



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Wales – a Play Friendly Country

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Statutory Guidance

July 2014



Foreword

“Wales: A Play Friendly Country” is Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on assessing for and securing sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas. It is published by Welsh Ministers to give detail to the duty on Local Authorities under section 11, Play Opportunities, Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. This section of the Measure fully came into effect on 1st July 2014.

This Statutory Guidance combines **“Creating a Play Friendly Wales”**, the Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on assessing for sufficient play opportunities (2012), along with new guidance to Local Authorities to support in securing sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, 2014.

The detail on assessment and the matters that need to be taken into account in the Play Sufficiency Assessments, as set out under “Creating a Play Friendly Wales” Statutory Guidance, have not been changed. They have been taken forward into the new Statutory Guidance “Wales: a Play Friendly Country”. This Guidance also sets out the detail under the duty to secure sufficient play opportunities following the consultation on draft Statutory Guidance “Wales: A Place Where Children Can Play”.

“Wales: A Play Friendly Country” is the Statutory Guidance that Local Authorities must follow to comply with the duty to assess for and secure sufficient play opportunities.

Ministerial Foreword



I am very proud that the Welsh Government is the first Government in the world to legislate for children's play and I am committed to taking this agenda forward through fully commencing the duty on Local Authorities to assess for and secure sufficient play opportunities for all children.

We are acting on the Welsh Government commitment to continue to improve opportunities for all children and young people to play in safety and, in particular, to support improved access to play for children with disabilities.

We strongly believe in the importance of play in children's lives and the benefits it gives to their health, happiness and well-being. It is also important in laying the foundation for each child in reaching their full potential during their adult life.

Through this legislation we are continuing to make Wales a country where every child has a wide range of challenging and interesting opportunities to play and to enjoy their leisure time. This is a task that will involve working with our partners to consider the many aspects of community life that affect play opportunities. These include use of the environment, traffic and transport; play and leisure provision, and parental and community involvement with play.

I should like to thank the many individuals, organisations and other stakeholders who have contributed to making sure that this document is fit for purpose, particularly Play Wales and the Welsh Government Association. I am sure that we will continue to work together on taking this important agenda forward and making the necessary changes to ensure that Wales truly is a play friendly country that meets the needs and rights of all our children.

Vaughan Gething AM, Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty

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1. Introduction

The Welsh Government places great value on play and its importance in the lives of children in our society. We believe that children have a fundamental right to be able to play, and that play is central to their enjoyment of life and contributes to their well-being. We also believe that play is essential for the growth in children’s cognitive; physical; social and emotional development. There is much evidence to support this belief and an increasing understanding of play’s contribution not only to children’s lives, but also to the well-being of their families and the wider community¹.

Children’s right to play is enshrined in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Welsh Government formally adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2004, and we are committed to making the principles of the UNCRC a reality for all children and young people. There are three articles which particularly relate to this duty:

- **Article 31 (Leisure, play and culture):** Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.², which must be read in combination with the **General Comment No17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (art. 31):** “ The general comment seeks to enhance the understanding of the importance of article 31 for children’s well-being and development; to ensure respect for and strengthen the application of the rights under article 31”
- **Article 15 (Freedom of association):** Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations.
- **Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child):** When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

In Wales play is established as one of children’s rights under Core Aim 4 - Play, Sport, Leisure and Culture, of the Welsh Government’s 7 Core Aims for Children, set out in *Children & Young People: Rights to Action, 2004*.³

The Welsh Government also believes that high quality play opportunities for all children may contribute to mitigating the negative effects of poverty on children’s lives and help to build their resilience.⁴ Play can also be a means of reducing

1 Lester, S. and Russell, W. (2008) Play for a Change – Play, Policy and Practice: A review of contemporary perspectives. National Children’s Bureau for Play England: London.

2 A General Comment is currently being developed by the UNCRC to further explain the right of children to play, within Article 31

3 <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childreynyoungpeople/publications/rightstoaction/?lang=en>

4 Child Poverty Strategy for Wales - <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/child-poverty-strategy/?lang=en>

inequalities between children living in families that can afford costly recreational provision and those that cannot so reducing poverty of experience for all children.

The Welsh Government wishes to create an environment in Wales where children have excellent opportunities to play and enjoy their recreation time. Our Play Policy⁵ states that:

“Play is so critically important to all children in the development of their physical, social, mental, emotional and creative skills that society should seek every opportunity to support it and create an environment that fosters it. Decision making at all levels of government should include a consideration of the impact of those decisions, on children’s opportunities to play.”

To achieve this purpose the Welsh Government commenced the first part of the duty under section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, Play Opportunities for Children in November 2012. That part of the duty requires Local Authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities for children in their areas, in accordance with regulations. The Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations published in November 2012 set out the requirements of the assessments and the matters they need to take in to account.

On 01 July 2014 Welsh Ministers commenced the second part of this legislation, which places a duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to their assessments. The duty also requires Local Authorities to publish and keep up to date information about play opportunities for children in their areas.

Wales is the first country in the world to establish such a duty within its legislative framework, so there are no precedents for this work. We wish to work with all stakeholders to make this legislation fit for the purpose of making Wales a play friendly country with all the benefits that this will offer to our children. We welcome your endorsement, and implementation of this Statutory Guidance and ongoing positive engagement and support for the play agenda in Wales.

2. Play Policy development in Wales

To achieve the outcomes for children that play provides, the Welsh Government worked with stakeholder organisations to create the **Play Policy** in 2002 and the **Play Policy Implementation Plan** in 2006 (see Appendix A, Associated Policy documents). These documents set out the Welsh Government’s vision for Play for children in Wales and the actions that it intended to take to realise this vision. The

1. ⁵ Play Policy (2002). www.nwwplayforum.org.uk/documents/play-policy-e.pdf

Welsh Government recognises that to achieve the aim of creating a play friendly Wales and to provide excellent opportunities for our children to play; it is necessary for Local Authorities, their partners and other stakeholders to also work towards this purpose. Therefore a section on “Play Opportunities” was included in the **Children and Families (Wales) Measure**, which received royal assent in 2010.

3. Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 (Legal Basis)

Chapter 2, Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure sets out the duty on Local Authorities as regards Play Opportunities.

Section 11 -

Local authority duties in respect of play opportunities for children

- (1) A local authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children in accordance with regulations.
- (2) Regulations may include provision about—
 - a. The matters to be taken into account in assessing sufficiency.
 - b. The date by which a first assessment is to be carried out.
 - c. Frequency of assessments.
 - d. Review of assessments.
 - e. Publication of assessments.

Commenced 01 July 2014(3) *A local authority must secure sufficient play opportunities in its area for children, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to its assessment under subsection (1).*

Commenced 01 July 2014(4) *A local authority must—*

- a. publish information about play opportunities in the authority’s area for children, and*
- b. keep the information published up to date.*

- (5) In performing its duties under this section, a local authority must have regard (among other things)—
 - a. to the needs of children who are disabled persons (within the meaning of section 1 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (c. 50)).
 - b. to the needs of children of different ages.
- (6) In this section—

“play” includes any recreational activity;
“sufficient”, in relation to play opportunities, means sufficient having regard to quantity and quality.

Welsh Ministers decided to commence the duty in two parts. The first part covered the duty on Local Authorities to assess for sufficient play opportunities, sections 11(1); 11(2); 11(5); 11(6) and commenced in 2012.

The second part of the duty placed a duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities in their areas for children, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to the assessments 11(3); and the duty to publish information about play opportunities for children in their areas and keep the information up to date 11(4). This duty was commenced on 01 July 2014, after full consideration of the Play Sufficiency Assessments and the Local Authorities’ Action Plans for improving play opportunities.

