



Tools for evaluating local play provision:
A technical guide to Play England local play indicators
October 2009

Play England promotes excellent free play opportunities for all children and young people. Play England provides advice and support to promote good practice, and works to ensure that the importance of play is recognised by policy makers, planners and the public.

Play England aims for all children and young people in England to have regular access and opportunity for free, inclusive, local play provision and play space. Play England is part of NCB, is supported by the Big Lottery Fund, and is the government's national delivery partner, working to implement the national Play Strategy in England.

NCB promotes the voices, interests and well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their lives. As an umbrella body for the children's sector in England and Northern Ireland, NCB provide essential information on policy, research and best practice for our members and other partners.

NCB aims to:

- challenge disadvantage in childhood
- work with children and young people to ensure they are involved in all matters that affect their lives
- promote multidisciplinary cross-agency partnerships and good practice
- influence government policy through policy development and advocacy
- undertake high quality research and work from an evidence-based perspective
- disseminate information to all those working with children and young people, and to children and young people themselves.

NCB has adopted and works within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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These are available as separate documents from the Play England website

Appendix 1: Household questionnaire survey

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Acknowledgements

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Quality Assessment Tool

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Children and young people satisfaction questionnaire

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Foreword by Howard Simmons

‘Rigorous and regular self-assessment is a feature of effective organisations and partnerships. Good organisations and partnerships use it as part of their performance management to identify how well they know their communities, if outcomes are being improved, how effectively resources are used, and what needs to be done to sustain and further improve good performance. We will use the information that partnerships and organisations use to evaluate and manage their own performance wherever possible to help gauge how well performance is being managed in organisations and across areas.’

Comprehensive Area Assessment Framework document (Audit Commission, 2009)

Measuring the nature, value and impact of local services and provision is becoming increasingly important as providers and funders seek to ensure the best and most effective value for money provision for local people. Play provision is no exception to this. Not only will robust evaluation help local authorities and their partners better understand the needs of the communities they serve, it will also help ensure those needs are met, and that resources are directed to children and young people most in need of improved play opportunities and experiences.

Play England’s local play indicators have been developed as tools for local evaluation and provide information about the extent to which children and young people play outside in their local neighbourhoods (participation), the type and quality of playable spaces available to them (access and quality) and what they think about these spaces as places for play (satisfaction).

The new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) examines how well councils are working together with other public bodies to meet the needs of the people they serve. It draws on the detailed work of different inspectorates, including Ofsted for Children’s Services; alongside the views of local residents, people who use local services and other stakeholders; the National Indicator Set (NIS) and the information being used to manage public services locally. The local play indicators are designed to provide local authorities and partnerships with this locally collected performance management information. This can also be used as an evidence base to underpin the achievement of many indicators in the NIS, including NI 199 (Children’s satisfaction with parks and play areas).¹ The locally assessed satisfaction indicator will be useful for local authorities and partnerships in looking in detail at children and young people’s views of their local playable spaces, complementing and driving up performance under NI 199.

Where there are two tier authorities, with county and district councils, many services that have a substantial impact on quality of life and outcomes for children and young people are provided at district level. These include strategic housing issues, crime and disorder reduction, planning, managing the quality and improvement of the local environment and provision of play, leisure and recreation facilities. Local play indicators are therefore as important to district councils and they are to top tier authorities in helping to self assess the outcomes and deliver on locally determined priorities such as play provision.

Howard Simmons Audit Commission
Comprehensive Area Assessment lead, London Region

¹ Play England (2009) *How children’s play contributes to the National Indicator Set*. London: NCB/Play England. Available online at: www.playengland.org.uk/resources/play-national-indicator-set.pdf

Section 1: Background and introduction

1.1 Background to the Play England local play indicators

The Play England local play indicators have been developed to support both top-tier and second tier local authorities in assessing and managing their own performance in providing play opportunities to local children. In addition they can contribute evidence to underpin a number of indicators in the National Indicator Set including those relating to: stronger, safer communities; the outcomes for children and young people of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being; tackling exclusion and promoting equality; and environmental sustainability. Local authorities might therefore choose to use the local play indicators as part their evidence base for Comprehensive Area Assessment.

In April 2009 the government introduced National Indicator 199 (NI199) into the National Indicator Set. NI199 collects information about the extent to which children and young people are satisfied with the parks and play areas in their local area. This information is collected through the annual TellUs survey and is available to top tier local authorities through the annual report of the survey. Top tier authorities will be inspected against this indicator as part of their Comprehensive Area Assessment and will be able to judge trends in their own performance over time and compare their results with those of other local authorities. This process is separate from the local play indicator data collection process and will be undertaken centrally.

All Children's Trusts should be seeking to review local play spaces, as outlined in the statutory guidance to Children's Trusts² and the forthcoming guidance document *Embedding the Play Strategy*³ published by Play England for consultation in autumn 2009.

The local play indicators offer a set of tools to measure the performance of local authorities in providing appropriate facilities and spaces for play and informal recreation. The local play indicators focus on:

- children and young people's **use** of spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation
- children and young people's **access** to spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation
- children and young people's **experience** of spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation
- the **quality** of local spaces and facilities available for play and informal recreation.

² DCSF (2008) *Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

³ Play England (2009) *Embedding the Play Strategy*. London: NCB/Play England.
www.playengland.org.uk/playstrategy

This technical guidance describes the local play indicators and the recommended methods of data collection and analysis. A detailed report on the development and piloting of the local play indicators can be found on the Play England website.

Play England believes that the primary aim of local authority investment in and support for local spaces and facilities for children and young people's play and informal recreation should be to increase the numbers and frequency of children and young people – from all social groups – playing freely in their local neighbourhood or in staffed play facilities. Evidence shows that this is good for children and young people, good for families and good for supporting inclusive communities.

The local play indicators seek to measure the extent to which, wherever they live or spend the majority of their free time, children and young people have access to spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation which:

- pass the '**three frees**' test, i.e. **free** of charge, where they are **free** to come and go and **free** to choose what they do while there
- are accessible, welcoming and engaging for all, including those who are disabled or have specific needs and wishes
- allow for the differing needs of people of different ages and with different play interests.

Local authorities have a duty, under the Children Act 2004, to work across their service areas and with other organisations to promote the well-being of all children and young people. This duty includes promoting children and young people's well-being and recent statutory guidance to Children's Trusts⁴ highlights the importance of working closely with other organisations including those involved in the provision of play and recreational opportunities.

Embedding the Play Strategy offers detailed guidance to local authorities on the implementation of the statutory guidance.

Although much local provision for children and young people's free-time activity is made by the community and voluntary sector, local authorities can only be sure local children are well provided for if they adopt a strategic approach to the development, delivery and support of appropriate and quality spaces and facilities.

Local authority success in promoting opportunities for children and young people's play and informal recreation should therefore include indicators for the full range of provision it supports, including that from the community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors, not merely that provided directly by the local authority.

Play England is also working with government to develop a national map of play provision, guidance to local authority planning departments on the

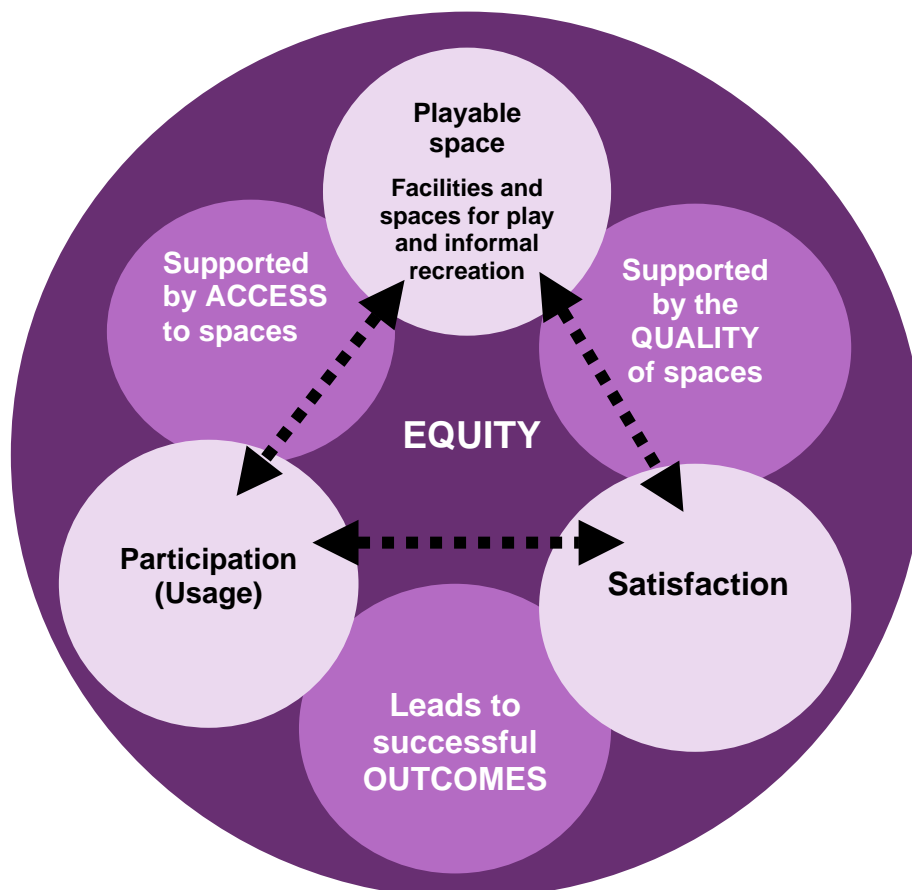
⁴ DCSF (2008) *Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

consideration of playable space in local open space auditing and planning⁵ and training for local authority officers, in planning and other relevant departments, to increase their knowledge and understanding of children's play and their role in the provision of more and better playable spaces.⁶ This work links with local evaluation using the local play indicators, in particular through mapping for the access indicator and quality assessments for the quality indicator.

1.1.1 The play offer

The local play indicators have been developed around the model of the **play offer** described in Diagram 1 below. This starts with the concept of all children and young people having **access** to a variety of facilities and spaces for play and informal recreation in their neighbourhood. There is evidence to suggest that where those opportunities exist then all children are more likely to play out i.e. **participate**. They are most likely to do this if they are **satisfied** with the experience and will benefit most if the facilities and spaces are of high **quality**. The model emphasises the importance of considering how the variety of facilities and spaces is accessible to specific social groups, and of including equity measures within the performance indicators.

Diagram 1: The 'play offer'



⁵ Play England (2009) *Better Places to Play through Planning*. London: NCB/Play England (pending publication).

⁶ The Play Shaper programme is an integrated training package to be offered to all top tier local authorities in the next two years (2009 – 2010). www.playshaper.org.uk

1.2 The technical guide

This guidance has been prepared to provide local authorities with a clear understanding of the performance indicators for play. It provides clear descriptions and definitions of the indicators, data sources and methods for collecting and analysing the data. In detail the guidance:

- explains the purpose of the performance indicators and the performance information system
- ensures that the definitions are precise but practicable
- explains what should be measured
- explains how the data will be checked and audited
- explains how the data should be collected
- provides data collection forms to ensure that it is possible to match data that comes from different sources
- explains the technical properties of each indicator, example, with respect to sampling scheme, response rate in surveys, and precision
- provides the protocols on how the data will be checked and audited
- explains how the data will be analysed, and whether there will be any adjustment for context
- indicates how the results will be presented, including the protocols whereby institutions or individuals may be named publicly
- demonstrates how uncertainty will be conveyed to safeguard against over-interpretation and misinterpretation.

The indicators and the process of collecting the necessary data have been piloted by six local authorities. These were:

Chelmsford District Council A largely rural area in west Essex based on the county town of Chelmsford but also covering a number of smaller villages. Chelmsford is the only district to have participated and has provided valuable pointers on the capacity of districts to deliver these indicators.

