic to A Pirate Party.

In Feb 2011, the Chair person and treasurer applied to 4 funders, Cwm , £50,000; Coalfields £50,000; Aggregate £100, 000 and People’s Heritage £50,000. Consultations from children and youth were used as supporting evidence and plans have been drawn up by the Parks Department in partnership with SMP (fixed play equipment company) for a children’s play area and a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) in the existing tennis courts and children’s park at the memorial park grounds. A bench was also discussed, to be put into the children’s park in memory of Nia Wyn John- Children’s Participation Officer who worked with many of the local children and young people, involving them in the designs of the project in 2010. Open Space Notice for the land use had been agreed by Leisure within the council. The lease for the park would be the responsibility of the committee for at least 18 months. The land registry was put into the Park Committee’s name.

The funding applications accepted were:

CFAP (Community Facilities Activity Program)	£100,000
Aggregates Levi originally £100,00, but updated to	£125,000
County Collaboration Fund (CCC)	£25,000
Cwm	£20,000

Total of £270.000 of which, £245,000 equates to externally funding. The Park and MUGA official opening was on 29th June 2012. The group continues to hold fund raising events and consultations to engage with the community. They have also connected to many sports groups and Play providers to hold timetabled activities in the MUGA, which makes greater use of the both spaces for all children and young people.

Consultation Findings - Play in Schools

Information was collected from Primary and Secondary Schools within the county using a questionnaire developed by the Play Sufficiency Officer; ascertaining school's views on children and young people's access and provision of play within their school during the school day and out of school hours. The questionnaire was sent out electronically to all schools through the Schools Governor Support Unit during the first week of January with a closing date to email or post a response to the Play Sufficiency Officer by 31st January 2013.



A total of 27 out of a possible 130 schools (21%) completed and returned the form. Schools were asked basic monitoring questions and short closed questions about their play spaces and barriers to play. An opportunity to expand any comments was provided at the end of the questionnaire.

When asked what space is available to pupils, grass and hard surface was provided in the majority of schools (75%). With many stating that grass is made available during dry days and kept off for 'wet play'.

Pupils have access to the indoors at break times, mainly when it is raining or 'Wet Play'. 3% of schools who responded stated that pupils could use the indoor space anytime.

Other spaces for play available in schools (in less than 10%) include bark, sand, gardens, woods and safety surfaces.

When asked how pupils spent their break times, some of the most prevalent responses include: 77% of 27 schools stated they use sport equipment, 67% stated team and running around games, 33% stated socialising and 33% stated a variety of play.

The two highest responses for resources available to pupils were: surface marking (89%) and sports equipment (74%). Other resources included sand pits and water, in majority for the Foundation Phase.

44% of schools stated that staff encourage games and play activities, with 48% saying that break time staff participate or deliver activities to pupils. School Ambassadors were also mentioned as a scheme of mentoring being developed in some schools.

When asked to tick all that would make break times more playful, 40% specified more/ different space, 52% wanted resources, 33% wanted staff, 26% wanted training for all staff including ideas for games, and 11% wanted something else e.g. Shelter.

Over half schools (59%) open their buildings and grounds out of schools hours with supervision from staff in school or hired to organisations. One school in rural Carmarthenshire stated that the pupils can use the school grounds out of hours, no mention of supervision. Schools mainly



use the County Rental System to charge external providers to hire the school and 15% let to after school play clubs free of charge.

There appears to be a diverse level of spaces and resources available to children and young people regardless whether they are in rural or urban areas, primary or secondary schools. Further consultation would be recommended in order to carry out a no cost, low cost approach where the Play Sufficiency Officer would aim to provide schools with training for all staff and advice/ support when issues arise for play spaces. This would work best in partnership with the Health and Safety Officer for school grounds, as policies and procedures are paramount when considering the type of activities and spaces that can be provided.

No schools questioned, declared holding a play policy which would be a consideration, giving support to schools to write up and adopt a Play Policy for their individual areas. It is hoped this would increase the parity of play experiences. A school Play Advocate Program would link policy and practice, as piloted successfully in other counties (Pembrokeshire 2011).

Community / Town Councils and Organisations

The survey was conducted by the Play Partnership for Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The Play Partnership took primary responsibility for sending out questions set by the Play Sufficiency Officer and Play Coordinator to all Carmarthenshire Community and Town Councils and selected organisations that had dealings with children and young people in Play Activities. Responses were obtained from 31 of the 72 Town and Community Councils across Carmarthenshire. This represents a response rate of 43%.

Each Town and Community Council was asked 7 questions and also given an opportunity to add further comments. These questions were:

- Where do Children Play in your community?
- Do you organize anything for children's play or leisure time?
- Are you responsible for any play provision (playing field, fixed play equipment etc.)
- How much do you spend annually on children's play?
- Do you know of any areas children play e.g. common land, farmers field etc.?
- Can you tell us about any new Play activity or provision that has been developed in your area in the last year?
- Is there an individual or group that is the 'Play Champion' in your area or is there an individual or group that you think should be recognised for the work that they do to promote children's play



There was, as expected, a wide variation between the responses from Urban and Rural Town and Community Councils. In some areas, particularly those with a wide geographical base, there was little focus for provision and a perception of low demand.