This Statutory Guidance is intended to:-

- support Local Authorities in completing their Play Sufficiency Assessments and Play Action Plans for achieving sufficiency. It sets out the purpose of the duty and the matters to be taken into account in assessing sufficiency as set out under section 10. A toolkit has also been made available to support the production of the assessments.⁶
- support Local Authorities in securing sufficient play opportunities. This will be through the implementation of the Play Action Plans which they are required to develop to maintain the strengths and improve on the shortcomings identified in their Play Sufficiency Assessments.

Under Section 71 of the measure, “child” (“plentyn”) means a person who has not attained the age of 18.

This guidance is issued in accordance with Section 17(3) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure, which states that:

*In exercising its functions under **sections 11** (Local authority duties in respect of play opportunities for children) **and 12** (Participation of children in local authority decision making), a local authority **must** have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Welsh Ministers.*

And in accordance with Section 70 (guidance) of the Measure, which states:

- (1) This section has effect in relation to any guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers under this Measure to bodies that must have regard to it.
- (2) The Welsh Ministers —

⁶ <http://www.playwales.org.uk/sufficiency>

- (a) may give guidance to bodies generally or to one or more particular bodies;
- (b) may issue different guidance to or in respect of different bodies;
- (c) must, before they issue guidance, consult the bodies that must have regard to the guidance;
- (d) must publish the guidance.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Assessing for and Securing Sufficient Play Opportunities through Partnership working and collaboration

To achieve a play friendly society that offers a wide range of play and recreational opportunities it is necessary for all partners within the community to work together for this purpose.

The Welsh Government encourages Local Authorities to acknowledge the importance of play in children's lives and make a firm commitment to work strenuously within their own structures; with partner organisations; with children and their families and communities to ensure that children have access to the play opportunities that they want and have a right to expect.

The relevant partnerships are likely to include:

- Town and Community Councils.
- Third sector organisations, particularly regional play associations.
- The private sector if appropriate.
- Community groups.
- Communities First partnerships.
- Health Boards;
- Housing Associations Police and Fire Services as appropriate.

As well as working with relevant organisations within its area, the planning and delivery of play provision can take place on a regional and cross Local Authority basis where appropriate, and with national organisations that support the development of play. Each area should be proactive in developing play opportunities for children in its own area, as well as being supportive and sharing good practice with other authorities/organisations to promote play for all children in Wales. The Assessments and implementation of the Action Plans should take account of provision that may be used by children beyond Local Authority boundaries.

To ensure a sufficient contribution from a range of partners, and across Local Authority policy and delivery areas and to meet the duty for assessment, planning and securing of sufficient play opportunities, the Local Authority should establish a

Play Monitoring Group or equivalent. This group should support the **lead director**, the **lead member for children and young people's services** (point 4.2) and the **designated lead for the managerial and delivery functions** (matter G) to fulfil the duty under the Measure and thereby secure sufficient play opportunities for children in its area. It should also invite the active involvement of Play Champions to promote engagement and support in achieving sufficient opportunities for children to play.

To support Local Authorities in sharing information about their progress in securing sufficient play opportunities, the Welsh Government will work collaboratively with the authorities and other stakeholders to provide information on case studies under its section on Play Opportunities on the Welsh Government website.

4.2 Completion of the Assessments

The Local Authority has the duty to assess for, and with regard to the assessment, develop an action plan for securing sufficient play opportunities.

- Where an assessment identifies an insufficiency in play opportunities for children in the Local Authority area, the action plan must set out what steps need to be taken to improve the opportunities for children to play within that Local Authority area.
- Where an assessment identifies that opportunities for children to play in the Local Authority area are sufficient, the action plan must set out what steps need to be taken to maintain opportunities for children to play within that Local Authority area.

Local Authorities and key partner agencies are required in law to cooperate to improve the wellbeing of children and young people in the local area. The Children Act 2004 placed a duty on every Local Authority in Wales to appoint a **lead director** and **lead member for children and young people's services**. It is expected that these lead directors and members will be responsible for the completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and the development and implementation of the Play Action Plan.

Single Integrated Plan or subsequent high level plan

The Single Integrated Plan is the mechanism through which action on local priorities is planned and delivered, and outcomes monitored and evaluated, based on an assessment of local needs. Action to develop, monitor and scrutinise the Single Integrated plan is coordinated by the Local Service Board, bringing together leaders of local government, the NHS, the police, third sector and the Welsh Government itself.

Local Authority representatives on the Local Service Board should ensure that the Play Sufficiency Assessments form part of the local needs assessment. Progress made to improve the opportunities for children to play, as set out in the Single

Integrated Plan should follow the planning cycle in the Guidance on Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery: Integrating Partnerships and Plans⁷. The assessment and the proposals for securing sufficient play opportunities should be integrated into the planning, implementation and review of the Single Integrated Plan at every stage of the planning cycle.

Action plans are the essential building blocks of the Single Integrated Plan. They set out in detail what actions each of the Local Service Board partners will undertake over 3–5 years to achieve outcomes which contribute towards identified long-term goals.

Legal duties on local partners in respect of play remain. Participation of children in planning for play and the monitoring of play provision should become part of developing citizen engagement and scrutiny procedures.

At the time of publication of this Guidance, the Local Authority Single Integrated Plan is the high level plan to which the Play Action Plan should contribute. In future years this may be changed, and the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Play Action Plan should contribute to any subsequent high level plan.

4.3 Providing and maximising resources

Play covers a wide range of provision; facilities; services and community organisation, therefore it is essential that budgets that cover all these areas contribute towards the purpose of achieving sufficient opportunities for children to play

It is anticipated that with a slight shift in emphasis in how a budget is utilised a significant improvement in the availability of play opportunities can be achieved.

Local partners should identify and consider use of these budgets in developing the Action Plans for improving play opportunities, including reprioritisation if necessary. Review of budgets of relevant policy areas that affect children’s play opportunities and maximise their benefit for play should contribute to the Single Integrated Plans.

4.4 Securing sufficient play opportunities

Under the duty to secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas Local Authorities should use all practical means available to them to maintain provision and services, and to increase and improve play opportunities for all children in their areas. They should have regard to the strengths and shortcomings identified in their Play Sufficiency Assessments and to the requirements of assessment as set out in the Regulations and this guidance.

⁷ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/improvingservices/publicationevents/publications/sharedpurpdel/?lang=en>

Sufficient play opportunities must particularly be secured through implementation of the actions set out in the Local Authorities' **Play Action Plans** developed to maintain the strengths and address the shortcomings identified in the assessment. The Play Action Plans must be developed and reviewed each year to record progress and identify and set out actions that need to be taken during the following year; how these will be achieved; and timescales for completion. Further information is given under point 6.

4.5 Publishing information

The Welsh Government expects each Local Authority to develop a clearly identified play section on its website giving comprehensive information about:

- parks, play grounds and other outdoor spaces affording opportunities for children to play; Indoor play provision; play activities and clubs providing play opportunities;
- Holiday play schemes;
- Events for children and families; and wider community events where children can play.

This information should also be made available via the Local Authority's other main methods of publicising its provision, services and events, including the Family Information Service and CLIC if appropriate.

All information provided should be kept up to date.

This is a statutory requirement under section 11(4) of the Measure.

5. Consultation, Participation & Engagement

For play opportunities to meet the requirements of children it is essential that they are consulted on what they want from play and recreational activities.

The Local Authority should consult with children as to what play opportunities; play provision; activities and events they want in their area. The participation and consultation methods should comply with the Welsh Government's Children and Young People's Participation Standards⁸ and Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 on Participation⁹. The Authority should also consult with parents; the local community and any other interested stakeholder on the development of play opportunities and developing child and play friendly communities. The National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales¹⁰ can be used to support this process. Further guidance on consulting on play is available in

⁸ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/participationstandards/?lang=en>

⁹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2010/1/section/12>

¹⁰ <http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/national-principles>

the **toolkit**¹¹ which was developed to support Local Authorities in conducting the assessment.

