

National Assembly for Wales
Children and Young People Committee

Provision of Safe Places to Play
and Hang Out: Plain English
Summary and Recommendations

November 2010



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Children and Young People Committee

We are a group of five people who work as Assembly Members in the National Assembly for Wales in Cardiff. People in Wales have voted for us to do this and it's our job to make sure that the people who make decisions about things and how to spend money (called the Welsh Government) are doing a good job. Our group is called the Children and Young People Committee.

Committee membership



Helen Mary Jones (Chair)



Eleanor Burnham



Sandy Mewies



Jonathan Morgan



Joyce Watson

The following Member was also a member of the Committee during this inquiry:



Angela Burns

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Glossary of Terms

- **Chair:** The Chair of the Committee is the Member who the Committee has elected to speak for them. He or she cannot make decisions for the other Members or tell the Committee what to do.
- **Children's Commissioner for Wales:** The Children's Commissioner for Wales stands up and speaks out for children and young people's rights. Children and young people can contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales if they need help with an issue that affects them.
- **Committee Inquiry:** an investigation into a topic. A Committee Inquiry will ask experts and people affected by the topic what they think and how things can be made better. The Committee then thinks about what all the people have told them and makes recommendations to the Welsh Government.
- **Evidence:** the things that people tell the committee inquiry by writing, speaking or using other forms of communication, are called evidence.
- **Guidance:** advice that should be followed.
- **Local Authority:** a local council, led by a group of councillors who have been elected to make decisions on how to spend money in the local area.
- **Local Government:** this is how we refer to all of the local authorities as a group.
- **Media:** Newspapers, TV, radio, internet and other forms of mass communication.
- **Recommendation:** a strong suggestion that something is done.
- **Statutory Guidance:** advice that should be followed to avoid breaking the law.
- **Welsh Government:** creates and carries out policy and is held to account by the National Assembly for Wales. It is led by Ministers who are also Assembly Members.

A message from the Chair

Play is a really important part of childhood. By playing and spending time with their friends, children and young people learn new things about themselves, others and the world they live in. They also get to try new things and find out what they are good at and what they enjoy doing.

As a society, we must do what we can to let children and young people have the space and time they need to play. We should also make opportunities for children and young people to try new things.

The Children and Young People Committee is really pleased that over 2700 children and young people told us what was important to them during the 'it's all about you' project that we ran in Summer 2009. Because of what those children and young people told us, we started out inquiry into safe places to play and hang out in December 2009.

The result of that inquiry is this report, and the 26 recommendations we make in it. We hope that the Welsh Government will think carefully about the recommendations that we make and we ask them to let us know how they will achieve the changes we have suggested so that more children and young people in Wales can play, hang out with their friends and enjoy their free time.

Thank you to all the children and young people, organisations and individuals who took time to speak or write to the Committee on this important subject. We are very grateful to you.

Helen Mary Jones AM
Chair, Children and Young People Committee

The Committee's recommendations

The Committee's recommendations to the Welsh Government are listed below, in the order that they appear in this Report. Please refer to the relevant pages of the report to see the supporting evidence and conclusions:

Recommendation 1. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government makes it clear to local authorities what it means by 'play' and how much play would be 'enough'. They should do this as soon as possible. (Page 14)

Recommendation 2. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should check which things listed in the Play Policy Implementation Plan are still to be done. The Welsh Government should ask interested organisations to help them do this before April 2011. (Page 15)

Recommendation 3. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government gives guidance to local authorities that says how important the Children and Young People Partnerships are. The guidance should also say that all departments of local authorities must show how they are involved with the Children and Young People Partnerships. (Page 16)

Recommendation 4. Because evidence shows that children in less well-off areas are much more likely to get hurt or killed on the roads than other children, the Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should concentrate on reducing child injuries in less well-off areas. (Page 17)

Recommendation 5. The Committee recommends that road safety should be taught in schools in Wales. (Page 17)

Recommendation 6. The Committee recommends that all Children and Young People Partnerships ask children and young people for their opinion, especially in the planning process. Planning departments should think of things that they can do to make sure that children and young people can say where they want play facilities to go. The Partnership Support Unit, which helps the Children and Young People Partnerships to do their work, should let all Children and Young People Partnerships know when one has found a good way of getting children and young people involved in the planning process. (Page 18)

Recommendation 7. Guidance given by the Welsh Government to local authorities about the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, should include a good practice guide to consulting with children and young people. The guide should say that when consulting with children and young people, they should be given all the information they need to think about the issues, including how much money is available to spend on a particular issue. (Page 18)

Recommendation 8. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government gives statutory guidance to local government that says children and young people should be consulted about decisions that are made in lots of local authority departments, like education; housing; transport and planning. The statutory guidance should also say that local authorities should work with children and young people to help them understand the issues and how best to say what they think about them. (Page 19)

Recommendation 9. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should make clear to planners that they must use guidance called ‘manual for streets’ as the guidance says areas should be better for children and young people to play in. (Page 20)

Recommendation 10. The Committee recommends that local authorities keep lights on by play areas, and the streets that people walk along to get to there. The Committee also recommends that lights are included in the plans for any new play areas. (Page 20)

Recommendation 11. The Committee recommends that local authorities talk to children and young people to find out where the worst problems with mess and disrepair are. Local authorities should then clean and repair those areas. (Page 21)

