



**Report of the Cabinet Members for  
Investment Regeneration & Tourism and Community Services**

**Cabinet – 21 July 2022**

**Swansea Play Sufficiency Assessment 2022**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To approve the findings of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) 2022. The Assessment forms a statutory duty on local authorities to 'secure sufficient play opportunities as far as is reasonably practicable', therefore it relates to compliance with a statutory responsibility
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Wellbeing of Future Generations, Child & Families (Wales) Measure 2010
<b>Consultation:</b>	Access to Services, Finance, Legal. The duty to assess play sufficiency includes a requirement to consult with key groups including all stakeholders
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that Cabinet:  1) Approves the Play Sufficiency Assessment attached at appendix A  2) Supports the identified Actions in section 4 to develop an Action Plan to address areas for development identified in the PSA
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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of the 2010 Child & Families (Wales) Measure 2010, a duty was placed on all Wales local authorities to 'secure sufficient play' in recognition of its contribution to addressing poverty.
- 1.2 The Duty on all authorities to '*secure sufficient play as far as is reasonably practicable*' requires the completion of a Play Sufficiency Assessment every 3 years and the publication of any findings including actions to meet sufficiency.
- 1.3 To date, assessments have been completed in 2013, 2016 and 2019.

## **2. The 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment**

- 2.1 As with the previous assessments, the 2022 assessment was led by the Childcare and Play Sufficiency Manager within the Partnerships and Commissioning Service within Social Services Directorate. Additionally, a Sufficiency Assessment Support Officer post was created in September 2021 to support completion.
- 2.2 The assessment was undertaken between July 2021 and April 2022 and featured extensive consultation with children and young people, parent/carers, professionals and the general public, as well as several stakeholder working groups including those with protected characteristics.
- 2.3 A series of 'matters' or indicators of sufficiency are identified for which a rating of 'fully met', 'partially met' or 'unmet' must be recorded based on the position at time of completion. Where appropriate, shortfalls and recommended actions to support sufficiency are identified.

## **3. Key Findings**

- 3.1 In terms of feedback from stakeholders, the following were identified;
  - *Children and Young People felt they have less play opportunities compared to before, many said this was down to COVID restrictions making it difficult for them to play and meet with friends.*
  - *Children and Young people want more time during the school day to socialise and play with friends.*
  - *Parents/Carers told us they felt their children were not having sufficient play opportunities.*
  - *Parents/Carers mentioned issues with safety, accessibility and lack of organised play activities.*

- *The vast majority of the general public told us they feel play is essential to children and young people however, comments also mentioned there is not currently enough play opportunities.*
- *99% of the general public that responded to the survey told us that they feel children are playing less now compared to 10 years ago. Parental fears, COVID and technology were named as barriers to play.*
- *Professionals told us they feel the playworker role is more important than ever, yet despite this, they felt it was being valued less.*
- *Children/ Young People mentioned the use of tracking devices on their smart devices to help reduce parental fears when they go out to play.*

3.2 In relation to what is going well in Swansea, the following were key findings;

- *The collaborative working across services and directorates to increase play opportunities*
- *Most notably, the investment in public play spaces and the accompanying joint working towards enhancing accessible play space*
- *Continued efforts generally towards accessibility and inclusivity, engaging representative groups as appropriate*
- *The fact that, despite restrictions caused by Covid-19, children & young people were actively and meaningfully consulted on their play needs*

3.3 With regard to areas for which more work is required to achieve sufficiency, the following were identified;

- *Children are not getting enough opportunities to play. This is impacted by Covid-related restrictions, but parental fears, technology, pressures on school timetables reducing opportunities to interact playfully and the increase in traffic making it harder to get out about in communities.*
- *Workforce pressures, again Covid-related, and the reduction in playworkers and staffed play generally across Swansea has impacted on play opportunities*
- *At the same time, those involved in play and playwork are feeling that their role is not always valued, this finding is reflected in a sense that perhaps not all recognise play's importance to every child's healthy development*

3.4 The Assessment is comprised of 9 'matters' or areas, for which an overall RAG grading is required, these are outlined in the table at 3.6

3.5 In 2019, there were 4 assessed Amber and 4 assessed Green RAG grading, whereas in 2022 that are now 3 Green and 5 Amber grading but still no Red grading.

### 3.6 Summary table of each 'matter' and grading comparison from 2019 to 2022.

Matter	2022 Grading	2019 Grading	Comment
A – Population		<i>No indicators associated</i>	
B – Providing for Diverse Needs	Amber Partially Met	Amber Partially Met	Excellent work on supporting access to play. Need groups have been particularly impacted by the pandemic. Very hard to fully meet.
C – Space for Children to Play	Green Fully Met	Green Fully Met	Significant investment in public play spaces has had a major positive impact.
D – Supervised Provision	Amber Partially Met	Green Fully Met	A notable reduction in the level of playwork, particularly in communities over past 3 years, particularly impacted by the pandemic.
E – Charges for Play Provision	Green Fully Met	Green Fully Met	The commitment to developing free to access play areas, plus additional WG funding have supported this
F – Access to Space/ Provision	Amber Partially Met	Amber Partially Met	Some good work in place but traffic / transport remains a deterrent to play
G – Securing & Developing the Play Workforce	Amber Partially Met	Green Fully Met	As with Matter D, the reduction in playwork has impacted on the play workforce, particularly impacted by the pandemic
H – Community Engagement & Participation	Amber Partially Met	Green Fully Met	Swansea's approach to Children's Rights is key to this although restrictions have meant face to face engagement has reduced
I – Play within relevant policy & implementation agenda	Green Fully Met	Green Fully Met	Excellent examples of embedding play into policy and practice of teams and services, although a continued sense that not all recognise and value play's importance

## 4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Although the overall grading has improved, there are still key areas that need to be developed to enable to take a whole council approach and recognise the importance of play.
- 4.2 An action plan we will be developed to respond to identified shortfalls. Following submission of the plan template to Welsh Government, this plan will be further broken down with SMART targets to further ensure accountability. Key elements of this action plan will include;
- *Establishing effective Governance arrangements for this agenda, to include cross-council representation to ensure collective actions are taken forward and monitored, increasing the understanding of play's importance.*
  - *Re-establishing the Play Network including sub-groups to address access to play, play spaces and a Playworker Forum to ensure a collaborative approach, across the local authority and third sector.*
  - *Developing a new Play Strategy to document why it is essential to provide play opportunities and what key outcomes will be achieved as a result.*
  - *Supporting children to get out to play safely in their local areas by working with relevant internal and external agencies to increase understanding and consider corrective measures*

- *Working alongside internal and external partners to understand how to address the workforce needs around developing opportunities for staffed play provision and support existing projects*
  - *Working with schools and education colleagues to maximise opportunities for play within schools*
- 4.3 Additionally, in response to findings of the 2022 PSA, we have created additional post of Community Play Involvement Officer to develop the workforce and develop opportunities for staffed play provision within Swansea communities.
- 4.4 This post will support existing provision as well as work in communities to develop new, community-led, provision to maximise opportunities for staffed play. The recent re-structure which led to the formation of a new Play Sufficiency Team will ensure that officers are in place to effectively respond to gaps in play sufficiency as well as maintaining existing good practice.

## **5. Integrated Assessment Implications**

5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

5.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

5.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

- 5.2 By definition, the duty to undertake a Play Sufficiency Assessment requires local authorities to consider each of the protected characteristics and address any shortfalls or areas of concern.
- 5.3 As part of the 2022 PSA, specific consultation was undertaken with;
- representative groups supporting children & young people with additional learning needs
  - those from ethnic minority groups, including Traveller communities
  - those organisations supporting looked after children and young carers
  - organisations representing LGBTQ+ children and young people
- 5.4 As such, an IIA Screening for Relevance was completed which identified no further action was required, however when carrying out the actions identified as part of the action plan a full IIA process will be followed.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report aside from the additional post identified in point 3.6 for which agreement has previously been obtained.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report. Submission of the assessment will ensure compliance with a statutory duty.

### **Background Papers:**

None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A	2022 Swansea Play Sufficiency Assessment
Appendix B	Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Screening Form