



# Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

## PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2025 SUMMARY

### What is the council's vision for play?

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council wants every child to enjoy play as a natural and important part of growing up. The Local Authority believes that all children, no matter who they are or where they live, should have safe, fun, and inclusive places to play. Their vision is to make play a normal part of everyday life – at home, in schools, and in the community.

### Why does play matter?

**Play is essential for every child. It helps with:**

- Physical health
- Emotional well-being
- Social skills
- Feeling included and connected in the community



Merthyr Tydfil recognises that **play is a right**, and that providing safe, fun spaces for children is part of our duty.

### What have we done so far?

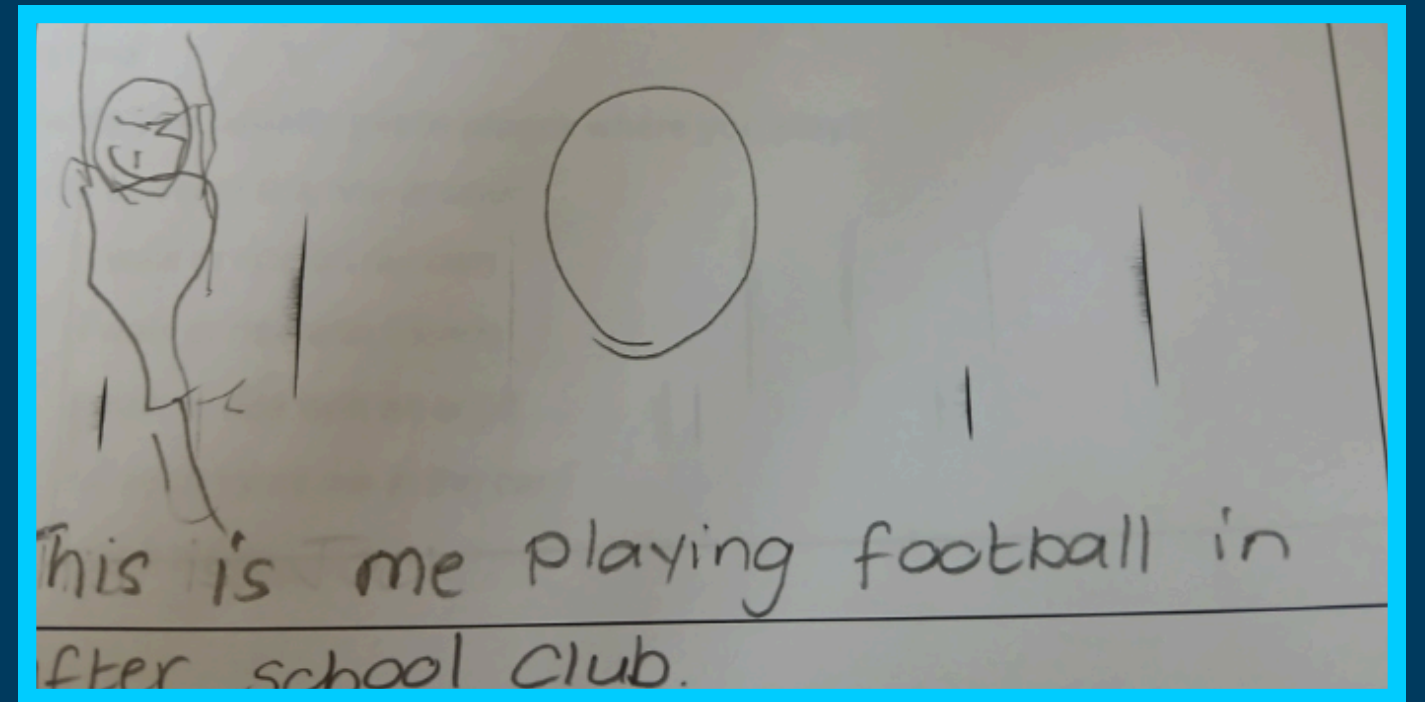
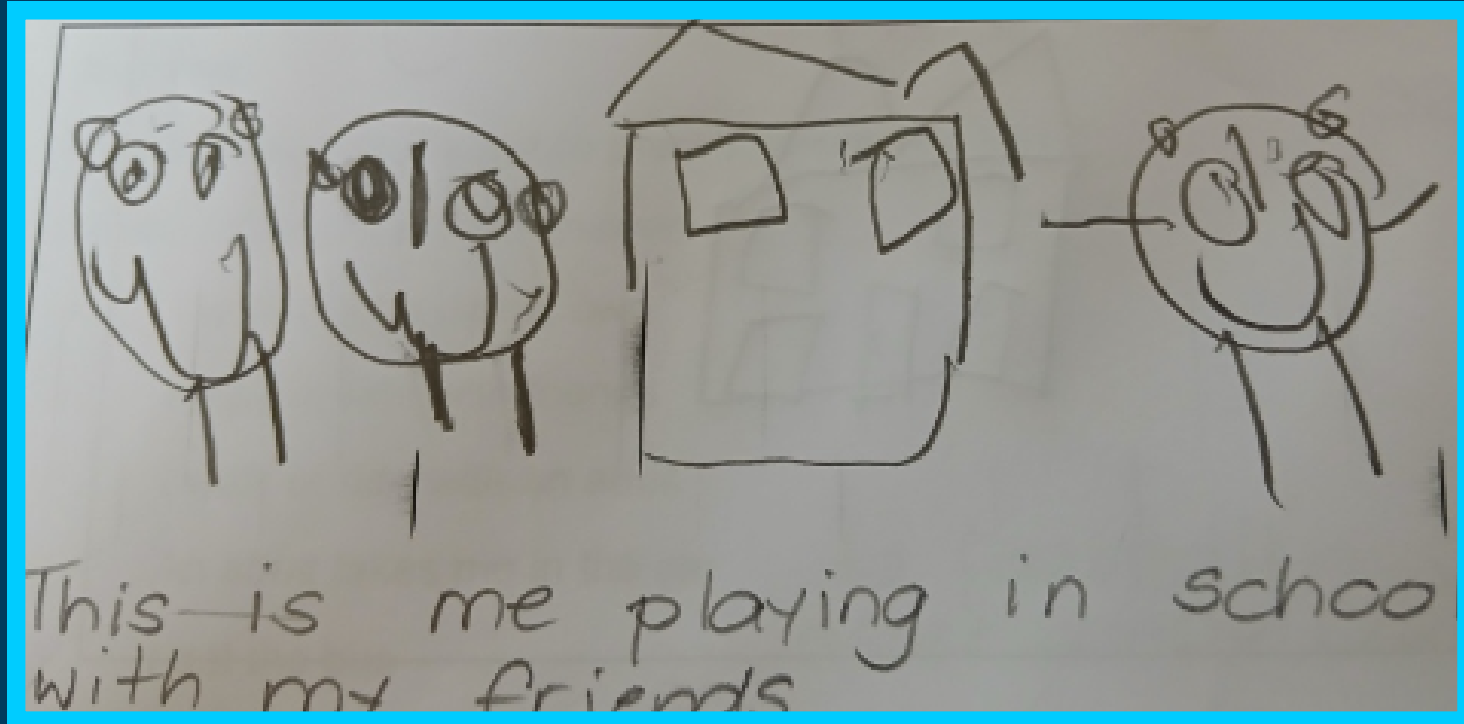
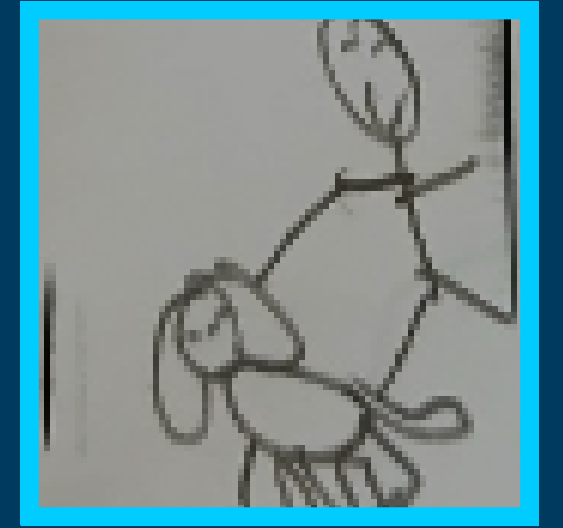
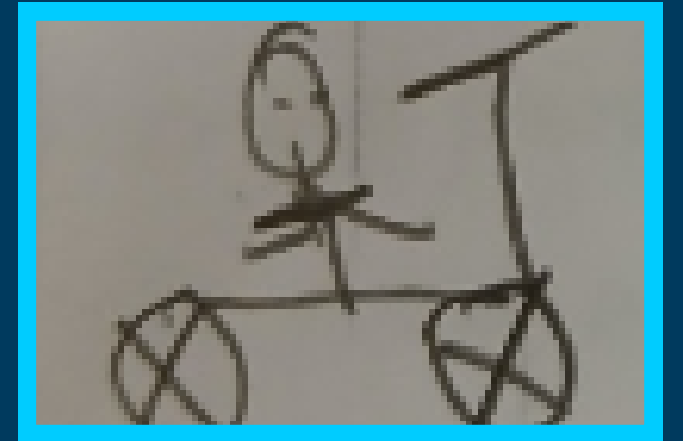
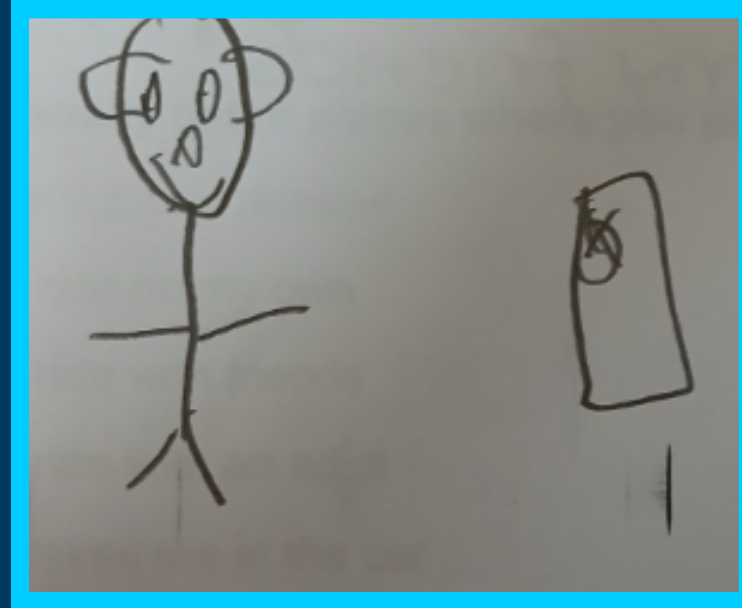
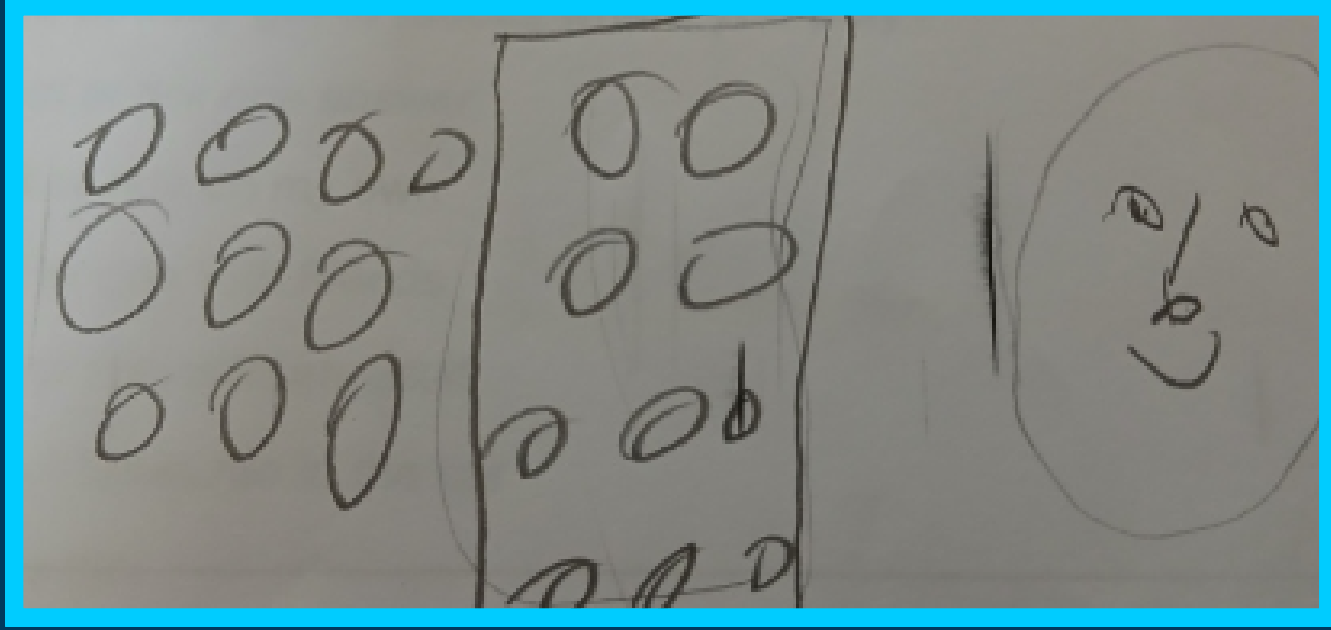
- Raised **awareness** about how important play is
- **Promoted play** in schools and communities
- Started **refurbishing parks** to improve conditions

