

Common themes and lessons learned by Big Lottery funded Child's Play projects in Wales.



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| CONTENTS | PAGE |
|--|-------------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 1.1 The Child’s Play Programme | 4 |
| 1.2 Background and Purpose | 4 |
| 1.3 Methodology | 5 |
| | |
| 2. PLAY AND THE WELSH POLICY CONTEXT | 6 |
| 2.1 The Play Policy Statement | 6 |
| 2.2 The Children Act 2004 and Play Policy Implementation Plan 2006 | 7 |
| 2.3 The Children and Families (Wales) Measure | 7 |
| | |
| 3. MONITORING DATA AND EVALUATION EVIDENCE | 9 |
| 3.1 Overview of the Child’s Play projects | 9 |
| 3.2 Performance (Quantity) – How much has been done? | 10 |
| 3.3 Performance (Quality) – How well has it been done? | 11 |
| 3.4 Effect – What difference has been made? | 11 |
| | |
| 4. ANNEXES | 13 |
| Annex 1: Overview of Projects | 13 |
| Annex 2: Evidence - Performance (Quantity) – How much has been done? | 22 |
| Annex 3: Evidence - Performance (Quality) – How well has it been done? | 25 |
| Annex 4: Evidence - Effect – What difference has been made? | 28 |

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Child's Play Programme

In 2005, the Big Lottery Fund in Wales announced the Child's Play Programme. The aims of the Child's Play Programme were to:

- Develop new play spaces for children in their communities.
- Develop play opportunities that provide space for children to choose how they play.
- Develop 'staffed open access' play opportunities.

The Child's Play programme was aimed at children up to 12 years old living in Wales, and in particular children aged 8-12. It was a strategic programme that aimed to make a positive impact on children's play in Wales. In round one, the Child's Play programme supported the development of the infrastructure needed to deliver play and helped to staff ten regional play networks covering the whole of Wales.

Round two of the programme awarded grants to a total of 10 regional play networks that directly offered opportunities for play. The Child's Play programme focused on new approaches to staffed play projects, and expected projects to come up with creative play projects that offered challenge and varied opportunities.

Through this programme the Big Lottery Fund in Wales awarded grants amounting to £13 million.

It is the second round of the Child's Play programme that this document is concerned with.

1.2 Background and Purpose

In February 2014, as part of its on-going contract to support grant-holders with self-evaluation¹, the Big Lottery Fund in Wales asked Old Bell 3 Ltd. to assist recipients of funding via its Child's Play Programme to undertake a 'light touch' analysis of project level evaluation evidence. This followed a broadly similar exercise, undertaken by Old Bell 3 to analyse project level evaluation evidence gathered by AdvantAGE² projects (aimed at supporting older people in Wales with advocacy and befriending services).

The purpose of this exercise was to draw together monitoring information and evaluation findings gathered by Child's Play projects in order to identify some of the achievements of the programme as a whole in the context of the three main questions posed by the Results Based Accountability Model, i.e:

- How much was done?
- How well was it done?
- What difference was made?

Specifically, the Big Lottery Fund have sought to use this opportunity to explore the extent to which the second round of the Child's Play programme (and the projects funded by it) has contributed to the delivery of the play requirements set out in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure.

¹ The self-evaluation support service operated by Old Bell 3 on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund is called 'BIG Support Wales'. See www.bigsupportwales.co.uk

² See: <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/wales/advantage>

1.3 Methodology

This work is based on:

- An initial briefing provided by Robert Roffe of the Big Lottery Fund in Wales to the self-evaluation support team at Old Bell 3.
- A meeting between Old Bell 3 Ltd. and Child's Play funded projects in May 2014 to explore what project level evaluation evidence might be made available for a 'lessons learned' document
- Receiving and analysing project monitoring and evaluation data, information and evidence from all of the approved 10 Child's Play projects.
- Undertaking a light touch desk based review of the Child's Play policy context in Wales.
- Drawing together this brief document detailing setting out some of the lessons learned.

This paper is not intended to be a comprehensive programme level evaluation and no primary evaluation research has been conducted by the authors as part of the work. Rather, the intention has been to analyse project level monitoring information and evaluation evidence to identify some consistent themes and key learning points.

2 PLAY AND THE WELSH POLICY CONTEXT

Before reflecting on the monitoring data and evaluation findings of the individual Child's Play projects, we briefly consider Child's Play policy in Wales. This is based on reviewing a number of key documents and the purpose of this section is to set the strategic context for the Child's Play Programme and to identify key policy priorities that the Child's Play projects may have helped to deliver or achieve.

2.1 Welsh Government's Play Policy

The [then] Welsh Assembly Government published its Play Policy in October 2002. It set out the Welsh Government's beliefs that:

- Play is the elemental learning process by which humankind has developed. Children exhibit a behavioural imperative and instinctive desire to play. It has contributed significantly to the evolutionary and developmental survival of our species. Children use play in the natural environment to learn of the world they inhabit with others. It is the very process of learning and growth, and as such all that is learnt through it is of benefit to the child.
- 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.
- 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.
- Play is first and foremost the process of a child's own, self-directed learning and as such is a process that has a validity for all ages of children. It is such a vital component of a child's life that the child's capacity for positive development will be inhibited or constrained if denied free access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.
- It is the very freedom and child centredness of play that makes it such an effective and comprehensive learning process³.

The Welsh Government's play policy statement was based on the principles that:

- Every child is entitled to respect for their own unique combination of qualities and capabilities;
- The perceptions of the child, their views and opinions should always be respected for each child is connected to, and a bearer of, a wider culture;
- The child's free choice of their own play is a critical factor in enriching their learning and contributing to their well-being and development⁴.

2.2 The Children Act 2004 and Play Policy Implementation Plan 2006

³ Source: Welsh Assembly Government Play Policy 2002. Pages 3 and 4.

⁴ Ibid. Page 4.

Following the publication of the Play Policy, the UK Government's Children Act came into force in 2004. Part 3 of the Act related specifically to Children's services in Wales. Following on from this, the Welsh Government then published 'Play in Wales: The Assembly Government's Play Policy Implementation Plan' in February 2006. This implementation plan contextualised some of the duties contained within the 2004 Act, including a duty of 'co-operation between agencies that promote the well-being of children and young people'⁵. It went on to say that the (2004) Act 'specifies that one of the purposes of this co-operation is to improve the well-being of children relating to education, training and recreation'⁶ and that as such 'play is therefore included in a specific duty in the primary legislation'⁷.

