

CYP(3) SP 10

Children and Young People Committee

Inquiry into provision of safe places for children and young people to play and hang out.

Response from Recreate, Cardiff & Vale Play Services Association submission

	Contents
• Summary of the Play spaces consultation 2009	4 – 22
• Consultation response	4 – 11
• Consultation questionnaires	12 – 14
• Sarn Community 1 st consultation – March 2009	15 – 18
• Film – Wildmill	19
• Film – KPC	19 – 20
• Film – Bettws Boys and Girls Club	20
• Response from Blackmill MUGA development	20 -21
• Children/young people living in rural areas	21
• Children/young people living in disadvantaged areas and Low income households	21
• Disabled children	21
• Children/young people from marginalized group	21 – 22
• Participation	22
 Parks and green spaces	 22
 Play Providers	
• Play Provisions in Bridgend County	28 -28
• Under developed wards	23 -24
• Knowledge of playwork	24
• Playworkers	24
• Support	24
• Barriers for the play sector	24 – 25
• Quality assurance	25
• Year round play provision	25
• Open access/ closed access	25 – 26
• Local proximity	26
• Free play opportunities	26
• Playing outdoors	26
• Play opportunities	26
• inclusion	27
	27 - 28
 Communities	
• Community consultation response – Blackmill	28 – 33
• Community First response – Wildmill & Cornelly	28
• DIY Streets – Bridgend	29 – 32
	33

The following report is Bridgend County’s response to the request for evidence from the Children and Young People Committee in relation to “safe places to play and hang out”. The views expressed below are extracted from

a play audit carried out in 2009 with updates using the consultation questionnaires that accompanied the request for evidence.

The play audit was commissioned by the Play Services Strategy Group which is a sub group of the Children and Young People's Partnership and completed by RCT Play Association as part of the submission for the Child's Play BIG Lottery programme.

The Bridgend Children and Young People's Plan has identified the following priorities regarding play :

Core Aim 4 states that all children and young people will have access to:

- appropriate formal and informal play opportunities, including adventure play;
- out-of-school hours childcare and holiday playschemes;

and that Bridgend's strategic intentions are to:

- make a range of play, sporting, creative and recreational opportunities more readily available to children and young people, and where possible, delivered through the medium of both the Welsh and English languages;
- encourage take-up of activities amongst the more disadvantaged and low participating groups of children and young people.

Core Aim 7 has also identified that access to services and opportunities for children and young people:

- living in the more disadvantaged areas;
- with recognised lower levels of involvement in sporting and similar activities, for example teenage girls;
- who are disabled;
- who are looked after or are young carers;
- living in poorer households.

Bridgend also has outlined its commitment to disabled children and young people. The following services have been identified in the Disabled Children and Young People's Strategy to ensure that the play, sports leisure and recreation needs of disabled children and young people,;

- more opportunities in holiday periods
- many more opportunities throughout the year, outside holiday periods
- opportunities for integrated play and leisure as well as for specialist services
- pool of experienced and trained staff to deliver this programme
- transport – dedicated transport could be utilized all year round by all partners
- focus on supporting venues for specialist and integrated play .

In addition, there is a recognized need for more and better quality open play and recreation spaces in residential areas.

Summary of the Play spaces Consultation 2009

In February 2009, a play spaces consultation was undertaken with approximately 216 children/young people primarily between the ages of 5 to 15, living in five forum areas across Bridgend County Borough.

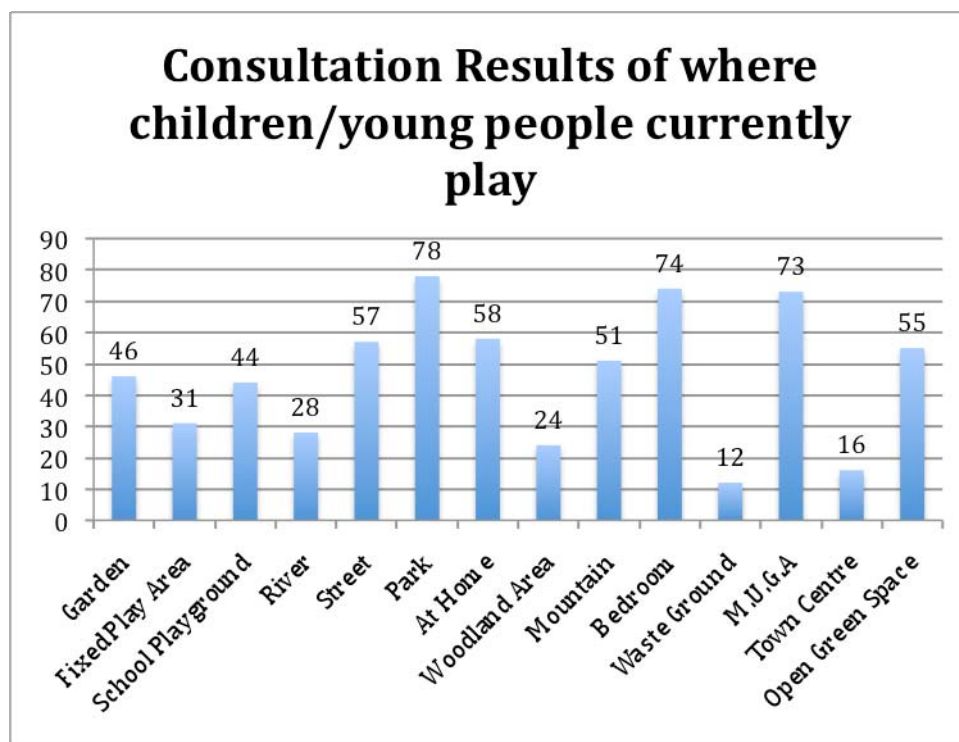
The consultation enabled children/young people to express their views on:

- Where they currently play
- Where they would like to play
- What they think of differing play spaces
- Barriers to accessing differing play spaces
- How can play spaces improve

The results were as followed:

Where do children/young people currently play?

