

Play and Free Time Strategy for Children and Young People in Cheltenham

2005-2008

“When children play together, parents invariably talk together and new community alliances are forged. Inclusive play spaces can be the seedbeds from which sustainable and inclusive communities grow.”

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2003

Introduction

Play is an essential element of an individual's childhood and development, crucial to the health and wellbeing of children, young people and subsequently the wider community.

Through play children are able to explore the world around them in a 'safe' way that has meaning to them

Positive play and free time activities are fundamental to the development of children and young people socially, physically, intellectually, creatively and emotionally. Exploring and learning through play helps prepare children for adult life as well as giving them the chance to relax and have fun.

The strategy is aimed at play and free time activities for 0-19. It is a borough wide action plan which takes into account the need for local planning that acknowledges the diversity within our communities. The strategy's aims and objectives are intended to encompass all children and young people, including those with disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds; so that individual needs and aspirations of children and young people across the Borough are met.

Across Cheltenham there are a variety of different activities and opportunities for play and free time delivered by a wide range of providers covering the public, private business, community and voluntary sectors. To deliver the objectives and outcomes of Cheltenham's Community Plan, Gloucestershire's Play Policy and Every Child Matters, partnership working is required to develop an effective play and free time strategy.

The development of this strategy would not have been possible without the valuable contributions of the steering group, delegates of the play afternoon and those who responded to the consultation process (see appendix a for contact details).

The Development of the 'Play Agenda'

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force in 1990 and has so far been ratified by 192 countries worldwide. Article 31 of the Convention recognises that every child has the right to play and recreational activities appropriate to their age. Thus enshrining play as one of a child or young person's basic human rights protected by international agreement.

The fifteen years since then have seen significant progress in the field of Playwork and children and young people's activities. The nineties saw the setting up of regional Playwork centres to develop training and research into the sector, and in 2000 new national standards for out of school clubs were published recognising the professional status of Playwork.

The culmination of these and many other steps forward in the field was the review in 2004 by Frank Dobson MP, **Getting Serious about Play** which paved the way for the Government announcement in 2005 that £155 million pounds of Lottery funding would be made available to children's play.

Children and young people's activities are currently high on the national and local agenda. The **Every Child Matters Green Paper** which subsequently formed the basis of the **Children Act 2004** and the current **Youth Matters Green Paper** not only place a renewed emphasis on meeting the needs of the whole child but also showed the importance of statutory and voluntary agencies working strategically in partnership to most effectively improve children and young people's wellbeing.

For play and free time activities this process began countywide in 2004. Informal partnership working became formalised through the Gloucestershire Play Policy '**Taking Play Seriously**' which was developed by a team of consultants following consultation across the county with everyone from parents and children to councillors and youth workers. Part of the county Play Policy was a commitment from those organisations that endorsed it to write a local strategy so that the policy was a deliverable working document that impacted on the lives of Gloucestershire children and young people.

Development of Cheltenham's Play and Free Time Strategy

The process of developing a local strategy was begun in April 2005 by the hosting of a Play Afternoon to launch the Gloucestershire Play Policy in Cheltenham. This launch was also an opportunity to bring a wide range of local stakeholders together to discuss the way forward for implementing the policy at a local level.

The delegates at the afternoon received presentations on the Gloucestershire Play Policy and the plans for the local strategy before being asked to contribute their ideas.

M.A.D. Youth Council and the Council's playscheme children had produced a map prior to the launch, showing where and how they liked to play and spend their free time, which delegates were invited to add to by providing details of the services they provided for children and young people. From the afternoon a steering group was formed which took the ideas and mapping information from the conference and linked these into key local and national agendas to create the Play and Free time Strategy Action Plan.