The implementation plan set out that 'The Big Lottery Fund has consulted on priorities for its programme, agreed with the Welsh Assembly Government. It is now developing a new programme on Children's Play and Active and Healthy Families that will:

- Develop new and stimulating play opportunities for children.
- Promote the long-term strategic development of play provision across Wales.
- Develop joined up approaches to promote healthy eating, exercise and play among children and families.

2.3 The Children and Families (Wales) Measure

In 2010, Her Majesty approved the Children and Families (Wales) Measure which enacted a series of provisions relating to child poverty, play and participation. The Measure set out a duty for 'local authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children'⁸.

Specifically, in relation to play, the Measure outlined (amongst other things) that a local authority must:

- Assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children in accordance with regulations.
- Secure sufficient play opportunities in its area for children, so far as reasonably practicable.
- Publish information about play opportunities and keep the information published up to date⁹.

In terms of definitions, the Measure defined play as 'including any recreational activity' and defined sufficient as 'having regard to quantity and quality'¹⁰.

In order to assist local authorities meet their obligations under the Measure and the duties it placed on them, the Welsh Government published a play sufficiency assessment toolkit which included a play sufficiency assessment form¹¹.

2.4 Summary of Lessons Learned from the Policy Review

⁵ Source: Play Policy Implementation Plan. February 2006. Page 6.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

⁹ Ibid. Page 8.

¹⁰ Ibid. Page 9.

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

In terms of lessons learned from the review of policy, these include that:

- During the 2000's Welsh policy on Child's Play developed at a rapid pace with the publication of several key strategy documents leading up to the enactment of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure in 2010. These various publications and developments demonstrate a high degree of commitment by successive Welsh Assembly Governments to the Child's Play agenda.
- The Child's Play programme and the projects funded by it (particularly round one) would have been delivering their activities during this period of rapid policy evolution.
- Despite the emerging and evolving nature of the policy context, there was a clear 'fit' between the Big Lottery Fund's Child's Play programme and the Welsh Government's strategic priorities – as evidenced in the Play Implementation Plan of 2006.
- The Children and Families (Wales) Measure formalised the duty on Welsh local authorities in respect of play. This was supplemented by guidance issued by Welsh Government to assist local authorities in meeting their obligations. It also set a clear framework within which the Child's Play programme would operate.

3. LESSONS LEARNED

3.1 Overview of the Child's Play projects

In analysing the monitoring and self-evaluation evidence collated by Child's Play Projects, we found that the projects were a mix of three and four year initiatives. There was also a mix of projects covering single local authority areas as well as ones that covered sub-regional territories (i.e. multiple, neighbouring local authority areas).

The projects all set out very similar aims i.e. to develop and improve play opportunities within the counties they operated with a particular emphasis on enhancing opportunities for 8-12 year olds.

Seven projects provided details of their staff resources. Between them, these seven projects employed some 90 members of staff. 43 (48 per cent) of these were part-time positions. Only two of the posts were full time, while five were described as 'casual'.

Seven of the 10 projects provided information about their intended outcomes. The outcomes for four of the projects set out the number of children they aimed to engage with. Between these four projects, their combined target amounted to 8,138 children aged between 8 and 12 to be engaged by them.

Key outcomes (though described and quantified slightly differently across different projects) included:

- The establishment of new groups, centres and organisations to facilitate on-going play opportunities.
- The recruitment and engagement of volunteers to help deliver play sessions or activities.
- The delivery of open access play sessions.
- Changed attitudes towards play.
- The delivery of physical improvements to play environments.
- The on-going sustainability of increased play provision.

In terms of evaluation, nine projects provided information about how they had evaluated their project activities. Of these nine, eight projects confirmed that they had commissioned independent external evaluators.

In terms of approaches to evaluation:

- Three of the nine projects had set about gathering baseline data or information.
- All of the projects that had provided information were collecting monitoring information on beneficiaries although different projects used different approaches to capture data.
- Most of the projects that provided material were collecting information about or from volunteers.
- Observation techniques in play settings had been used by at least three projects.
- Several projects had included research with external stakeholders (as well as beneficiaries) in their evaluation methodologies.

3.2 Performance (Quantity) – How much has been done?

In this section, we analyse the performance of Childs Play projects in terms of how much has been achieved.

Nine projects supplied information on how much they had done. Seven of these provided information on how many children (beneficiaries) they had engaged in play opportunities. Between them, these seven projects said that they had engaged a combined total of 29,796 beneficiaries. This represents around 18 per cent of the total population of 8-12 year olds in Wales¹² though in practice we are not able to comment at this stage with any rigour on the extent to which the 29,796 recorded beneficiaries are 8-12 year olds. Our analysis of age data provided by projects (see below) seems to suggest that a proportion of recorded beneficiaries (a potentially statistically significant proportion) fall outside of the 8-12 year old age bracket.

We were able to analyse performance in relation to beneficiaries engaged for five projects compared to their original targets. Of these five projects, four had exceeded their target (two by very substantial margins). The fifth project had yet to achieve its target number of beneficiaries.

Three projects provided some analysis of the children (beneficiaries) they had engaged. On the basis of this information, it is possible to say that in terms of gender balance, one project reported engaging 59 per cent boys and 41 per cent girls (though this was based on one play setting rather than the project as a whole). A second project reported (in the context of a mid-term evaluation) a gender split of 52 per cent girls to 48 per cent boys.

In terms of the age range of beneficiaries, one project reported that the majority of children attending their play sessions were younger than their intended target group. A second project said that 44 per cent of their beneficiaries were 8-12 year olds, while a third project reported that 48 per cent were 8-12 year olds with over half (52 per cent) being outside of the 8-12 target age group. This suggests that engaging with the target group of 8-12 year olds may have been challenging for some projects.

In terms of other demographic information, one project was able to say that five percent of their beneficiaries had disabilities and that the majority (96 per cent) were white children of British origin.

Five projects supplied information about volunteers engaged. Of these, four expressed difficulties in recruiting suitable volunteers. One project explained that while they saw 'many parents' at play sessions, these parents were either unable or unwilling to commit to more formal volunteering. One project had recruited approximately 70 volunteers who were aged between 14 and 25 years old. Two projects said that they were experiencing relatively high turnover of volunteers as people participated to gain experience and skills before moving on to other jobs or enrolling at college.