Recommendation 12. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government works with play providers, children and young people and other people with an interest to write health and safety guidelines that will encourage adventurous play. (Page 21)

Recommendation 13. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should work with others to think about if it would be helpful to run a campaign to help children and their parents learn how to stay safe without being scared to go out. (Page 22)

Recommendation 14. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should make sure that intergenerational work should think about the views of children and young people as well as adults.
(Page 22)

Recommendation 15. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government includes intergenerational work in the school curriculum to make sure that older people and younger people are working together often in a positive way.
(Page 24)

Recommendation 16. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government holds four media events around Wales to help the media understand children and young people better and explain why negative stories about them can cause problems for the whole community. The Welsh Government should also ask the UK Government to do the same across the UK.
(Page 24)

Recommendation 17. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government looks into what can be done to reduce bullying outside of schools. The Welsh Government should think particularly about what it can do to help disabled children and young people who are bullied. The Committee also asks the Welsh Government to say when its anti-bullying guidance, which was going to be published in December 2009, will be published.
(Page 25)

Recommendation 18. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government gives guidance to local authorities asking them to provide supervised play opportunities for children and young people in various ways. The Welsh Government should also think about how best to train play workers so that they are not confused about when to stop bullying.
(Page 25)

Recommendation 19. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government makes reducing fares for 16-18 year olds in Wales a priority to help young people get to leisure activities as well as education and training opportunities.
(Page 26)

Recommendation 20. The Committee recommends that the needs of children and young people should be considered, as well as the needs of others, when thinking about public transport system. If that thinking shows that there are more problems with the system, the Welsh Government should do what it can to solve those problems.
(Page 26)

Recommendation 21. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government gives guidance to the local authorities that says pupils are not excluded from extra curricular activities because of difficulties in securing transportation home at the end of the activity. (Page 26)

Recommendation 22. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government makes sure that mainstream play settings are accessible to all children and young people, and that specialist play opportunities are available to disabled children who want them. When thinking about the needs of carers of disabled children and young people, support for the carer to feel confident letting the child or young person try new things though play should be considered too. (Page 28)

Recommendation 23. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government takes action to make sure that all new public buildings in Wales are totally accessible. Access to older buildings should be improved where and when possible. (Page 28)

Recommendation 24. The Committee recommends that local government pricing policies are changed so that play and leisure opportunities are provided free of charge wherever possible. Where there is a charge, family tickets should be available for different numbers of adults and children in a family. (Page 29)

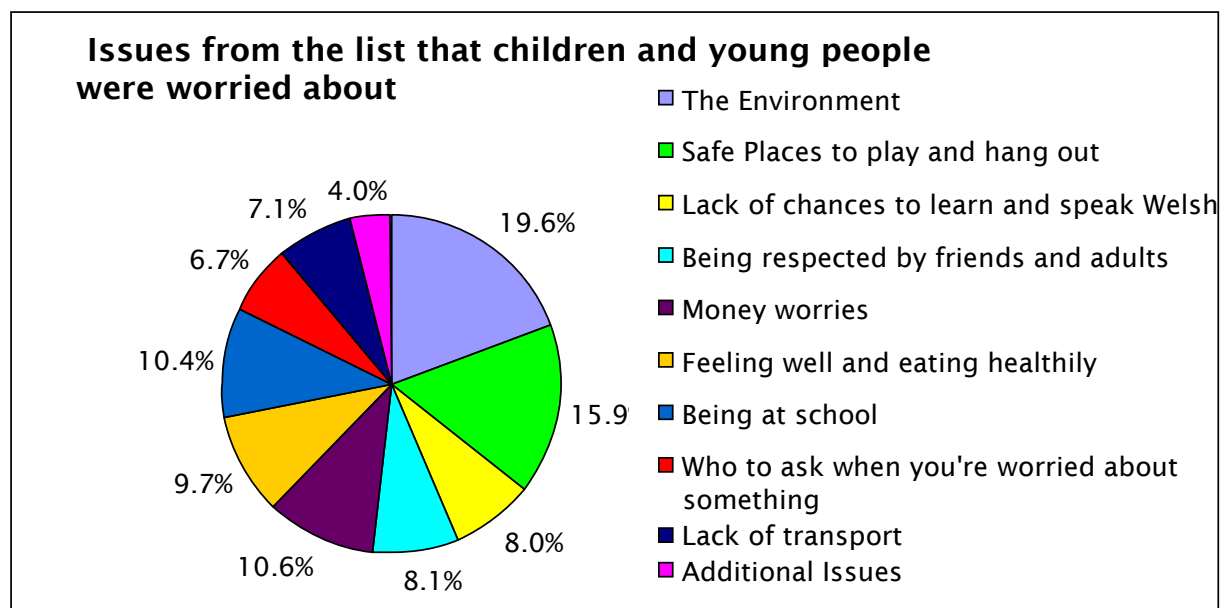
Recommendation 25. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government thinks about the needs of Gypsy Traveller children and young people. Gypsy Traveller children and young people, and their parents, should be involved in decisions about making a play development plan. Planning guidance for Gypsy Traveller sites should make sure that play opportunities are included on each site. (Page 29)

Recommendation 26. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should review what all maintained schools can do to support safe places to play and hang out. The review should include all the issues that need to be considered if schools are to share facilities wherever possible. (Page 30)