Kirklees Council A metropolitan council in West Yorkshire centred on the large town of Huddersfield and also covering a range of smaller towns and villages. Kirklees has a large range of play provision.

Manchester City Council An entirely urban metropolitan council covering a large and diverse community which includes a major city centre and inner city undergoing significant regeneration, and suburban areas.

Bolton Metropolitan Council Covering the large urban area of Bolton and its immediate surroundings, northwest of Manchester.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea A West London borough that has some affluent districts alongside wards that are included in the 10 per cent most deprived in England (Indices of Deprivation, 2007).

Bristol City Council. A large unitary authority in the west of England that covers a primarily urban area with a diverse population base.

We are very grateful to the many staff involved at each of these authorities for their constructive and enthusiastic approach to piloting the indicators and to their contribution to refining this guidance.

1.3 The local play indicators

The performance indicators for play provision are defined in Table 1.

Table 1: Local performance indicators

Indicator 1	Participation	Method of generation
Description	The percentage of all children and young people aged from birth to 16 years (from all social and ethnic groups, including those who are disabled), who play out for at least four hours each week.	Household survey
Indicator 2	Access to a variety of facilities and spaces	Method of generation
Description	The percentage of children and young people aged from birth to 16 years that have access to at least three different types of space or facility (doorstep, local and neighbourhood), at least one of which is a dedicated place for play and informal recreation, which are all within easy walking or cycling distance as defined in Table 3.	Open space and play strategy audits GIS mapping
Indicator 3	Quality of facilities and spaces	Method of generation
Description	The proportion of play spaces and facilities with high scores for location, play value and care and maintenance as assessed using the Playable Space Quality Assessment Tool.	Quality Assessment Tool
Indicator 4	Satisfaction	Method of generation
Description	The percentage of all children and young people (from all social and ethnic groups, including those who are disabled), who think that the range and quality of play facilities and spaces they are able to access in their local neighbourhood is good/very good.	Questionnaire survey of children and young people

1.4 Practical steps towards a successful data collection and analysis

From the experience of other schemes, it is important that you try to ensure that the following requirements are fulfilled.

Clear leadership is essential for good project management. In particular it is important that you try to avoid split responsibilities. You will need a project manager with the authority to drive it through. It is also important for you to have a rapid replacement policy, should the local project manager become ill or leave.

It is important to establish clear and unambiguous communications procedures with internal teams, particularly regarding the protocols for data collection.

It is essential for you to set a clear timetable for your responsibilities in the procedures for data collection, data analysis and reporting of the results. This should obviously be compatible with the timetable for data collection. Build in some slippage time because it is inevitable that there will be delays in obtaining or analysing some of the data.

Finally, the project manager needs to be clear on a number of things:

- First, on the **definitions** of what you are measuring and reporting on. The next section will help you on this. Any ambiguities remaining in these definitions should be resolved by discussion with the consultants, **not** by second-guessing what should be the right way or by dialogue with other local authorities. It is vital that local authorities measure and report the same data, for the reliability of performance measurement.
- Second, on the **procedures** for obtaining the data needed to measure the four performance indicators. You need to either implement these procedures or monitor them being conducted by other organisations.
- Third, on the **desired outputs** of the pilot, ie the measures of the four performance indicators. These measures have to be consistently presented by all local authorities.

1.5 Definitions

1.5.1 Designated and non-designated play places

Places where children play that may or may not be specifically designed for play or informal recreation (designated or non-designated) and may or may not be supervised by staff trained in playwork or other skills.

The play place grid (Table 2) give examples of the types of facility and space which offer children and young people the best opportunities for play and informal recreation and which should form the basis of provision where children should be able to play freely and free of charge in their own neighbourhoods.

Table 2: The play place grid

	Supervised and semi-supervised	No formal supervision
Designated places for play and informal recreation	Adventure playgrounds Open access play centres Play ranger and outreach play projects Mobile play facilities School playgrounds (out of school hours)	Playgrounds/play areas, Bike, skate and skateboard facilities Ball courts Multi-use games areas, Hangout/youth shelters
Non-designated places for play and informal recreation	Parks with rangers and gardeners Streets with wardens	Residential streets Neighbourhood open spaces Parks and green spaces Beaches, rivers and lakes Woodlands and natural open spaces Routes to school and play areas Playing fields and recreation grounds Public squares and plazas Public rights of way

1.5.2 Supervised and semi-supervised play provision

Supervised and semi-supervised play provision will need to pass the ‘**three frees**’ test⁷, that they are:

- **free** of charge
- where children are **free** to come and go
- where children are **free** to choose what they do whilst there.

This may be difficult to assess in some circumstances, particularly where this involves the use of school buildings. Where children have to register when they attend a supervised or semi-supervised open access play facility, this is

⁷ Developed by Perry Else, Sheffield Hallam University 2005.

entirely acceptable. However, if children have to be collected by parents or a charge is made then this type of provision cannot be considered within the accessibility indicator because the children are not engaged in 'free play'.

Unequipped space – while there is no equipment or specific design for play, the area is suitable and used for play. It may only be practicable to audit such spaces if undertaken as part of a wider open space audit.

Toddler/doorstep – small space near housing specifically designed for play; may or may not have some small items of equipment or other features for toddlers and seating for adults.

Small play area – primarily aimed at under-8s with, offering a variety of play experiences and/or seating. Near to housing.

Large play area – aimed at 5- to 11-year-old children with a larger range of features offering a wide range of play experiences, and space/design for ball games, wheeled sports. Offers seating and is near to housing.

Neighbourhood play area – providing for all children including teenagers. Facilities as for large play area but with additional features offering challenge to older children; youth shelter type provision; and floodlit MUGA (multi-use game area) and/or wheeled sports facilities.

Youth facilities – these are spaces aimed primarily at older children and teenagers (12+). They will range from youth shelters/meeting areas within local public open space to floodlit MUGAs, skateboard and BMX parks.

Green spaces – parks, playing fields and other green spaces open to the public and available for play.

Destination playgrounds – these are play spaces within key sites that are aimed at attracting family and similar groups for a longer visit. They will tend to be larger than neighbourhood sites, have car parking facilities, a greater variety of fixed equipment, and access to facilities such as cafes and public toilets.

Other play spaces – outdoor play facilities and places where children can play that are not covered by the above, including home zones.

1.6 Planning and resources

Careful planning will help ensure more systematic and robust data collection. Preferably before data collection gets fully under way, or at least in its early stages, the following procedures require discussion and planning.

1.6.1 Internal marketing

Educating staff and other key internal stakeholders – success in performance monitoring is often a matter of attitude: seeing it as an opportunity and something which is centrally important for the future of the service, rather than a threat and something which is marginal to the main functions of the service.

Local monitoring and evaluation offers the opportunity for the service to make significant improvements in its performance management.

1.6.2 Staffing and leadership

Identification of a named project manager to lead the process will help ensure consistency. It will also help to consider a replacement/succession policy for illness or staff turnover in this key role.

Allocation of roles and responsibilities, clarifying who will be responsible for what and who they are responsible to, is also important. The key responsibilities are:

- **data collection:** household survey; school survey; open space and play strategy audits; GIS data entry; quality assessment for play facilities and spaces
- **data analysis:** household survey; school survey; GIS mapping; quality assessment aggregation.

Certain skills are important for the success of the data collection and analysis. With this in mind, the local project manager needs to plan who is going to deal with key tasks – survey design, implementation and analysis; GIS data entry and analysis; and quality assessment. In particular, an early decision will be whether to use internal authority staff or external staff. In making this decision it is very important to be realistic about the capacity of internal staff to take on the additional responsibilities of the project.

Internal options include reciprocal arrangements with other departments regarding, for example, survey implementation or quality assessment. Internal teams can be built using different parts of the local authority and beyond, including the departments or sections responsible for play (education, leisure, and/or parks); PPG17 planning, including GIS data; research and information; and performance management. Appropriate voluntary sector agencies, such as play associations, may also have a useful role. Whatever team is constructed, it is important for each member to have a shared sense of involvement and for the team to have the appropriate skill mix: use initial meetings with the project consultants to advise on this.

External options include contracting out any or all of the data collection and analysis to external organisations, or using existing partnerships with organisations (for example, a local university) to help the data collection.

1.6.3 Other resource inputs

To help in ensuring that local evaluation and performance monitoring is embedded into service management and delivery, rather than being an added 'extra', it is important to plan, as far as possible, to use existing processes and resources. It is also important to use the experience of and information from all relevant staff and departments.

Relevant information is already collected in many authorities and if it is not the audit of playable space, required for monitoring local play provision and data collection for the local play indicators, will be a useful catalyst for progressing this work. Useful data for auditing playable spaces should be available in:

- PPG17 open space and play strategy audit (see *Companion Guide to PPG17 and Green Space Strategies: a good practice guide and Better Places to Play through Planning*⁸)
- playing pitch assessment
- play strategy audit (see *Embedding the Play Strategy*⁹).

These information sources support data collection for the access indicator primarily but they also provide specific 'facilities and spaces' prompts for the household and school surveys which deliver the participation and satisfaction indicators. They can also provide a task sheet for the quality assessments required for the quality indicator.

If the authority already conducts regular surveys (e.g. school surveys), there is a potential for adding relevant questions to them to satisfy the survey needs of the pilot. The added play-relevant questions would be on participation (total weekly hours, frequency and duration, activity, location) and satisfaction (with the range and quality of play facilities).

It is also necessary to plan for sufficient finance to be able to collect, analyse and interpret the monitoring information so it is important to be realistic about the potential costs to be able to undertake the exercise. Cost will depend to a large extent on the types of information already being collected by the local authority.

1.7 Checking and sorting data

The local project manager, or a delegated person, needs to check that the data being used for the performance indicators are correct and that the results look sensible. To facilitate aggregation and comparison of the data, required all data should be stored electronically.

Checking that the results look sensible requires a knowledge of the service being monitored and therefore probably needs to be conducted by a relatively senior manager. It comprises examination of the outcomes and if any findings look suspiciously high or low, it will be necessary to check that the data entry and analysis have been conducted properly. At this stage it is not possible to specify parameters for what is 'too high' or 'too low' for each indicator, which is why this is a matter of judgement by a manager who is familiar with the service.

⁸ See footnote 5

⁹ See footnote 3

Section 2: Children’s participation in play: Indicator 1

Indicator 1	Participation	Method of generation
Description	The percentage of all children and young people aged from birth to 16 years (from all social and ethnic groups, including those who are disabled), who play out for at least four hours each week.	Household survey

2.1 Household questionnaire survey

To obtain data for **indicator 1: Participation**, a questionnaire survey needs to be undertaken to find out how much time children are spending ‘playing out’.

To ensure data compatibility and reliability, follow the guidance closely and comply with the specific survey requirements. If you are unsure about your capacity to do this, help may be obtainable from the local authority monitoring department.

The survey is of private households and the data will be obtained principally from households with children.

The two questions you need to ask are provided in **Appendix 1**.

These questions are designed to be completed by adults. They are inappropriate for children. The questions have been developed with a view to their being included in a larger household survey. Many local authorities distribute general household surveys from time to time, to seek the views of local people on important local issues and council services. Addresses are sampled to ensure that there is a representative cross section of the community. Essentially this survey represents a snapshot of public opinion at a given time and is used to inform council decision-making processes.

The household survey is a postal survey that will entail posting questionnaires to selected households within your local authority area. Guidance on the distribution and collection of data is given in below.

The two questions are limited to a question about the child or children, and a question about the amount of time the child or children have spent playing or hanging out. It asks for demographic data about the children, rather than the respondent themselves. Demographic data about the adult completing the questionnaire would normally be included elsewhere in a general household survey.