One project provided an analysis of volunteers engaged. This showed that the majority (85 per cent) were female and that just under half (48 per cent) of volunteers engaged had attended more than 20 play sessions.

Five projects provided information on the number of geographical communities they had worked with. Between them, this amounted to a combined total of 107 geographical communities, a mean average of 21 geographical communities per project.

¹² Based on 2011 Census Data which shows that there were 167,299 children aged 8-12 living in Wales. Source: Stats Wales.

Five projects provided information about the number of play spaces developed. Between them, these five projects had developed a combined total of 54 play spaces, a mean average of 11 play spaces per project.

Three projects provided information about how many play sessions they had delivered. Between them the play sessions delivered by these three projects amounted to a combined total of 2,174, a mean average of 725 play sessions per project.

Three projects provided information about average attendance at their play sessions. These ranged from a low of 7.2 children per session to a high of 13.8 children per session. There are clearly limitations in terms of the extent to which lessons can be drawn from this, though it is perhaps worth noting that the lowest average per session was from a project operating in a rural local authority area, while the highest average per setting was from a project operating in a South Wales valleys local authority area.

Four projects provided information on how many training courses they had delivered. Between them the four projects had delivered a combined total of 100 courses (16 of which were accredited) a mean average of 25 courses per project.

3.3 Performance (Quality) - How well has it been done?

In this section, we analyse the progress of Childs Play projects in terms of how well services have been delivered.

Nine projects provided information about 'how well' their project was being received. However, the information available on 'how well' things have been done is somewhat inconsistent and the basis of the information provided was not always clear. In several cases, the base (i.e. number) of beneficiaries or stakeholders interviewed for evaluation purposes was not available.

On the basis of the data and information provided, from a beneficiary perspective, satisfaction and enjoyment (via research with parents and children) appears on the whole to be positive, though there are one or two exceptions to this.

Two projects provided volunteer feedback on 'how well' the project had been received. In both instances, the feedback was positive.

With regards to stakeholders, there is some, albeit limited, evidence to suggest that stakeholder and partner organisations value the professional, participatory and partnership based approaches taken by some projects to develop and strengthen play provision. There is also some evidence to suggest that stakeholder and partner organisations have rated the quality of play provision provided by projects highly.

3.4 Effect – What difference has it made?

In this section, we analyse the progress of the Child's Play projects in terms of what difference has been made.

The key findings from this section are that nine grant holders provided evidence on what difference their project has made. The evidence provided is mixed, with some projects supplying independent project evaluation reports with specified research methodologies, whilst others have provided more limited information based on self-evaluation activities undertaken in specific play settings and sessions.

There is some evidence to suggest that both from a child and parent's perspective, projects have led to positive outcomes in terms of children socialising more, having fun, making new friends and playing outdoors in safer and more varied environments. Parents also perceive there to have been health benefits to their children from increased participation in outdoor play with some evidence to suggest a reduction in watching TV and video game usage.

These outcomes were not universal however and there is some evidence to suggest that from a parent's perspective, some projects have not led to noticeable changes in their children's play patterns and behaviours.

There is some evidence to suggest that projects have instigated other community based activities, including parents going on (on a voluntary basis) to establish after-school clubs for example. There is also some evidence to suggest that volunteers participating in Child's play projects feel that their involvement has led to positive outcomes for them in terms of developing skills which could help them find work in the future.

There is some evidence to suggest (from a parent and local stakeholder perspective) that projects have created positive community cohesion outcomes - for instance, by encouraging interaction between parents and families of different backgrounds. In some instances, there is evidence to suggest that enhanced play opportunities have led to an increase in the confidence, independence and social skills of participating children as well as improvements in positive behaviour and a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

There is some evidence to suggest that projects have led to outcomes in terms of more positive parental attitudes to play and participation in 'open' play settings in particular. There is also evidence to suggest that projects have led to more tolerant and positive attitudes towards child's play by local community members.

In terms of evidence relating to the extent to which the Child's Play projects have helped contribute to the play related requirements of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure, a handful of projects provided evidence (via independent evaluation reports) that they had been directly involved in assisting local authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in their areas in a formalised way. In two cases, the project sponsor had been directly commissioned help undertake sufficiency assessments by the local authorities in their areas.

In terms of the other two requirements of the Measure to secure sufficient play opportunities and publish information about play opportunities, the evidence from projects is more 'implicit' in nature. It is likely for instance that the investments made in additional play opportunities, play settings and play facilities via the Child's Play programme have contributed positively to the extent to which individual local authorities 'meet' the sufficiency requirements of the Measure. In a similar vein work done by projects to promote play and communicate information about play opportunities is also likely to have made a positive contribution to awareness at a local (or in some instances at a sub-regional level). However, the extent to which this work to communicate, disseminate and inform people about play opportunities can or will be sustained after project funding comes to an end seems uncertain.

ANNEX 1: OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

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|--|---|
| Project Name | Branching Out Into the Community |
| Lead Sponsor | Chwarae Plant |
| Area(s) covered | RCT and Bridgend |
| Project Duration | Four years |
| Staff Resources | 12 – two full time and ten part time |
| Commissioned external Evaluation? | Yes |
| Brief project description | The project aimed to bring play opportunities, particularly outdoors play, to children and young people (particularly focused on the 8-12 age range) living in deprived areas and developing teams of play workers operating in those areas. It also sought to engage with and change community attitudes towards young people playing outdoors, to generate encouragement in the community for such play, as well as making local people more aware of what opportunities are available in order to facilitate the delivery and handover to the local community of those opportunities. |
| Overview of intended project outcomes | <p>Outcome 1: 2900 children and young people between 8-12 years old have access to high quality staffed open access play opportunities by the end of the Project</p> <p>Outcome 2: A minimum of 60% of the 20 communities in receipt of service display positive attitudes towards children playing by year 4 of the Project, resulting in a greater participation and support for children and young people playing out in their own community;</p> <p>Outcome 3: A minimum of 25% of the 20 communities in receipt of the service by the end of the four years will have established community constituted groups and taken over the delivery of the Play provision within their community so children and young people have continued access to high quality play opportunities.</p> |
| Evaluation information/data/evidence available | <p>Baseline staff and key stakeholder consultations and construction of evaluation toolkit (2011).</p> <p>Stakeholder consultations, wider community consultations, community and children's surveys and case studies (2012)</p> <p>Monitoring data on volunteers, members and groups participating in the project to April 2014.</p> |

