



Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2022 SUMMARY

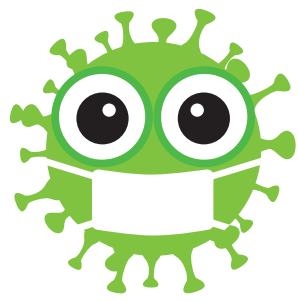
The Play Sufficiency Duty

Wales is the first country in the world to have a law ensuring children have enough time, space and permission to play. As such, the Council and its partners take a serious look at the quantity and quality of children's opportunities for play every 3 years. These results are published in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's **Play Sufficiency Report**, and this document shares some of the main issues highlighted in the report.

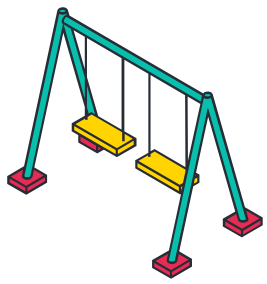
KEY FINDINGS ABOUT PLAY IN MERTHYR TYDFIL



560 children contributed to our play satisfaction surveys. The overwhelming majority surveyed **felt safe** while playing outdoors around Merthyr Tydfil.



215 parents responded to our play survey. Some parents reported that their children **feel anxious going out to play** because of reduced socialising during lockdowns. Almost **a fifth** of children surveyed reported that they do not enjoy playing out as much since COVID-19.



£580,000 has been allocated to improve fixed play equipment in Merthyr Tydfil. £280,000 has already been spent on refurbishing and replacing equipment.

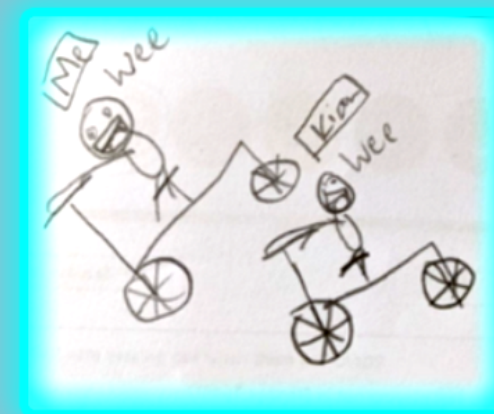
Outdoor Play

Children surveyed talked about outdoor activities as being the most popular and that they were happiest when they played out in a range of different places.

Health and Safety policies recognise the value of children being able to experience the risks and challenges of outdoor play



How do children like to play?



Are children happy with play in Merthyr Tydfil?



"Poverty of Experience"

As part of the Welsh Government's anti-poverty agenda, we recognise that children can have "**Poverty of Experience**" and that this can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

Play is essential for children to access adequate opportunities, aiding their development.



Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

THE STATE OF PLAY

A lively & joyful Merthyr Tydfil

Successful government-funded and Council-led events, such as Summer of Fun, Winter of Wellbeing and Playfest have benefited local communities.

"I was really nervous when I came but I've made **loads of friends** and had the best laughs ever"

"You have given the children the **best 6 weeks holiday** ever they have made memories that will last forever!"

"It's **great to have these activities** during the summer, the children have missed out on so much"

An inclusive Merthyr Tydfil

The requirements of disabled children are understood and provided for within traffic and transport initiatives.



Feedback shows that marginalised groups of CYP **can access groups and spaces where they feel supported** and can access activities that benefit their development.

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.

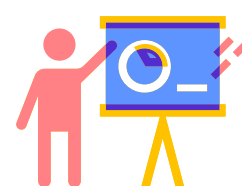


Road Safety Grants and other funding to has been used to support delivery of cycling training for children to national standards.

A supportive Merthyr Tydfil



Local Authority provides information on **access to play opportunities** and contact for support.



Training for volunteers & parents to develop their **playwork knowledge**.



Support for partners to **deliver appropriate training** to community groups, parents and volunteers.



A comprehensive range of **CPD opportunities** for professionals who work with children.

Areas for Improvement

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) & Access to Play

50% of play providers reported children having difficulty joining in certain activities because of an ALN or Disability

Disability sport was raised as an activity that **isn't always promoted enough**, so some children miss out on these opportunities.