Figure 1



In relation to figure 1, the top three Play Spaces in which children/young people currently play in are:

1. In first Place, the Park, with 78 votes taking 12.1% of all Votes
2. In Second Place, the Bedroom, with 74 votes, taking 11.5% of all votes
3. In third Place, M.U.G.A, with 73 votes, taking 11.3% of all votes

In relation to figure 1 the bottom three Play Spaces in which children/young people currently play in are:

- In bottom place, Waste Ground, with 12 votes, taking 1.9% of all votes

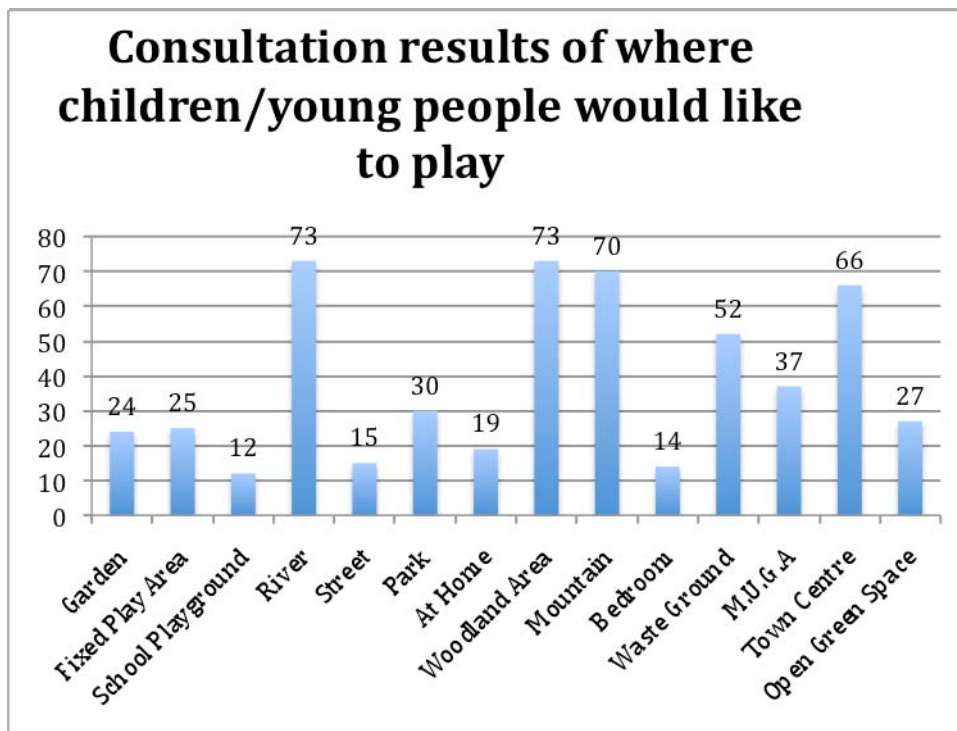
- In last but one place, Town Centre, with 16 votes, taking 2.5% of all votes
- In last but two place, Woodland Area, with 24 votes, taking 3.7% of all votes.

Additional places of where children/young people currently play, that were expressed in completed questionnaires, included the following:

- Road
- Car Park
- Local area
- Youth Club
- Farm
- Hall
- Skateboard Park
- Sand Dunes
- Swimming Pools
- In the mud
- Crèche
- On Bouncy Castles
- Soft Play Areas
- In the Snow
- Leisure Centres

Where would children/young people like to play?

Figure 2



In relation to figure 2 the top three Play Spaces children/young people would like to play in are:

1. In joint First Place, Woodland Area and River, with 73 votes (taking 13.6% of all votes)
2. In Second Place, Mountain, with 70 votes, (13% of all votes)
3. In Third Place, Town Centre, with 66 votes, (12.3% of all votes)

In relation to the figure 2, the bottom three Play Spaces children/young people would like to play in are:

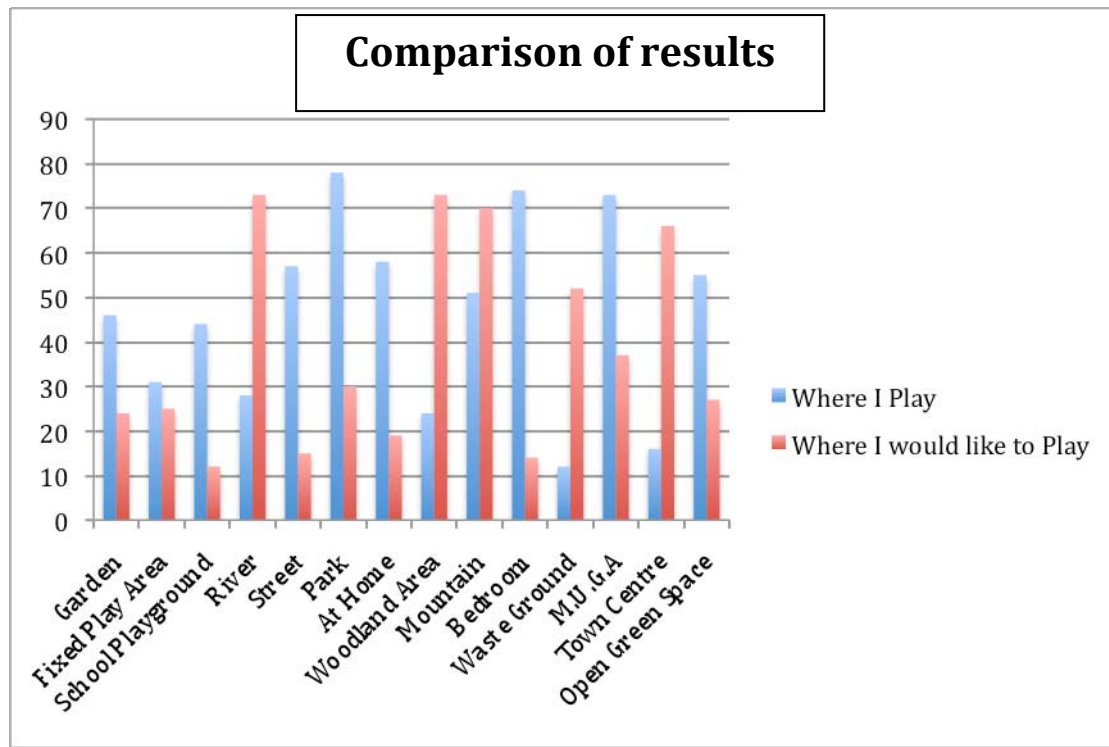
- In Bottom Place, School Play Ground, with 12 votes, (2.3% of all votes)
- In Last but One Place, Bedroom, with 14 votes, (2.6% of all votes)
- In Last but Two Place, Street, with 15 votes (2.8% of all votes)

Additional places where children would ideally like to play included the following:

- Skateboard Parks
- BMX Tracks
- Adventure Parks
- The Fair
- Bike Parks
- Places in which children/young people could go out alone
- Places in which children/young people could explore nature
- Places that would enable a range of sporting activities including surfing, rafting, trampoline, basket ball etc
- Obstacle courses including Zip Lining and water slides
- The Beach
- Places that enabled climbing opportunities

Comparison of Results

Figure 3



Findings

The three Play Spaces, when compared, expressing the greatest discrepancy were:

- The Bedroom was chosen as the Second most popular play space in which children/young people currently play. However, the Bedroom was the 12th most popular play space in which children/young people would like to play, the largest comparison of figure 3. This could possibly indicate the level of safety felt whilst playing in the bedroom is high, as well as indicating the level of safety felt to be low in terms of playing else where, in particular outdoors.
- Town Centre was chosen as the thirteenth most popular play space in which children/young people currently play, However, Town Centre was the third most popular play space in which children/young people would like to play; the second largest comparison of figure 3. Children/young people indicated that fears for road safety, and feeling a lack of ownership of this space to play prohibited them from playing there as often as they would like.
- Woodland Area was chosen as the twelfth most popular play space in which children/young people currently play. However, Woodland Area came joint first place as the most popular play space children/young people would like to play; the third largest comparison of figure 3. Safety issues felt, also influence this result, in terms of an unfamiliar space to play in, whilst at the same time being intrigued naturally to it as a place to play/hang out.