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| Project Name | Childs Play 2 |
| Lead Sponsor | Dyfodol Powys Futures |
| Area(s) covered | Powys |
| Project Duration | 3 years, 7 months |
| Staff Resources | 11 part time staff 2 further part time staff recruited part-way through project 5 casual staff |
| Commissioned external Evaluation? | Yes |
| Brief project description | The purpose of this project was to enhance existing and create new play spaces for children and young people. It employed play workers to facilitate regular open access play sessions, to enhance facilities and develop the capacity of small voluntary organisations. |
| Overview of intended project outcomes | Outcome 1: Increased play opportunities through the creation of a minimum of 1,800 new or enhanced open play sessions, providing play opportunities for at least 1000 children aged under 12 and improving or enhancing play environments in 3 locations Outcome 2: 50 community organisations strengthened and enabled to sustain play activities Outcome 3: Increased capacity within Powys, through the recruitment and training of 54 volunteers to support ongoing play activities by the end of the project. |
| Evaluation information/data/evidence available | Observation of a range of play sessions, data analysis of monthly reports and monitoring reports, interviews with community members, town and community council questionnaire, case studies and three team reflection sessions. |

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| Project Name | North East Wales Community Play Project |
| Lead Sponsor | Flintshire County Council |
| Area(s) covered | Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham |
| Project Duration | Three years |
| Staff Resources | Unknown |
| Commissioned external Evaluation? | Yes |
| Brief project description | The North East Wales Play Project aimed to increase children's play opportunities within their community through the introduction of three peripatetic teams across Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire. The project also aimed to demonstrate that by enhancing children's opportunities for play within a targeted community it could increase recognition of play's importance in the life of the community. |
| Overview of intended project outcomes | <p>Outcome 1: Children in at least fifteen targeted communities receive a minimum of three play sessions a week for a period of six months to enable them to access their right to play, as articulated in the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child and Welsh Assembly Government Play Policy</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the time play workers leave a community, attitudes of 25% of the surveyed community have changed to enable children to access their right to play, as articulated in the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child and Welsh Assembly Government</p> <p>Outcome 3: By the end of July 2013 six new satellite centres will be established providing quality play resource requirements to 25 sites of play provision across the region.</p> |
| Evaluation information/data/evidence available | <p>Year 2 Project Report.</p> <p>Three exit reports.</p> <p>Baseline survey data.</p> |

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| Project Name | Play Aloud |
| Lead Sponsor | Cardiff City Council |
| Area(s) covered | Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan |
| Project Duration | Three years |
| Staff Resources | 12 (unconfirmed whether full- time or part- time) |
| Commissioned external Evaluation? | Unknown |
| Brief project description | The Play Aloud project aimed to support communities in providing free, open access play opportunities for children and young people aged 5 to 14. The project encouraged and enabled local residents, organisations and groups, with the support of qualified play workers to provide play opportunities for local children. |
| Overview of intended project outcomes | Details of outcomes not supplied |
| Evaluation information/data/evidence available | Baseline questionnaires from parents and children, volunteer feedback on training and general experience, letters of support, consultation findings, seventeen evaluation/reports on individual play schemes Monitoring data on volunteers, members and groups participating in the project to April 2014. |

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|--|--|
| Project Name | Play Rangers |
| Lead Sponsor | Conwy County Borough Council |
| Area(s) covered | Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey. |
| Project Duration | Three years |
| Staff Resources | 11 (unconfirmed whether full-or part- time) |
| Commissioned external Evaluation? | Yes |
| Brief project description | The Play Rangers was a project aimed at promoting open access, outdoor play opportunities within the counties of Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey. The Play Rangers facilitated safe play opportunities, allowing children to take risks and feel challenged. Staff utilised loose parts (recycled materials) for children to experience a wide range of freely chosen play materials and textures which provided opportunities for children in their catchment area. |
| Overview of intended project outcomes | Details of outcomes not supplied |
| Evaluation information/data/evidence available | Monitoring data on volunteers, members and groups participating in the project to April 2014. Project impact report containing findings from structured interviews with project staff, interviews with schools and questionnaire results from both children and parents. Document with Rich Play Award information |

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| Project Name | Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Play Project |
| Lead Sponsor | Play Right |
| Area(s) covered | Swansea and Neath Port Talbot |
| Project Duration | Four years |
| Staff Resources | 20 part-time posts |
| Commissioned external Evaluation? | Yes |
| Brief project description | The project was designed to deliver a sustainable approach to improving and increasing play opportunities for children and young people aged 8-12 years old, living in 20 communities across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot |
| Overview of intended project outcomes | <p>Outcome 1 – To increase opportunities for 2278 8-12 year old children and young people to engage in play provision in 20 communities and 3 sustainable community open access play spaces. To offer a total of 520 free inclusive open access play sessions per annum across the region.</p> <p>Outcome 2: To engage with 23 local communities in recognising and supporting play opportunities. To establish six constituted community play action groups and engaging with 11 volunteers annually to ensure the play areas are sustained across the region after the life of the project.</p> |
| Evaluation information/data/evidence available | <p>End of Year Reports to BIG Lottery Fund for Years 1 to 3 of the project</p> <p>Project Year 2 Evaluation Report (May 2013)</p> <p>Monitoring data on volunteers, members and groups participating in the project to April 2014.</p> |

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|--|--|
| Project Name | Purple Routes |
| Lead Sponsor | CAVS |
| Area(s) covered | Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire |
| Project Duration | Four years (extended from initial three years) |
| Staff Resources | Staff numbers not available |
| Commissioned external Evaluation? | Yes |
| Brief project description | The project aimed to ensure that children in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire were able to exercise their right to free play, as defined in sections 25 – 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. |
| Overview of intended project outcomes | <p>Outcome 1: Deliver play opportunities/provision to 12 communities in the region over the three year period of the project.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Ensure community engagement, monitoring and evaluation with the 12 communities prior to and during the three-year project in order to sustain the provision.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Provide information and training on physical activity and nutrition within all 12 communities where delivery will take place.</p> |
| Evaluation information/data/evidence available | <p>Formative Report (2012)</p> <p>Final Evaluation Report (October 2013) containing evidence collected from semi-structured interviews with staff and stakeholders, observations of play sessions and focus groups with children.</p> |