The assessment should take into account:

- The views of children, obtained through consultations, on what play and recreation provision they want in their areas; how they would like their neighbourhood to be organised to provide the play opportunities they want; and what barriers stop them from playing. The consultation should include the views of children who do and do not use the existing play opportunities.
- An analysis of the results of these consultations and how these have or will be used to inform future plans.
- The views of parents, families and other stakeholders, obtained through consultation, on play provision/opportunities and how this has or will inform future plans.

As the Play Action Plans are developed, implemented and reviewed each year, children and families who have been, or will be, affected by the actions should be consulted as to their views on what has been achieved; the benefit in increasing their opportunities to play; and actions for future improvements.

6. Timetable for the completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessments, Play Action Plans, securing sufficient play opportunities and reporting to Welsh Ministers

The duty to assess for sufficient play opportunities commenced on **2 November 2012**.

The duty to secure sufficient play opportunities commenced on **1 July 2014**.

Assessing for sufficient play opportunities

Under these duties Local Authorities must complete assessments of play opportunities for children in their areas every three years as set out in the Regulations.

Local Authorities are required to complete and submit a copy of their Play Sufficiency Assessments and Play Action Plans to the Welsh Government. The first assessments and action plans were completed and submitted to the Welsh Government in March 2013.

The documents required to be submitted to Welsh Ministers are:

¹¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/toolkit/?lang=en>

- 1. The Play Sufficiency Assessment** – This must be a full assessment of the play opportunities in the Local Authority area, set out on the Play Sufficiency Assessment template provided under the Welsh Government toolkit
- 2. An Executive Summary of the Play Sufficiency Assessment** which must include a summary of the main outcomes from the Play Sufficiency Assessment and highlight the actions that the Local Authority proposes to take to achieve sufficiency. This summary must be published on the Local Authority web site.
- 3. An Annual Play Action Plan** detailing the actions, priorities and milestones to maintain strengths and address shortcomings identified in the Play Sufficiency Assessment. An updated Play Action Plan is required each year.

Securing sufficient play opportunities

Under the duty to secure sufficient play opportunities, Local Authorities should work with partners to develop and implement the Play Action Plans that remove shortcomings and maintain the strengths identified in the Play Sufficiency Assessments. The Play Action Plans should be developed and implemented each year. Each year Local Authorities should show continuous improvement in securing play opportunities.

Both Play Sufficiency Assessments and Play Action Plans must contribute to the Single Integrated Plans or future high level Local Authority as detailed in point 4.2.

Report to Welsh Minister on assessing and securing sufficient play opportunities

Local Authorities must submit the Play Sufficiency Assessments, Play Action Plans and other reports to Welsh Government officials as set out below. The Welsh Government wishes to develop a strong working relationship with Local Authorities in taking the play agenda forward through, information sharing and monitoring of the Play Action Plans.

Timetable for assessing and securing sufficient play opportunities for the next 10 years.

October 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress Report on the Play Action Plan 2013-2014 2. Annual Play Action Plan 2014-2015 3. Timetable for Cabinet to sign off the Annual Play Action Plan 2014-2015
March 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress Report on the Play Action Plan 2014-2015 2. Annual Play Action Plan 2015-2016 3. Timetable for Cabinet to sign off the Annual Play Action Plan 2015-2016
March 2016 March 2019 March 2022 March 2025	<p>Local Authorities are required to complete and submit a copy of their Play Sufficiency Assessments; the Executive Summary of the Play Sufficiency Assessments; and the Play Action Plan for the following year to the Welsh Ministers.</p> <p>The Executive Summaries of the Play Sufficiency Assessments should be published on the Local Authorities' websites. The published summaries must include the outcomes of the Play Sufficiency Assessments and highlight the actions that the Local Authorities intends to take to achieve sufficient play opportunities.</p> <p>Play Action Plans must be developed and submitted to the Welsh Government each year.</p> <p>Local Authorities were required to contribute the results of the Play Sufficiency Assessments to the Single Integrated Plan (please see the Guidance on Shared Purpose, Shared Delivery: Integrating Partnerships and Plans¹²).</p>

A toolkit¹³ has been developed, in conjunction with Play Wales, to assist Local Authorities in preparing for and conducting the Play Sufficiency Assessments and developing the Play Action Plans. The toolkit includes templates that will support these processes.

¹² <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/improving/services/publicationevents/publications/sharedpurpdel/?lang=en>

¹³ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/toolkit/?lang=en>

7. Definition of Play

The definition of play as used in the Play Policy and Implementation Plan is the one that had been developed by the play sector and is recognised internationally. This states that:

“Play encompasses children’s behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward, and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development - not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live”.

The Welsh Government wishes to emphasise this definition of play. It also recognises that play can include a wide range of recreational activities.

The Welsh Government sees creating an environment where children can freely play as central to the aim of this section of the Measure. We recognise that our society has changed significantly in recent years in the extent to which it is accepted as the norm for children to go out to play and organise where they go and what they do in their own time. This has come about for various reasons including increased concerns about risks to children from increased traffic density; perceived danger from adults who may pose a threat to children; lack of safe places to play; increased television and computer use and sometimes a negative view of playing children by other sections of the community. For these reasons we aim to make communities more play friendly by valuing and increasing quality opportunities for play throughout the community. The intended outcome will be more children playing both inside and outside and so enjoying the health, social, cognitive and emotional benefits that play provides.

Play is defined for the purposes of the measure as including “any recreational activity” (Section 11(6) Measure). The definition of play includes but is not limited to “any recreational activity”. This recognises that children enjoy and benefit from taking part in a wide range of activities that are, in the main, organised by adults for children. These can include junior and youth clubs; leisure centre and sporting activities; cultural and arts activities; indoor play centres, play buses and events organised for children and their families. These recreational activities may offer a combination of adult led organised activities, and opportunities for freely chosen and child led play. In any of these situations children should have the choice of taking part and a voice in what opportunities are offered and how they are organised.

We see the range of play opportunities for children that are covered under the Measure as being:-

- **Freely chosen Play** - With or without adult supervision / facilitation.
- **Structured recreational activities** - in the main led by adults, with predefined rules.

These opportunities can be available in a range of spaces and settings and any setting may afford both opportunities for freely chosen play and structured recreational activities.

Examples within these categories and a glossary of terms is provided in Appendix B

8. Priorities for assessing and securing freely chosen play and recreational activities

The Play Sufficiency Assessments to be carried out by each Local Authority under this duty should give a comprehensive assessment of freely chosen play opportunities as described in the Play Policy.

The assessment should also cover voluntarily chosen structured recreational activities for children covering opportunities for leisure, sporting and cultural activities. These areas are covered, together with play, under the Welsh Government's Core Aim 4 for children and young people. It should identify whether access to provision is free to use or paid for at the point of entry. We recognise that much work has and is being carried out in these areas and do not wish to require duplication with other assessments. We therefore require clear and concise statements on these areas of provision, with cross reference to other relevant assessments of delivery so allowing Local Authorities to utilise existing information.

In securing sufficient play opportunities the Local Authority should give emphasis to the actions required as identified through the play sufficiency assessment and planning process. It should also give consideration to children's opportunities to take part in leisure, sporting and cultural activities and the extent to which these policy and delivery areas support freely chosen opportunities for children to play.

8.1 Play as a tool within other policy agendas

Play is important in its own right. It is also seen as an important tool or method in achieving other agendas relating to children's well-being and development. These include:

- Childcare and early years development.
- Education, particularly the Foundation Phase.
- Healthy living and wellbeing.