To keep the question simple and clear (and hence easy to answer to improve your response rate), we have simplified some of the demographic data, particularly about ethnicity. We believe the question, as it stands, is adequate for the level of analysis you are likely to undertake. It is however possible that you have corporate requirements about ethnicity categories which are not met

in this simplified question. You may therefore wish to seek the guidance of corporate consultation staff about using this simplified ethnicity breakdown, bearing in mind that the household survey of which this forms a part, will include a more detailed ethnicity question about the adult completing the form.

If you decide to commission the survey externally, details of market research contractors can be obtained from the Market Research Society. Ensure that your supplier has a copy of this document.

2.2 Household survey – distribution and data collection

The survey must be conducted by post, unless there are overriding considerations for the survey to employ a different method. It can be undertaken either

- as part of a wider survey asking other questions about sport and play, or
- as part of a household survey being run or commissioned by your authority.

Note: it is not recommended that you should only ask these questions! This is an opportunity to find out more about your local community and its needs, and if you would like advice or suggestions on other questions that may be appropriate to ask in your survey, look at the Place Survey Question Bank, available online at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/placesurveymanual0809

or ask your consultation officer.

2.2.1 Timing

The survey should start before mid-term, to avoid the survey reaching too far into dark evenings and inclement weather. Be careful that you allow sufficient preparation time to achieve this timing; don't underestimate the work involved.

2.2.2 Sample

It is very important that every household in the authority area has an equal probability of being selected for survey. The best way of achieving this is to select your sample from the *Postal Address File* (PAF), which lists all residential properties in your area (although without the names of the occupiers). If you prefer and are confident about the quality and completeness of the data, you may use your authority's *Local Land and Property Gazetteer*. You should **NOT** use the electoral register, as many people choose either to keep their details confidential (which means you won't be able to access them) or simply opt not to register to vote. Also, legislation prohibits the use of the council tax register for this purpose.

A PAF can be obtained for your authority area from a commercial supplier. If you don't know how to get one, ask the consultants. However, it is perfectly possible that you already have one (for instance in your chief executive's department) and provided it is less than two years old you may use an existing PAF.

The PAF will probably be supplied in a particular order, so before you use it you will need to randomise it (this can be done in Excel); the first 5,000 addresses in the list can then be extracted to form your base sample. Set up a spreadsheet with the addresses listed, and assign each address a unique reference number.

The questionnaire should be printed with a unique sequential reference number on it. This number should correspond to the entry in your PAF sample, so that each address in the sample has its own reference number. This means you will be able to tell which addresses have replied and which haven't.

The requirement is that you secure 1,100 responses from the mailing. For this study, that means we need information about 1,100 children.

If you are doing a household survey, a sample of 5,000 should be more than adequate to achieve 1,100 responses, but not all of these will have children about whom they can answer. Given that around 29 per cent of households have children, and an average of 1.8 children in each of these households, we would predict that a household survey would generate information about 522 children for every 1,000 forms returned, though this depends on getting a proportionate response from each age group in the population. To be sure of getting 1,100 children, we suggest you need to secure a total of 2,200 responses as a minimum.

You may send out a smaller quantity if you choose, but you must achieve the required number of responses or your result will lack the necessary statistical validity.

If you are conducting your own survey, the questionnaire should be mailed:

- with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the survey (a sample letter is provided)
- in a white A4 envelope with the council's name and logo on it (this helps to distinguish it from junk mail)
- with a reply paid envelope enclosed (this has a massive impact on response and is much better than supplying a freepost address)
- using second class post.

2.2.3 Logging responses

As replies come in, log them on your PAF sample spreadsheet. Two weeks after the first mailing, you should carry out a second mailing to those people who have not yet responded. This should include:

- a reminder letter (a sample letter is provided)
- a further copy of the questionnaire
- in a white A4 envelope with the council's name and logo on it
- with a reply paid envelope enclosed

- using second class post.

If after a further two weeks you still do not have the required response, please ask the consultants for advice. We may suggest a further reminder, or an additional sample.

2.3 Checking and storing the data

The local project manager, or a delegated person, needs to check that the data being used for the performance indicators are correct and that the results look sensible.

Checking the accuracy of the data involves ensuring that:

- the sampling for the household is random and representative of the
- populations concerned, i.e. everyone in the relevant populations (local authority or schools) has an equal chance of being selected for the survey)
- the responses to the survey questions appear valid, i.e. they have been completed honestly and seriously by the right persons
- the data entry for the surveys contains no errors that affect the validity of the survey results.

For survey data, a check on 1 in 10 respondents would suffice. Both household and school surveys have standard scripts for data entry and analysis. data entry will be by the local authority to a data file.

To facilitate aggregation and comparison of the data, it is required that all data is stored electronically.

Checking that the results look sensible requires a knowledge of the service being monitored and therefore probably needs to be conducted by a relatively senior manager. It comprises examination of the outcomes and if any look suspiciously high or low, to check that the data entry and analysis have been conducted properly. At this stage it is not possible to specify parameters for what is 'too high' or 'too low' for each indicator, which is why this is a matter of judgement by a manager who is familiar with the service.

2.4 Data analysis and reporting

For the participation indicator, the process is simply to use the household survey data to generate the required percentage. Be aware that a household survey should generate data for the full age range required – birth to 16 years.

The software to do the required analysis can be a spreadsheet, a database, or a survey package such as SNAP or SPSS. The procedure required is to identify the percentage of respondents which have the necessary total duration of play, i.e. four hours or more per week. This will require computation of the total hours of play a week for each respondent, using the response for average frequency of play occasions in a week, multiplied by the

average duration of each play occasion for each respondent. This will then enable selection of those respondents with four hours or more a week, to be expressed as a percentage of the total valid responses. Responses which are 'N.A.' or 'don't know' are invalid for the calculation of the percentage participating.

To compile the total hours of play a week requires summation of the positive responses to all the separate 'playing outside' prompts. The average hours per week to use are the mid-points of the ranges identified in the survey, eg 2.5 hours for the range 2–3 hours. For the highest range, over 4 hours a week, please use 4.5 hours. In the calculation of the percentage participating, the data is not to be weighted by any factors.

NB socio-economic categories, ethnic groups, disabled, age and gender are disaggregations which are not required for the headline participation indicator, but they would be required for more detailed analysis across a number of services, or more specific participation indicators for specific services, if required. Therefore it is highly desirable that consistent questions are asked in the surveys on these respondent profiles.

Section 3: Access to playable space: Indicator 2

Indicator 2	Access to a variety of facilities and spaces	Method of generation
Description	The percentage of children and young people aged from birth to 16 years that have access to at least three different types of space or facility (doorstep, local and neighbourhood), at least one of which is a dedicated place for play and informal recreation, which are all within easy walking or cycling distance as defined in Table 3.	Open space and play strategy audits GIS mapping

3.1 Audit and site survey

The purpose of **indicator 2: Accessibility**, is to identify the numbers of children and young people who have access to three or more different kinds of play space. This is done primarily within a Geographic Information System (GIS). Local authorities should be aware of the difference between audits and site surveys (see below).

3.1.1 Audit

The main purpose of the audit is to obtain data for **indicator 2: Accessibility**.

The audit will primarily be concerned with collating existing data held by individual local authority departments. Information is required about all the spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation within the local authority area. This information may well be available from the open space sport and recreation needs assessment required by Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) and undertaken by the planning department for the Local Development Framework. Additional information could also be available from the audit undertaken for the preparation of the local play strategy.¹⁰

The specific spaces to be covered by the audit, in order of size, are:

Type A: ‘Door-step’ spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation

A small space, within sight of home, where children, especially young children can play within view of known adults.

For example, this could be a grassed area, open space, residential street in a home zone or small designed play area, which is large enough to enable young children to play within sight of known adults. The space could incorporate some interesting and attractive landscape features and/or a small

¹⁰ The audit is recommended in *Embedding the Play Strategy* (Play England, 2009).

number of items of play equipment and create an environment which will stimulate young children's play, providing opportunities for a variety of play experiences, bearing in mind that older children and young people may also use the space from time to time. A doorstep space would be sufficiently close to home for the children who use it to feel safe and be able to interact with individuals and groups of other children. It should also be capable of catering for the needs of children with a range of impairments. Seating may be available for carers to be able to sit, watch and meet other people.

Type B: 'Local' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation

A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk to with ease.

For example, this could be a grassed area, small park, local open space, designed space for play or informal recreation or school playground open out of school hours, which is attractive to children as they begin to move around their neighbourhoods without being accompanied by adults. These spaces and facilities provide varied and interesting physical environments including, for example, natural features, sand and water, and incorporate landscape features with varying levels and contours, which test children's capabilities. There might also be features designed for specific activities such as ball games, wheeled sports or meeting places and/or several of items of play equipment offering a variety of play experiences. Play facilities might also include local staffed play provision such as play centres, play-schemes, play ranger projects and adventure play grounds. These spaces and facilities should also be capable of catering for the needs of children with a range of impairments. The children who use these spaces and facilities should feel safe and be able to interact with individuals and groups of other children of different ages.

Type C: 'Neighbourhood' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation

A larger space or facility for informal recreation which children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently, can get to safely and spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers and have a wider range of play experiences.

For example, this might be a park, playing field, recreation ground or natural open space such as woodland, moorland or a beach, accessible and attractive to older children and young people. The space or facility provides for a variety of age appropriate play and informal recreational experiences. It might provide a varied and interesting physical environment incorporating some interesting and attractive landscape features with varying levels and contours. There are likely to be more challenging items of equipment and features that meet the needs of older children and young people. Larger facilities specifically designed for informal recreation could be present, such as a ball court, multi-use games area or skateboard area, which can provide the opportunity for a variety of experiences to young people with differing skills levels. These spaces and facilities should also be capable of catering for

the needs of children and young people with a range of impairments. There is likely to be sufficient space to play large group ball games and seating and shelter to enable young people to socialise with their friends.

3.2 Undertaking the audit

The focus of the audit will be on designated play spaces, and recreational and informal open space that has both the capacity and the capability to be used by children and young people for play and which has public access. This will involve carrying out a survey using a standard survey form to record the location, type of use and quality of each area.

The aims of the audit will be to:

- provide information that will provide the baseline data for the access indicator
- assess the quality of the open space as a resource that provides opportunities for children's play (see section 4).

The audit process is normally undertaken in two stages:

Stage 1 – desk-based research.

Stage 2 – site visits.

3.2.1 Stage 1 – desk-based research

The first step is to review all existing databases to identify the precise location of all sites to be audited. This will ideally mean a grid reference or at the very least a full address and postcode for every site. Sufficient detail also needs to be gathered to classify each potential playable space.

Information sources

Before embarking on an audit, existing information on open spaces and play spaces within the local authority should be compiled from a variety of sources, including:

- open space audit undertaken for PPG 17
- audit of children's play facilities undertaken for the play strategy
- aerial photographs
- housing associations
- voluntary organisations such as local recreational trusts
- recreation services/grounds maintenance records on parks and play areas
- playing pitch assessments
- town/parish council consultations.

3.2.2 Categorising open space

A system for categorising open space is shown in Table 2 (page 11). A detailed description of the individual categories is also provided.

Auditing smaller spaces

A minimum area to be recorded will need to be established. As a guideline, the area of an under-7s mini football pitch is approximately 1,250m² (0.125ha). However, to survey all sites above this threshold size may prove to be too onerous, depending on the characteristics of the local authority area.

Audits of amenity green space¹¹ undertaken as part of an assessment for PPG 17 may well have set a size threshold of 0.2 hectares. This is equivalent to a mini-soccer (U9–U10) football pitch. An area of this size is relatively large when considering the size of areas that can accommodate children's play. It may therefore be appropriate to consider reducing the size threshold to 0.1 hectares, which is an area approximately equivalent to two tennis courts.