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| Project Name | Childs Play Project |
| Lead Sponsor | RAY Ceredigion |
| Area(s) covered | Ceredigion |
| Project Duration | Four years |
| Staff Resources | 7 (unconfirmed whether full- or part- time) |
| Commissioned external Evaluation? | Yes |
| Brief project description | This project focused on increasing the amount of time children spend playing outdoors in their own communities, and included improving the play environment within communities. |
| Overview of intended project outcomes | <p>Outcome 1: Over the four years this project will increase play opportunities for 1,160 children aged between 8 and 12 years who currently do not have access to open access play provision</p> <p>Outcome 2: Over four years improve eight community play areas through landscaping into areas that provide varied, inspirational and interesting physical environments, made sustainable in partnership with town and community councils, based on 10 Design Principles.</p> <p>Outcome 3: At the end of 4 years this project will have worked with community groups to increase their capacity to ensure long-term sustainability of the outcomes of this project, in particular the retention of an open access play provision for 50% (580) of the children targeted.</p> |
| Evaluation information/data/evidence available | <p>Monitoring data on volunteers, members and groups participating in the project to April 2014.</p> <p>Evaluation of Round One Final Report.</p> <p>Report on school play sessions, based on observation and questionnaire findings from school staff and children.</p> <p>Community Engagement and Capacity Building Report, with evidence collected from desktop research, on site observations, informal interviews with children, online staff survey, semi structured interviews with parents, online stakeholder survey and graphic facilitation session.</p> <p>Evaluation Framework</p> <p>Ceredigion Play Sufficiency Assessment Evidence</p> <p>Documents detailing progress against project outcomes and milestones</p> |

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| Project Name | Three Counties Communities Play Project |
| Lead Sponsor | Torfaen Voluntary Alliance |
| Area(s) covered | Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen |
| Project Duration | Four years |
| Staff Resources | 10 (unconfirmed whether full- or part-time) |
| Commissioned external Evaluation? | Yes |
| Brief project description | The project sought to set up play opportunities for children aged 8-12 by using community buildings, open spaces, parks and wooded areas in the three counties of Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. The main aim was to increase sustainable, community based play opportunities. |
| Overview of intended project outcomes | <p>Outcome 1: By the end of the project more children aged 8-12 years across the region will have accessed new, quality, open access, play opportunities.</p> <p>Outcome 2: By the end of the project there will be an increase in the level of community based play provision across the region.</p> <p>Outcome 3: By the end of the project research carried out will have shown a change in adult attitudes within communities which will enable children and young people to access their right to play.</p> |
| Evaluation information/data/evidence available | <p>Monitoring data on volunteers, members and groups participating in the project to April 2014.</p> <p>External mid-term evaluation report (July 2013), based on document review, consultation with key stakeholders and further qualitative and quantitative data, including volunteer and parent questionnaires.</p> |

ANNEX 2: Evidence - Performance (Quantity) – How much has been done?

| Project name and lead sponsor | Beneficiaries engaged to date | As % of overall target | Volunteers engaged to date | As % of overall target | Evidence on Beneficiaries and Volunteers | Nature of Intervention |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| Branching Out Into the Community. Chwarae Plant. | 5121 | 176% (2900 target) | - | - | Not available | 20 geographical communities worked with 1 play space developed |
| Childs Play 2. Dyfodol Powys Futures. | 2153 | 120% (1,800) | 49 | 91% (Target 54) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of children attending the play sessions were younger than the target group. Only 26.9% and 30.7% of children were in the target age range in 2012 and 2013 respectively¹³. | 1368 play sessions delivered. Across the three old counties of Powys 7.2 children attended each session on average. |
| North East Wales Community Play Project. Flintshire County Council | 1,343 | - | - | - | <p>Rhuddlan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59% of the children that attended the Rhuddlan play sessions were male, and 41% female¹⁴ 44% of the children that attended the Rhuddlan play sessions were aged 8 and 12 and 38% were aged between 5 and 7¹⁵. <p>68 Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms were completed for children involved in the Rhuddlan project. However, proportionally significant numbers of questions were left blank.</p> | <p>Connah's Quay – 102 play sessions, on average 13.3 children per session</p> <p>Acton – 115 sessions, on average 10.1 children per session</p> <p>Rhuddlan – 81 sessions, on average 12 children per session</p> |
| Play Aloud. Cardiff City Council. | - | - | - | - | Equal opportunities monitoring data for one set of play sessions was available, but no whole project data was available. | 16 geographical communities worked with |
| Play Rangers. | 5,400 | - | 270 | - | Not available | 27 geographical communities |

¹³ 1000 Things to do with cornflour. Powys Childs Play 2 Evaluation Final Report. October 2013. Page 39.

¹⁴ Exit Report Rhuddlan. Date Unknown. Page 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., pg.10.

| | | | | | | |
|--|-------|------------------------|-----|---------------------|--|--|
| Conwy County Borough Council. | | | | | | worked with 27 non-accredited training courses delivered |
| Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Play Project. Play Right. | 8,936 | 392% (Target 2,278) | 73 | 664% (Target 11) | Not available | 3 Play Spaces developed 30 geographical communities worked with 2 training courses delivered (1 accredited) |
| Purple Routes. CAVS. | - | - | - | - | Not available | 16 Play Spaces developed |
| Childs Play Project. RAY Ceredigion. | 883 | 76% (Target 1,160) | 331 | - | Not available | 16 play spaces developed to date 14 geographical communities worked with 20 training courses delivered (including 15 accredited courses) |
| Three Counties Communities Play Project. Torfaen Voluntary Alliance. | 5,960 | 1192% (Target 500) | 141 | 147% (Target 96) | The mid-term evaluation report (July 2013) ¹⁶ found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The split between boys and girls participating is nearly equal, with 52% of girls having registered as opposed to 48% boys¹⁷. Less than half (48%) of children registered were in the target 8-12 age range. 40% were in the 5-7 age range. The remaining 12% were either under 5 or over 13. | 18 Play Spaces developed. 509 sessions delivered. Average attendance for weekly sessions ranged from 26 to highest to 9.6 at lowest. Across all provisions 13.8 children attended each session on average ¹⁹ . |

¹⁶ Source: Three Counties Communities Play Project Mid Project Evaluation. Evans, H. July 2013.

¹⁷ Base - 567

¹⁹ Ibid., pg.18

-
- 30 beneficiaries (5%) had disabilities, with 90% of these being based in Monmouth.
 - The vast majority of children registered (95.7%) were of white British origin.
 - 44% of all registered children attended between 6-19 sessions.

51 different training sessions have been delivered to volunteers²⁰.

