



Flintshire Play Sufficiency Seminar

2 November 2016

Deeside Leisure Centre, Queensferry

Flintshire Play Sufficiency Seminar

Flintshire County Council, in partnership with Play Wales, organised this seminar to explore how all of those whose work impacts on children's play can work together to make Flintshire a more play friendly county.

Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a statutory duty on all local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children. This is a task that involves working together 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.

Wales – A Play Friendly Country, statutory guidance to local authorities, sets out a wide range of Matters across several policy areas that need to be taken into account. These include:

- Education and schools
- Town and country planning
- Traffic and transport
- Health and wellbeing
- Child poverty
- Early years, childcare and family policy
- Intergenerational policy
- Community development
- Community safety
- Health and safety

Please email Janet.Roberts2@flintshire.gov.uk for more information.



Conference Programme

Item	Content
Welcome and introduction	Presentation of overall aim and opening contextualisation for the day: To think about the idea of 'play sufficiency', possibly in a slightly different way, to build on what has been achieved to date and to think ahead to how this momentum might be maintained to continue to make Flintshire a healthy place for playing
Opening context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Sufficiency Duty in Wales • Flintshire's Play Sufficiency Assessment • Implementing Play Sufficiency in Flintshire: a case study
Exploring the idea of 'play sufficiency'	An introduction to key issues when thinking about play sufficiency – establishing foundations for the remainder of the day
Accounting for play	The issues and challenges of assessing children's play – the limitations of technical accountancy systems
Sufficiency, 'play-space' and spatial justice	Considering environmental conditions that might enhance or constrain the emergence of play in children's everyday lives
12.30 – 1.15pm Lunch	
Play sufficiency and 'critical cartography'	Ways of accounting for play – building a 'map' of local communities and subjecting it to critical scrutiny
Towards collective wisdom	Mapping networks of relations – how do they relate to each other, who else might be important in the formation of collective wisdom?
Action planning	Back to spatial justice and looking at equitable distribution of time/ space for playing – what small experimental steps would improve the possibility of playful moments emerging?
Review and evaluation	<p>Drawing together some key lessons gained from the session and how this will shape future work.</p> <p>What do people need to continue along this route?</p>



Setting the Scene

Janet Roberts, the Play Development Officer in Flintshire, welcomed delegates to the seminar. She reminded delegates that the local authority had submitted its Play Sufficiency Assessment and an Action Plan for 2016-17 to Welsh Government in March 2011. This built on the first one, which was submitted in 2013.

Janet reminded us that we all have a role to play in making Flintshire a more play friendly place. She informed us that she hoped that the seminar would strengthen the interest and support for children's play in Flintshire. One of the aims of the day was to reinvigorate the Flintshire Strategic Play Forum. This Forum will be responsible for developing, monitoring and evaluating the Play Sufficiency Action Plans.

Wales – A Play Friendly Place

Marianne Mannello, Assistant Director at Play Wales, opened the seminar with an overview of international and national policy supporting children's right to play. All children have the right to play as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This is recognised both by the UK Government and by the Welsh Government. Article 31 of the Convention says:

“Every child has the right 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.”

On 1 February 2013 the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted a General Comment that clarifies for governments worldwide the meaning and importance of Article 31 of the Convention on the Right of the Child. A General Comment is an official statement that elaborates on the meaning of an aspect of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that seems to require further interpretation or emphasis.

The aim of the General Comment is to raise the importance of an Article and increase accountability among countries that have signed up to the Convention.

General Comment 17 on Article 31 defines the key characteristics of play as fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity.



“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.”

Welsh Government

It states that playing is a fundamental and vital dimension of the pleasure of childhood and an essential component of physical, social, cognitive, emotional and spiritual development. In the General Comment, the Committee on the Rights of the Child strongly encourages States to consider introducing legislation to ensure the rights under Article 31 for every child. It states that such legislation should address the principle of sufficiency – all children should be given sufficient time and space to exercise these rights.

In Wales, Play Sufficiency is part of the Welsh Government’s anti-poverty agenda. Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a duty on local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities.