It is likely that most of the information relating to smaller spaces will already be held within the local authority. The department that is most likely to hold data about smaller spaces in housing areas is the grounds maintenance department. This could be located in Parks, Technical Services or Streetscene. Records held by this department could be in the form of paper maps or electronic data from commonly available software packages and GIS.

It may be possible to reduce the need to audit all these smaller spaces by confining the search to those areas that currently have access to both a Type B and Type C space. Smaller spaces will typically be Type A spaces. If an audit of these spaces is undertaken it could be limited to those areas that already have access to Types B and C spaces to determine whether these areas have access to all three different types of space.

It will be necessary to review these additional spaces to determine whether they are suitable for children's play. In the first place this should be a desk exercise to assess the site's location. However, this may not be apparent from an inspection of the maps and a site survey may be required.

It will be necessary to bring this information together on to a common base to establish a definitive list of spaces prior to undertaking on-site assessments

Audit of supervised play facilities

Examples of types of supervised play facility that you will need to include in the audit include spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation which pass the 'three frees' test¹² (where the facility is free of charge, where children are free to come and go, and free to choose what they do whilst there). These may include adventure playgrounds, open access play centres, open access

¹¹ The typology of open spaces set out in PPG 17 states: 'Amenity greenspace (most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas) – including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens.'

¹² Developed by Perry Else, Sheffield Hallam University 2005.

playschemes, and specialist provision for disabled children or those with other specific needs.

You should not include any facilities that do not meet the 'three frees' test. Examples of facilities that do not meet this requirement might include after-school clubs where a fee payable is payable, childcare facilities, and free access junior youth clubs at which children pay a subscription.

Again this information will need to be recorded on a database or spreadsheet and mapped on a Geographical Information System (GIS).

Destination play spaces

In many areas there are designated play spaces designed to attract people from long distances who will come, often as a family or group, and spend time with children playing in the sort of facilities they might not otherwise have access to. If these destination play areas are in residential areas, providing free, local play opportunities to the children and young people living nearby, they can be mapped according to the functions described above. If they are only available to children who travel long distances with adults they should not be mapped as part of local provision.

3.2.3 Stage 2 – site visits

In addition to the desk research it may be necessary to visit some of the sites identified in Stage 1. It will be necessary to visit all the sites that are to be assessed for the quality indicator (see section 4).

It is worth ensuring that you have some form of identity or a letter of authorisation with you when undertaking any site surveys. Either a member of the public or an official may challenge you about the work you are undertaking. It is sometimes necessary to verify that you have the required authority.

A model pro forma assessment form has been included in appendix 2b. You may wish to modify this to capture any additional information that you feel is necessary or is of value for other purposes.

The main purposes of site visits are to:

- fill gaps in site-specific information not secured through Stage 1
- undertake quality assessments (see section 4).

3.2.4 Data recording and outputs

An audit should produce the following key outputs:

- a map of open space (using GIS) categorised according to the typology
- a quality assessment.

Once collected, data for each site will need to be recorded on a database or spreadsheet and mapped on a GIS (see section 3.5).

Audit attribute data record sheet

The audit attribute data record sheet should include at least the following fields:

- unique site reference number
- site address
- type of space, eg Type A 'doorstep' space (small equipped play area, amenity green space or home zone)
- presence of features or equipment with a primary age range of 0 to 5 years
- presence of features and equipment with a primary age range of 5 to 11 years
- presence of features or equipment with a primary age range for teenagers
- does it have an adventure playground?
- does it have a toilet?
- does it have refreshments?
- is it accessible to disabled children and young people
- is it a playbuilder site?
- is it a play pathfinder site?
- quality assessment scores for location, play value and care and maintenance.
- grid reference.

It should be recorded using a spreadsheet which can be imported and associated with the GIS maps. The use of handheld, mobile units can greatly speed this process up and improve consistency. Ideally, the units should have GPS as this will automatically link the information back to the site, but even standard data loggers will reduce processing time back at the office.

3.3 Geographic Information Systems mapping

3.3.1 What is it and what does it do?

GIS at a very basic level is a computerised form of mapping, utilising a layer principle of maps overlaid with mapped data. For example, a base map of an urban area (layer 1) can be overlaid with a map of recreational spaces (layer 2) and further overlaid with census demographics (layer 3). The GIS not only understands the precise location of each of these layers and their components, but can also analyse the spatial relationships between the components on different layers. For example, utilising two of the layers mentioned above, you can determine the demographic profile of the population that live within a specific distance of a number of play spaces. Furthermore, you can identify areas which are deficient in recreational spaces,

i.e. areas where the residents are more than a specified distance from their nearest play space.

Finally, it should also be understood that digital maps in GIS are not just pictures. Any database information (known as attribute data) associated with the digital maps, e.g. name, condition, type, size, etc is also available for analysis.

3.3.2 What you will need

You will need to have access to:

- GIS
- reasonably experienced personnel to deploy and analyse the data into the GIS
- digitised maps of all play spaces (points or polygons). Polygons will give more accurate results and are essential for all but the smallest of spaces.
- demographics at Census Output Area level – these will need to be mappable i.e. matched / joined to polygons or centroids of Census Output Areas.

3.3.3 General methodology

This part of the guidance looks specifically at the deployment of a methodology which – utilising GIS – will allow the user to:

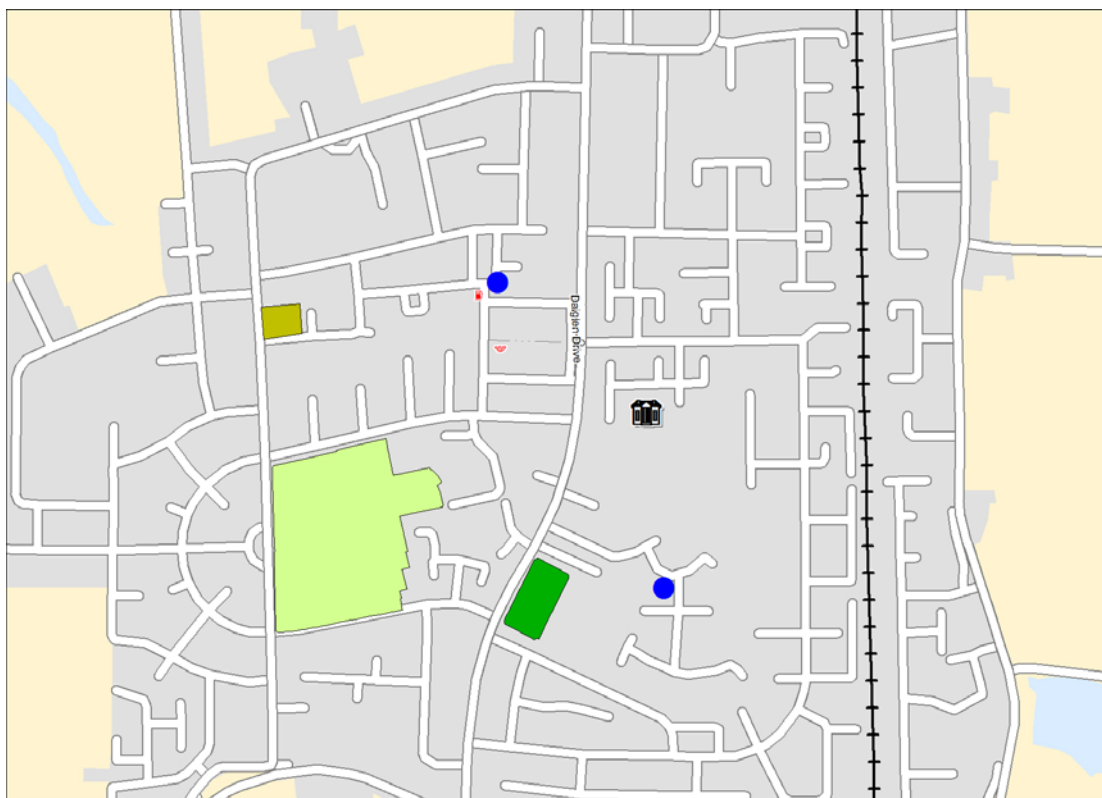
- identify the location of different types of playable space
- create catchment areas (buffers) around each of these playable spaces
- look at the location and distribution of relevant population data
- identify the numbers of children that have access to an appropriate number of *different* types of playable space
- provide basic information on the use of the two primary GIS installations currently in use within most local authorities (MapInfo and ESRI Arcview/ArcInfo).

Note: the following sections are aimed at staff that are comfortable with GIS tasks such as ‘creating buffers’, ‘clipping’ polygons and selecting features based on location. If you are not familiar these types of tasks, then you may need support from someone in your GIS department or training.

3.3.4 Identification of playable spaces.

The first stage in the process is to identify sources within the authority and within other relevant organisations for digital maps of all playable spaces (see Map 1). If GIS maps aren’t available then maps will need to be digitized for the area under consideration. The play spaces will need to be collated and sorted according to the typology set out in Section 3.1.1. In order to do this, the file sets and associated data will need to be imported into your GIS. We strongly recommend that separate layers and tables are kept for each classification. This will allow for easier interrogation of the data later in the process and will also make the creation of catchment areas and buffers more straightforward. GIS works on a system of layers and can display and analyse more than one layer at a time, so this should be very straightforward.

Map 1: Map showing location of different examples of play space



3.3.5 Creation of Catchment Area Buffers.

Buffer creation is again a standard function within all GIS installations. The buffers need to be created in accordance with the recommended distances outlined in Table 3. There are two different approaches that the user might encounter:

- Creating buffers when all spaces are mixed in one layer or table. If the open space data is held in the GIS in one table or layer, and the end user is faced with an assortment of typologies and/or buffer distances then the data must contain a numeric field identifying the buffer distance for each play space. The GIS can then build the buffer based on this value.
- If each table contains spaces requiring the same buffer distance then the field mentioned above need not be present. In this scenario the end user will create the buffers around each space by entering the required distance. The different types of playable space therefore have different buffer specifications. The large, well-equipped open space with a wide range of facilities draws visitors from a wider area than the very small open space without equipment of any kind. It should be noted, however, that these buffers may well overlap each other, and that they will need close examination so that they can be trimmed and adjusted to take account of barriers to movement (the large catchment area reflects these points and has also been trimmed where it meets the railway line, which is a barrier to movement). (See map 2.)