Expenditure on Play was variable and generally responsive to specific identified needs. Some areas clearly identified a need and set budgets accordingly. However, even where Councils did have an annual spend, the majority did not have a pre set annual budget amount.

In some areas there were proposals in place for new or additional fixed play equipment and parks development. Where this was identified, there was also a perceived need for additional support to help them meet their objectives in fundraising.

Where there were proposals for further provision, it was predominantly focused on fixed equipment, skate facility or MUGA's. In only one case was there a target to develop revenue funded provision. In all over 40% of Councils had some plans to develop further play provision.

In a third of the areas responding, a specific person or group was identified as being a 'champion' for Children's Play. It should be noted that the Play Partnership has plans to work with these identified people to see what support could be given to them.

29% of Town and Community Councils were involved in organising activity for Children and Young People in their leisure time.

45% of Town and Community Councils were responsible for fixed play equipment and inspecting local play areas. Others identified that they were receiving support from the County Council to enable them to do this effectively.

29% of Town and Community Councils had a specified spend on Children's Play. However, much of this was responsive rather than planned spend.

Local Communities have a good understanding of local needs and the range of services available. However, it would be beneficial to cross reference this with the surveys of Children and young people.

Support to properly manage play areas and parks grounds is seen as important and it is positive that the County Council is able to provide on-going advice and guidance. Consideration may need to be given to ensure that as more Town & Community Councils take on responsibility for parks and fixed equipment, the appropriate support and guidance is in place.

In over a third of councils, an individual or small group were identified as the main drivers for developing and managing provision. Additional support for these people is planned, as is a network for Play Champions.



Children's Consultations - Method and Approach

Due to the diverse number of communities within Carmarthenshire, the time of year and the short timescale for consultation, two local children/ young people organisations (Purple Routes and Menter Cwm Gwendraeth) were brought in to work alongside the Play Sufficiency Officer, to conduct a number of the consultation for children up to the age of 11 years. Both organisations had expertise in areas of the county which would allow them easy access to groups of children.

Staff members played a vital role in the delivery process. The consultation for children was delivered in a fun and practical way; Simple, age appropriate activities prepared to take the participants through the consultation process of both closed and open questions (adapted from the Play Wales Toolkit). Games, voting, drawing and other hands-on activities were required to keep the children engaged. In addition, monitoring forms were completed to record qualitative details, filled by the teacher or leader.

The following questions were asked as part of activities:

- When you play/hang out what do you like doing?
 - When playing/hanging out in your community- can you the things you want to?
 - How does playing or hanging out make you feel?
 - Where is your favourite place to play or hang out when not in school?
 - In your community, are there places to play or hang out?
 - What stops you from playing or hanging out?
 - How can we help you to come out to play or hang out more often?
 - Do you attend After School clubs?
 - What do you do when you are there?
 - What is the best thing? Things you least like?
 - What do you play in school when it's dry? Wet?
 - One thing you would change about break times?

Menter Cwm Gwendraeth 'Children's Officer' delivered three sessions to bilingual after school clubs in the Gwendraeth Valley, using the practical age appropriate methods. The clubs were: Cefneithin, Pontyates and Pontyberem. They also drew on support from Menter Bro Dinefwr 'Children's Officer' who delivered a session in Teilo Sant out of school club.

Purple Routes Play Development Officer and Resource Officer planned and delivered eight sessions in open access play sessions (previously running through their community program) and eight sessions in primary schools linked to those areas.

The Play Sufficiency Officer aimed to carry out activities with targeted groups of children ages 4-11 years old, namely: young carers (Barnardos), KIDZone (children with disabilities), Llwynhendy ICC open access, FACT Looked After Children, Llanelli Multicultural Network, CYCA Bryn After School Club and three primary schools: St Mary's, Ysgol Brynteg and Talley School.

All groups were selected to represent the diverse mix of children within the county. In total, 441 children aged 11 years and under have taken part in the consultations through activities. It should also be noted that results show that the number of respondents per question varies as not all respondents have completed every question and in some instances, have ticked more than one choice.

Findings

89% of children stated that playing or hanging out makes them feel happy, followed by 16% being active and 10% describing feelings as free.

Overwhelmingly, scooters / bike(51%) , ball games (30%), chasing games (22%) and hanging out with friends (23%) came out most popular as things to do when out and about.

67% of children feel that they can do what they like the best when out playing. With only 12% feeling that they had hardly anything to do.

The most popular places to play or hang around are the streets (65%), fields or sports pitches (45%) and local grassy areas (43%).

The highest barrier to playing out is rain and cold at 62% followed by homework, dog mess and adults being over 20%.

When asked how we could improve children's opportunities to play or hang out, 31% said to make roads safer, 20% said talk to parents about letting us out, 14% said weather was too bad and 14% said that there was nothing to do when they were out.