In terms of volunteers:

- 85% of registered volunteers are female¹⁸.
 - Nearly half (48%) of all volunteers have attended more than 20 sessions.
-

¹⁸ Base - 88

²⁰ Ibid., pg.20

ANNEX 3: Evidence - Performance (Quality) – How well has it been done?

Branching Out Into the Community. Chwarae Teg.

Source/Methodology:

Project Interim Report (2012) containing findings from case studies, consultations with stakeholders and surveys with both children and the wider communities.

Key findings to date include that:

- As part of the community survey, parents were asked, if relevant, how much they thought their child enjoyed play sessions. All respondents in the Bridgend area replied 'very much' or 'a lot'. This was the same for the RCT area, except for two 'neutral' responses²¹. We do not know the sample size for these respondents, as they formed part of the wider community survey.
- 75% (52) of the children surveyed as part of the evaluation said they preferred outside play²².

Qualitative feedback has indicated;

- The report stated 'stakeholders unanimously stated that quality of provision...has been 'high' and feedback from parents 'permanently positive'²³. Comments from wider consultation with the community echoed these feelings.

Childs Play 2. Dyfodol Powys Futures.

Source/Methodology:

Evaluation report with evidence collected from a variety of sources

Key findings to date include that:

- The limited qualitative feedback provided by children in the report was generally positive, with quotes such as 'I loved this activity'²⁴

North East Wales Community Play. Flintshire County Council.

Source/Methodology:

Exit Reports for Connah's Quay and Acton Play Schemes

Key findings from the Connah's Quay Exit Report include that;

- The report states the community were very supportive of the project, but there is limited qualitative feedback available to support the statement.

Key findings from the Acton Exit Report include that;

- Positive feedback from a parent was included – 'This is a perfect idea'²⁵, and other anecdotal evidence included indicates that the community was generally supportive of the project and its ethos.

Play Aloud. Cardiff City Council.

Source/Methodology:

Volunteer feedback forms, letters of support, various play session reports

Key findings to date include that:

- Qualitative feedback on volunteer training was given by both volunteers and project staff. One of the project staff said she 'thoroughly enjoyed' the process and another stated she thought she had delivered the training well. The volunteers involved were

²¹ Chwarae Plant Branching Out into the Community Play Project Evaluation Interim Report (November 2012). Page 34.

²² Ibid., Page 37

²³ Ibid., pg.24

²⁴ 1000 things to do with cornflour – Powys Child's Play 2 Evaluation Final Report. October 2013. Page 32.

²⁵ Exit Report Acton Community. Date Unknown. Page 12.

also positive about the courses, with one terming it 'beneficial'.

- Six letters of support for various aspects of the project have been received, all positive and saying how much the children enjoyed their play sessions. One letter called the staff 'friendly and supportive', and another 'simply lovely'.
 - 85% of children at the Colcot play sessions rated them as 'excellent', whereas 60% of children at the Sully play sessions rated the sessions as 'excellent'. They also provided positive feedback on the sessions and activities, saying 'it is amazing' and 'it is really fun with all the toys to play with...I really enjoyed this week'²⁶. Parents of children at the Sully sessions were also surveyed. 100% of parents thought their children had benefitted from the play provision²⁷. However, no information is given on how many people were surveyed and what methodology was used to collect this information.
 - Informal feedback reported in the various reports on the individual play sessions was generally positive in terms of both children and parents.
 - Towards the end of the project an Awards Event was held at a hotel in Cardiff to celebrate the project's achievements. Feedback on the event was positive, and comments included 'a fantastic day in celebration of a fantastic project' and 'excellent celebration vibe'²⁸
-

Play Rangers. Conwy County Borough Council.

Source/Methodology:

Project impact report containing findings from structured interviews with project staff, interviews with schools and questionnaire results from both children and parents.

Key findings to date include that:

- 93% of parents surveyed in Conwy said their children had really enjoyed the Play Rangers Project. However, this dropped to 40% and 30% in Gwynedd and Anglesey respectively²⁹. 45 parents in total completed a questionnaire, though the breakdown of this sample across the three counties is not provided.
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Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Play Project. Play Right.

Source/Methodology:

Project Year 2 Evaluation Report

Key findings to date include that:

- All Community Workers felt that steering group members provided enough support for the project³⁰
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Purple Routes. CAVS.

Source/Methodology:

Final Evaluation Report containing evidence collected from semi-structures interviews with staff and stakeholders, observations of play sessions and focus groups with children.

Key findings to date include that:

- Areas of good practice identified in the project were working in partnership with local organisations, open access varied play and parent and community involvement³¹.
 - One particular success was the project's work with schools and family centres, with one member of staff saying the partnership working has 'been really good'³².
-

²⁶ Colcot and Sully evaluation and comments document. Date Unknown.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Play Aloud Awards Evaluation document. Date Unknown.

²⁹ Play Ranger Impact Report. Marginson, V. Date Unknown. Pages 12 – 13.

³⁰ Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Play Project Year 2 Evaluation. May 2013. Page 14.

³¹ Source: Purple Routes Evaluation. Wavehill. October 2013. Page 7.

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- The evaluation found that partner organisations felt that the project staff were ‘dedicated, professional and effective’³³. Other comments included ‘excellent’ and ‘enthusiastic’.
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Childs Play Project. RAY Ceredigion.

Source/Methodology:

Community Engagement and Capacity Building Report, with evidence collected from desktop research, on site observations, informal interviews with children, online staff survey, semi structured interviews with parents, online stakeholder survey and graphic facilitation session.

Key findings to date include that:

- The wide range of qualitative feedback supplied was positive. Comments from the children included ‘Its better when the play project is here’, but the vast majority of comments included in the report came from parents, staff and stakeholders.
-

Three Counties Communities Play Project. Torfaen Voluntary Alliance.

Source/Methodology:

External mid-term evaluation report based on document review, consultation with key stakeholders and further qualitative and quantitative data, including volunteer and parent questionnaires.

