

## Children's rights must be defended

**Nicola Butler, Chair of Trustees**

With calls in some quarters for Britain to leave the European Convention on Human Rights in the wake of the EU referendum, children's rights need defending as never before.

As signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the government should already be upholding its obligations to children.

However, in response to the British government's most recent progress report, the UN Committee has outlined a number of serious concerns and made over 150 recommendations.

The 'Concluding Observations' released by the UN Committee in June, state it is 'seriously concerned at the effects that recent fiscal policies and allocation of resources have had in contributing to inequality in children's enjoyment of their rights, disproportionately affecting children in disadvantaged situations.'

It calls on the British government to introduce a statutory obligation at national and devolved levels to 'systematically conduct a child rights impact assessment when developing laws and policies affecting children'.

The UN Committee report also raises its concern that despite ratifying the Convention, the British government has failed to make it enforceable in law — and presses Westminster to speed up this process.

Article 31 of the Convention recognizes the right of every child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities and free and full participation in cultural and artistic life.

The 'See it, Say it, Change it' campaign helped children make submissions to the UN Committee, which included the need for safer places for children to play.

Play England has joined calls to put children at the centre of government decision-making by appointing a senior Cabinet level minister responsible for children's rights.

This echoes recommendations from the 'Play' report published last year by the All Party-Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood.

It is vital that the government makes good on its commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children's right to play is crucial to their mental and physical wellbeing.

Planning to ensure children have the freedom to play out benefits everyone: children,

families, local communities and is integral to the future health and wellbeing of our society.

We urge the government to implement the Convention and champion children's right to play.

● To read the UN's concluding observations click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/jldm8wg>



'Playday' – the national day for play – has launched its theme 'Play matters...' for this year's campaign.

As well as promoting children's right to play, the campaign highlights that Play matters for:

- children's mental health and wellbeing
- creativity and learning
- all ages and abilities
- strong communities

To find out more, get involved and register your own event, visit the Playday website:

<http://www.playday.org.uk/>

**Playday takes place on  
Wednesday 3 August**

## Play England support launch of new ITC report

Chair of Trustees, Nicola Butler, was a guest speaker at the launch of the Independent Travel Commission's report, 'Children and Travel'.



The ITC found a big decline in children's independent travel. The National Travel Survey

shows that in 2010 62% of trips by under 16s are accompanied by an adult compared to 41% in 1971.

The report, authored by Kris Beuret OBE, concludes that children are largely invisible passengers in their own right and that better transport design for children is needed.

● To download the report visit: <http://tinyurl.com/h7slgl5>

## Health Play Specialists support call for playing out

New Play England Trustee, Anita Grant, spoke at the NAHPS 41st Annual Conference and AGM in June.

Participants discussed ideas for shared campaigning activity to promote the importance of children playing out.

For more details:

<http://www.nahps.org.uk/>



## Challenge to council that blocks children's right to play

In another case of children's right to play being undermined, tenants of a small housing development in East Sussex have been threatened with eviction if their children are caught playing outside the front of their homes.

In April, all 28 tenants of the cul-de-sac received letters from Wealden Council's policy and community department warning that a 'possession notice would be served on any resident found to be ignoring this letter'.

In response, tenants called an emergency meeting to discuss how to respond and secured national news coverage to draw attention to the situation.

Playing out on a street near their homes is vital to children's health and wellbeing. Sadly, Wealden Council's threat of eviction is just another example of the increasing number of barriers that stop children playing out. Play England's research has found that whilst 71% of adults played in the street or area near their home everyday when they were a child, only 21% of children do so today.

Nicola Butler, Play England's Chair of Trustees, put the case for play on BBC Radio Sussex, arguing that it is vital that children have the opportunity to play out. She promoted the Street Play scheme, which addresses the twin problems of traffic danger and parents' confidence by helping residents to close their streets to cars so that children may play out on a regular basis.

● Play England has asked the Children's Commissioner to urge Wealden Council to withdraw its threat of eviction and, instead, work with local play associations to develop an awareness-raising campaign of the benefits of children playing out.



