

Vale of Glamorgan
PLAY
Sufficiency
Assessment
Executive Summary



March 2019

This document is available in Welsh.
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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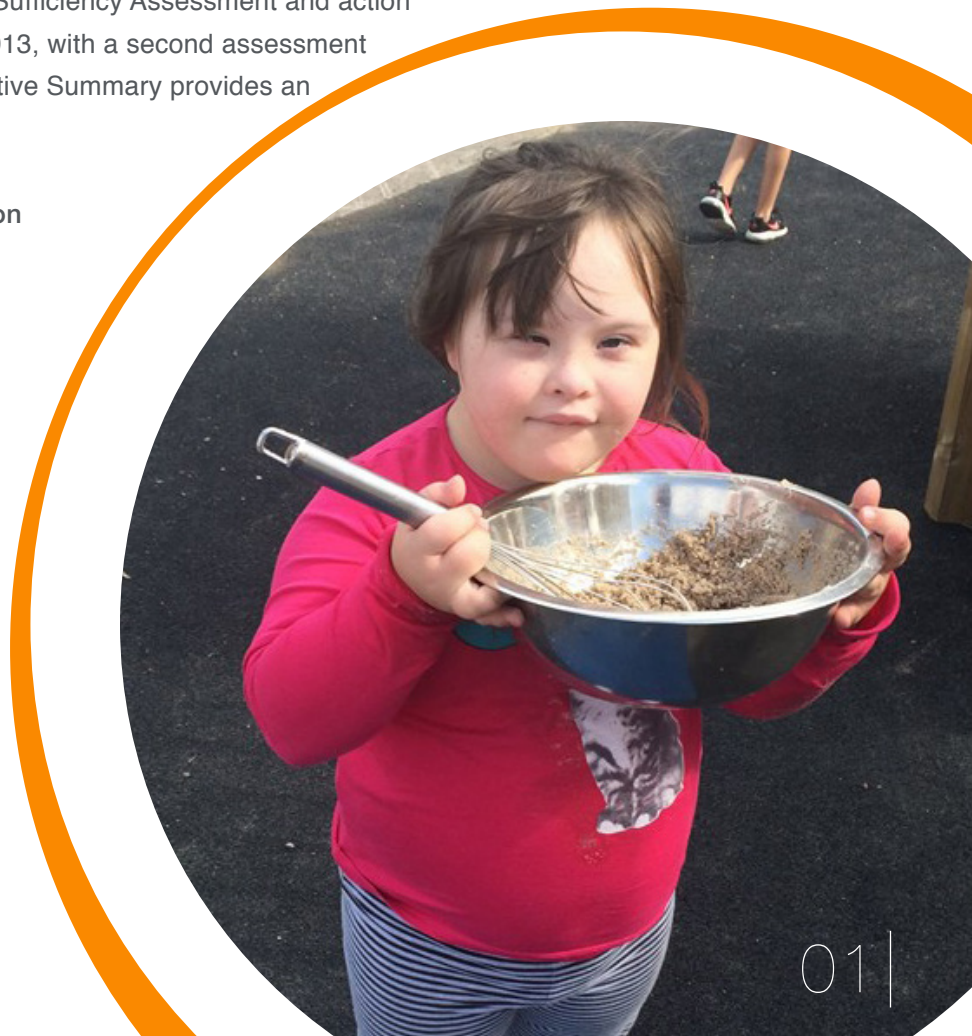
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Background

The Welsh Government is the first Government in the World to legislate for children's play – they acknowledge that children have a right to be able to play and therefore they are committed to improving opportunities for all children and young people to play in safety. The Vale of Glamorgan Council also acknowledges and supports this right.

To demonstrate their commitment to driving this agenda forward, in November 2012 the Welsh Government placed a duty on all Local Authorities to assess the level of play opportunities in their area and produce an accompanying action plan to improve play opportunities available. The Vale of Glamorgan Play Sufficiency Assessment and action plan was initially completed in March 2013, with a second assessment process completed in 2016. This Executive Summary provides an overview of the 2019 assessment.

The full assessment process and action plan can be obtained by contacting KJDavies@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or calling 01446 704793.





Completing the assessment

Whilst the Vale of Glamorgan Council took the lead on the Play Sufficiency Assessment process, it was acknowledged from the outset that the development and provision of play opportunities in the Vale of Glamorgan is the responsibility of a variety of public and voluntary services.

More than fifty individuals from internal Council departments and external organisations inputted into the process. A Play Sufficiency workshop was held which was attended by twenty three people from fifteen different Council departments and external organisations. Organisations were also able to input by providing evidence to support the different matter areas identified in the PSA document. In comparison to the previous assessment processes, the response rate was around the same as with the 2016 assessment.

