

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Form



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Name of Local Authority: Merthyr Tydfil

Name of responsible officer: Chris Hole

Job title: Early Years and Youth Manager

Date of completion:

Please note that the Play Sufficiency Assessment must be received by the Welsh Government by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016



As well as establishing a baseline of provision, the Play Sufficiency Assessment will enable the following:

- Identification of gaps in information, provision, service delivery and policy implementation
- Support the establishment of evidence to give an indication of distance travelled in relation to play sufficiency
- Highlight potential ways of addressing issues relating to partnership working
- The input and involvement of all partners increasing levels of knowledge and understanding
- A monitoring system which will involve and improve communication between professionals
- The identification of good practice examples
- Increased levels of partnerships in assessing sufficient play opportunities
- The identification of actions for the Securing Play Sufficiency Action Plan which accompanies the Play Sufficiency Assessment

A template has been produced to support a corporate appraisal of the matters that need to be taken into account as set out in the Statutory Guidance. The indicators listed within each matter are provided as sample indicators which should be amended to meet local issues as appropriate.

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

The Play Sufficiency Assessment must demonstrate that the Local Authority has taken into account and assessed the matters set out in The Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012 and Statutory Guidance.

As well as providing baseline information, the Assessment can include examples of current practice that the Local Authority wishes to highlight.

Local Authorities might consider structuring the Play Sufficiency Assessment in the following way and as a minimum address all the identified sections.

### Principle Statement

This section should be used to articulate the Local Authority's acknowledgement of the value and importance of play in the lives of children.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council acknowledges the value of play for children and young people and its importance in the lives of children to assist in developing cohesive, safe and strong communities.

Merthyr Tydfil welcomes the definition of play as set out in the Children And Families (Wales) Measure (section 11(6)) which recognises the role of both freely chosen play and the valuable contribution of 'any recreational activity' in meeting the needs of children and young people. Merthyr Tydfil through its ongoing commitment to its communities recognises that children have a fundamental right to be able to play; that play is central to their enjoyment of life and contributes to their wellbeing; play is essential for the growth in children's cognitive; physical; social and emotional development.

The vision for Merthyr Tydfil is to ensure that play is recognised within key strategies and policies within the Authority and that there is a clear strategic drive to improve coordination in the interests of improving children's play opportunities across the County Borough.

### Context

This section should describe the methodology used to undertake and approve the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan and any consultation with partners on the Assessment/Action Plan. It should also list the key partners that engaged with the process and identify any challenges in undertaking the Assessment. It should describe the mechanism that the Local Authority proposes to use to take forward the identified actions for the action plan.

In December 2015, Play Wales (with partners Melyn Consulting and Play Right) was appointed to undertake the Play Sufficiency Assessment and support the development of the Action Plan for 2016-17. This was supported by the Contract Manager and a Steering Group comprised of stakeholders from across Merthyr Tydfil. Departments and organisations represented in the Steering Group include:

- Early years and Flying Start
- Children with disabilities
- Family Information Service
- Planning Department
- Parks Department
- Sports and Leisure and Leisure Trust
- Road Safety, highways and traffic management
- Estates Management
- Schools and inclusion
- Youth and Community service
- Clybiau Plant Cymru
- Voluntary action Merthyr Tydfil

The steering group has met twice to review and contribute to the Play sufficiency Assessment. Members provided information for the PSA template and contributed to its completion. The group has through email reviewed the findings of the assessment at each stage of production.

The approach to the play sufficiency assessment has paid attention to the requirements set out in *Wales-A Play Friendly Country* statutory guidance, utilising the toolkit issued by Welsh Government.

The methodology was undertaken in five phases

- 1) Data gathering (quantitative and qualitative) phase
- 2) Data Assessment phase
- 3) Consultation phase
- 4) Play Sufficiency Assessment phase
- 5) Conclusion and recommendation phase

### **The data gathering and assessment phases**

The Contract team:

- Obtained and reviewed the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2013, community profiles or similar quantitative and qualitative data already gathered to support the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016
- Identified gaps in data and arranged to obtain and assess such data
- Liaised with the Client to identify and agree stakeholders and key partners
- Undertook assessment activity with stakeholders, including those where there are gaps
- Analysed GIS data, existing surveys and strategies [ such as Open Space Strategy, Youth Service Strategy and Local Authority Partnership Agreement (LAPA)]

In this phase, insights from the Play Steering Group were incorporated and appropriate existing information and data was reviewed in order to minimise duplication in data gathering.

### **Consultation Phase**

The contract team:

- Designed and implemented easy access surveys both online and hard copy.
- Uploaded and advertised bilingual surveys aimed at children and young people
- Uploaded and advertised bilingual surveys aimed at parents and carers
- Developed and implemented a programme of focus groups for children aged 5-17
- Worked with colleagues and specific local partners to implement focus group activities for disabled children and young people
- Implemented a programme of focus groups with stakeholders

### **Play Sufficiency Assessment phase**

The Contract team:

- Utilised the toolkit provided by Welsh Government to complete Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016, referencing Play Sufficiency Assessment 2013

- Assessed Matters A-I, alongside colleagues from the Authority, in line with regulations and *Wales- A Play Friendly Country* statutory guidance and complete the Play Sufficiency Assessment using Welsh Government's toolkit

### **Conclusion and recommendation phase**

The Contract Team

- Completed a strengths and weakness analysis for each Matter (A-I)
- Drew conclusions from the analysis
- Prioritised the conclusions with regards to Matters A-I in consultation with the Play Steering Group
- Produced the final PSA and Action Plan

### **Methodological Approach and Research Methods for Collecting Data**

In addition to desk research, qualitative and quantitative data was gathered from children, young people, parents/cares, service deliverers, and council officers. A mix methods approach to data gathering was employed, to allow researchers to cross reference responses during the analysis stage. This research technique enabled a greater understanding of responses and ensured robustness of findings; based on a triangulation approach, comparing data sets and held information (such as, play spaces). Methods for collecting data included:

- Self completed questionnaires (available online and hard copy)
- Focus group sessions
- Semi structured interviews
- Children/young people's workshops
- Desk research

### **Challenges associated with completing the Assessment**

As with most Local Authorities across Wales there are significant staffing and financial resource issues within the Authority, and amongst its partners, which has limited the ability of some services to fully engage with the Play Sufficiency process. Challenges faced by services across the county has led to diminished capacity and in some cases staff with information and knowledge have moved within or out of the Authority.

Engaging with children and young people has been particularly challenging, partly due to the timescale and also to capacity locally. This will be addressed early in April 2016.

The closure of Tri-County Play Association and the concurrent end of the BIG Lottery Child's Play programme has significantly resulted in a reduction of activity/services , particularly the provision of staffed open access community based play provision.

The assessment has identified some good practice that would support play sufficiency; however there is no clear evidence of joined up working and there have potentially been missed opportunities for concurrent work which would have enhanced opportunities.

### **Developing and taking forward actions**

The unprecedented and regressive funding cuts to public services, across Wales means all authorities are facing challenges in meeting their statutory requirements. Within Merthyr Tydfil the closure of the regional play association has meant that maintaining levels of delivery identified in the PSA 2013 has been difficult. It has been particularly challenging to maintain and improve services, which support access to play opportunities with less financial investment across the sector.

Moving forward, there is a significant need to demonstrate the added value and wider impacts of play and playing to partner agencies, showcasing the contribution it can make to wider agendas, leveraging funding and resources to support the Authority to comply with its duties to secure sufficient play opportunities that are reasonable and practicable.

Despite the challenges facing the Authority there are some good examples of work being carried out in Merthyr, which has the potential with collaboration to uphold children's right to play. Improving access and mobility to existing spaces as well as addressing parental and wider societal concerns is key to the Authority working towards sufficiency.

The majority of work associated with play sufficiency previously has tended to focus on developing more quality staffed play provision, and whilst we recognise the need to secure these services and facilities in recognition of the significant contribution they make to children and communities, more of an emphasis needs to be placed on promoting children's play within the wider public realm.

The following priorities have been identified through the play sufficiency assessment and support an approach that provides focus for our work in securing sufficient time and space for children's play. This approach will ensure that we address the most significant barriers identified through our assessment.

- Increase and secure the quality of play in existing staffed provision
- Secure safer streets for play
- Secure access to a wider range of spaces for play
- Secure spaces for play in close proximity to children's homes
- Ensure quality assessment of spaces for play value
- Increase parental permission for play

Actions have been developed on a no cost/low cost basis and as such the need to work collaboratively is a necessity. With limited staff capacity, there will need to be a strategic infrastructure in place to keep the Action Plan under review, report on progress to Welsh Government annually, to develop Action Plans for 2017-18 and 2018-19. The Play Steering Group will be maintained as a working group, which meets quarterly to implement a review programme and ensure sufficient communication and planning.

### Partnership working

This section should demonstrate to what extent the following (and others) were involved in the undertaking of the Assessment and the development of the action plan:

- Town and Community Councils
- Third sector organisations, particularly regional play associations
- The private sector if appropriate
- Community groups
- Community First Partnerships

There are a number of third sector organisations commissioned to deliver play, youth and leisure provision across the County Borough. Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil is the organisation supporting voluntary sector organisation and representatives from this organisation are active members of the Play Steering Group.