Some parents reported a **lack of suitable fixed play equipment** for children with ALN & disabilities, there isn't always trained staff there to provide for the children.

There is **only 1** out-of-school club for children with ALN and a reduction in holiday provisions for children with ALN and disabilities.

“ There are **barriers to some play and activities** (monetary, transport etc.) that have negative impacts on children being able to access them. This is especially true for **children who do not have huge amounts of parental support** to access different activities. ”

Independent & Safe Outdoor Play



Most children thought that adults were friendly, but did say that adults could get in the way of playing, usually because they **were worried about children's safety**.

A significant number of parents we spoke to said they do not feel safe allowing their children to play outside without adult supervision, although most children do feel safe when playing in Merthyr Tydfil. The more parents worry about their children's safety, the greater the limitations and more boundaries to play, and the less freedom children have to play.

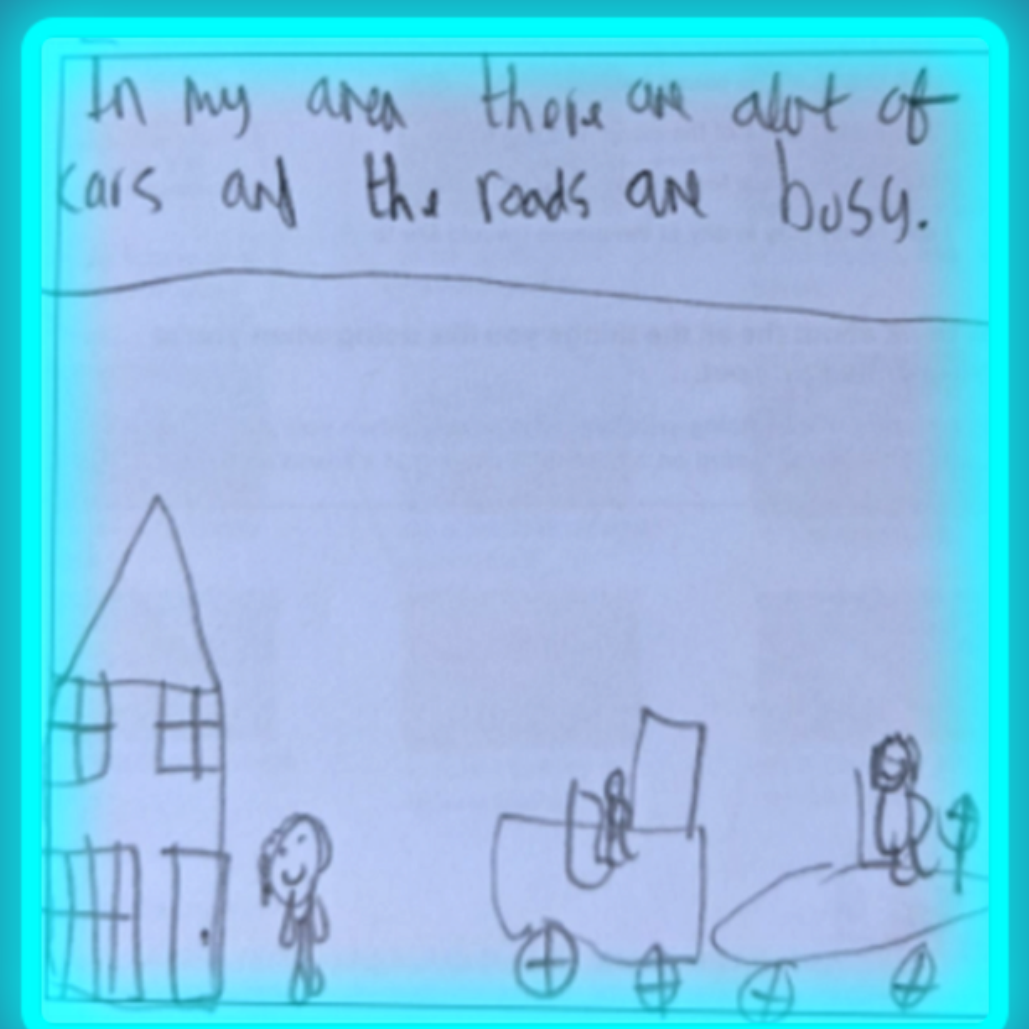
Making play safe for children and worry-free for parents will create more opportunities for independent outdoor play.