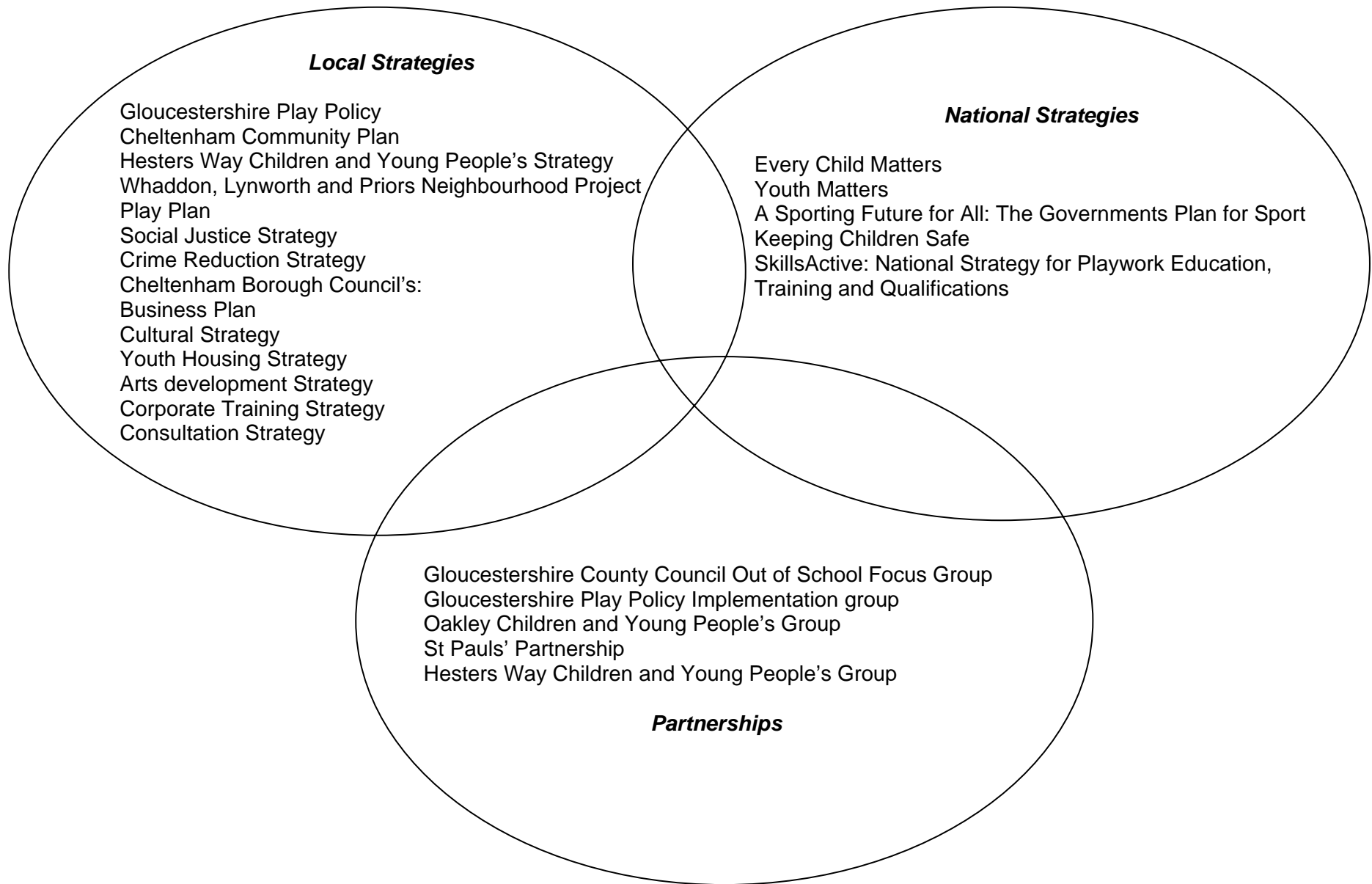
Achieving Local and National Priorities

The Play and Free Time Strategy for Cheltenham has been developed by using three key strategic agendas, Every Child Matters, the Gloucestershire Play Policy and Cheltenham's Community Plan. The agendas cover not just themes directly related to play but also the general wellbeing of children and young people, their families and communities and the aspirations of the community of Cheltenham for a better town. The priorities used to inform the strategy are summarised in the table below.

TABLE ONE

National	Local		Play and Free Time Strategy Aims
Every Child Matters	Glos. Play Policy	Community Plan	
Being Healthy	Helping make sure play and free time is fun and enjoyable for children and young people, improving their health and wellbeing	We will re-dress the imbalances in our communities and build strong healthy geographical communities and communities of interest.	To promote children and young people's health, wellbeing and development through play and free time activities
Making a Positive Contribution	Recognising children and young people's rights and helping change attitudes Listening to children and young people, meeting their individual needs in an inclusive way		To involve children and young people in decisions that effect their lives and their local community
Staying Safe	Recognising the need for opportunities to be challenging and free from unnecessary hazards	We will reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime in our communities.	To encourage good practice in tackling safety issues that affect children and young people
Enjoying and Achieving	Helping all children and young people have access to a balanced range of play and free time opportunities, in designated spaces and facilities, indoors and in the general environment Working in partnership to consult on and develop a play strategy and action plan	We will enhance the town's reputation as a national and international cultural centre, promote a healthy and sustainable economy and provide opportunities to broaden and enrich sport, play and cultural opportunities	To work in partnership to provide play and free time activities that meet the needs of local children and young people
Achieve Economic Wellbeing	Sharing resources, making provision more sustainable and appropriate to local needs		To raise awareness of the importance of play and free time activities for children and young people
			To work in partnership with voluntary groups, statutory agencies and the local community to share resources, information and expertise.

Although the Play and Free Time Strategy mainly drew on these three key documents, as detailed in the action plan later in the strategy a number of other agendas and partnerships are linked into the strategy. These are summarised below.



Vision for Cheltenham

Our vision is to support and encourage play and free time activities for children and young people that promote safe, stimulating, healthy and sustainable communities.

Aims

- To promote children and young people's health, wellbeing and development through play and free time activities.
- To work in partnership with voluntary groups, statutory agencies and the local community to share resources, information and expertise.
- To involve children and young people in decisions that affect their lives and their local community
- To encourage good practice in tackling safety issues that affect children and young people
- To raise awareness of the importance of play and free time activities for children and young people.
- To work in partnership to provide play and free time activities that meet the needs of local children and young people.

Why is Play Important?

• Being Healthy

- Helping make sure play and free time is fun and enjoyable for children and young people, improving their health and wellbeing.

Community Plan Priority

- We will re-dress the imbalances in our communities and build strong healthy geographical communities and communities of interest.

Play and Free Time Strategy

- To promote children and young people's health, wellbeing and development through play and free time activities.

Children and young people's health is currently high on the agenda with levels of childhood obesity reaching worrying levels and one in five children estimated to suffer from mental illness¹

Play has an essential part to play in addressing these health issues especially through prevention and early intervention. A wide range of physical activity from sport to active play such as drama and parachute games can introduce children and young people to fun, non conventional ways to get fit and keep active; sometimes counteracting any negative experiences of school sport and prompting them to continue to be physically active into adult life.

Play can also be used to educate children and young people informally about health for example cooking or activities to promote sexual health. Play is vital to promoting children and young people's mental health not only through raising their self esteem and social confidence but by allowing children and young people to express their emotions and explore in a safe environment issues such as bullying and relationships.

• Making a Positive Contribution

- Recognising children and young people's rights and helping to change attitudes
- Listening to children and young people, meeting their needs in an inclusive way

Community Plan Priority

- We will re-dress the imbalances in our communities and build strong healthy geographical communities and communities of interest.

Play and Free Time Strategy

- To involve children and young people in decisions that effect their lives and their local community

The social skills needed in everyday life can be developed through play and free time activities. Simple board games or physical activities can foster skills such as how to follow rules, co-operate with others, problem solve and compromise. Play is also valuable for teaching children and young people about social inclusion allowing children and young people from a variety of backgrounds to form friendships and mutual understanding. The new experiences that children and young people gain from different

¹ Target, M. & Fonagy, P. (1996). The psychological treatment of child and adolescent psychiatric disorders. In: Roth, A. & Fonagy, P. (eds.). *What works for whom? A critical review of psychotherapy research*, pp. 263-320. New York: Guilford Press.

play activities should broaden their knowledge of different people and cultures helping them to gain a greater respect for other people.

Play is not only important to individual children and young people but also to the communities in which they live. By encouraging children and young people's social and emotional development play can help the development of well rounded children and young people with basic life skills making them able to deal with situations they come across both as children and then hopefully as adults in a constructive way that benefits the community.

Play and free time activities can also allow children and young people to become involved with community, local and national events such as community tree planting or contributing to projects around Britain's bid to host the Olympic Games. This gives children and young people a sense of belonging and self worth that enables them to become positive, active citizens who contribute to their local communities.