Discussions with Children/Young people

"I wish I could play in every place in the world, playing all the time, playing every single thing I could think of"

(Boy)

Feedback from discussions around where children/young people currently play consisted of the following:

- **Park**
The Park was the most popular choice of play space in which children/young people play. Feedback from this was that there are many parks situated across Bridgend County, therefore providing close proximity for children/young people to access. Children/young people also said parks were fun.
- **Bedroom**
The Bedroom was the second most popular choice of play space in which children/young people currently play. Feedback from this was that the bedroom is easily accessible; everyone has one. Play in the bedroom was often associated with computers/game consoles, or having friends round.
- **M.U.G.A**
M.U.G.A's were the third most popular choice of play space in which children/young people currently play. Feedback from this was that there are many situated across Bridged County, therefore providing close proximity for children/young people to access. Also feedback given showed they were seen as fun and meeting specific play/sport needs. It is also worth noting that some organisations visited had M.U.G.A's on the premises, therefore children/young people were likely to access them regularly as part of attending.
- **Woodland Area**
Woodland area came joint first place as the play space in which children/young people would like to play. Feedback from this was that Woodland Areas looked appealing, were different to what children/young people were used to in terms of play, it didn't determine a set way of playing, free reign, tree's were appealing in terms of play, exploring was appealing, being amongst nature. However, children/young people put forward that they would feel safer playing in Woodland Areas if they weren't alone, if they were allowed, if the grounds were safer (i.e. Cleared from harmful debris or animal waste)
- **River**
Rivers came joint first place as the play area in which children/young people would like to play. Feedback from this was that it would be fun, risky, a bit dangerous, and also that it didn't seem commonly

associated with play, and children/young people would feel more comfortable playing there if they were allowed, and not alone in doing so.

- **Mountain**

Mountains came second place, as the play space children/young people would like to play. Feedback from this was that you could explore, be amongst nature, they don't dictate any specific play experience, it would be fun. However, children/young people believed they would feel safer if they were allowed and if they didn't play up the mountain alone;

"You never know who's around the corner!"(Boy)

- **Town Centre**

Town Centre was the third most popular choice of play space in which children/young people would like to play. Feedback from this was that children would like to play in the Town Centre without an adult accompanying them; they would like to meet with friends there. However, they are afraid of being run over by cars when it's busy traffic, and are also scared of damaging any cars through playing because of being told off and getting into trouble.

- **Garden**

Gardens tended to be a popular choice with younger children in terms of feeling safe as their parents/carers could see them through the home window. Some children/young people disliked playing in their garden due to lack of space and lack of grass area.

- **Fixed Play Area**

Feedback of fixed play areas included them being in close proximity to children/young people therefore being convenient to access. Some children wrote swings and slides as things they like to play.

- **School Play Ground**

Feedback of School Play Grounds included the fact that children/young people access them almost every day of the year; they are familiar to their play experience.

- **Street**

This was a popular choice for younger children/young people in terms of feeling safe as parents/carers can see them from home. Also they're easily accessible. However, fear was projected over traffic:

"I want to play on the road in my street more, but I'm scared of being run over."(Boy)

- **At Home**

Playing At Home was heavily associated with computers/games consoles and having friend over.

- **Waste Ground**
Playing in Waste Ground areas was appealing and inviting to children/young people, as it is not associated with a specific way of playing. However, children/young people said they would feel safer playing there if the surface was safer (broken glass removed etc)
- **Open Green Space**
Feedback from discussions resulted in open green space being associated with free reign of play experience, and that open green space tended to be in close proximity to many children/young people therefore easily accessible.

What's stopping you?

Reasons children/young people gave for feeling unable to play at the play spaces they would ideally like to, consisted of the following:

- It's dangerous
- You could get lost
- You don't know who's around the corner
- You could get hurt
- You could get hurt on the metal (fixed play sites)
- You could get run over
- I'm not allowed/lack of parental permission
- Transport
- Hard to get to/distance

Additional reasons for why children/young people felt they couldn't play in the play spaces they would ideally like to, included the following:

- Weather
- Money
- Lack of equipment
- Nothing to do in area
- Injury/ill health
- Too young
- Talent
- Bullies
- Parents lack of time to take them to these places
- There may be drugs around
- Not safe
- Litter and rubbish
- Too rough
- Too busy
- No one to play with

Things that could improve play spaces:

Children and young people said that the following could improve play spaces:

- Make the environment safer (i.e. remove glass, dog mess, anything harmful)
- Less cars (“scared of getting run over”)
- Being able to play freely in the woodland areas without being told off
- More space designated for play
- Free access
- Access to materials

“I like playing in Waste Ground but sometimes there’s glass on the floor and things that you can hurt yourself on really easily.” (Boy)

“What if them dangers were removed?” (Playworker)

“That would be awesome! I could play whatever I wanted there then.” (Boy)

(Consultation 2009)

Adventure Play

Children/young people were shown a visual board of adventure play opportunities including wet slides, playing with fire, digging streams, and building dens out of wood and tools in a woodland area.

Children/young people were asked to mark whether or not these play opportunities were appealing to them, as something they’d like to engage in.

91.5% of children/young people asked displayed they would like to have adventurous play opportunities.

Feedback included:

- “Getting mucky is my thing!”
- “I would really like to do all them activities (adventure play photographs) but my mum can’t afford to keep buying all them materials and my garden is too small to do all that”
- “I’d love to do all them, they look awesome!”
- “I like playing in mud because it makes me dirty.”

It appeared to be the case, that most children/young people consulted, did not currently have access to these adventurous play opportunities on a regular basis, if at all, despite 91.5% of children/young people indicating they would like to, given the opportunity.

Play Spaces Consultation - Safe places to play and hang out

The 2009 play spaces consultation clearly highlighted the views of children/young people with regard to safety issues. It clearly sets out the perceived fears for safety of playing/hanging out in differing play spaces. However, what the consultation also shows is that children/young people want to experience risk in the play spaces they choose, and this is beneficial to their development. Children/young people would like to experience risk, but not unnecessary risk that could cause serious harm and which affects their play in a negative prohibiting way. Children want to feel safe and confident to play in their local community, in stimulating and challenging environments that trigger many play behaviours. The issues of safety, felt by children /young people influence where they play, and also prohibit them from playing where they would ideally like to at times. It appears that reasons children/young people feel they cannot play in the places they'd ideally like to, range from parental concerns, to low self esteem, to the condition of the environment, to financial elements and distance of access.