In its *Wales – A Play Friendly Country* statutory guidance to support local authorities to comply with its statutory duties, Welsh Government states, *“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.”*

Case Study

Simon Bazley, Playful Futures

Simon discussed the Playful Futures Play Sheds project, which was developed in direct response to an identified need for more playful playtimes across northeast Wales. The Playful Futures Play Sheds is a term long holistic project to support a move to more playful playtimes that can be sustained for years to come.

Why are schools important for securing sufficient play opportunities?

“73% of children interviewed by ICM as part of National Playday research (2009), say that school is the main chance they have to play with their friends”

If we can ensure that children’s play experiences are positive in school then it goes a good way towards securing sufficiency of play opportunities, at the very least in the one place where children spend a significant amount of their time, in school. Also, as schools are hubs of communities, if we can showcase the benefits of adopting a playwork approach in schools, then its benefits will be cascaded down through the communities of Flintshire.

The project:

- Child centred approach
- Term long project
- Single point of contact
- Enhances space – loose parts
- Changes attitudes – playwork
- Monitoring tools embedded
- Sustainable approach
- Acts as a catalyst for change
- Offers on-going support.

The project engages with children, staff and parents:

1. Identify children to act as Play Champions who undertake a five week investigation – right to play, play doctors, play detectives, play session, what if possibilities
2. Build shed and fill with loose parts
3. Train midday staff
4. Start more playful playtimes for four weeks (support change)
5. Play Champions re-assess playtimes
6. Parents session and then the school adopts approach (includes new play policy and risk-benefit assessments).

Some results from the pilot project include, on a continuum of 0-10:

- boring to fun – went from 3.8 to 10
- Whether adults stop or support play – 2.7 to 9
- Whether they have not enough to do or enough to do – 3.8 to 9.75
- Number of children who were dissatisfied with their play experiences at playtimes from 44.33% to 98.33% of children now

think that their playtimes are now either good or great.

Other benefits of the project:

- An increase in physical activity (and reduction in inactivity)
- A reduction in challenging behaviour on the school playground
- The provision of positive social experiences for children
- Increased attention and activity in the classroom
- A reduction in bullying
- Less stress for mid day supervisors and teachers
- Happier children and staff.

How has the project been possible to date?

- Pilot projects were funded initially by a one off grant from Welsh Government
- One school pursued their own funding via Big Lottery Awards For All fund
- Another self funded it across both of their sites



“My first thought about the Play Shed was that I didn’t think it would have a big impact on our children in Llanfynydd. How wrong I was.

From day one that the shed was up and open, the imagination and creativity of the children has blown me away. One year four child who always played on his own now interacts with others and can’t wait to get outside to play. Cardboard boxes, old wedding dresses, drain pipes, pots, pans, sleeping bags are now turned into fashion shows, pirate ships, car races, dens and loads of other creative ideas.

Even on wet days the shed is opened and the children have taken control of what is coming out and what needs to stay inside to keep dry. We can’t thank you enough Simon. I can count on one hand the arguments we have had to sort out since the shed has arrived and usually its about who wears the wedding dress. Every child should have access to a Play Shed.”

Midday supervisor

- Communities First in Flintshire recognises the broader impact on both children’s wellbeing and their increased perceptions of the school experience as a result of this project.

Researching Play Sufficiency – the story so far

Play Wales has worked with the University of Gloucestershire to undertake research exploring how local authorities responded to Welsh Government’s Play Sufficiency Duty. *Leopard Skin Wellies, a Top Hat and a Vacuum Cleaner Hose: An analysis of Wales’ Play Sufficiency Assessment duty*, presents the findings from a small-scale research project exploring how local authorities respond to the introduction of the duty to assess sufficiency of play opportunities for children,

the first part of the Play Sufficiency Duty as set out in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, Section 11.

It draws on data from 20 local authority Play Sufficiency Assessments (PSAs) and associated documentation, interviews and notes from stakeholder meetings in three local authority case studies, notes from attending regional meetings to share experiences across local authorities, interviews with a Welsh Government officer and key officers from national partners (Play Wales and Welsh Local Government Association) and an online survey for key stakeholders involved in the PSA process.