Private sector businesses, such as after school clubs, childminders, and education providers have contributed to the PSA regarding consultation and workforce development. The lead officer with responsibility for the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) sits on the Play Steering Group.

The Communities First Management Team has contributed to the Play Steering Group and the content of the audit. A decreasing capacity amongst partners has hindered active engagement and we aim to redress this as part of the Action Plan.

Groundwork Wales and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council have worked in partnership throughout 2015/16 to identify and target communities for support. This has included engagement with local community groups, housing associations, Families First, Communities First, Flying Start

and schools, where they serve a local area. Future projects have been identified from this partnership working and will continue during 2016 and 2017.

### Consultation and participation

This section should describe how the Local Authority has:

- Obtained the views of children with regards to the play opportunities they currently access, how they would like the community to better support them to play and what barriers stop them from playing
- Obtained the views on play provision from parents, families and other stakeholders
- Analysed the information and have used it to inform future plans

Consultation and participation activities have been conducted to establish:

- The strategic context for play in Merthyr Tydfil
- Existing data on play opportunities and provision
- The views of stakeholders (children, parents, community members, providers)

Groundwork Wales staff has sought feedback and views on play sessions from all families and children and other stakeholders who have attended play sessions in Merthyr Tydfil. This has included other play opportunities, cost, activities offered and barriers to play. These areas have included:

- Merthyr Vale
- Glyn Mill Traveller Site
- Twynrhodyn

### Surveys and focus groups

After receiving few responses to a comprehensive questionnaire for children, the contract team ran 5 focus groups with children and 2 with parents. The Merthyr Tydfil Open Space Strategy consulted with 149 children and young people and included questions around accessibility and satisfaction in open spaces.

On line questionnaires for parents were also promoted via Corporate Communications and the Family Information Service. The feedback and responses from the questionnaires and focus groups will help to form the action plan to enable the authority and partners to focus on addressing the barriers to accessing play in communities across Merthyr Tydfil.

### **Maximising resources**

*This section should provide an overview as to how partners currently use their existing budgets to support children's access to play opportunities. It should identify how budgets have been reprioritised as part of the 2013 Play Sufficiency Assessments and subsequent plans.*

*Please use this section to highlight what has changed since the 2013 Play Sufficiency Action Plan in terms of how resources are allocated.*

*Please also highlight how Welsh Government programmes have been used locally for the provision of play and how they have addressed priorities from your 2013 play sufficiency assessment:*

The 2013 PSA indicated that the authority did not intend reprioritising budgets for Play Sufficiency. However, a small amount of core funding covered the appointment of a Youth and Play Manager from July 2014-2015. Upon the post holder tendering resignation, the Authority undertook a staffing restructure and removed the post, passing on the responsibility for play sufficiency to the Children, Young People and Partnerships Manager. Similarly, this post holder also tendered a resignation in November 2015 and the decision was taken to restructure. Responsibility for play sufficiency now sits with the Early Years and Youth Manager.

The Authority has faced significant funding issues and whilst some progress has been made in terms of meeting some of the Play Sufficiency Action Plans, this is largely due to the additional Play Sufficiency Grants allocated from Welsh Government in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

#### Welsh Government Increasing Play Opportunities Grant (2013-14 and 2014-15)

When funding has become available, through the Increasing Play Opportunities Grant, it has been spent in accordance with the 2013 and 2014 Play Sufficiency Action Plan as far as was reasonably possible given the time constraints associated with the grant.

#### Welsh Government Sustainable Play Project

Groundwork Wales has delivered Sustainable Play, funded by Welsh Government's Children and Families Delivery Grant in communities of Merthyr Tydfil during 2015 and 2016. Groundwork Wales has supported play in Merthyr Tydfil through the delivery of staffed play sessions. Staff from both Groundwork Wales and Merthyr Tydfil CBC met soon after Sustainable Play funding commenced to discuss priority areas for Sustainable Play support in Merthyr Tydfil. There is potential for this service to be strategically co-ordinated in the future.

### Families First

There are two projects commissioned via the Families First Disability element:

- Law yn Llaw Preschool Support to Children aims to provide a collaborative and co-ordinated service which supports children aged 2 - 4 years old who have disabilities and developmental delays to access pre-school and play activity provisions. At least 40 children per year supported in pre-school settings providing a minimum of 2 sessions per week.
- SNAP Inclusion For All aims of the service is to reduce the inequalities that exist in access and inclusion to services for disabled children, young people and their families to enable them to reach their full potential.

### **The Play Sufficiency Assessment and the Single Integrated Plan**

This section should identify how the Play Sufficiency Assessments form part of the local needs assessment and to what extent the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan are integrated into the planning, implementation and review of the Single Integrated Plan.

Play in Merthyr is not represented in key strategic plans, either Local Authority or Local Service Board level. With the advent of the new wellbeing duty on all public bodies, there is an opportunity to put forward a credible argument as to how play can contribute to our understanding of wellbeing, and how it can be a useful addition to the Wellbeing Plan or the Wellbeing Objectives that the LA must set out.

### **Monitoring Play Sufficiency**

This section should identify the lead director and lead member for children and young people's services. It should also describe the Play Monitoring Group or equivalent. Along with a list of members, please describe how the group has been facilitated and the benefits and challenges of the group.

The Lead director for People and Performance Lorraine Buck is the councils nominated lead for Children and Young People Services within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and the Lead Member is Councillor Harvey Jones.

The Play Sufficiency Steering Group has been established by council prior to the 2013 PSA assessment and are also the group responsible for monitoring progress of the actions approved by council. The PSA monitoring group is made up of representatives of the following departments and is chaired by the Early Years and Youth manager who also has responsibility for Play within the Local Authority

- Early years and Flying Start
- Children with disabilities
- Family Information Service
- Planning Department
- Parks Department
- Sports and Leisure Trust
- Road Safety, highways and traffic management
- Estates Management
- Schools and inclusion
- Youth and Community service
- Clybiau Plant Cymru
- Voluntary action Merthyr Tydfil

There are significant benefits from the current group which draws together the expertise from across a range of departments and organisations which all have a role to play in developing a 'play friendly' Merthyr Tydfil.

The challenges faced by the Local Authority are the same as most across Wales due to the severe financial pressures they are facing. In tandem with this as Merthyr Tydfil is compact which results in individuals often fulfilling multiple roles which can create time and capacity pressures. However, these pressures also mean that the authority has developed services through thinking creatively and of reshaping and modernising services to continue to meet the needs of the public.

### **Criteria**

This section contains the “matters that need to be taken into account” as set out under section 10 of the Statutory Guidance.

The Criteria column: sets out the data that needs to be available and the extent to which Local Authorities meet the stated criteria.

The RAG status column: provides a drop down box, whereby the Local Authority can show its assessment of whether that criterion is fully met; partially met; or not met. These have been given Red, Amber Green markers, which appear as words in the drop down boxes.

Red, Amber Green (RAG) status is a tool to communicate status quickly and effectively.

RAG status

Criteria fully met.	Fully met
Criteria partially met with some good features	Some good features
Criteria partially met with	Partially met
Criteria not met.	Not met

The Evidence to support strengths column: should be used to provide the reason for the chosen criteria status and how the evidence is held.

The Shortfall column: should be used to explain the areas in which the Local Authority does not fully meet the criteria.

The Identified Action for Action Plan column: Should be used to show the Local Authority action planning priorities for that Matter.

The General Comments: for each matter should give a clear overview of how the Local Authority complies with the intention and implementation of this matter as set out fully in the Statutory Guidance.

The template should be monitored by the officer who is co-ordinating the Assessment and reviewed on a regular basis by the Play Sufficiency Working Group.

Matter A: Population

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should present data about the number of children living in the Local Authority to enable an assessment of their potential play requirements. The data should provide information about the numbers of children in different categories that may affect their play requirements. The data should also show if the area is classified as one of disadvantage/deprivation and whether a 5 year population projection is available.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met with some good features	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
There is data broken down by Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)			Data from the ONS (2015) Small area Population Estimate, Mid-2014 and Mid-2013. Small area (LSOA) population is published by ONS founded on the most recent census (2011) but updated by a range of other data including Child Benefit records to produce estimates. A detailed data report has been produced	Children form between 16% and 31% of the population in Merthyr LSOAs. Areas with the highest proportion of children include Penydarren and Gurnos areas. There is a clear link between proportion of children and deprivation.	Identify an appropriate mechanism for collating data and using it to plan for play services.