Safe places to play consultation response

10 children aged 8 to 12 from one organisation in Bridgend County Borough responded to this consultation. The consultation involved engaging children/young people in differing activities to gain their views on the issue of safe places to play and hang out. The results are as follows:

Map of play/hanging out

Children/young people drew a map of where they play/hang out around their house. They also drew in places they weren't allowed to play/or made them feel unsafe, and explored these issues.

Results

Places where children felt safe to play/hang out

- Park
- Fields
- At home
- Small forests
- Play provision
- Garden
- Wall
- Shed
- Fence
- Friends garden
- Friends street
- Friends house
- Shops
- Street
- Bedroom
- Living room
- Hall way
- Siblings bedroom
- Stairs at home

Places where children felt unsafe to play:

- Shops – because intimidating by young people hanging out there
- Roads – not allowed, feared of getting run over
- Large woodland areas – not allowed, but would like too. Too far away
- Outside of the house – not allowed outside

Play/Hang out scenario game

Children/young people were asked to consider different scenario's and determine whether in each scenario they feel safe:

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some times
- Never.

Reasons were then explored.

Results

Do you feel safe to play/hang out.....

1. In your street?

- Always – 3
- Most of the time – 0
- Some times – 4
- Never – 3 (reason given - Not allowed to go out)

2. Outside of your street but near to where you live?

- Always – 1
- Most of the time – 2
- Some times – 0
- Never – 6 (reason given - not allowed)

3. Exploring further away from where you live?

- Always – 2
- Most of the time – 1
- Some times – 0
- Never – 7 (reason given – Too young, not allowed)

4. When it gets dark outside?

- Always – 0
- Most of the time – 0
- Some times – 0
- Never – 10 (too young, not allowed)

5. In a space without adults?

- Always - 3
- Most of the time - 1
- Some times - 4
- Never – 2 (reason given – too young)

6. In a space where you can see other children/young people playing/hanging out?

- Always – 3
- Most of the time – 3 (reason given – some naughty children)
- Some times – 4
- Never – 2 (reason given – scared of other children coming over and spoiling our game)

7. On your own?

- Always – 3
- Most of the time – 3
- Some times – 2
- Never – 3 (reason given – scared other children might come up to us)

8. With friends?

- Always – 3
- Most of the time – 5
- Some times – 2
- Never - 0

9. In a space with playworkers/youth workers?

- Always – 3
- Most of the time – 0
- Some times – 3
- Never – 4 (reason given – they take over sometimes)

10. In the spaces where adults tell you to stop playing/hanging out?

- Always – 0
- Most of the time – 0
- Some times – 3
- Never – 7

This consultation exercise needs further work to gain responses from more children/young people in the borough, but it does identify children/young people's concerns regarding safety.

Children and Young People's Committee questionnaire responses

The questionnaire was sent out to members of Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisation's Play Network. 1 organisation responded.

28 children/young people responded between 8 & 16 years, to the youth questionnaire in relation to safe places to hang out.

1. What sorts of things make a safe place to hang out?

- Youthworks – 1
- Clean – 6
- Fun – 5

- Other people there to look after you – 4
- Not on/keep off the streets – 4
- Friends – 4
- Warm – 3
- A place to go – 3
- Staff to look out – 3
- Safe building – 3
- Other people being there with you – 2
- Roof over your head – 2
- Parents to look out – 2
- Someone to look out for you – 2
- Workers - 2
- Walls – 2
- Alarm – 2
- Cover – 2
- Feel protected – 2
- Stops you doing drugs – 2
- People to help you - 2
- Group of friends – 1
- Tidy – 1
- Teachers to look out – 1
- Someone to watch you – 1
- Parents/staff to look out, i.e. drugs, smoking, roads, criminals, injury – 1
- Ceilings – 1
- Lock gates – 1
- Log gates – 1
- Bus cover – 1
- Rules – 1
- People you can trust – 1
- Cameras – 1
- Friendly – 1
- Enclosed – 1
- Streets – 1
- Familty – 1
- People you know – 1
- Adults – 1

2. How close to a safe place to hang out are you?

- About 5 mins walk away – 12
- About 10 mins walk away – 8
- More than 10 mins walk away – 7
- There is nowhere safe close to where I live – 1

3. To get to a safe place to hang out, does someone have to go with you or can you go by yourself?

- By myself – 17
- With another young person – 8

- With an adult – 9 (inc 2 who said depending on the weather and time of day)

4. How safe do you feel when you are hanging out?

- Very safe – 11
- Quite safe – 12
- Not sure – 4
- A bit safe – 0
- Very unsafe – 1

5. If you have felt unsafe when you were hanging out, what caused this?

- Bullies – 7
- Teenagers – 4
- Druggys (sic) – 3
- Unknown individuals/ people I don't know – 2
- Stranger/s – 2
- Staff not looking – 2
- Other people giving alcohol/drugs – 2
- Man following me – 2
- Strange people – 2
- No – 1
- People carrying weapons – 1
- Family bereavement – 1
- Murders – 1
- No activities – 1
- People following you – 1
- Drunks – 1
- People smoking – 1

6. Does anything ever stop you hanging out when you want to? What sorts of things stop you?

- No – 5
- Cost/money – 2
- Parents – 1
- Working – 1
- Might be a bad place with bad people – 1
- Might be a bad place and you don't know it – 1
- Men – 1
- The weekends – 1
- When my friends don't want to – 1
- Nobody invites me – 1
- Gone someone else – 1
- Bad weather – 1
- Man watching us – 1
- Mum – 1

7. If you could do something to make the area you hang out in better, what would you do?

- More skate parks - 4
- Make the computers work – 2
- Build mud jumps – 2
- Skiing – 2
- I don't know – 2
- New games – 2
- More trips – 2
- Comfortable chairs – 1
- X box – 1
- Make a gym – 1
- More people/adults watching you – 1
- Make it better with more friends & sister & brother – 1
- More friends – 1
- A park – 1
- More people – 1
- Clean it up – 1
- Stop letting bad people in – 1
- Better furniture – 1
- More lighting as gets really dark – 1
- Camera – 1
- Plasma tv – 1
- New games consoles – 1
- No cost – 1

8. Do you take part in any organised clubs or activities?

- Yes – 24
- No – 2

9. How do you get to the activities you are in?

- Walk – 15
- Bike – 6
- Car – 11
- Bus/train – 2
- Other – Minibus (KPC), Skate Board, Skate

10. Are there any activities you would like to take part in but can't?

- Yes – 14
- No – 13

11. If not, why not?

- Really expensive – 1
- It's too far – 1
- Sometimes friends cant come over – 1
- Too far – 1
- Too young – 1
- No one to take me – 1

- I don't know – 1
- Don't go out enough – 1
- Don't go to youth club enough – 1
- Brazien jut – jit - su – 1
- Cause go swimming – 1
- I'm busy – 1
- None in my area – 1

12. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about safe places to play and hang out?