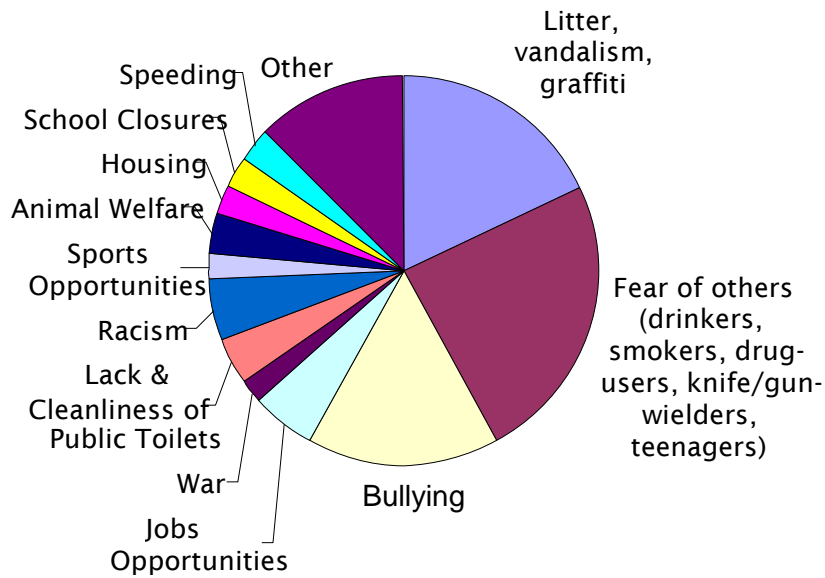
Introduction

Why did the Committee decide to do an inquiry into safe places to play and hang out?

1. The Children and Young People Committee think it is really important to listen to children and young people's opinions, so in the summer of 2009 we asked lots of children and young people to tell us what topics they thought Committee Inquiries should be on in the future.
2. Over 2,700 children and young people got in touch with us to tell us what they thought. They looked at a list of topics and then filled in a voting form to tell us which topics they thought the Committee should look into. They could also say if there were any other topics they were worried about that were not on the list.
3. The results of the vote are here:



Other issues that children and young people were worried about



4. The three issues that most children and young people were most worried about were:

- -the environment;
- -safe places to play and hang out; and
- -money worries.

5. Because of the vote, the Committee wrote to other Assembly Committees asking them to look into children and young people’s concerns about the environment and money. The Committee then decided to carry out an inquiry into safe places to play and hang out.

How did the Committee carry out its inquiry?

6. The Committee started the inquiry in December 2009.

7. The Committee spoke to some children and young people and asked others to fill in a questionnaire about what made them feel safe, or not so safe, when they were playing.

8. We held a workshop with disabled children, young carers, asylum seeking children and others in north Wales.

9. We visited play sites and some schools to speak to children and the adults who help them play safely.

10. Some children and young people sent us film clips that helped us understand what made them feel safe. Others drew up pictures and sent them in.

11. We also asked interested organisations and individuals to write in and tell us about how they thought we could help to make sure that children and young people have safe places to play and hang out.

12. We then asked some of the organisations to come to the Senedd in Cardiff and talk to us at a committee meeting about the issues.

13. We would like to thank the people who helped us with this inquiry. We are grateful for their time and interest.

Key issues emerging from the Committee's inquiry

14. Witnesses agreed that it is really important that children and young people are able to play and be able to do enough of the different leisure activities that they want to do.

15. There were 6 main issues that came out of the evidence to this inquiry:

- the importance of planning for play;
- road safety and the design of the areas we live in;
- how fear affects play;
- transport;
- the needs of children and young people with particular needs;
- what schools can do to help.

The importance of planning for play

Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010

16. The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 is a Welsh law that, amongst other things, makes local authorities think about planning for play in a new way.

17. Because of the Measure, local authorities have to look at all the play opportunities that children and young people in the area have, and make sure that each child and young person has enough play opportunities.

18. The Measure also says that local authorities have to think about what things disabled children and young people might need to help them enjoy play opportunities too.

19. The Welsh Government told the Committee that it thought play was really important, but witnesses told the Committee that some local authorities thought play was less important than other issues.

20. The Welsh Government said that it would be checking that local authorities realised the importance of planning for play, and making sure that children and young people had enough play opportunities. The Welsh Local Government Association told the Committee that local authorities were happy to do the things that the Welsh Government asked to provide enough opportunities for play, but that the Welsh Government had not made it clear what they meant by 'play' and how much play was 'enough'.

21. Some witnesses said that it was important to understand that while some children and young people were happy to play without adults around, others wanted adults to watch out for them or to run activities. The Committee thinks it is important that any definition of play includes child led and adult led play.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government makes it clear to local authorities what it means by 'play' and how much play would be 'enough'. They should do this as soon as possible.

Play Policy Strategy and the Play Policy Implementation Plan

22. The 'Play Policy Strategy' is a written document that sets out the Welsh Government's plans to make sure that children and young people in Wales have enough play opportunities. The 'Play Policy

Implementation Plan' sets out what the Welsh Government has to do to put those plans into action.