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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
There is up to date data for ages:			The data (2014) shows that there are:		
0-3			2,902 (23% of all children)		
4-7			2,903 (23% of all children)		
8-12			3,193 (26% of all children)		
13-15			2,019 (16% of all children)		
16-17			1,461 (12% of all children)		
There is an up to date recorded number of disabled children in each age group			ONS (2011) Census: QS303EW Long-term health problem or disability, local authorities in England and Wales. ( <a href="http://goo.gl/trTx9a">http://goo.gl/trTx9a</a> Accessed 20/01/16). Data for children with limiting life-long illnesses is available from the 2011 Census which asked the question “Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?” and the available responses extended to “Yes, limited a lot”, “Yes, limited a little” or “No”.	Mapping the data shows a strong relationship between deprivation and child disability / poor health. All LSOAs within the highest 10% also have 7% or more children with poor health / disabilities (Merthyr Ave. 5.7%).	
There is up to date information regarding the number of children			3.5% of children aged 0 to 15 speak Welsh (ONS	Use of Welsh language by children is low in the	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
for whom Welsh is their first language or attend Welsh medium schools			Census 2011). PLASC returns (Jan 2015) recorded 8% of all pupils in Welsh medium education.	context of Wales as a whole. Rates are higher in the Merthyr Vale and Treharris area.	
There is up to date information regarding other recorded cultural factors, including other language, and gypsy traveller children			<p>The 2011 Census shows that there are 62 individuals who identify their ethnicity as White Gypsy or Irish Traveller. Two thirds of these individuals (41) are residents of Plymouth (the location of the Glynmill site), Town and Gurnos wards.</p> <p>The White British ethnic group is the main ethnicity amongst the resident population of Merthyr. 94.6 per cent (55,635) individuals define themselves as White British compared with 93.2 per cent in Wales. The figures also show that of the 2,641 Merthyr residents not born in the UK, 56.9 per cent (1,503 residents) were born in one of three countries.</p>	There are small numbers of minority groups in the area which is likely to make any specific needs for play provision difficult to ascertain.	

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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			<p>1,016 born in Poland, 293 born in Portugal and 194 born in the Philippines. These groups are also particularly concentrated in certain parts of Merthyr with Gurnos, Dowlais, and Town wards dominating the numbers of these residents.</p> <p>In 2015 there were 215 National Insurance registrations in Merthyr to overseas residents. The majority of these were from EU8 countries.</p>		

### General Comments: Population Measures

The Census data at LSOA level have provided a detailed picture of the numbers of children and young people in the identified age groups. The management information system that has been amended through previous Play Sufficiency Action Plans should be utilised to include play provision and access to play opportunities.

The new Social Services and Wellbeing Act will also provide an opportunity to ensure all play services are integrated onto the directory through the DEWIS web based directory.

*How has/will the Local Authority use its population data to plan for sufficient play opportunities locally?*

The Authority needs to identify a strategy for analysing the range of relevant population data it holds to plan more effectively for children's play. The lack of financial resources for a strategic lead officer for play has negatively impacted on the ability to plan and develop services in a strategic manner. The lack of core funding for play services inhibits the provision and securing of play opportunities. The Authority will use an

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existing management information system to record attendance and engagement in play provision that the Authority delivers and commissions.

### Matter B: Providing for Diverse Needs

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should present data about how the Local Authority and partners aim to offer play opportunities that are inclusive and encourage all children to play and meet together.

#### RAG Status:

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met with some good features	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The play requirements of children living in isolated rural areas are understood and provided for			The Open Space Strategy provides good mapping of availability of open space and play space provision.	Mapping clearly shows limited formal or informal play space in the most rural areas e.g. Bedlinog.	Establish a coherent agreement with Groundwork Wales in 2016 to identify priority areas for its service  Play Steering group partners to help identify other groups who would benefit from inclusive play training.
The play requirements of Welsh language speaking children are understood and provided for			Groundwork Wales' open access play sessions are offered bilingually  There is Menter Iaith provision at Canolfan Soar, which provides programmes for children wishing to use and develop their use of the Welsh Language.  The Youth Strategy recognises that Welsh language continues		

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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			to be an area for development and aims to ensure 100% of services promote the use of the Welsh language to young people, developing ownership and raising cultural awareness.		Groundwork Wales to share information with stakeholders who could promote play opportunities to any of these groups.
The play requirements of children from different cultural background are understood and provided for			MAGNET is funded under the BIG Lottery Community Voice grant scheme for four years. The portfolio began in May 2013 and the finishing dates for the projects taper off to the end of October 2017. The aim is to increase the voice of citizens, especially those who are most marginalised, in policy, planning and delivery processes. MAGNET is made up of 7 projects and Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) is the portfolio holder.	Other than support for Gypsy and Traveller children, MAGNET initiatives don't currently directly support play opportunities.	Identify low cost model of provision, which utilises the outdoor space at Glyn Mill.  Registered staffed provision to undertake the access audit and identify actions for improvement
The play requirements and support needs of disabled children are understood and provided for.			Sustainable Play is co-delivered with SNAP Cymru which has delivered inclusive play training to Groundwork Wales staff. This training is available to other organisations	The relationship between poor health, disability and deprivation in Merthyr is pronounced. This has required a greater focus in specific areas and hindered a universal service offer.	
Play projects and providers have access to a range of resources which support inclusion			Available from Groundwork Wales through Welsh Government funding.	Closure of Tri-County Play Association has resulted in a loss of resource in terms of inclusive training, toolkit	

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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			Funding is available through Families First to include disabled children and young people in play provision.	and mentoring.	
There is a well known and agreed mechanism which is used to identify the need for separate provision for disabled children			<p>Children are assessed for need and service upon intake and referral. There are 90 children with functionality needs who require a specific service of support to access leisure opportunities. These are provided by either direct payments to access provision or through Leisure Link workers for those children who require significant support. (Children with Disabilities Team)</p> <p>As a result of Families First having a better understanding of the barriers which affect disabled children and parents accessing services, a new post has been created based at SNAP Cymru to deliver the Amber Green Inclusion Scheme.</p> <p>The aim of the scheme is to promote inclusion and develop a quality mark to demonstrate</p>	There is a lack of capacity in mainstream provision to encourage inclusion of disabled children, particularly for those with complex needs	

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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			that facilities (schools, businesses, third sector) are more accessible.		
Access audits for all play provision as described in the guidance are undertaken			Access audits to space are undertaken through the Open Space Strategy.	Access Audits for staffed provision has not been evidenced currently in play provision delivered by partners	
Designated play space is provided and well maintained on Gypsy Traveller sites			<p>The Community Centre is now open on Glyn Mill Traveller Site. It offers a homework club (through Education-Access and Inclusion) and other structured recreation activities, which are well received by children and young people. Groundwork Wales facilitated 4 staffed play sessions on open space in summer 2015 with more planned in 2016.</p> <p>The Bridges Project (Safer Merthyr Magnet Project) facilitates the Cobs Group (a forum for young Gypsy Travellers) which works with children from Glyn Mill and children in dwellings.</p>	<i>Uncertainty regarding wardenship</i>	
The requirements of young carers are understood and provided for		STATUS	Barnardo's Young Carers Service supports young carers aged 5 – 18 years old who		

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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			have caring responsibilities.. The service provides after-school groups, activity days, residential breaks, in-school support, one-to-one support and any other support the young carer and/or their family may need.		
The requirements of lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) children are understood and provided for			Through Visible, as part of the Magnet Project, LGBT parents have indicated that they are concerned about the opportunities and resources (such as library books) available to their younger children. In response, a family play day has been held with more requested. The Magnet Project is working in partnership with PRIDE Cymru to develop youth provision which will operate monthly initially		
The requirements of disabled children are understood and provided for within traffic and transport initiatives			The Local Authority has facilitated a programme of providing raised kerbing at bus stops to make access to buses easier for people with mobility problems.  The Local Authority is working closely with the RNIB and their new Street Charter to		

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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			understand their needs when developing new schemes, installing new crossings facilities. This would apply to all users with additional needs.		

General Comments: Providing for Diverse Needs

*How has data been used (or how will the data be used) to address the barriers that children with diverse needs face in accessing inclusive opportunities for playing?*

The local authority should utilise the existing management information system held by the Youth service to enable the data capture of service provision commissioned by the local authority. If independent partners are also willing to share data or contribute to the system then this will allow the collection and review of intelligence on the play needs of the diverse population groups in Merthyr Tydfil

Matter C: Space available for children to play: Open Spaces and Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces

The Local Authority should recognise that all open spaces within their area are potentially important areas where children can play or pass through to reach other play areas or places where they go.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met with some good features	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

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### Open Spaces

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority has undertaken an Open Space Assessment (OSA) that maps areas that are used, or might be used for playing as listed in the Statutory Guidance			<p>The Open Space Strategy (OSS) has been undertaken and is in consultation phase.</p> <p>The Strategy identifies the different types of open space which are locally important and sets out locally derived quantity, quality and access standards. The current level of provision of these locally important open spaces has been established through the gathering of evidence by extensive site surveys and audits.</p> <p>The OSS identifies a total of 45 sites of children and young people’s play space and data is available by both LSOA and ward with detailed analysis of accessibility for children and young people’s play space also available.</p> <p>Data maps included in Data Annex</p>	Particularly poor provision / access to provision for children and young people is identified in the OSS in Park, Town, Treharris and Penydarren wards.	The Ward analysis and accessibility maps (appendix 4) contained in the OSS should be used to provide guidance on maintaining formal and informal play space across the LA.
The Local Authority has undertaken an Accessible Greenspace Study that maps areas that are used			Planning department has used Natural Resources Wales Green Space toolkit to inform Open Space policy.	Access to amenity green space is poor or non-existent in Bedlinog, Cyfartha, Merthyr Vale, Penydarren,	

