

# Play today

MEMBERS' QUARTERLY **NOVEMBER 2015**

**To all our members — welcome to Play England!  
You are part of a growing movement campaigning  
for children's play!**

This is the first quarterly e-zine since becoming an independent charity. 'Play today' aims to give you the latest news, keep you informed about Play England's activities and suggest ways that you can help us improve play opportunities for children nationwide.

In this issue we've highlighted some key areas for Play England's work. This year's 'Playday' on 5 August was a great success. Many thanks to everyone involved, including our national partners Play Scotland, Play Wales and PlayBoard Northern Ireland.

In September we organised a seminar, supported by our partners Playing Out and London Play to build local authority support for Street Play.

Play England also contributed to a new parliamentary report on Play, launched in October, which offers us all an opportunity to promote very widely the importance of play.

On 11 February, we hold our Annual General Meeting. This is where we will assess our work and determine the campaigning priorities for the year ahead. I'd really like encourage all members to participate. Building our membership base will be a key part of our work in the coming year.

**Play England is a small organisation, but working together, we can have a far greater impact and reach. You can play a crucial role in helping us bring together everyone who cares about play in England.**

**Nicola Butler**  
Chair of Trustees



## Play England

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Join us to help shape our campaigning priorities for the year ahead.**

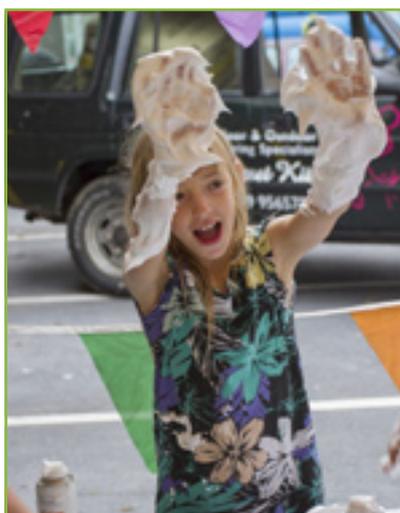
**To register your interest, please contact**  
[membership@playengland.net](mailto:membership@playengland.net)

**More details will be posted on our Facebook page**  
<https://www.facebook.com/playengland/>

**THURSDAY  
11 FEBRUARY 2016**

**10am-4pm**  
Coram's Fields  
93 Guilford St,  
London WC1N 1DN

**Venue details:**  
[www.coramsfields.org/](http://www.coramsfields.org/)



Over 170,000 people took part in this year's Playday — making clear that the first Wednesday of August is now firmly fixed in the national calendar for Playday.

This year Playday was endorsed by the Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland, former President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and Chair of Play Wales, and the Children's Commissioner for England. Screenings of the Project Wild Thing, organised

by The Wild Network and the Free Time Consortium, helped spread the word

about more children playing outside and connecting with nature.

**Check out the Playday website**  
<http://www.playday.org.uk/media/playday-in-the-news>.



# All-party parliamentary group calls for a 'fresh approach' to children's play

By Neil Coleman, Play England Trustee

On 14 October the All Party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood (APPG FHC) launched its latest report 'Play'. It is the fourth in a series of reports published by the group on major aspects of child wellbeing. It focuses on play as one key positive element within a 'whole-child' message, a theme which was initiated by the APPG FHC two years ago and has since been adopted by many others.

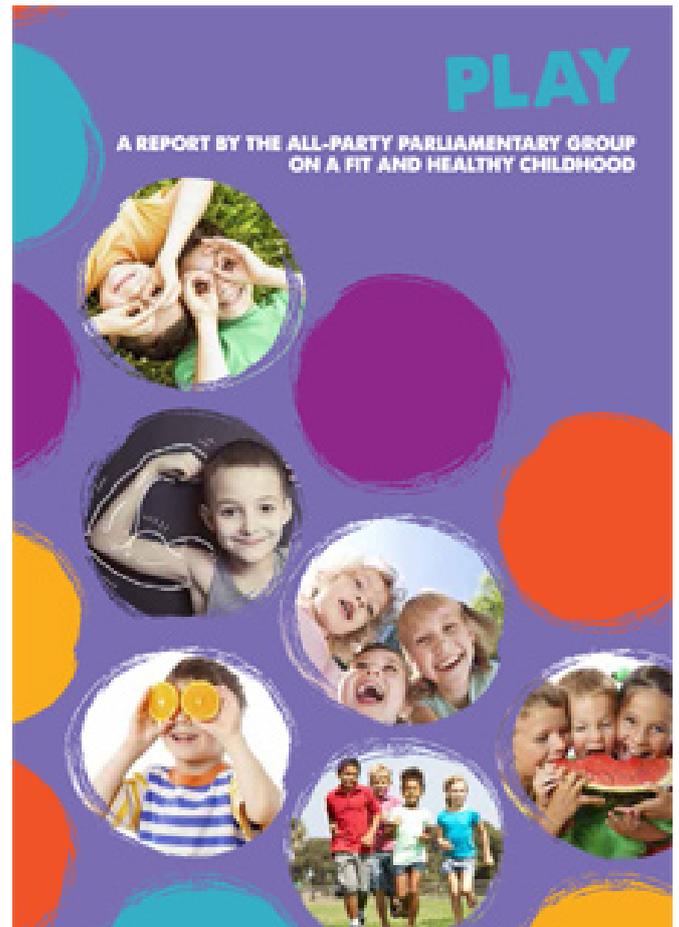
'Play' has been welcomed by ministers, MPs, peers, corporate bodies and academics alike as offering a fresh approach to a serious and long-standing issue, and has already led to a number of top-level meetings.