## Championing diversity

It is vital that the Play sector reflects the diverse and rich communities it serves. Play England is working with play workers, parents and practitioners to help share ideas and experience about celebrating and championing diversity in play.

We are delighted that **Jade Newton-Gardener**, founder of I MAP I aM A Person is our most recent guest blogger. She discusses diversity within the Play sector and offers important and practical ways to help make sure our play environments reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

- Read Jade's blog for Play England here: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/diversity-in-play/> Please join the debate and share your own ideas and experiences.

## Scottish Minister presents PlayBoard award

In June, newly appointed Scottish Minister for Education, Peter Weir MLA, presented Ballymacash Primary School with the first ever PlayBoard 'TOPS' (Taking Outdoor Play Seriously) Quality Assurance Award for Outdoor Play in Schools. The PlayBoard award recognises the significant work and commitment shown by the school to enhancing its outdoor space for play opportunities.

- For more information, click here: <http://www.playboard.org/providers/schools-2/tops-taking-outdoor-play-seriously/>

With the summer holidays fast approaching, **Play Scotland** have produced this **FREE Outdoor Adventure Checklist**.

- Just e-mail [info@playscotland.org](mailto:info@playscotland.org) to request your copy.



## New London Mayor backs '20's Plenty' campaign

Sadiq Khan, newly elected Mayor of London, has pledged to back the '20's Plenty For Us' campaign, encouraging the roll out of 20mph zones across the city.

'20s Plenty for Us' is calling for 20 mph as a national urban speed limit to help children to reach play places like parks, play areas or simply to go and meet their friends.

The new London Mayor has also said that he will strengthen protections for open spaces within the London Plan, including playing fields.



20's Plenty for Us



## Spirit 2016 Conference

Play Wales's annual 'Spirit' event is filled with inspiring speeches, lively discussions and practical workshops about children's play.

Keynote speakers include:

- **Jan Van Gils — President of the European Network for Child Friendly Cities**
- **Professor Sally Holland — Children's Commissioner for Wales**
- **Stuart Lester — University of Gloucestershire**
- **Dr Jacky Tyrie — Cardiff Metropolitan University**

This year 'Spirit' will be exploring play in the public realm, the challenges and barriers to providing for playful communities. The conference will also be sharing examples of good practice for all those who want to improve children's mental and physical health as well as helping make Wales a play-friendly country.

For more details visit:

<http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/events/303>



Erasmus+



## SAFERPLAY Project draws on European expertise

Play England is part of the SAFERPLAY project, a pioneering cooperation between universities, research associations, experts, Vocational and Educational Training providers (VET) and key stakeholders responsible for the design and safety of play spaces.

Along with partners from six European countries, Play England is sharing its expertise to develop on-line training materials covering all aspects of design, installation

and maintenance of safer and more attractive play spaces for all levels of professionals from architects, designers and landscapers to operators and technicians responsible for the installation and maintenance of play areas and VET trainers.

The project also serves as a platform for exchanging experiences and collaborative learning between all stakeholders involved in play spaces.

## IPA calls on governments to intervene on environment

The International Play Association has produced 'Children's Rights and the Environment' — a paper on the theme of this year's Day of General Discussion for The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, on 23 September in Geneva.

The paper notes that the majority of the world's poorest children face hazards such as polluted water, open sewers, overcrowded cities, uncontrolled traffic, poor public transport, lack of safe play areas, green spaces and cultural facilities. It suggests that while climate change will ultimately impact every

child, negative environmental changes are affecting the safety of outdoor play: from an increase in asthma symptoms to aggravated reactions to increases in heat for children with sickle cell disease.

It recommends greater government intervention to protect children's rights under Article 31 and cross-departmental collaboration to ensure its implementation.

- Read the full paper here: <http://ipaworld.org/childrens-right-to-play-and-the-environment/>

### 'Child in the City' conference

7 – 9 November 2016, University College in Ghent, Belgium

A key opportunity for children's professionals, city planners, geographers and policy makers to share knowledge, good practice and research findings, the 'Child in the City' conference aims to promote liveable, sustainable designs, services and projects that support the well-being of children.

- To book your place visit: <http://www.childinthecity.eu/conference-2016/>