• **Staying Safe**

- Recognising the need for opportunities to be challenging and free from unnecessary hazards.

Community Plan Priority

- We will reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime in our communities

Play and Free Time Strategy

- To encourage good practice in tackling safety issues that affect children and young people.

Play is a fundamental part of all children's positive development, forming the foundations for many aspects of adult life. Through play children are able to explore the world around them in a 'safe' way that has meaning to them. By learning about the risks around them children and young people are able to begin to make their own decisions about level of risk taken by them so as to minimise any potential detrimental affect on their personal safety. This enables them, as they grow older to become independent and to keep safe.

Providing children and young people with play and free time activities can reduce anti social behaviour in a number of ways. It can engage children and young people in positive activities in a safe environment rather than leaving them to amuse themselves in ways that the community as a whole may find inappropriate. It can also help discourage anti social behaviour by encouraging appropriate use of public spaces by children and young people and the wider community. With renewed community pride and ownership enabling the marginalisation of anti social behaviour both demonstrating and reaffirming what behaviour is socially unacceptable within a community.

Properly organised play opportunities as well as informal play opportunities are important. Formal play provision gives children and young people the chance to play in safe environments with properly qualified and checked staff, who can offer them supervision and support.

• **Enjoying and Achieving**

- Helping all children and young people have access to a balanced range of play and free time opportunities, designated spaces and facilities, indoors and in the general environment
- Working in partnership to consult on and develop a play strategy and action plan

Community Plan Priority

- We will enhance the town's reputation

Play and Free Time Strategy

- To work in partnership to provide play and free

as a national and international cultural centre, promote a healthy and sustainable economy and provide opportunities to broaden and enrich sport, play and cultural opportunities.

time activities that meet the needs of local children and young people.

- To raise awareness of the importance of play and free time activities for children and young people.

Play is also essential for children and young people's wellbeing and one of the most important reasons to play is for its own sake. As adults we enjoy leisure time and within some restraints we are able to choose how we spend this time. The same should be true of children and young people who receive similar benefits of relaxation, enjoyment and recuperation as adults do from their leisure time.

Allowing children and young people the opportunity to enjoy leisure time encourages high self esteem. This is not only because of the social and personal benefits of play but also because it enables children and young people to explore new opportunities and develop skills and aptitudes that give them feelings of success and self worth. This can be especially important if the child or young person finds it difficult to achieve conventional success academically through school.

One of the key areas for achievement that play offers children and young people is through creative play. Creative play such as painting, photography or drama give children and young people the opportunity to express themselves, develop new skills and often have an end product to show for their play.

• **Achieving Economic Wellbeing**

- Sharing resources, making provision more sustainable and appropriate to local needs.

Community Plan Priority

- We will enhance the town's reputation as a national and international cultural centre, promote a healthy and sustainable economy and provide opportunities to broaden and enrich sport, play and cultural opportunities.

Play and Free Time Strategy

- To work in partnership with voluntary groups, statutory agencies and the local community to share resources, information and expertise.

Play activities can be important to families' economic well being by providing either supervised or unsupervised ways for children and young people to be occupied while their parents work. This can especially be the case in lone parent families where a parent is reliant on being able to work to maintain the family.

As previously mentioned children and young people gain a variety of practical skills and experience as well as social competence and self esteem from play and free time activities enabling them to cope well with the challenges and responsibilities of employment. This contributes to them achieving success in the work place as young people through to adulthood.

For those children who don't achieve in school, achieving success in play and free time activities can help raise their self esteem and play can also be used to support conventional learning both in and out of school. Methods of teaching through play, especially at a young age, can help overcome learning difficulties, special needs or developmental concerns. Early Maths and English are often taught through play activities.

Local Context

Cheltenham's Children, Young People and their Communities

According to the 2001 Census 23.5% of Cheltenham's population is 0-19.

Cheltenham is often seen from the outside as an affluent town and this image can hide the poverty and challenges that parts of the community face.

Each of the Borough's wards are split into smaller super output areas and these areas are ranked on a number of factors linked to health, education, deprivation etc. One factor that super output areas are measured on is income deprivation affecting children. When ranked on this factor part of St Paul's is ranked number one in the county (number one being most deprived). The rest of St Pauls, Oakley, Springbank, Hesters Way are all ranked in the top 25% most deprived for income affecting children.

These areas are part of the three regeneration areas in Cheltenham and are a focus of the Play and Free Time Strategy. However it mustn't be forgotten that there are other pockets of deprivation within the borough, Warden Hill, Lansdown, Pitville, Swindon Village and St Marks all have super output areas ranked in the top 25% of the county for income deprivation affecting children.

The level of deprivation that some areas of Cheltenham face is shown by the fact that during the first phase of children's centres, which is targeting the most deprived 20% of wards across the county, 4 out of the 9 centres established were in Cheltenham. The areas identified above also tend to have a slightly higher number of lone parents making affordable play provision in these areas even more vital for the children and young people's economic wellbeing.

The number of children and young people in an area and their ages must always be taken into account when planning play and free time provision.

Broadly speaking, the highest numbers of children and young people live in the regeneration areas of Cheltenham and the housing estates of Benhall, The Reddings, Up Hatherley and Charlton Kings in the south. There are some notable fluctuations in this particularly the high number of 16-19 year olds who lived in the wards of Lansdown and College.

A detailed breakdown of these statistics is provided in Table 2 on page 10. Wards that contain high levels of income deprivation affecting children and also suffer from having few or no out of school childcare places are highlighted in yellow.