Most of the children who attended clubs after school were run by the Primary School or that they belonged to a sports club (predominantly boys)

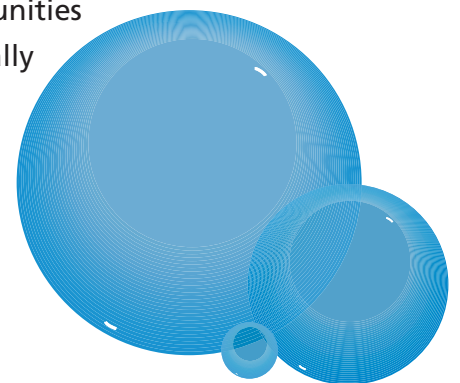
All children stated that they were indoors for wet play and had DVD's, board games or construction as options to free play. When outside, 78% of children said that they hung around with friends at break time and 62% did run around games.

Key Issues

Children and Young People involved in the consultation clearly demonstrated that there are two main areas that need to be considered to be able to provide quality play opportunities for under elevens; the attitudes and understanding of adults and the flexibility of play spaces.

Play makes the majority of children happy and active, play opportunities need to be protected and time made for freely chosen, intrinsically directed play to occur.

98% of children questioned with special needs do not play out without adult supervision, with majority meeting friends in school, organised clubs or events.



Young Persons Questionnaire

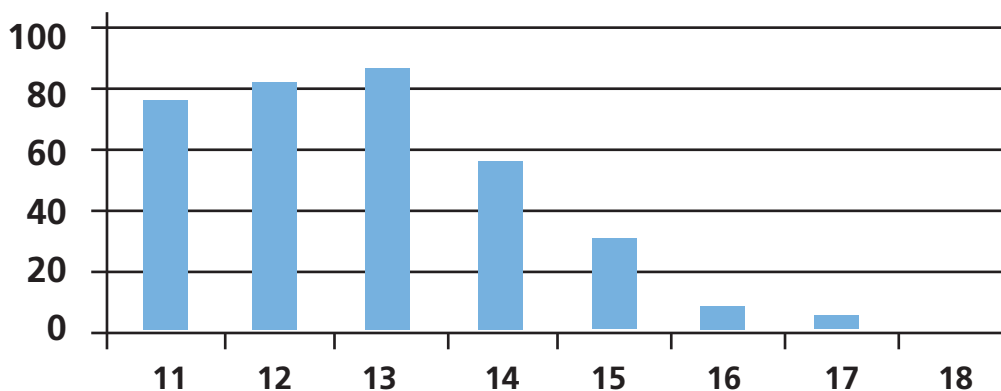
The consultation collected opinions on young people's play experiences and hanging out in their community. A bilingual paper questionnaire was designed with mainly closed questions that were in line with the children's consultation. In order to compare the results and get an idea of views in a short period, the need for simple multiple choice questions were designed.

In total, 500 questionnaires were distributed through youth organisations and departments. This included 5/60 school based officers, youth based youth workers, youth clubs, church youth clubs, Young Offender Officers, Carmarthenshire Youth Council, Integrated Children Centres and Sports Groups.

The adults from the groups were asked to distribute the questionnaires to young people between 11 and 18 years old, and collect them in when completed, rather than a postal method. A total of 383 questionnaires were returned. The process was time consuming, as the Play Sufficiency Officer collated all the paper copies together, however, the 77% return rate illustrates the attainment worked in this instance.

49.5% of the 383 questionnaires returned were from males and 50.5% from females. The chart below shows the ages of the participants, noting that 11 to 13 year olds gave the largest response.

How old are you?

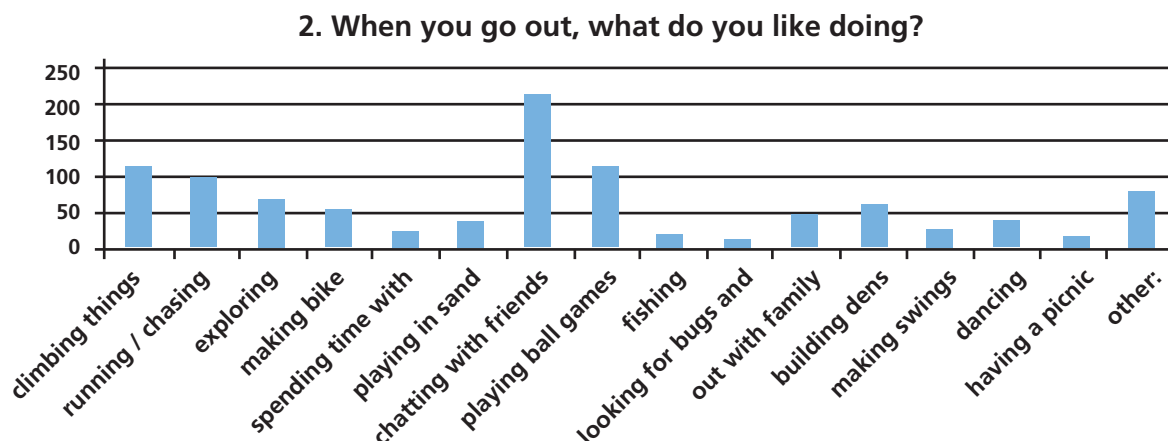


When asked what school / college were attended, there shows a broad cross section of the county. Responses came mainly from Secondary Schools.

The language mainly spoken by the respondents was English (76%), 21% noted Welsh as a first language and remainder spoke Polish and one another language not stated. It should be noted that some pupils in Welsh speaking schools indicated English as a first language, when they could converse in both.