23. The Play Policy Strategy is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that says, amongst other things, that all children have the right to free time and to play. The Welsh Government has agreed that children and young people have rights, and it aims to think about how the rights that the UNCRC say children have are affected by its plans and actions.

24. Witnesses told us that they thought the Welsh Government was right to say that children and young people have rights, and that its plans for making sure children and young people had enough play opportunities were good. Some witnesses said that felt that some of the things listed in the Play Policy Implementation plan had still not been done.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should check which things listed in the Play Policy Implementation Plan are still to be done. The Welsh Government should ask interested organisations to help them do this before April 2011.

Local authority co-ordination of play opportunities

25. Witnesses said that some local authorities were not doing very well at planning how to provide play opportunities, and that sometimes people working in different departments of the local authority did not think about how best to work with other departments. That could mean that one department is planning to build a skate park while another department is planning to change the bus routes, which might make it difficult for young people to get to the new park.

26. Witnesses told the Committee that if all departments had to listen to children and young people's views, they would better understand why it was important to have a bus that went to the skate park or a safe place to cross the road by the leisure centre, for example.

27. Local authorities all have a 'Children and Young People Partnership', which someone from each department of the local authority should be a member of. The partnerships helps each department to think about how what it does effects children and young people. These partnerships should help local authorities to

work together for children and young people, but they can only do that if all the departments understand how important the partnerships are and make them work well.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government gives guidance to local authorities that says how important the Children and Young People Partnerships are. The guidance should also say that all departments of local authorities must show how they are involved with the Children and Young People Partnerships.

Local authority support for volunteer led play opportunities

28. Some witnesses said that local authorities did not always work well to support the efforts of volunteers who provided play opportunities.

29. Iwth Pen youth club in the Nantlle Valley is run by volunteers. They told the Committee that they were struggling as so many young people wanted to join, so they had to pay the local authority youth club to let some of the young people go there instead. This seemed unhelpful to the youth club and the Committee hopes the local authority can find a better way to support the Iwth Pen youth club, and others like it.

30. Some play opportunities run by volunteers are given money as financial grants. Staff at Rhyl Adventure Playground in north Wales told the Committee that it would help them plan better if the grants were given every three years instead of every year.

The lasting effects of Big Lottery Play Funding

31. The Big Lottery is a charity that pays for lots of play opportunities in Wales and the UK.

32. The Committee thinks that it is important to make sure that the play opportunities paid for by Big Lottery are able to carry on after the Big Lottery stops paying for them.

33. The Welsh Government has set up a national steering group that will try to make sure the play opportunities keep going. The Committee would like to see a list of the things the group has been asked to do.

Road safety and the design of the areas we live in

Traffic

34. Public spaces should be available for everyone to use, but evidence suggests that the needs of cars and their drivers are often seen as more important than the needs of children and pedestrians.

35. Children and young people told the Committee that they couldn't always go out to play because cars were parked where they wanted to play and traffic made it unsafe.

36. The Welsh Government's Deputy Minister for Children told the Committee that although most children were safer now than before, a child living in a less well-off area is much more likely to get hurt or killed on the road than children living in other areas.

37. The Welsh Local Government Association, which is an organisation that represents local authorities in Wales, told the Committee that more could be done to give children and young people the skills they need to stay safe by the road.

Because evidence shows that children in less well-off areas are much more likely to get hurt or killed on the roads than other children, the Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should concentrate on reducing child injuries in less well-off areas.

The Committee recommends that road safety should be taught in schools in Wales.

Homezones and DIY streets

38. Witnesses told the Committee that parked cars made it difficult for children to play in the street.

39. Homezones are areas where the streets have been designed to let children play outside, and pedestrians share the space with cars better. DIY streets are similar to Homezones.

40. Although the idea of Homezones and DIY streets is good, they can cause difficulties for some people with specific needs and they cost a lot of money.

41. The Welsh Government's Play Policy Implementation Plan encourages the use of Homezones, and other ways of helping children play on the streets by their homes if they want to.

Planning for the needs of everyone in the community

42. If streets were planned from the start with children's play in mind, then expensive Homezones would not be needed. Witnesses told us that the planners who design the streets seem to think about the needs of adults more than the needs of children.

43. The Committee feels that local authorities should ask children and young people what they need in their area, and where things like play parks and skate parks should go.

44. The Big Lottery told the Committee that because different departments in local authorities did not always work well together, not all departments thought about what children would need.

45. As each local authority has a Children and Young People Partnership that someone from each department should be involved with, the Committee feels that the partnerships should be consulting with children and young people to find out what they think.

The Committee recommends that all Children and Young People Partnerships ask children and young people for their opinion, especially in the planning process. Planning departments should think of things that they can do to make sure that children and young people can say where they want play facilities to go. The Partnership Support Unit, which helps the Children and Young People Partnerships to do their work, should let all Children and Young People Partnerships know when one has found a good way of getting children and young people involved in the planning process.

Guidance given by the Welsh Government to local authorities about the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, should include a good practice guide to consulting with children and young people. The guide should say that when consulting with children and young people, they should be given all the information they need to think about the issues, including how much money is available to spend on a particular issue.

46. Witnesses told the Committee that when local authorities did ask children and young people their views, it was often the same few children and young people that they asked.

