

Further information about the Free Time Consortium

Membership

New members can join the Free Time Consortium (FTC) through the Play England website. Organisations that are members of the FTC will have links from their websites to the FTC webpage on the Play England website. All new members must complete an application form and meet the criteria for membership below. Membership is open to voluntary organisations, charities, not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises and organisations registered as a community interest company. Local authorities cannot become full members of the FTC but are encouraged to support the Love Outdoor Play campaign and work closely with voluntary and not-for-profit play organisations in their area. Membership will be approved by the FTC Management Board.

New members will:

- Sign up to the FTC Statement of Commitment and Memorandum of Agreement
- Sign up to the Charter for Children's Play and be committed to the UNCRC Article 31
- Be a member of Play England
- Be working towards or have achieved a quality kite mark that embeds the Playwork Principles into play provision (such as Quality in Play) where appropriate
- Be committed to Continuing Professional Development for their staff, including endorsed training and playwork qualifications where appropriate
- Promote and support FTC campaigns, currently Love Outdoor Play
- Attend FTC meetings and conferences
- Join one of the FTC Development Groups
- Sign up and contribute to the FTC hub (WordPress site)

Networking

The FTC is a collective of local and specialist organisations committed to increasing the freedom to play for children and young people. The purpose of the FTC is to *increase the sustainability of play provision for children and young people* both in staffed settings and around their neighbourhood. This includes:

- Capacity building
- Promoting good practice
- Sharing resources
- Joint fundraising

Play England is part of the FTC. All partners have agreed Play England continues to act as the lead body for the FTC. This will be reviewed regularly by the FTC

Management Board and Membership of the FTC. The FTC Management Board is responsible for the overall leadership and development of the FTC.

Play England membership is open to individuals and organisations that believe in the importance of play and want to promote a vision for England to be a country where everybody can fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years. This role includes influencing decision makers at all levels about the importance of play, campaigning and supporting others to promote play as a part of children's daily lives, at school, at home, and throughout the public realm. Members of Play England do not have to be involved in the delivery of play provision.

Play England provide a national platform for the FTC through the Play England website, management of the FTC hub and lead role in the Love Outdoor Play campaign. Members of the FTC will have information about the FTC and the Love Outdoor campaign on their website and promote the work of the FTC and campaigns through their social media and local networks. Members of the Free FTC support local community groups and organisations through their websites, social media and other activity.

Information sharing

Play England, as part of the National Children's Bureau, is the lead and accountable body for the Social Action Fund on behalf of the FTC.

The purpose of the Social Action Fund grant to the National Children's Bureau is to 'contribute to a consortium campaign to increase social action in support of outdoor play for children, to fund consortium activity to promote outdoor play, provide play resources and set up/ expand play schemes'. This includes the Get Involved in Play programme and the Love Outdoor Play campaign.

The current members of the FTC funded by the Social Action Fund are monitoring on a quarterly basis as part of the requirements of the Social Investment Business and the terms and conditions of the Social Action Fund Grant from the Cabinet Office.

Practice is shared through the Love Outdoor Play campaign, including blog posts and Twitter feed and by FTC members on their websites and through other social media. Other information is shared through the Play England website.

The FTC hub is a WordPress site open to FTC members only. The FTC hub provides Free Time Consortium members with updates about FTC activity, including the work of the development groups.

- Capacity building, training and quality
- Volunteering and participation
- Web, social media and reach

- Evaluation

The terms of reference for each of the FTC development groups are available on the Play England website.

The Playful Communities website will be refreshed building on the experience of FTC members, to provide information and advice for voluntary and community organisations that want to promote play or develop play provision in their area.

Practice

The FTC will not support the replacement of paid/ qualified playworkers with volunteers. Paid / qualified playworkers are essential to the delivery of play services. It is important to recognise the added value that volunteers can bring to staffed play provision as well as informal play in the community. The activities and campaigns of the FTC will encourage and support the involvement of local people and communities in the delivery of play provision. This includes volunteering and other social action – donations, gifts in kind, involvement in local campaigns and social media. The FTC will support volunteers to undertake endorsed training and development leading to playwork qualifications where appropriate. We believe future playworkers will come from young people and adults who have had a rich play experience as children. Paid/ qualified playworkers will continue to have a role to support volunteers in the delivery of local play provision and to raise awareness of the importance of play in local communities.

Membership of the FTC is dependent on organisations working towards or having achieved a kitemark that embeds the Playwork Principles (such as Quality in Play) and a commitment to providing Continuing Professional Development of staff, including endorsed training and playwork qualifications, where appropriate.