When asked how often young people hang out, 50% stated most days, 24% stated a few days a week, 11% said hardly ever, 4% only went out with adults and 9% said they didn't go out at all.

Young People were given multiple choices on what they did when they went out, they could tick all that apply. Below is the chart of responses:



Other answers given from young people were: shopping, Xbox/ Face book, outdoor pursuits, cinema, swimming pool and 'nothing'. The highest response was chatting with a friend, that features high in children's under 11 years responses.

When asked to select a feeling to describe how they felt when hanging out, the top three answers were, 295 young people felt happy, 163 felt active and 139 felt free.

In the young people's opinion, 55% can do the things they like in their community, 32% can do some things that they like and 13% cannot or hardly do what they like in their community.

In contrast when asked if the places are available to hang around or play in, 49% said yes lots of places, whilst the remaining 51% said that there were little or no places to hang around. Favourite places to hang out included: 140 responses for streets, 102 said a football field, 68 said a skate/ cycle park, 77 said a beach or river, 63 said a grassy area and 96 said somewhere else like town, cinema or at home.

Answers given that stop or create barriers to playing or hanging out include, 147 stated rain/ cold, 77 were busy with electronic devises like x-box, 114 had homework to do, 56 young people said they had nothing to do when out, 52 were busy with clubs, 24 stated bullies, 22 stated they were not allowed out.

When asked how we could help young people play / hang out more often, 79 young people wanted transport, 91 stated clear dog mess, 79 stated better facilities including shelters and better parks / places to hang out for teenagers, 56 wanted safer routes to access play spaces and 70 wanted parents to understand that it was okay to play out, 48 answered deal with bullies and 40 said that adults who move them along could be spoken to.

The majority of young people have positive feelings of being out playing or hanging out and most are out more than a few times a week.

In relation to barriers, further links with transport to investigate the support for young people to access play spaces, however, this would be

very different dependant on the area, as urban towns have regular bus routes, also consideration to the type of transport suitable for young people with disabilities.

As high numbers of young people were restricted by cold or wet weather and a high number showing interest in shelters and more interesting places to play, it would be recommended that when communal open spaces or parks are being designed, that consideration to the young people through consultation is included.

Parent/ Carer Survey

A collection of closed questions were designed to get a quick response through a survey monkey. This process was easy to set up and could be accessible to large number of parents.

Questions asked were:

- How often do your children go out to play or hang out with friends?
- Do you think children have enough time for playing or hanging out?
- Where are your children's favourite places to play or hang out?
- Can you explain why they like these places?
- When your child is out playing with friends, how far can they go?
- How do your children usually get to the places where they play?
- How worried are you about your child's safety when they are playing out?
- Is there anything that makes it difficult for children and young people to play or hang out? If yes, what?
- Overall, how good are your child's opportunities for playing out?
- What could be done to help improve your child's opportunities for play?

The online questionnaires went live on the 7th January 2013. An email was sent to all staff at the council, Children Centres, family centres, Multicultural Network, child minders, play organisations on the data base and links to the survey put on the county's Twitter page and web page. Staff also posted links on Facebook parent pages.

In addition to the online survey, there was a substantial number of paper copies printed to enable those without internet access to take part. Children's Centre and family centre staff were asked to make parents and carers aware of the consultation and encouraged them to respond to it. Results were added online by the Play sufficiency officer.

The survey closed on the 31st January 2013. In total 311 responses were logged on the Survey Monkey.

Hard to reach parents were best approached via paper format through family services at the Integrated centres and Family Centres.



As expected, the largest number of responses came from parents in Carmarthen, Ammanford and Llanelli, which relates to the most densely populated areas. Other less densely populated wards were represented.

93% of participants classed themselves as white British, 3 % are white from another country, 1% is Chinese or Eastern and the remainder preferred not to say.

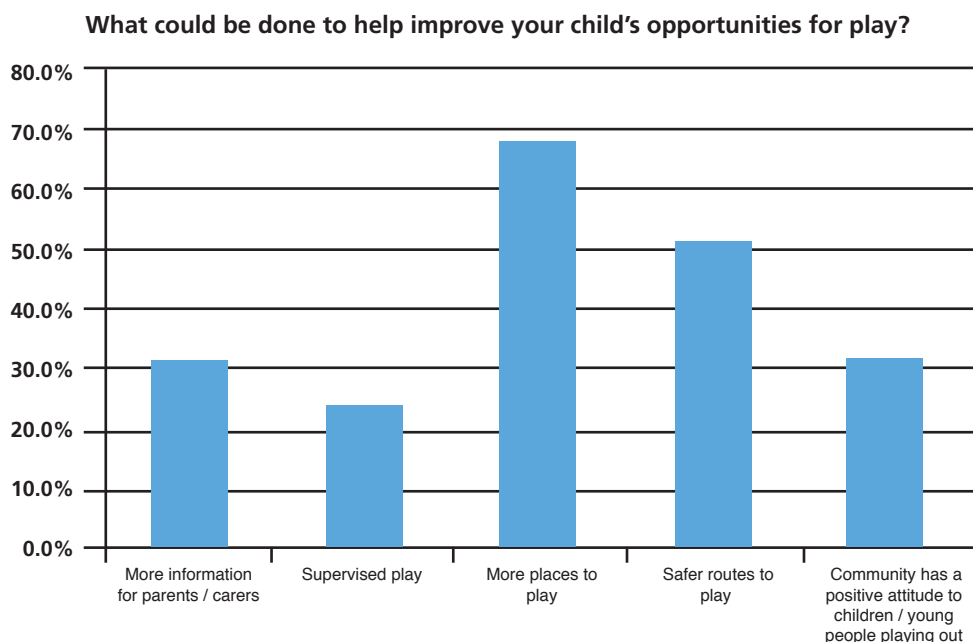
50% of those responding could understand spoken Welsh, 46% could speak Welsh, 45% could read Welsh and 34% could write Welsh.