47. The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 says that local authorities must make arrangements to tell children and young people how to get involved in decision making, and help them to get involved

if they want to. Because of this, local authorities should no longer consult only the same few children and young people that they have spoken to before, but should include others too.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government gives statutory guidance to local government that says children and young people should be consulted about decisions that are made in lots of local authority departments, like education; housing; transport and planning. The statutory guidance should also say that local authorities should work with children and young people to help them understand the issues and how best to say what they think about them.

Section 106 agreements

48. A section 106 agreement is an agreement that might be made between a local authority and a developer who has bought some land to build houses, shops or other things. The agreement will say that the person or company that bought the land – the developer – will give money to the local authority to pay for services or things for people in the area. These might be new roads, affordable homes or a park, for example.

49. The Welsh Local Government Association told the Committee that not many section 106 agreements had been made in the last 18 months because people had less money now. They also said that there had been less section 106 agreements because of a new charge that local authorities can now ask developers to pay, called the Community Infrastructure Levy.

50. The Committee understood that there may be less section 106 agreements in the future. But they also felt that any local authorities that have section 106 agreements should ask their Children and Young People Partnerships to think about how the agreement could help children and young people have safe places to play and hang out.

51. The Committee also thinks that parks that are paid for by section 106 agreements should be built on new housing estates before people start buying the houses. That way, families with children will be able to buy houses closer to the park and people who want to live away from the play area can buy a house further away.

Planning guidance and policy

52. Sustrans, a charity that helps people travel in an environmentally friendly way, told the Committee that some road planners were not following up to date advice on what they should be including in newly built areas. Sustrans felt that sometimes the needs of adults were thought of first and the needs of children were not thought of until after the plans had been made.

53. North East Wales Play told the Committee that children and young people playing or hanging out should not be separated from the rest of community life, and the Committee agreed. It thought that children and young people should be able to play on the streets outside their homes and in their local communities.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should make clear to planners that they must use guidance called ‘manual for streets’ as the guidance says areas should be better for children and young people to play in.

54. Even though children and young people should be able to play on the streets outside their homes and in their local communities, they should also have play areas and parks to go to.

55. Children and young people told the Committee that sometimes they can’t go to their local parks or play areas because other people tell them to go away because of their age.

56. The Committee felt that there should be different areas in parks with different things in them. There might be slides for toddlers, climbing frames for older children and shelters for teenagers to hang out in. Children should not be stopped from going into the different areas because of their age as each child will be different from the next and might like to play in different ways and at different times.

57. A witness from Rhyl Youth Action Group told the Committee that in some areas, there were shelters for teenagers to use but they were cold as they had holes in the side and the wind blow through them. Also, there were no lights in the area so the teenagers could not go there after dark.

The Committee recommends that local authorities keep lights on by play areas, and the streets that people walk along to get to there. The Committee also recommends that lights are included in the plans for any new play areas.

How fear affects play

Litter and vandalism

58. Lots of children and young people told the Committee that litter and vandalism in the areas they played in made them feel less safe. Witnesses told the Committee that dog mess in the areas children wanted to play in was a problem too.

59. It is against the law to drop litter or vandalise things and dog owners should clean up after their dog but there is still a problem with litter, vandalism and dog mess.

The Committee recommends that local authorities talk to children and young people to find out where the worst problems with mess and disrepair are. Local authorities should then clean and repair those areas.

Health and safety

60. Witnesses told the Committee that some children and young people were not allowed to play in an adventurous way because adults were worried that the children might get hurt and then the adults would get into trouble for not looking after them properly.

61. Witnesses also told the Committee that adventurous play was important as it helped children and young people to learn how to take risks and learn new things.

62. But one witness told the Committee that playgrounds needed to be safe so that parents could be sure that their children would be not be hurt if they let them play.

63. The Committee felt that adventurous play is really important and helps children and young people to develop. The Committee also felt that children and young people should be kept safe from risks that could be avoided.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government works with play providers, children and young people and other people with an interest to write health and safety guidelines that will encourage adventurous play.

Stranger danger

64. Lots of children and young people told the Committee that they were worried about stranger danger. The Committee's questionnaire asked 'if you have felt unsafe when you were playing / hanging out, what caused this?' The most popular reply to the question was stranger danger.

65. But the Police told the Committee that only one young person had been kidnapped in the last two years in the South Wales area, and none had been kidnapped in the last two years in north Wales. They felt that people were more scared of strangers than they should be.

66. Barnardo's Cymru told the Committee that children should not be scared of all strangers, but instead should be taught how to keep themselves safe wherever they are.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should work with others to think about if it would be helpful to run a campaign to help children and their parents learn how to stay safe without being scared to go out.

67. The Beth Johnson Foundation for Intergenerational Studies told the Committee that people in the community are afraid of others in the community because they don't really know each other. They suggested that if young people and older people worked on projects together, called 'intergenerational projects', they would get to know each other and be less scared of each other.

68. Intergenerational projects that older people and younger people get involved with might be things like younger people interviewing older people to help them understand history. Intergenerational projects are good, but are often run by older people and don't always think about what sort of things the young people might want to do.

69. The Beth Johnson Foundation also told the Committee that street parties had been used to help people get to know each other better. The Committee felt that this was a good way of getting to know others in the community, especially as closing the street for a party would let children play without danger from cars.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should make sure that intergenerational work should think about the views of children and young people as well as adults.

