

Policy S4 Play and informal recreation

A Boroughs should:

- 1) prepare Development Plans that are informed by a needs assessment of children and young person's play and informal recreation facilities. Assessments should include an audit of existing play and informal recreation opportunities and the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision. Boroughs should consider the need for cross-borough collaboration where appropriate
- 2) produce strategies on play and informal recreation facilities and opportunities, supported by Development Plan policies, to address identified needs.

B Development proposals for schemes that are likely to be used by children and young people should:

- 1) increase opportunities for play and informal recreation and enable children and young people to be independently mobile
- 2) for residential developments, incorporate good-quality, accessible play provision for all ages. At least 10 square metres of playspace should be provided per child that:
 - a) provides a stimulating environment
 - b) can be accessed safely from the street by children and young people independently
 - c) forms an integral part of the surrounding neighbourhood
 - d) incorporates trees and/or other forms of greenery
 - e) is overlooked to enable passive surveillance
 - f) is not segregated by tenure
- 3) incorporate accessible routes for children and young people to existing play provision, schools and youth centres, within the local area, that enable them to play and move around their local neighbourhood safely and independently
- 4) for large-scale public realm developments, incorporate incidental play space to make the space more playable

- 5) not result in the net loss of play provision, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no ongoing or future demand. Where published, a borough's play and informal recreation strategy should be used to identify ongoing or future demand for play provision.

- 5.4.1 **Safe and stimulating play** is essential for children and young people's mental and physical health. It is not just an activity confined to playgrounds and play areas but is something that can be done in all aspects of a child's life, in a wide variety of locations and environments. Accessing a variety of opportunities for play and being able to be independently mobile within their neighbourhood, is important for children and young people's wellbeing and development. When preparing needs assessments, boroughs should consult with children and young people to ensure their needs are understood in terms of existing and future provision.
- 5.4.2 Many children and young people, however, find that there are limited opportunities for them to play in their local neighbourhood. This is often not because of a lack of formal play provision, but due to restrictive street design and layouts, poor links between spaces for play and recreation, and the threat of busy roads and traffic. Developments should **encourage children and young people to move around freely** through safe streets and footpath networks that connect to more formal play provision, green spaces and parks, and that follow the Healthy Streets Approach.
- 5.4.3 It should be recognised that children play in all sorts of spaces, including playgrounds, playing fields, skate parks and other recreation areas and this should generally be encouraged and taken account of in the design and layout of development. Where **formal play provision** is provided in new developments, it should be free, well-designed, accessible, inclusive and stimulating, and should balance the need to be safe whilst also providing an element of risk, which is important for children's development. It should integrate into the wider network of public open spaces and not be severed from the rest of a neighbourhood by physical barriers such as main roads. Play provision should be overlooked in some way to allow for a level of informal community supervision and generate a sense of safety and security. Integrating natural environments into play provision is encouraged, acknowledging the benefits to learning, and to help to support a green infrastructure network across the city.
- 5.4.4 There should be **appropriate provision for different age groups**, including older children and teenagers. Particular consideration should be given to



consultation with children and young people in the design of new provision to understand their changing needs. The needs of parents and carers should also be considered in the design of these spaces. Appropriate arrangements for management and maintenance of play and communal facilities should be provided. Youth facilities for young people should also be incorporated where possible to ensure that young people have suitable spaces to meet and play and feel welcome and included in developments and the public realm.

- 5.4.5 Formal play provision should normally be made **on-site** and provide at least 10 square metres per child to address child occupancy and play space requirements generated by a development proposal. Supplementary Planning Guidance will provide additional detail on the application of this benchmark and other implementation issues. Where development is to be phased, there should be an early implementation of play space.
- 5.4.6 **Off-site provision**, including the creation of new facilities or improvements to existing provision, secured by an appropriate financial contribution, may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it addresses the needs of the development whilst continuing to meet the needs of existing residents. This is likely to be more appropriate for the provision of play facilities for older children, who can travel further to access it, but should still usually be within 400 metres of the development and be accessible via a safe route from children's homes. Schools, school playing fields and other facilities can also provide an important contribution to play and informal recreation facilities and should be encouraged to allow community access to facilities out of hours.
- 5.4.7 Through the development of **play strategies**, boroughs should ensure the integration of play provision and child-friendly neighbourhoods into other borough strategies. Boroughs are encouraged to collaborate when developing strategies to ensure play spaces are provided in an integrated way and to help create child-friendly neighbourhoods across borough boundaries.

Policy S5 Sports and recreation facilities

- A To ensure there is sufficient supply of good quality sports and recreation facilities, boroughs should:
 - 1) prepare Development Plans informed by a needs assessment for sports and recreation facilities. Needs should be assessed at the local and sub-regional level. Needs assessments should include an audit of existing facilities