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The views of children, young people and residents have also been taken into account through methods including:

- an online survey called 'Play – Have Your Say' targeting children and young people. 304 people completed this survey.
- consultation at events including Family Fun Days
- consultation through links to the Index and groups such as the Families First Holiday Club, to ensure the views of disabled children and their families are obtained.
- including play related questions in the Vale-wide Viewpoint survey which targeted children and young people. 1325 people completed this survey.
- looking at useful data from sources such as Community Mapping exercises that have been undertaken by the Creative Rural Communities Team, S106 consultation exercises and information from surveys undertaken by local Town and Community Councils.

The 'Play – Have Your Say' survey completed by children and young people highlighted that:

- **64%** would rate their opportunities for playing as great or good.
- **71%** go out to play or hang out at least a few times a week, but 7% never play outside.
- **32%** would like more time to play or hang out with friends.
- **21.5%** think that some or most adults are grumpy and do not like children playing out.
- **93%** always or usually feel safe when playing or hanging out.
- **14%** feel that the places they play in are not good and they cannot do all they would like to.

- Children and young people play in more than 30 different types of places in the Vale, which are dependent on what is local to them, where they can safely travel and where they feel safe to play.
- The fantastic natural environment in the Vale helps children and families to undertake local play opportunities.
- Whilst many children feel they have access to good play opportunities, this is very much dependent on where they live, whether they are allowed to play in the places they want to and what type of play they like.
- Things that are not good about playing in the Vale include:
 - play equipment being unsuitable for all ages, particularly for older children and young people
 - worn fixed play equipment
 - busy traffic
 - accessing local play opportunities and spaces in identified areas
 - having places to play when it is raining
 - feeling safe playing out in the evenings
 - some children feel that adults do not want them to play in the places they do.

These findings were similar to those received from the Viewpoint survey completed by children and young people.



What did we find out

Whilst financial resources are limited, the local authority is meeting its duty of providing sufficient play opportunities.

As part of the assessment process the Local Authority had to consider a large number of statements relating to play and indicate whether they would assess the current position in the Vale as red, amber or green (RAG status) in relation to each statement. Analysis of the RAG status of the 99 criteria identified that 28 of the criteria were assessed as green, 63 as amber and 8 as red. The assessment has illustrated that there has been increases in 14 of the criteria. 75 of the criteria were assessed as remaining the same. 24 of those that remained the same were for criteria that were already green in status, thus demonstrating good achievement against a large number of criteria. The status of 6 of the criteria has decreased

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The assessment has highlighted that:

- There has been progress made in a number of Matter areas since the previous PSA in 2016 which is positively impacting on the provision of quality play opportunities in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- There has been a move forward in relation to partnership working with increased pooling of resources. There is improved communication across internal departments and with external partners, and an increased desire and understanding for the need to work together more. However there are still pockets of developments taking place on their own internally within the Council so there are still further opportunities for joined up working to maximise the limited resources available.
- There has been an investment in funding to increase access to fixed play equipment across the Vale, with areas in the rural Vale also benefitting from the funding. Where possible resources are being secured to continue to improve opportunities, and this has been particularly successful in relation to securing S106 funding and via funding streams accessed through the Creative Rural Communities programme to improve parks, play areas and open spaces in local communities. These have been welcomed by the communities affected, however it has also caused negative comments to be received from those communities who have not benefited from this funding and who feel their areas are also in need of upgrading.
- There has been increased opportunities for disabled children and young people to access play opportunities during school holidays through the Families First Holiday Club and the Teenscheme project.
- As with the previous assessment, this assessment highlighted that there is a growing passion and understanding of the benefits of play amongst a number of internal and external partners, who are committed to the further development of play opportunities for children and young people. It is essential to ensure that we use these individuals as campaigners for play when they are at their various networks and meetings.
- There has been increased awareness and interest amongst non-play professionals regarding the indirect impact they have on a child's ability to play. For example, how planners can help in making sure there are spaces to play in areas where new building work is taking place. This, together with the interest generated from the recently held PSA Workshop has led to an interest in revisiting the organisation of a Play Sufficiency Steering Group which will bring together people from different backgrounds to discuss how more play opportunities can be developed. In addition to this, the local authority will continue with the smaller task and finish groups which are organised when required.
- The area that has seen the most positive change is within 'Matter G: Securing and developing the play workforce' where seven of the eleven criteria statements have progressed. These progressions have been assisted by national changes whereby more training has become available such as the L2App and MAHPS. These courses have made playwork training more accessible and attractive to the casual playwork staff who work in

the Vale of Glamorgan and has also enabled individuals with associated qualifications to add playwork to their portfolio of qualifications, thus expanding the number of people who can deliver play.