The research concluded:

- Everything governments do has an impact on children’s environments
- Play is not a separate phenomenon that happens in designated spaces and



Leopard Skin Wellies, a Top Hat and a Vacuum Cleaner Hose:

An analysis of Wales’
Play Sufficiency Assessment duty

UNIVERSITY OF
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prescribed times but is interwoven into children's everyday lives and will erupt whenever conditions allow

- Strengthened existing partnerships in local authorities
- Collective wisdom: more than facts; children's situated knowledge

Towards Securing Sufficient Play Opportunities: A short study into the preparation undertaken for the commencement of the second part of the Welsh Government's Play Sufficiency Duty to secure sufficient play opportunities, is a follow up research project. It presents the findings of a small-scale research project looking back over the first year of play sufficiency assessments and forward to the commencement of the second part of the Play Sufficiency Duty, to secure sufficient play opportunities for children.

The purpose of the *Towards Securing Sufficient Play Opportunities ...* research was to:

- Look at what happened over the 12 months after submission of the 2013 Play Sufficiency Assessments
- Look at how selected local authorities prepared themselves to respond to the forthcoming commencement of securing sufficiency of play opportunities.

Data from this report were gathered through documentation, attendance at and notes from regional meetings to consult on the draft Statutory Guidance for the second part of the Duty, and semi-structured interviews with national and local stakeholders.

Thinking about Play Sufficiency - Stuart Lester

Stuart Lester facilitated the seminar and invited us to think about the idea of 'play sufficiency' in a possibly different way. The session will build on what has been achieved to date and to think ahead to how this momentum might be maintained to continue to make Flintshire a healthy place for playing. A key outcome is to emphasise the importance of collective wisdom and re-invigorate partnership working (formally and informally). Stuart facilitated a range of interactive exercises to introduce some of the key issues when thinking about play sufficiency. We began to look beyond play provision to consider the spatial conditions that support playing. The discussions reinforced that children should have sufficient time and space for playing and supportive and tolerant attitudes from adult community members. It is best when these conditions are co-created and we were encouraged to consider 'what might this look like?'

Thinking differently:

- Not overly concerned with the meaning of playing but how does playing emerge from all the ever-present possibilities that exist at any given moment
- This requires a different set of conceptual tools than currently brought to the study of play
- Drawn towards processes of emergence and the points around which the virtual is actualised – how does play happen from all the other possibilities that might be present at any given moment
- A move beyond traditional methods of counting and measuring, comparing and classifying, mapping and planning which seek to present a scientific account of the world and reduce messiness to more of the same

- For example, 'mobility' can be measured and mapped (how far, how quickly, whereabouts) to produce transport models; space can be classified according to taxonomies, differentiated and ordered into discrete blocks.

