

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Form



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**Name of Local Authority: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

**Name of responsible officer: Sharon Cargill**

**Job title: Play Sufficiency Officer**

**Date of completion: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022**

Please note that the Play Sufficiency Assessment must be received by the Welsh Government by 30 June 2022



### Conducting the Assessment – Play Sufficiency Assessment

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.

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.

*The Local Authority continues to support Welsh Governments commitment to improve opportunities to provide children and young people with the time, space and permission to play. The Local Authority recognises and acknowledges that every child has the right to play, play is central to children's physical, mental, social, emotional health and well-being and is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).*

*The definition of play used for the purpose of the Play Sufficiency Duty is the one that had been developed by the play sector and is recognised internationally. This states*

that:

*‘Play encompasses children’s behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed, and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward, and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development – not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live’.<sup>1</sup>*

*Following the recent coronavirus pandemic, we recognise that children and young people’s lack of or restricted play opportunities has had a detrimental impact, affecting their mental and physical health. Through play, children develop resilience and flexibility, contributing to physical and emotional well-being.*

*We have an amazing environment in Blaenau Gwent that is a valuable resource to support children’s play. The Local Authority values the importance of play for children, young people, their families and the benefits this brings to local communities. We advocate that every child should have the freedom to regularly play out, actively and independently, close to where they live. There are many barriers to enabling children’s play so to allow this to happen we all need to work together.*

*Our aim is for Blaenau Gwent to be a County where children and young people are increasingly seen outside enjoying the benefits of play. This requires parents, families and professionals to recognise that play is of great importance to children’s lives, and that we all have a role. The Play Sufficiency Duty ensures the Local Authority has mechanisms in place to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.*

<sup>1</sup> Wales a Play Friendly Country: Statutory Guidance July 2014

### **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.

*The Local Authority has a strategic lead for play through the role of the Play Sufficiency Officer with responsibility for monitoring, reviewing, planning and drafting the Local Authorities Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan; with a reporting process to the Early Years, Childcare and Play Manager and the Services Manager, Children’s Services forming the ‘Play Sufficiency Implementation Group’.*

*A timeline was drafted to research, gather and review data and for the drafting of the Play Sufficiency Assessment. Desktop research, face-to-face meetings, consultation, focus groups, surveys, phone calls and emails ensured we offered a flexible, varied approach for lead officers and our partners in the collection of data. Colleagues were able to contribute in their areas of expertise and offer solutions to gaps in data.*

*Usually we start the assessment process a year before it needs to be submitted but with the pandemic, effects of the pandemic, limited capacity with SoF/WoW/play*

projects there was a significant delay to starting.

Solutions were sought to ensure the deadline would continue to be met and to ensure this assessment continued to build on previous assessments while reflecting an accurate picture of Play Sufficiency in Blaenau Gwent.

The following outlines data used for each matter

Matter A - Population: This section presents socio-economic and demographic data supplied by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council - Policy Officer, Research and Analysis and web based sources.

Matter B – Providing for diverse needs: Underpinned by the responses from our BIG play survey for children/young people and targeted focus groups.

Matter C – Space available for children to play: The following data assisted with the review including the LA's Annual inspection report of outdoor unstaffed fixed play provision, open space assessments, Local Development Plan, GIS mapping, local community knowledge, parks department, Play Sufficiency Officer and survey/focus group findings.

Matter D – Supervised provision: Information from DEWIS (FIS) from providers that have been identified as providing supervised play provision along with information on Early Years, parent and toddler groups and after school clubs that participate in our Quality Assurance scheme, the LA's Play team and youth service and Leisure Trust.

Matter E – Charges for play provision: Information held by FIS and services offered by the Play team and LA. Welsh Governments AWPOG funding for Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing reports.

Matter F – Access to space/provision: Data and information held by colleagues from Traffic Management, Active Travel and Road Safety Team.

Matter G – Securing and developing the play workforce: Spreadsheet of qualifications of the sector are held by the LA's Childcare Business Development Officer, EYDCPP annual training programme.

Matter H – Community engagement and participation: Data held by the Local Authorities Playteam, FIS and Blaenau Gwent's Engagement strategy.

Matter I – Play within all relevant policy and information agendas: This section is based on key policy and strategic documents working with colleagues across different areas including; transport; education, partnerships, planning, Early Years and Flying Start, Families First and Health & Safety.

Actions following the Play Sufficiency Assessment are agreed; that are specific, realistic and achievable within budgets and officer/partner resources. The Play Sufficiency Action Plans are developed and reviewed each year to record progress and identify and set out actions that need to be taken the following year.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan is approved by the Early Years, Development, Childcare and Play Partnership (further information can be found in

*'monitoring play sufficiency' section) and from the Departmental Management Team, Corporate Leadership Team and Scrutiny Committee prior to a consultation period with partners and lead officers and final report to Executive Committee.*

### **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 play associations and play providers
- The private sector if appropriate
- Community groups

*The Local Authority has faced some challenges with engagement of some of our partners due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic resulting in limitations on their time and their own service priorities. It is recognised that there is a need to prioritise this as a key action to reinforce the importance of play and the Local Authorities statutory duty with colleagues and partners and a piece of work that will be moved forward through the Play Sufficiency Action plan.*

*Town and Community Councils: Our Town and Community Councils were invited to comment on the draft assessment and the agreed actions during the consultation stage prior to final approval and submission.*

*Community Groups: As a result of the demanding timescales and limited capacity we were unable to engage with community groups to the same degree that we have in the past. Further engagement with community groups will form part of our action plan for the next year. We have a number of community groups who work to support and promote children's play including 'friends of groups' who volunteer their time to develop play spaces and plan local community events for families.*

*Aneurin Leisure Trust: Aneurin Leisure is a community focused organisation, who are passionate about making a positive impact to people's lives by not only improving physical health and wellbeing, but also their mental and social wellbeing through their diverse range of services and facilities.*

*They fully understand their value as a strategic partner in communicating and supporting the Council and Sport Wales' Vision in everything they do; in using their local and growing regional and national understanding and networks to bring additional value into the area and by adding real value into the wider local authority outcomes - including where their contribution supports and adds value to wider economic and social objectives and initiatives.*

*Recreational play underpins Aneurin Leisure Trusts methodology across all practical sessions. Sessions are facilitated by coaches who deliver sports and games based on what the participant wants. They also deliver school based extra-curricular sessions, community outreach sessions and work in partnership with multiple organisations across all age groups to encourage participation via sport and play and improve physical and mental health.*

Sparkle: Sparkle is a charity that supports children and young people with disabilities and/or developmental difficulties, and their families. The guiding principle for Sparkle is to ensure that children and young people with disabilities and/or developmental difficulties and their families are fully supported and able to participate in valued childhood experiences, with access to the same range of opportunities, life experiences, activities and community services as any other child and their family.

Sparkle works in partnership with Blaenau Gwent County Council and operates from Integrated Children's Centre. Sparkle supports children, and young people aged 5 to 18 with a disability or developmental difficulty, providing Play and Youth Clubs.

One of the key strategic intentions of Sparkle is to ensure that all children and young people who are being supported by the project will have access to a comprehensive and inclusive range of fun, educational and experiential learning opportunities in a safe environment, including the additional cultural and curriculum enhancing trips and community visits. Many of our children and young people have no opportunity to access specialist provision on a weekly basis and over school holidays when parents need the most support. The Play clubs provide a wide range of play activities in a safe and fun environment and the Youth club provides young people with the opportunity to gain basic skills and essential personal and social skills to support and increase their levels of independence.

Play club runs 3 times a week and has 24 children registered and youth provision once a week and has 8 young people registered. During school holidays additional sessions are provided. There are 9 children on a waiting list to access provisions in Blaenau Gwent and the charity are currently recruiting more staff to be able to address the demand.

Barnardos: During lockdowns, Barnardos delivered resources to children with disabilities and their families to encourage them to play at home, with an emphasis on sensory play. During school holidays, they provide a programme of family activities, including workshops, community activities and day trips. Groups are structured during term time – building independence, community safety, healthy relationships etc.

19/20 – Approx: 80 children / young people. Activities included play in the park sessions, cooking, music and day trips.

20/21 – Approx: 100 Children / young people. Activities included lots of virtual groups – cooking, crafts etc. Activity and Play kits were delivered to families to promote and encourage play. Face to face activities included animal encounters, mountain view ranch and cantref farm.

21/22 – Approx: 120 Children / young people. Activities included virtual cooking, craft and sensory play. Face to face included Dino Day, Science workshops, African drumming, bath bomb making, escape rooms, soft play.

To support the Play Sufficiency Assessment, Barnardos asked children and young people 'What's great about Blaenau Gwent?' – responses included - Lots of green space, parks, swimming, leisure centres, my home.

Representatives from many of our partners sit on the Early Years Development, Childcare and Play Partnership including Education, Health, Social Services, Flying

*Start, Families First, Strategy & Policy, Early Years, Childcare & Play provider umbrella organisations who form the 'Play Sufficiency Monitoring group'.*

*Partnership working has been pivotal in assisting with disseminating and collecting information, offering advice, and guidance from their areas of expertise. This ensures the Local Authority can reflect on and considers approaches to maximise resources and minimise duplication.*

### **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 how it has been used to inform future plans

*The Local Authority used the Child play satisfaction survey template circulated by Play Wales', this ensured that data was consistent with previous assessments to generate a more accurate view of the play needs of children and young people living in Blaenau Gwent over a period of time. Questions were developed to gauge children's play experiences relating to; temporal – how children spend their 'free time', spatial – how space supports or constrains children's play and access to space and psychological – permission to play. In this year's survey there were also question relating to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.*

*Surveys were circulated to children and young people via partners, schools, local events, play sessions, afterschool clubs and an online version promoted on social media. 254 children and young children participated in our Play survey findings:*

- 90% of surveys were completed by children aged between 5 & 14yrs, with the average of 8 years.
- 15 children identified themselves as disabled with 60% of children satisfied with opportunities for playing and hanging out.
- 77% felt they had more than enough or plenty of time for playing or hanging out with friends
- 20% of children said they can play in all the places they would like to
- 95% said they always or usually felt safe when playing out, and it was considered that adults were supportive. The findings showed that 10-14yr olds were more likely to not feel safe.
- 96 children said they weren't allowed to play out on their own or with friends, with 43 between the ages of 8 & 15yrs
- Children were able to name lots of things that were good in their area, lots commented on playing in areas close to their homes, playing with friends who lived close by, leisure facilities, enjoying natural features like fields, woods and mountains too.

- *In terms of what was not so good about playing in their own area, comments tended to focus around; traffic, litter/cleanliness, the need for better equipment in play areas, older children (hanging about/bullying), nothing to do.*
- *The lack of investment and poor state of play areas continues to be one of the top themes of dis-satisfaction when consulting children, young people and their families.*

*To enrich data from the survey responses, focus groups were held with 6 school councils, 4 after-school clubs and 1 youth group. To ensure that minority groups of children had an opportunity to participate our focus groups ensured we had representation from children from Welsh language schools, children with disabilities, children looked after and gypsy/traveller children. 120 children participated in an activity-based workshop with a further 221 children, young people and parent/carers consulted during play sessions.*

*Children and young people were asked... (please see photos below)*

*Why is play/hanging out important?*

*Where/what they play when they are not in school? - yellow*

*What's good about them? - green*

*What's bad about them? – pink/red*

*What are the barriers? - bricks*

*What can we do to minimise the barriers? and who is it? Children? Adults? – stars*



Focus group findings:

1. *Why is play/hanging out important? Responses included: improving mental health, socialising, exercise, fun, being out in nature, our right to play, being happy, fresh air,*
2. *Where/what they play when they are not in school? Children identified places they played including: parks, play areas, sports centres, woodland, streets, at home, relatives and friend's house, mountain, skate park, after school clubs, fields.*
3. *What's good about them? Many gave examples of what they did; playing sports, cycling, playing games, skateboarding, tree climbing, fishing, running, jumping, climbing, walking, tag games, getting messy, lots of space, feel safe.*



4. *What's bad about them? Bullies, older children, other adults, random people, dog poop, broken glass, litter, nothing to do.*
5. *What are the barriers? These could be categorised into 3 main themes;  
Temporal – how children spend their 'free time'  
Spatial – how space supports or constrains children's play and access to space  
Psychological – permission to play*
6. *What can we do to minimise the barriers?  
Participants were able to identify what they could do themselves 'wear suitable clothing', 'carry a mobile phone', 'learn green cross code', 'go with friends'. 'walk away', 'tell an adult', 'call the police'.*

*Play diaries, case studies and observations during play sessions have also given insight to the play interests and needs of children and young people.*

*Challenges were faced with our consultation for this assessment as it was impacted by the pandemic with limited access for face to face consultation in settings, schools and lack of public events. For some groups (Children's Grand Council, Young Carers) we were reliant on completion of the online surveys during the pandemic.*

*Data captured has been analysed and informs our ward 'play' profiles. Where limited data is available the Local Authority will concentrate engagement to ensure an accurate picture for play is established for each ward. The Local Authority and their partners will utilise the data to inform future development of services, ensuring gaps in play opportunities are prioritised.*

### **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 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessments and subsequent plans.

Please use this section to highlight what has changed since the 2019 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 2019 play sufficiency assessment:

*The Play Sufficiency Officer continues to be primarily funded through the Childcare element of the Revenue Support Grant. The additional All Wales Play Opportunities Grants allocated from Welsh Government over the last few years has been gratefully received in Blaenau Gwent and has helped to address priorities from our 2019 Play Sufficiency Assessment and subsequent action plans.*

- The lack of investment and poor state of play areas continues to be one of the top themes of dis-satisfaction when consulting children, young people and their families. The AWPOG capital funding has supported the upgrading of fixed play equipment and enabled the Local Authority to enhance the aesthetics of aging playgrounds. This continues to be a significant piece of work requiring substantial funding as for many families the local play area is the ‘go to’ for children’s play.
- Play provision for children with disabilities
- 2 ‘signalong’ training days to 30 play workers/volunteers.
- Funded 9 places on intro to playwork and L2APP playwork qualifications
- 35 vulnerable children funded to attend play provision over the October half term 2020.
- Activity crafts/sports/games packs – October/Christmas 2020 and February/Easter 2021
- National Play Day 2020 – Playday packs

The Playworks Holiday Project revenue funding 2020 & 2021 has enabled the Local Authority to support the gaps in play provision through the recruitment of playworkers. This service was previously commissioned but has enabled it to be bought ‘in house’ recognising the need to be responsive, promoting consistency and to develop play opportunities throughout the year to support the needs and interests of children and young people.


**Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing 2021:** Accessibility, charges for activities, are often cited as barriers to play opportunities as well as ‘there is nothing to do’. The Local Authority have limited capacity/funding to meet gaps in provision.

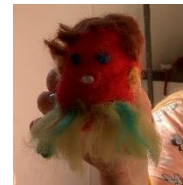
Welsh Government funded programmes have been most welcomed and have proved beneficial to families in Blaenau Gwent. The programmes have helped to raise awareness of the importance of play while enabling the Local Authority to provide a programme of free play (cultural, sports, arts) opportunities for children, young people and their families. The Local Authorities allocation for SoF was 91k and 125k for WoW engaging with over 12,000 children and young people across the 2 programmes.



*Our Summer of Fun programme provided 34 different activities for children and young people across Blaenau Gwent. With our Winter of Wellbeing bringing together a programme of 60 activities.*



	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Folly Farm trip</li> <li>Cinema trips</li> <li>Mini Movers sessions</li> <li>Little Legends</li> <li>Family swim</li> <li>Preschool gymnastic sessions</li> <li>Swim sessions</li> <li>Blaenauon heritage Railway Christmas</li> <li>Christmas pantomime</li> <li>Fireworks Display</li> <li>Pantomime / Musical</li> <li>Santa Train</li> <li>Cinema</li> <li>Animal Encounter</li> <li>Family cookery</li> <li>Yoga</li> <li>Trampolineing</li> <li>London trip</li> <li>Craft packs</li> <li>Activity Vouchers</li> <li>Go find it cards</li> <li>Winter Wonderland Trip</li> <li>Ysglwl Cŵc Brynmaer</li> <li>Sparkle - xmas &amp; Feb half term places</li> <li>Muggles Afternoon of Magic</li> <li>Silent Disco</li> <li>Family Christmas Party</li> <li>Movie Nights</li> <li>Get Involved Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cae'rphilly Adventure Group Adventure Walk</li> <li>Youth Service - Paintballing</li> <li>First Aid Workshops (Street Doctors)</li> <li>Lifeguard Qualification</li> <li>West Midlands trip</li> <li>Coe Cae residential</li> <li>Eggsheads - youth shelter</li> <li>H4Arts - Delivery of craft sessions</li> <li>Aneurin Leisure Trust - sports centres</li> <li>Get to know your Gym</li> <li>3g Turn up and play</li> <li>Playscheme Referrals</li> <li>Doorstep sport sessions - Skateboarding academy</li> <li>Doorstep sport sessions - E-fit dance</li> <li>Doorstep Sports sessions - Carl Beatty</li> <li>Cardiff City Football Kicks</li> <li>Doorstep Sports Club</li> <li>Gym memberships</li> <li>TREDEGAR Super Santa Day</li> <li>Super Family Day</li> <li>Christmas Fun Afternoon</li> <li>Neaf Wars Day</li> <li>Princesses Foodie</li> <li>Adventure Activity Day</li> <li>Intro to paddle boarding</li> <li>Valentines Party</li> <li>Gaming Squad Day</li> <li>Fair ground</li> <li>BEAT technique - Cwm Youth Club</li> <li>Lloyd Roberts Graffiti workshops</li> </ul>



*Through Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing the Local Authority engaged with a range of colleagues and partners including:*

### *Children's Services*

- Early Years, Childcare and Play
- 14+ team
- Disability Team
- Families First
- Flying Start

### *Blaenau Gwent Youth Service*

### *Aneurin Leisure Trust*

### *Linc Cymru*

### *Mudiad Meithrin*

### *Menter Llaith*

### *Barnardos*

### *Local Activity providers*

*Funding has enabled partners to come together, to build stronger working partnerships and to forge new pathways for further working.*

*Foundation Phase Providers received funding from Winter of Wellbeing to provide opportunities for their children to participate in play, arts, sports and cultural activities.*

**Youth Service:** *The Youth Service were able to increase its offer and provide additional activities and play opportunities to young people through additional funding from both Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing. Activities and opportunities included:*

- Open Air Cinema
- Trips to theme Parks

- *Comprehensive school holiday programme*
- *Increased opportunities to use local leisure facilities*
- *Music workshops*
- *Art & Crafts workshops*
- *Resources*

**Flying Start:** *The Flying Start programme sits within Children's Services, and fully compliments the Play agenda. Flying Starts delivery plans and services recognise the importance of play and contributes to the provision of rich play opportunities through each of the 4 core elements of the programme; Free high quality Childcare, Enhanced Health Visiting Service, Speech, Language and Communication.*

*Flying Start recognises that early years play opportunities underpin children's learning and all aspects of child development so alongside all our accredited programmes we deliver interventions that actively promotes the value and purpose of play (Stay & Play/Language & Play). Flying Start settings provide key opportunities during each session for children to play, independently, alongside and with their peers. We have invested in training on suitable environments for all of our childcare practitioners and pride ourselves that our settings offer ideal safe spaces for children to play and interact with one another, no bright, bold colours, all natural resources with sensory elements and no plastic.*

*During each half term and throughout the summer holiday period, family fun sessions are delivered by the Flying Start team which offer play enriched opportunities, family focused activities using nature and outdoor spaces, that are targeted at early years and encouraging positive parent and child interaction through play. We also deliver ELKLAN classes in the swimming pool which allows little ones the opportunity to attend the pool and enjoy water play, we also run muddy monsters, mini movers, wild tots and buggy fit which all encourage parents to promote outdoor and sensory play opportunities. Family trips to the seaside and to the farm are also organised each year during the Spring and Summer period to offer families – (who may not have these opportunities due to living in poverty) positive play, fun on the beach and family focused experiences with their children. We also have community gardens for the last few years at Cefn Golau and this year a new one at Cwm Flying Start Hub to allow our parents and little ones to play and grow food and flowers together.*

**Beaufort Road – Children Looked After:** *Improvements to play opportunities for Children Looked After at Beaufort road has been a key priority over the last 3 years. They have redesigned their outside play space, provide a growing area and a new area to cook produce grown.*

**Families First:** *The Families First programme also sits within Children's Services based in the Integrated Children's Centre. This provides co-location of teams and a close working relationship including integrated management systems. Families First are represented on the Early Years Development, Childcare and Play Partnership and this helps to ensure a sustained focus on play within Blaenau Gwent.*

*The Young Carers element of Families First, provides support to children and young people who provide a caring role to parents, carers and siblings. This service provides*

children and young people with free, recreational opportunities within the Borough and supports them to access play and leisure activities.

The disability element of the programme supports children and young people and their families who are affected by disability. Needs for disabled children in relation to play are identified at point of referral, the team have a breadth of knowledge and links to local services and providers of play and leisure opportunities for disabled children.

**Early Years Transformation and Integration Programme:** Blaenau Gwent are one of the pilot authorities to ensure every child has the best start in life through the Early Years Transformation and Integration Programme and aims to:

- Create an Early Years system to deliver services in a co-ordinated, integrated and timely way
- To support local partners to re-configure Early Years services focusing on planning, commissioning and identifying and addressing needs.
- Through this process to identify barriers to integration and ways to remove, reduce or rationalise them.

The programme offers support to families with young children aged 0-7years by reducing inequalities in early years' services offering families opportunities similar to Flying Start (without the childcare element) when required by the family. The pilot areas are Cwm, Brynmawr, Nantyglo and part of Blaina.

In the pilot we promote the importance of play. The Stay and Play Groups delivers key messages around the Health Child Wales Programme, but also ensures that activities provided are age appropriate and in line with current practice. Natural resources and sensory equipment are used during these sessions.

The importance of outdoor play and exploration has been promoted by facilitating walk and talk groups which build on the natural environment as a learning tool to promote play. The pilot has delivered several community engagement events such as Christmas and Easter events delivering creative activities using natural play resources.

**Grants:** Settings have had opportunity to apply for a number of capital grants including:

- 2019 small improvement grant to improve quality of childcare.
- 2020 and 2021 Childcare Covid response grants to help to reduce the spread of the coronavirus; creation and maintaining of groups 'bubble' and to increase the accessibility to outdoor spaces.

Settings were granted funding to develop and enhance outdoor spaces including groundworks (fencing, steps), the purchase of outdoor play equipment (mud kitchens, gazebos, climbing frames, outdoor hand wash sinks, sails for shade, fire pits, trikes, bikes, scooters, gardening, balance beams, storage, sand and water play) as well as equipment to aid settings to remain open while maintaining Health and Safety requirements throughout the pandemic with purchases including fog machines, steamers and hand sanitiser stations.

*During the pandemic Welsh Government guidance advised that being outdoors was the safest environment for children. The Local Authority provided capital grants to childcare and play providers to develop their outdoor play spaces.*

### **Child Development Fund:**

*Parent and Toddler groups: Part of the CDF money enabled us to offer some Parent and Toddler groups who were open following closures due to the coronavirus, the opportunity to be part of an upskilling scheme, that would see officers from the Local Authority support the key person or leader, with training, resources and funding to offer free spaces for families to attend. The training and resources were directly identified to enhance children's physical development, speech, language and communication skills, social interaction ability and very importantly supports self-esteem, self-belief and confidence. Early interventions are the best way to counteract negative outcomes and help to make the children's young and early experiences positive in order to give them the best chance of success in the future.*

*Outreach element of the Assisted Places Scheme: We were able to add an extra element of support that goes beyond the direct access to childcare provision and encouraged a family approach to the learning and development of parents own children. This element was named 'outreach' and we were able to empower parents to be proactive in their child's experience with learning and in turn give parents the confidence to know how to engage in play activities with their children and reap the benefits of seeing their children flourish. In order to do this, we created a network of people to co-ordinate the implementation and follow up support. This included weekly packs delivered to parents by their support worker who explained how to use the packs. The activities within the packs were specifically chosen to support learning and development and promote playful experiences. The first activity pack contained a book, this didn't have to be read by the parent, they could look at the pictures and talk about the animals, lift the flaps. This was accompanied by finger puppets of the animals that the parents and children could use, they could name the animals and make the sounds, this was aimed at developing speech, language and communication skills. Further packs contained, ingredients to make playdough and instructions, followed by ideas to extend use, treasure baskets etc.*

*Parents were supported by their support worker, a childcare practitioner who reiterated these things over the phone and encouraged them to join the closed group on facebook where the childcare practitioner demonstrated the use of the book, followed by the other activities weekly and parents were able to share their thoughts, feedback, questions and videos if they wished too. The childcare support worker liaised with both the support worker and Quality Improvement Officer on a weekly basis to track progress, provide further support and additional advice and guidance.*

*Wild Tots Blaenau Gwent: Introduced in 2016 as an outdoor based Parent & Toddler group, our Wild Tots Bedwellty group is led by a team of Wild Leaders (Play Volunteers) managed by the Local Authority. Through funding we were able to secure a Level 3 post to support these sessions going forward and enabled sessions to be offered free of charge to families. Wild Tots saw a significant increase in registered families (400+) following the closure during the pandemic and have now expanded to*

another site in March 2022 (Festival Wild Tots). \*\*Please see additional information in 'insights from the coronavirus page 16.

**Children and Communities Legacy Project:** Funding secured through CCG enabled the Play team to develop their play in crisis project – The Wild camps project was piloted as coronavirus restrictions reduced from April – September 2021 enabling us to deliver outdoor play provision for children where they had experienced significant changes to their lives during the recent pandemic; homelessness, domestic abuse and children in care. Wild Camps aims to support children in non-statutory services who are living in poverty, recognising that children have the least choice and ability to change what happens to them and this impacts their future life chances putting them at increased risk of becoming reliant on statutory services. 22 children were supported in the pilot with a further 27 following the roll out.

### The Play Sufficiency Assessment and local Well-being Plans

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 Well-being Plan and Public Service Board.

*Lack of activities especially those for children and young people were one of the most popular comments received during the Well-being assessment. Information from the 2016, 2019 and current Play Sufficiency Assessment continue to support and validate these findings with Play Sufficiency actions supporting the 5 Well-being objectives.*

- 1. Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life*
- 2. Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities*
- 3. Blaenau Gwent wants to look after and protect its natural environment*
- 4. Blaenau Gwent wants to forge new pathways to prosperity*
- 5. Blaenau Gwent wants to encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places they live, learn, work and play*

*We view the five Well-being objectives as being integrated, but play is intrinsically linked with:*

- Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life...*
- Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities...*
- Blaenau Gwent wants to encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places they live, learn, work and play...*

*Blaenau Gwent's Public Services Board was dissolved in September 2021 making way for a Gwent Public Services Board to be established in October 2021. In November 2021, a new Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Partnership was established to act as the local delivery group of the Gwent PSB, overseeing the delivery of Blaenau Gwent's Well-being Plan up to May 2023.*

*The Play Sufficiency Assessment findings are considered as part of the development of a Gwent Well-being Assessment and Local Area Assessments (WBFG Act statutory*

requirement). Play is captured in the Cultural chapter of the new Gwent Well-being Assessment which will be published within the next few weeks (May 2022).

The Gwent Well-being Assessment will underpin the development of a Gwent Well-being Plan which is to be published in May 2023.

### 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.

*Responsibility for Play and the Play Sufficiency Duty is placed within Social Services - Children's Services with Tanya Evans as the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services. Our Executive Member for Social Services is Councillor Haydn Trollope.*

*The Play Monitoring Group role is undertaken by the Early Years Development, Childcare and Play Partnership. The partnership consists of a range of stakeholders from across the Local Authority including Health, Education and Early Years as well as representation from Voluntary and Third sector organisations and National partners whom have an interest in the Early Years, Childcare and Play sector.*

*Membership is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the partnership has representation from organisations and Managers are represented to carry forward high-level actions and address any challenges.*

Angela Lewis	Early Years Strategic Lead ABUHB
Ann Angell	Cylch Meithrin Cymru - Regional Manager SE Wales
Bethan McPherson	BGCBC - Team Lead Employment & Enterprise
Beverley Madden	BGCBC - Business Support
Bobbie-Jo Swift	BGCBC – Early Years Transformation Project Lead
Carol Brace	Wales NHS
Carol Pugh	DWP – Job centre Plus - Partnership Manager
Catrin Saunders	Cylch Meithrin Cymru
Ceri Bird	BGCBC – Service Manager, Children's Services
Claire Smith	BGCBC – Early Years, Childcare & Play Manager
Clare Gardner	BGCBC - 21st century Schools - Education Transformation Manager
Deb Jackson	Wales NHS – Head of Midwifery
Debra Whinney	
<b>CHAIR EYDCPP</b>	NDNA
Denise Cook	BGCBC - Business Support
Donna Hardman	Aneurin Leisure Trust – Libraries Officer
Eira Bowen	Cylth Meithrin Cymru
Elaine Gregory	Wales NHS - Midwifery Lead Blaenau Gwent
Elinor Stafford	PACEY Cymru – Regional Manager
Emma Jones	BGCBC - 21st Century Schools
Emma Scherptong	BGCBC – Partnerships Team Leader



<i>Eryl Powell</i>	<i>Public Health Wales</i>
<i>Hayley Lewis</i>	<i>Health Visitor, ABUHB</i>
<i>Hayley Rawlings</i>	<i>BGCBC - EYCP – Quality Improvement Officer</i>
<i>Holly Love</i>	<i>PACEY Cymru – Regional Co-ordinator</i>
<i>Jane Baker</i>	<i>Wales NHS - Oral Health</i>
<i>Judith James</i>	<i>BGCBC – Healthy &amp; Sustainable Preschool Officer</i>
<i>Kara Kershaw</i>	<i>BGCBC - EYCP – Childcare Business Development Officer</i>
<i>Karen Bennett</i>	<i>Aneurin Leisure Trust – Adult Education</i>
<i>Kate James</i>	<i>BGCBC – Integrated Services Business Manager</i>
<i>Martine Redfern</i>	<i>BGCBC - Childcare Strategy Team Leader</i>
<i>Nia Parker</i>	<i>Cylth Meithrin Cymru - Deputy Manager SE Wales</i>
<i>Nicola Dawson</i>	<i>Families First - Acting Team Manager</i>
<i>Nichola Maggs</i>	<i>Head of Flying Start Health Visiting, ABUHB,</i>
<i>Rachel Barrett</i>	<i>BGCBC – Family Information Service</i>
<i>Rebecca Foster</i>	<i>BGCBC – Education Psychology</i>
<i>Rebecca Hall</i>	<i>Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs</i>
<i>Sandra Taylor</i>	<i>Coleg Gwent - Health &amp; Social Care</i>
<i>Sara Thomas Gough</i>	<i>BGCBC - EYALNLO</i>
<i>Sharon Cargill</i>	<i>BGCBC – Play Sufficiency Officer</i>
<i>Sherelle Jago</i>	<i>BGCBC – Flying Start Manager</i>
<i>Vikki Curtis</i>	<i>BGCBC – Flying Start Advisory Teacher</i>

*As a multi-skilled partnership, the group are able to support, develop, promote, and monitor the play sufficiency duty through sharing of information, offering advice, and guidance, with opportunities for partnership working and raising awareness of the child’s right to play within their own specific areas of work.*

*The EYDCPP meet quarterly with the Chair and EYCP Manager meeting to discuss agenda items/actions from the previous minutes before circulation to the group. Throughout the pandemic, meetings were moved virtually which promoted participation and engagement, there is also the opportunity for the partnership to be contacted via email. This has been really beneficial in the event of a cancelled meeting and enabled information to continue to be shared. The Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan are regular items on the agenda, with the Play Sufficiency Officer providing updates, and the Children’s Services Manager regularly updating the Social Services Senior Management Team with progress and addressing any challenges.*

### **Insights from the Coronavirus**

This section should discuss the impact the Coronavirus has had on the local authority’s ability to progress Play Sufficiency Actions.

*The impact of the coronavirus affected officer capacity and resources to implement elements of our Play Sufficiency Actions.*

Assessment process: *The Play Sufficiency Officer usually begins preparatory work at least a year before final submission. However, lack of capacity due to other service priorities (recommencement of services that had been on hold during the pandemic,*

*bringing a previously commissioned service 'in house', co-ordination Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing 2021), the commencement of engagement to undertake research, gather, review and analyse data was significantly delayed. This was further affected by coronavirus restrictions limiting access to our customary routes to consult with children, young people and their families (clubs, groups, schools, events, play sessions). With service priorities, sickness and the long term effects of the pandemic capacity of colleagues and partners who support and assist with the assessment has also impacted the process. This has been further affected by changes of officers responsible for supporting the duty and as a consequence new officers may not have given the Play Sufficiency Assessment the same level of priority.*

*PSA Action plans: Two actions following our 2019 assessment and action plan required more development and were due to be carried over to 2020-2021. These actions were dependant on face to face engagement with children and local communities – Launch of Play Friendly Communities, developing Buy a Day of Play. With varying levels of lockdown these were difficult to achieve with any level of continuity and it was agreed they were best placed on hold until such time capacity and accessibility were eased and to support the Local Authority to sustain service priorities with the sector.*

*Our 2020-2021 action plan reflected the situation with coronavirus with actions focusing on meeting the needs of children during the pandemic. With funding secured from the Children and Communities Grant we were able to introduce and develop an action to recognise the impact of the Covid pandemic on children, young people and families and to aide their recovery which was eventually launched in April 2021.*

*Actions in 2021-2022 continued to focus on supporting children in the recovery of the pandemic. Actions were lower level to reflect capacity to co-ordinate and maximise Welsh Government funded programmes to promote children's play (Holiday Playworks and Summer of Fun) and other service priorities.*

*Despite all the planning, the unpredictable nature of the pandemic affected the ability to carry out some of our actions and a lot of service delivery:*

*The launch of our Wild Camps project was expected to commence in January 2021 with the creation of a new post and planning in place ready to go, with further lockdowns and requirements of 'bubbles' which weren't achievable due to the nature of the project resulted in a four-month delay rolling out in April 2021.*

*The planning of our Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing programme of activities also faced challenges with last minute cancellations due to further restrictions, shortage of staff due to illness and confusion for some providers on what they could/couldn't do within the guidelines. It was also felt that families needed to regain confidence following the pandemic in accessing and participating in activities.*

*Despite some impact restricting the progress of higher level actions, there have been some opportunities that wouldn't have been progressed/developed without additional funding from Welsh Government and the raised profile of play locally and nationally. This has contributed to more interest, increased awareness and recognition of the value and benefits of play and the role of the playwork workforce in supporting children in the recovery of the pandemic.*

*Recognising the impact on the wellbeing of children and young people the Local Authority Play team developed a new project 'Wild Camps' building on the success of our Wild Tots groups. The coronavirus and lockdown have intensified children and families' fears of being outdoors, of dirt and disease and of contact with other people. However reasonable this may be, it has to be balanced against the risks to children's physical and mental health and well-being from being indoors and away from their friends for prolonged periods of time. By encouraging and supporting children to play in the natural environment and working with adults to explain the benefits of play for children's health and wellbeing, learning and resilience we are able to take a balanced approach.*

*Our Wild Tots Parent and Toddler group which being outdoors was able to restart sooner than other provision. Wild Tots saw a significant increase in registered families (400+) following the closure during the pandemic. The demand was so high that rather than turn families away the Local Authority offered an additional session to meet demand. Furthermore, sessions were offered free of charge to recognise the challenges many families had faced during the pandemic and the emphasis for opportunities to be outdoors based. Families expressed how their children had missed opportunities to play and to socialise with other children, for new parents who felt alone and isolated - the opportunity to play, to be outdoors, to meet others, to have a conversation about their new baby was greatly appreciated. One parent came along with a 9month old asking 'what do I do?' the reply 'sit your child down (in the mud) and take 2 steps back!'*



### 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. *(In the “RAG status column” Double click on the word STATUS – this will bring up drop-down form fields options, use the arrow down key until the status required RED, AMBER or GREEN- is at the top then press ok)*

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

### RAG status

Criteria fully met.	Fully met
Criteria partially met.	Partially met
Criteria not met.	Not met

**The 2022 column enables the local authority to indicate the direction of travel with the insertion of arrows.**

**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 Comments section:** asks some specific questions for each matter that should enable you to 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. It also provides the opportunity to identify challenges and how they might be overcome.

**Matter A: Population**

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should provide an overview of population and demographic data used locally to plan for play provision. Information should also be included regarding:

- Ages of children
- First language Welsh speaking children
- Cultural factors (such as other language)
- Gypsy Traveller children
- Disabled children

**What has changed in terms of population and demographic trends since Play Sufficiency Assessment 2019?**

*During the period 2018-2028 the overall population is projected to decrease by 0.7% and projected to continue to decrease over the next 25 years.* <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2020-08/subnational-population-projections-2018-based-280.pdf>

**Population:** *The 0-18 years’ population estimates have been collated at ward level (These reflect the current changes from 16 to 14 ward boundaries after the recent review of the Electoral Arrangements of the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent)*

*Mid-year 2020 Population estimates – single year of age*

Ward Name	All Ages	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Abertillery	848	34	43	53	39	56	36	48	41	48	52	43	47	44	41	54	45	38	50	36
Six Bells	459	23	23	20	21	22	25	24	31	20	32	28	27	24	27	22	25	18	24	23
Beaufort	846	51	44	34	43	40	49	39	46	49	52	65	49	48	47	51	45	23	35	36
Badminton	609	24	30	33	33	38	33	31	31	34	43	39	25	21	34	45	34	31	26	24
Blaina	995	53	59	48	50	52	60	53	60	52	50	56	52	57	47	56	53	50	43	44
Brynmawr	1,122	59	51	73	39	61	58	64	57	64	70	43	68	85	52	66	59	55	54	44
Cwm	739	34	41	44	26	30	37	35	31	41	45	41	52	44	46	39	38	38	40	37
Cwmtillery	1,030	51	49	61	38	48	53	60	65	54	66	85	52	55	49	61	52	45	42	44

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

Ebbw Vale North	958	47	57	60	55	51	48	44	58	40	54	49	48	49	48	45	47	48	48	62
Ebbw Vale South	948	46	43	39	52	52	47	47	53	43	52	41	55	43	40	61	48	70	64	52
Georgetown	804	40	40	44	42	49	40	52	53	40	35	42	51	34	39	44	45	44	30	40
Llanhilleth	911	41	44	48	48	47	52	56	50	42	55	58	74	52	38	41	49	45	35	36
Nantyglo	1,091	52	59	60	40	58	58	55	70	47	61	64	64	65	60	68	53	60	41	56
Rassau	619	31	24	25	36	25	39	32	30	32	30	44	30	45	38	29	38	28	38	25
Garnlydan																				
Sirhowy	1,087	58	63	51	54	61	55	68	62	56	59	72	46	53	50	61	54	52	63	49
Tredegar Central and West	1,209	67	63	60	64	72	58	62	56	77	60	61	70	67	78	63	48	62	73	48

*Ward boundaries were restructured in late 2021 reducing from 16 to 14. The 0-18 population data for the Rassau ward to include Garnlydan is currently unable to be calculated and will be updated as census data reflects the boundary changes and becomes available.*

**Welsh Language:** *Blaenau Gwent has a low percentage of Welsh speakers, with only 7.8% of the population able to speak Welsh (Census, 2011), the area is the 2nd lowest out of the 22 Local Authorities in Wales. The Blaenau Gwent average is well under the national average of 19% although the Census 2011 shows that there are higher levels of Welsh language ability in those aged 0-15 (34% are able to speak Welsh). As well as having low levels of Welsh speakers, information suggests that those that do consider themselves to be able to speak Welsh still do not use the language on a regular basis. (Gwent Wellbeing Assessment 2022)*

**Cultural Factors:** *The 2011 Census data showed Blaenau Gwent's Black and Ethnic Minority population to be just under 1900. This equates to 2.6% of the total population and well below the Welsh average 6.7%. In 2001, the percentage of people in Blaenau Gwent from minority ethnic groups was 1.8%, approximately 1300 people, which shows a notable increase from 2001 to 2011. Even so, Blaenau Gwent still has one of the lowest levels of people from minority ethnic groups in England and Wales. (Population estimates by local authority and ethnicity (gov.wales))*

**Gypsy Travellers:** *This has been difficult to ascertain in previous assessments but with a dedicated officer working on site with our Gypsy/Traveller families we are able to maintain a more accurate figure. Currently there are 37 children/young people aged between 0-18 years in Blaenau Gwent this fluctuates throughout the year with moves, relatives visiting etc*

**Disability:** *The Disability Index in Blaenau Gwent currently has 240 children/young people (161 children aged between – 0-17 and a further 70 Young People aged 18-24). The Local Authority recognises that there are different definitions of disability and thresholds to access services that may mean not all children are counted.*

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

*A ward profile of population of 0-18 year olds has been collated to assist the Local Authority in identifying where play opportunities may be most needed. Data will be used to develop future consultation programmes ensuring we continue to increase our contact with children and young people and to promote engagement in future development of play provision. The information is available to all partners, organisations and stakeholders across Blaenau Gwent to minimise duplication, maximise resources and ensure play opportunities meet the greatest need.*

**Have there been challenges?**


*Most of the population data is currently drawn from the 2011 census and there has been limited updates for some data sets. This means that generally speaking population figures are estimates rather than actual.*

**How can these be overcome?**

*As population data is released following the 2021 Census a more accurate picture of population can be generated in Blaenau Gwent.*

**Comments**

**RAG Status for Matter A**

Criteria fully met. 

**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.	
Criteria not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
B1	The play requirements of children living in isolated rural areas are understood and provided for			<p><i>Very few areas are classified as rural in Blaenau Gwent; Bedwellty Pits, Trefil, Pochin and Cwm.</i></p> <p><i>The Playteam conducted focus groups via schools and invited children to complete play surveys during open access play sessions in preparation for this assessment.</i></p>		
B2	The play requirements of Welsh language speaking children are understood and provided for			<p><i>A focus group of 8 * 11-12year olds was held at Bro Helyg - the only Welsh language school in Blaenau Gwent.</i></p>		



Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>A further 22 children and young people completed our BIG play survey, of these 2 children advised their preferred language of choice was Welsh.</i>		
B3	The play requirements of children from different cultural background are understood and provided for			<p><i>An informal discussion was had with Gypsy/traveller children during the consultation for this assessment.</i></p> <p><i>4.7% of surveyed children and young people indicated different cultural backgrounds.</i></p> <p><i>The LA's Quality Assurance programme for play provision evaluates, monitors and recognises play requirements to support children from different cultural backgrounds.</i></p>		
B4	The play requirements and support needs of disabled			<i>The Disability team, Barnardos and Sparkle work to support the play</i>	<i>Limited access to provision for</i>	<i>Undertake an audit of what provision is available across Blaenau Gwent for children</i>

Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
	children are understood and provided for.			<p><i>requirements of disabled children in Blaenau Gwent.</i></p> <p><i>The Playteam conducted a small focus group with 4 children/young people at Sparkle ASC with a further 15 completing our BIG play survey.</i></p> <p><i>Increase in ASD training/awareness</i></p>	<p><i>children with more complex disabilities</i></p> <p><i>The consultation evidence suggests that there could be further development of play opportunities for disabled children/young people in Blaenau Gwent.</i></p>	<p><i>with disabilities to identify gaps and look at options for further development</i></p>
B5	Play projects and providers have access to a range of resources which support inclusion			<p><i>Resources purchased for the Playteam to support inclusion during play sessions.</i></p> <p><i>Larger resources purchased by the LA to lend to providers to support inclusion</i></p> <p><i>Capital grants 19/20 were available for After-school/Holiday Clubs to purchase resources to support inclusion and Cwtch grant in 2021.</i></p>		

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>The Integrated Children's Centre has a well-resourced light and sensory room which is available for individuals/families and groups.</i>		
B6	There is a well-known and agreed mechanism which is used to identify the need for separate provision for disabled children			<i>Disability Related Agencies/Services (SSD, Flying Start, Families First, Barnardos/Sparkle) across Blaenau Gwent meet and consult on a regular basis to share information in relating to play requirements and support needs of disabled children.</i>		
B7	Access audits for all play provision as described in the guidance are undertaken			<i>Registered provision complies with access requirements as part of the registration with CIW.</i>	<i>Not conducted due to time limitations</i>	<i>Conduct access audits for all play provision</i>
B8	Designated play space is provided and well maintained on gypsy traveller sites			<i>The designated play space consists of a small shipping container which is used to provide indoor activities for children and young people.</i>	<i>The shipping container is a multi-function space for all purposes. Limited space available for play.</i>	<i>Develop a designated play space for gypsy/traveller children.</i>

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p><i>Agencies use the space to provide short term projects.</i></p> <p><i>There are plans to expand the site and to incorporate a more suitable space for play.</i></p>		
B9	The requirements of young carers are understood and provided for			<p><i>Families First provide support to Young Carers through the delivery of play opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>Young Carers were consulted through the BIG play survey.</i></p>		
B10	The requirements of lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) children are understood and provided for			<p><i>Services delivered by the Local Authority including Youth &amp; Play, works with an inclusive ethos encouraging LGBTQIA+ children and young people's participation through all their opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>Staff are trained to support and adapt activities where necessary.</i></p>	<p><i>Statistics on sexual orientation are not available with any level of accuracy.</i></p>	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p><i>The youth service website – www.thebyg.com provides information and advice for LGB young people.</i></p> <p><i>Families First deliver weekly groups at Brynmawr, Tredegar and Abertillery comprehensive schools to support LGBTQIA+ children and young people. The team have plans to attend groups to ensure their views are reflected in this PSA.</i></p>		

**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 and accessible opportunities for playing?**

*The Local Authority has made significant progress in developing and supporting provision for children with disabilities, there is still further work to be done to undertake access audits of all play provision to give us a good understanding of what is available in Blaenau Gwent.*

**Have there been challenges?**

*The Local Authority has previously encouraged Gypsy/Travellers to access community based play spaces however through the consultation for this PSA there are cultural factors that hadn't been considered previously and need more consideration. The designated play space is currently unsuitable for the number of children on site and very limiting.*

**How can these be overcome?**

*There are plans to expand the Gypsy/Traveller site and to incorporate a more suitable space for children's play.*

**Comments:**

*As part of our consultation for this PSA, we also held a focus group for Children Looked After in February 2022, where a group were invited to join the Play team at the ICC. Due to being a smaller group than expected consultation was informal, with more generalised discussion about children’s play. Feedback from the children’s carer following their attendance was really encouraging.*

*‘Thanks very much. Thursday was interesting, made me think how I interact with the girls. A lot of our play is educational and social, they have had limited interaction. It’s nice to bring fun into play and I would like the opportunity to see their interaction with other children and adults. Covid has caused so many restrictions. Thanks again for Thursday’*

*A further focus group will be held with Children Looked After prior to final submission to Welsh Government.*

**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.	■
Criteria not met.	■

**Open Spaces**

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
C1	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			<i>Open space assessments are conducted and mapped for 'formal/informal play spaces – play areas, wheeled sports areas, playing fields etc.</i>		
C2	The Local Authority has undertaken an Accessible Greenspace Study that maps areas that are used for playing			<i>Green Space Assessment conducted as part of the Leisure Background Paper to support the Local Development Plan.</i>		
C3	The Local Authority undertakes access audits at all open spaces and implements proposals to improve access and safety			<i>Conducted on an annual basis and proposals for improvement are prioritised.</i>		
C4	The Local Authority has developed its own Open Space Standards in accordance with the advice and requirements of Planning Policy Wales			<i>The Local Authority is currently working towards 2.4 hectares per 1000 people, this is based on the results of the Open Space Assessment process and FIT standards.</i>		
C5	The Local Authority undertakes and actions play value assessments in public open space			<i>The Local Authority recognises the play value of open spaces and responds to feedback from local communities.</i>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
C6	Brownfield sites owned by the Local Authority are assessed for the potential for the site to be reclaimed to provide for children's play			<i>Children's play needs are identified as part of the assessment of any new development.</i>		

**Outdoor Unstaffed Designated Play Spaces**

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
C7	The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of all designated play space as described in the Statutory Guidance			<i>GIS records held of formal play space include wheeled sport areas, MUGA's, ball courts, informal play space, grassed sports pitches, parks, outdoor sports such as bowls, tennis courts.</i>		
C8	The Local Authority assesses play spaces for play value and potential to increase in play use as set out in the Statutory Guidance			<i>A basic play value is assessed as part of the Local Authorities annual inspections programme.  The Local Authority recognises that children use informal play spaces for play and publish guidance to</i>	<i>While play value is assessed there are no means to improve due to limited budgets this has only been available through AWPOG funding allocations.</i>	



## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>promote and support play opportunities.</i>		
C9	The Local Authority undertakes access audits at all designated play spaces and implements proposals to improve access and safety			<p><i>Access audits are conducted as part of the Annual Inspection Programme</i></p> <p><i>Improvements needed to improve access and safety are recorded and prioritised.</i></p>	<i>Limited due to available budget and capacity.</i>	
C10	The Local Authority has developed and agreed a new fixed play provision standard			<i>The Local Authority has its own policy standard to provide 1 static play area per 250 children, with a wheeled sports area and multi-use games area (MUGA) per ward area.</i>		
C11	The Local Authority undertakes and actions play space assessments in designated play spaces			<p><i>Annual inspections of designated children's play spaces are conducted and improvements are programmed on a maintenance and safety basis.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Authority undertook a comprehensive Play area review in 2018</i></p>	<p><i>Assessments of each play space are beyond the LA's current resources other than through annual safety inspections.</i></p> <p><i>There are factors that would affect assessments during a one-visit</i></p>	

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>which forms the basis for capital investment.</i>	<i>observation including weather, other interests etc so not considered a true reflection of use.</i>	
C12	<p>The Local Authority has introduced smoke-free playgrounds.</p> <p>The local authority complies with The Smoke-free Premises and Vehicles (Wales) Regulations 2020 that requires playgrounds in Wales to be smoke-free.</p>			<p><i>All playgrounds in Blaenau Gwent have been smoke-free zones since 2014.</i></p> <p><i>Playgrounds/school grounds and play provision all display signage to promote compliance.</i></p>		
C13	The Local Authority has removed 'no ball games' signs to encourage more children playing in the community				<i>Observations suggest there are 'no ball game signs' remaining in place that could potentially be removed.</i>	<i>Audit of 'no ball games' signs and consider removal where appropriate.</i>
C14	The Local Authority has erected signs, such as Play Priority Signs to encourage more children playing in the community			<i>This will be actioned through the 'Play Friendly Communities' programme</i>	<i>This was on hold from 2019 due to the pandemic</i>	<i>Identify local communities to pilot the launch of the Play Friendly Communities programme</i>
C15	The Local Authority includes a recognition of the importance			<i>Supported through the Local Development Plan and</i>		

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	of playing fields to children’s play when any disposal decisions are made			<p><i>planning guidance. The FIT standard is considered when determining any disposal of green space.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Development Plan identifies all land across Blaenau Gwent and its permitted use.</i></p>		
C16	The Local Authority includes children and their families in any consultations regarding decisions to dispose of playing fields			<p><i>WG introduced a measure; ‘Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure 2010’ making it mandatory for Local Authorities to include local communities in playing field disposal decisions.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Authority meets this measure.</i></p>		
C17	The Local Authority refers to guidance around creating accessible play space when refurbishing or developing new playgrounds			<p><i>The Local Authority refers to ‘Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play in Wales – Beyond the Six Acre Standard (Wales) Fields in Trust’</i></p> <p><i>£277,000 has been invested into the refurbishment of</i></p>		

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				<p><i>playgrounds between 2019-2021 through AWPOG funding.</i></p> <p><i>Good practice examples and guidance shared.</i></p>		

**Open Spaces**

**How has the Local Authority ensured collaboration between Open Space Assessments / Green Infrastructure Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessments to improve spaces for play?**

*Blaenau Gwent's Open Space Assessments reflect there are a variety of open spaces including outdoor sport pitches, formal and informal playing space and playing fields. The number of people with access to natural greenspace within 400m of their home has exceeded the 80% by 2021 with 87%. The Play Sufficiency Assessment recognises and works to promote play as a 'function of space'.*

**Have there been challenges?**

*We currently do not map all areas that 'are used or might be used for playing' and this is an area for development.*

**How can these be overcome?**

*Findings of areas that are used for play from the BIG play survey will be shared with colleagues to promote collaboration between Open Space Assessments/green infrastructure strategies and the Play Sufficiency Assessment.*

**Comments:**

**Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces**

**How has the local authority considered all issues of accessibility in play space development?**

*Meeting the play needs of all children through the provision of accessible outdoor play space continues to be a priority for the Local Authority.*

*Blaenau Gwent keeps a comprehensive and up-to-date list of all outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces. Playgrounds are inspected annually and assess play spaces for: accessibility, security of perimeters, inspecting of ancillary items, safety surfacing, operation and stability of equipment, and provide an estimated life expectancy of equipment. As part of the Annual Inspections, the overall location, layout and design of the site is assessed and any issues recorded. These may include nearby features (roads, water, electricity cables/pylons, electrical installations), desire lines running across the path of moving equipment, other clashes of movement in and around the playground or lack of segregation by age. Any compliance failures are noted, risk assessed and comment made as to whether any further action is required. The annual inspection reports of outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces present information on a ward level in line with statutory guidance.*

*The Local Authority undertook a thorough review of Static Play Provision in 2018, looking at several criteria;*

- *Play Value*
- *Risk/Benefit Challenge Opportunities*
- *Catchment*
- *Social Safety & Casual Supervision*
- *Vulnerability to vandalism*
- *Development opportunities*
- *Access*

*Each of the 74 Static Play Facilities in the borough were individually assessed and reviewed using the review methodology to allow a priority evaluation matrix to be established to provide a clear rationale for the use of any funding stream that became available.*

### **Have there been challenges?**

*Maintenance/upkeep and staffing budgets for playgrounds have been significantly reduced year on year resulting in limited funding and capacity to maintain playgrounds and to respond to findings in the annual safety inspection reports. Currently medium risk assessed compliance failures are prioritised and low-very low are monitored. Many of our play areas have aging stock that is functional but does not offer much play value.*

### **How can these be overcome?**

*It is recognised in Blaenau Gwent that providing for children's play is not just about playgrounds, play areas and playschemes. The Local Authority has traditionally provided fixed play areas for children, however recognise that there is now a greater trend towards more naturalistic play environments. Responses from the children's survey reinforce that play 'takes place whenever and wherever', the Play Sufficiency Duty recognises that children's ability to find time and space for play is affected by all Local Authority functions and therefore will continue to develop working relationships cross-departmentally.*




*In the event of further funding availability, the Local Authority will prioritise addressing some of the identified lower risk failures to promote longevity/aesthetics of existing equipment and consider more non-prescriptive equipment, which can be used flexibly to meets the needs of large numbers of children with different needs and abilities.*

**Comments**


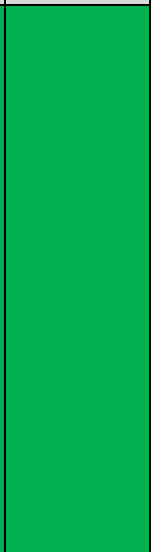
**Matter D: Supervised provision**

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

**RAG Status**

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

**Playwork provision**

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
D1	The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of all supervised play provision as described in the Statutory Guidance			<p><i>All information regarding supervised play provision is held by Family Information Service and available via email, telephone service, online as well as through DEWIS search facilities.</i></p> <p><i>The Family Information Service (FIS) holds details of all registered childcare/after school and holiday provision, which providers can now update online at any time.</i></p>	<p><i>FIS is reliant on services providing and updating their own information and it is recognised that not all providers (particularly unregistered services) use the facility.</i></p>	<p><i>To encourage more registered and unregistered provision to sign up to DEWIS</i></p>

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LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
D2	The Local Authority offers play provision which offers a rich play environment as described in the Statutory Guidance			<p><i>The Local Authority offers a range of play provision delivered by a team of playworkers and volunteers.</i></p> <p><i>Wild Tots – weekly outdoor based parent &amp; toddler group</i></p> <p><i>Wild Camps – a weekly group for older children where they have experienced significant changes to their lives to access outdoor play opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>Open Access play provision during school holidays</i></p>	<i>These are limited due to the limited capacity of a small team and reliance on volunteers.</i>	<i>To sustain current delivery model for play provision and look at options to expand</i>
D3	The Local Authority ensures that partners offering playwork provision are supported to offer rich play environments as described in the Statutory Guidance			<p><i>The LA supports the private and voluntary sector with advice, guidance and training in relation to offering rich play environments.</i></p> <p><i>Grants available to develop outdoor play spaces.</i></p>		



## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
D4	Staffed playwork provision that the Local Authority provides meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards			<i>Staffed Play provision that the Local Authority provides meets regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards as good practice.</i>		
D5	Staffed play provision that the Local Authority funds meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards			<i>Staffed Play provision that the Local Authority funds meets regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards as good practice.</i>  <i>In the event of commissioning this is monitored though the Local Authorities commissioning criteria, evaluations and monitoring by the Play Sufficiency Officer.</i>		
D6	Staffed play provision that the Local Authority's partners provide meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards			<i>The LA works closely with partners to ensure they meet the NMS - in addition unregistered provision is advised to meet NMS as good practice.</i>  <i>The Play Sufficiency Officer monitors through the QA</i>		

## Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit – Part 2

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>programme and regular visits.</i>		
D7	Staffed play provision across the Local Authority works to a recognised quality assurance programme			<p><i>All registered settings have signed up to the Local Authorities Quality Assurance (QA) programme.</i></p> <p><i>All settings were supported virtually during the pandemic to ensure quality could be maintained.</i></p> <p><i>Unregistered provision is supported to register with CIW by both the LA and umbrella organisations and meet good practice and subsequently to undertake the LA's QA process.</i></p>	<p><i>Due to the restricted access to settings during the pandemic and limited capacity of the Play Sufficiency Officer the QA programme was temporarily paused.</i></p>	Undertake QA with all registered settings
D8	The Local Authority prioritises quality issues when engaging with/ commissioning the private sector to deliver recreational activities for children.			<p><i>This is a requirement and monitored through our Service Level Agreements with any commissioned services.</i></p> <p><i>The Play Sufficiency Officer promotes and monitors during routine visits</i></p>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
D9	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			<i>Open spaces are provided free of charge to play provision that has been commissioned/or is being delivered by the Local Authority.</i>	<i>Local Authority premises are limited in number and incur a charge for use.  Where premises are available, free use is limited to programmes delivered by Local Authority services.</i>	

**Structured recreational activities for children**

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
D10	Local authority sport, physical activity, and active recreation plans are contributing to increasing free play and recreational activities			<i>The Playteam work closely with Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team to maximise resources and minimise duplication.</i>		<i>To look at options to increase the working relationship/capacity between play and ALT sports development team.</i>
D11	The sports agenda contributes to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children			<i>The Aneurin Leisure Sports Development Team continue work to increase physical activity levels in line with Sports Wales vision for</i>		<i>Deliver Summer of Fun 2022 programme of activities for 0-25yrs with partners</i>

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>sport. Providing recreational activities for children and young people through leisure centre programmes and sports development programmes.</i>		
D12	The cultural and arts agenda, is contributing to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children			<p><i>Head4Arts is a community arts organisation which operates in the South East Wales Valleys region. They work across all art forms with people of all ages to provide high quality, inspirational arts experiences that introduce participants to new art forms and unlock their creative potential.</i></p> <p><i>The Arts, Culture and Events Strategic Business Unit manages arts activity and large scale arts events in venues operated by Aneurin Leisure in Blaenau Gwent.</i></p>		
D13	The Local Authority Youth Service provides for children's			<i>The Youth Service understands the importance of play and provides a</i>	<i>Two thirds of the Youth Services workforce and</i>	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
	opportunities for leisure and association			<p><i>varied range of opportunities for young people aged 11 – 25 to play and socialise. Open access provision includes youth clubs and centres, school holiday programmes, trips and the provision of detached staff within their own communities.</i></p> <p><i>Targeted provision includes projects/delivery to support homelessness, NEET, counselling, health and wellbeing linked to early identification and transition destinations for 16+.</i></p> <p><i>All activities are delivered by qualified staff and are developed in partnership with young people, taking their opinions on board through a series of consultations which help shape activity design.</i></p>	<p><i>provision is funded through external grants, and most of those grants are for targeted pieces of work rather than to extend open access.</i></p> <p><i>Over the past three years, the Youth Service have experienced a growing demand and need for all of their services including more open access provision, which is becoming more noticeable through the increasing numbers reported for youth related ASB.</i></p>	

## Supervised play provision

**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?**

*The Early Years, Childcare and Play Team (EYCP) are committed to ensure the quality of all Childcare and Play provisions are maintained throughout the Local Authority. The Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) and Flying Start Advisory Teacher (FSAT), along with the Flying Start Childcare Co-ordinator (FSCC) assess settings using a variety of tools including the established Environment Ratings Scales (ERS).*

*At the end of 2019 it was considered that the validity and reliability of ERS had been reduced, after discussions surrounding the appropriateness of the ERS a decision was made to collaboratively write a new Quality Improvement tool named 'Quality Matters' (QM) that would incorporate partner's assessments as well as our own at Local Authority.*

*The working group consisted of the Local Authorities Quality Improvement Officer (QIO), Flying Start Advisory Teacher (FSAT), Flying Start Childcare Co-ordinator (FSCC), Healthy and Sustainable Pre Schools Scheme (HSPS), Play Sufficiency Officer (PSO), Early Years Transformation Project Officer (EYTO), Early Years, Childcare and Play Manager and Flying Start Manager shared ideas and areas of expertise to feed into the development of a new QM for the sector.*

*Our new approach would cultivate a relationship of working with the childcare providers in a supporting and empowering capacity, inviting providers to self-evaluate, reflect and identify their own improvement plans, whilst receiving the expert guidance from (FSAT), (QIO) and (FSCC) along with the (HSPS) as a partner. The celebration of good practice will still be of paramount importance during the process. The QIO or FSAT, FSCC and HSPS will observe and assess the quality of what the children actually experience while Childcare providers are required to work with the assessors to self-identify, co-write actions plans, set review dates, share with their teams and celebrate good practice. Together they can embed the new quality guidance into their everyday practice.*

*The ERS assesses the various interactions not only between adults and children, but with the materials and activities in the Childcare environment that children can access freely. It also considers features such as space both indoors and outdoors and materials that support interactions. Additionally, the observers look at the opportunities for stimulation and learning experiences, protection of children's health and safety and building positive relationships. The new QM will not only assess; it will observe alongside providers as a critical friend; it will question why? What does the child get out of it? Why are we doing it this way? Then together we will look at and discuss new ways of working and planning.*

*When the new QM launches in 2022 the process will be similar. Currently the QA process involves an initial arranged visit to complete a baseline assessment, this will continue however initial visit will be to look over the document and establish a rating system. An Action Plan is developed in partnership with the setting, along with agreed timescales to work towards enhancing the areas that can be improved. When the setting feels that they are ready, within the given timescale, the QIO or FSAT will visit to perform a further assessment and observations, which will identify a new improved rating, moving towards the setting self-identified goals. This new rating will be the setting's overall quality rating with green being the optimal colour, identifying excellence, while an amber will show the areas that need lesser amendments and red would be an inadequate rating, requiring immediate improvements. Every setting is encouraged and supported to achieve a good quality rating striving to be green. The QIO and FSAT continue to work with in the collaborative ways described above with the settings to ensure that the quality is maintained or improved, visiting the settings sometimes adhoc to ensure that the good practice is embedded into their everyday practice.*

*The Safeguarding Quality Assessment tool previously developed will now form part of the QM and not appear as a separate document. Its purpose to ensure that National Minimum Standards are adhered to and good practice encouraged. The Safeguarding QA tool was introduced to ensure that safeguarding became a priority focus for all of our childcare and play settings. The Safeguarding QA tool looks at safe recruitment, logging and reporting concerns as well as encouraging staff to undertake specialised Safeguarding training to enhance their understanding and knowledge, which is over and above National Minimum Standards requirements*

*There is one full time QIO and their role is to take the lead in promoting and undertaking assessment and observation of quality in Blaenau Gwent's childcare and play settings. They are responsible for collaboratively creating and monitoring action plans that will promote continuous improvement, offering creative suggestions and solutions where required. There is a particular focus on promoting excellent safeguarding practice within the sector. Where a setting has been identified as needing a higher level of support the Childcare Strategy Team Leader will lead on the QA process. They work closely with members of the Early Years, Childcare and Play team and the Flying Start Advisory Teacher, identifying and promoting good practice models, identifying the training needs of the workforce and delivering some of that training. They support the collection of baseline and exit assessment data, and support and facilitate transition arrangements for children moving into school nursery settings. They ensure that the childcare and play sector are fully supported in providing a quality provision. It was identified that parent and toddler groups required advice, guidance, support and training this has become part of the QIO role and they will endeavour to raise the quality across Blaenau Gwent, paying particular attention to Physical development and Speech Language and Communication development, as these were identified concerns post pandemic.*

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

*The Local Authority works closely with providers providing advice, guidance and training to promote the importance of providing quality of play opportunities. The Play Sufficiency Officer works with all registered play providers to undertake the Local Authorities 'We Play' Quality Assurance*

*scheme on a bi-annual basis with an action plan agreed to improve quality. There is a strong commitment to ensure that children receive good play opportunities and that providers recognise the importance of play.*

*The Quality Improvement Officer also offers good practice guidance to non-registered provision including a Quality Assurance tool for Parent and Toddler/Cylch Ti a Fi groups.*

**Have there been challenges?**

*Many of our settings primarily offer a childcare service to parents which can impact upon the quality of some play opportunities for children. With the pandemic and limited (if any) access to settings the QA was temporarily paused as it was considered settings had other key priorities to focus on.*

**How can these be overcome?**

*The Local Authority will continue to signpost good practice models to promote quality play opportunities through the Quality Assurance process, social media, network meetings and training opportunities. The Playteam will continue to develop and offer quality play opportunities in the provision they offer sharing and promoting good practice.*

**Comments:**



**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.	
Criteria not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
E1	The Local Authority keeps records of the number of children living in low income families			<p><i>The Local Authority maintains a number of records on children/young people living in low income families. The WIMD 2011 is a child index which provides information on income and outlines which LSOAs in Blaenau Gwent are the most deprived. Information is also available through the free school's meals data.</i></p> <p><i>Children aged 0-3 in low income households have been identified in relation to the Flying Start programme</i></p>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>and through the Childcare Offer.</i>		
E2	The Local Authority keeps records of the number of children living in areas of deprivation			<i>WIMD 2011 provides information on income and outlines which LSOAs in Blaenau Gwent are the most deprived.</i>		
E3	The Local Authority keeps records of the number of children living in rural areas			<i>Information is available through Educations PLASC data.</i>		
E4	The Local Authority keeps records of the number of disabled children and those with particular needs.			<i>Social Services records disabled children accessing services.</i>	<i>The data does not account for children without formal diagnosis.</i>	
E5	The Local Authority records the availability of no cost provision			<i>Cost is recorded with provider information captured through Family Information Service/DEWIS.</i>		
E6	The Local Authority records the provision of no cost / low cost premises used for play provision			<i>This is recorded through Family Information Service.</i>  <i>The Local Authority works with partners to identify and promote low cost/no cost opportunities.</i>		

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E7	The Local Authority records the provisions where grants or subsidies are available for play providers			<p><i>The Local Authority provides Start Up grants for newly registered After School and Holiday Clubs.</i></p> <p><i>The LA also offer Expansion, Sustainability and Innovation grants. Records are maintained in relation to allocation of spend.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Authority signposts funding sources to the sector and supports the development of funding applications.</i></p>		
E8	The Local Authority provides subsidised transport for children travelling to play opportunities			This has been provided through SoF and WoW programmes – Flying Start, Families First and Youth Service		

### Charge for play provision

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

*The Local Authority recognises that a lot of play provision in Blaenau Gwent incurs a cost to families. The Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing programme 2021 has been most welcomed by families and well supported by providing opportunities for families that they may not usually be able to participate in.*

- The Playworks Holiday Project funding has been used to secure 2 p/t play leader posts, which has enabled the Local Authority to bring play services back in house. This is more beneficial than out sourcing the service as the team can be reactive to support the gaps identified through the Play Sufficiency Assessment process. The team offer open access play sessions in various locations across Blaenau Gwent during all school holidays as well as developing term time provision.*
- Wild Tots is an outdoor-based Parent and Toddler group launched in the summer of 2017. The aim of the group is to encourage families with young children to access the outdoor environment and offer freely chosen play opportunities, we were fortunate to secure some funding in 2021 to be able to offer these sessions at no-cost to our families. The group is now led by the Local Authorities Play leaders (supported by our Play Volunteers) this ensures that sessions run regularly and consistently.*
- Open access plays sessions are delivered during February, Whitsun, Summer and October half terms to encourage children and young people to play out in their local communities with a team of playworkers supporting freely chosen activities with no cost to attending children.*
- National Play Day brings together a host of partners who provide activities free of charge for children and their families. With the pandemic a celebration has still be maintained by bringing partners together to distribute activity/craft/sports bags.*
- Flying Start deliver free family fun days to their families throughout the year offering a range of play activities and ideas for parents to take away with them.*
- Families First hold free events for young carers, and children with disabilities.*
- The Local Authority offers an assisted places scheme for families in need for children to attend childcare/play provision.*

**Have there been challenges?**

*With large areas of economic deprivation in Blaenau Gwent, cost of activities is often mentioned as one of the biggest barriers and limits access to provision. We understand that even relatively small costs for low income families with several children can mean that opportunities are not available to these children. An additional pressure is the current Cost of living crisis which is also going to have a significant impact on families already living in deprivation and putting increasing pressure on families during school holidays and costs of activities for their children.*

**How can these be overcome?**

*The Local Authority will continue to provide and promote low/no cost provision to promote accessibility and to work with partners to minimise costs wherever possible. In the event of further funding initiatives to provide play opportunities the Local Authority will in the first instance consider families in greatest need. The Summer of Fun 2022 will enable the Local Authority to offer a range of free opportunities to families to support school holiday activities and opportunities.*

**Comments:**

*While the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing programme 2021 has been most welcomed by families, there is a concern that this becomes an expectation and its longevity is short term. Through these programmes children may have experienced new opportunities that families are unable to sustain in the longer term due to cost.*

**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.	
Criteria not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
F1	The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of the number of 20 mph zones/school safety zones in residential areas			<i>The Local Authorities’ Transport Officer holds information of 20mph zones and are working to Welsh Governments 20mph default speed limits for all residential areas in Blaenau Gwent by 2023.</i>		
F2	The Local Authority has an identified mechanism for assessing the impact of speed reduction and other road safety measures on the opportunity for children to play outside in their communities			<i>Mechanism continues to be in place which is community focused with the use of road traffic accident data to assess the impact of speed reduction and other road safety measures.</i>		
F3	The Local Authority has a plan(s) to reduce the negative effect of busy roads and			<i>As F1 above and are conducted through community engagement,</i>		

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	junctions through the introduction of speed reduction measures and provision of safe crossing points/routes for pedestrians and cyclists			<i>observations, local knowledge and road traffic accident data under continual review and assessment.</i>		
F4	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				<i>Funding for such schemes is based on casualty reduction. Applications for funding must be based on sites having a history of personal injury collisions.</i>	
F5	There is potential for the Local Authority to take further action to reduce traffic speed and improve road safety to promote play opportunities			<i>The LA are working towards 20mph zones for all residential areas in Blaenau Gwent by 2023.</i>		
F6	The Local Authority uses road safety grants and/or other funding to support delivery of cycling training for children to national standards			<i>Level 1 and 2 National cycling standards continue to be delivered in schools. The road safety team also obtained additional funding in 2022 to be able to deliver Balanceability – a learn to ride a bike scheme, that has</i>		

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				<i>been taken up by 16 schools in the borough. Children attending Nursery, Reception and Year 1 all received the training in 2021/2022 and it was well received by those taking part.</i>		<p><i>Carried from 2019 Meet ESAG to discuss potential of ‘Street Play’ road closures for local communities.</i></p>
F7	The Local Authority uses road safety grants and/or other funding to provide pedestrian safety training for children			<i>The Local Authority continued to provide child pedestrian training to schools throughout the pandemic, when able.</i>		
F8	The Local Authority has an accessible and well-known way of arranging temporary road closures, to support more children to play outside their homes			<i>Blaenau Gwent ESAG (Event Safety Advisory Group) is available to help people plan and organise successful, safe events for the public within Blaenau Gwent.</i>	<p><i>Information not easily found on corporate website.</i></p> <p><i>Lengthy process – 3 months for a small scale event.</i></p>	
F9	The Local Authority refers to <i>Manual for Streets</i> when considering new developments and changes to the highway network/urban realm			<i>Manual for Streets is consulted when considering new developments and changes to the highway network</i>	<i>Manual for Streets only applies to streets and not the wider higher classified road network</i>	



LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
F10	The Local Authority works to nationally recognised good practice guidelines when developing walking and cycling facilities			<p><i>Development of Active Travel routes is undertaken by reference to Welsh Government design guidance.</i></p> <p><i>Active Travel Network Maps are developed in order to inform the location of and extent of both existing and proposed routes and this exercise has recently been completed following extensive public consultation.</i></p> <p><i>The authority will also shortly commission an audit of barriers on active travel routes to assess accessibility along them.</i></p>		
F11	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><i>The LA monitors road traffic accident casualty data to inform requirements for interventions.</i></p>	<p><i>Any interventions would be for all road users and not one specific user group</i></p>	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
F12	The Local Authority considers children’s needs to access play opportunities when making decisions about public transport planning and expenditure			<i>The LA prioritises access to key sites which include some play and leisure opportunities.</i>	<i>Limited influence on services as commercial in nature.</i>	
F13	The requirements of disabled children are understood and provided for within traffic and transport initiatives			<i>This is met through the Disability Act.</i>  <i>The LA’s highways infrastructure provide traffic calming measures; disabled parking, drop kerbs, home to school transport taking into consideration sensory and disability requirements.</i>		

**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.**

F14	The Local Authority has a clearly identified section on its website which gives information about play opportunities as described in the Statutory Guidance (play			<i>There is a dedicated page for play on the website</i>  <i>Information on play provision, clubs, accessibility, opening times,</i>	<i>This isn’t used to provide information for the general public on play opportunities.</i>	<i>Audit play page and update bi-monthly</i>
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	areas, play provision, clubs and their accessibility)			<i>fees is available through DEWIS and Family Information Service</i>		
F15	The Local Authority provides information on access to play opportunities and contact for support if required			<p><i>Family Information Service provides and disseminates information through the website, social media and search facilities. FIS is available for enquiries and support via telephone, email, social media and outreach events.</i></p> <p><i>The Family Information Service will shortly have has its own stand- alone website to establish a bilingual Family Information Service Website, there will be a dedicated section for play.</i></p>		<p><i>Development of a dedicated page on FIS website to raise awareness of ‘play’ opportunities across the Local Authority.</i></p>
F16	The Local Authority supports and publicises events which encourage play opportunities and events for children and families			<p><i>Family Information Service and the Corporate Communication team promote play opportunities and events to families through the corporate website, social media channels and shares with local community groups.</i></p>		
F17	The Local Authority publicises information which contributes			<p><i>Family Information Service widely publicises through</i></p>		

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	to positive community attitudes to play			<i>social media and LA partnerships, which includes invitations for feedback from the community to promote positive attitudes towards play.</i>		
F18	The Local Authority publicises information and support for parents to help them encourage their children to play			<i>Family Information Service uses social media and the corporate website to publicise information and support for parents/carers to encourage their children to play and access play activities.</i>		
F19	The Local Authority widely uses on-site signposting to safeguard and promote play			<i>Family Information Service signposts various subjects on the topic of Play and offers advice, support and guidance.</i>		<i>Update/promote the 'play all day' booklet</i>
F20	The Local Authority engages with the media to encourage the positive portrayal of children playing in the local area			<i>The Corporate Communications Team promote play opportunities and engages local media in key events.</i>		

### Access to space/provision

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

*The Local Authority encourages walking and cycling schemes within its Healthy schools and Active Travel Plan. In addition, schools also engage with child pedestrian training, Level 1 and 2 National cycling standards and also the more recently with the introduction of Balanceability – a learn to ride a bike scheme, that was taken up by 16 schools in the borough.*

### **Have there been challenges?**

*With regards to permitting temporary road closures for children's play, applications tend to be more targeted at larger scale events – Queens Jubilee. Very few (if any) have been made for the purpose of play potentially due to the lack of knowledge that the opportunity is there and the process and information as to how to go about requesting a temporary road closure is difficult to find and a lengthy process. There is nothing easily available on the corporate website to advise local communities of the process.*

*Rural access via public rights of way (e.g. footpaths across fields and woodlands) are currently not adequately resourced by the Council which has not employed a rights of way officer for the last 5 years. Our statutory plan (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) which should set out our approach expired in 2017 and numerous duties pertaining to the recording and management of this area are not being discharged. As a result, it's important to appreciate that this is strained and these facilities are not encapsulated by responses from Highways or DLO.*

### **How can these be overcome?**

*Further work with the EASG (Event Advisory Safety Group) through the PSA action plan will look at how 'street play' type schemes can be developed/offered to local communities. However, the Local Authority recognises that 87% of the population live within 400m of a green space (LDP 2020-21 annual monitoring report)*

### **Comments**

#### **Information, publicity, events**

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

*The Family Information Service provides free, confidential and impartial information and guidance on a range of services available to children, young people and their families. They offer information in relation to Play provision, Childcare, play spaces, health issues, career choices, benefits, sports and recreational activities. Information is provided via a telephone helpline, online search facility on the Family Information Service pages of the corporate website, via email, and through the use of social media sites.*

*Information/focus papers are circulated to support and promote access to play.*

**Have there been challenges?**

*Getting childcare and play providers to update information on DEWIS has been particularly difficult throughout the pandemic.*

**How can these be overcome?**

*The Early Years, Childcare and Play team will continue to encourage providers to update information on DEWIS through regular contact, and at network evenings.*

**Comments:**

**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.	
Criteria not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
<p><b>Note – These criteria are specifically about Playwork: Playwork is a highly skilled profession that enriches and enhances play. It takes place where adults support children’s play but it is not driven by prescribed education or care outcomes. This includes both open access and out of school childcare settings</b></p>						
G1	The Local Authority keeps up to date information regarding the playwork workforce across the Local Authority (this should include the number of playworkers, playwork management structure, qualification levels, training opportunities and volunteers)			<i>The Local Authorities Childcare Business Development Officer maintains and updates information of the playwork workforce through an annual workforce audit.</i>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
G2	The Local Authority supports all of the workforce to achieve the qualification level required by the Welsh Government's National Minimum Standards			<p><i>The Childcare Business Development Officer brings together the EYDCPP annual training programme and signposts to qualifications providers.</i></p> <p><i>Training providers are invited to network meetings and opportunities to gain qualifications are regularly promoted to the sector.</i></p> <p><i>The LA has funded intro to playwork and L2APP for 9 learners through Adult Learning Wales</i></p>		
G3	The Local Authority has a staff development budget ring fenced for play, including playwork			<p><i>Play and playwork CPD opportunities are offered through the EYDCPP annual training programme</i></p>		
G4	There is a comprehensive range of Continuing Professional Development			<p><i>This is offered through the EYDCPP annual training programme, signposting to</i></p>		



	(CPD) opportunities available for playworkers in the area			<p><i>opportunities from voluntary sector groups.</i></p> <p><i>Areas of development from the Quality Improvement schemes inform the annual training programme to meet the needs of the sector.</i></p>		
G5	Training is available for volunteers and parents to develop their knowledge on skills in playwork			<p><i>Volunteers and parents are able to access play/playwork training through the LA's Play Sufficiency Officer and Play Volunteers are able to access the EYDCPP annual training programme.</i></p>		
G6	The Local Authority includes playwork within its Workforce Development strategies			<p><i>Playwork is provided through the EYDCPP annual training programme which sits within the Social Care Workforce Development Strategy.</i></p>		<p><i>Deliver workshops for Year 11 and community groups on childcare and play as careers.</i></p>
G7	The Local Authority supports partners to deliver appropriate training to community groups, parents and volunteers			<p><i>The Local Authority works with a range of partners including NDNA Cymru, Pacey Cymru, Coleg Gwent, Clybiau Plant, Kids Club Cymru</i></p>		

				<i>to offer and deliver appropriate training.</i>		
<b>Note – these criteria are about the Play workforce: This encompasses anyone employed whose role has an impact on children playing – those who may either directly facilitate their play, design for playing, or those with the power to give permission for children to play, or not.</b>						
G8	The Local Authority has undertaken a comprehensive training needs analysis for the play workforce as defined in the toolkit glossary and above				<i>Many Officers within the Local Authority do not recognise themselves as being part of the play workforce</i>	<i>Deliver ‘Understanding Play Sufficiency’ training to all PSA contacts</i>
G9	The Local Authority takes action to expand the variety of learning and development opportunities that are offered to staff			<i>The EYCP Quality Improvement Officer monitors the needs of the sector which informs the EYDCP annual training programme.</i>		
G10	There is a comprehensive range of CPD opportunities for a range of professionals who work with children			<i>The EYDCP annual training programme offers a wide range of both mandatory and CPD courses to all staff/volunteers and professionals working with children.</i>		
G11	Training awareness sessions are available for professionals and decision makers whose work impacts on children’s opportunities to play			<i>The Local Authority signposts relevant training to professionals and decision makers.</i>		

## 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?**

*The Play Sufficiency Officer came into post in October 2014 with responsibility for the strategic development of play in Blaenau Gwent to ensure children can safely and freely access a broad range of environment and play opportunities within their community. To recognise the importance of play and the statutory duty, the Local Authority secured the role through their Revenue Support Grant and amended the post from an annual contract to a permanent position in 2022.*

*The Play Sufficiency Officer continues to bring together the Play Sufficiency Assessment and monitor the Play Sufficiency Action Plans, with support from the Early Years, Childcare and Play Manager, and Children's Services Manager (PSA Implementation group). The Play Sufficiency Officer also acts as the Local Authorities key point of contact with external National bodies such as Welsh Government and Play Wales concerning play policy matters as well as locally for play providers. The role has also aided the Local Authority to develop partnerships with partners and stakeholders, both internally and externally to represent the interests of children and young people.*

*Two of our long term Community Play Volunteers have now secured employment with the Local Authority as part of the play team and another has been successful in gaining a position with a local play provider.*

### **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 and above)?**

*An annual workforce development survey is conducted by the Local Authorities Childcare Business Development Officer to ascertain qualification levels and training needs for the sector. The information collated informs the EYDCPP annual training programme for qualifications and professional development.*

### **How has the Local Authority ensured it understands and provides the playwork workforce (as defined in Wales: A Play Friendly Country and above)?**

*Please see below*

### **Have there been challenges?**

*Many Officers/partners do not identify themselves as being part of the play workforce although recognise that some of their work impacts on play. Therefore, it is difficult to collate training requirements for this group as play training is as a consequence not a priority. In addition, as a small Local Authority capacity of some officers is a real issue as often very small teams or individuals with responsibility for their own area of*

*work and 'play' isn't a priority. There were plans in place to put on a conference for stakeholders however this was postponed due to the pandemic.*

*Four after-school clubs in Blaenau Gwent have closed since 2020, there are a number of reasons; sustainability concerns through lack of service users, sustainability following the pandemic and staff recruitment. We have found that some providers have changed required qualification criteria for applicants to include TA's which further reduces the recognition of playwork as a recognised profession and dilutes the playwork workforce.*

**How can these be overcome?**

*This will be conducted over a series of networking/training events; firstly, the Local Authorities Play Sufficiency Officer will work with Play Wales to roll out 'Understanding Play Sufficiency' training to raise awareness of the playwork workforce which will also assist with the development and implementation of further Play Sufficiency Assessments/Action plans. Following this the Local Authority will undertake an exercise with the group to look at the wider playwork workforces training needs.*

*The EYCP team attended Welsh Governments workshop in February 2022 to discuss recruitment and retention of the early years, childcare and play sector, there are plans to engage with schools and other groups to promote playwork as a career in 2022/23.*

**Comments**

*This will also encourage engagement for the many roles that support the Local Authorities statutory duty for children's play.*

**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 not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
H1	The Local Authority promotes initiatives to engage relevant groups in enhancing play opportunities for children in its area.			<p><i>The Local Authority has developed 'Play Friendly Communities' award programme for Local Communities.</i></p> <p><i>Roll out of Wild Tots Parent &amp; Toddler group to Ebbw Vale</i></p>	<i>Delay with roll out due to the pandemic</i>	<p><i>Action in Matter C</i></p> <p><i>Deliver Community Family Fun day to celebrate National Playday</i></p>
H2	The Local Authority promotes community engagement in: <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> </ul>			<i>Organisation of play opportunities and events are encouraged from local communities with support from the Play Sufficiency Officer and Playteam.</i>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
	- training on the importance of play.			<p><i>The LA deliver play training for local community groups.</i></p> <p><i>Signposting to relevant guidance and information</i></p>		

**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?**

*Blaenau Gwent’s Engagement Strategy is a web-based engagement and consultation database system that allows Blaenau Gwent partners to publicise their consultation and engagement activities. The Local Authority is committed in making Blaenau Gwent a place where all its citizens are treated as valued members of the community, whose voices are heard and needs considered across the range of policy making areas. The strategy sets out a clear vision that enables professionals to gain a more coherent, consistent methodology to engagement, leading to better outcomes for our residents and communities in which they live.*

*The Youth Forum is attended by young people aged 11-25 and usually meets once per month. The forum is led by the young people who look at issues and priorities that affect children and young people living in the Borough. The forum work closely with the Local Authority and senior decision makers to influence change on matters that affect them.*

*The Grand Children’s Council enables pupils of primary school age to have their say on issues that affect them. Each Blaenau Gwent Primary School has elected two representatives from their school councils to sit on the Grand Council, which meet once every school term – during the pandemic these were held online.*

**Have there been challenges?**

*The pandemic affected the opportunity for the Youth forum and Children’s Grand Council to meet face to face which led to meetings being held virtually and less frequently. This limited access to the forum for consulting for the Play Sufficiency Assessment – young people were invited to participate in our BIG play survey.*

**How can these be overcome?**

*This was a short-term challenge which will resolve following the pandemic.*

**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 not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
I1	There is a named person on the Local Public Service Board who champions children’s play and ensures that the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan contribute to and are incorporated within the Well-being Plan			<i>The new Champion for Best Start in Life is Robert Holcome who is Chief Finance Officer at ABUHB who ensures the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan contribute to and are incorporated within the Well-being Plan</i>		
I2	The Well-Being Plan recognises the importance of play and contributes to the provision of rich play opportunities			<i>The Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan 2018-2023 recognises the importance of play and rich play opportunities across our well-being objectives.</i>		



LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p><i>The Gwent Well-being Plan will do the same and response analysis work is currently underway - play will be considered as part of it. The 3 main themes identified by the Gwent PSB are Climate Change; Health Inequalities; and Community Cohesion and play falls under some of these areas – further consultation will be conducted locally over spring/summer 2022.</i></p>		

**Education and schools**

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
13	Schools ensure that children are provided with a rich play environment for breaks during the school day			<p><i>The Local Authorities ‘Play Friendly Schools’ award programme supports schools to provide a rich play environment with support and guidance from the Play Sufficiency Officer.</i></p> <p><i>To date Willottown have completed their bronze award.</i></p> <p><i>Age appropriate play spaces developed within all 21st century schools.</i></p>	<p><i>Due to the pandemic access to schools has been limited</i></p>	<p><i>Refresh and reintroduce ‘Play Friendly Schools’</i></p>
14	Schools provide play opportunities during out of teaching hours			<p><i>Schools in Blaenau Gwent offer a variety of clubs at the end of the school day; ranging from extra-curricular activities to out of hours’ childcare and play provision. These vary across each school, dependant on the facilities available and partners involved. Schools make their own decisions regarding the clubs they offer and the external partners they choose to work with.</i></p>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>Schools work with wider partners to offer a range of activities outside of the school day.</i>		<i>Revisit feasibility studies for schools looking to develop after-school play provision.</i>
15	Schools provide access to school grounds for playing out of school times			<p><i>One school in Blaenau Gwent support an After School Club and provide access to school grounds for children during operational hours.</i></p> <p><i>SHEP delivery during school holidays widens usage of schools grounds outside of normal operational hours.</i></p> <p><i>The Playteam access school grounds during school holidays to offer open access play provision.</i></p>		
16	Schools encourage children to walk and cycle to school			<p><i>The Local Authorities Road Safety Team promotes safer routes to schools and provides information for children and their families.</i></p> <p><i>Level 1 and 2 National cycling standards continue to be delivered in schools.</i></p>		

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LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>The Local Authority continue to provide child pedestrian training to schools.</i>		
17	The Local Authority offers guidance to ensure schools understand and ensure that regular outdoor play is not curtailed			<p><i>The LA signposts relevant guidance to schools.</i></p> <p><i>21<sup>st</sup> century schools promote the design of outdoor spaces to ensure play is not curtailed.</i></p> <p><i>Play Friendly Schools promotes the importance of outdoor play and works with schools to minimise curtailment of children’s play</i></p>		

### Town and Country Planning

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
18	The Local Development Plan recognises and addresses the outdoor play needs of children of various age groups and abilities			<p><i>The LDP was adopted in 2012 and reviewed in 2016 and continues to be the current plan.</i></p> <p><i>A replacement LDP is currently being prepared and as part of this process the Play Sufficiency Officer</i></p>		<i>Develop links with planning to ensure children’s play needs are considered in all housing developments.</i>

				<i>and PSA 2022 will contribute to ensure the LDP recognises and addresses the outdoor play needs of children of various age groups and abilities.</i>		
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**Traffic and Transport**

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
19	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			<i>The Local Authority are currently looking to produce an updated Local Transport Plan, however local streets, roads and walking and cycling routes are recognised as offering play opportunities for children of different ages and abilities. The Plan supports the enhancement and increase of such provisions and their role in creating safe areas for children.</i>		
110	The local Transport Plan identifies ways of assessing			<i>The LTP aims to improve access for all both in terms</i>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
	and addressing the needs of all groups including those which are often marginalised.			<i>of accessing facilities and services and in provision for children and groups which are often marginalised.</i>		

**Early Years Plans**

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
111	Early Years and Flying Start plans and services recognise the importance of play and contribute to the provision of rich play opportunities for younger children			<u><i>Flying Start</i></u> <i>Flying Start continue to provide intervention that actively promotes the value and purpose of play (Stay &amp; Play/Language &amp; Play). Flying Start settings provide key opportunities during each session for children to play, independently, alongside and with their peers. We have invested in training on suitable environments for all of our childcare practitioners and pride ourselves that our settings offer ideal safe spaces for children to play</i>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p><i>and interact with one another.</i></p> <p><i>Continue to deliver ‘Elklan - let’s talk with your baby’ programmes - which aims to promote positive adult-child interaction from the earliest possible stage, to support early attachment and communication skills and provide a communication-rich environment through interactive, fun activities within Flying Start hubs, community venues or natural environments across Blaenau Gwent. The programme will continue to be offered in each hub area to children aged 0-12 months and is facilitative in providing the first steps towards encouraging parents/carers to adopt a play-based approach to their child’s communication and language development.</i></p>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p><i>Facilitate Play and Development groups for parents with children aged 0-3. These groups feed into the new Speech, Language and Communication Pathway's that have recently been developed by Flying Start, enabling families to access communication-rich play environments where interaction and social opportunities are maximised. Family take up of the provision will be reviewed half-termly and amendments made to reflect need, including embedding further provision where required across the county borough.</i></p> <p><i>Maximise the work of the Dads Support Service working alongside the NSPCC to support their developing 'Look, Say, Sing, Play' initiative and the</i></p>		



LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p><i>piloting of resources given to parents to reinforce the programme aims and objectives.</i></p> <p><i>Provide a schedule of non-term time play and family events and activities that encourage families to participate in play, outdoor activities and trips (which can include supported visits to parks and play spaces).</i></p> <p><u><i>Integrated Children’s Centre</i></u>  <i>The Integrated Children’s Centre recognises the importance of play and contributes to the provision of rich play opportunities for younger children offering access to the light and sensory room, provides space for children with disabilities to attend after school and holiday provision, offers a commissioned childcare and play service, offers play</i></p>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p><i>sessions during school holidays, family support including opportunities for play and deliver community events such as the annual Christmas grotto.</i></p> <p><u>Registered Childcare</u>  <i>Registered childcare settings such as childminders also recognise the importance of play and contribute to the rich play opportunities for younger children. The LA, Local and National partners offer additional support and/or training.</i></p> <p><u>Early Years Transformation and Integration Programme</u>  <i>Blaenau Gwent are one of the pilot authorities to ensure every child has the best start in life through the Early Years Transformation and Integration Programme and aims to;</i></p>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Create an Early Years system to deliver services in a co-ordinated, integrated and timely way</i></li> <li>• <i>To support local partners to re-configure Early Years services focusing on planning, commissioning and identifying and addressing needs.</i></li> <li>• <i>Through this process to identify barriers to integration and ways to remove, reduce or rationalise them.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The programme offers support to families with young children aged 0-7years by reducing inequalities in early years' services offering families opportunities similar to Flying Start (without the childcare element) when required by the family and recognises the importance and benefits of play and promotes play through family initiatives. The</i></p>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>programme is currently offered in Cwm, Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina.</i>		

**Family policy and initiatives**

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
I12	Family support initiatives provide up to date information and support for parents to enable them to support their children to play			<i>Families First deliver the Family links ‘playful parenting’ programme course which highlights the importance of play and of building attachment through play. It focuses on understanding child development, the brain, attachment and how play supports healthy development and explores the value and benefits of different types of play.</i>  <i>Child led play is covered in the ‘Nurture Programme’.</i>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p><i>Families First also deliver 'Early Bird'. The programme covers: Why parents may see certain behaviours and how they can support children's behavioural/emotional needs.</i></p> <p><i>Understanding Autism, Understanding and supporting sensory differences, communication, supporting and developing interaction and socialisation.</i></p>		
113	<p>The local implementation of the Families First programme recognises the importance of play and contributes to the provision of rich play opportunities</p>			<p><i>Families First assess each family through using the JAFF model.</i></p> <p><i>Families First support a number of children with additional needs, the children are offered additional support in the play setting in the form of 1-2-1 or shared support.</i></p> <p><i>Where play is identified as a need for family engagement in order to improve child-</i></p>		

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LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p><i>parental relationships then Families First sign post the family to provision.</i></p> <p><i>Young Carers access weekly support groups which provides them with the opportunity for respite from their caring roles, with activities to develop their independence and caring roles such as cooking and first aid.</i></p>		
114	Plans to reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences recognises the importance of play and contributes to the provision of rich play opportunities			<p><i>Local Authority staff are able to attend training on the effects of ACES and importance of early intervention.</i></p> <p><i>Play is recognised in the Local Authority as the child's natural language, and it works to support children to have the time, space and permission to play.</i></p> <p><i>Wild Camps is a new project delivered by the</i></p>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>Playteam to support children who are at risk of Adverse Childhood Experiences.</i>		

**Inter-generational policy and initiatives**

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
115	There are a range of play based approaches to inter-generational activity			<p><i>Providers from across the Local Authority provide activities that bring older and younger people together including visits to nursing homes, volunteering opportunities, PACEY Cymru have developed a toolkit for supporting childminders to engage with nursing homes.</i></p> <p><i>Open Access play sessions are family focused encouraging intergenerational activity between children and other adults.</i></p>		<i>Work with local schools and colleges to develop a Youth</i>

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LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
116	There is a creative approach to inter-generational activity which encourages better interaction between children of different ages			<p><i>Launch of our Wild Camps project in 2021 encourages children of different ages to engage and participate in activities that develop positive relationships with children of different ages.</i></p> <p><i>Our Wild Tots Parent &amp; Toddler group welcomes older children during school holidays.</i></p> <p><i>H4arts encourages children of different ages through various environmental and arts based projects.</i></p>		<i>Play volunteer scheme for children 14yrs +</i>

**Health and Safety**

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
117	The Health and Safety policies explicitly recognise the value of children being able to experience risk and challenge			<i>Policies in place for organised play sessions the Local Authority deliver clearly state that children will be encouraged to</i>		



LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<i>develop their own sense of risk, whereby risk is managed rather than eliminated.</i>		
118	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)			<i>The Local Authorities risk-benefit approach training continues to be rolled out on an annual basis for all Early Years, Childcare and Play providers in Blaenau Gwent.</i>		
119	The Local Authority offers the provision of insurance through the Local Authority scheme to all third sector play providers and community councils			<i>No change in position from previous PSA's</i>		

**Play within relevant policy and implementation agendas**

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

*Play contributes across many different strategic priorities relating to children's education, development and well-being and community cohesion. The Local Authority recognise that every aspect of children's lives is influenced by their need and desire to play, and that play opportunities can help to mitigate the negative effects of poverty on children's lives, and Adverse Childhood Experiences ensuring every child has the 'Best start in life'.*

*Play is just as important during a crisis such as the coronavirus pandemic; children have been hard hit with stay-at-home orders and the closure of schools, childcare, playgrounds and some other outdoor spaces, and loss of opportunities for learning, socialising and being physically separated from friends, families and their usual routines. These have brought new situations which have been challenging for many children and*

*families. Our Wild Camps project works across Children’s Services enabling us to deliver outdoor play provision for children and young people where they have experienced significant changes to their lives during the recent pandemic and are receiving support services.*

*Our ethos is to follow the needs and interests of the children, wherever practical and possible we offer and support activities to suit.*

- *Arts and Crafts using the natural environment.*
- *Den building, bug hunts, campfires, treasure hunts, wood whittling, mud painting*
- *Free Play - time to explore the environment around them*
- *Activities - cooking on the campfire*

*To promote the natural environment, sessions are delivered outdoors – this enables children and young people to have the time, space and permission to run, climb, shout, express themselves and enjoy the wild nature of being outdoors, while being supported by knowledgeable and experienced Playworkers.*

**Have there been challenges?**

*Challenges continue to be faced around raising awareness of how the play agenda contributes to Local Authority plans and policies.*

*There are a large number of new housing developments across Blaenau Gwent however space for children’s play is limited if considered at all.*

**How can these be overcome?**

*The Local Authority will continue to examine all its policy agendas for their potential impact on children’s opportunities to play and to continue to develop play as a cross cutting theme. and ensure that services work together to ensure the value of play is recognised and included in plans.*

*There are many factors and time scales which effect policy changes and these will need to be implemented on a gradual basis as strategies/plans are renewed.*

**Comments:**

**Conclusion**

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

*Our 2022 Play Sufficiency assessment continues to demonstrate the progress and achievements that have been made since 2019, despite the challenges faced with the pandemic. It continues to show the Local Authority’s commitment to play while identifying areas for development.*

### Matter A: Population **Green**

*The main data source for population is still the census 2011 with most of the data being drawn from Stats Wales as availability proved a challenge. Blaenau Gwent has managed to gather population data at ward level for children 0-18 which will be refreshed upon release of data following the census 2021.*

### Matter B: Providing for Diverse Needs **7 green and 2 amber**

### Matter C: Space available for children to play **15 green and 2 amber**

*Blaenau Gwent has a large number of open spaces and designated play areas. However, it is evident through the Play Sufficiency process and Local Authority review that static play areas are in desperate need of significant investment. There is much evidence to show that there is a high level of dissatisfaction with fixed play areas in Blaenau Gwent. Adults and children commented on litter, broken equipment, traffic and vandalism as barriers to accessing play areas. The poor state of the play areas is something that the Local Authority has recognised in its review of play areas conducted in 2018. The Local Authority have been fortunate to have received AWPOG funding for the last few years which has helped to undertake refurbishment and replacement of some areas items of fixed play equipment.*

*There is a need to:*

- While AWPOG capital funding is not guaranteed the Local Authority needs to consider more non-prescriptive equipment, which can be used flexibly to meets the needs of large numbers of children with different needs and abilities.*
- Promote the use of open and green spaces for play, which can offer children sometimes better opportunities to play creatively.*
- Pilot the Play Friendly Communities programme to identify local open and green spaces that can be used to promote creative, active and adventurous play.*
- Develop initiatives to raise awareness of children's play*

### Matter D: Supervised Provision **13 green**

*Supervised play provision in Blaenau Gwent can be categorised as follows:*

- Play provision (After School/Holiday Clubs/Open Access provision)*
- Youth activities (Streetgames/clubs)*
- Recreational activities (sports/arts/cultural/uniformed groups)*

*There are 6 staffed CIW registered play settings in Blaenau Gwent providing After School Club and Holiday Clubs (the majority of provision is delivered as wrap around by childcare providers). There is a strong commitment to ensure that children receive rich play opportunities, however this is often met with the challenge of offering a childcare service to parents and expected outcomes rather than freely chosen play opportunities for children.*

*There is a need to;*

- *Seek ways to develop community led open access play provisions.*
- *Review further opportunities to increase play and recreational activities for children and young people.*

### Matter E: Charges for play provision 8 green

*Support is offered to children with additional needs who have been referred through the Additional Needs Panel, assisted places are also offered to children from workless households that meet the criteria. No cost provisions are offered across the Local Authority by means of open access play sessions, community events, sessions support by Flying Start and Families First programmes and some activities organised by Aneurin Leisure Trust. Welsh Governments Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing 2021 has helped the LA to respond to feedback received from children, young people and parents, that there is a need for more no/low cost activity.*

### Matter F: Access to space/provision and information, publicity and events 19 green and 1 amber

*Play is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development, not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live. The Local Authority and partners recognise that play is essential to the health and well-being of children. In the past children's play has been considered facility-based provision whereas it is now being accepted as an environmental issue, i.e. creating the type of environment where children are able to get out and play with their friends. Creating a more child-friendly environment has the potential to create many more opportunities for play than facility provision could do alone. However, facility-based provision is valued by children and adults, providing a service to working parents (breakfast/after school/holiday clubs) and dedicated space for play (static play areas/playing fields).*

*Family Information Service (FIS) social media and online search facility, as well as email, and telephone options currently provides information on play provision, activities and events but this is not complete and relies on Officers, individual clubs and organisations providing information about specific services, events and activities.*

*There is a need to:*

- *Regularly update 'play' designated section on the corporate website.*
- *Share case studies of community led initiatives in supporting children's play.*
- *Provide Family Information Service (FIS) with information linking to the full range of play opportunities for children and families.*
- *Promote positive attitudes to play when engaging with local communities and the media.*
- *Improve the way that we engage with the public and use the Family Information Service and Press Office to communicate effectively.*

### Matter G: Securing and developing the play workforce 10 green and 1 amber

*The Local Authority is fortunate to have a Play Sufficiency Officer and Business Development Officer who support the sector and develop the Play and playwork workforce. There are a number of key staff in specific service areas (e.g. Education, Social Services, Leisure, Youth Service, Environment, Regeneration, Planning) whose work contributes to children's play.*

*There is a need to:*

- *Commission/offer training awareness sessions about play for professionals and key decision makers*
- *Consider a joint approach with other Local Authorities to provide training and support to the play workforce.*

### *Matter H: Community engagement and participation* 2 green

*The Local Authority has a strong commitment in making Blaenau Gwent a place where all citizens are treated as valued members of the community, whose voices are heard and needs considered across the range of policy making areas. The cost of interacting with individual communities can be extremely high, the Local Authority need to continue to work with partners to ensure a robust mechanism is implemented to minimise duplication and maximise outcomes. The Local Authority recognise that Children's participation is most effective when the issues for consideration have a direct relevance to them within their communities and they can see their input has made a difference.*

*There is a need to:*

- *Develop links with partners to ensure play is a regular theme for engagement*
- *Continue to work with partners to ensure a robust mechanism is implemented to minimise duplication and maximise outcomes.*

### *Matter I: Play within relevant policy and implementation agendas* 17 green, 1 amber and 1 red

*Play is embedded in Local Authority policy and implementation agendas for Health and Well-being, Child Poverty, Early Years/Childcare initiatives and intergenerational initiatives. The Local Authority will continue to examine all of its policy agendas for their potential impact on children's opportunities to play and assess what targets and actions are required to enhance children's play opportunities. Additionally, in Education, many schools have developed interesting and stimulating play environments. Schools encourage children to cycle to school where it is practical for them to do so and play is actively promoted during morning, afternoon and lunchtime breaks supported and promoted via the Early Years, Childcare and Play Teams 'Play Friendly Schools' award programme. This needs to be continued to be rolled out to schools across Blaenau Gwent following the pandemic.*

*The 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment recognises that weaker areas may not necessarily be down to poor policy or practice but down to lack of information at the time of gathering data and researching as well as limitations on officer capacity. However, it has been evident throughout the assessment process that not all directorates understand their role in supporting children's play which limits further development of children's play and positive change and a key priority moving forward.*

### 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 Local Authority and its' partners, continue their commitment to further develop children's play facilities and play spaces, extending the range of open access play provision and ensuring that opportunities continue to support and promote the play needs and interests of children across Blaenau Gwent. The Local Authorities' Action Plan has been developed to maintain the strengths and address the shortcomings identified in the assessment. We have also considered the actions delayed in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, where we feel these continue to be relevant and a priority these actions have been added.*

*The Action Plan has been developed through discussions with stakeholders and partners considering;*

- *Is this a pressing need?*
- *Is it very likely that we can make a big difference addressing this action?*
- *Does the action address the play needs of a vulnerable group?*
- *Do we have capacity to work on this action?*
- *Can we start working on this straight away?*

*The Local Authority also considers;*

- *Are any of our partners working on this already that we could work with or support?*
- *What are the cost implications of this action?*
- *What are the benefits of this action?*
- *Do we have the skills and expertise locally to address the action?*

*The accountability of delivering the actions in the plan are not the responsibility of any one department and are very reliant on effective partnership working. Some aspects are also reliant on external sources of grant funding that are short term in nature and may impact on the sustainability of some of the actions.*

*Progress of the action plan is conducted quarterly by the Play Sufficiency Officer reporting to the Early Years, Childcare & Play Manager, Early Years Development, Childcare and Play Partnership and Corporate Management Team via the Children’s Services Manager.*

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....



**Actions to be taken to address the issues / shortcomings recorded in the Play Sufficiency Assessment**

**Proposed actions for the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

**(Funding source: funding from Local Authority own budgets and to be included in the Single Integrated Plan).**

<b>Matter</b>	<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Links to other Matters</b>	<b>Resources, including costs</b>	<b>Funding source (new or existing funding streams)</b>
Statutory Guidance-policy framework					
Matter A: Population	<i>Population</i>	<i>Update population data as becomes accessible following Census 2021</i>		<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>
Matter B: Providing for diverse needs	<i>B4 – The play requirements and support needs of disabled children</i>	<i>Undertake an audit of what provision is available across Blaenau Gwent for children with disabilities to</i>	<i>Matter C, D, E, F</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>



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	<i>are understood and provided for.</i>	<i>identify gaps and look at options for further development</i>			
	<i>B7 - Access audits for all play provision as described in the guidance are undertaken.</i>	<i>Conduct access audits for all play provision</i>		<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>B8 - Designated play space is provided and well maintained on gypsy traveller sites</i>	<i>Develop a designated play space for gypsy/traveller children.</i>	<i>Matter C &amp; F</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>NEW</i>
<b>Matter C: Space available for children to play</b>	<i>Matter C: Space available for children to play</i>	<i>Research gaps in data, evaluate ward 'play' profiles</i>	<i>Matter A, D, E, F, H</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>C13 - The Local Authority has removed 'no ball games' signs to encourage more children playing in the community</i>	<i>Audit of 'no ball games' signs and consider removal where appropriate.</i>	<i>Matter F &amp; H</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>

	<i>C14 - The Local Authority has erected signs, such as Play Priority Signs to encourage more children playing in the community</i>	<i>Identify local communities to pilot the launch of the Play Friendly Communities programme</i>	<i>Matter F &amp; H</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>
Matter D: Supervised provision	<i>D1 - The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of all supervised play provision as described in the Statutory Guidance</i>	<i>To encourage more registered and unregistered provision to sign up to DEWIS</i>	<i>Matter C</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>D2 - The Local Authority offers play provision which offers a rich play environment as described in the Statutory Guidance</i>	<i>To sustain current delivery model for play provision and look at options to expand</i>	<i>Matter B, C, D, E, F, H</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing Playwork Holiday</i>
	<i>D7 - Staffed play provision across the Local</i>	<i>Reinstate QA programme with all registered settings</i>		<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>

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	<i>Authority works to a recognised quality assurance programme.</i>				
	<i>D10 - Local Authority sport, physical activity, and active recreation plans are contributing to increasing free play and recreational activities.</i>	<i>To look at options to increase the working relationship/capacity between play and ALT sports development team.</i>	<i>Matter B, C, E, F</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>
		<i>Deliver Summer of Fun 2022 programme of activities for 0-25yrs with partners</i>		<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing Summer of Fun</i>
<i>Matter E: Charges for play provision</i>					
<i>Matter F: Access to space/provision</i>	<i>F8 - The Local Authority has an accessible and well-known way of arranging temporary road closures, to support more children to play</i>	<i>Carried from 2019 Meet ESAG to discuss potential of 'Street Play' road closures for local communities</i>		<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>

	<i>outside their homes</i>				
	<i>F14 - 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)</i>	<i>Audit play page and update bi-monthly</i>			
	<i>F15 - The Local Authority provides information on access to play opportunities and contact for support if required.</i>	<i>Development of a dedicated page to raise awareness of 'play' opportunities across the Local Authority.</i>			
	<i>F19 - The Local Authority widely uses on-site</i>	<i>Update/promote the 'play all day' booklet</i>			

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	<i>signposting to safeguard and promote play</i>				
Matter G: Securing and developing the workforce	<i>G6 - The Local Authority includes playwork within its Workforce Development strategies</i>	<i>Deliver workshops for Year 11 and community groups on childcare and play as careers.</i>		<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>G8 - The Local Authority has undertaken a comprehensive training needs analysis for the play workforce as defined in the toolkit glossary and above</i>	<i>Deliver 'Understanding Play Sufficiency' training to all PSA contacts</i>	<i>Links with G11</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>
Matter H: Community engagement and participation	<i>Matter H</i>	<i>Deliver Community Family Fun day to celebrate National Playday</i>		<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing Summer of Fun</i>
Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas	<i>Matter I</i>	<i>Contribute to discussions with the Regeneration to attract larger scale investment to</i>		<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>

		<i>provide opportunities for children and young people to play and hang out in their local communities.</i>			
	<i>13 - Schools ensure that children are provided with a rich play environment for breaks during the school day</i>	<i>Refresh and reintroduce 'Play Friendly Schools'</i>	<i>Links with 17</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>15 - Schools provide access to school grounds for playing out of school times.</i>	<i>Revisit feasibility studies for schools looking to develop after-school play provision.</i>			
	<i>Matter 18 - The Local Development Plan recognises and addresses the outdoor play needs of children of various age</i>	<i>Develop links with planners to ensure children's play needs are considered in all housing developments.</i>		<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>

	<i>groups and abilities</i>				
	<i>I16 - There is a creative approach to inter-generational activity which encourages better interaction between children of different ages</i>	<i>Work with local schools and colleges to develop a Youth Play volunteer scheme for children 14yrs +</i>	<i>Links with Matter G</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>Existing</i>