### Key Findings about play.

- Most of the **162 children** surveyed felt safe while playing outdoors around Merthyr Tydfil.
- Some parents said children have difficulty accessing unsupervised play safely because of **busy roads** or due to no access to areas without a car
- Many parents commented on the recent refurbished play areas and highlighted enthusiasm for **upgraded equipment**.



## How do children like to play?



## What have families told us about play?

Out of 469 parents surveyed the most popular requests were:



- Better play parks and **inclusive equipment** (for children with ALN and/or disabilities).
- **More supervised play, youth clubs,** and **outdoor sports areas** like skateparks, trampolines, and splash pads.
- Play areas for **teenage girls**, including community hubs and safe places to hang out.
- **Nature-based play** like forest schools and bushcraft
- **Non-digital events** and after-school clubs.

***Making play safe for children and worry-free for parents will create more opportunities for independent outdoor play.***

### Biggest concerns:

- Antisocial behaviour and **safety worries.**
- Poor park maintenance and **vandalism.**
- **Costs** to attend or travel to activities.
- **Lack of accessible equipment** and space for children with disabilities.
- Few play areas within **walking distance**, especially in **lower valley wards.**
- Not enough places for **older kids**, so they use younger children's spaces.

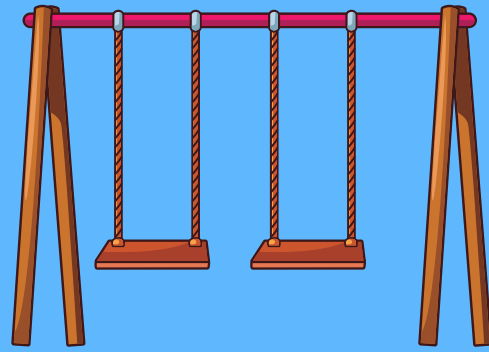




# What did Playfest reveal about play?

## ***Playworkers said:***

- Children loved football, bouncy castles, table tennis, and swing ball.
- Well-staffed indoor play is always welcomed.
- The cost of play is important for families.
- The recruitment of playworkers in an ongoing challenge.