- Where opportunities have emerged to secure additional funding for play, such as the monies allocated from Welsh Government, this funding has been welcomed and appropriately used to positively impact on play. However the timeframe in which this funding was available and had to be spent, and due to the limitations on what the funding can be used for, there were some areas that the Vale would like to use the funding for but have not been able to do so. The Welsh Government funding has been used for areas such as:
 - purchase equipment and resources for use at playschemes and events delivered by the Healthy Living Team and other partners including community organisations. This includes the purchase of specialist equipment to support the inclusion of disabled children into play provision.
 - purchase of fixed play equipment placed in parks identified through the improvement plan for fixed play areas, including those within the rural Vale to assist in overcoming barriers to play experienced in rural areas. Where possible inclusive equipment was purchased to support the inclusion of disabled children.
 - to support the costs of delivering some Play Rangers, Playscheme and Play events.
 - training for those involved in the delivery of play, including training to ensure the inclusion of disabled children into play opportunities.
 - raising awareness of the benefits of play and the different play types available.
 - expansion of Outdoor Play Opportunities through the purchase of a variety of outdoor play and Forest Schools equipment.
 - the creation of an Interactive Tree Trail at Romilly Park, Barry which is an exciting resource that will encourage outdoor activity for many years to come.
 - increasing play provision delivered through the medium of Welsh by supporting Menter Bro Morgannwg to deliver additional open access playschemes during school holiday.
- The Play – Have Your Say online survey and the results from the Viewpoint survey provided useful feedback from the children and young people regarding their experience of and access to play opportunities in the Vale of Glamorgan. As highlighted earlier in this document, this showed that 64% would rate their opportunities for playing as great or good.
- In the previous PSA one of the priorities identified was to focus on developing ‘playful communities’ whereby there is an understanding of the need to widen the areas where people perceive children can play and what ‘play’ really means. The definition of play to some people can be very fixed so there is a need to broaden these perceptions and highlight the various play experiences available within the Vale that can be undertaken for low or no cost. Since this PSA there has been progress with moving away from the assumption that there is a need for fixed play equipment / play area to be located near every child in order for them to experience quality play. The play survey highlighted that there is an appreciation of the good natural environment in the Vale such as open spaces, woodlands and beaches in enabling children to experience play in its widest form. However it will continue to be a priority to promote the availability of no cost play within the Vale.

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- There is a desire to increase opportunities, however a lack of resources means that there are only limited people available to develop this area of work. The identification of long term funding continues to be an issue for both internal and external partners with limited funding available for developing play opportunities in the Vale. This not only impacts on programme delivery but also on developing staffing infrastructure. This limits strategic planning and continues to prove time consuming.
- The criteria areas that have decreased were mainly due to lack of resources. The areas that have decreased include background work relating to planning such as open space assessments, Accessible Greenspace study, and assessment of brownfield sites for reclamation for play. There is also a need to update the relevant website pages with clear information relating to all parks and play areas in the Vale, including information regarding the accessibility of these places.





Moving Forward

The Vale of Glamorgan Council and its partners remain committed to providing play opportunities and this commitment is demonstrated in the inclusion of play in the corporate plan. The positive benefits of play is also recognised by the Public Service Board by the inclusion of play in their Wellbeing Plan.

As was the case with both the 2013 and 2016 Play Sufficiency Assessments, due to financial constraints there will be limited budgets available for the Council to allocate to play moving forward. However the positive collaborative working between partners will continue and it is hoped that this will continue to ensure that resources are found to drive forward the actions identified in the action plan that has been created as part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process.

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Many of the actions identified in the plan are low cost actions or actions that can be delivered with no additional cost utilising existing resources. The results from the play survey undertaken with children, in addition to the discussions undertaken at the PSA Workshop highlighted barriers to participation and potential actions that have been considered and included where appropriate. As with previous PSA action plans, it is intended that this document will be a working document, which will be reviewed and amended where appropriate.

The Welsh Government has combined their relevant funding streams to form the Children and Communities Grant. This has brought positive opportunities in relation to play and has provided the opportunity to bid for funding to employ an additional staff member to assist with developing more play opportunities in the Vale. If the funding bid is successful this staff member will seek to increase opportunities across specific projects and to those who currently have limited access.

The full action plan can be found in the full PSA document.

Below is an overview of priority areas included in the action plan:

- **Increasing the amount of and access to play opportunities in identified areas in the rural areas.**
- **Increasing access to play opportunities for disabled children and young people.**
- **Increasing opportunities for children to access play through the medium of Welsh.**
- **Increasing awareness regarding the existing play opportunities available in the Vale and how children, young people and families can use the natural environment to access low cost / no cost play.**
- **Raising awareness regarding the benefits of play and the child's right to play in their community.**
- **Investigating ways of supporting children to be able to safely travel to spaces to play and use fun, active methods to do so. There is a greater understanding of the impact that traffic and safe routes to play spaces has on children's ability to access play opportunities.**
- **Develop the Play infrastructure within the Local Authority, increasing capacity within the Healthy Living Team to enable more strategic development, in addition to more delivery of opportunities.**
- **The delivery of a Community Play Ambassadors project to support young people to become 'play ambassadors' through training, qualifications and volunteering opportunities with the aim of getting children active through play. (This action is dependent on a successful funding bid).**

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