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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
for playing				Town and Plymouth wards.	
The Local Authority undertakes access audits at all open spaces and implements proposals to improve access and safety			The Open Space Assessment contains useful analysis of play space accessibility—this is an improvement from the information in the PSA 2013.		
The Local Authority has developed its own Open Space Standards in accordance with the advice and requirements of Planning Policy Wales			The Green Space standard benchmarks informed the Open Space survey. These benchmarks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Welcoming Place</li> <li>• Healthy, safe and secure</li> <li>• Clean and well maintained</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Management/achievements</li> <li>• Community involvement</li> <li>• Marketing</li> </ul>		
The Local Authority undertakes and actions Play Space assessments which include actions to make public space clear from hazards			There are rigorous management systems and procedures in place to ensure that the provision of play facilities is maintained. A Playground Fitter, Fitter's Mate and Playground Inspector currently maintain levels of inspections and maintenance set out within BSEN 1176:1998 Part 7.  This is administered through a regular inspection and assessment programme with frequent visual inspections, quarterly operational assessments and annual independent inspections.	The annual inspection may result in a decommissioning of play equipment if it does not meet recommended safety features.	Review the PSA to ensure that findings and actions from the imminent annual inspection are noted and reflected in actions.

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			An annual inspection of current play spaces is due to take place within this financial year (by end of March 2016)		
Brownfield sites owned by the Local Authority are assessed for the potential for the site to be reclaimed to provide for children's play			This is considered as part of the Planning process through Section 106 Agreements for the provision of play areas	Lack of funding makes this currently unachievable	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan

### Outdoor Unstaffed Designated Play Spaces

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of all designated play space as described in the Statutory Guidance			This data is included within the Open Spaces Strategy.  Parks Department monitors playground and playing fields as part of the Open Space Strategy. There is data on maintenance, and inspection, age of equipment and facility provision in relations to FIT's standards (LAP's, LEAP's, NEAP's).	The policy of full cost recovery for playing fields (passing costs on to users) may result in a reduction in the maintenance of some playing fields to league standard. However, these spaces will remain accessible to the public as an amenity for informal use.	
The Local Authority assesses play spaces for play value and potential to increase in play use as set out in the Statutory Guidance			Regular inspection programme in place	Capacity issues limit the extent to which spaces can be assessed for play value.	
The Local Authority undertakes			Regular	The Open Space Strategy and	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
access audits at all designated play spaces and implements proposals to improve access and safety			inspection of play spaces through play inspectors (staffing structure of inspection team currently under review) Annual structural inspections Access auditing features as part of the annual independent inspection.	annual independent inspection considers access issues but this can only make recommendations, rather than implement change.  The age of current spaces hindered adherence to DDA requirements	
The Local Authority has developed and agreed a new fixed play provision standard			Fixed play standard adheres to FIT Cymru guidelines  The Authority has adopted the current European Standards, BSEN 1176:1998 Parts 1-7 for Equipment and BSEN 1177:1998 for surfacing as minimum standards required for the installation of all new equipment.	The majority of playgrounds (36/53) are older than their expected 15 year lifespan.  Without continued financial investment sites exceeding 15 year olds will see equipment decommissioned, although these sites would remain as informal amenity sites.  There have been no new installations of fixed equipment since 2010.	
The Local Authority undertakes and actions play space assessments in designated play spaces			Regular schedule of inspections of all Parks is in place  Work is carried out to mitigate risk and clear hazards. Annual structural	A proposed staffing restructure may result in a decrease of the maintenance regime.	Install Playground signage (which include smoke free messages) and work with FIS to promote

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			inspections on play areas.		
The Local Authority has introduced smoke-free playgrounds			With the use of additional funding from Welsh Government (2014-15), work was undertaken in partnership with the Local Health Board and Parks to produce smoke free signage		
The Local Authority has removed 'no ball games' signs to encourage more children playing in the community				This has not been a priority or strategic drive within the Authority	
The Local Authority has erected signs, such as Play Priority Signs to encourage more children playing in the community			New playground signage has been designed and commissioned for all fixed sites in Merthyr Tydfil.		
The Local Authority includes a recognition of the importance of playing fields to children's play when any disposal decisions are made			The Local Development Plan (LDP) acknowledges the importance of 'community facilities' and 'leisure facilities' within which 'playing fields' are counted.  The Council comply with The Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Regulations 2015, which came in to force on 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2015	The council has not dealt with any disposals of playing fields since the effective date.	
The Local Authority includes children and their families in any			The Council comply with The Playing Fields (Community	The council has not dealt with any disposals of playing fields	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
consultations regarding decisions to dispose of playing fields			Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Regulations 2015, which came in to force on 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2015	since the effective date.	

### General Comments: Open Spaces

*How has the Local Authority ensured collaboration between Open Space Assessments (OSAs) and Play Sufficiency Assessments to improve spaces for play?*

The Planning Department is well represented on the Play Steering Group. The Open Space Assessment contains useful analysis of play space accessibility. The Merthyr Tydfil Open Space Strategy and associated Action Plans are being consulted on (3<sup>rd</sup> March – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016).

Collaboration will continue via the Play Steering Group.

### Other Comments on Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces

There is a strategy for the management and maintenance of the playgrounds and playing fields under the responsibility of the Authority. These are well spread across the local authority area and provide a resource to support play.

There are on going issues of significantly decreased funding for the playground portfolio which has resulted in the majority of available designated equipped playgrounds being beyond their original lifespan.

Matter D: Supervised provision

The Local Authority should aim to offer a range of supervised play provision.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met with some good features	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Play work provision

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of all supervised play provision as described in the Statutory Guidance			<p>Merthyr Family Information Service hold details of all supervised play provision. In January 2016 this comprised 15 After School Clubs (8 in day nurseries), 21 childminders and 16 holiday playschemes (8 in day nurseries).</p> <p>The CSA Action Plan sets out a range of strategies and actions to support existing provision and develop new play-based</p>	<p>Numbers of open access playwork settings has decreased since the last PSA (due to the closure of the Tri County Play Association and the end of the BIG Child’s Play Programme)</p> <p>The Merthyr CSA identifies gaps in both after school and holiday provision across the County Borough.</p>	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			childcare provision - especially school holiday services.		Review current quality self-assessment process to ensure it is in line with Statutory Guidance.
The Local Authority offers play provision which offers a rich play environment as described in the Statutory Guidance				The Local Authority does not directly provide services however does contract with 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector support organisations	Undertake quality play audits in staffed settings in line with statutory guidance. Monitor access by children through a quality process.
The Local Authority ensures that partners are supported to offer rich play environments as described in the Statutory Guidance			The Local Authority requires commissioned services to complete a quality self-assessment.	There is no clear evidence as to how this is supported or monitored.  Tri-County Play Association previously supported this function through training and a Quality Assurance scheme. The Association has ceased to operate since the PSA 2013.	Implement actions within the CSA Action Plan for play-based school holiday services.  Review the use of the Out of School Grant for better effect for play based provision.
Staffed play provision that the Local Authority provides meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards				The Local Authority does not directly provide staffed play provision that would require regulation.	
Staffed play provision that the Local Authority funds meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards				The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty's has introduced reforms (effective 1 April	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
				to16) to childcare regulation and registration to ensure consistency of regulation quality and suitability of childcare provision for children up to the age of 12. The change will impact on the conditions of registration for providers of services for older children who do not currently register with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW).	Develop and deliver workshops for providers currently providing services for children aged 8-12 who may need to be regulated due to changes in childcare registration.
Staffed play provision that the Local Authority's partners provide meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards			Groundwork Wales reports that it works to the National Minimum Standards	The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty's has introduced reforms (effective 1 April to16) to childcare regulation and registration to ensure consistency of regulation quality and suitability of childcare provision for children up to the age of 12. The change will impact on the conditions of registration for providers of services for older children who do not currently register with the Care and Social	Work with the Children and Young People Voluntary Organisations Forum (CYPVOF) facilitated by Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil to identify how members may facilitate opportunities for children's play.

