



Play sufficiency in Wales

'We need to make sure all children have a wide range of challenging and interesting opportunities to play ... I'm very proud that Wales is leading the way with regards to children's play ... It's really important that we continue to lead the way to make sure children in Wales have good play opportunities.'

Lesley Griffiths AM,
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Time, space and permission to play

The Welsh Government wishes to create an environment in Wales where all children have the best opportunities to play and enjoy their recreation time. It believes that high quality play opportunities for all children may contribute to alleviating the negative effects of poverty on children's lives and help to build their resilience.

The Welsh Government wants Wales to be a country where children are increasingly seen outside enjoying the benefits of play; a play friendly country which provides time, space and permission for all children to play.

The Welsh Government recognises that to achieve the aim of creating a play friendly Wales and to provide excellent play opportunities for all children, it is necessary for local authorities, their partners and other stakeholders to also work towards this purpose.

To help achieve this change the National Assembly for Wales passed the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 which addresses the commitment to tackle child poverty. Importantly this Measure covers play and participation.

A Measure is a piece of law made by the National Assembly for Wales. It has similar effect to an Act of Parliament.

Play Sufficiency Duty

Part of the Measure places a legal duty on every local authority in Wales to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their area.

The 'Play Sufficiency Duty', as it has become known, is part of the Welsh Government's anti-poverty agenda which recognises that children can have a poverty of experience, opportunity and aspiration, and that this kind of poverty can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds across Wales.

Wales is the first country in the world to pass a law for children's play, so there are no existing models or guides for this work. The Duty has the potential to make real and meaningful changes that support children's right to play as well as providing them with a wealth of opportunity and experience.

The Play Sufficiency Duty was introduced in two parts. The first part, which requires local authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities for children in their areas, was commenced in November 2012. The second part, which requires local authorities to

The Welsh Government defines 'play' as 'any recreational activity' and 'sufficiency', in relation to play opportunities, is about the 'quantity and quality of opportunities for children to play'.



secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, as far is reasonable and practical, was commenced in July 2014. The Duty also requires local authorities to publish and keep up to date information about play opportunities for children in their areas.

Statutory guidance

To support the introduction of this duty the Welsh Government has published *Wales: A Play Friendly Country – Statutory Guidance* that sets out what local authorities must follow to comply with the duty.

Play Sufficiency Assessments

As part of the Duty each local authority is required to undertake a Play Sufficiency Assessment and develop an Action Plan which describes what they are doing, every three years.

Providing for children's play is not just about playgrounds and play areas; the Play Sufficiency Assessments include:

- Demographic profiles of the area
- As assessment of:
 - Open space and potential play space
 - Dedicated play provision
 - Recreational provision
- Other factors that promote play opportunities including planning, traffic, transport, information, publicity, and workforce development.

A well-conducted Play Sufficiency Assessment will provide the evidence needed to identify gaps in provision and support the development of Action Plans to address these gaps.

To support local authorities to undertake Play Sufficiency Assessments the Welsh Government and Play Wales, in conjunction with play providers across Wales, produced the *Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit*. The toolkit provides support to local authorities in fulfilling their duties. It also explains the purpose of the Duty and the different matters that should be taken into account when assessing play sufficiency.

The matters include:

- Population
- Providing for diverse needs

- Space available for children to play
- Open spaces
- Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces
- Playing fields
- Supervised provision
- Playwork provision
- Structured recreational activities
- Charges for play provision
- Access to space/provision
- Information; publicity; events
- Securing and developing the play workforce
- Community engagement and participation
- Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas.

On 1 March 2013 all 22 local authorities in Wales submitted their first Play Sufficiency Assessments and Action Plans to the Welsh Government. Local authorities will be submitting their next Assessments and Action Plans on 1 March 2016.

Local authorities are also required to publish a summary of their Play Sufficiency Assessments, which must include the outcomes of the Assessments and highlight the actions that they intend to take to achieve sufficient play opportunities.

While some local authorities are in the process of making their Assessment summary available online others are available to download. Links to the Assessments as well as contact details for local authority Play Officers can be found at: www.playwales.org.uk/eng/playservices



New Model Army Photography

For more information about play sufficiency visit:
www.playwales.org.uk/eng/sufficiency



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Play Wales is the national organisation for children's play, an independent charity supported by the Welsh Government to uphold children's right to play and to provide advice and guidance on play-related matters.

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