The majority of parents had 1 or 2 children with ages ranging from 0 up to 18 years. Nearly 4% of parents responding had children with disabilities.

Parents felt that children go out a few days a week (38.9%), with only 10.3% going out most days, 29.4% hardly ever going out and 21.4 % saying that children do not go out, mainly due to the age of the child.

24% of children have more than enough time out playing according to parents, 38.2% having just enough, 32.3% would like children to have more and 5.5% wanting much more time.

Main place spaces identified by parents are in the house and garden, again, this could be due to parents having children under 8 years old. A high proportion of parents (38.2%) stated play spaces in parks with fixed play equipment or 25.6% in indoor play areas. Other comments covered town centre, cinema, sports clubs and activity clubs.



Majority of parents' state that their children play in spaces because of its safety (69.3%), 54% stated that it was near their home, 40.8% said it was to meet friends there and 34.2% said because it was in there garden.

Most parents questioned, either did not allow playing out or allowed their children to be insight and near the home. 12.8% allowed children to be up to 10 minutes away, 12.4% were allowed in streets about 15 minutes away and 23% were allowed further afield.

63.7% of children are taken to the play spaces compared to 22.2% who walk on they're own. 44.3% of parents are worried for their child's safety but allow them out, only 7% don't worry, 32% often worry and find it difficult to let children out whilst 16.7% are so worried that they do not let children out.

81% of adults stated that there were things that made it hard to let children play out. Parents could choose more than one reason: 78.3% said road traffic, 39% said other adults, 38% said dog mess, 25.5% said other children, and 24.5% said parked cars. Other comments in this field include: fear of abduction, drugs on the streets, lack of facilities, no parks near our home, anti-social behaviour and weather.

Parents believe overall, opportunities for children to play are okay, but needs to be made better. 67% want more places to play (comments are directed towards the condition of existing parks and lack of resources). 50.7% stated safer routes to play would help improve their children's opportunities, including reduced parking, signs for children to know where to play and for adults to be aware of children playing.

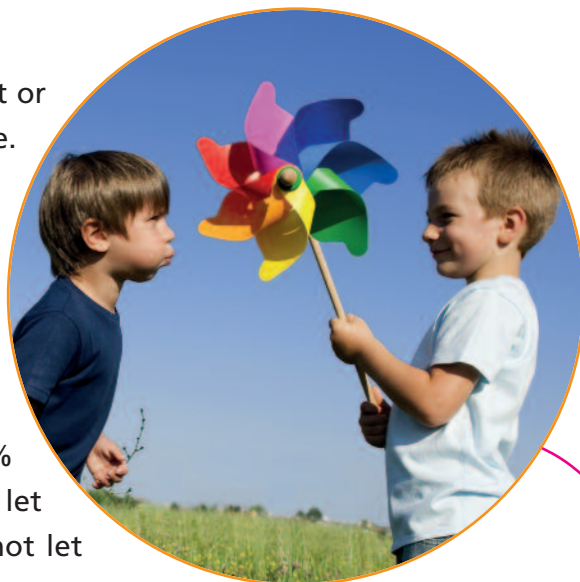
GAP ANALYSIS

Matter B: Providing for diverse needs

As noted earlier, nearly three-fifths (59%) of the population of Carmarthenshire live in 'sparse' or 'super sparse' areas. One of the domains in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD): Child Index (2011) is a geographical access to services domain. This combines a number of indicators relating to access to primary schools, public libraries, leisure centres and secondary schools. The most accessible areas within Carmarthenshire are concentrated in Llanelli and Amman Community Network Areas and Carmarthen Town. The most deprived areas in relation to access to services are the most rural areas of the county.

Issues of sparsity and accessibility affect the provision of play opportunities for children living in these areas. The distribution of play provision follows a concentrated path, with more focus on areas high socio economic disadvantage (urbanised areas) rather than the areas of high access to provision disadvantage.

Play Opportunities for children 0-10 years old tend to be focused within family Centres, Mobile Bus provision, Integrated Centres, After school and Holiday clubs. However, within the most rural areas of the community, namely the Taf/Myrddin, Teifi and Tywi Community Network Areas there is a deficiency in quantity in play opportunities. Currently, there is no Mobile Bus provision, no integrated children's centres, limited leisure facilities and family centres. There is Open Access



Play provision available via Purple Routes within Newcastle Emlyn and Llandovery, however this is for a limited amount of time once a week and there are still access barriers for the children living in the surrounding areas. There are primary and secondary schools located within this area and it is currently unclear as to the accessibility of these grounds outside of school hours.