- This is the only good place (KPC Youth) - 1
- Library – 1
- Youth Club – 1
- Quad rangle – 1
- Nothing – 1
- KPC Youth – 1
- Scouts - 1

Sarn Comm 1st Consultation with young people – March 2009

Young people – 11 to 18 years

Consultation – aimed to find out:

- What activities/services young people use in the area
- What prevents young people using the services in the area
- What they would like to have in their area

Response overview of needs–

- They want a more stimulating environment – more to do – bored – limited activity
- Cost barrier to access services
- Hard to get to
- People with drink issues around the area
- Communication – promotion of services need to be improved
- Small space
- Better lighting
- Limited to those who attend the school only
- Age appropriate opportunities
- Want to be able to be loud in a space
- Open them for longer
- Let more people in
- Playing field/town/park/bus shelter/the river/ fields easy to access

Would like in the area:

- MUGA
- Skate park
- Adventure play – things to climb, exciting & interesting enough for older children/young people
- Better park equipment, sports clubs
- Better maintained football pitch
- Music recording studio
- Community farm

Exploring through film

Several films have been created/or involved the views of young people that can link to the issue of safe places to play and hang out:

- **Wildmill young people's film:**

"A few years ago the Wildmill Estate had some of the highest levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in the Bridgend area but the group says things are getting much better. They say one of the problems is there's nothing for young people to do. They take on the challenge of trying to get a skate park or games area built on waste ground on the estate."

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/ps/sites/on_tv/pages/wilmill.shtml)

This short film explores the stereotypes of young people, as well as the decrease in youth annoyance in Wildmill due to the existence of youth provision.

The film can be viewed at

http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/ps/sites/on_tv/pages/wildmill.shtml

- **KPC – PRU - "Fire Starter":**

'Firestarter', written and produced by 7 young people aged 14-16 from the Pupil Referral Unit based at KPC, was the 2nd film of the Reel-to-Reel project. Firestarter shows a day in the life of a group of young people who are just trying mind their own business and hang out together. Everyone else they come into contact with seems to have a different idea about them and they're finding it hard to get on with their day, and if that's not enough Niko is convinced he's being followed. The film explores how the young people feel when they are perceived negatively by certain members of the public, and how they deal with this in a sometimes comic way."

(http://www.valleyandvale.co.uk/video_projects.htm)

In the film young people choose to hang out in Car parks, re-cycling area, sand dunes. Negative community perceptions were explored such as; People see them as "hoodies", and up to no good. These negative perceptions make the young people feel a bit angry/frustrated. This film is based on the real life experiences of these young people. The idea for the film grew from their own discussions. The film is currently in the process of completion.

- **Bettws Boys and Girls Club Film**

“Bettws is a former mining village with great views over the surrounding countryside. But it's a few miles from Bridgend and apart from the club there's nothing much to do. A shortage of funding means the Boys and Girls club isn't always open when the group want to go. The group is challenged to find out how they can help turn things round.”

http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/sites/on_tv/pages/bettws_boys_and_girls_club.shtml

The film explores what it is like to live in Bettws, and the importance of the focal point for young people being the youth provision in which young people can access stimulating opportunities, that in their eyes keeps them off the street, possibly resorting to alcohol, and feeling isolated and bored.

The film can be viewed at

http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/ps/sites/on_tv/pages/bettws_boys_and_girls_club.shtml

- **Blackmill MUGA Development**

Consultation was undertaken with young people in Ogmores Comprehensive in regards to the development of a Multi Use Games Area in Blackmill. The young people expressed their views of safety issues by stating that lights would be needed to help people play in the dark, materials should be used that cannot be burned, and bins need to be available on site for rubbish.

Children and young people living in rural areas

Bridgend County Borough is made up of rural, urban and coastal areas. Children & young people living in rural areas in Bridgend County Borough often are surrounded by beautiful, engaging natural landscape that is inviting to play/hang out in. Play opportunities and areas for young people to hang out in rural areas have been highlighted in consultations and are included in Bridgend's Rural Partnership Plan and are included in 2 bids to WAG under the Axis 3.

Children and young people living in disadvantaged areas and in low income households

There are 8 Community First areas in Bridgend County Borough. Within these areas there are barriers to children/young people playing hanging out, which also exists to many outside of these areas. Such barriers include:

- Cost of attending provisions
- Inability to travel to provisions that are not in walking distance (lack of transport)
- Lack of year round services and provisions.

Disabled children and young people

Specialized provision for disabled children/young people is available and also inclusive opportunities. However, it has been recognized in the Children and Young People's Plan more should be done to enhance community based opportunities to allow disabled children/young people to play/hang out safely.

Children and young people from marginalized groups

CSSIW registered play provisions abide by standards that are inclusive to marginalized groups and portray positive images and experiences of different cultures. Provisions working to Extending Entitlement explore and are inclusive of different cultures. Community based provision, therefore provisions in close proximity, that do not require a cost to attend, would be more inclusive to children/young people from marginalized groups to play/hang out safely. Bridgend County Borough also has existing Welsh language provisions enabling children/young people to play/hang out safely in a way that feels authentic to them in terms of using their first language. Welsh speaking Playworkers are working to some degree throughout the Borough. Trained Playworkers are inclusive workers providing a wide range of safe play opportunities meeting the needs of all children/young people aged 5 to 15 years. All provisions have an equal opportunities policy, encouraging non-discriminatory practice and all are open to children/young people from marginalized groups.

Participation

Bridgend Children & Young People’s Partnership Plan includes the importance of participation of children/young people in anything that effects them, as does the WAG Play Policy and implementation plan. Children/young people should therefore have a say and influence the planning and implementation of play spaces, based on their needs being met in their community.

Parks and Recreation Department has carried out an extensive consultation exercise when developing a play area in Braich y Cymmer.

The survey was also taken to Bridgend’s disabled play provision but the children and young people said that they preferred to play rather than answer questions!

Parks and Green Spaces

Bridgend County has dynamic spaces in which children and young people can play freely. Bridgend County Borough Council currently provides:

Country Parks	2
Community Parks	10 (includes 2 lake sites)
Recreation Grounds	35
Public Open Spaces	127Ha (or 1,271,194M2)
Designated Children's Play Spaces	148 (equipped and unequipped sites)
Skate Parks	3
MUGA's/Kickabouts	20 (grass and tarmac)

The Voluntary Sector also provides dynamic play spaces, including woodland areas and green open spaces that children often access to play.

Along with providing dynamic spaces in which children can play freely within local proximity:

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that the impact of

modern society on children's lives has significantly restricted their opportunity to play freely and has resulted in a poverty of play opportunities in the general environment. It is therefore committed to encouraging the creation of high quality "compensatory" play provision that is appropriate, local stimulating and challenging for all children in Wales.