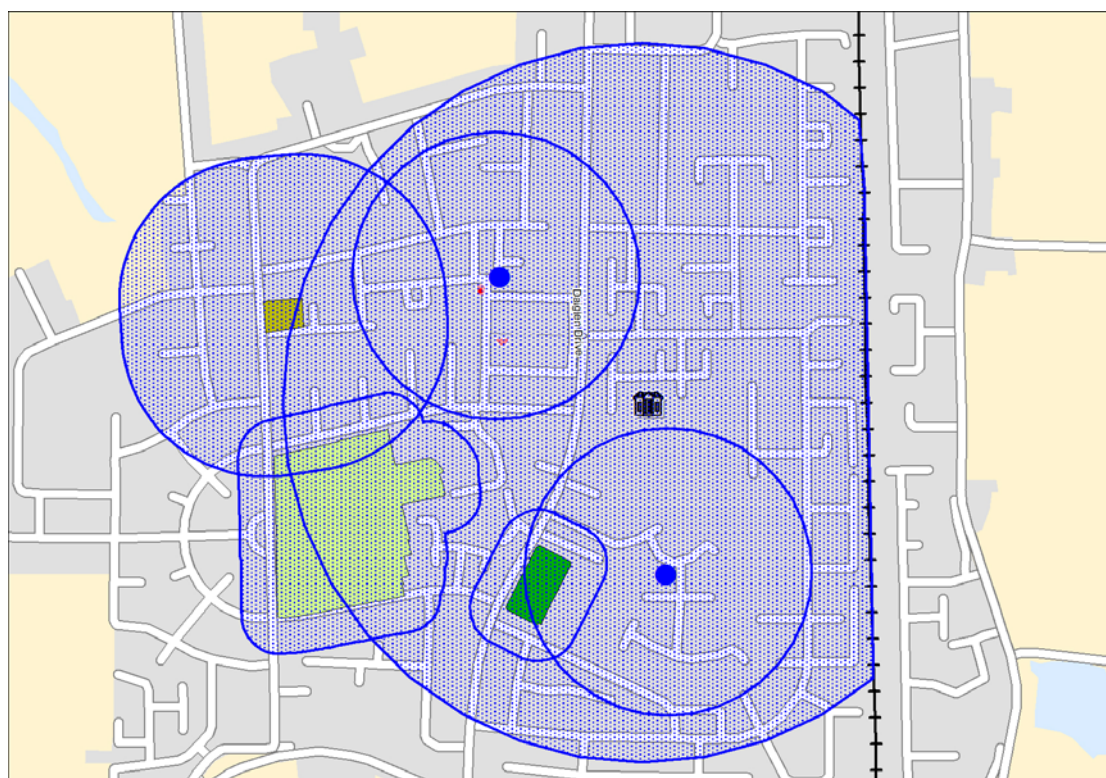
Catchments trimmed for barriers to movement can be produced without routing software. Any GIS system can create a buffer around a polygon (initial catchment) that can be manually trimmed to take account of barriers to movement. This may be somewhat time consuming but is not a massive task.

Table 3: Distance thresholds for catchment areas

Type of space	Distance criteria	
	Walking distance (m)	Straight line distance (m)
Type A: 'Doorstep' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation	100	60
Type B: 'Local' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation	400	240
Type C: 'Neighbourhood' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation	1000	600

Map 2 shows the buffers around each type of space in accordance with the distances shown in Table 3.

Map 2: Catchment areas generated around play spaces



3.3.6 What to do when two playable spaces overlap

When calculating and generating buffers or catchments around play sites a problem may occur if one site (eg a designated play space) is located within another site (eg a park). In this instance a buffer must be generated *around each of the sites*. Therefore, because there are in effect two sites, any household or area falling within both catchments is classed as having access to two play spaces (plus any others it may have access to). Furthermore, if the buffer generated around the designated play space does not extend beyond the boundary of the park, then it must be generated from the perimeter of the park. Once again, any household falling within this buffer and the buffer of the park is classified as having access to two types of playable space (plus any others it has access to).

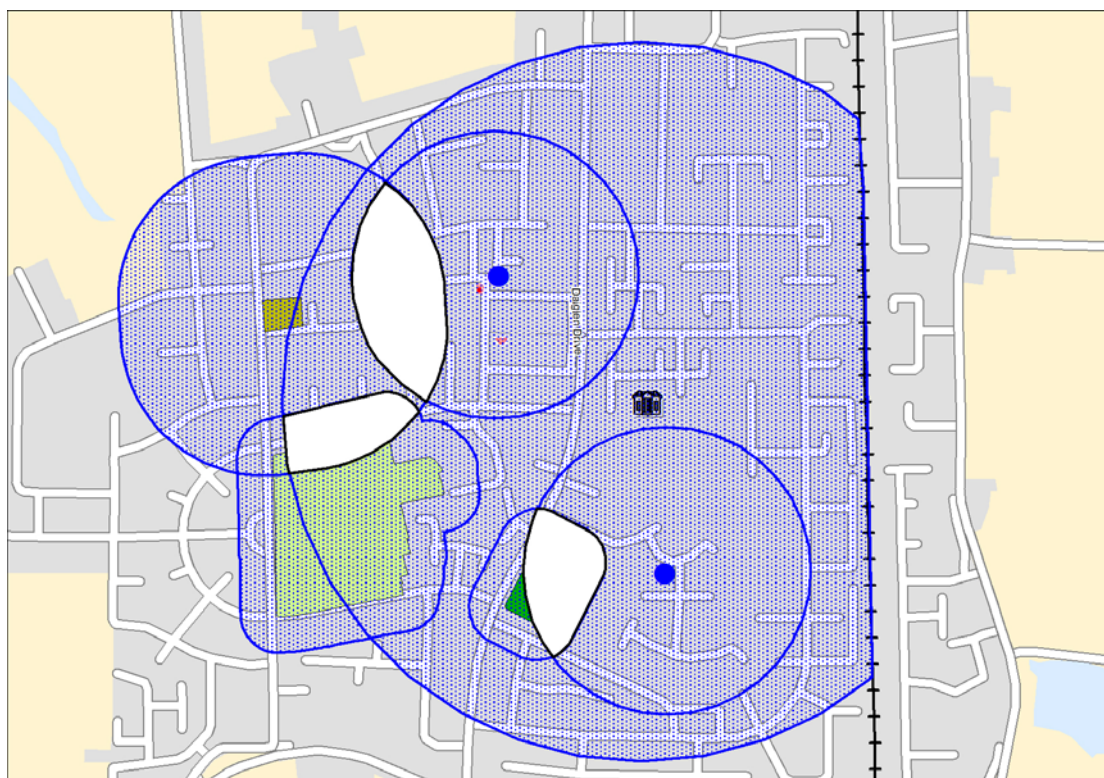
3.3.7 Accessing and analysing population data.

Once the buffers have been created the user will need to calculate population statistics to identify the numbers of children or young people who have access to three or more different types of playable space. Population data is available from a number of sources and whilst greater accuracy may be obtained by using (for example) school roll or PCT data, we recommend that census data at Census Output Area (OA) is deployed into the GIS. This allows for more consistent results – particularly if comparisons between authorities are likely to be required. All local authorities have access to this data and information or it can be downloaded from www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk.

3.3.8 Identifying the numbers of children that have access to an appropriate number of different types of playable space.

The result of the process in the first instance is a map (Map 3) showing the residential areas that fall within the catchments of one or more playable space. They will also show, therefore, those areas that fall outside the catchments of any play space, or only fall within the catchment of one or two types of space.

Map 3: Map showing areas that fall within the catchments of three playable spaces



Once these areas have been identified, using appropriate demographics at Census Output Area level, it will be possible to determine the total numbers of children in the relevant age groups who have access to adequate play provision, as well as those that do not.

3.4 Checking and storing the data

The local project manager, or a delegated person, needs to check that the data being used for the performance indicators are correct and that the results look sensible.

Checking the accuracy of the data involves ensuring that:

- all relevant play facilities and spaces are included in the audits used for the access indicator
- all these play facilities and spaces are available for deployment in a GIS as polygons and that each polygon has appropriate data.

For the facilities and spaces data derived from the audits, it is necessary to check every entry. GIS requires a reference number for each space and the drawing of digitised polygons.

Checking that the results look sensible requires a knowledge of the service being monitored and therefore probably needs to be conducted by a relatively senior manager.

3.5 Data analysis and reporting

3.5.1 Mapping the data

Combining Play Spaces, Buffers and Population Data in the GIS to get results from ESRI ArcInfo / ArcView Software.¹³

The two main GIS deployments in local authorities are MapInfo and ESRI ArcInfo / ArcView. The guidance below gives more detail how to extract population data from the GIS and get your results. These descriptions cannot be a definitive 'how to' instruction manual but they should help a moderately experienced GIS user to extract the results. However, if you are not familiar with GIS systems you will need some training and support.

3.5.2 Getting your results using ESRI software

This section provides a guide on how to generate play space catchment areas and calculate number of children aged birth to 16 with access to at least three different types of place spaces (Type A, B,C: doorstep, local and neighbourhood) using ArcGIS software version 9.1.

Step 1. Generate the catchment areas

Once the play space dataset is digitally captured in ESRI format and quality assured create a multiple buffer using the *Buffer Wizard* in ArcMap. Create the buffers based on a distance from an attribute. In this case use the field you previously added to your play space attributes table containing the three buffer values (60, 240, and 600). (See Table 3)

Once the play space buffer shapefile is created start an editing session and trim the catchment area polygons to take account of physical barriers to movements e.g. railway lines, rivers, mayor roads, etc.

Step 2. Generate Output Areas Centroids

Use the FME software (<http://www.safe.com/products/fme>) if available to create centroids from population data boundaries – the 2001 Population figures by Output Areas can be downloaded from the Office of National Statistics (<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>).

During the conversion process remember to import the field containing the number of children aged < 16 for each centroid as shown in the example below.

	FID	Shape ^	Age0_15
▶	0	Point	43
	1	Point	40
	2	Point	55
	3	Point	23

¹³ This section of the guidance detailing the methodology for ESRI software has been kindly provided by Marco Sala from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

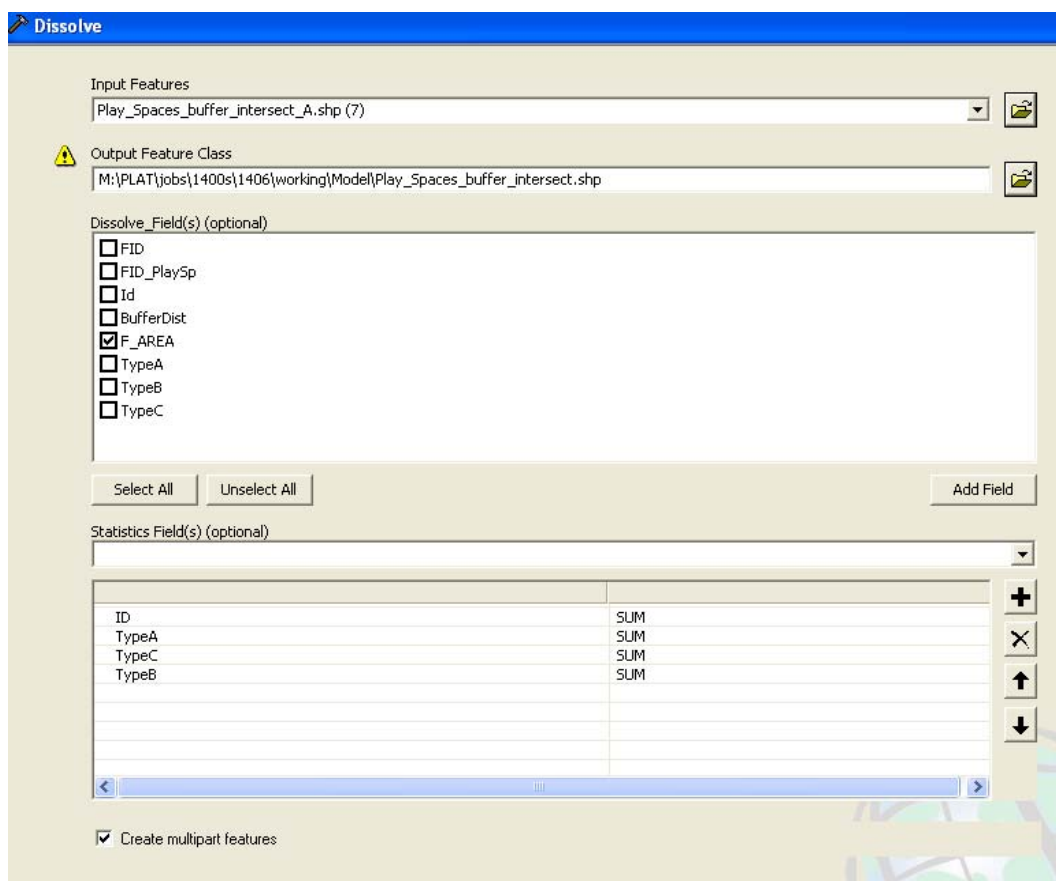
Step 3. Select catchment areas of at least three types of playable spaces

To select catchment areas of all playable space types, a set of steps need to be run in sequential order:

- Run the *Intersect* geo-process on the previously ‘trimmed’ play spaces buffers shapefile (using Arc Toolbox).
- Run *Calculate area* to add area value for each polygon feature (using Arc Toolbox).
- Add three new fields: TypeA, TypeB and TypeC to the attributes table of the new dataset and populate each record with 1 or 0 values (for example in column TypeA select all the TypeA records and give them the value 1). See the example below.