Key findings to date include;

- The qualitative fieldwork revealed that, on the whole, the project engaged successfully with the various communities. Comments included ‘Some of the play workers were really good at engaging with communities and don’t make it look like a job – they really seem to enjoy it...’(partner organisation)³⁴
 - 100% of volunteers surveyed by questionnaire (34 base) stated they either ‘enjoy it most of the time’ or ‘love coming here’ in response to being asked how much they enjoy volunteering at play sessions³⁵.
 - Volunteers were also asked to rate the support and involvement of the Three Counties Community Play Project and Team in relation to various aspects of the project, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 being excellent. 100% surveyed rated the support they received in getting up and running as ‘excellent’, and this was reinforced by qualitative feedback. The recruitment and development of volunteers was rated lowest, with only 57% of those surveyed rating that particular support as ‘excellent’³⁶.
 - Qualitative feedback from participating children was very positive. One child even said ‘I love it here. It’s amazing! Even if you offered me £1,000 to stay home instead of coming here I’d choose to come to here. Even though I wouldn’t have the £1,000...’³⁷
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ANNEX 4: Effect – What difference has it made?

Branching Out Into the Community. Chwarae Plant.

Source/Methodology:

³² Ibid., pg.39

³³ Ibid., pg.40

³⁴ Source: Three Counties Communities Play Project Mid Project Evaluation. Evans, H. July 2013. Page 27

³⁵ Ibid., pg.40

³⁶ Ibid., pg.42

³⁷ Ibid., pg.53

Project Interim Report (2012) containing findings from case studies, consultations with stakeholders and surveys with both children and the wider communities.

Key findings include that:

- In the RCT area, the community survey data showed an increase in positive attitude in all six attitudinal questions asked. The question regarding staffed provision of play outside of school saw the largest increase, and showed that communities in RCT were becoming increasingly aware of outdoor play provision at the point in the project when the survey was undertaken (2012).³⁸
- The community survey data for the Bridgend area also saw the largest increase in awareness of staffed outdoor play provision.³⁹
- Interestingly, the same data showed that communities thought the visibility of children playing outside had decreased post-intervention⁴⁰. One reason given for this was children were now playing in particular places, such as parks, as opposed to the street.
- Respondents were also asked if they thought children playing outdoors caused problems in their local area. 30% (an increase of 8% from the baseline figure) of people surveyed in RCT thought children playing outdoors did cause problems in their area. This is in contrast to Bridgend, which saw a 10% (from 50 to 40%) decrease in the amount of people thinking children playing outdoors caused problems post-intervention⁴¹.
- Qualitative feedback from parents of children involved said the benefits of the play session for their children were 'socialising, playing outdoors, getting fresh air, meeting new friends and being in a safe, creative, staffed environment. The health/exercise benefits were also highlighted a number of times'⁴².
- 43% (27) of the children surveyed said they had changed their opinion of what type of space they prefer to play in due to the project and 99% (66) had some form of positive comment about playing outside and how it made them feel.⁴³

Qualitative feedback indicated;

- The project has motivated parents to undertake activities in their communities. For example, one parent set up an after-school club. 'It has made the community think about the appropriateness of their own behaviour'⁴⁴.
 - Stakeholders also agreed that the positive attitudes towards children playing outside had been promoted well by the project⁴⁵.
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Childs Play 2. Dyfodol Powys Futures.

Source/Methodology:

³⁸ Chwarae Plant – Branching Out into the Community Play Project Evaluation Interim Report (November 2012) Pages 30-31.

³⁹ RCT – Baseline base 51, post-intervention base 100. Bridgend – Baseline base 38, post-intervention base 88.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Page 32

⁴¹ Ibid., Page 33

⁴² Ibid., Page 35

⁴³ Ibid., Page 37.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pg.22

⁴⁵ Ibid., pg.25

Evaluation report with evidence collected from a variety of sources

Key findings include that:

- The 'differences made' by the project were reported via qualitative feedback. These were increased social cohesion (between different families, ages and races), increase in children's confidence and social skills and a reduction in anti-social behaviour.⁴⁶
 - Changes in attitudes to Open Access Play were also reported by project staff. Some staff felt that, at the start of the project, there was 'a reluctance to let children get too dirty [that] hindered some of the sessions'. It was also felt that some communities needed 'convincing' and 'Open Access Play has not always fitted with community expectations'⁴⁷.
-

North East Wales Community Play. Flintshire County Council.

Source/Methodology:

Exit Reports for Connah's Quay and Acton Play Schemes

Key findings from the Connah's Quay Exit Report include that:

- The project staff felt that, by the end of the project, the community were more accommodating of children playing in green spaces and more receptive to the idea of outdoor play. However, this was not supported by any qualitative or quantitative evidence⁴⁸.
- The project staff also felt that the project had changed children's play behaviour, and by the end they were able to lead their own play. Anecdotal evidence is provided to support this assertion⁴⁹

Key Findings from the Action Exit Report include that;

- Questionnaires completed by children at the end of the project⁵⁰ indicated that 93.75% of children were allowed to play out without an adult, compared to 66.67% at the start of the project⁵¹. Other questionnaire findings indicate that, at the end of the project, children played in a greater variety of locations.
 - The project staff also felt that the project had changed children's play behaviour, and children had become more independent in their play.
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Play Aloud. Cardiff City Council.

Source/Methodology:

Various play session reports

Key findings include that:

- One volunteer commented 'My confidence has increased and I understand more now about play and the idea of children just being allowed to get on and play by themselves'⁵².
 - Several project reports contained details of volunteers taking on responsibility for play schemes after the end of the project. However, this was not the case across the project area, with some play schemes reporting problems recruiting and retaining volunteers.
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⁴⁶ Powys Childs Play 2 Final Report (October 2013). Pages 50-52.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Page 53

⁴⁸ North East Wales Community Play Project End of Project Report – Connah's Quay Flintshire. Date Unknown. Page 14.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pg.16

⁵⁰ Base 32

⁵¹ Exit Report Action Community. Date Unknown. Page 17.

⁵² Record Based Accountability St Brides Major document. Date Unknown.

Play Rangers. Conwy County Borough Council.

Source/Methodology:

Project impact report containing findings from structured interviews with project staff, interviews with schools and questionnaire results from both children and parents.

Key findings include that:

- Parents and children were both asked via. questionnaire if their children/they were playing out more and spending less time playing video games. The majority of children in Gwynedd and Anglesey felt they were playing out more and were playing a lot less video games, and the majority of children in Conwy agreed that they were also playing less video games.
 - The views of the parents were much more varied, with the majority of parents in Conwy saying they had seen no change in their children's playing habits⁵³.
 - Qualitative feedback from staff at schools involved with the project was also varied. Some said they could see the children were 'more imaginative, creative; they experiment and play together', while several raised concerns over the 'dangerous' nature of the activities⁵⁴.
 - Qualitative feedback from the Play Rangers themselves indicated they thought the project had had an impact on the children in several ways, including increased creativity, playing with children of a different age, and more confidence in both themselves and to lead their own play⁵⁵.
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Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Play Project. Play Right.