Negative stereotypes of children and young people

70. People often judge all children and young people before they get to know them, based on the bad things they have heard about a few children and young people. This can be called a negative stereotype.

71. The Committee was told about one young person who went to help an old lady who had dropped her shopping. When he went over to help her, she expected the boy to behave in a certain way and was scared that he was going to attack her so she screamed. The boy was embarrassed and walked away without helping her.

72. The Children's Commissioner for Wales told the Committee that although most children wanted to play outside, 80 per cent of them had been told off, 50 per cent had been shouted at and 25 per cent had been threatened with violence for playing outside.

73. One witness said that 'children were also fearful of older people'.

74. Some parents worry about letting their children go out to play because they think that bad things might happen. Others won't let their children out to play because they think they will be seen as bad parents for not finding something more worthwhile for them to do.

75. The Committee thinks that playing is a very important thing to do and children should be welcome to play outside in their communities. It is important that everyone values children and so because play is important to them, it should also be important to us.

76. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was worried about the negative way adults think about children and young people in the UK.

77. Some witnesses told the Committee that the way children and young people were talked about in the media. Fairbridge Cymru told the Committee that although young people have hung out on street corners with their friends for years, the media have been campaigning to stop them by printing articles with headlines like 'Ban the Hoody'.

78. The Committee hopes that intergenerational work, and other things suggested in this report, will help to stop adults being negative towards children and young people. But it is very difficult to change the way lots of people think so it is very important that the Welsh Government and local authorities do all they can to treat children and young people as valued members of society.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government includes intergenerational work in the school curriculum to make sure that older people and younger people are working together often in a positive way.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government holds four media events around Wales to help the media understand children and young people better and explain why negative stories about them can cause problems for the whole community. The Welsh Government should also ask the UK Government to do the same across the UK.

Bullying

79. Children and young people told the Committee that bullying stopped them from going out to play. Young people from Funky Dragon said that bullying was less likely to happen if adults were around. Nearly half of the children and young people who filled in the Committee's questionnaire said that they would feel safer with adults to watch out for them.

80. The Committee was surprised that so many children and young people wanted adults around when they were playing and was worried that children and young people do not feel safe without adults.

81. The organisation 'Children in Wales' told the Committee that bullying was always an issue for disabled children and young people.

82. Some witnesses told the Committee that some play workers were confused about when to step in and stop bullying. The Committee was worried about this and asks the Welsh Government to make sure that play workers are trained in a way that makes sure they understand that bullying must be stopped.

83. Rhyl Youth Action Group told the Committee that bullying out of school was a problem for lots of children. The South Wales Police told the Committee that police try to support people who are being bullied outside of school.

84. The Committee understands that not all children and young people will want to be supervised by an adult, but thinks that supervised play should be available in each area for those who want it.

85. Play workers are ideal to supervise play, but other people who work with children could do that too. For example, if park rangers

could be trained to watch out for bullying, children might feel safer in the park and parents would worry less.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government looks into what can be done to reduce bullying outside of schools. The Welsh Government should think particularly about what it can do to help disabled children and young people who are bullied. The Committee also asks the Welsh Government to say when its anti-bullying guidance, which was going to be published in December 2009, will be published.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government gives guidance to local authorities asking them to provide supervised play opportunities for children and young people in various ways. The Welsh Government should also think about how best to train play workers so that they are not confused about when to stop bullying.

Transport

86. Lots of witnesses told the Committee that there was not enough public transport and this was stopping children and young people get to safe places to play and hang out. The cost of using public transport was also a problem for many children and young people.

87. The problems were worse for people living in rural areas and for young people aged over 15 who had to pay full fare.

88. The Welsh Government paid for 16 - 18 year olds in Bridgend and north east Wales to have reduced fares for a while and although it helped the young people in those areas, it cost too much money to do it across all of Wales. The Committee thinks that reducing fares for 16-18 year olds in Wales should be important to for the Welsh Government.

89. Better public transport would benefit lots of people in the community - older people and those living in rural areas in particular. The Welsh Government should give more thought to how public transport can be improved.

90. The committee was told by witnesses that some children were missing out on after school activities because they had to catch their school bus straight after classes had ended.

91. The Committee felt that schools should try to rearrange busses or change the timing of the school day so that all pupils could take part in the activities they wanted to.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government makes reducing fares for 16-18 year olds in Wales a priority to help young people get to leisure activities as well as education and training opportunities.

The Committee recommends that the needs of children and young people should be considered, as well as the needs of others, when thinking about public transport system. If that thinking shows that there are more problems with the system, the Welsh Government should do what it can to solve those problems.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government gives guidance to the local authorities that says pupils are not excluded from extra curricular activities because of difficulties in securing transportation home at the end of the activity.

The needs of children and young people with particular needs

Children living in rural areas

92. Evidence shows that children and young people living in rural areas don't get to see their friends as often as those who live in urban areas. This might be because there are fewer leisure facilities close by and there is not enough public transport to get to safe places to meet friends.

93. There are often no pavements in rural areas so walking to meet friends is difficult too.

94. The Deputy Minister for Children told the Committee that the Welsh Government is looking into how useful mobile play provision is in rural areas. The Welsh Government is also looking in to how it can help people in rural areas get access to other public services. The Committee is pleased to hear that the Welsh Government is doing this and hopes that children and young people will be involved in any decision making.