Accountability and responsibility

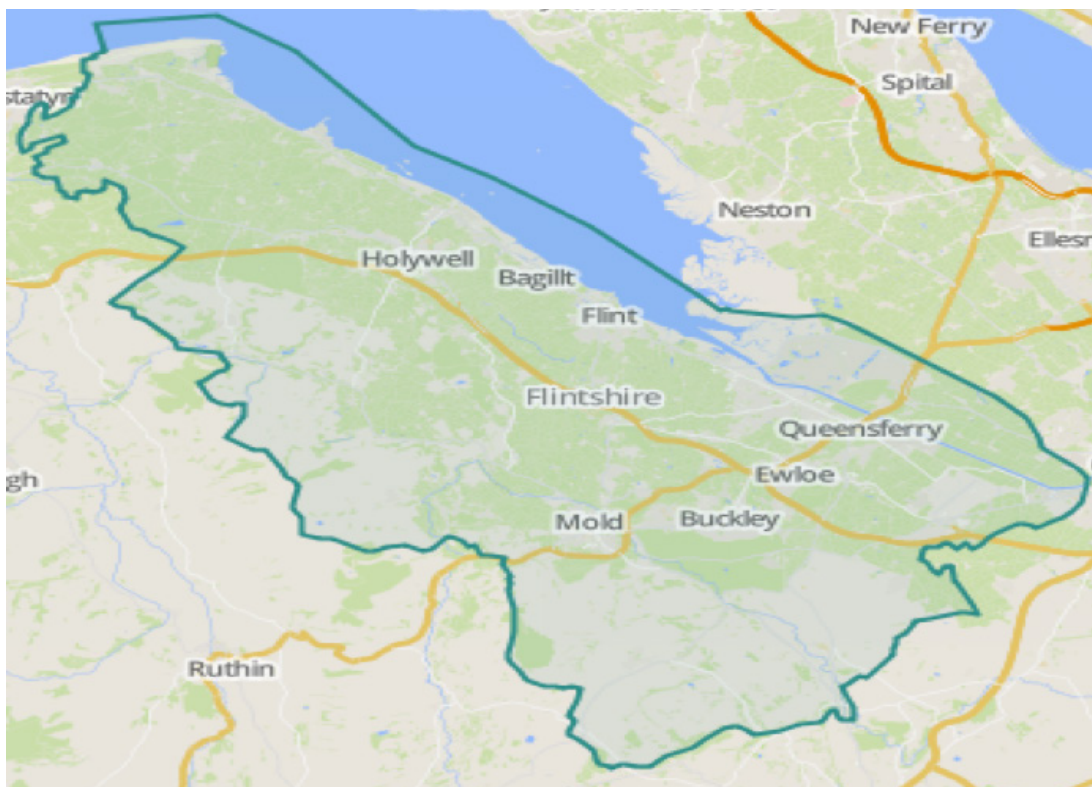
We started to think beyond traditional accounting systems (numbers attending provision, amount of space, distance between sites etc.) to get at the messiness of children's and adult movements in their everyday environments.

Stuart introduced the concept of Accountability – how might we work with the messiness of the world by developing an ability to take account of the movements and navigations of everyday life.

We also considered Response-ability – how might we develop the ability to be responsive to these movements and negotiate conditions that enhance the possibility for playful moments to emerge and transforming negative and constraining forces.

Using plans and maps of a specific geographical area (with schools, shops, playgrounds, open space, residential and main roads, playwork provision identified), we worked in small groups to respond to the prompt about boy getting up on Saturday morning with a series of follow-up questions to extend our thinking. We recorded significant ideas associated with the opportunities for playing response and provided feedback.

We were then encouraged to work in small groups to map networks of relations. We explored how we relate to each other in their small group, with everyone in the room and who else might be important in the formation of collective wisdom.



Thank you

Flintshire County Council and Play Wales would like to thank all the delegates for attending and contributing to the Flintshire Play Sufficiency Seminar.

Thank you to Simon Bazley for providing an inspiring case study showcasing how Flintshire is supporting more children to have

more time, space and permission to play in their neighbourhoods.

We would especially like to thank Stuart Lester for setting the scene and inspiring us to think about play sufficiency differently and in a way that considers children's negotiated movements through their neighbourhoods.

Flintshire – Play Sufficiency Seminar Delegate Feedback

What are the main learning points you have taken from the day?

- That play is unstructured and is not just a 'need', but a right
- That play sufficiency does not just mean new play areas but for conditions to play throughout the whole neighbourhood
- Play and its connections to and potential impact on other agendas
- Thinking about how we all link in and maximising this
- Every aspect of my work is somehow related to play
- There is more to offer my own area
- The view of sufficiency – the idea of play as 'movement'
- There are many links that can be made and opportunities for joint working and much can be achieved together
- The importance of changing spaces regularly – small interventions to make a difference and offer interesting and challenging opportunities for play
- Partnerships are key

- The importance of networking to support play opportunities
- The realisation that our aims and objectives are similar to other organisations and council departments and that we would achieve more by networking and working together.

What would you like to see happen next?

- More chance to network and share ideas
- Regular/frequent meetings of a network
- Be offered a place on the Strategic Play Forum
- Identify pilot communities to map and develop a framework
- Discussions implemented in the community
- Full commitment by Welsh Government
- To identify how/where/when children and young people play in their community
- Wider groups to be involved
- Schools to be actively involved
- To identify how the Play Sufficiency Action Plan fits in with the Local Development Plan