

Year 4 review

Guildford Play Strategy



2016-2021

Our plan to ensure that our playschemes and our play area facilities are of a high standard and are what is needed locally

Play Strategy year 4 review

April 2019-March 2020

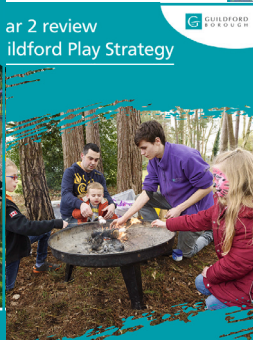
Welcome to the fourth annual review of our Play Strategy 2016-2021

Guildford Borough Council is one of the main local providers of play provision and facilities. We have a play strategy to help us to ensure that our playschemes and our play areas are of a high standard and are what is needed by families who live in Guildford.

We want our children and young people to have the space and freedom to play in Guildford, and would like to see more children playing, more often.

The Guildford Play Strategy launched in 2016. The annual action plan was last reviewed in April 2019. This review provided us with the opportunity to reflect on our progress so far and to develop our goals for year four (2019-20).

The aim of this review is to report on our progress towards the goals we set out in our year four action plan, and to set out our plans for developing children's play in 2020-21.



Read in full our Year 3 review; Guildford Play Strategy 2016-2021
www.guildford.gov.uk/playstrategy



Alternative Formats

If you would like to read this document in a different format such as large print, please contact Leisure Services.



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Our vision for play in Guildford

- our play spaces are attractive, welcoming, challenging and accessible
- our parks and open spaces provide opportunities for a wide range of play
- our communities have a range of spaces for play
- our local communities are safe and have interesting places to play freely
- adults within our communities' welcome children's play
- children, young people and their parents take an active role in the development of local play spaces
- the need to create child friendly communities is understood by the people who design and plan for community spaces

Our play strategy shows that we recognise that play is an extremely important part of a child's development and wellbeing. It is through play that children understand each other and make sense of the world around them.

In our strategy, we have four themes- this is where we group together the important areas of what we are trying to achieve. These themes help us to focus on doing specific things to make playing in Guildford better:

- **Widening accessibility and participation in play** - increasing people's awareness of opportunities to play
- **To advocate for play** - advising adults why children should play
- **Improve children's health and wellbeing through play** - encouraging children to get more active through their play
- **Balancing risk in play** - helping children to measure the risks within their play

The Council has a team who encourage outdoor play, called **Playrangers** and have a holiday playscheme for 10-16 year olds called 'Fun In School Holidays' (**FISH**). We also support an idea called Street Play where residents can plan local road closures to let children play safely and freely in their street. **Street play** helps both children and adults socialise with their neighbours. This is how we ensure there are lots of opportunities for children and young people to hang out with their friends playing games, to be creative, to be adventurous and to make new friends.



Our annual action plan helps us prepare for and show people, what areas of our strategy we are going to focus on, in each year. It highlights key projects we think will help us deliver our themes.

We must replace our play equipment every few years, so we must plan the order in which improvements to the play areas will be done based on need. We have checked all our play areas against a list of key items for that type of play area. This is called a play value assessment and looks at things like access, safety, quality, layout, life expectancy and equipment. This has set our replacement and refurbishment priorities for our 10-year plan.



Read in full, our Play Strategy 2016-2021 www.guildford.gov.uk/playstrategy

Review of year 4

Our progress towards our goals in our year four action plan

Increased awareness of opportunities for play

Research shows that play has many benefits for children, families and the wider community, as well as improving health and quality of life. Yet children have fewer chances and less time for play because of things like; fear of traffic, their parents fears about their safety, busy/working parents, lots of scheduled activities and even other adults getting upset about children playing out. Adults can often forget how important it is for children to be able to play.

We want to ensure that children, parents and other adults in our communities know how important it is for children to have fun and inspiring spaces for play.