95. Witnesses also told the Committee that although there are some great activities in rural Wales that tourists enjoy, things like surfing and rock climbing can be too expensive for children and young people to do. Barnardo's suggested that local people could be offered discounted prices for some activities, or local businesses could be encouraged to work with groups of local children to give them a chance to try the sports.

Children with disabilities

96. Witnesses told the Committee that it was important that children with disabilities were able to go to mainstream play opportunities. There were benefits for all the children involved when this happened.

97. Other witnesses told the Committee that disabled children should also be able to go to specialist play opportunities if they wanted to. Some children would benefit from a mix of both specialist and mainstream play opportunities.

98. Some parents were worried that their disabled child would not have enough support at a mainstream play setting. The Children's Commissioner for Wales said that sometimes worried parents might

stop disabled children joining in when that was what they wanted to do.

99. The Committee felt that it was really important that the right level of support was there for each disabled children who wanted to go to mainstream play opportunities. The Committee also felt that support should be offered to parents who needed more confidence to let their children try new things through play.

100. Sometimes, disabled children were not able to go to mainstream play settings because the buildings they were in were not accessible. The law says that public buildings must be made accessible but at the moment, not all public buildings are.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government makes sure that mainstream play settings are accessible to all children and young people, and that specialist play opportunities are available to disabled children who want them. When thinking about the needs of carers of disabled children and young people, support for the carer to feel confident letting the child or young person try new things through play should be considered too.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government takes action to make sure that all new public buildings in Wales are totally accessible. Access to older buildings should be improved where and when possible.

Children and young people living in less well-off households

101. For children and young people living in less well-off households, the cost of accessing play opportunities is really important. Witnesses told the Committee that even an entry fee of 50p a night was too much money for a less well-off family with several children.

102. Barnardo's Cymru told the Committee that prices for local authority run activities varied across Wales. One Mum told the Committee that because her 14 year old son was charged an adult entry fee, she could not afford to take the whole family to the local authority run winter ice-rink. 16 to 18 year olds were offered a student discount at the ice-rink, but there was no such reduction for 14 and 15 year olds.

103. The Welsh Local government Association told the Committee that sometimes, local authorities charged an entry fee to make sure

that the activity is 'not taken advantage of'. The Committee felt that this was unhelpful to families on low incomes.

The Committee recommends that local government pricing policies are changed so that play and leisure opportunities are provided free of charge wherever possible. Where there is a charge, family tickets should be available for different numbers of adults and children in a family.

Gypsy Traveller children

104. Committee member Angela Burns visited some Gypsy Traveller children and young people in Pembrokeshire. The children and young people said that they found it difficult to get to play opportunities because they were often too far away.

105. The girls told the Committee that they were not often able to go out to play because their parents were worried about them going out on their own or with their friends.

106. A report written by Welsh Non-Governmental Organisations in 2007 said that Gypsy Traveller children often face extreme racism and so it is much harder for them to take part in leisure activities.

107. We need to get a better understanding of the needs of Gypsy Traveller children and young people, but it has been widely reported that some of the sites they live on are terrible.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government thinks about the needs of Gypsy Traveller children and young people. Gypsy Traveller children and young people, and their parents, should be involved in decisions about making a play development plan. Planning guidance for Gypsy Traveller sites should make sure that play opportunities are included on each site.

What schools can do to help

108. Witnesses told the committee that schools could provide a safe place to play and hang out at weekends and outside of normal school hours.

109. Some children told the Committee that they would like to use the arts and sports facilities at their school outside of normal school hours. Others said they would not go to school in their free time.

110. Scouts Wales said that they would find the use of a school building or grounds really useful, but that some schools were not willing to let them use them. Other schools were willing, but the cost of heating the whole school so that the Scouts could use a small part of it was too much.

111. Rhosymedre Community Primary School in north Wales told the Committee that they had built a special play area that was really strong. They left the school gates open at all times to let local children use the school field and play area whenever they wanted.

112. The committee understands that not all children and young people will want to go spend time in school during their free time, but for some the buildings and grounds could be a safe place to play and hang out. Using schools in this way might also help children and young people who have problems with public transport.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should review what all maintained schools can do to support safe places to play and hang out. The review should include all the issues that need to be considered if schools are to share facilities wherever possible.

Witnesses

The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the Committee on the dates noted below. Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed in full at <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-other-committees/bus-committees-third-cyp-home.htm>

19 January

Huw Lewis, Deputy Minister for Children Welsh Government

Chris Tweedale, Director -
Children, Young People and
School Effectiveness Group
(CYPSE)

Martin Swain, Head of Children &
Families Programmes Branch
Tanis Cunnick, Head of Youth
Work Strategy Branch

Mike Greenaway, Director Play Wales
Marianne Mannello, Assistant
Director

Keith Towler, Children's
Commissioner for Wales Children's Commissioner for Wales

2 February

Vikki Butler, Senior Research
Policy Officer Barnardo's Cymru

Tim Ruscoe, Development
officer, Assembly Liaison and
Participation

23 February

Melanie Blake, Core
Development Manager Funky Dragon

Jessica Simmonds, Conwy Funky Dragon

Victoria Madden, Merthyr Funky Dragon

Chris Llewelyn, Director of Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Information