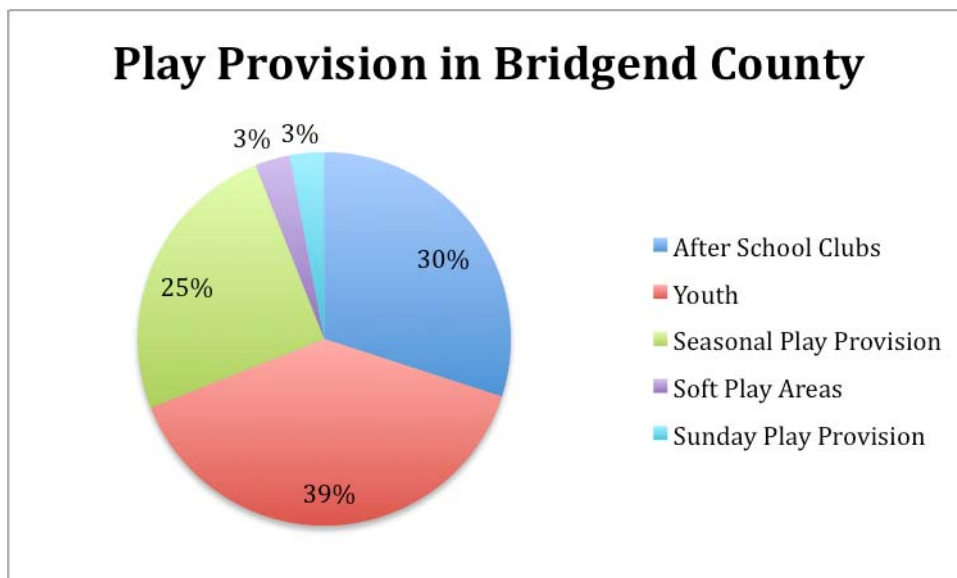
(W.A.G Play Policy 2002)

Play providers

Play Provisions in Bridgend County

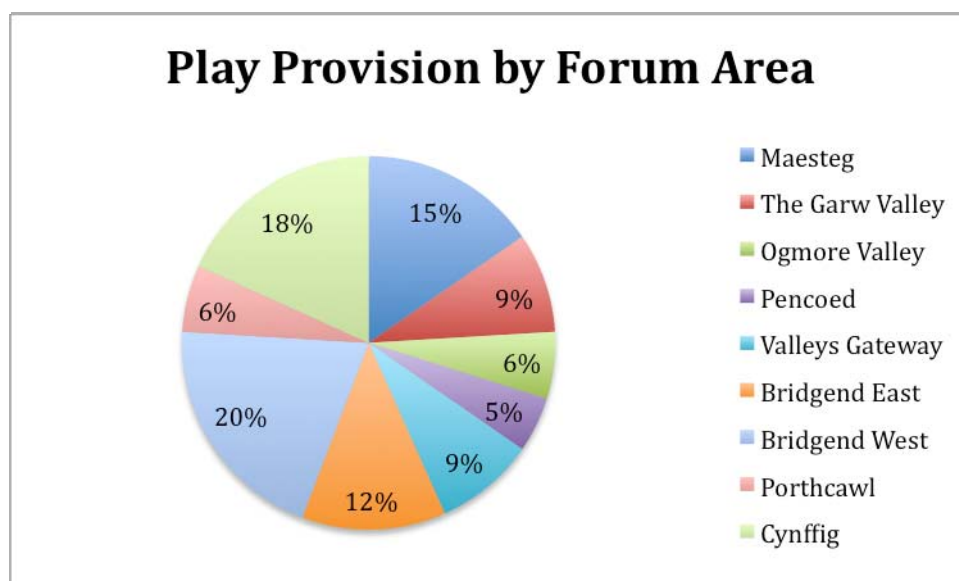
Bridgend County Borough 2009 Play Audit identified there to be 104 provisions evidenced to/possibly catering for play opportunities within a safe provision. They were as followed:

Figure 1



The 104 possible Play Provision opportunities in Bridgend County, in relation to received audit information, can be categorised in terms of distribution as follows:

Figure 15



Under developed Wards

Although there are provisions in each forum area of Bridgend County, there are currently wards in Bridgend County Borough that do not have any play provisions for children/young people to access. Some wards in Bridgend County do not have any year round play provisions for children/young people to access. Overall, this could mean that 2923 children, aged 8 to 12 years, are potentially Play Deprived in terms of lack of staffed Play Provision in Bridgend County; 38% of the overall population of children aged 8 to 12 living in Bridgend County.

Knowledge of Play/Playwork

Education around the meaning of Play, and Playwork as a profession, needs to be clarified and promoted in Bridgend County in order for it to be clearly understood and implemented.

Playworkers

The role of the playworker is to support the creation of space in which children can play. Playworkers work towards the Playwork Principles as a framework for best practice. Playworkers aim to provide for a wide variety of play opportunities in a safe and stimulating environment, allowing for beneficial risk whilst keeping children/young people safe from serious harm. Playworkers can help to dispel some of the myths of it being dangerous to play outside.

“The provision of trained playworkers and play rangers can help making environments safer, by supporting and facilitating opportunities for children to play .”

(WAG Play Implementation plan 2006)

Support

Existing play providers, and those who have an impact on play in their area, are now supported by Bridgend County Play Network, where needs can be discussed and addressed enabling Bridgend County play sector to grow in quality of provision.

Barriers from the Play sector

Play providers expressed, within the 2009 play audit, issues of lack of available training opportunities, and struggles to find funding to enable them to continue to exist as well as grow in quality for the benefit of children/young people playing/hanging out safely.

Quality Assurance

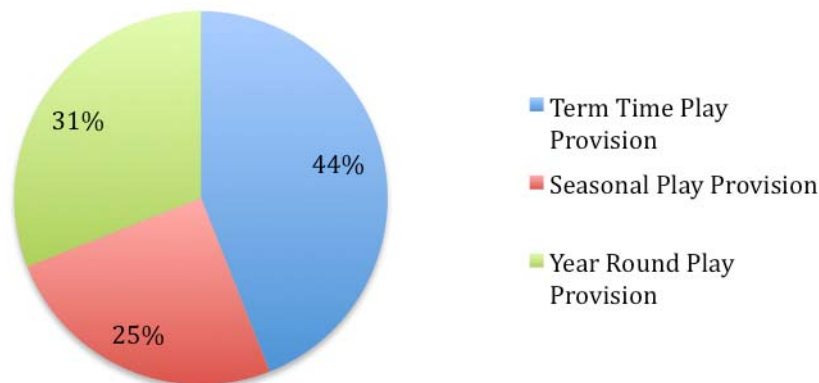
Quality Assurance schemes, such as Play Wales “The First Claim”, and Clybiau Plant Cymru’s “Raising the Game”, can also be used within existing play provisions to enhance the quality of opportunities and service delivery for children/young people.