In relation to 11-17 year old children, once again provision appears to be concentrated within the Llanelli, Gwendraeth and Taf Myrddin Network areas, including youth clubs, Multi Use Games Areas and Skateboard/BMX areas. However, the Teifi Community Network Area appears to have limited youth provision.

The 2011 Census shows a decline in the Welsh Language in Carmarthenshire with a total of 44% of the population speaking the language. In percentage terms Carmarthenshire was ranked fourth behind Gwynedd (65%), Anglesey (57%) and Ceredigion (47%).

The highest rate of Welsh speakers in the county were amongst the 3-15 year olds where 57.7% of the age group speak Welsh. In this age group the Teifi was highest with 77.8% of the population of that age group speaking Welsh, followed closely by Gwendraeth (74.2%), Tywi (72.6%), Amman (66.9%), Taf Myrddin (56.2%) and Llanelli (38.8%).

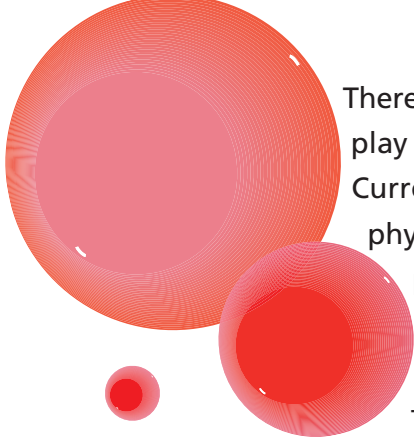
The 16-64 age group has the least percentage of Welsh speakers within its age group, a total of 39% of this age group for the county. The highest percentage of Welsh speakers for his age group was in the Gwendraeth (53.5%) followed by Teifi (51.1%), Amman (49.3%), Tywi (44.9%), Taf Myrddin (39.0%) and Llanelli (22.4%).

Statistics on children with disabilities were gathered from a number of sources within the County Council. The data include children with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and those with physical disabilities included on Local Authority disability register.

During consultations with play providers and from direct work by the Play Sufficiency Officer within clubs it was highlighted that children with SEN benefited greatly from attending Open Access Play provision as it had positive influences on a child's behaviour, gave children an opportunity to interact and play in a safe environment. However, there are only three clubs within the county that are specific to the needs to children with additional needs.

In relation to physically disabled children it has been highlighted through consultations with key stakeholders that there is a lack of fixed play equipment that meets the play needs of these children. For example, although some parks may have a 'basket swing' which is deemed suitable for a wheelchair user, they require the child to be accompanied by someone who is able to lift them from the wheelchair into the swing and out again which limits the spontaneity of the child's play.

Disability Inclusion Training has been completed by coaches, volunteers and Sports Development Officers within Carmarthenshire. However not all coaches/volunteers across the county have completed the course and also school staff need to attend specific Disability Inclusion training.



There are no plans currently to introduce this training to registered/unregistered play settings across the county.

Currently, most children and young people within Carmarthenshire with a physical disability or with additional learning needs will access mainstream provision with a personal assistant if needed. During consultations with stakeholders it was apparent that most often than not children and young people with a physical disability wish to attend mainstream provision and that there is more of a need for separate provision for children and young people's with additional needs related to their social, emotional and educational development.

In terms of accessibility of play opportunities it appears that access audits are carried out in relation to a play space being DDA compliant, however it is unclear whether these access audits consider issues related to diverse needs such as ethnicity, rurality and other cultural factors.

There are 171 traveller children and young people living within Carmarthenshire between the ages of 4 and 19 years old. There are also a great number of children living within the county from various cultural backgrounds; however it is unclear at present how many of these children access the available provision and whether or not there are additional barriers these children experience as a result of their cultural backgrounds.

All transport and traffic initiatives are DDA compliant; however the specific requirements of disabled children and young people in relation to being pedestrians are not fully considered or accessed via robust consultations.



Matter C: Space available for children to play: Open spaces and Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces

Open Spaces

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

Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces

Designated play spaces are assessed in relation to the value of the fixed play equipment, however the assessment does not take into account how children interact or experience other children; the natural world; loose parts; the four elements (earth, air, fire and water) and challenge and uncertainty. Furthermore, with the introduction of Asset Transfer within the Local Authority, these play space assessments may be undertaken by the Town and Community Councils or community groups and their outcomes will not be known to the Local Authority.

Access audits have been undertaken by officers from the Corporate Property department with more emphasis being placed on incorporating issues related to access into designs of future buildings and play spaces. However, currently there are limited funds available to undertake such a programme due to budgetary pressures.

The Local Authority has developed and agreed a new fixed play provision standard based on the Planning and Design for Outdoor Play and Sport (PAD). However, as a result of these standards some of the playgrounds that are owned by the Local Authority do not meet these new standards.

Carmarthenshire County Council has not introduced the initiative of 'smoke free' playgrounds due to uncertainty related to the enforcement and policing of such an initiative.

It is apparent that 'No Ball Games' signs are being erected within the county and that the Local Authority possesses the liability for these signs. There are no measures currently in place for the eradication of 'No Ball Games' signs and the introduction of 'Play Priority' signs within the county.