Ward	0-4 year olds	5-15 year olds	16-19 year olds	Total number of children and young people 0-19 years old	Lone parent households with dependant children	Income deprivation affecting children (No of SOA's in county's 25% most deprived)	Total no. of childcare places	No. of Out of School childcare places
All Saints	279	453	221	953	102	0	235	54
Battledown	236	609	199	1044	66	0	223	89
Benhall and Reddings	314	745	199	1258	73	0	224	72
Charlton Kings	272	743	229	1244	102	0	243	110
Charlton Park	165	601	185	951	55	0	72	0
College	290	621	402	1313	74	0	310	208
Hesters Way	419	879	269	1567	246	3	95	0
Lansdown	150	560	420	1130	89	1	606	159
Leckhampton	289	750	202	1241	84	0	235	24
Oakley	394	1030	290	1714	258	4	257	110
Park	219	575	459	1253	70	0	174	85
Pittville	217	436	308	961	77	1	322	158
Prestbury	228	630	205	1063	63	0	111	24
St Mark's	408	918	289	1615	187	2	194	24
St Paul's	275	502	429	1206	167	4	5	0
St Peter's	370	690	295	1355	154	2	179	16
Springbank	399	1041	318	1758	235	3	128	0
Swindon Village	361	911	303	1575	168	1	262	82
Up Hatherley	356	791	250	1397	133	0	210	98
Warden Hill	323	737	182	1242	112	1	225	118

Table 2 Figures © Maiden 2005

Current Provision Activities

Cheltenham Borough Council's Community Play Development Unit is part of the Community Services Division. It is responsible for providing the council's direct play provision as well as strategically supporting and working in partnership with other council departments, voluntary and statutory agencies and the local community to meet the play and free time needs of Cheltenham's children and young people.

The officer lead for the unit is the **Community Play Development Worker** whose role it is to make the strategic links between play and a variety of agendas to help co-ordinate an effective approach to play across the Borough. This includes facilitating the Play and Free Time Forum.

The post also provides **support and advice** to the council and other agencies on issues relating to play and free time activities most notably through the unit's **training programme**. They are also responsible for the management of the council's direct provision and its continued development in line with best practice and the communities needs.

There are three strands to the units direct play provision, the Holiday Playschemes, Play Ranger Service and Community Fundays.

- The council runs **holiday playschemes** in the Easter and Summer holidays. Since April 2005 these playschemes have been targeted in areas of most need within the Borough. The schemes are popular with both parents and children alike achieving high grades in the Government endorsed quality assurance scheme 'Flying High'.
- The Play Ranger Service operates in two parts. The **Early Years Play Ranger service** is managed by the council and funded by Sure Start until April 2006 to provide activities for children a under 4 years of age. The service runs throughout the year and aims to encourage parents in the Sure Start areas of Cheltenham to play with their children.

- The **Play Ranger Service** for over 5's which is also run by the council operates in school holidays right across Cheltenham encouraging children, young people and their families to use open spaces appropriately and to their full extent.
- Finally the unit works in partnership to provide **Community Fundays** in different parts of the Borough to bring communities together. Every year the flagship event organised in conjunction with departments from across the council and Cheltenham Borough Homes is **National PlayDay**. This celebrates children and young people's right to play.

Within Cheltenham there are a variety of different types of play and free time opportunities available to children and young people run by the public sector, voluntary organisations, community groups and privately as businesses.

Parents of pre school children are able to choose from **nursery, creches and playgroups** for formal childcare, or a variety of **toddler groups, mother and baby groups and drop in sessions** for more social informal play activities. Across the Borough there are over 80 registered groups providing early play opportunities to pre school children.

For school aged children especially those at primary school formal play and free time activities tend to focus around **after school clubs and holiday playschemes**. These are often located on school sites. The Gloucestershire children's information service currently has 44 out of school/ holiday clubs registered in Cheltenham however these may not run all year round and often have limited spaces available.

Young people may feel they have grown out of out of school play opportunities by the time they become teenagers so specific activities for this age group are vital.

The County council's **Youth Service** run the majority of activities for this age group. Their services include **youth clubs** from which a range of groups run such as junior and senior groups, disability groups or girls nights. They also undertake **detached projects** including street work and informal education programmes around topics such as sexual health and relationships.

A number of **voluntary groups** also work with young people although these tend to focus more on specific client groups and informal education.

Informal play opportunities are offered right in the heart of the local community. This might be a community funday or art and craft activity run at the local community project. These opportunities tend to be run by voluntary or community groups sometimes in partnership with statutory agencies.

To sustain play and free time provision beyond the end of a particular funding stream it is vital to build on these community activities and give ownership of them to the local people.

Location of activities

see map page 13

As can be seen from Table 2, page 10, the areas of deprivation have a marked lack of childcare places available.

This could be due to the difficulty of running schemes in these areas that are both affordable to the community and viable to run.

Play and Free Time schemes are primarily classed as out of school provision, with some areas of Cheltenham having zero out of school places recorded namely, Hesters Way, Springbank, Charlton Park and St Pauls.

This is obviously an issue for children and young people's wellbeing but also for communities who experience anti social behaviour sometimes due to children and young people having nothing to do.

The County Council's research (*Environment Directorate 2005*) shows that of the out of school places available in Cheltenham 100% percent are filled. This shows the need to explore ways of capacity building in this area.

Play and Free Time Activities Map of the Borough

Key

- Out of school care including Holiday schemes
- Pre-school playgroups
- ★ Free time activities for young people identified by MAD youth council
- ▲ Services by play afternoon attendees
- ▨ Play areas & play rangers (CBC/Surestart)
- ▨ Youth Activities (Youth Service)
- ▨ Splash (CCP)
- ▭ Borough Wards



Free time activities for young people identified by MAD youth council:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0 - MAD YP Council | 12 - Gloscat |
| 1 - Skate park | 13 - Oasis youth centre |
| 2 - Beechwood Arcade | 14 - Pates Grammar School |
| 3 - Cleeve School | 15 - Hestersway Shops |
| 4 - Tythe Barn | 16 - Prestbury Playing Fields |
| 5 - Cleeve Hill | 17 - Bournside School |
| 6 - Racecourse | 18 - LAFitness |
| 7 - Imperial Gardens | 19 - Swindon Village Park |
| 8 - Montpellier Tennis Courts | 20 - Holy Trinity Church & The Noise |
| 9 - Town Hall | 21 - Six Ways Shops |
| 10 - Lido | 22 - Queen Elizabeth II park |
| 11 - Leisure@ | |



Provision of play space

The Council secures contributions from developers towards play space because of the anticipated extra demand generated for play provision from the creation of new residential developments. This is done in the following ways:

- By asking the developer to provide equipped play space on the development site - if the development is of sufficient size.
- By asking the developer to contribute to the enhancement of existing play space in the locality.
- By both of the above.
- By asking the developer for a contribution toward youth adult provision within the Borough.

The current calculation is based on the guidance contained within the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) "Six Acre Standard", and is expanded upon in much more detail within the council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Play Areas are classified according to their characteristics the table below shows the main features of each type of play area. The locations of the different types of play area within the Borough are shown on map.2 page 15. The circles on the map represent the radial straight line distance for the various play areas.

Summary of the Characteristics of Children's Play Area

Facility	Time	Walking Distance	Radial (Straight line) Distance	Minimum Size Activity Zone	Characteristics
LAP (Local Area for Play)	1 min	100m	60m	100m ²	Small, low key games area (may include 'demonstrative' play features)
LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play)	5 min	400m	240m	400m ²	5 types of play equipment, small games area
NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play)	15 min	1,000m	600m	1,000m ²	8 types of play equipment, opportunities for ball games or wheeled activities

© National Playing Fields Association 2001

A more participative planning system based around spatial planning and understanding current and future community needs is being embedded through the Local Development Framework. This approach is being supported by evidence from the Green Space strategy assessment in order to identify areas of open space and play space deficiency, gaps in provision and spaces that need improvements. This will improve the evidence base and support CBC in developing a policy, subject to consultation and adoption, to inform and prioritise the allocation of available resources.



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Gaps

Following the mapping of provision it was identified that there were some gaps in the range of activities offered to children and young people.

It was shown that there was a need for more informal play opportunities, which allowed children and young people to access them for a long or short time and with or without their parents. This was especially true of children 12 years and over who wanted spaces and activities they could socialise in with limited adult contact but which they also felt safe in. Schemes such as the Whaddon Lynworth and Priors Neighbourhood Play Rangers have given older children some opportunity to do this in the school holiday but more provision is needed.

The need for informal evening provision for the 9-12 age group has also been identified as this age groups falls between the after school club bracket and the main focus of the Youth Services provision.

Linked to the idea of informal play opportunities is the need for family play opportunities. These opportunities are often run by an agency but parents and other family members rather than staff from the agency play with their children in the facilities provided. This type of provision has been very popular when piloted as many parents and carers find it difficult to fit time to play with their children into busy daily schedule.

Holiday play provision is also a concern for parents who work particularly those on low income as it can be difficult to find affordable childcare in the school holidays. Often provision that is affordable for these parents cannot cover its own running cost so needs external subsidy. There is a lack of school holiday provision for children 10-14 years old whose parents work and would like them in a

supervised setting during the holidays. Children and young people of this age do not want to attend a holiday playscheme however their parents want them to attend activities where the agency organising them takes on the duty of care.

It will be the task of the play forum to develop approaches and projects that help fill these gaps, thereby helping to better meet local community needs.

Challenges

As a non statutory service securing long term funding for play and free time activities is often a challenge. This causes providers to invest a significant amount of resources in seeking funding from a variety of external streams. These funding streams often have different criteria and agendas that play and free time activities must meet in order to succeed in the face of strong competition from other play providers as well as agencies unconnected with play.

Another difficulty is that when funding runs out often projects have to stop either permanently or temporarily. This disrupts the continuity of services often leading to some of the good work achieved being undone.

The Government proposed Children's Centre and the Extended Schools programme for older children will be an important source of funding and resources for play and free time activities as long as these activities fit in with the local agenda and meet the needs of the local community.

As funding is limited the services provided for children and young people are often run, managed and delivered by a small number of dedicated staff or volunteers who often take on tasks and work hours simply out of goodwill. The heavy reliance on a small number of dedicated people to run services not only limits the services that can be provided but means that if any of these people are no longer able to deliver services often the services stop or suffer. It is important therefore that not only do we provide play and free time activities but through training, volunteering opportunities and cross agency working we capacity build and increase the number of adults who have a stake in children and young people's play and free time activities. This will help enable the continuity and quality of play and free time activities to continue as long as there is a need for these services.

A significant boost to the funding for Play and free time activities will be the Big Lottery programme Children's Play that is due to be launched in Early 2006. £155 million has been ring fenced for play with eighty percent of the money going to help deliver open access play opportunities to areas of most need and the remaining twenty percent going to innovative planning and delivery and regional infrastructure.

Action Plan

This is a partnership action plan that has been developed with key stakeholders to take into account current provision and the aspirations of the local community. The strategy will be monitored and delivered by the Cheltenham's Play and Free Time Forum. The forum will be facilitated by Cheltenham Borough Council's Community Services Division

Aim: To promote children and young people's health, wellbeing and development through play and free time activities.

Objective	Actions	Partners	Performance Indicators, Milestones or Targets	Links to other strategies
Encourage families to play together to support wellbeing.	<p>Play Ranger Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership to extend the service in regeneration areas. • Provide a Play Ranger Service in summer holidays across the Borough • Work to mainstream the early years Play Ranger service <p>Support family activity 'taster' sessions at various community and commercial venues to give families ideas and break down barriers to access.</p>	<p>CBC Community Services CBC Community Rangers Detached Youth Workers Neighbourhood Projects CBH Neighbourhood Wardens PCSO's</p> <p>CBC Community Services Leisure@cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum Everyman Theatre Sure Start</p>	<p>Funding secured to enable Play Ranger Service and Early Years Play Ranger Service to continue to operate after March 2006</p> <p>No of sessions held, per year, to encourage families to access leisure/entertainment venues. Initiatives held at all Cheltenham Borough Council run facilities. December 2008</p>	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy CBC Cultural Strategy Hesters Way Children and Young People's Strategy Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors Neighbourhood Project Play Plan</p>
Work in partnership to encourage children and young people to take part in activities that promote all aspects of a healthy lifestyle.	<p>Work in partnership to encourage children and young people from all areas of Cheltenham to access leisure@cheltenham</p> <p>Encourage children and young people to</p>	<p>CBC Community Services CBC Healthy Communities Partnership Manager Leisure@cheltenham Neighbourhood Projects</p> <p>CBC Healthy</p>	<p>Consult with children and young people regarding access to leisure@cheltenham Winter 2006</p> <p>Annual participation by</p>	<p>Every Child Matters: Change for Children Gloucestershire Play Policy Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan Social Justice Strategy A Sporting Future for All:</p>

	<p>take part in sports through the Gloucestershire youth games</p> <p>Work with health professionals to provide activities in existing playschemes and children and young people's projects to raise mental and physical health awareness</p>	<p>Communities Partnership Manager Gloucestershire Sports Partnership Sports clubs</p> <p>PCT CBC Healthy Communities Partnership Manager CBC Community Services Neighbourhood Project Sure Start Youth Service</p>	<p>Cheltenham Borough Council in Gloucestershire Youth Games</p> <p>Equivalent of one day of health promotion and well being related activities to be delivered on our holiday activity programme Summer 2006</p>	<p>The Governments Plan for Sport</p>
<p>Promote activities that encourage informal learning through play and free time activities.</p>	<p>Develop links with primary and secondary schools to provide alternative curriculum activities to include disaffected children and young people and children and young people with disabilities</p> <p>Introduce young people to new opportunities and hobbies for example photography or a musical instrument</p>	<p>Primary and Secondary schools CBC Community Services CBC Healthy Communities Partnership Manager School Sports Co-ordinators Neighbourhood Projects Youth Service CBC Community Rangers Art Gallery and Museum</p> <p>Youth Service Local interest clubs Relevant Council departments</p>	<p>No of initiatives per year</p> <p>Deliver one initiative in each of the regeneration areas and each special school to deliver an aspect of the curriculum through sport, the arts or environmental play by Autumn 2008</p> <p>Equivalent of one day of activities that can introduce children and young people to hobbies they can continue in their free time to be delivered on our holiday activity programme starting Summer 2006</p>	<p>Every Child Matters: Change for Children Gloucestershire Play Policy Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan A Sporting Future for All: The Governments Plan for Sport</p>
<p>Work in partnership to encourage children and young people to take part in creative activities.</p>	<p>Work in partnership to provide children and young people with new arts opportunities in their local area</p>	<p>CBC Community Services Neighbourhood Projects Art Gallery and Museum CBC Arts Development Officer Everyman Theatre</p>	<p>No of arts activities delivered through Community Play activities.</p> <p>Arts activity to be delivered at each community fun day</p>	<p>CBC Arts Development Strategy Cheltenham community Plan CBC Business Plan CBC Cultural strategy</p>

	<p>Analyse children and young people's access to arts events and performances</p>	<p>CBC Community Rangers MAD youth council Youth Forums Cultural Forum</p>	<p>organised by CBC Community Services Consult with children and young people about access to arts events and performances</p>	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy</p>
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Aim: To work in partnership with voluntary groups, statutory agencies and the local community to share resources, information and expertise.

Objective	Actions	Partners	Milestones or Targets	Links to other strategies
Co-ordinate and contribute to an audit of children and young people's activities across the borough	Collate audit information of play and free time activities from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood projects • Regeneration areas • Sports Development Unit Then work with the University of Gloucestershire to try and fill in gaps in the audit. Feedback to County Play Policy Implementation group from the audit	Community Services Healthy Communities Partnership Manager Neighbourhood Projects University of Gloucestershire Community Services	Audit of play and free time activities to be presented to partners at the Play and Free Time Forum Autumn 2006 Autumn 2006 take results of the audit to county implementation group to add to county audit	Gloucestershire Play Policy
Facilitate a play forum linked to the delivery of a local play and free time strategy.	Write a play and free time strategy that brings together local and national agendas. Establish a strategic play and free time forum for Cheltenham to discuss related issues and monitor the play policy Establish a sub group of the play and free time forum to support delivery of play and free time activities	CBC Community Services Play and Free Time strategy steering group All partner agencies with an interest in children and young CBC Community Services Play and Free Time strategy steering group All partner agencies with an interest in children and young	Play and Free time strategy endorsed by Cheltenham Borough Council and partner agencies by January 2006 First Meeting of a bi annual forum to take place February 2006 First meeting to take place May 2006	Gloucestershire Play Policy
Support already established partnerships and forums that relate to children and young people's issues.	Support the children and young people's groups and partnership forums in regeneration areas	Oakley Children and Young People's group Hesters Way Children and Young People's group St Pauls Social Regeneration Group	Continued attendance at Hesters Way Children and Young People's Group, Oakley Children and Young People's Group, St Pauls Social Regeneration Group and all sub groups	Hesters Way Children and Young People's Strategy Whaddon Lynworth and Priors Neighbourhood Project Play Plan

	Attend the Gloucestershire Play Policy implementation Group	Gloucestershire County Council PATA Community Services local district councils	Continued attendance at Gloucestershire Play Policy implementation group	Gloucestershire Play Policy
Offer support to people and agencies who work with children and young people.	<p>Through development of a training programme offer low cost training to parents and voluntary agencies</p> <p>Encourage volunteer placements to support capacity building especially among parents and the communities local to projects</p> <p>Offer support and guidance to CBC and CBH staff who have regular contact with children and young people</p>	<p>Community Services CBC Training Development Manager Playwork Partnerships University of Gloucestershire</p> <p>All partners</p> <p>Community services</p>	<p>Fully endorsed Playwork training programme to be available for external delivery Spring 2007</p> <p>Publicise supported volunteering opportunities on CBC holiday activities Summer 2007</p> <p>Offer endorsed Playwork training to CBC and CBH staff from Summer 2006</p> <p>No of training sessions delivered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internally (incl CBH) • Externally 	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy Cheltenham Community Plan Every Child Matters: Change for Children Social Justice Strategy Corporate Training Strategy</p>

Aim: To involve children and young people in decisions that affect their lives and their local community

Objective	Actions	Partners	Milestones or Targets	Links to other strategies
<p>Encourage children and young people to take an active role in their community.</p>	<p>Develop citizenship training programme building on the already existing democracy education activities</p> <p>Target key facilities in local communities and support children and young people to take an active role in them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New community centre in SACS area • St Pauls Community House <p>Work together to provide children and young people with information about their local community that is relevant to them</p>	<p>Schools MAD Youth Service Play providers CBC Policy Division Elected members</p> <p>CBC CBH Neighbourhood Projects Cheltenham Community Projects Children and young people's groups</p> <p>CBH CBC Neighbourhood Projects</p>	<p>2005-2008 an initiative based around each of the following topics to take place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Justice system • Local Government • The Media • Ethnic Diversity • Conflict Resolution • Global Society <p>One project lead by children and young people to take place in each venue by Winter 2008</p> <p>Quarterly newsletter (paper and electronic versions) about local activities and issues for children and young people available by January 2008</p>	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy Every Child Matters: Change for children Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan Cheltenham Crime Reduction strategy</p>
<p>Develop effective ways of consulting children and young people on decisions that affect them.</p>	<p>Support the extension of Youth Forums</p>	<p>Youth Service MAD</p>	<p>Develop with representative youth groups effective methods of involving children and young people in development of the play and free time strategy and activities. Autumn 2006</p>	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy Every Child Matters: Change for children CBC Business Plan CBC Consultation Strategy</p>

	Work in partnership to develop effective forums for children under 11's views to be heard	Community Services Neighbourhood Projects Children and young people's groups Primary Schools	Consult with children under 11 to involve them in the development of the play and free time strategy and activities. Spring 2007	
Encourage understanding and co-operation between children, young people and adults.	From consultation with children and young people identify key areas of conflict with adults and support children and young people to work through the issues. Facilitate community fun days that adults, children and young people take an active part in to help increase co-operation	MAD Youth forums Children and young people's groups All Partners	A young persons representative to feedback to each meeting of the Play Forum any play and free time issues that are affecting children and young people No of community events held with play and free time activity opportunities delivered	Gloucestershire Play Policy Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan
Involve children and young people in local and national events that are relevant to them.	Work in partnership to include children and young people in Cheltenham's many high profile festivals. Link into national sports events when appropriate for children and young people.	Art Gallery and Museum Everyman Theatre Town Hall MAD Youth Forums Healthy Communities Partnership Manager School Sports Co-ordinators University of Gloucestershire	Facilitate activities linked to each festival on CBC holiday activity programme and negotiate for these to be included in the festival programme. Commence 2006 One young person led activity to be included in each of the town's relevant festivals during 2008 Spring/Summer 2008 facilitate an activity programme in each regeneration area to coincide with the Beijing Olympics 2008	Gloucestershire Play Policy CBC Cultural Strategy Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan A Sporting Future for All: The Governments Plan for Sport

Aim: To encourage good practice in tackling safety issues that affect children and young people.

Objective	Actions	Partners	Milestones or Targets	Links to other strategies
Encourage good practice in child protection issues.	<p>Support the development and implementation of a corporate child protection Policy</p> <p>Develop play development unit training programme to make child protection training available to CBC, CBH staff and community groups</p>	<p>Child Protection Policy steering group</p> <p>Community services CBC Training Development manager Playwork partnerships</p>	<p>Draft policy to be circulated by end of 2005</p> <p>Child Protection training to be submitted for endorsement April 2006</p>	Keeping Children Safe Gloucestershire Play Policy
Empower children and young people to be responsible for their own health and safety.	<p>Support the Oakley and Hesters way anti bullying group</p> <p>Work in partnership to provide an enjoyable activity programme around the following safety themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water safety • Bullying • Fire safety • Road safety • First aid/accident • Taking risks • Personal Safety 	<p>Hesters Way children and young people's group Oakley young people's group</p> <p>Gloucestershire County Council Police Fire service St Johns Ambulance leisure@cheltenham</p>	<p>A member of Cheltenham Borough Council to attend the training the group will provide and to disseminate this training to other departments and groups</p> <p>2005-2008 an activity programme around each of the identified themes to take place</p>	<p>Hesters Way Children and Young People's Strategy Gloucestershire Play Policy Every Child Matters: Change for children Cheltenham Crime Reduction Strategy</p>
Promote awareness of good practice in health and safety in relation to children and young people.	Work with partners to make the design of estates safer for children and young people.	<p>CBH Neighbourhood Projects Tenants association Residents associations Planning department Youth Forums MAD Youth Council</p>	Consult with children and young people about their views on the safety of their local area. Summer 2006	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy Every Child Matters: Change for Children Cheltenham Crime Reduction strategy Cheltenham Community Plan</p>

	<p>Develop the play development unit training programme to offer health and safety training for people who work with children and young people.</p> <p>Develop departmental good practice into corporate health and safety guidelines for children and young people's activities that conform to relevant legislation</p>	<p>Community Services CBC Health and safety advisor Playwork partnership</p> <p>Community Services Community Rangers Art Gallery and Museum CBC Health and safety advisor</p>	<p>Offer endorsed Playwork training to CBH and CBC staff summer 2006 extend this training to community and commercial groups Summer 2007</p> <p>Corporate Health and safety guidelines for working with children and young people to be developed and implemented by March 2006</p>	<p>CBC Business Plan Corporate Training Strategy</p>
<p>Work in partnership to help ensure children and young people's safety in their local community.</p>	<p>Work in partnership with the police to involve them in children and young people's activities to foster good relations between police and young people</p> <p>Educate children and young people about looking after their local community and environment i.e. litter picks</p>	<p>Police Neighbourhood Projects CBC CBH</p> <p>Neighbourhood wardens Community Rangers Police</p>	<p>Equivalent of one day of activities in partnership with the Police delivered on our holiday activity programme Summer 2007</p> <p>Continuation of the existing initiatives run by these agencies for the duration of the strategy</p>	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy Every Child Matters: Change for Children Cheltenham Crime Reduction strategy Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan</p>

Aim: To work in partnership to provide play and free time activities that meet the needs of local children and young people.

Objective	Actions	Partners	Milestones or Targets	Links to other strategies
Encourage shared activities across generations.	Develop the concept of community gardens in regeneration areas Involve people from the local community in organised play and free time activities.	Neighbourhood wardens Neighbourhood projects Community Rangers Community Services Youth Service Residents associations Neighbourhood Projects Art Gallery and Museum	A working group to be formed to agree a plan of action to enable the establishment of community gardens in regeneration areas Spring 2006 Residents associations to be invited to take part in community fun days organised by CBC Community Services 2005-2008	Gloucestershire Play Policy Whaddon Lynworth and Priors Play Plan Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan
Encourage the use of open spaces.	Consult children and young people to understand their views on Cheltenham's open spaces Extend the Play Ranger service to all the regeneration areas.	MAD Youth Forums Schools CBC Community Rangers CBC Community Services Residents associations CBH Community Services Neighbourhood Projects Sure Start Community Rangers Detached youth workers Neighbourhood wardens	Consult with children and young people on their views about the open spaces around the area in which they live and present this to the play and free time forum. Summer 2006 Develop an action plan through the forum to address the issues raised Autumn 2006 Funding secured to enable Play Ranger and Early Years Play Ranger Service to continue to operate after March 2006	Gloucestershire Play Policy Every Child Matters: Change for Children Cheltenham Crime Reduction strategy Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors Neighbourhood Project Play Plan Hesters Way Children and Young People's Group