Year Round Play Provision

In light of received audit information it is predicted that Play Provision in Bridgend County is open to children 8 to 12 years in the following way:

Figure 23

Play Provision in Bridgend County



- 8 Wards of Bridgend County currently appear to have no Year Round Play Provision, in light of received Play Provision
- 11 Wards of Bridgend County currently appear to have one Year Round Play Provision
- 18 Wards of Bridgend County currently appear to offer more than one Year Round Play Provision.

Year Round Play Provision is essential to ensure that children/young people have consistent access to Quality Play Opportunities in their community.

Open Access/closed Access

When considering year round/term time play provision in Bridgend County, there are considerably more closed access play provision opportunities (63%), than there are open access play provision opportunities (37%). Both forms of provision should be available to communities. Childcare is needed in communities, however, Open access play provisions enable children to come and go as they please, and often do not involve a fee to attend, which could be a provision that suits the needs of some members of communities best. The freedom of choice needs to be available.

Local Proximity

Play provision that is community based, (therefore within local proximity to children/young people), allows for the play provision to be easily accessible for children/young people.

“Access can have a fundamental effect on how people engage in the life and benefits that their community can offer.”
(Bridgend County Borough Community Strategy)

Through consultation work with children in Bridgend County, having play provision closer to one’s home was expressed as a need to improve play in

children's local areas. Transport and play provision being hard to get to, were both expressed as barriers to accessing play provision.

Free Play Opportunities

It appears that most play provision involves a membership and attendance fee, that often reflects the community's financial status, but this can be a barrier for many families. Having play opportunities offered to communities on a free access basis, would be a more inclusive approach for future developments. During consultation work with children in Bridgend County, free access and access to free materials, were both expressed as a need for improving play in children's local areas.

Playing Outdoors

Most play provisions in Bridgend County appear to have access to outdoor space that varies in size and proximity. Most play provision's value the importance of outdoor space for children to play amongst. Consultation work with children in Bridgend County revealed that the top three play spaces in which children would ideally like to play were all outdoors. However, barriers to playing outdoors were expressed, such as traffic, and parental concerns, as well as opinions voiced on how this can be improved. Playing outdoors is essential for children to learn and explore their communities, to engage with their environment and to connect with their natural surroundings. It is important for children to establish a relationship with their locality for developmental health. Natural outdoor environments are full of quality play experience, all essential for developing as an individual.

Play Opportunities

Play provision should aim to provide the resources and landscape to cater for a maximum amount of play opportunities, in order to maintain a quality play environment..

Play environments that are favoured, as places children and young people would like to play in, are:

- Those that have extended play value,
- Places that do not dictate a specific way of playing,
- Places, which have the resources and landscape to inspire unlimited playful behaviour.

Consultation questionnaires showed preferences to engaging in Play Opportunities such as:

- Exploring,
- Creating things out of materials,
- Building dens,
- Playing made up games with friends,
- Messy play,
- Playing with identity
- And playing with the elements.

91.5% of children/young people consulted within Bridgend County would like to have Adventurous Play Opportunities within their community.

Children/young people should therefore be able to feel safe and confident to experience such opportunities, but as this report shows, there are barriers to this.

Inclusion

Play provision should aim to be inclusive for all children/young people, regardless of sex, culture, race, language, disability etc.

There are Welsh language play provisions in Bridgend County via the voluntary organisation Menter Bro Ogwr.

There are play settings in Bridgend County that have enough trained staff employed to cater for children/young people with moderate to complex needs at the appropriate ratio of care needed. Discovery Days run by the local authority, and Y Bont within the voluntary sector, both provide play provision for children with moderate to complex additional needs, with the appropriate ratio of Playworkers to support children/young people to access play opportunities.

All returned Play Audit Questionnaires stated that their Play Provision is inclusive. It is to be credited that Play Providers are dedicated to an inclusive environment in Bridgend County.

Trained Playworkers are inclusive workers:

“Playworkers are trained professionals who know how to recognize both the verbal and non-verbal cues that children use to show how, what and where they want to play. Playworkers familiarize themselves with the character, capabilities and communication preferences of all the children in the setting. Playworkers take a flexible approach; they interpret children's needs and adapt a situation or environment in order to extend their play and their range of experiences.”

(“Inclusive Play” Play Wales)

Communities

Re-enforcing positive community attitudes towards children playing/young people hanging out in their community is key to a healthy community that fosters its children and young people.

Community attitudes towards play/hanging out in the community can be prominently negative, which is felt by children/young people, prohibits them from the full experience of connecting with their community spaces. It is a children right to play, and the importance of this right needs to be advocated to communities and adopted.

Community attitudes towards children playing/ young people hanging out include:

- An understanding that play/hanging out is important for children
- A worry about safety issues
- An intolerance for children playing/young people hanging out in the community

Such views are echoed in a community consultation in Blackmill, Bridgend, in relation to a development of a Multi use Games Area:

- An understanding that play/hanging out is important for children:
 - “Would be great for the kids”
 - “Children are so bored they are becoming destructive”
 - “Need more for the kids to do”
- A worry of safety issues:
 - “They have to cross the main road”
 - Lighting would be safer for the kids”
 - “Worry about late night drinking on site and fires”
- An intolerance for children playing/young people hanging out in the community:
 - “residents are complaining about them playing around the houses.”

*Children’s play in public spaces is often interpreted as antisocial behaviour. The places children prefer to play may seem untidy, unsightly or even dangerous.
(Best Play)*

*Low-level supervision, for example of fixed play areas by staff in parks, can add to a sense of security for both children and their families. Children cannot play freely when they feel insecure. Oversight by a sympathetic adult, perhaps as part of more general park supervision duties, may be all that is required to give children confidence to relax and play freely. This is particularly so in the case of young children who, rightly or wrongly, may feel threatened by the presence of teenagers. Parents are often anxious about their children’s safety in public spaces, with varying degrees of justification. As a result their children are denied access to play opportunities from which they would benefit. A degree of supervision can help to overcome the problem by providing reassurance to parents.
(Best Play)*

Community First Response

The Community First programme, operates in 8 wards of Bridgend County, follow these initiatives:

- Education, skills and training
- Environment
- Jobs, Business and Income Generation
- Child poverty

- Community Safety
- Health and Wellbeing

All initiatives have an impact on safe places for children to play and hang out.

The following responses are based on the Draft Community Audits from Wildmill and Cornelly, but issues highlighted are likely to be similar across the Borough.