To date, no playing fields have been disposed of by the Local Authority, however due to budgetary pressures imposed on



the Local Authority it may be the case that Local authority owned land will need to be disposed of at a later date. The Play Sufficiency Officer is not currently involved in discussions with the planning department in relation to assessing the need for play spaces within a community as a result of planned developments across the Local Authority.

Matter D: Supervised Provision

Play work provision

The Play Sufficiency Assessment has highlighted the difficulties in capturing and keeping up to date information in relation to unregistered supervised play provision. There is a Carmarthenshire Directory of Activities and Services for 11-25 year olds (2007 – 2008), however this information has not been up dated since 2008. Similarly, the Family Information Service has up to date high quality information in relation to registered supervised provision, however the reliability of information with regards to unregistered provision is questionable and reliant on service providers updating the Family Information Service of any changes.

Currently two of the three Integrated Children’s Centres in Llanelli have no play provision in place despite being located within areas of high economic deprivation.

The Carmarthenshire Children’s Partnership offers high quality and affordable play training as part of the termly training programme to all partners that provide play opportunities to children and young people. However, due to capacity and budgetary constraints only one play training course is delivered per term.

Currently there is no agreed and recognised Quality Assurance programme being used within staffed play provision across the Local Authority.

There are a number of privately run clubs across the county that offer/deliver recreational activities to children, such as Beavers, Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, URDD, YFC, indoor fixed soft play areas to name a few. However, the Local Authority has no involvement currently in working with these settings in relation to monitoring and promoting quality.

The rental charges of council premises for Play Provision varies greatly with schools, Leisure Centres, Bowls Clubs etc all having different rental charges which has an effect on the charge placed on children and young people in accessing play provision.

Structured recreational activities for children

Currently the LAPA supports funding requests through National Governing Bodies of Sport, Public Health Wales. Further Education and Higher Education. However, funding requests are not considered from play providers, although some play provision may meet the standards of the LAPA funding criteria.



Matter E: Charges for play provision

At present there is no agreed mechanism or requirement in place to record the availability of no cost provision or no cost/low cost premises for play. The cost of accessing provision is greatly dependant on the cost of property rental, and therefore the higher the rental charges the higher the cost of accessing provision.

Matter F: Access to space/provision

When assessing for the success of road safety speed reduction measures, there is no direct consideration of the impact on children themselves and the impact it has had in relation to being able/unable to access play opportunities.

The Transport and Engineering Department has no access to information/maps detailing children's play opportunities in order to make informed decisions when new road safety or transport initiatives are being developed. Furthermore, children's consultation responses related to road safety or transport barriers is not relayed efficiently or regularly to the relevant departments.

The Local Authority does not have an accessible and well known way of arranging temporary road closures to support more children to play outside their homes. Currently, it is felt that there are many Health and Safety implication for the temporary closure of roads for play, in particular in relation to liability, and the fact that roads/streets cannot be closed fully to emergency services vehicles.

Information, publicity and events

The 'play' section of the Children's Partnership website is out of date and not particularly user friendly. There are currently no links made via external websites to the 'play' section of the website. Play is not currently advertised or highlighted via social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook on a regular basis and there are no promotional play items available such as information sheets, newsletters and flyers.

Matter G: Securing and developing the play workforce

Although a Workforce Survey was conducted over the summer of 2012 there was not enough information gathered in relation to the play work profession and there was no training needs analysis included.

At present the Children's Partnership develops a termly Training Programme that includes all the training required by registered settings to achieve minimum standards. As part of this there is one play related training per term which is available to all registered and non registered settings. However, play providers who are not registered do not have access to the training which ensures minimum standards. Money is allocated within the training budget to deliver one play training course per term.



There is currently no monitoring system in place to assess the career progression of workers accessing the Children's Partnership training programme or to track the progress of enquiries for play work that have been sign posted to local colleges. The play work is not currently included within the Social Care and Workforce Development Plan.

The only Local Authority led group related to play is currently the Play Sufficiency Stakeholder Group. There is no forum in place which supports play workers in relation to their daily work and also their Continuing Professional Development.

Matter H: Community Engagement and Participation

Although the Local Authority makes every effort to promote various initiatives across the county, very little is done to promote initiatives that enhance play opportunities for children.

Matter I: Play within all relevant play and implementation agendas Education and Schools

Currently, use of school grounds outside of school hours is inconsistent across the county. Some schools allow the delivery of after school clubs and holiday clubs from their premises and it is unclear as to which school if any make their school grounds available to children within the community on an open access basis outside of school hours. There is currently a fear in relation to allowing the use of school grounds due to issues related to health and safety, liability and risk of damage to the property. It has also been noted that there is a lack of understanding related to the importance of children's play and that play is often the first element of the school day to be curtailed due to curricular constraints.

Town and Community Planning

Currently, the LDP has not come into force and therefore some residents within Carmarthenshire are at risk of losing their green space if it is sold before the implementation of the LDP. Play Sufficiency Officers are not currently involved in the decisions made related to disposal of land and are only informed of decisions when communities are requesting support to protect their green spaces.