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
				Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW).	
Staffed play provision across the Local Authority works to a recognised quality assurance programme				The Local Authority does not directly provide services however does contract with 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector support organisations	
The Local Authority priorities quality issues when engaging with/ commissioning the private sector to deliver recreational activities for children.			Service Level Agreements include specific requirements quality in relation to the requirements of the service and self assessments are undertaken		
The Local Authority provides council premises and space free of charge to organisations which provide free (at the point of access) play provision for children			A community organisation rental policy is in place, which requires organisations to pay a market rent. A rental grant application can be made to effectively reduce the level of rent payable in some circumstances  The Authority has supported Groundwork Wales outreach staffed play provision by allowing access on their		

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			land for open access funded play sessions.		<p>Review contracted services to ensure that the provision is meeting quality issues.</p> <p>Review and amend Service Level Agreements and guidance to ensure providers are achieving outcomes regarding access to play opportunities as defined in statutory guidance within the communities of Merthyr Tydfil.</p>

### Structured recreational activities for children

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority is delivering on its responsibility			Active Merthyr Tydfil Community Sport Plan	Lacks reference to role of active play alongside sport	Stronger alignment with the

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

to secure the services set out under Core Aim 4 for sport, leisure and culture			2016-17 identifies a range of plans for sport		Community Sport Plan to recognise role of active play
The local “Creating an Active Wales” plan is increasing play and recreational activities for children			Active Merthyr Tydfil Community Sport Plan 2016-17 identifies a range of plans for sport	Lacks reference to increasing play alongside sport	
Local Authority Partnership Agreements (LAPAs) are contributing to increasing free play and recreational activities			Active Merthyr Tydfil Community Sport Plan 2016-17 is the LAPA for Sports Activities in Merthyr	Sports Wales funding is necessarily focussed on sports development activities and does not have an explicit link or responsibility for the development of active play	
The sports agenda contributes to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children			There is a focus on structured activity within Active Merthyr Tydfil Community Sport Plan 2016-17		
The cultural and arts agenda, is contributing to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children			Merthyr Tydfil Public Library Service is part of Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust, which delivers the statutory service on behalf of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The Arts Division is based at Merthyr Central Library  There is a range of cultural events delivered for children and young people by		
					Offer support to community based provision to consider developing play services as part of the community offer.

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			<p>the service. Events are advertised on FIS website and Leisure Trust Website.</p>		
<p>The Local Authority Youth Service provides for children's opportunities for leisure and association</p>			<p>Youth strategy is being developed to respond to restructure and is due to be consulted on.</p> <p>Current strategy has a clear vision and curriculum plan which supports leisure and association for young people.</p> <p>Street Games offer an outreach service across 9 settings.</p> <p>The youth service is moving towards a youth and community service which is well placed to deliver and support the delivery of play opportunities in communities.</p> <p>Youth services providers have undertaken play and playwork training</p>	<p>There is a significant decrease (11 settings to 4) predicted due to funding cuts.</p>	

General Comments: Supervised play provision

There is a need for more strategic and delivery links between the play, youth, sport and recreational activities to identify how play opportunities can be further enhanced for the communities of Merthyr Tydfil

*Where the Local Authority has assessed settings as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (CSAs), how have these settings been assessed in respect of the quality of play opportunities they provide and offer?*

Service Level Agreements between the Authority and providers include specific requirements on quality in relation to the requirements of the service and self-assessments are undertaken by providers however this work has tended to focus more on early years childcare as opposed to generic play.

*How has provision that is not part of the CSA been assessed in respect of the quality of play opportunities they provide and offer?*

Some work has been done since the last PSA in improving the quality of play opportunities offered by a range of settings. The authority has offered playwork training which many settings have accessed in order to develop their service.

The Authority and providers acknowledge that children are spending time in childcare should have access to play opportunities as defined in statutory guidance. It will work with providers to increase the play opportunities offered in childcare settings.

**“Defining playwork provision** - Good playwork provision enables children to extend their own play and they protect and enhance the play space so that it is a rich play environment. A rich play environment is: A varied and interesting physical environment that maximizes the potential for socializing, creativity, resourcefulness and challenge. A place where children feel free to play in their own way, on their own terms. Where children don’t have access to local friends, time and places to play that support their play needs, staffed play provision can compensate by offering a place where children can invent and extend their own play.” (Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit)

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### Matter E: Charges for play provision

The Local Authority should consider which play opportunities involve a charge and the extent to which the Local Authority takes these charges into account in assessing for sufficient play opportunities for children living in low income families as set out in the Statutory Guidance.

#### RAG status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met with some good features	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority keeps records of the number of children living in low income families			DWP Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure 2012 Snapshot (2014) ( <a href="https://goo.gl/XxE1QY">https://goo.gl/XxE1QY</a> Accessed 20/01/16) Data from DWP shows the number of children living in families in receipt of Child Tax Credit whose reported income is less than 60 per cent of the median income or in receipt of Income Support or (Income-Based) Job Seekers Allowance, divided by the total number of children in	Care should be taken in interpreting these rates as definitive measures of child poverty levels in any given area.	Review the role of DEWIS in relation to FIS requirements

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			the area (determined by Child Benefit data).		
The Local Authority keeps records of the number of children living in areas of deprivation			Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (2014 – revised 01/12/15) ( <a href="http://goo.gl/odpziv">http://goo.gl/odpziv</a> Accessed 20/01/16). For the PSA WIMD data provides a picture of child deprivation for small areas across a small set of key indicators, both relative to other areas, and also showing actual levels such as rates of children reporting Limiting Long-Term Illness. There are 8 Merthyr LSOAs that are within the 10% most deprived in Wales for children (child index).		
The Local Authority keeps records of the number of children living in rural areas			Child population data by LSOA (see Matter A) provides the LA with the ability to identify children living in rural areas.		
The Local Authority keeps records of the number of			Data from local authority Children with		

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
disabled children and those with particular needs.			Disabilities register alongside Census health data (see Matter A).		
The Local Authority records the availability of no cost provision			Data is available from Merthyr Tydfil Family Information Service.	There is currently no registered 'no-cost- play provision in the area.	
The Local Authority records the provision of no cost / low cost premises used for play provision			The FIS records details of the costs of premises available for hire who have supplied details to the FIS team	Data is often incomplete and outdated as it is reliant on providers giving correct information.	
The Local Authority records the provisions where grants or subsidies are available for play providers			FIS has records of providers in receipt of grant funding.		
The Local Authority provides subsidised transport for children travelling to play opportunities			There is no subsidised transport provided.		

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General Comments: Charge for play provision

*How is the Local Authority ensuring that children have access to no or low cost provision?*

Some data is collected via the Family Information Service. However, the information provided is reliant upon providers providing the information to the FIS

Some families identified as requiring support are able to access play provision through the MIA programme. The authority also offers Community reductions when hiring facilities (ICC) and has an active asset transfer policy to make facilities available to the community.

Matter F: Access to space/provision

The Local Authority should consider all the factors that contribute to children's access to play or moving around their community.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met with some good features	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of the number of 20 mph zones/school safety zones in residential areas			The Local Authority has a record of 20mph zones		
The Local Authority has an identified mechanism for			The Local Authority uses	Limited resources to gather	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

assessing the impact of speed reduction and other road safety measures on the opportunity for children to play outside in their communities			Speed/Traffic survey data to assess speed reduction and any other road safety measures necessary.	the information required.	
The Local Authority has a plan(s) to reduce the negative effect of busy roads and junctions through the introduction of speed reduction measures and provision of safe crossing points/routes for pedestrians and cyclists			The Local Authority is continually aiming to create safer environments with lower traffic speeds in communities, close to schools and residential streets. This will enable the streets to be increasingly used for activities such as walking, cycling and playing. These schemes also support the Welsh Governments Active Travel Bill.	Limited resources and funding means that it is not possible to implement all needs.	
The Local Authority has a plan(s) to improve walking and cycle access to parks, outdoor play facilities and local leisure centres from residential areas			New cycling and walking paths are being developed from Welsh Government Safe Routes in Communities funding and Active Travel to access parks, schools and other leisure facilities	Limited resources and funding means that it is not possible to meet all needs.	
There is potential for the Local Authority to take further action to reduce traffic speed and improve			Some improvements have been made for walking and cycling within the Borough and for children	All improvement schemes rely on external funding.	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

road safety to promote play opportunities			accessing local schools. This has been achieved via Welsh Government Safe Routes in Communities Funding		
The Local Authority uses road safety grants and/or other funding to support delivery of cycling training for children to national standards			The Local Authority uses Road Safety grants to deliver National Standards Cycle Training Level 1 off road and Level 2 on road. This training is offered to all Year 6 pupils within the Borough. Level 3 is also offered to 240 pupils in the Year 9/10 group. <a href="http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/130719delplan.en.pdf">http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/130719delplan.en.pdf</a>	This training relies on continued funding from Welsh Government.	
The Local Authority uses road safety grants and/or other funding to provide pedestrian safety training for children			The Local Authority uses Road Safety grants to deliver Kerbcraft (Child Pedestrian Training) to Year 1 pupils. The Road Safety Team promote the Junior Road Safety Officer Scheme in schools to support initiatives that are important to them. Activities include, walk to school, traffic counts, seat belts, mobile phones, crossings. The Road	Limited resources mean that some events cannot be attended.  LA relies on financial support via Welsh Government grants which are continually being reduced.	

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			Safety Team, will on request, visit local playgroups, nurseries and play schemes to deliver road safety activities. <a href="http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/130719delplanen.pdf">http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/130719delplanen.pdf</a>		
The Local Authority has an accessible and well-known way of arranging temporary road closures, to support more children to play outside their homes			Whilst there are means to apply for temporary road closures, there is nothing specific in relation to play opportunities.		Review the current street closure procedure with the aim of reducing the associated costs and enabling communities to arrange regular temporary closures in support of children's play.
The Local Authority refers to <i>Manual for Streets</i> when considering new developments and changes to the highway network/urban realm			The Local Authority refers to <i>Manual for Streets</i> and the <i>Active Travel Design Guidance</i> when considering new development and changes to the highway network/urban realm.		Pilot a street play project.
The Local Authority works to nationally recognised good practice guidelines when developing walking and cycling facilities			The Local Authority works to nationally recognised guidelines when developing new cycling and walking facilities, and when improving existing facilities. These guidelines include ROSPA guidelines, <i>Active Travel Design Guidance</i> .		