The Welsh Government fully recognises the importance of play in its own right and also its being seen as experiential learning; a source of physical activity; and in some contexts a form of therapy, by professionals and others working in service areas for children. Child led play can also contribute to the desired outcomes in these areas. It is important that service providers and practitioners in all relevant areas are aware of the balance between play for its own sake and play as contributing to other agendas.

The provision of quality play opportunities can also significantly contribute to agendas for the whole community, including:

- Community safety – by providing safe environments for children and all other citizens.

Sustainable development – by providing environments that attract families to work and live in areas that meet the needs of the whole family over a period of time.

9. What are sufficient play opportunities?

Section 11(6) sets out that “sufficient” in relation to play opportunities means sufficient having regard to **quantity** and **quality**.

The Welsh Government recognises that clearly setting out a required quantity and quality of play opportunities for a particular area is not a straightforward task as it depends on many variables including:

- The natural environment and geography of the area.
- The built environment and characteristics of the communities.
- The demography of the area.
- Existing play opportunities and provision.
- Existing organisational structures.

These will all affect what is:

- The present situation.
- What changes are needed to create a play friendly environment.
- How these can be achieved.

We acknowledge that what is considered as sufficient and achievable will depend on these variables and should be determined locally, in accordance with the intentions and matters to be taken into account as covered in the Regulations and this Statutory Guidance. This includes consultation with children, their families and communities.

9.1 Quantity

The quantity of play opportunities should be such that any child 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.

9.2 Quality of provision

The Local Authority should assess for, and secure, opportunities for children to play of a quality that meets the enjoyment; social and developmental needs of the children in its area. Many documents have been produced by specialist play organisations giving advice on the criteria associated with good quality and successful play spaces. A rich play environment¹⁴ is one which is flexible, adaptable, varied and interesting. It maximises the potential for socialising, creativity, resourcefulness, challenge, and choice. It is a trusted public space where children feel free to play in their own way, in their own time, on their own terms.

Quality play provision offers all children the opportunity to freely interact with or experience the following:

- **Other children** - of different ages and abilities with a choice to play alone or with others, to negotiate, co-operate, fall out, and resolve conflict.
- **The natural world** - weather, trees, plants, insects, animals, mud.
- **Loose parts** - natural and man made materials that can be manipulated, moved and adapted, built and demolished.
- **The four elements** - earth, air, fire and water.
- **Challenge and uncertainty** - graduated opportunities for risk taking; both on a physical and emotional level.
- **Changing identity** - role play and dressing up.
- **Movement** - running, jumping, climbing, balancing, rolling, swinging, sliding and spinning.
- **Rough and tumble** - play fighting.
- **The senses** - sounds, tastes, textures, smells and sights.

Under the different sections of the Play Sufficiency Assessment the Local Authority should take account of the extent to which children have access to play spaces with high play value; and to a range of recreational activities that meet their needs.

In securing sufficient play opportunities Local Authorities should ensure that their Play Action Plans are developed and implemented to achieve high quality opportunities for all children to play.

9.3 Time, Space and Permission

For children to have sufficient play opportunities, they need time to play, space to play and the recognition by adults that this is every child's right so that all children are allowed this time and space.

¹⁴ Play Wales <http://www.playwales.org.uk/landing.asp?id=6>

10. Play Sufficiency Assessments: Matters that need to be taken into account in assessing for and securing sufficient play opportunities.

This section sets out the matters that need to be taken into account in assessing for sufficient play opportunities. The assessments will show the strengths and shortcomings for each matter and the actions to be taken to maintain strengths and address shortcomings.

To secure sufficient play opportunities Local Authorities must develop and implement Play Action Plans as set out under point 6 covering all of the matters to be taken into account in the assessments.

Matter A: Population

The assessment should present data about the number of children living in the Local Authority area at the present time with a projection of 5 years forward, to enable an assessment of their potential play requirements. The data should provide information about the numbers of children in different categories that may affect their play requirements. The data should also show if the areas are classified as being areas of disadvantage or deprivation.

This should cover the number of children in each, ward, broken down into Lower Super Output Areas, or areas that the local authority has identified as appropriate for sufficiency planning purposes, by:

- Age groups for 0-3 year olds; 4–7 year olds; 8–12 year olds; 13-15 year olds; 16–17 year olds.
- Recorded number of disabled children in each age group.
- Welsh as a first language and those educated through the medium of Welsh.
- Children for whom English or Welsh is not their first language.
- Other recorded cultural factors including ethnicity (including gypsy traveller children, refugees and asylum seekers).
-

Matter B: Providing for diverse needs

The Local Authority should aim to offer play opportunities that are inclusive and encourage all children to play and meet together if they wish to. It should recognise that there may be barriers for some children in taking part in the range of play opportunities in their area. This could be due to disability/impairment; children's own communities' cultural values or other environmental or attitudinal factors. The play assessment should cover the extent to which:

- Play opportunities are appropriate to the requirements of children from diverse communities and cultures, including those in isolated rural areas.
- Play opportunities are appropriate to the requirements of Welsh language speaking children.
- Play opportunities are accessible to and inclusive of disabled children and may include support to access play opportunities.
- Specialised provision is available for disabled children if there is a clearly identified need for this.
- Community planning; traffic and transport initiatives cover the requirements of disabled children to access play opportunities.

Matter C: Space available for children to play

Open Spaces

The Local Authority should recognise that all open spaces, including those which whilst not owned by them, are accessible to the public within their area, are potentially important areas where children can play or pass through to reach other playable areas or places where they go. The Play Sufficiency Assessment should take into account:

- Grassland/scrubland.
- Woodlands and amenity green space.
-
- Beaches and river and lake sides.
- Public parks and gardens (in addition to dedicated play areas within the parks).
- Residential streets.
- School grounds.
- Brownfield sites.
- Village greens, town squares, plazas and other open urban public spaces.
- Incidental pockets of land, for example alongside roads and paths

As part of the Play Sufficiency Assessments Local Authorities should draw upon existing Open Space Assessments and other local sources of information to map areas that are used for play or could potentially be used for play. The open spaces considered should include those set out in the Welsh Government Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16 “Sport, Recreation and Open Space”; Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 “Design” * and Creating an Active Wales (2009)* as well as brown field sites; residential streets; and school grounds.

A space should be assessed for:

- Its play value.

- Distance to travel from where children live without any significant physical barriers.
- Its accessibility.
- Its freedom from inappropriate hazards.
- Acceptable levels of opportunities for beneficial risk taking.
- Its existing use for play.
- Its potential for play use.

Any change of use for open spaces, or areas that become disused, will come under the guidelines and regulations set out as part of the planning system in *Planning Policy Wales* and the associated Technical Advice Notes¹⁵.

It is expected that any assessment relating to planning of open space and leisure and recreation, will be undertaken with close collaboration with the Local Authority Play Officer and that Open Space Assessments (OSAs) will inform the Play Sufficiency Assessment and vice-versa, to avoid duplication of effort.

Securing sufficient play opportunities

In securing sufficient play opportunities through the Play Action Plan, Local Authorities should ensure that the collaboration that was established in undertaking the assessment is continued in developing and undertaking actions to improve open spaces for play. The Play Implementation Group should include representation from the Local Authority Planning Department to ensure a strong contribution from this policy area in the Play Action Plans.

Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should take into account:

- Playgrounds and play areas.
- Doorstep.
- Local.
- Neighbourhood.
- Destination.
- Recreation (sports) fields – natural and artificial.
- Multi use games areas (MUGAs).
- Wheeled play areas – BMX bike and skate parks.
- Youth shelters.

¹⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/policyindex/?lang=en>

A space should be assessed for:

- Play value.
- Distance to travel from where children live without any significant physical barriers.
- Quantity of provision in relation to number of children.
- Accessibility and suitability in relation to different ages; abilities; dry and wet weather use.
- Acceptable levels of opportunities for beneficial risk taking.
- Its existing use for play.
- Potential for increasing use for play

Playing Fields

The Local Authority should recognise the importance of playing fields as areas of community use for organised sporting activities and for play and informal recreational use. The Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure 2010¹⁶ empowers the Welsh Ministers to make provision by way of regulations for the involvement of communities in decisions by local authorities about proposed disposals of fields. A “Local Authority” in this context is a county/county borough council, community council and a national park authority.

The Welsh Ministers have consulted on draft regulations (and the related statutory guidance) to be made under the Measure. The draft regulations require a local authority to publish information on the impact of a proposed disposal of a playing field on the health and well-being of the community, by reference to key strategies and plans for the area (including the play sufficiency assessment). The regulations will also strengthen arrangements for meaningful consultation by local authorities with the local community and appropriate national and local sports and other organisations prior to a decision to dispose of a playing field.

It is currently anticipated that the regulations will come into force in late 2014.

Any impact assessment should recognise the importance of playing fields to children’s opportunities to play and include children, young people and their families in any consultations on such decisions.

¹⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2010/6/contents>

Matter D: Supervised provision

Play work provision

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should take into account play provision including:

- Holiday play schemes (Registered and unregistered).
- Adventure playgrounds.
- Play opportunities supported by peripatetic playworkers (play rangers).
- Mobile provision, such as play buses.
- Clubs and youth groups.
- Organisations which provide resources for these settings (such as toy libraries or scrap stores).

This provision should be assessed for the extent to which:

- There is sufficient provision to meet the needs of children and their families.
- The provision meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards for that setting, as set out by the Welsh Government; Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) or other inspection body.
- The provision works to achieve high standards in offering play opportunities for children as developed by the Sector Skills Council for Play (SkillsActive) and the play sector.

Where out of school childcare and open access play is already assessed by Local Authorities through the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, the Play Sufficiency Assessment should also assess these settings in respect of the quality of the play opportunities that they provide and offer.

Structured recreational activities

Under the Measure recreational activities form a part of Play Opportunities.

The Welsh Government wishes to avoid duplication of assessments of provision and service delivery within the range of youth support services and other areas providing for Sport, Leisure and Culture, so requires less information on this provision within the Play Sufficiency Assessment. (See point 8: Priorities for assessing freely chosen play and recreational activities). A statement should be provided of sufficiency in these areas with cross reference to the relevant sections in each policy/delivery area's assessments of provision.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should take into account the extent to which:

- The Local Authority is delivering on its responsibility to secure the services set out under Core Aim 4 for sport, leisure and culture.

- Local “Creating an Active Wales” Plans are increasing play and recreational activities for children.
- Local Authority Partnership Agreements (LAPA) are contributing to increasing free play and recreational activities.
- The sports agenda is contributing to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children.
- Leisure centre provision of free play opportunities – free swimming; play sessions.
- The cultural and arts agenda, is contributing to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children.
- The Local Authority Youth Service is providing for children’s opportunities for leisure and association.

As set out in Shared Planning for Better Outcomes (2007),¹⁷ Youth Support services and the Youth Service should provide children with their entitlement to accessible recreational and social opportunities, sports, culture, music and arts.

Matter E: Charges for play provision

Play opportunities in open spaces and outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces (Matter C) will, other than in exceptional circumstances, be free of charge to children and any accompanying adults. Supervised provision both for playwork provision and structured recreational activities (Matter D) may incur a cost to children and their families. This could be through voluntary contributions, entry charges and payment or subscriptions for activities. A further cost could be for transport to these opportunities (Matter F). Any charges will clearly affect whether a wide range of play opportunities are available for all children and therefore the sufficiency of provision for a particular area. It should be appreciated that even relatively small costs for low income families with several children can mean that opportunities are not available to these children.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should show which play opportunities involve a charge and the amount of that charge. It should take into account the extent to which any charges affect the sufficiency of play opportunities for:-

- Children living in low income families.
- Children living in areas of deprivation.
- Children living in rural areas.
- Disabled children or children with particular needs.

¹⁷ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/sharedplanning/?lang=en>

The Play Sufficiency Assessment and Play Action Plans should show the extent to which Local Authorities take charges into account for these children and their families and the measures used to mitigate these circumstances including:

- Provision of no cost opportunities for children to play.
- No or low charges for Local Authority premises used for play provision.
- Grants or subsidies for play providers.
- Subsidised transport costs for children travelling to play opportunities.

Information of no or low cost play provision will be accessible via the Family Information Service available in each local authority area.

Matter F: Access to space/provision

In assessing for and creating play friendly communities Local Authorities should work to ensure that children are able to move around their communities to play; to walk or cycle to open spaces, play or leisure provision; to visit family and friends or to attend school, without risk of harm.

The Welsh Government is committed to reducing road traffic collisions and injuries, and developing a safer environment for all. The goal is a safer country - for our children and for all the people of Wales.

Local Authorities have powers to introduce 20mph limits where appropriate – for example in residential areas where children could play. The number of 20 mph schemes in Wales has risen steadily in recent years, largely due to Welsh Government funding through our Local Road Safety Grant and Safe Routes programmes.

For many children the pavements and roads outside their front doors represent not only access to play provision, but also a space in its own right, where they can play; sometimes the only public open space in a community. We also recognise that when children travel somewhere they don't just walk or cycle but they play their way through their community.

Under the Welsh Government's Local Transport Services Grant, Local Authorities are allocated annual funding to help them boost the number and range of subsidised local bus and community transport services. While the majority of local bus services are provided commercially, Local Authorities have powers to subsidise services that they believe are required to meet a social need. To achieve this they use their own budgets but also the annual allocations that they receive under the Local Transport Services Grant Scheme.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should take into account all factors that contribute to children's access to play or moving around their communities including:

- Traffic calming.

- Play streets / temporary road closures.
- Safe walking, cycling routes.
- Public transport provision.
- Shared spaces.
- Parking.
- Opening hours of play provision.

These factors should be assessed for:

- The number of 20 mph limits in residential areas.
- The effectiveness of these limits in allowing for children to safely move around their communities and playing outside.
- The potential for increasing the number of 20 mph limit areas to promote play opportunities.
- The Local Authority's provision of safe walking and cycle routes and potential for increasing these. This should align with the proposals that are set out in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.¹⁸
- Confirmation that their public transport planning and decisions about expenditure on bus and community transport services reflect their assessment of children's needs to access play.
- Processes for arranging temporary road closures being straightforward and information on these being readily available.
- The impact that parked cars in residential streets have on children's use of space.
- Whether play opportunities are available at times when children want them.

Information; publicity; events

For children and families to take part in play opportunities, recreational activities and events it is necessary for them to know what is available in their area.

The Welsh Government expects each Local Authority to develop a clearly identified play section on its website. This should give comprehensive information about all play opportunities; play areas and areas not necessarily designated as such that provide a range of play opportunities; activities; clubs and events for children in its area. It would also be useful to provide information and relevant links for parents, to promote support for, and involvement with play opportunities within the wider community. This information could also be provided through the Local Authority's other publicity methods.

¹⁸ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/integrated/walkingcycling/activetravelact/?lang=en>

Events which encourage play and which promote the normalisation/acceptance of play activities in community spaces will contribute to play being accepted at other times, as will publicity of events and providing positive information and news stories to develop positive community attitudes to children and their right to play.

The Local Authority could use physical on site signposting of areas within the community which are available for children to play, to provide a clear message to both children and adults that children are welcome to play in this area. This could take the form of play equipment or more symbolic indication of permission to play. It should be clear that this does not limit children's play just to these areas.

The assessment should cover the extent to which:

- Information about play areas; play and recreation activities; clubs and events for children is readily available through the Local Authority website and other sources.
- Information about the accessibility of provision and contact for support if required.
- Information about events for the whole family is available.
- Information of how parents; school governors community groups; volunteers can become involved in providing play opportunities.
- The Local Authority publicises positive attitudes towards children and their presence outside, playing in their communities.

Note: that there is now the legal requirement on Local Authorities under section 11(4) of the Measure to publish information about play opportunities and keep the information up to date.

Matter G: Securing & Developing the Play Workforce

Local Authorities and partners are required to undertake or secure the managerial and delivery functions necessary to achieve sufficient play opportunities. This will include the co-ordination of the required assessment of the cross cutting policy areas; the integration of the assessment results into the single strategic plan and the delivery of the play agenda by a sufficiently resourced, sized and qualified workforce

The play workforce should have, or be supported in achieving, the qualifications required by the Welsh Government's National Minimum Standards for Regulated Settings; the accepted qualification levels set out by SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council covering Play; and other requirements set out by other associated inspection and regulatory bodies including CSSIW. The Local Authority should support the development of the play workforce including the involvement and training of other professionals within the children's workforce; volunteers and community members, in line with the National Occupational Standards for the sector.

The assessment should provide information on the organisational structure of the policy area which manages the Play agenda and the play workforce.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should take into account the extent to which:

- The structure and size of the Play workforce (policy and delivery) is able to achieve sufficient play opportunities for children in the area.
- The level of qualifications of the play workforce is sufficient and appropriate for their roles.
- Training is available for the play workforce to achieve the necessary qualifications.
- Training is available for volunteers and parents to develop their knowledge and skills in play work.
- Training is available for professionals working in the children's workforce in relation to play.
- Training or awareness sessions are available for professionals and decisions makers whose work impacts on children's opportunities to play for instance town planners.

Welsh Government recognises that this is a cross cutting agenda and many professionals whose primary purpose at work is not necessarily to support children's play, undertake roles which impact directly and indirectly on children's access to play opportunities. The Play Sufficiency Assessment should take into account the extent to which training is available to enable this broad group to develop their knowledge and understanding of how they may contribute to ensuring sufficiency of play opportunities.

The Welsh Government is developing, with partners, a 10 Year Early Years, Childcare and Workforce Plan which will contribute to ensuring an appropriately trained and qualified play workforce.

Matter H: Community engagement and participation

The Local Authority should consult widely on children's; their families' and other stakeholder's views on play and recreational provision as set out in Section 5. It should also aim to promote wide community engagement in providing play friendly communities.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should take into account the extent to which the following groups are engaged in initiatives to enhance play opportunities:

- Youth groups.
- School Councils.
- School governing bodies.
- Community Groups.
- Any other relevant groups.

Such initiatives could include:

- Making space available and suitable for play.
- Organising play events.
- Promoting positive attitudes of children and play.

As securing sufficient play opportunities is achieved through the development and implementation of the Play Action Plans each year, the children and families affected by the actions should be consulted as to their views of what has been achieved, the benefit in increasing their opportunities to play, and actions for future improvements. It is expected that Local Authorities will use existing mechanisms for children's participation and family consultation processes to achieve this.

Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

To achieve the outcomes we desire for children and to create a child friendly society that offers a wide range of opportunities for freely chosen play and recreation, it is necessary for policy and implementation across many policy areas to contribute to this purpose.

The Local Authority should examine all its policy agendas for their potential impact on playing children and embed targets and actions to enhance children's play opportunities into all such strategies and policies.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should take into account the extent to which the policy areas set out below include consideration of, and actions to enhance, children's play opportunities. This should also cover any other Local Authority agendas that affect children. The Play Sufficiency Assessment should show that it has taken account of these policy areas either through the provision of related information or by cross-referencing to the related plan with reference to the detail on play.

In securing sufficient play opportunities the Local Authority must give full regard to its Play Sufficiency Assessment and the Play Action Plan showing the actions it is taking each year to improve play opportunities within each of these policy areas. As set out under section 4.1, the Play Monitoring Group should form the basis whereby all policy and delivery areas report progress against actions and targets in the plan, The Play Monitoring Group should be the mechanism for ensuring collaboration across all policy areas. As set out in section 4.3, the Local Authority should examine budgets in the policy areas listed below, to identify how they can be used to meet the actions in the Play Action Plan for improving play within that policy area.

Policy areas to be considered in the assessment:

Education/schools

Schools provide an important opportunity for children to play during the school day and for periods before and after classes. They can also provide valuable play space at weekends and during holiday periods if the school is organised to allow for this. The Welsh Government recommends that Local Authorities advise schools to provide high quality play space and sufficient time for children to play during the school day and give full consideration to opening this provision during out of teaching hours.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- children are provided with an interesting play environment for breaks during the school day.
- schools provide play opportunities during out of school times, including before school, in the evenings, at weekends and during holiday periods, as well as open access to school grounds and use of premises for activities.
- schools encourage children to walk or cycle to school.
- children are provided morning, lunchtime and afternoon play breaks.

Town and Country Planning

Town and country planning is an important factor in providing spaces where children can play. The assessment of open space provision should be undertaken as part of the preparation of the local development plan. This should assess the suitability of streets and open spaces for play, including the mapping of formal and informal play provision and opportunities. The development plan should show how the Local Authority intends to provide play space in residential, neighbourhood and town or city centre environments where provision has been assessed as inadequate.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- Planning of the built environment including housing and use of public and open spaces provides for children's opportunities to play.
- The Local Development Plan recognises and addresses the outdoor play needs of children of various ages

Traffic and transport

Traffic control and transport services are important in enabling children to walk, cycle or use public transport in reaching places where they play or take part in leisure provision.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- Children can play within community areas and there are safe routes for walking, cycling or using public transport to access play; leisure provision and school.
- The Local Transport Plan recognises the importance of local streets, roads and walking and cycling routes in offering play opportunities for children of different ages and abilities.
- The Local Transport Plan identifies ways of assessing the needs of all groups including those which are often marginalised.

Health and Wellbeing

Evidence shows that active play contributes strongly to children's health and well-being. It is shown as contributing to both children's physical and mental health and a means of reducing childhood obesity. Local Authorities should work to ensure that play is taken into full account in providing for a healthy community. The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- the Local Authority's plans and agenda to promote health and well being recognising the importance of freely chosen play and recreational activities in contributing to both children's and their family's physical, mental and social health.
- Such plans support actions to enhance play opportunities for children to promote their health and well being.

Child Poverty

Play has been shown to mitigate the negative effects of poverty on children's lives by providing enjoyment and helping to build their resilience to difficult situations. Play can also be a means of reducing inequalities between children living in families that can afford costly recreational provision and those that cannot so reducing poverty of experience for all children. The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- the Local Authority's tackling poverty agenda and plans recognise the potential of play to increase children's resilience and mental well-being in difficult situations.
- Play opportunities are available to all children regardless of family income.

Early years/Childcare and Family policy and initiatives

Play is central to children's early years and vital for their health, learning and development. Building a Brighter Future, the Welsh Government Early Years and Childcare Plan 2013, recognises the importance of play for all 0 – 7 year olds. The Local Authority in its provision of services for early year's children and their families should recognise the importance of high quality play opportunities in their lives.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- The Local Authority recognises the importance of play within this policy area, and the benefit to parents and families as a whole, through access to a wide range of play opportunities.

Early Years, Flying Start and family support plans and services recognising the importance of play and contribute to the provision of rich play opportunities for children.