Transportation & Road Safety

Play providers note that children **need a safe place for spontaneous play**, as roads become busier and areas more built up.

There is a **lack of sufficient public or subsidised transport** to support CYP to reach play destinations.

Work is in progress to **pilot street closures**, these approaches should continue to be developed to ensure additional outdoor play opportunities.



“ **Children need safe spaces to play, this is truer now than ever where streets are full of parked cars and opportunities for spontaneous play are reduced.** ”



PLAY ACTION PLAN

Increasing Opportunities for Play



Ensure that Play Priority signs are erected across Merthyr Tydfil and families are made aware of their purpose.



Ensure all sport, physical activity, and active recreation plans are contributing to increasing free play and recreational activities.

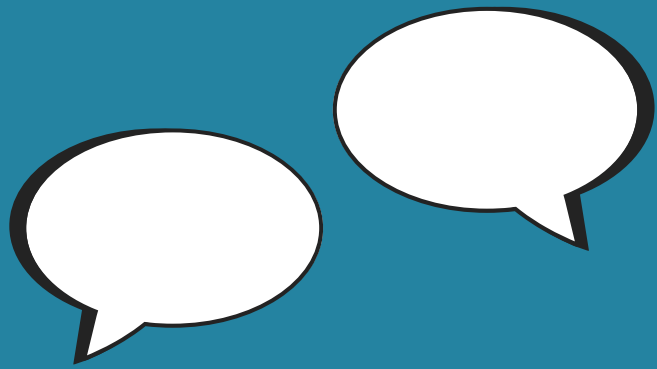


Significant funding has been committed to improving fixed play equipment in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough, with works being carried out over the next 5 years.



Assessment of play spaces for play value and potential to increase in play use as set out in the Statutory Guidance.

Collaboration with stakeholders through the Play Team



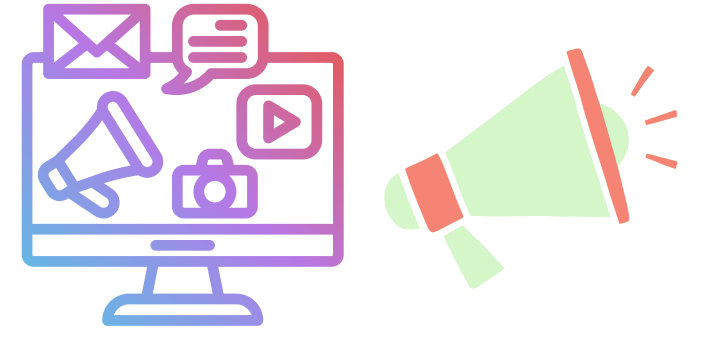
Engage with the community to value and invest in our children, including having more engagement with carers and parents about the importance of play.



Provide guidance for schools to ensure they recognise the value of outdoor play, so they won't curtail it.



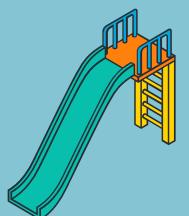
The Play Team has appointed a Children's Champion who ensures that play is sufficient and of good variety.



Continue effective promotion of the 30 Days Of Play campaign and other events such as Playfest to engage families of all backgrounds.

Providing for diverse needs

Greater focus on inclusion to ensure suitable resources and equipment are in place for children with ALN and disabilities and that these children have a forum. 



Work with parks department to ensure funding for new fixed play equipment reaches rural areas and meets the needs of children with ALN.

Ascertain the play needs of LGBT+ youth and work to fulfill these play needs through targeted activities. 



COVID-19 Recovery Support for staff as well as families in need to ensure they are able to access opportunities for play.