The report reads rather differently to typical Play Sector publications and reaches far outside the traditional scope of the sector. The author, former MP Helen Clark, has deliberately aimed her work at a specific audience of non-play people which, coming from an 'independent' viewpoint, can carry extra weight in government circles.

Contributors to the report included the Universities of Sheffield, Roehampton, Derby, Cambridge and Leeds Beckett, along with detailed submissions from many independent consultants, local government, the Association of Play Industries (API), Leapfrog Toys and, of course, Play England.

The work of the APPG FHC continues, with forthcoming reports on the government's National Obesity Framework, Child Mental Health and the role of Sport and Physical Exercise in child wellbeing.

- Neil Coleman represents Play England on the All Party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood (APPG FHC) and is also a member of its National Obesity Framework working group.



For more information and to download the report visit [http://www.royalpa.co.uk/?p=the\\_appg\\_on\\_a\\_fit\\_and\\_healthy\\_childhood](http://www.royalpa.co.uk/?p=the_appg_on_a_fit_and_healthy_childhood)

## What you can do:

Contact your MP and ask them to support the report's recommendations, including the restoration of core government funding for Play England and local play organisations to maximise provision in the most play-deprived areas.

## How are conker supplies holding out round your way?

Up in York, they all seem to disappear almost as soon as they hit the ground, so someone must be hoarding them. If you're short of ideas for what to do with your secret conker cache, check out some tips from **The Wild Network**:

<http://www.thewildnetwork.com/conkers>

**Mark Gladwin**  
Play England Trustee

## Membership drive

Play England's vision is for England to be a country where everybody can fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years.

As a membership-led organisation, attracting new members is absolutely vital for us to achieve this vision. You can help by encouraging friends, colleagues and organisations to sign up today. For all membership rates and to download the membership form visit <http://tinyurl.com/c9feujj>

# Councils sign up to Street Play



In September, Play England organised a seminar hosted by Leeds City Council to show how easy it is for local authorities to facilitate street play and explain its health benefits.

Over 70 delegates from 16 north of England local authorities joined health and transport professionals for the seminar, which was supported by Playing Out, University of Bristol, Leeds Play Network, 20s plenty for us and Get Cycling.

The seminar coincided with European Mobility Week and included information on how Street Play can complement sustainable travel initiatives.



Play England also produced a new Street Play briefing for the event, which is available at the Play England website. Visit <http://www.playengland.org.uk/our-work/projects/street-play.aspx>

## 1 in 5 children are refused mental health treatment

The NSPCC has drawn attention to a looming mental health 'time-bomb' as children are denied access to mental health treatment. A survey of 35 mental health trusts across England has shown that out of 186,453 cases referred by GPs and other professionals, 39,652 children did not receive help. Following a Freedom of Information request by the mental health charity YoungMinds in July it emerged that more than £35m was cut from children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) last year.

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/nmrz9nf> to find out more.

## Positive mental wellbeing essential for children and young people to flourish

Public Health England has published a new guide for public health commissioners.

It outlines the importance of measuring mental wellbeing in children and young people. 'Raising levels of mental wellbeing across children and young people can improve life satisfaction and feelings of worth in individuals involved, while at the same time improving the economic prospects of an area by reducing the overall burden of ill health'.

Download the report at <http://tinyurl.com/ndu8w8n>

Tanny Stobart, Play England Trustee and Director of Play Torbay

## Get involved:

- If you have ideas you'd like to contribute for future issues of Play Today please e-mail: [membership@playengland.net](mailto:membership@playengland.net)
- Keep up to date and share information on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/playengland/>



Leeds Beckett University is recruiting to the BA (Hons) Playwork for September 2016 start. If you are interested in pursuing a career working with children in a play context, come along to our open day on 28 November. If you can't make it to Leeds, you can take part in an on-line open day or speak to a member of the playwork team.

Lesli Godfrey, Play England Trustee and Senior Lecturer, Leeds Beckett University

Details: [www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk)