

# Practical tips for PLAY RANGERS

# 4



## Practical tips for play rangers to publicise their work

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## Play rangers

There are a number of key considerations that need to be addressed before play rangers start to work in local parks and open spaces.

A period of at least six-to-eight weeks is recommended for each new team to concentrate on identity, preparation and publicity tasks that will enable local communities to understand the nature of the play ranger provision.

It is also essential that existing provisions keep publicising and promoting their work.

Allow six-to-eight weeks preparation time for a new play ranger team.

- It is vital for an organisation to have a clear identity and vision for their service
- Creating a list of agencies that may impact provision helps to establish ways for future collaboration
- Fun assembly sessions at local primary schools really help to establish the service in the early stages
- Identify a clear and concise publicity campaign to help reach the key stakeholders.



### About these briefings:

This series was compiled by Dan Rees-Jones; a practising play ranger and author of *Playing on the Range*. The briefings have been developed in response to FAQs to the Play Ranger Support Service e-group. The e-group was set up by Dan in 2008 with support from Playwork Partnerships and Play England to provide play rangers and playworkers with an access point to share experiences, information, advice and good practice.

# Identity

**It is important for an organisation to have a clear vision for their play ranger provision, and to effectively communicate this to their clients: children, young people, parents and carers.**

Although this vision may have been clearly identified in the project proposal for funding, its communication between the staff team and the local community is vital so everyone knows the purpose and scope of the provision being offered.

Creating a statement of intent, being clear about the difference between childcare and open access provision, and outlining the nature and scope of

open access provision is a good way of achieving this goal.

For example, play rangers are 'detached' play workers, working away from a fixed setting. They differ from registered after-school clubs or play schemes because they are open access. 'Open access' is defined as:

'... supervised provision which allows children to come and go at will. It is designed specifically to respond to the needs and wishes of children, offering secure and stimulating places where they can play and meet their friends in their leisure time.'

(PLAYLINK, 2003)



# Preparation

## Before a play ranger provision starts it is important to gain local knowledge of the parks and open spaces.

1. Visit the designated local parks and open spaces that play rangers will be working in to establish baseline figures on current use. This information will be useful in helping to monitor the project's impact over the first few months.
2. Try to obtain information on current levels of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity in the area from the relevant local authority, establishing a reference point for any future improvements through the play ranger service.
3. Make a list of other agencies in the area that would impact on a play ranger provision, such as housing associations and newspapers. Make contact with as many as possible, letting them know who the play rangers are, what the service is, and outlining potential ways of working together in the future.

The list below may provide a starting point:

- Adventure playgrounds
- Play associations
- Children's Centres
- Sure Start projects
- Early years, play, youth or children and young people's services at your local authority
- Holiday playschemes and out of school clubs
- Youth groups
- Schools including extended schools open in the holidays
- Charities and voluntary groups with shared aims
- Church and faith groups
- Community groups
- Environmental networks
- Health centres

- Libraries
- Housing associations and landlords
- Neighbourhood renewal partnerships
- Parks and leisure services at your local authority
- Police and neighbourhood wardens
- Residents' associations
- Shops and businesses
- Sports and healthy living teams at your local authority
- Transport, traffic or travelwise team at your local authority.

## Schools visits

- Arrange appointments to visit all local primary and secondary schools in the local area to introduce the play rangers to the children.
- Devise and deliver some fun assembly sessions informing the children and young people about the play ranger provision. Key messages that will need to come across are:
  - Play rangers; who we are
  - Play rangers; what we do
  - Details of park locations
  - Details of day(s) and time(s).

If possible try to follow up the assembly with a play ranger session during lunch, break times or during planning, preparation and assessment time which will help reinforce the message being delivered and the relationship with the school.

## Leaflets and advertising

Create attractive and informative leaflets that can be delivered to all the immediate houses within the communities where the provision will be available. Where possible, this leaflet should include photographs of each ranger and details of what the play rangers will be doing, when and where.

Finally, arrange to have distinctive

# Publicity

uniforms and suitable official identification displayed on the exterior of each play ranger's attire. This will help children, young people, parents and carers recognise who they are.

## Press release

A press release is a free form of advertising to the local communities through local media. Write a press release to be included in the local papers two weeks before your first provision is about to start and follow it up with an invitation to the editor to attend the new play ranger provision for a feature article.

When the sites are well established it may also be worthwhile issuing regular press releases to promote good news stories about the great work the play rangers are doing, including the impact of the work on the local community.

## Further publicity and good news stories

It is also worth considering designing and printing a generic glossy leaflet and setting up a website about the play ranger provision. This can be a form of media to be used when promoting your existing sites to new parents and children who come to the play space, or other professionals at conferences and meetings etc. This will not only help boost numbers attending but will give added confidence to parents and carers, and reinforce the professional image of the provision and playwork. Details could include:

- Introduction to play rangers
- Who are play rangers?
- What do play rangers do?
- Success stories
- Why it works
- Contact details
- Website links
- Funders' logos.



# Resources

- Beunderman, J (2010) *People make play*. London: NCB/Play England. Online: [www.playengland.org.uk/peoplemakeplay](http://www.playengland.org.uk/peoplemakeplay)
- Play England (2008) *Charter for Children's Play*. Online: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/charter>
- Conway, M (2008), *Quality in Play: Standards, assessment indicators and evidence – a manual*. London: NCB/Play England. Online: [www.playengland.org.uk/quality](http://www.playengland.org.uk/quality)
- NPFA, CPC and Playlink (2000) *Best Play: what play provision should do for children*. London: NPFA. Online: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/bestplay>
- PLAYLINK (2003) *Open for Play*. London: PLAYLINK.
- Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group (2005) *Playwork Principles*. Cardiff: Play Work Principles Scrutiny Group. Online: <http://www.skillsactive.com/playwork/principles>
- Play England's Playful Communities website: [www.playfulcommunities.org.uk](http://www.playfulcommunities.org.uk)
- Rees-Jones, D (2008), *Playing on the Range*, Gloucester: Playwork Partnerships, University of Gloucestershire. Online: [www.playwork.co.uk](http://www.playwork.co.uk)
- Rees-Jones, D (2007) *The Play Ranger Guide*. Radstock, Wansdyke Play Association. Available from <http://bit.ly/vKQwmB>
- Matrix Evidence (2010) *Play England: An economic evaluation of play provision*. London: Matrix Evidence. Online: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/economicevaluation>

Play rangers build positive relationships with children and young people within their communities, by listening and responding to their play needs.

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