

# Acton Report – 1<sup>st</sup> Feb – 15<sup>th</sup> April

## Playwork Projects: supporting children to play out earlier and more often

Over the past few generations there has been a significant shift in the age at which children start playing out in their community independently of their parents and/or carers. Where it might previously have been normal to see children aged four or five playing out (often with older children keeping an eye on them) in some communities children now only start being allowed to play out on their own, or with friends, at the age of 10 or 11. This change in culture has occurred for a number of reasons including increases in the amount and speed of traffic, sensationalist media reporting of tragic incidents, greater pressure on parents of young children to work and an over-structuring of children's time outside of school. As a result parents are understandably more cautious about allowing their young children out to play and often struggle to find time for play within the busy schedule of work, childcare and other extra-curricular activities.

Our playwork projects support parents, other carers and children to feel more confident about playing out in their local communities and encourage them to prioritise time for playing out alongside other more structured activities. In doing so our aim is to support children to play out from as early as is possible and to continue playing out regularly throughout their childhoods.

### Evidence Base

In light of the discussions at the previous meeting please see 4 key links below which outline the importance of children's play, its rationale and the legislative framework for play in Wales. In addition, our team would be more than happy to present this to members at a future meeting.

1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) article 31 and general comment 17 underline the importance of play and the impact it has on children's wellbeing: [General comment No. 17 \(2013\) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts \(art. 31\) | Refworld](#)
2. Welsh Government legislative guidance on local authorities statutory duty to provide sufficient opportunities for children's play [Wales: a play friendly country | GOV.WALES](#)
3. Link to short film entitled 'This is Why Play is So Important' developed by Play Wales: <https://youtu.be/UnfdamgVFhY>
4. Summary paper of a new, upcoming publication which conducts a review of recent research into children's play, social policy and practice, with a focus on Wales. Ultimately providing a vast evidence base as to how play supports children to be well: [Summary – Playing and being well: A review of recent research into children's play, social policy and practice, with a focus on Wales - Play Wales](#)

## Attendance Statistics for Acton (1<sup>st</sup> Feb – 15<sup>th</sup> April)

	1 <sup>st</sup> Feb – 15 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>Number of sessions</b>	9
<b>Total number of visits</b>	51
<b>Average attendance per session</b>	6

From December 23 onwards, in agreement with the community council, we opted to run sessions from one location rather than alternating as we had been through the year.

Despite an initial uptake in December with the consistency of location, as presented the average attendance for the period is 6 children per session. Whilst inclement weather can be attributed to the low attendance at a few sessions this average is far below what we would expect.

### Advertising

Since the previous meeting we have promoted the project with a leaflet drop in the surrounding streets of the play space. We have the sessions with the local schools and will be delivering a presentation in Acton CP 22<sup>nd</sup> April to the children. We are also hoping to secure a presentation slot at Borrass CP however we are awaiting a date. CCP have also circulated our promotional material during their sessions. In addition to this we have updated our 24/25 timetable which has been circulated on social media with specific community posters as well. The WCBC play website and related QR code directs people to all playscheme information.

### Feedback

As previously reported the response to the play sessions has been overwhelming positive within the community. Evaluation forms completed by children and parents agree that the sessions develop resilience, support emotional and physical health and improve overall well-being. Importantly, service users regularly report their enjoyment with the sessions and children are able to engage in opportunities that are new, novel and adventurous. It is evident from playworker observations and reflections that those children in attendance are building confidence, developing resilience and having fun.

The types of play activities children have engaged in have been; den building, hammocks, sports games, street games, waterslides, 'traditional' games such as hide and seek, fire lighting and toasting marshmallows and go-karts to name a few.

## Recommendations

Whilst it is evident that the children in attendance are getting a lot of benefit from attending, understandably we are concerned that the attendance has not improved greater since January.

Following the previous meeting there were a number of ideas from members regarding a change of location to attract more children. We feel like this should be explored further however, as ever, we will follow the suggestions of the community council.

*Below are a selection of photos from recent sessions.*