Id	BufferDist	Area	TypeA	TypeB	TypeC
1	60	10540	1	0	0
1	60	10540	1	0	0
1	60	3184	1	0	0
1	60	3184	1	0	0
1	60	4446	1	0	0
1	240	4446	0	1	0
1	240	696	0	1	0
1	60	696	1	0	0

- Run the *Dissolve* process using the Area field. Also calculate SUM for ID Filed, TypeA filed, TypeB filed and TypeC filed. See the screenshot below (using Arc Toolbox).



The attributes table of the new shapefile should look like the table below:

FID	Shape *	Area	SUM_Id	SUM_TypeA	SUM_TypeB	SUM_TypeC
0	Polygon	0	78	19	27	32
1	Polygon	1	5	2	0	3
2	Polygon	2	26	9	6	11
3	Polygon	3	36	10	11	15
4	Polygon	4	23	6	6	11
5	Polygon	5	14	4	5	5
6	Polygon	6	4	2	1	1

The combinations of spaces that meet the requirement that children need to live within the catchment of ALL three types of space include:

- 3 Type C spaces
- 2 Type C spaces and a Type B space
- 1 Type C spaces and 2 Type B spaces
- 1 Type C spaces a Type B space and a Type A space

Run a *selection by attribute* using the following SQL statements to select the areas that meet the above requirements:

"SUM_Id" >= 3 AND (("SUM_TypeC" >=3) OR ("SUM_TypeC" >= 2 AND "SUM_TypeB" >= 1) OR ("SUM_TypeC" >= 1 AND "SUM_TypeB" >= 2) or ("SUM_TypeC" >= 1 AND "SUM_TypeB" >= 1 AND "SUM_TypeC" >= 1))

Step 4. Calculate number of children living in the selected catchment areas

- Run a *selection by location* to select all the output area population centroids that fall COMPLETELY WITHIN the selected catchment areas.
- Create a new shapefile from the selection
- Calculate number of children as total value and as percentage on the total borough population.

Step 5. Aggregate the data to boundaries

- Choose newly created population centroids dataset to be joined to the area boundaries to be used to summarize the data i.e. ward boundary areas. Run a *Join by Location* on the data boundaries to get the total counts of children per each boundary area.

WARD	CODE	EASTING	NORTHING	Count_	Sum_Age0_1
Cremorne	00AWGD	526710	177480	23	1215
Holland	00AWGH	524635	179627	5	254
Norland	00AWGJ	524202	180551	1	51
Golborne	00AWGF	524354	182060	29	1995
Redcliffe	00AWGN	525937	177928	0	0
Stanley	00AWGR	526700	177889	8	326
Royal Hospital	00AWGP	527855	178141	0	0
Brompton	00AWFZ	527270	179023	0	0

- Create thematic maps using the Sum field (total numbers and percentage)

3.5.3 Getting your results from MapInfo Software.

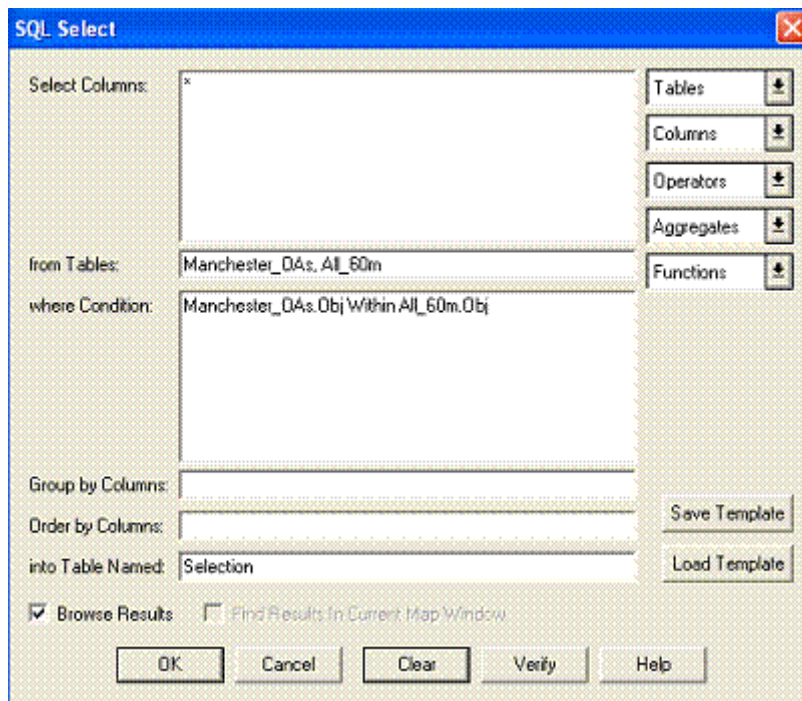
The starting point in MapInfo is to open a boundary file containing census Output Areas. The example below is based on Manchester data.

The objective here is to create a subset of Census Output Areas which fall within each of the buffers you've created. The first step is to create a subset of OA's for *Manchester* and add 3 *integer* columns – (one for each buffer). In this example these columns are called 'In_60m', 'In_240m' and 'In_600m'.

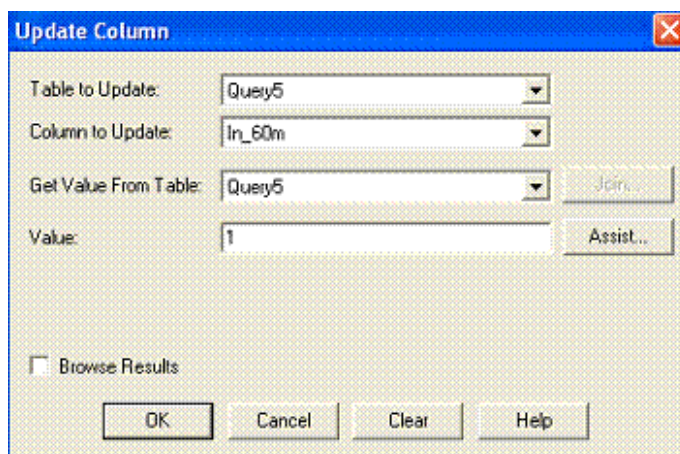
You will then need to use the 'Query>SQL Select' function to select the OA's that fall within the 60m buffer like below. The two tables listed in the 'From Tables' section of the dialogue box are:

- Manchester_OAs – this is all the Output areas that fall within the Manchester Local Authority area.
- All_60m – this is the table that contains the 60 metre buffers drawn around the play spaces.

The 'Where Condition' part of the dialogue box should fill itself in automatically but if it doesn't suggest a *spatial join* as shown below, you will need to use the 'Columns' and 'Operators' drop down lists to create the join in this way.



Running this will then create a selection which will initially be displayed as a Query. Make a note of the Query number and then use the Table>Update Column function to update the column 'In_60m' *in the Query* with a value of 1 – as shown below.



Updating the query then also automatically updated the table it was derived from (which was the list of Manchester OAs). This means that if an OA has a '1' in the column then it is within that buffer.

You will then need to repeat this process for each of the other two buffer layers. You can now use the Output area list in this table to add demographic (census) data which you should have at Output Area level. If your demographics are available at a different geographic level, then use the same method described above, but change the table names in the dialogue boxes as required.

Section 4: The quality of playable spaces: Indicator 3

Indicator 3	Quality of facilities and spaces	Method of generation
Description	The proportion of play spaces and facilities with high scores for location, play value and care and maintenance as assessed using the Playable Space Quality Assessment Tool.	Quality Assessment Tool

4.1 Quality assessment

The more children play out freely, the more opportunities they have to build friendships and a network of social contacts. Playing out helps to build their bodies, gets them fit and teaches them vital skills such as: planning, negotiating, being creative, not being afraid to take risks and to experiment, having fun and enjoying themselves. The assessment tool aims to help providers create the best possible conditions for that natural and most important activity for children.

The aim of the quality assessment is to assess the quality of children's play spaces. It is designed as a tool to help play providers look at the spaces available for children's play, near where they live and go to school, and assess what sort of improvements could be made to enhance the use and quality of those spaces.

The Quality indicator, was commonly selected by the local authorities that participated in the pilot study as one of the most useful of the four indicators. However, there was concern that if this indicator was used for national comparisons the subjective nature of the judgments could lead to inconsistencies. It does, however, have considerable potential as an internal management tool for establishing priorities for improvement and could be combined with some of the other indicators eg by mapping the results and combining these with the findings from the access indicator and the satisfaction indicator.

In this assessment we focus on three major aspects to children's outdoor play provision: the location of play areas, the play value and the care and maintenance. The guide offers guidelines for the assessment of the three different types of playable space to which all children and young people should have free access in their local neighbourhood.

Type A: Doorstep space and facility

Type B: Local space and facility

Type C: Neighbourhood space and facility

4.2 Site surveys

The main purpose of the site survey discussed in section 3 is to obtain data for the quality indicator in order to determine the proportion of facilities and spaces that are rated as good or very good.

Site surveys are for assessing the quality of playable spaces. In addition, it may be necessary to survey some of the smaller spaces that are to be included in the audit to determine whether they are in fact suitable for children's play.

Before embarking on any site surveys first identify the types of space to be visited (see section 3.1.1 on sampling below) and ensure there are sufficient copies of the assessment score sheets for each type of space. (Appendix 2b)

A quality assessment of each space using the criteria set out in the assessment sheets is required. Any space defined as a playable space should be assessed against all three criteria. Not all spaces will be able to offer a full range of play opportunities but it is important that children have access to a range of play experiences. Local knowledge of other playable spaces in the area will help with the interpretation of the findings.

4.2.1 Sampling

Some authorities will be unable to assess all their sites at the same time each year, because resources are insufficient to allow this. In such cases, it will be more realistic to take a sample. Two forms of sample are possible:

- 1 A straightforward **proportion of each type of site**, such as 25 per cent of all sites. This sample should be:
 - Proportionate to each type of site (i.e. 25 per cent of all Type A sites, 25 per cent of all Type B sites, 25 per cent of all Type C sites).
 - Spread across the district, not concentrated in one particular locality or quarter of the area.
 - Chosen at random from a list of all sites (the sites sampled should then be excluded from future years' sampling until all other sites have had their turn to be assessed).
- 2 Alternatively, **a minimum number of sites** can be selected for assessment. This should be at least 40 sites and should include at least 15 Type A, 15 Type B, and 10 Type C sites chosen at random and distributed across the district.

4.3 The Playable Space Quality Assessment Tool¹⁴ (Appendix 2a)

Design for Play, current guidance on designing successful play spaces, published by the DCSF, DCMS and Play England¹⁵ highlights 10 key design principles for creating successful play spaces. These principles should be considered alongside this tool, which incorporates the principles within the assessment framework for location, play value and care and maintenance.

Design for Play: The golden rule

A successful play space is a place in its own right, specially designed for its location, in such a way as to provide as much play value as possible.

The 10 principles for designing successful play spaces

Successful play spaces:

- are 'bespoke' – designed to enhance their setting
- are well located – in the best possible place for children
- make use of natural elements – close to nature
- provide a wide range of play experiences – where children can play in different ways
- are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children - where they can play together
- meet community needs and are loved by the community
- allow children and young people of different ages to play together
- build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge – where children can stretch and challenge themselves in every way
- are sustainable and appropriately maintained - maintained for play value and environmental sustainability
- allow for change and evolution – evolving as the children grow.