Traffic and Transport

Although social impact of decision and initiatives is considered within the current transport plan, children's play opportunities are not focused on specifically. When consultations are planned as part of various initiatives the consultations are conducted on a general level and are not inclusive and inviting to children and communities.



Health and Wellbeing

The Carmarthenshire Play Strategy 2008-2011 is considered to be the platform for recognising the importance of play for children and families' physical health and wellbeing. However, the current Play Strategy for Carmarthenshire has lapsed in 2011 and there is currently no direct and clear reference to the health and wellbeing benefits of play.

There is currently no partnership working between the Play Sufficiency Officers and the Public Health Wales department and therefore no collaboration on initiatives to support the health and wellbeing benefits of children's play.

Child Poverty

Although the Integrated Community Strategy includes reference to play in contributing to the Child Poverty agenda, there is no mention of the Local Authority providing council premises for free to organisations that provide free play provision. Due to budgetary constraints across departments and organisations it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide play opportunities that are free of charge.

Early Years and Childcare

Play training is offered to all childcare settings across Carmarthenshire as part of the Children's Partnership termly training programme. Unfortunately due to budgetary constraints and the availability of the Play trainer only one play training course is delivered per term. Furthermore, there are no play promotion items such as newsletters, flyers in use to support and advise childcare providers in offering rich play environments to the children they are caring for.

Intergenerational Policy and Initiatives

When addressing intergenerational issues within communities it tends to be between the younger and older generation. However, many younger children and parents of younger children are fearful of older children, and the older children do not understand these fears.

Community Development

The Integrated Community Strategy has no clear statement regarding the rights of children to play within their communities and does not state how providing play opportunities contribute to community cohesion.

Community Safety

There is no recognition of the rights of children to play in their communities within the Community Safety section of the Integrated Community Strategy.

Health and Safety

All departments within the Local Authority manage Health and Safety differently and there is no agreed standard for using risk benefit assessments across settings and departments. The Local Authority is only able to cover own business activities and is very unlikely to be able to deal with any third party liability. Community Councils have their own insurance and any third party organisation letting a Local Authority property would be expected to have the same.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report makes the following recommendations to address the gaps in play provision across Carmarthenshire.

RECOMMENDATION 1 (Matter B)

Aim to offer play opportunities that are inclusive and that address barriers such as disability/impairment; cultural values; language; ethnicity and sexuality

RECOMMENDATION 2 (Matter C)

Local Authority to recognise the importance of open spaces in contributing to children's play needs within the community and the potential negative effects that the selling of these pockets of land has on children and communities.

RECOMMENDATION 3 (Matter C)

To ensure that there are sufficient amounts of age appropriate fixed play spaces across the county and that they are assessed holistically for their play value and address the needs of the children.

RECOMMENDATION 4 (Matter D)

Aim to offer a variety of supervised, high quality play provision within areas of identified need across Carmarthenshire.

RECOMMENDATION 5 (Matter D)

To ensure that the Local Authority is delivering on its responsibility to deliver play and recreational activities for children.

RECOMMENDATION 6 (Matter E)

To consider the effects of charges for play provision on the accessibility of that provision for children and their families.

RECOMMENDATION 7 (Matter F)

Continue to deliver initiatives that contribute to children's ability to access play opportunities safely.

RECOMMENDATION 8 (Matter F)

To advocate, develop and promote children's right to play, and publish information regarding events, opportunities and the importance of play.

RECOMMENDATION 9 (Matter G)

To support the development of the play workforce across the county

RECOMMENDATION 10 (Matter H)

To ensure that children, families and communities are consulted with in relation to their views on play and recreational activities, and promote wider community engagement in providing play friendly communities.

RECOMMENDATION 11 (Matter I)

To ensure that policies and strategies that have a potential to impact on play should be embedded with targets and actions to enhance children's play opportunities.



CONCLUSIONS/WAY FORWARD

The Assessment has identified that there is a great deal of positive work being accomplished across the county in relation to providing positive play opportunities to children. There is a variety of play opportunities available within Carmarthenshire, ranging from Open Access Play sessions delivered within communities, provision within Family Centres, recreational and sporting opportunities via Leisure Centres and provision via holiday and after school clubs.

However, in considering the diversity of the communities within the county and its geographical nature there is a need to further develop play opportunities for children living within Carmarthenshire which caters to these diverse needs. Through doing so the play workforce will need increased support; and issues related to quality within settings will need to be addressed and monitored. In order to increase acceptance of children's play, more positive promotion is needed and increased community involvement in order to ensure that children's play opportunities are protected and further developed. The role of the schools in contributing to children's positive play experiences needs to be developed as school playgrounds may well be the only resource within a community that children are able to access. Road Safety and Transport developments need to ensure that children's play opportunities are considered fully when initiatives are introduced. Furthermore, children's rights to play need to be featured strongly within policies and implementation agendas that are relevant to play.

Throughout the Assessment process a wide range of key stakeholders including parents and carers, play providers and members of the wider community have been involved.

In order to respond to the gaps highlighted within the full Assessment, an Action Plan for 2012/2014 and 2014 has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders. This is linked directly to the recommendations which have been made in this report. The Action Plan will be monitored, reviewed and updated on an annual basis by the members of the Play