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

<p>The Local Authority uses child pedestrian road accident casualty data to inform the location and design of interventions which help children get around independently in their communities</p>			<p>The Local Authority uses collision data as supplied by Welsh Government from the STATS 19 information off South Wales Police, which is reviewed to assess any new interventions</p>	<p>This data is not 100% up to date. Currently it has data up to June 2015.</p>	
<p>The Local Authority considers children's needs to access play opportunities when making decisions about public transport planning and expenditure</p>			<p>No separate consideration is given to this at present.</p>		

### Information, publicity and events:

For children and families to take part in play opportunities, recreational activities and events it is necessary for them to know what is available in their area.

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
<p>The Local Authority has a clearly identified section on its website which gives information about play opportunities as described in the Statutory Guidance (play areas, play provision, clubs and their accessibility)</p>			<p>Dedicated section on FIS website pointing towards PSA and other resources regarding play.</p> <p>DEWIS Cymru is the National Citizen portal for Wellbeing information in Wales</p>		<p>Use the DEWIS Portal and newsletters to further promote play and play opportunities to residents of Merthyr</p>

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

			FIS Officer is part of the Cwm Taf DEWIS working group. DEWIS produce regular newsletters		Explore providing information about play spaces on FIS website
The Local Authority provides information on access to play opportunities and contact for support if required			FIS provides this information for staffed provision but not open spaces		
The Local Authority supports and publicises events which encourage play opportunities and events for children and families				The FIS is reliant on providers to keep this information up to date.	
The Local Authority publicises information which contributes to positive community attitudes to play			There has been an increase of information on FIS website		
The Local Authority publicises helpful hints and support for parents to help them encourage their children to play			There are clear signposts and links to other websites and resources for parents	There is no information regarding the impact this information has had-	
The Local Authority widely uses on-site signposting to safeguard and promote play			As identified in Matter C, financial resources for signage has decreased since mid 1990's and unlikely to be a priority going forward		Incorporate children's play

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The Local Authority engages with the media to encourage the positive portrayal of children playing in the local area			There is limited press coverage normally generated around special events (past Play Days)	This appears adhoc rather than forming part of a corporate marketing strategy.	into media/marketing strategies
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General Comments: Access to space/provision

There is a real opportunity for stronger collaboration between the play sufficiency and active travel agendas. Shared mapping which demonstrates the location of identified safe routes and potential spaces for playing should be identified as a medium term action when resources and staff capacity allow.

*How has the Local Authority ensured collaboration to ensure children can move around their communities to increase access to opportunities for playing?*

Although road safety activity is in place, there has been little collaboration between Transport and Road Safety policy and an ongoing lead for play in order to make clear links to the previous play sufficiency actions.

General Comments Information, publicity, events

*How has the Local Authority positively used information to support access to play provision?*

The upgrade of the Family Information Service website since PSA 2013 has resulted in opportunities to provide information for Merthyr residents regarding play opportunities and this upgrade previously linked to the Merthyr Noise website. This web based information service targeting young people aged 11+ also supported access; however, this site has recently ceased due to the end of the Welsh Government support contract with Promo Cymru. There is a future plan to link both of these information portals into the future development of the DEWIS website to support the implementation of the social services and wellbeing act. .

Matter G: Securing and developing the play workforce

The Local Authority should provide information on the organisational structure of the policy area which manages the play agenda and the play workforce.

RAG status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met with some good features	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority keeps up to date information regarding the workforce across the Local Authority (this should include the number of playworkers, play management structure, qualification levels, training opportunities and volunteers)			Merthyr Tydfil’s Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce Development Plan (WDP)		Implement RED actions from the Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce Development Plan.
The Local Authority supports all of the workforce to achieve the qualification level required by the Welsh Government’s National minimum Standards			Merthyr Tydfil’s Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce Development Plan (WDP) recognises the need to meet NMS requirements in respect of play qualifications	A number of out of school clubs do not meet the requirements of registration and those who do are usually associated with a wider provider such as a day nursery. <i>Stakeholders expressed a belief that low level of participation among out of school clubs is a result</i>	Consider in it’s planning how to support Out of School Childcare Providers, who are caring for children up to the age of 12, to gain playwork qualifications to meet the new regulatory requirements of National Minimum Standards.

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
				<p><i>of them not being required to undertake training and therefore lacking in motivation to do so (WDP 3.4.3) – this will be a challenge for out of school childcare provision that comes into regulation as a result of changes to include registration up to the age of 12</i></p>	<p>Ensure providers are aware of how the changes affect them.</p> <p>Consider how to provide CPD opportunities for the wider workforce, this could be achieved by highlighting to stakeholders in play sufficiency; national training opportunities, conferences, workshops; as well as pursuing the feasibility of addressing priorities for the wider workforce with neighbouring Local Authorities.</p>
<p>The Local Authority supports the workforce to achieve the accepted qualification levels set out by SkillsActive</p>			<p>The WDP recognises the need to meet SkillsActive requirements in respect of play qualifications</p> <p><i>Short courses and additional training can be more responsive and providers can provide additional provision as required, or in some cases develop specific training to respond to need. (WDP 3.4.6.4)</i></p>	<p>There is a lack of funding to support learners to achieve qualifications at no cost to themselves and concerns over the information from out of school childcare providers in relation to the demand for playwork qualifications.</p> <p><i>The lack of play training at Merthyr Tydfil College is because of limited demand for provision, which ultimately means that it would not be cost effective to supply this training. (WDP 3.4.3)</i></p> <p><i>Often those working in playwork roles within out of school childcare have other</i></p>	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
				<p><i>roles and demands on their time that are a barrier to participating in training (WDP 3.4.6)</i></p> <p><i>The WDP looked at the provision of training at 49 providers within South Wales. This matrix of provision shows that whilst there is a significant number of providers offering Level 2 and 3 in Children’s Care, Learning and Development or an equivalent (75% of providers analysed) there is significant less provision for Playwork Level 2 (23% of providers) and Level 3 (20% of providers)</i></p>	
The Local Authority includes playwork within its Workforce Development strategies			Retention of staff within established settings is generally good across the early years, childcare and play workforce so there is potential to support staff through qualifications over time.	<i>Recruitment of playwork staff has historically been a challenge (3.4.5) this is both in terms of people applying for jobs in the first place but then also not having experience or qualifications especially in relation to the Groundwork Sustainable Play Project.</i>	
The Local Authority supports partners to deliver appropriate training to community groups,			Training has commissioned through contracts with national organisations to provide	This work was included in the development work undertaken by Tri County	

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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
parents and volunteers			transitional awards and other continuing professional development opportunities	Play Association but has ceased since the closure of the organisation.	
The Local Authority has undertaken a comprehensive training needs analysis for the play workforce as defined in the toolkit glossary			Workforce development plan 2015 questionnaires and workshops to providers and stakeholders (3.4.2 and 3.4.1)	<p>Data from the consultation process for the workforce development plan and attendance records from the 2014/15 training programme suggests out of school clubs and childminders are the groups least likely to participate in training – therefore data on the needs for playwork qualifications by Out of School childcare may be inaccurate.</p> <p>The workforce development plan is also supported by data from 2014 Care Council for Wales workforce survey however, this had a very low response rate from the playwork sector.</p> <p>There has been a delay in data from the CWLWM partnership to inform this section of the PSA.</p>	
The Local Authority has a staff development budget ring fenced for play, including			There is a free annual training programme for early years, childcare and playwork (3.5)		

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
playwork			<p>which includes play training supported by the workforce survey undertaken by the Local Authority.</p> <p><i>27% of respondents to the questionnaire are looking for more play training, and this reflects the high participation level in Language and Play for Flying Start and Play to Learn Training provided by the Local Authority through the training directory. (4.3.3)</i></p>		
The Local Authority takes action to expand the variety of learning and development opportunities that are offered to staff			<p>Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Outcome 2: Quality - highlights an objective to ensure <i>“providers are motivated and enabled to increase the quality of their provision”</i></p> <p>This outcome is supported by the annual training needs assessment and free training plan.</p> <p>The WDP action plan highlights the need to ensure providers understand the importance of attending opportunities for training and CPD.</p>		

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
There is a comprehensive range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities available for playworkers in the area			There is a free annual training programme for early years, childcare and playwork (WDP 3.5)		
There is a comprehensive range of CPD opportunities for a range of professionals who work with children			The free training plan is aimed at early years, children and play practitioners.  The Youth Service also delivers a training plan		
Training is available for volunteers and parents to develop their knowledge on skills in play work			Flying Start settings offers 15 family sessions during the holidays which focus on whole family engagement with an emphasis on play and disseminating some key messages such as healthy lifestyles etc.	The 2013 PSA highlighted training that was run by Tri-County Play Association. Following their closure these courses have ceased	
Training awareness sessions are available for professionals and decision makers whose work impacts on children's opportunities to play			Departments have their own training and professional development plans	The free training plan is aimed at early years, children and play practitioners. There is no specific plan in place to support CPD for the wider play workforce	

General Comments                      Securing and developing the play workforce

*How has the Local Authority met the requirement to undertake or secure the managerial and delivery functions necessary to achieve sufficient play*

### *opportunities?*

How has the Local Authority ensured it understands and provides for the workforce development needs of the play workforce (as defined in *Wales: A Play Friendly Country*)?