4.3.1 The importance of location

Research shows that location is perhaps the single most important factor in how well children use not only play areas but also open spaces. In general, children like to play locally where they can be seen, see others and meet others. Young people are able to roam further and can therefore use neighbourhood play areas, although they too like to feel safe wherever they are 'hanging out'.

¹⁴ This tool was developed by INSPIRE Consultancy Ltd.

¹⁵ Shackell A, Butler N, Doyle P and Ball D (2008) *Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families; Department for Culture, Media and Sport; and Play England.

Disabled children and parents or carers with buggies should be able to access the play areas as much as non-disabled children. Often children will play with younger siblings who may need to be taken to the area in a buggy or push chair.

The scoring system is designed to identify the suitability of the location of play areas and spaces where children may play.

4.3.2 The importance of play value

The assessment deliberately focuses on the different, innovative and challenging ways in which children can have a wide range of play experiences and sensations such as rocking, swinging and sliding – this is particularly important for some disabled children whose impairments mean they cannot for example, sit on traditional swings.

The natural environment also has play value so consideration should be given to the varied and interesting ways in which children can play in these environments. Quiet, contemplative play is as important as boisterous and physical play and although children will play in their own way in any given area, their play can be enriched through creating appropriate and stimulating play environments.

Children need to take risks to learn about and understand their own capabilities. Risk does not mean creating hazardous environments, but it does mean ensuring opportunities for challenging play are available through design.

4.3.3 The importance of care and maintenance

All areas will require that children can play free from unexpected hazards. This section aims to assess the quality of care and maintenance of play spaces and areas and should refer to other types of risk–benefit analysis being undertaken.

4.4 How to carry out the assessments

4.4.1 How many people should carry out the site assessments?

A minimum of two people should carry out the assessments. Ideally the assessment team consists of three or more. This will help alleviate the inevitable bias in the scoring and provide opportunities for debate and creative discussion.

Each person should assess the sites individually and the scores compared and discussed at the end of each site assessment. Individuals can then adjust scores if they wish to do so. Adjustments in scoring should be done through a cooperative dialogue that enables sharing of different perspectives.

4.4.2 Who should carry out the site assessments?

The most useful results will be achieved if the same people carry out all the site assessments in one area.

The assessments can be carried out by a range of people such as:

- children and young people
- tenants and residents

- playworkers
- parks and open space officers and managers.

Involving a diverse group of people will generate more points of view, perspectives and debates, which can lead to a more critical assessment of the play site. Local residents will probably only score sites in their neighbourhood where their local knowledge will be invaluable.

If the system is to be used across a local authority consistency and comparative data between sites will be important.

Peer assessments carried out in partnership with another local authority can also provide a valuable perspective and is recommended. They can help bring a level of objectivity into the assessment process and provide an opportunity to compare standards.

4.4.3 When to assess?

Whilst this guide does not prescribe a specified time for the assessments, it is recommended that they be carried out when children and young people are most likely to be playing out. If children and young people are present, their views could be sought about the site. And, their use of the site may indicate its popularity or otherwise. Observations about how children and young people use the site can provide valuable data about the play value and location of the site.

4.4.4 Guidelines and definitions (see Appendix 2a)

The guidelines and definitions for assessing the three different types of play space are a guide and are neither fully comprehensive nor definitive. They suggest what children and young people might experience and benefit from in the different types of space. The role of the definitions is to provoke thought and discussion and allow providers to view their provision in a systematic manner, but still taking into account the local surroundings, other spaces available to children and the needs and wishes of local children, young people and other community members. Additional guidance looking specifically at access and inclusion for disabled children, can be found on the KIDS website.¹⁶

4.4.5 The score sheet (see Appendix 2b)

There are two parts to the score sheets. The first part is designed to provide information that may inadvertently affect the scoring such as the weather and the time the assessment took place. If the assessment took place during a bleak, rainy morning during term time there will be no or few children playing. The same site might look more successful during a hot summer holiday when lots of children may be playing there. The assessment sheet provides a record of when the assessment actually took place.

The front page requires the assessors to define the 'site'. In a large Type C park for example, the assessors might restrict the site to a specific radius

¹⁶ KIDS (2009) *Inclusivity Assessment Tool*. London: KIDS. Available online at www.kids.org.uk

rather than include the whole park. This information will ensure consistency of scoring between different assessors and different years.

Often the first impressions of a site can be important. First impressions may give a clue as to whether the site looks inviting to children to play. First impressions can be compared to the actual scores and further discussions can take place about any discrepancies.

The scores should provide data for making some planning decisions. The section *Judgements for planning* is to be completed at the end of the assessments once scores have been analysed. This section will provide a record of the rationale for the development decisions for each site.

The actual scores (from 1 to 5) are to be converted into percentage scores to allow for weighting and comparisons between sites and between the location, play value and care and maintenance sections.

The aim of the scoring system is to identify which play area and which particular aspects of the play area needs improving. Final scores are calculated as a percentage of the possible total score. For each criterion the minimum final score is 20%.

In the fictitious example in Table 4 below, Flip Flop play area scores relatively high on care and maintenance (78%) but lower in location (54%) and play value (48%). Sandcastle play area scores high on location (73%) and low on play value (38%) as does Turn Around play area (69% and 43% respectively).

The local authority responsible for Sandcastle play area might review the design of the play area, consult with local children and young people, and improve the play value of that particular site. It might decide that given the low scoring in all areas, Primal play area should be removed and the funding invested in the Sandcastle play area.

Table 4: Play area scores - fictitious example

Type	Play area	Location % score	Play value % score	Care and maintenance % score
A	Flip Flop	54	48	78
A	Sandcastle	73	38	81
B	Turn Around	69	43	56
B	Primal play	55	52	57
C	Treetops	80	54	46
C	Potters Park	65	64	78

The scoring sheet also contains targets for improvements. The scores for Treetops play area show that it is in a good location (scoring 80%) but needs to increase the score for play value (54%). The local authority responsible for the site might decide to take steps to increase the play value by looking at the design and layout of the play area.

In some types of play spaces it may not be possible to score a full 100% because of the location and size. This should be recorded in the front page of the assessment sheet.

For example it might not be possible for Sandcastle play area to achieve 100% for play value because it is too small for extensive planting or movement. However, there may be other possibilities that allow for the play value to be increased.

Local authorities will need to decide on, and make known, their own benchmark of what constitutes 'good' quality in each aspect of the assessment. One possible approach is to take the range of scores for each aspect for all the local authority play areas and calculate the median¹⁷; this can then be used as an initial benchmark with sites above the median scoring 'good'. If a play area with a median score is not felt to be representative of a good site, a site with a higher score can be selected as the 'benchmark' site.

¹⁷ The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median.

To work out the median:

a) Put the numbers in order: 3 6 6 6 7 9 11 11 13

b) The number in the middle of the list is the median 7 is in the middle. So the median value is 7.

If there are two middle values, the median is halfway between them. For example, if the set of numbers were: 3 6 6 6 7 8 9 11 11 13 There are two middle values, 7 and 8. The median is halfway between 7 and 8. The median is 7.5.

Example score summaries

Discrepancies between assessors should be discussed and adjusted as appropriate. Where there is continued disagreement a commentary should be added, alternative scores noted and if agreement cannot be reached an average score calculated.

Type A: Doorstep playable spaces

Flip Flop Play area	Current score						Target score to be achieved					
	Location Max=35 Min=7	%	Play Value Max=40 Min=8	%	Care and maint Max=25 Min=5	%	Location	%	Play value	%	C and M	%
Scorer 1	23	66	23	58	21	84						
Scorer 2	14	40	17	42	18	72						
Scorer 3	21	60	17	44	19	76						
Scorer 4	19	53	18	46	18	72						
Scorer 5	17	50	20	50	21	84						
Average		54		48		78						

Sandcastle Play area	Current score						Target score to be achieved					
	Location Max=35 Min=7	%	Play value Max=40 Min=8	%	Care and maint Max=25 Min=5	%	Location	%	Play value	%	C and M	%
Scorer 1	25	73	12	30	21	84						
Scorer 2	25	70	15	38	20	80						
Scorer 3	23	66	16	40	19	76						
Average		70		36		80						

Type B: Local playable space or facility

	Current score						Target score to be achieved					
Turn Around Play Area	Location Max=35 Min=7	%	Play value Max=50 Min=10	%	Care and maint: Max=35 Min=7	%	Location	%	Play value	%	C and M	%
Scorer 1	23	66	28	56	22	62						
Scorer 2	27	76	22	44	20	57						
Scorer 3	23	66	19	38	21	60						
Scorer 4	22	63	24	48	15	42						
Scorer 5	25	70	21	42	22	62						
Average		68		46		57						

	Current score						Target score to be achieved					
Primal Play Area	Location Max=35 Min=7	%	Play value Max=50 Min=10	%	Care and maint: Max=35 Min=7	%	Location	%	Play value	%	C and M	%
Scorer 1	19	53.	30	60	21	60						
Scorer 2	26	76	29	58	23	65						
Scorer 3	21	60	23	46	22	62						
Scorer 4	9	26	22	44	12	34						
Scorer 5	21	60	25	50	22	62						
Average		55		52		57						

Type C: Neighbourhood playable space or facility

	Current score						Target score to be achieved					
Treetops Play Area	Location Max=35 Min=7	%	Play Value Max=50 Min=10	%	Care & Maint: Max=35 Min=7	%	Location	%	Play Value	%	C&M	%
Scorer 1	26	73	18	36	15	42						
Scorer 2	32	90	41	82	16	45						
Scorer 3	29	83	25	50	18	51						
Scorer 4	29	83	32	64	17	48						
Scorer 5	24	70	19	38	15	42						
Average		80		54		46						

	Current score						Target score to be achieved					
Potters Park Play Area	Location Max=35 Min=7	%	Play Value Max=50 Min=10	%	Care & Maint: Max=35 Min=7	%	Location	%	Play Value	%	C&M	%
Scorer 1	26	73	35	70	30	86						
Scorer 2	19	53	23	46	20	57						
Scorer 3	23	67	36	72	28	80						
Scorer 4	25	70	30	60	29	83						
Scorer 5	22	63	35	70	30	86						
Average		65		64		78						

4.5 Checking and storing the data

The local project manager, or a delegated person, needs to check that the data being used for the performance indicators are correct and that the results look sensible.

Checking the accuracy of the data involves ensuring that the quality assessments have been conducted, as far as possible, to the same standards.

For quality assessments, it is necessary to check all the assessments for consistency in the application of the scoring – see appendix 3a and 3b.

To facilitate aggregation and comparison of the data, it is required that all data is stored electronically.

Checking that the results look sensible requires a knowledge of the service being monitored and therefore probably needs to be conducted by a relatively senior manager. It comprises examination of the outcomes and if any look suspiciously high or low, to check that the data entry and analysis have been conducted properly. At this stage it is not possible to specify parameters for what is ‘too high’ or ‘too low’ for each indicator, which is why this is a matter of judgement by a manager who is familiar with the service.

4.6 Data analysis and reporting

The maximum scores for the different attributes are different – location can secure a maximum raw score (in Type C) of 35, but play value can achieve 40 and care/maintenance a total of 35. Of the three attributes, location is recognised as being the most important and it therefore necessary for additional weight to be given to this set of scores.

The score is meaningless without some understanding of the maximum that can be achieved, so scores were expressed as a percentage rather than a number. The percentage is the site score as a percentage of the maximum possible score for that site.

It is also possible to calculate an overall score for your authority by taking the total scores for all sites in your sample, expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible scores for those sites.