- in year 4, the children’s holiday activity pages on our website achieved a 9.3% increase in unique page hits, this means 8,589 local families have found out about activities within our borough, from 41 different organisations
- we attended a variety of community network meetings to speak to, and exchange ideas with other people, about how good play opportunities can make a difference to children and young people
- we attended over a dozen community fetes, open days and events to show parents and children how much fun playing can be, and to tell them more about where they can play locally



Design and deliver play opportunities for all children especially those who are disabled or vulnerable

We continued to provide and improve our play services for all children to access:

- we provided transport for young people who had no other way of getting to our FISH playscheme for a small fee of £1 for each week
- our holiday playscheme, FISH, provided 41 week-long *keyworker places across the 4 weeks of the scheme

* Keyworkers at FISH offer young people access to a mainstream setting where they can freely access play and leisure and make choices for themselves in a supported environment. Parents value this as a significant step forward for many children who usually access specialist provision.



We have worked with, and offered support to other organisations working with families in our communities:

- 16 children whose families serve in our armed forces accessed free places on FISH this year through funding we secured
- we have secured funding for a three-year project to continue our work with armed forces families and used our projects to encourage children from service families to improve their physical health and develop their resilience

Developing and maintaining inspiring places for play

Every child should have access to good play opportunities

- we have delivered an internal service review of our FISH playscheme, which ensures the scheme continues to meet the needs of the community and the Council's priorities
- we have started an extensive review with colleagues from across the Council of our Playranger service, to ensure it remains what is wanted and needed by families to enhance the well-being of children
- we worked alongside local, regional and national play and youth organisations, which enabled the play development team to advise on the delivery of community play schemes, leading to increased play opportunities within the borough

We continued to carry out our 10-year development plan for our play spaces, with current projects in the wards of Holy Trinity and Westborough, once completed, these new play areas will deliver quality provision and opportunities for children to engage in a wide range of stimulating and physically challenging play

- we have completed the design brief, tendered and appointed a designer for both the play area at Foxenden Quarry play space and a new piece of playful artwork for the play area
- funding achieved from developments in the local area, known as S106, was approved for the Foxenden Quarry play area
- we have written the specification and tender documents for a major redesign of our four play areas in Westborough, and have continued to pursue permission to use the land beside Kings College play area, owned by Surrey County Council.
- we commissioned and installed a playful set of timber art pieces within Westnye Play Garden
- we have continued to work with colleagues in legal and planning enforcement to resolve ownership issues at the Briars open space so the play area can be refurbished.
- we have restored the unique helter skelter and large crocodile in Stoke Park play area



Better health outcomes through play

Improved health for children and young people through play is at the heart of what we do. Active play can make unique contributions to children's development, helping them to feel more positive about themselves, socialise better with others, create new and stronger friendship networks and feel more confident and optimistic about their lives.

- we attended thirteen community events to encourage children to spend more time playing in outdoor spaces within their communities
- residents enjoyed 10 street play sessions in five different communities, where their roads were closed to traffic to allow children to play out
- we had 5,947 contacts with children attending our Playranger scheme in local communities, developing their sense of belonging and increasing friendships
- 92% of the 600, week-long places were filled on our FISH playscheme, providing creative, imaginative and fun activities for young people in a supportive culture and affordable childcare for parents



Increased playworker knowledge and skills

Our dedicated playwork team are the essence of our projects and drive the positive benefits children attain in their play. To maintain the skills and knowledge of our staff, we:

- continued to deliver our comprehensive playworker training programme
- supported a member of our Play Development Team to achieve his qualification as a Forest School leader, enabling us to embed sound practice in the provision of our play services

The Council's Play Development Team facilitated a seminar on 'Barriers to Play' at the National Playwork Conference and delivered a speech on 'Frontline Playwork' at the National Playwork Awards. These two opportunities assist in affirming Guildford Borough Council as a leading local authority in play development.



Increased parental understanding

We have continued to highlight directly and indirectly to parents the value of good play provision:

- we developed Impact Reports for the FISH and Playranger schemes, which highlight the difference we made to the children and young people who attended, these are emailed to parents and to other teams we work with
- we delivered a presentation to Parish Councils on our Street Play scheme, to promote the benefits of this idea and to encourage parents in their wards to get involved





Challenges

The end of the strategy year saw the start of the national emergency caused by the coronavirus pandemic. This meant Council staff undertaking different jobs than usual to support residents through the crisis. The impact of this on the strategy was a number of goals not being fully achieved within year 4, and being carried over into year 5 of the strategy.

Looking forward

Our year 5 action plan is on our website.
www.guildford.gov.uk/playstrategy



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