Since the 2013 PSA, the closure of the Tri County Play Association has impacted on the delivery of training and qualifications. However, the 2015 Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce Development Plan (WDP) shows that there is now an improved infrastructure in place for the planning and delivery of play qualifications. The workforce group provides a forum to monitor progress against the WDP action plan. Furthermore, the WDP highlights the needs to recruit a play development officer to both develop provision and lead on play workforce development. Consideration is being given to the most appropriate way forward within these times of austerity.

How has the Local Authority ensured it understands and provides for the workforce development needs of the play workforce (as defined in *Wales: A Play Friendly Country*)?

The surveys and workshops that were undertaken in the development of the WDP have given a better picture of the needs of the workforce and highlight a number of barriers to securing the delivery and uptake of playwork qualifications including; low demand for playwork qualifications from Out of School Childcare providers and accessing funding for playwork qualifications. The WDP also identifies a number of key existing and future actions to improve the delivery of playwork qualifications. These include:

- delivery of the play to learn training through Flying Start
- improving links with Merthyr Tydfil College and other training providers
- ensuring that level 2 qualifications are a minimum requirement for assistant practitioners
- providing a range of play related training through the free training plan.

The WDP Action plan includes actions to undertake an annual needs assessment to maintain a clear picture of the changing qualification and CPD requirements of the sector. This will inform the development of the free training plan to address gaps in skills and knowledge.

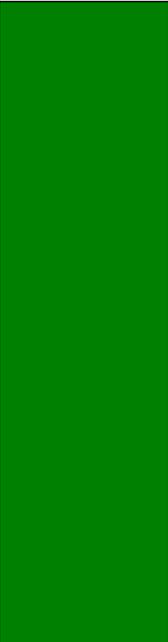
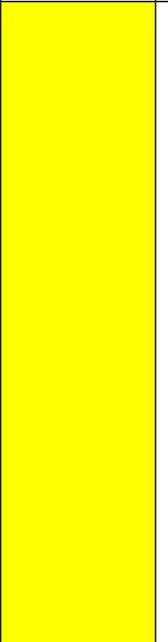
## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Matter H: Community engagement and participation.

The Local Authority should consult widely with children, their families and other stakeholders on their views on play provision. It should also promote wide community engagement in providing play friendly communities.

### RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria partially met with some good features	
Criteria not met.	

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority promotes initiatives to engage youth groups, school councils, school governing bodies, community groups and other relevant groups in enhancing play opportunities for children in its area.			<p>Children, young people and communities have been encouraged to become involved in consultation exercises through the development of the draft Open Space Strategy and the draft Youth Strategy.</p> <p>Corporate Communications and Family Information Service have pro actively promoted the Play Survey 2016 to inform the PSA.</p> <p>A planned restructure of the participation infrastructure within the Authority can potentially promote</p>	Reduced staff and other resource within various departments has impacted on the capacity to actively engage young people	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

			engagement.		
<p>The Local Authority promotes community engagement in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- making space available and suitable for play</li> <li>- organising play events</li> <li>- positive attitudes towards children and play</li> <li>- training on the importance of play.</li> </ul>			<p>Flying Start settings offers family sessions during the holidays which focus on whole family engagement with an emphasis on play and disseminating some key messages such as healthy lifestyles etc.</p>	<p>This work was included in the development work undertaken by Tri County Play Association but has ceased since the closure of the organisation.</p>	

General Comments Community engagement and participation.

*How has the Local Authority effectively used existing mechanisms for children's participation and family consultation processes with regards to play?*

Corporate Communications and Family Information Service have supported the promotion of the Play Survey 2016.

There is a significant amount of both community engagement and participation work undertaken by the authority to establish the views of children and young people and involve them in the decision making around a broad range of services. However little work has been undertaken that would directly contribute to key elements of the play agenda.

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

The Local Authority should examine all its policy agendas for their potential impact on children’s opportunities to play and embed targets and action to enhance children’s play opportunities within all such policies and strategies.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met	
Criteria partially met with some good features	
Criteria not met.	

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
There is a named person on the Local Service Board who champions children’s play and ensures that the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan contribute to and are incorporated within the Single Integrated Plan				Children’s play and play provision is not represented in key strategic plans, either LA or LSB level.	Put forward a credible argument as to how Play can contribute to an understanding of wellbeing, and how it can be a useful addition to the Wellbeing Plan or the Wellbeing Objectives that the LA must set out

Education and schools

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
Schools ensure that children are provided with a rich play environment for breaks during the school day			Groundwork Wales is working with MTCBC to offer a pilot programme  Schools are required to provide break times during the school day and are advised to provide a variety of resources to encourage a range of activities.	Financial implications limit the opportunities that schools can offer.	Identify a pilot school to implement the use of school grounds for play beyond the teaching day.
Schools provide play opportunities during out of teaching hours			Schools are advised to provide a variety of exploring through play activities during teaching hours to develop creative independent learning, especially in the Foundation Phase.		
Schools provide access to school grounds for playing out of school times			A community approach to school grounds is encouraged wherever possible.	Staff capacity issues	
Schools encourage children to walk and cycle to school			Walking and cycling to school is a cross curricular theme that is promoted in schools and is re-affirmed through the Schools Eco awards scheme	Reliant on parental preference	
The Local Authority offers guidance to ensure schools understand and ensure that regular outdoor play is not			The LA provides guidance on the importance of regular outdoor play through the Wellbeing Handbook		

**Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2**

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
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## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

### Town and Country Planning

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Development Plan recognises and addresses the outdoor play needs of children of various age groups and abilities			<p>The Local Development Plan notes “<i>The Council will protect and support the enhancement of the County Borough’s network of leisure facilities including outdoor play space, public open space and public rights of way in order to ensure their continued use for recreation and amenity.</i>”</p> <p><a href="http://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/1538/adopted-ldp-mtcbc-may-2011.pdf">http://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/1538/adopted-ldp-mtcbc-may-2011.pdf</a></p>		

### Traffic and Transport

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The local Transport Plan recognises the importance of local streets, roads and walking and cycling route in offering play opportunities for children of different ages and abilities			<p>Although there is no specific mention of play within the local Transport Plan the vision is for a modern, accessible, integrated and sustainable transport system for the SE Wales Valleys and beyond which increases opportunity, promotes prosperity for all and protects the environment;</p>		

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
			<p>where walking, cycling, public transport and sustainable freight provide real travel alternatives.</p> <p>The LTP objectives build on the vision and are long-term (20+ years) objectives for transport in the SE Wales Valleys area. The objectives detailed in the document set the direction of the LTP and form the basis for activity in addressing the area's transport issues. The LTP objectives refer to 'all' users of the transport system, including vulnerable road users e.g. those with disabilities, young people, older people, cyclists, the equestrian community, etc.</p>		
<p>The local Transport Plan identifies ways of assessing and addressing the needs of all groups including those which are often marginalised.</p>			<p>As above, see Local Transport Plan documents for full details. <a href="http://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/1490/south-east-wales-valleys-local-transport-plan.pdf">http://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/1490/south-east-wales-valleys-local-transport-plan.pdf</a></p>		

Health and Wellbeing

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority plans and agenda to promote health and well-being recognise the importance of play for children's and families' physical health and well-being			The Wellbeing Handbook for Schools makes an explicit link between physical activity, play and wellbeing.		Explicit links between play and wellbeing needs to be made in the emerging Wellbeing action Plan development

### Child Poverty

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Local Authority's tackling poverty agenda and plans recognise the importance of ensuring that play opportunities are available to all families regardless of their income.				Families can access support through the MIA process and enable children to access play opportunities however there is little evidence of the recognition of play within the wider poverty programmes	

### Early Years/Childcare

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
Early Years, and Flying Start plans and services			Language and Play feature as part of the existing		Ensure the guidance for

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
recognise the importance of play and contribute to the provision of rich play opportunities for younger children			<p>delivery of Flying Start.</p> <p>Childcare settings for Flying Start are registered by CSSIW and as such adhere to the requirements within the National Minimum Standards (7: Opportunities for Play and learning)</p>		local childcare providers regarding the importance of providing a quality play environment is in accordance with statutory guidance.
The Childcare Strategy offers guidance to ensure local childcare providers understand the importance of and provide a rich play environment as a routine part of the care they provide			<p>Childcare settings for Flying Start are registered by CSSIW and as such adhere to the requirements within the National Minimum Standards (7: Opportunities for Play and learning)</p> <p>Services commissioned by the Local Authority complete a quality self-assessment</p>		

### Family policy and initiatives

Criteria	RAG Status	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
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## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

	2013				
Family support initiatives provide up to date information and support for parents to enable them to support their children to play			Family Information Service website provides online information regarding (staffed) play opportunities in Merthyr Tydfil		

### Inter-generational policy and initiatives

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
There are a range of play based approaches to inter-generational activity			Flying Start setting offers 15 family sessions during the holidays which focus on whole family engagement with an emphasis on play and disseminating some key messages such as healthy lifestyles etc.		
There is a creative approach to inter-generational activity which encourages better interaction between children of different ages			Families First, Flying Start, MIA and Communities First programmes deliver across families to support bringing age groups together but this does not focus specifically on children's play or supporting it.		