## ***Parents said:***

- Play opportunities bring the community together.
- More promotion is needed.
- The new parks felt safe and accessible.
- Playfest events should happen more often.



## **Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council**

# **PLAY ACTION PLAN**

## ***An accessible Merthyr Tydfil***

We will:

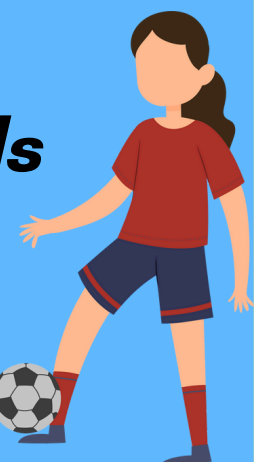
- Develop more opportunities for ***free and low-cost*** play activities
- Support afterschool and holiday clubs to ***extend*** their provision
- Support community run play in ***rural areas***



## ***An inclusive Merthyr Tydfil***

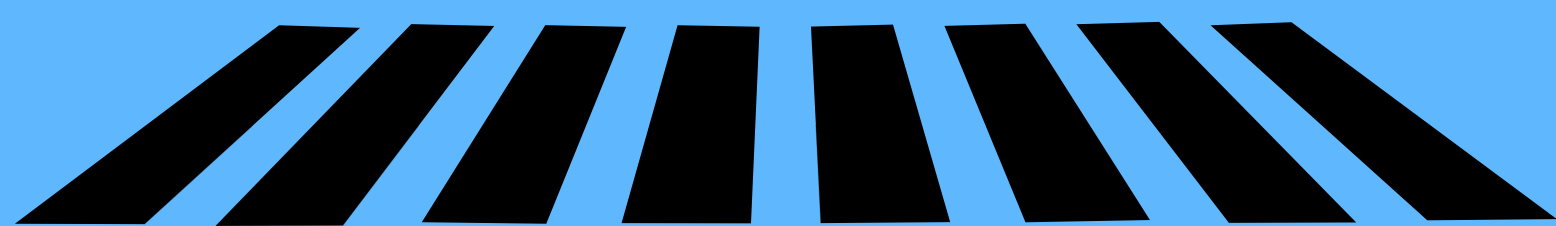
We will:

- Continue to improve the ***safety*** of parks and open spaces
- Continue to make sure children and young people of ***all backgrounds*** feel included in play
- Offer more activities for ***teenage girls***



## ***A safe Merthyr Tydfil***

- The Local Authority has plans to reduce negative effects of roads and junctions by introducing ***speed reduction measures*** and ***safe crossing points*** for pedestrians and cyclists
- ***Road Safety Grants*** and other funding will continue to be used to support delivery of cycling training for children to National Standards



## ***A supportive Merthyr Tydfil***

- We will provide information on access to play opportunities and support
- Offer and promote ***training*** for volunteers, parents and playworkers to ***develop*** their knowledge of playwork
- Support will be given to partners to deliver appropriate training to ***community groups, parents and volunteers***
- A comprehensive range of CPD ***opportunities*** will be offered to professionals who work with children





## PLAY ACTION PLAN

### *Increasing Opportunities for Play*

- ✓ Continued focus on ***inclusive, free, and low-cost*** play options.
- ✓ Continued priority of play opportunities in ***under-served areas***.
- ✓ Stronger ***advertisement of training*** and support for playworkers.
- ✓ New ideas like media campaigns to promote ***positive play messages***.
- ✓ Prioritise ***community co-design*** approaches to develop spaces that truly reflect the voices and ***needs of local children***.

### ***What does this mean?***

- Play is seen as ***a priority*** in Merthyr Tydfil
- Not all children can access play equally yet, but ***steps are being taken***
- More ***accessible, inclusive, and safer*** play spaces are on the way
- The council is ***listening*** to children and families through consultations
- Services will be better ***coordinated*** and can reach more families, especially those with the ***greatest need***.
- Increase in ***cross-departmental working***, embedding play into health, education, housing, and community planning policies.