Environment - Wildmill

Wildmill's Draft Community Audit identified the following key environmental issues which could impact on safe places to play/hang out:

- Drugs and Alcohol – dependency/on the streets
- ASB (Adult)
- Youth Annoyance
- The local environment – aesthetics/layout
- Dogs – fouling/roaming
- Vandalism
- Broken glass
- Litter
- Condition of roads
- Condition of parks
- Car parking
- Condition of open spaces
- Condition of walkways
- Fly tipping

Community members favoured ways of improving the environment in Wildmill utilizing green spaces better and developing facilities for children.

Environment – Cornelly

Cornelly's Draft Community Audit identified also highlighted key environmental issues which could impact on safe places to play/hang out:

- Car speeding & volume of cars
- Dogs – fouling/roaming
- Litter
- Fly tipping
- Vandalism
- Youth annoyance
- Drugs and alcohol – dependency/on the streets
- Poor community spirit

Jobs, business and income generation

Both draft community audits for Wildmill and Cornelly identify that the community feels there is a lack of affordable or free childcare services, as well as a lack of affordable childcare services in relation to the low income status of families in the area. There is also a recognition that expanding such services could open up employment and training opportunities to members of the community.

Child Poverty – Wildmill

Wildmill Draft Community Audit identifies that the community feel that facilities for children/young people are inadequate for the area. The findings clearly show that high priorities for Wildmill are sports facilities, youth buildings and play areas.

48.5% of those who responded in the community feel that leisure/sports facilities are of a poor standard or not available, and 28% feel they are very difficult to access or not available.

39.7% of those who responded in the community feel that children's recreation is of a poor standard or not available, and 14.2% feel that it is very difficult to access or not available.

Some community members feel that there is not enough facilities to cater for the differing ages of children/young people in the area.

Some community members feel the maintenance of areas need to be improved, such as removing broken glass etc.

One member of the community states, "I imagine these kiddies have a lack of confidence which they bury under bravado and occasionally aggressive behaviour."

"Opinion over the safety of the area for children and young people is mixed. Many do not think it is a safe community for children to play in, citing issues such as dogs roaming, people swearing and drinking in public spaces. However, others suggest that most of the community is safe for children to play in, and the children living in this community are happy."

"Intergenerational issues may be a problem in the area. Some suggest that residents feel intimidated by young people, due to ASB and bad language. Adults are often thought to see children as being unsafe and "up to no good"; seeing gangs of teenagers together is intimidating. However, others suggest that adults do not have a good attitude towards children, though it is the minority who create problems. More tolerance to youngsters playing, and making a bit of noise, may help some inter-generational issues."

Child Poverty – Cornelly

Cornelly Draft Community audit identifies that key priorities needed in the area are youth buildings, play areas, community buildings and children's groups.

36.3% of those who responded in the community felt that children's recreation opportunities were of a poor standard or not available. 18% felt they were difficult to access or not available.

32.5% of those who responded from the community felt that youth services/facilities were of a poor standards or not available. 12.9% felt they were difficult to access or not available.

36.7% of those who responded from the community felt that leisure/sports facilities were of a poor standard or not available.

The Draft audit recognizes existing services for children/young people, but recognizes that fee based provisions are a barrier for many families, as well as lack of transport/distance travelled to access provision.

“There are safe areas for children to play in as there are lots of green areas. Most interviewees believe this is a safe community for children to play in and on the whole children are happy within the community. However there are areas of improvement; the worst thing children can face is other children in the community. Some interviewees state that the play park is not that safe and accessible for the children of Marlas. Motorbikes on the street are also cited as a danger.”

“There are inter-generational issues in the area, with a lack of respect from adults towards children and vice versa. Some interviewees note that attitudes towards children amongst adults are negative; a lot of people think they are a nuisance especially the teenagers, although this tends to be the adults who have been victims of crime in the community. There is a perception that adults are less tolerant of children/young people and only see bad in them.”

Community Safety – Wildmill

Wildmill Draft Community Audit identifies that 26% of the community feel unsafe in the community during day time, and 56.1% feel unsafe at night time.

Reasons given for feeling unsafe at night time were:

- Poor lighting
- Drugs
- Gangs
- People
- Youth annoyance
- Drinking

Anti-social behaviour from adults is a key issue, but anti-social behaviour from young people is also strongly felt by the community, especially in the summer period. In relation to this, members of the community stated the following:

“I’d definitely put some sports facility here, somewhere for the kids to go, and possibly be monitored while they’re there, where they can let off steam and where they’re not affecting anyone else’s quality of life.”

“All these could be answered if there was something that could take up the interest of these young people.”

In relation to new developments for children/young people a member of the community “notes that planning such activities requires an inclusive process” from the community:

“The thing is, you’ve got to appease everyone haven’t you? You’ve got residents who don’t want it next to them, but then they don’t want the problems that kids are making on the estate.”

Community Safety – Cornelly

Cornelly Draft Community Audit identified that 18.4% of the community felt unsafe during the day time in the community, and 46.1% felt unsafe at night time. The streets were regarded as the most unsafe place in the day time.

Key reasons for feeling unsafe at night included:

- Poor lighting
- Gangs
- The area is generally not safe
- Youth annoyance

“The survey identified that drug/alcohol use; drug dealing; road safety issues and youth annoyance are clearly the most important crime and safety issues in Cornelly.”

Speeding, police presence, street lighting and youth annoyance are high priorities for improving community safety in the area, as expressed by community members.

Many of the interviews relate that young people are a problem on the estate due to lack of provision of sports and leisure activities and drunken anti-social behaviour. However, there is a hope that this will change with the new youth facility (the Yellow Building). However, while young people are a problem within the community to some extent, this is not expected to be higher than any other area. Importantly, where there are opportunities for young people, some interviewees suggest that children choose to exclude themselves.

Problems caused by young people, particularly related to underage drinking, are identified by the interviews. This often described as general mischief, litter, and verbal abuse. Many Interviewees have experienced ASB within the community such as teenagers purposely kicking balls into gardens and other general nuisance. This nuisance factor is compounded by noise, use of language and a lack of respect, which one interviewee relates to a low level of discipline by their parents. Others, including those that have experienced some ASB in the community, do not think young people are a problem in the community in the whole, and that kids in the community have a bad reputation but talking to them usually helps.

Some interviewees believe that the root causes need to be tackled, including giving young people something to do. Through positive engagement with the community, one interviewee suggests this may give children the tools to encourage respect to provide hope for the future. However, there is a sense that despite opportunities, they are still bored and cause problems. One interview suggests that it may be a small number of young people are a problem in the community and that is what gives Marlas the bad reputation. Therefore, targeted responses may help to reduce the impact of ASB.”

DIY Streets – Bridgend

The DIY Streets Pilot Project in Bridgend has not included the participation of children/young people's views directly in terms of safe places to play. However the new developments of the street, such as designated car parking, utilizing green spaces and traffic control measures will, as a bi-product have a positive impact on children playing there. Residents of the street were reluctant to develop features that would attract young people, for fear of increase in youth annoyance on the street.