Source/Methodology:

Project Year 2 Evaluation Report

Key findings include that:

- Community Workers interviewed felt that early responses to the project included reduced complaints of anti-social behaviour, children and young people using play spaces more often, children saying they are less bored outside of school, and local people being more positive about the need for children to play – 'mind sets are changing'⁵⁶.
-

Purple Routes. CAVS.

Source/Methodology:

Final Evaluation Report (October 2013) containing evidence collected from semi-structured interviews with staff and stakeholders, observations of play sessions and focus groups with children.

Key findings include that:

- Findings from semi-structured interviews with project staff and key stakeholders indicated the project had had a positive impact on the way children played, in terms of community links and social cohesion and perceptions about children playing out in groups⁵⁷.
 - Another important finding from these interviews was 'the impact that open access play has had on family centres in the area'. The play sessions bring adults into contact with family centres when they may have had no reason to previously. 'Many families [in deprived areas] are reluctant to engage with formal or statutory support,
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⁵³ Play Ranger Impact Report. Marginson, V. Date Unknown. Page 5.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pgs.13-14

⁵⁵ Ibid., pgs.14-15

⁵⁶ Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Play Project Year 2 Evaluation. May 2013. Page 11.

⁵⁷ Purple Routes Evaluation. Wavehill. October 2013. Pages 6-7.

and therefore can miss out on access to useful services'. Purple Routes can help these family centres reach families⁵⁸.

- Qualitative feedback indicated that there had been a variety of impacts for children involved in the project, including improved confidence, new skills and improved relationships and social skills.
 - The evaluation report reiterated throughout that the project had changed the perception that children lacked 'permission to play' and now children felt much more able to engage in free and creative play.
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Chids Play Project. RAY Ceredigion.

Source/Methodology:

Report on school play sessions, based on observation and questionnaire findings from school staff and children.

Community Engagement and Capacity Building Report, with evidence collected from desktop research, on site observations, informal interviews with children, online staff survey, semi structured interviews with parents, online stakeholder survey and graphic facilitation session.

Key findings include that:

- Staff, lunchtime supervisors and children from schools participating in the project were invited to evaluate the play sessions via. questionnaire. The report concluded that the responses indicated the project had had an impact on the schools that participated. Specifically, they had seen an increase in physical activity amongst children, a decrease in conflict in the playground and increased mixed gender and mixed age group play⁵⁹. These findings were reinforced by qualitative feedback from a variety of respondents.
 - The project also improved social inclusion and helped nurture adult-child relationships. External stakeholders commented 'it has engendered a sense of equality with adults for children' and 'the play sessions have enabled Cantref [a housing association] to engage with tenants in a creative way'⁶⁰.
 - Another effect of the project was an improvement in the quality of play provision on offer, in terms of play areas and play equipment. However this point is not discussed in detail⁶¹.
 - As part of this project, there was landscaping work of a specific site. This would have had wider impacts in terms of quality of environment for the wider community⁶².
 - External stakeholders reported a reduction in the number of reports of anti-social behaviour⁶³.
 - The report concluded that the project had had the following benefits for children; healthier lifestyles, new skills, improved wellbeing, and greater confidence and independence⁶⁴. This was reinforced by qualitative feedback from parents, including ' [The project has] given him more confidence while playing with other children, he has a lot more friends in the village'⁶⁵.
 - Parents also spoke of increased levels of confidence in allowing their children to play out unsupervised. Open play also allowed parents to develop relationships with other
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⁵⁸ Ibid., pg.7

⁵⁹ A report on the RAY Ceredigion Lunchtime School Play Sessions. Allman, M. & Byrne, G. March 2014. Page 15.

⁶⁰ Review of community engagement and capacity building. Play Wales & WIHSC. Date Unknown. Page 5.

⁶¹ Ibid., Page.12

⁶² Ibid., Page.12

⁶³ Ibid., Page.16

⁶⁴ Ibid., Page.16

⁶⁵ Ibid., Page.18

parents who they may not have met before, and gave parents some time to themselves.⁶⁶

- Respondents also felt that the project had generally improved awareness of the importance of play, and the lack of dedicated play spaces⁶⁷. This was commented on by both external stakeholders and parents.
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Three Counties Communities Play Project. Torfaen Voluntary Alliance.

Source/Methodology:

External mid-term evaluation report (July 2013), based on document review, consultation with key stakeholders and further qualitative and quantitative data, including volunteer and parent questionnaires.

Volunteer perspective:

- As volunteers have grown in confidence, they have taken on other projects in their locality. One case study details how volunteers that ran weekly play sessions and looked after an outdoor play facility in their village felt motivated and inspired to generate enough local interest to take over the local shop when it became empty⁶⁸. This is a specific example of where the project was brought about increased social cohesion and community interaction.
- As part of the volunteers survey, they were asked on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not beneficial at all, 10 being very beneficial) if community play provision was beneficial for their community and also for children and young people. These were scored as 9.2 and 9.48 respectively⁶⁹.
- Other benefits of the play provisions provided in feedback by volunteers included a safe place to play, an opportunity to make new friends and increased confidence.
- In one specific project example, more than one volunteer who was unemployed saw their participation in the project as vital for gaining experience and developing skills for any future employment.

Beneficiary perspective:

- According to the mid-term evaluation, the children involved in the project benefited from increased social skills and interaction – ‘they learn how to be with one another’⁷⁰
- Qualitative feedback from the children indicated that the majority of them thought they would either be watching TV or playing computer games if they were not at the play sessions.
- In terms of what they got out of the play sessions, the majority said they had made new friends, had fun, learnt new things (some had learnt to ride a bike) and some said it had made them more confident

Other relevant findings:

- Several stakeholders felt the project had led to a decrease in anti-social behaviour⁷¹.
 - When asked what difference the play sessions had made to their children, 67% of parents (base 15) said it had increased their confidence. 67% of parents said their children had also made new friends.⁷²
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⁶⁶ Ibid., Pages 21 – 22.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Page 22

⁶⁸ Source: Three Counties Communities Play Project Mid Project Evaluation. Evans, H. July 2013. Page 25.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pg.45

⁷⁰ Ibid., pg.32

⁷¹ Ibid., pg.32

⁷² Ibid., pg.51