Welsh Local Government Association

Naomi Alleyne, Director of Equalities and Social Justice

Huw Jones, Chief Executive

Sports Council for Wales

Anne Hamilton, Head of People and Programme Development

22 March

Shane Owen, Projects Manager

Rhyl Youth Action Group

Val Owen, Project Volunteer

Iwth Pen Youth Club Providers

Mandy Davies, Project Volunteer

Jamie Digwood, Rhyl FC Director of Football

Rhyl Football Club – Football in the Community

Lee Jones, Rhyl FITC community Development Manager

27 April

Catriona Williams, Chief Executive Officer

Children in Wales/End Child Poverty Network

Lynne Hill, Policy Director

11 May

Anthony Metcalf, Team Centre Manager

Fairbridge Cymru

Jonathan Bevan, Regeneration Project Officer

Merthyr Valleys Homes

Alexandra Allan, Liveable
Neighbourhoods Director

Sustrans

Lee Waters, Director for Wales,
Sustrans

Dave Morris, Assistant Chief
Constable for South Wales Police

Police

Martin Peters, Community
Councillor, Langford, Neath
Eugene Dubens, Caerau
Communities First Co-ordinator

PACT

25 May

Alan Hatton-Yeo, Chief Executive
of the Beth Johnson Foundation

Centre for Intergenerational Practice

Pete Duncan, Trainer and
Director of CLADA

Co-train

Barbara Wilding, Wales
Committee Member and Member
of BIG's Healthy Family
Committee

Big Lottery Fund

15 June

Jill Gloster Chief Commissioner
of Wales and senior volunteer
within Wales

Scouts

Simon Brownhill Field
Commissioner for South and
West Wales

Chris Llewelyn, Director of
Lifelong Learning, Leisure and
Information

Welsh Local Government Association

Naomi Alleyne, Director of
Equalities and Social Justice

Huw Lewis, Deputy Minister for Children Welsh Government

Elin Gwynedd, Head of Advocacy Unit

Suzanne Chisholm, Head of Rights and Entitlements Branch

List of written evidence

The following people and organisations provided written evidence to the Committee. All written evidence can be viewed in full at http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-other-committees/bus-committees-third-cyp-home/bus-committees-third-cyp-inquiry/cyp3_-inq-safe_places.htm

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Cllr Mike Whitby BNP		SP 01
Huw Lewis, Deputy Minister for Children	Welsh Government	SP 02 SP 02a AWE02
Mike Greenaway, Director	Play Wales	SP 03 AWE 01
Keith Towler, Children's Commissioner for Wales	Children's Commissioner for Wales	SP 04 AWE 03
Tim Ruscoe, Development officer, Assembly Liaison and Participation	Barnardo's Cymru	SP 05 AWE 13
Dave Morris, Assistant Chief Constable for South Wales Police	Association of Chief Police Officers	SP 06
Heledd James, Acting National Development Manager	Continyou Cymru	SP 07 SP 07a
Michelle Jones, REO	3 Counties Play Infrastructure Project	SP 08

Rhian Cook, Children and Young People's Involvement Worker	Monmouthshire Children and Young People's Partnership	SP 09
Jean Gregson, Partnership Support Officer	Bridgend Children and Young People's Partnership	SP 10
Chris Southern	Recreate, Cardiff and Vale Play Services Association	SP 11
Debbie Green, Policy and Campaigns Officer	National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)	SP 12 SP 12a
Vivienne Laing, Policy & Public Affairs Manager	Action for Children	SP 13
Rob Roffe, Policy Manager	The Big Lottery Fund	SP 14
Naomi Alleyne, Director of Equalities and Social Justice	Welsh Local Government Association	SP 15 AWE 05 AWE 11
Huw Jones, Chief Executive	Sports Council for Wales	SP 16
Melanie Blake, Core Development Manager	Funky Dragon	SP 17
Mike Dessington, Regional Play Development Officer	North East Wales Play	SP 18
Becky Cole, Adventure Play Development Officer	Play Right	SP 19
Caryl Alban, Play Officer	Carmarthenshire Children's Partnership	SP 20

Anthony Metcalf, Team Centre Manager	Fairbridge Cymru	SP 21
Shane Owen, Projects Manager	Rhyl Youth Action Group	SP 22a SP 22b SP 22C AWE 06
Val Owen, Project Volunteer	Iwth Pen Youth Club Providers	SP 23
Mandy Davies, Project Volunteer		
Jamie Digwood - Rhyl FC Director of Football	Rhyl Football Club	SP 24
Sean O'Neill, Policy Director	Children in Wales	SP 25 AWE 12
Professor J R Sibert		SP 26
Jonathan Bevan, Regeneration Project Officer	Merthyr Valley Homes	SP 27
Alexandra Allan, Liveable Neighbourhoods Director	Sustrans	SP 28 AWE 07
Pete Duncan, Trainer and Director of CLADA	Co-train	SP 29
Alan Hatton-Yeo, Chief Executive of the Beth Johnson Foundation	Centre for Intergenerational Practice	SP 30 AWE 08, 08a

Jill Gloster Chief Commissioner of Wales and senior volunteer within Wales	Scouts	SP 31
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing	Welsh Government	AWE 09
Note of Committee Members visits	National Assembly for Wales	AWE 10
Note from Ysgol Ardudwy Harlech		AWE 14