	<p>Work with befriending service to encourage people to independently access the spaces.</p> <p>Community fun days to reclaim the parks for the local community</p>	<p>CBC Community Services Sure Start Cheltenham Community Projects</p> <p>All Partners</p>	<p>Play Rangers to have worked with the befriending service to encourage use of open spaces by families. April 2006</p> <p>Annually support the organisation of one community event in each of the regeneration areas</p>	
<p>Try to break down barriers to allow children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access play and free time activities.</p>	<p>Membership scheme that enables children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access activities at subsidised rates</p> <p>Programme of activities to help children and young people learn to access opportunities themselves</p>	<p>Community Services MAD</p> <p>Community Services Neighbourhood Projects Cheltenham Community projects leisure@cheltenham Art Gallery and museum</p>	<p>Easter 2006 pilot membership scheme to be up and running</p> <p>By 2008 to have worked with all of the Cheltenham Borough Council run leisure/entertainment venues on at least one initiative to encourage children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the facilities.</p>	<p>Every Child Matters: Change for Children Gloucestershire Play Policy CBC Cultural Strategy Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan Social Justice Strategy A Sporting Future for All: The Governments Plan for Sport</p>
<p>In partnership continue to develop holiday activity programmes</p>	<p>Develop annual programme of play provision across borough, with particular focus on regeneration areas</p> <p>Develop holiday activities that fill the gaps in provision identified in the partnership audit</p> <p>Encourage older children to access holiday activities</p>	<p>All partners</p> <p>Community Services Healthy Communities Partnership Manager Youth Service Neighbourhood Projects Art Gallery and Museum</p>	<p>Annual programme of play published</p> <p>No of new opportunities for play and free time activities developed to meet identified need</p> <p>Joint activities between the Play Ranger service and Detached Youth Workers to be delivered Summer</p>	<p>Every Child Matters: Change for Children Gloucestershire Play Policy CBC Cultural Strategy Cheltenham Crime Reduction strategy Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business Plan Social Justice Strategy CBC Youth Housing Strategy: making things happen A Sporting Future for</p>

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To raise awareness of the importance of play and free time activities for children and young people.				
Objective	Actions	Partners	Milestones or targets	Links to other strategies
Publicise information about play and free time activities to parents, agencies and the local community.	<p>Contribute to combined information about school holiday activities in regeneration areas</p> <p>Develop a play and free time newsletter giving activity information and general information relevant to children and young people</p>	<p>CBH Neighbourhood Projects Children and young people's groups</p> <p>Community Services All partners</p>	<p>Local holiday activity information booklet distributed in each regeneration area before the start of Easter and Summer holidays.</p> <p>Quarterly newsletter available children and young people from January 2008</p>	Gloucestershire Play Policy
Participate in local and national initiatives to promote play and free time activities.	<p>Continue to celebrate National Playday.</p> <p>Continue to participate in Gloucestershire Youth Games</p> <p>Continue to support environmental initiatives specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National tree week • Seed Gathering Sunday 	<p>Community Services Community Rangers CBH leisure@cheltenham Arts Development</p> <p>Healthy Partnership Manager Gloucestershire Sports Partnership</p> <p>Community Rangers</p>	<p>Annual organisation of an open community event on National Playday (first Wednesday in August)</p> <p>Annual participation by CBC in Gloucestershire Youth Games</p> <p>Annual organisation of an initiative/activity to mark each of the listed events</p>	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy</p> <p>Every Child Matters: Change for Children Cheltenham Community Plan</p> <p>CBC Business Plan</p>
Support development of a qualified professional workforce.	Expand the Community Play Development unit's current training programme	Community Services CBC Training Development Manager Playwork Partnerships	<p>Endorsement and roll out externally of programme. 2007</p> <p>Two new modules developed to meet current skills requirements. Summer 2008</p>	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy</p> <p>SkillsActive: National Strategy for Playwork Education, Training and qualifications</p>

	<p>Providers of play and free time activities to offer work experience to young people</p> <p>Provide opportunities for people to volunteer on children and young people's activities</p>	<p>All partners</p> <p>All partners</p>	<p>Annually accept work placement students from local schools and colleges prioritising those schools in regeneration areas</p> <p>Publicise supported volunteering opportunities on CBC holiday activities Summer 2007</p>	
<p>Raise awareness of the benefits of play and free time to parents, agencies and the local community.</p>	<p>Involve parents in the planning and delivery of play and free time activities.</p> <p>On establishment of the Play and Free time Strategy Forum regular newsletters (paper and electronic versions) and up dates about the strategy to be sent out to generate positive publicity</p>	<p>CBC Community Services Sure Start Residents Associations CBH Neighbourhood Projects</p> <p>Community Services Play and Free time strategy forum</p>	<p>Publicise supported volunteering opportunities on CBC holiday activities Summer 2007 to local parents</p> <p>Bi annual newsletter to be published to co-ordinate with the meeting of the Play and Free time Strategy Forum Starting Spring/summer 2006</p>	<p>Gloucestershire Play Policy Cheltenham Community Plan CBC Business plan Every Child Matters: Change for Children</p>

Monitoring

As detailed in the action plan a Play and Free Time forum will be setup with an operational sub group. This strategic Play and Free time forum will have the responsibility of monitoring the Play and Free Time Strategy to check whether targets and performance indicators are being met. It will also review the strategy in light of the delivery and progress of the strategy and the current national and local strategic agendas. The strategic forum will meet bi annually and consist of key stakeholders and elected members. The progress of the play and free time strategy will also periodically be reported to Cheltenham Borough Council's Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The operational sub group of the forum will deliver in partnership the objectives of the plan by sharing resources and expertise.

Partnership List

Play and Free Time Steering Group

Tracy Brown	CBC Community Play Development Unit
Kath Camberlain	CBC Community Partnerships
James Blockley	CBC Parks and Landscapes
Anne Tranter	CBC Health and Wellbeing
Emma Breckin	CBC Policy and Public Relations
Hayley Jones	Cheltenham Borough Homes
Kim Gibbon	M.A.D. Youth Council
Colin Pritchard	Whaddon Lynworth and Priors Neighbourhood Project
Daisy Sedgley	Sure Start
Pippa Levett	Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Projects Network
David Turner	University of Gloucestershire
Representative	Cheltenham Community Projects

Contributors via the Play Afternoon

To be inserted