Inter-generational policy and initiatives

The Welsh Governments believes that intergenerational activities and programmes can benefit both children and older people. Play provision can help to promote this interaction.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- The Local Authority values an inter-generational approach to play and recreation opportunities for the benefit of children and people from older age groups.
- Policies allow for different age ranges – children, teenagers and adults to
 - Use the same space separately at different times of the day.
 - Share the same space at the same time.

Community Development

Welsh Government values community development to build up equal and fair societies where community's needs are understood and fulfilled. Opportunities for children to play form an important part in meeting the communities needs.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- The Local Authority recognises the rights of children to play within their communities.

- Promotes communities that support and provide for play opportunities for their children.
- Promotes communities that value the benefits which play provides for both children and the community as a whole and in promotes community cohesion.

Community Safety

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:
- The Local Authority recognises the rights of children to play within their communities and provides a safe environment for this to happen.
- The Community Safety Strategy has a clear statement which recognises the right of children to play in their communities.
- The Community Safety Strategy includes actions to provide a safe environment for children to play in their communities.

Health and Safety

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should assess the extent to which:

- The Local Authority's Health and Safety policies and procedures embracing the principle of Risk Benefit Assessment as illustrated in the Health and safety Executive's (HSE) High Level Statement on managing risk in play.

11. Future Developments

From 01 July 2014 the full duty on Local Authorities under section 11, Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 came into effect. The detail on assessing for and securing sufficient play opportunities is set out in this Statutory Guidance. This includes detail on undertaking the Play Sufficiency Assessments, development and implementation of the Play Action Plans, monitoring processes and reporting to Welsh Ministers.

Case studies and examples of how Local Authorities are securing sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas will be available on the Welsh Government website. Welsh Government officials will liaise with Local Authority Play Co-ordinators and other representatives on the development of and updating this material and on monitoring of progress and further initiatives for collaboration and partnership working.

Other materials to support Local Authorities and promote the play agenda will appear from time to time on the Welsh Government website.

Appendix A

Welsh Government policy and legislation

POLICY

Play Policy (2002)

In October 2002 the Welsh Government published its Play Policy, which was founded on Article 31 of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. The Play Policy was produced to demonstrate the importance that the Welsh Government places on the value of play in childhood and the importance of children in our society. It stated that:

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to ensuring that all children have access to rich stimulating environments, free from inappropriate risk, and full of challenge, thereby offering them the opportunity to explore through freely chosen play both themselves and the world.

It made clear the Welsh Government's commitment to children, and policymaking and provision designed to meet their needs. The Play Policy was a broad statement of principles rather than a detailed prescription of how provision should be implemented.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/3291781/?lang=en>

Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy (2003)

From April 2003, local authorities and local health boards will be required to formulate and implement a Health, Social Care and Wellbeing strategy for their local area.

Local authorities and local health boards will be under a duty to formulate and implement a local Strategy. In doing this, they will be required to co-operate with a range of local partners. The named partners are:

- NHS Trusts
- Health Commission Wales (Specialised Services)
- Community Health Councils (CHCs)
- County Voluntary Councils (CVCs)
- Any other voluntary, business or private body with an interest in health and well-being.

A range of other organisations will come under the heading of 'other voluntary, business or private body'. It is for the partners at a local level to determine this wider stakeholder group.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/health/strategies/strategies/?lang=en>

‘Children and Young People: Rights to Action’ (2004)

This set out the Welsh Government’s seven core aims for children and young people. The Play Policy Implementation Plan made a significant contribution to achieving the core aim 4: that all children and young people should have access to a range of play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/rightstoaction/?lang=en>

Wales: A Better Country (2005)

Sets out a long-term vision of Wales as a place which values its children and young people. It included amongst its core values the statement that ‘children and young people should be treated as valued members of the community whose voices are heard and needs considered across the range of policy making’.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/wales-a-better-country?lang=en>

Play Policy Implementation Plan (2006)

To further the commitment of the Play Policy, the Welsh Government worked with partners to develop an implementation plan, which was published in February 2006. This reaffirmed the Welsh Government’s commitment to play and how it related to and contributed towards other UK and Welsh Government policies and strategic plans. It set out actions that the Welsh Government would take including:

- Creating a duty of co-operation in addressing the play needs of children and, regardless of issues such as levels of ability, language, race or gender.
- Working with stakeholders, including children, to produce Standards for a wide range of high quality play provision.
- Checking its own policies that impact on children’s opportunities to play, including planning and transport, for consideration of and promotion of play.
- Providing information and training materials for schools and parents on facilitating play.
- Supporting the development of the Play workforce.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/playpolicy?lang=en>

Creating an Active Wales (2009)

- The Welsh Government recognises the importance of creating an environment that makes it easier and safer for people to choose to be more physically active, and that active play contributes to children's physical health and fitness, both during childhood and into later life. Creating an Active Wales includes a section on access to quality play and on woodlands and green spaces.

In Creating an Active Wales (2009), the Welsh Government sets out a vision where all children would frequently play outdoors in safe environments and that people would use their local environment for active recreation. One of the actions in the document was to improve access to woodlands and green space especially those near disadvantaged communities. For this action the Welsh Government undertook to work with the National Trust. We recognise the importance of woodlands and green spaces for children to play and develop an understanding of and respect for the environment. The play sufficiency assessment should include an assessment of children and young people's access to woodlands and green spaces as an opportunity to play, particularly in disadvantaged communities and work with relevant partners in addressing issues of access and removal of hazards.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/cultureandsport/sportandactivererecreation/active/?lang=en>

Good Practice Guide in Designing Gypsy Traveller Sites in Wales (2009)

This Good Practice Guide is intended as a guide to local authorities in providing appropriate services at reasonable cost to Gypsies and Travellers living on residential sites in Wales. It contains advice and examples of good practice and should be used as a basis to facilitate authorities in making decisions specific to their own particular local circumstances. It is not the intention of the Welsh Government to impose uniform solutions since situations may vary considerably across regions in Wales.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/people-and-communities/communitycohesion/publications/goodpractice/?lang=en>

Child Poverty Strategy (2011)

The Child Poverty Strategy, which sets out the Welsh Government's ambition to eradicate child poverty, recognises the importance of making poverty less damaging for children. It emphasises children's right to play and states that "the Welsh Government sees play as being a vital element in children's development and something that can provide a strong protective factor in children's lives. It can, to an extent, shield children from the negative aspects of poverty and allow them to develop their inner resources and build resilience to difficulties and uncertainties in their home and other parts of their lives."

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/child-poverty/?lang=en>

Gypsy and Traveller strategy (2012)

The aim of 'Travelling to a Better Future' is to realise our commitment to the Gypsy and Traveller community; to ensure equality of opportunity for Gypsies and Travellers in Wales and to think about new ways in which we can enable Gypsy and Traveller communities to access resources not always available to them by ensuring our services are flexible enough to respond to their needs.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/people-and-communities/communitycohesion/gypsytravellers/?lang=en>

Vibrant and Viable Places : New Regeneration Framework (2013)

Vibrant and Viable Places is the result of a review of approaches to regeneration in Wales and further afield and extensive consultation with partners.

It has the backing of the whole Cabinet and promotes a well-evidenced approach combining support for people and places. It also encourages partnership working with the public, private and third sectors.

The framework seeks to get the best out of every pound spent by the Welsh Government in terms of mainstream funding like health and education.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housing-and-regeneration/regeneration/vibrant-and-viable-places/?lang=en>

Road Safety Strategy (2013)

Road traffic injuries happen every day on Welsh roads. They can potentially have tragic consequences for those involved and their families, but are almost entirely avoidable.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/roads/safety/?lang=en>

Early years/Childcare and Play Workforce Development (2013)

"Building a Brighter Future: the Early Years and Childcare Plan", sets out the Welsh Governments intentions for policy development and implementation for children, pre-birth to seven years of age, for the next 10 years.