### Community Development

Criteria	RAG	RAG Status	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for
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## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

	Status 2013	2016			action Plan
The Community Strategy makes a clear statement regarding the rights of children to play within their communities					
The Community Strategy supports communities to provide play opportunities for their children			There are historical statements made of play in the Community Strategy, (It's Looking Good-Merthyr Tydfil 2020 Turning Aspirations into Reality)	No evidence that demonstrates how this strategy has supported community based play or play development	
The Community Strategy makes a clear statement regarding how providing play opportunities contributes to community cohesion			Although there are historical statements made of play in the Community Strategy, (It's Looking Good- Merthyr Tydfil 2020 Turning Aspirations into Reality) and Community Cohesion is identified as a priority under the SIP , there are no links made which demonstrate how providing for play contributes to community cohesion.		

### Community Safety

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Community Safety Strategy makes a clear statement which recognises the rights of children to play in their communities					
The Community Safety Strategy includes actions which provide a safe			MAGNET is funded under the BIG Lottery Community Voice grant scheme for four years.	Initiatives appear to be targeted at specific issues rather than prioritising the support of play	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

environment for children to play in their communities			<p>The portfolio began in May 2013 and the finishing dates for the projects taper off to the end of October 2017. The aim is to increase the voice of citizens, especially those who are most marginalised, in policy, planning and delivery processes. MAGNET is made up of 7 projects and Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) is the portfolio holder. Although not specifically working under the Community Safety Strategy, the project appears to have taken a community safety approach targeted at specific groups within the communities of Merthyr Tydfil.</p> <p>Street based youth work initiatives also contribute to supporting community safety</p>	opportunities.	
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Health and Safety	
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Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
The Health and Safety			Policies are in place across the		

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Criteria	RAG Status 2013	RAG Status 2016	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
policies explicitly recognise the value of children being able to experience risk and challenge			authority including those which will enable children to experience outdoor and hazardous activities which enables children and young people to experience risk and challenge		Review the Corporate Asset Transfer policy to consider corporate support such as insurance and inspection fees when considering a asset transfers
The Health and Safety policies and procedures incorporate the risk-benefit approach to health and safety assessments as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)			Risk assessments are completed for activities throughout the council and for organised activities.	It is unclear from the evidence obtained how this is implemented against a risk-benefit approach.	
The Local Authority offers the provision of insurance through the Local Authority scheme to all third sector play providers and community councils			Like many local authorities across Wales, the Council may need to explore and develop a Community Asset Transfer process to retain certain amenities in some communities. There is an opportunity to consider a badged insurance scheme to support local communities to have more confidence to become involved.		

General Comments: Play within relevant policy and implementation agendas

Please use this section to highlight successes of collaboration across policy areas to improve play opportunities.

There is little evidence of collaboration to improve play opportunities across the policy areas as the Steering group that was established in 2013 only existed for the purpose of the assessment and without a senior officer responsible for play the agenda has not been developed as much as it could have been through a partnership approach. Where there has been an improvement across Matter I it appears to have been the result of departmental commitment, rather than against a collaborative agenda or method of working.

### Conclusion

This section should identify the key priorities for the Local Authorities in accordance with the regulations and described in the Statutory Guidance.

The unprecedented funding cuts to public services, alongside the closure of the regional play association has meant that maintaining levels of delivery identified in the PSA 2013 has been difficult. It has been particularly challenging to maintain and improve services, which support access to play opportunities with less financial investment.

Moving forward, there is a significant need to demonstrate the added value and wider impacts of play and playing to partner agencies, showcasing the contribution it can make to wider agendas, leveraging funding and resource to support the Authority to comply with its duties to secure sufficient play opportunities that are reasonable and practicable.

Despite the challenges facing the Authority there are some good examples of work being carried out in Merthyr, which has the potential with collaboration to uphold children's right to play. Improving access and mobility to existing spaces as well as addressing parental and wider societal concerns is key to the Authority working towards sufficiency.

The majority of work associated with play development previously has tended to focus on developing more quality staffed play provision due to policy and funding drivers. The national, Welsh Government Open Access Play Grant, the play theme of Cymorth, and BIG's Child Play programme resulted in a growth of staffed playwork provision across the Authority which has been difficult to sustain when the funding programmes ended. Whilst we recognise the need to secure these services and facilities in recognition of the significant contribution they make to children and communities, more of an emphasis needs to be placed on promoting children's play within the wider public realm. Identifying synergy between play sufficiency and other programs (i.e. Active Travel and Open Space Assessments) will enable more effective collaborative working and support the Authority to comply with the duty to secure sufficient play opportunities (as far as is reasonably practicable) for children in the communities of Merthyr Tydfil, against a backdrop of severe financial constraint.

The following priorities have been identified through the play sufficiency assessment and support an approach that provides focus for our work in securing sufficient time and space for children's play. This approach will ensure that we address the most significant barriers identified through our assessment.

- Increase and secure the quality of play in existing staffed provision
- Secure safer streets for play
- Secure access to a wider range of spaces for play
- Secure spaces for play in close proximity to children's homes
- Ensure quality assessment of spaces for play value
- Increase parental permission for play

When considering these priorities against each of the matters addressed by the play sufficiency assessment there are three recurring areas for development which would present opportunities for creating real and lasting change:

- **Policy for Play** - despite recognition of play within a range of policies there remains a tendency towards working departmentally, particularly between children and young people's services and those departments responsible for the wider public realm. Given that play sufficiency is a dependant upon a wide range of inter-connected Matters, it cannot be addressed in isolation, and there is a need to prioritise this work across a range of agendas. This can be achieved by ensuring recognition of the value of play throughout all relevant local authority strategies and through the establishment of the Play Sufficiency Partnership.
- **Play Development** – securing sufficiency will require a driving force to maintain momentum and coordinate cross-departmental activities in support of children's play. Furthermore, community involvement and ownership of local opportunities for play is essential to affecting and sustaining change on the ground. Both of these issues could be addressed by establishing and sustaining a play development infrastructure which recognises playwork as an approach to community development in support of children's play.
- **Professional Development** – given the value that children place on time, space and permission to play, anyone working with or on behalf of children would benefit from an in depth and up to date understanding of children's play and play behaviour. This would lead to better collaboration and work toward the securing of play opportunities.

### Way forward

This section should briefly introduce the Action Plan which sets out what steps need to be taken to improve the opportunities for children to play within the Local Authority area, including what mechanism and criteria were used to agree and prioritise actions. It should also describe the actions the Local Authority will take with regards to change in infrastructure, partnership working or mechanisms to ensure that it is well placed to deliver on the duty to secure sufficient play opportunities.

### The Way Forward

The recommendations and subsequent actions from this play sufficiency assessment will be presented for approval to Cabinet on **(INSERT DATE)**. However, in the meantime the information contained within the play sufficiency assessment and action plan has been approved, in principle, by the Lead member for (Education Councillor Harvey Jones) and members of the Play Steering Group.

The recommendations and subsequent actions resulting from the play sufficiency assessment will inform the development of Merthyr Tydfil's Wellbeing Plan. However, the intention is that the actual play sufficiency action plans will continue to be implemented and monitored by the Play Steering Group, although this group will be re-branded as the Play Sufficiency Partnership in order to clarify its role in leading on this statutory duty.

Welsh Government's Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public sector authorities across Wales to embed sustainability in how they deliver services, aligning social, economic and environmental objectives. Working towards play sufficiency has the potential to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits but our focus must be on sustaining the improvements we make. With this in mind, the action plan has been developed by considering how each of the priorities identified through the play sufficiency assessment could be addressed at a policy, community or family level. The individual actions included are then those that would potentially have the greatest impacts on the priorities *and* which represent cost effective approaches to sustaining real change.

Unfortunately there are significant limitations involved in action planning when the availability of future resources is unclear and unlikely. However we think that all of the actions identified for the next 12 months can be delivered using existing resources and focus on developing the systems that will enable the local authority to secure sufficient opportunities that are reasonable and practicable. Furthermore, there is additional work to be carried out using the data collected for the play sufficiency assessment, including mapping access and availability of space and provision, with the aim of prioritising geographic locations for development work.

A Play Sufficiency Partnership will be established, to replace the existing Play Steering Group, and lead on the implementation of the play sufficiency action plans. This will include identifying those partners best placed to lead on individual actions and ensuring other appropriate parties are engaged where necessary.

Signed: ...Chris Hole (pending approval by cabinet – upon which the Lead for Children and Young people will sign)

Date: .....4<sup>th</sup> April 2016.....