4.7 Interpreting the data

The aim of the assessment is to ensure that children and young people have access to a variety of play opportunities and experiences near where they live and can easily travel to. Not every playable space can provide all type of play experience and so interpretation of the quality assessment can take into account other playable spaces in the vicinity. For example, if a doorstep or local space only offer a few play experiences there may be another space nearby, and accessible to the same children and young people that offers others – meeting the local need for a suitable range of play opportunities.

Section 5: Children’s satisfaction with payable space: Indicator 4

Indicator 4	Satisfaction	Method of generation
Description	The percentage of all children and young people (from all social and ethnic groups, including those who are disabled), who think that the range and quality of play facilities and spaces they are able to access in their local neighbourhood is good/very good.	Questionnaire survey of children and young people

5.1 Questionnaire survey of children and young people

The main purpose of the children and young people’s survey is to obtain data for **indicator 4: Satisfaction**.

The children and young people’s *Places Where You Play Questionnaire* is the result of a partnership with Bristol City Council’s Youth and Play Services. It is a child-friendly paper-based survey, which has been designed with the active involvement of children and young people aged between 5 and 17 years. The design of the questionnaire and the wording of the questions have been extensively and successfully piloted with children across the city. Children aged between 7 and 18 years, attending both primary and secondary schools, can easily participate in the survey (5- and 6-year-olds will need more support). They are asked to complete the short paper questionnaire. (Appendix 3)

The survey seeks to obtain the views of children and young people on the range and quality of facilities that they are able to access in their local neighbourhood.

5.2 Children and young people questionnaire: distribution and data collection

The children themselves should complete this survey. At present, the questionnaire can be only completed on paper, although you may want to create an electronic version for your own use.

The questionnaire can be used in a variety of settings. It can be distributed in schools for completion in school time or it can be distributed in other supervised play sessions such as at adventure playgrounds, after school clubs, leisure centres or youth clubs or in non supervised locations such as equipped playgrounds.

The questionnaire has been designed to be self explanatory and we have found that most children and young people do not have any difficulty in understanding the nature of the questions and what they are being asked to do. However, we would recommend that an adult is present who is able to

provide help and support to children who encounter difficulties in completing the form in addition to distributing and collecting completed questionnaires.

We have found that the questionnaire works best as part of a small group activity with adult supervision. It is important that the adult understands about the aims of the consultation and how the information will be used. Groups of approximately 10 to 15 children tend to produce the best results. We found that children were more eager to share their thoughts and feelings about their play areas after playing a short game or exercise. One exercise that was used in Bristol was to ask children to draw a map on a large sheet of flip chart paper of the spaces in their neighbourhood where they go to play. Another successful exercise was to provide children with disposable cameras and ask them to take pictures of what is good and bad about the spaces and places in which they play. This can be presented as a 'magic carpet' slide show, which starts with younger children sitting on a magic carpet at the start of their journey. The slide show is made up of pictures taken by the children of spaces where they play or hang out in their own locality and can then be extended by presenting high quality spaces from other locations. This is a more intensive exercise, which requires a greater input of resources, but it does stimulate debate amongst children about the places where they play.

The questionnaire can be used with children from younger age groups but they will require a significantly greater level of support. Most, but not all, children aged 5 and 6 years struggled to understand the questions fully.

It is important to ensure that the views of disabled children are captured as part of the survey. We found that trying to complete the questionnaire in a school setting was difficult for children in this group and would recommend that the questionnaire be completed in a setting where there are no time pressures. This may require extra time being allocated to the process and may include asking parents to complete with them or on their behalf.

Please remember that children and young people need to know what will happen to this information, who will see it and what the results are likely to be.

If you decide to carry out the survey in school, please ensure that someone is present when the forms are being completed. This will help to ensure that the distribution and collection of completed forms is done properly and minimises the administrative burden on the school.

5.2.1 The 'Places Where You Play Questionnaire' (see Appendix 3)

The full colour questionnaire can be downloaded from the Play England website. It contains a number of photographs and illustrations, which makes it more attractive and visually stimulating for children.

Children are asked to answer five questions about play provision together with some standard demographic monitoring questions at the end of the questionnaire. They are asked to tick the boxes that reflect their opinion about the quality and range of play facilities in their neighbourhood. Each box has a faint tick in the boxes already to indicate what is required. When the questionnaire was piloted, most children found that this was helpful but others were confused about where to tick because there was already one in the box!

The adult facilitator should be aware of this and will need to ensure that all the children understand what they are being asked to do.

The cover page explains the purpose of the questionnaire by asking the questions:

How do you feel about the places to play, or hang out, in your area?

Are there enough?

Are they any good? Let us know...

The second page provides the children with some photographs of different playgrounds and children involved in different activities. It includes the statement:

'Thank you for picking up this questionnaire. We hope you enjoy filling it in.'

The third page asks children the question:

1 What I like to do...

The responses to this question do not provide data that informs the satisfaction indicator. The aim of the question is to encourage children to think about the kinds of activities that they most enjoy such as being active, hanging out, being on wheels, being adventurous etc. The information that the children provide could be very useful to you when you are thinking about how to improve your 'Play Offer'.

The adult facilitator should advise the children that they can tick as many boxes as they like.

On the fourth page, Question 2 is the first question that provides data for the indicator is about the **quality** of spaces to play or hang out asks children and young people:

2 What I think about the places where I play and hang out...

The child or young person is asked to tick one box ranging from Very good to Very bad.

Next there is a follow up question:

3 What would make it better?

The adult facilitator could explain to the children the need / usefulness of this 'what would make it better' box for supplying ideas for future play schemes.

The fifth page also has a question that provides data for the indicator. Question Four is about the **range** of spaces to play or hang out. It asks children and young people:

4 Is there enough choice?

The child or young person is asked to tick one box ranging from Yes! Lots to No! None.

Then there is a follow up question, which is:

5 What choice is there?

The child or young person is asked to circle a variety of icons, which represent different types of play, or hanging out space such as skate parks, streets, woods as well as equipped playgrounds. Again, the adult facilitator could explain to the children that their answers will provide information about gaps in play provision and could be used to help to develop strategies for improvement in the future.

The last page has the standard demographic monitoring questions. It was found during the piloting exercise that children require adult support in completing these monitoring questions, particularly the postcode and ethnicity data questions.

5.2.2 Timing

The timing of the survey is important if you are going to compare your results with those of other local authorities or if you plan to do year-on-year surveys. If the survey is being undertaken on the autumn term it should start before mid-term, so as to ensure it does not encroach on dark evenings or inclement weather. Be careful that you allow sufficient preparation time to achieve this timing; don't underestimate the work involved.

5.2.3 Sample

Ensure that a range of age groups is covered and geographical variations considered as one part of your district may be better served than another. However, we also want to ensure that the workload is proportionate and reasonable. What follows is a minimum requirement, which you may exceed if you wish.

One option is to focus on distributing the questionnaire in schools. If this is your preferred method of delivery you should recruit the participation of six schools from across your authority area. These should include at least:

- three secondary schools (no more than one of which is an independent school) from different areas of the district
- three primary schools (no more than one of which is an independent school) from different areas of the district.

At each secondary school, get responses from at least one class in each year group from Years 7 to 10 inclusive. If you can get more, fine!

At each primary school, get response from at least one class in each of Years 5 and 6.

Recruiting schools for this kind of work is not straightforward and you will need to allow plenty of time for this aspect of the work. You may be able to get help from your schools liaison officer, or from the curriculum development staff for citizenship, or physical education.

Schools will want to know why they should co-operate. You may wish to offer a reward to schools, and you may also want to feedback to the schools on their results so that the children can discuss them. You will need to give some thought about how you might persuade schools to co-operate.

Alternatively, you may wish to distribute the questionnaire in different settings such as a supervised play facility, for example, an adventure playground or a summer play scheme, or you may wish to ask children in non-supervised play settings such as an equipped playground to complete the questionnaire. If this is the case you will need to make sure that you get a good mix of respondents with a spread across a range of key factors according to the demographics of your local authority area. These key factors are:

- age of child
- location of setting (you need a geographical spread)
- times when the facility or scheme is used by children and/or young people (different age groups may use the same setting at different times of day)
- ethnicity
- disability.

You should aim to secure approximately 300 responses; more if yours is a larger local authority. Of these 300 respondents, 50 per cent should be boys and 50 per cent should be girls. You should aim for a similar proportion of ethnic minority children as is present in the local population; because ethnic minority children are often concentrated in particular localities, this should be a factor in choosing the sites where you conduct the survey. In the same way, you should aim for a similar proportion of disabled and non – disabled children as is present in the local population.

The locations chosen for the survey should be spread across the whole of the local authority area to avoid any bias in the results and to ensure that responses relate to as many play settings as possible.

5.3 Checking and storing the data

The local project manager, or a delegated person, needs to check that the data being used for the performance indicators are correct and that the results look sensible.

Checking the accuracy of the data involves ensuring that:

- the sampling for the school surveys is random and representative of the populations concerned, i.e. everyone in the relevant populations (local authority or schools) has an equal chance of being selected for the survey)
- the responses to the survey questions appear valid, i.e. they have been completed honestly and seriously by the right persons

To facilitate aggregation and comparison of the data, it is required that all data is stored electronically.

Checking that the results look sensible requires a knowledge of the service being monitored and therefore probably needs to be conducted by a relatively senior manager. It comprises examination of the outcomes and if any look suspiciously high or low, to check that the data entry and analysis have been conducted properly. At this stage it is not possible to specify parameters for what is 'too high' or 'too low' for each indicator, which is why this is a matter of judgement by a manager who is familiar with the service.

5.4 Data analysis and reporting

The satisfaction indicator is derived from the school survey responses. Please note that this will only generate data for the age range covered by the schools and classes surveyed. The analysis needs to identify those respondents who scored their satisfaction in either of the first two categories (out of five points) in the scale of responses allowed – 'very good' and 'good' – and these need to be combined and expressed as a percentage of the total valid responses.

There are separate satisfaction questions for the range of facilities available and their quality. These combine to give the satisfaction score for each respondent, by a simple numerical average of the two scores. An average of two or less contributes to the percentage required for the indicator.

As with the participation indicator, the software to do the required analysis can be a spreadsheet, a database, or a survey package such as SNAP or SPSS.

Satisfaction performance indicators (PIs) often use confidence levels. The sample size we have established, which is explained later in the guidance, reflects a desired confidence interval of +/-3 per cent at 95 per cent level of confidence will establish whether or not this is achievable within realistic effort.

The population figure to use, to establish the numbers of children, is the ONS mid-year estimates. Mid-year population estimates are obtained from ONS at local authority level, see www.statistics.gov.uk/popest/

Appendices

The following are available online as separate files from the Play England website.

Appendix 1: Household questionnaire survey

Appendix 2a: Quality Assessment Tool - Guidelines and definitions

Appendix 2b: Quality assessment tool score sheet

Appendix 3: Children's satisfaction questionnaire

Your feedback on this guide

Tools for evaluating local play provision

Play England are keen to find out how effective this guide has been for local authorities using local play indicators.

Your feedback will help us to develop future editions of this guidance.

Did this guide give you a clear understanding of the local indicators for play? If not, what do you think was missing?

Did this guide give you the sufficient information to collect data to measure local play indicators? If not, how could we improve this?

On a scale of 1 to 5, how helpful was this guide? (Please tick)

- 1 = poor
- 2 = acceptable
- 3 = good
- 4 = very good
- 5 = excellent

Please copy this page and fax your response
to: 020 7843 6349

Thank you

Tools for evaluating local play provision:

A technical guide to Play England local play indicators

Produced by Ashley Godfrey Associates and INSPIRE.

This publication can be downloaded at www.playengland.org.uk

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