Part of Building a Brighter Future covers the development of a 10 year workforce plan for early years, childcare and play work practitioners. This aims to raise the profile of these sectors and increase the skills of the workforce. A proposal for future European Funding is being developed to support this programme.

This strategic plan will be looking to ensure that play workers in Wales are able to offer high-quality play opportunities which support children's development.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/building-a-brighter-future/?lang=en>

Planning Policy Wales (2014)

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs, listed in the Annex). Procedural advice is given in circulars and policy clarification letters. It translates our commitment to sustainable development into the planning system so that it can play an appropriate role in moving towards sustainability

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/ppw/?lang=en>

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/publications/manualforstreets/?lang=en>

LEGISLATION

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Came into force in UK in 1992).

The right to engage in play and recreational activities is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 31.1 of the Convention states that “State Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”.

<http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/Our-mission/UN-Convention/>

The Children Act (2004)

This imposed a duty of co-operation between each Local Authority in Wales and their partners as set out within section 25 of the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to promote the well being of children. It specified that one of the purposes of this co operation was to improve the well being of children relating to education, training and recreation and therefore play.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

The Childcare Act (2006)

The Childcare Act placed a duty on Local Authorities to assess childcare provision in its area. It also places a duty on Local Authorities to provide information on services or facilities for children and young people, including play, sports and other

recreational facilities. This information can be used to contribute to the Play Sufficiency Assessments.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents>

Shared Planning for Better Outcomes (2007)

The document provided Regulations and Guidance for Local Authorities and their Partners on producing Children and Young People's Plans. Core Aim 4 requires that all children and have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.

Section (7.3) states that Local Authorities should plan with their partners to provide or secure play opportunities for children and young people. Youth Support services should provide young people with their entitlement to accessible recreational and social opportunities, sports, culture, music and arts.

This includes:

- Play strategies, including plans for staffed adventure play.
- Leisure and sporting opportunities.
- Out of school hours childcare and holiday play-schemes.
- Action to promote other out of school hours activity.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/sharedplanningforbetteroutcomes?lang=en>

Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure (2011)

The Welsh Government put before the National Assembly for Wales a proposal for a new 'Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure related to the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Measure was unanimously accepted and received royal assent in 2011. The Welsh Government believes that the new Measure will be an effective way of ensuring that, in doing its work; it will place greater emphasis on helping children in Wales to access the rights which are set out in the UNCRC, as a step towards them all achieving well being. This increased emphasis will apply to all the Articles, including Article 31.1 relating to a child's right to play.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's Concluding Observations in 2008 stated that the UK should:-

95.Do more to make sure all children can enjoy their right to rest and play, and to take part in leisure and cultural activities. These activities should be appropriate for all different age groups (ranging from little children to teenagers).

96. Make sure all playgrounds are of good quality and accessible to all children, including disabled children.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents>

Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery (2012)

The statutory guidance on single plans “Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery” sets out the role of local government and their partners, through Local Service Boards (LSBs), in helping to bring together public service leaders to plan, work, deliver and improve. The date for the first plans is set for April 2013. The intention is that each area will develop a single integrated plan, based on a single needs assessment and owned by the Local Service Board. It will be built on the separate statutory plans now in place. The plan should cover the whole range of outcomes for the locality and discharge duties arising from legislation including the Children Act 2004 and NHS Wales Act 2006. The local Play Sufficiency Assessment should contribute to the overall needs assessment that will inform the single plan. Legal duties on local partners in respect of play remain.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/improvingservices/publicationevents/publications/sharedpurpose/?lang=en>

Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013)

The Act requires local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. The Act also requires new road schemes (including road improvement schemes) to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at design stage.

<http://wales.gov.uk/legislation/programme/assemblybills/active-travel-act/?lang=en>

Funding

The Welsh Government has various funding streams which may be available to Local Authorities to increase play opportunities for children in their areas. The funding programme is decided by Welsh Ministers to achieve the required outcomes under their portfolios to deliver on the Programme for Government and meet the needs of people in Wales. Proposals for increasing play opportunities may be eligible for funding under these programmes, but would need to comply with the funding criteria and be identified as an area of locally identified need by that Local Authority

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

- **Provision for children's play:** play provision offers a place, in a range of settings which are unsupervised and supervised where children can invent and extend their own play.
- **Open space:** Land laid out and used for the purposes of public recreation or has public value. Open spaces can be as diverse as informal amenity space, sitting areas, public parkland, landscaped areas, incidental open space such as tree belts and screening. A Typology of Open Space is included in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space.
- **Designated play space:** A place that has been designated specifically for children's play as its principal function
 - **Door-step:** A play space, within sight of home, where children, especially young children can play within view of known adults.
 - **Local:** A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk to with ease.
 - **Neighbourhood:** A larger space or facility which children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently, can get to safely and spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers and have a wider range of play experiences.
 - **Playable space or shared public space:** A place where children can play that is not specifically designated for play and which does not have play as its principal or only function.
 - **Inclusive play space:** A play provision that is accessible and welcoming to disabled and non-disabled children.
 - **Destination play areas:** A play space within a key site, such as a park. It is aimed at attracting families and similar groups for longer visits and tend to be the same size or larger than neighbourhood sites.
 - **Multi-use games areas:** An enclosed area, using a synthetic grass or hard surface for playing sports formally and informally.
 - **Youth shelters:** An area dedicated to local children as a place to hang out.
 - **Out of School Childcare Clubs:** Provide childcare and positive play opportunities for school children aged 3-16 years directly before and/or

after school and during school holidays. Qualified Play workers facilitate sessions. Clubs are based in community hubs such as schools, community centres, church halls and also within day nurseries. Childcare clubs are registered with CSSIW unless care is being provided for children over 7 years only or the care being provided does not exceed 2 hours daily e.g. a breakfast club running for an hour before school every morning. Childcare clubs enable parents/carers to enter work, training or education and provide respite for vulnerable families. Because of this, they aim to be sustainable, charging fees that are affordable for the local community.

- **Wheel park/wheeled play:** An area for activities on wheels such as skateboarding, rollerblading and BMX biking.
- **Staffed open access play sessions:** Open Access play provision can be permanent or short-term provision, located in a variety of settings with or without premises. Whilst the term Open Access applies to registered provision for children under 8 years, such provision usually caters for a wide age range of children, including those over 8 years and older. Open access provision for children 8 years and older is un-regulated. The purpose of the provision is to provide staffed play opportunities for children in the absence of their parents. Children are not restricted in their movements, other than where related to safety matters and are not prevented from coming and going as and when they wish. Children have the freedom of choice as to what range of play activity they wish to undertake and with whom they play.
- **Adventure playgrounds:** an open access setting staffed by trained play workers, where children can find materials and support so that they can build and adapt their own play space to suit their own needs. It is a rich play environment that compensates for today's lack of accessible natural space where children can play independently of adults.
- **Peripatetic play work (play rangers) project:** An open access, often short term project staffed by a small team of trained playworkers, visiting a different place, a park, estate play area or other public space, once or twice a week for a couple of hours. They will be equipped with ideas and equipment, and will work to help children places to play in their local area, and to reassure parents that it is safe for children to play out.
- **Playwork:** Playwork is a highly skilled profession that enriches and enhances children's play. It takes place where adults support children's play but it is not driven by prescribed education or care outcomes. (SkillsActive).
- **Play workforce:** Encompasses anyone employed whose role has an impact on children playing – those who may either directly facilitate their play, design for playing, or those with the power to give permission for children to play, or not.

