

WELLBEING Planner

INVOLVE | DISCOVER | DEVELOP

Outdoor Physical Activity in Childcare Settings in Bridgend Consultation Report

June 2017

About the Wellbeing Planner

Improving the wellbeing of the people of Wales is at the heart of everything we do at the Wellbeing Planner. Since 2013, we have been working with clients, providing independent advice and creative solutions to their most puzzling questions.

Our work is based on three principles - involvement, discovery and development.

By **involving** the people our clients care about - whether they are the client themselves, their service users or staff; we're able to capture people's lived experience and **discover** what's really going on. We then use those insights to **develop** sustainable and creative solutions to the most pressing of problems.

For more details contact

Dafydd Thomas
Wellbeing Planner
Director

t 07894 917 533
e dafydd @wellbeingplanner.co.uk
w www.wellbeingplanner.co.uk

Cyllidwyd y prosiect hwn drwy Cymunedau Gwledig Llywodraeth Cymru - Rhaglen Datblygu Gwledig Cymru 2014-2020, a ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru a'r Gronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig.

This project has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.



Contents

	Page
Summary	4
The Outdoor Physical Activity in Childcare Project Background	6
Consultation Background	7
Consultation Approach with Staff and Parents in the Settings	9
Consultation Results	12
Consultation Discussion	22
Recommendations	32
References	34
Appendix One - Questionnaire for Childcare Setting Parents	35
Appendix Two - Questionnaire for Childcare Setting Staff	43
Appendix Three - Good practice in encouraging children to be active in the outdoors	53

Summary

This report details a consultation exercise carried out to understand the connections, if any, that exist between local green space in Bridgend with childcare settings and families for outdoor active play and physical activity.

The objective of the consultation exercise was to better understand the effects of a wide range of factors that potentially influence current levels of active play and physical activity in childcare settings throughout Bridgend. These factors had been identified as being dependent on the childcare settings; the engagement of the settings with parents and carers and local green space provision near the childcare settings.

The key objectives of the consultation exercise was to:

1. review frequency and types of active play / physical activity provision in childcare settings in rural Bridgend^[SEP]
2. review what childcare staff feel are the barriers and opportunities to participating in and providing children with opportunities for active play/ physical activity outdoors
3. review current approaches used by childcare settings for engaging with parents and carers and gain an insight into what parents and carers feel are the best approaches for engaging with them about outdoor physical activity
4. gain perceptions of childcare staff and parents and carers about local outdoor physical activity provision^[SEP]

In March 2017 a series of interviews were held with parents and staff at 5 childcare settings across the borough to explore these objectives.

Broadly speaking, the results from the interviews show that the parents who took part in the consultation were unable to be more active outdoors because of lack of information, the weather and the needs of the child. They said they were mostly active in nearby parks, mostly at weekends, and that walking was their routine activity, despite the range of outdoor activities and experiences given to their children within the childcare settings. This finding is echoed by Natural Resources Wales (2015) outdoor recreation survey that walking is the 'dominant' activity in the open spaces across Wales.

According to Public Health Wales (2017), 'children who can walk on their own should be active for three hours every day. All children under the age of five should be active every day.' When the children are at the settings they have the opportunity to be physically active, both indoors and outdoors. But even if a child attends a session every day, is active for every second they are there, for five days a week, their physical activity levels aren't going meet the Public Health Wales guidelines.

As a result, other interventions need to take place outside the childcare settings to keep the children sufficiently active through engaging and motivating parents and carers to change behaviour. Despite the hard work

and good intentions of the settings staff, more needs to be done to get children and their parents connected with local green spaces in Bridgend.

This report proposes the following recommendations:

For Childcare Settings

- Review the procurement processes so that it's easier for staff across Bridgend to procure items and equipment they could use with the children for outdoor play or gardening.
- Provide support to the members of the Childcare Settings Staff to work with peers to share good practice on how to get children active in the outdoors.
- Work with parents and carers to build up their confidence, experience and motivation so that they can discover for themselves the assets they possess and how best they can change their own and their child's behaviour.

Across the Borough

- To train and support members of staff or parents to work with childcare settings to share good practice on how to get children active in the outdoors - this support and training could be provided by the Countryside Volunteering Network¹.
- To explore the feasibility of establishing a Centre of Excellence for engaging children and parents in childcare settings in outdoor activities.
- The independent childcare settings should receive the same amount of support as the childcare settings run by the Council, as this is a Borough wide issue that will need to be addressed and adequately resourced.
- Each setting establishes its own closed Facebook group so that parents have faith in the system not being open to abuse by others.
- Settings staff are given training so that they can use the Facebook system to its maximum potential - such as how best to market their services, including the dos and don'ts of social media and digital technology marketing and attracting users with engaging Facebook content.
- For venues and parks within the borough to work with the childcare settings and other organisations to understand what visitors with young children need and what would encourage them to visit these places more often.
- To develop targeted packages of information for the different audiences across the borough - for example setting staff, parents or new tenants, so that they can be informed about suitable venues and activities in the outdoors in the area. Suggestions include a regular newsletter, information packs for new parents or welcome packs for new tenants.

¹ Page 2 Local Development Strategy Intervention Logic Table
<https://www.bridgendreach.org.uk/resources/toolkits-information-packs/> accessed 20 June 2017

- Steps are taken to further understand people's experiences about being outdoors, whether good or bad in order to identify the factors that influence those choices using a system like SenseMaker.
- A partnership is established to work up interventions that work across institutional silos and service areas in order to contribute to the Wellbeing Goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015).

The Outdoor Physical Activity in Childcare Project Background

This report details a consultation exercise carried out to understand the connections, if any, that exist between green space in Bridgend with childcare settings and families for outdoor active play and physical activity. The reasons for wanting to better understand the quality and depth of that connection were detailed in the original Project Brief²:

- The Child Measurement Programme (Public Health Wales, 2016) has found that in Bridgend 1 in 4 children (25.4%) are overweight or obese by the time they start school (age 4-5 years in 2015-2016).
- Research has shown that over 80% of children who are obese at reception year remain obese in year four.
- Being overweight or obese in childhood has consequences for health in both the short term and the longer term.
- Giving children and toddlers opportunities to play outdoors every day is an evidence-based way to prevent obesity and is part of Public Health Wales' 'Ten Steps to a Healthy Weight' priority areas for action.
- Physical activity is critical to optimal growth and development; the pre-school age is also an important time in the establishment of life-long physical activity and sedentary behaviours.
- Studies have consistently shown that children who spend more time outside engage in higher levels of physical activity than those who spend a lot of time inside.
- A large proportion of children aged under five are enrolled in childcare and childcare is a potentially valuable setting for the promotion of physical activity in this age group and a mechanism for engagement with parents, grandparents and carers.

The objective of the consultation exercise was to better understand the effects of a wide range of factors that potentially influence current levels of active play and physical activity in childcare settings throughout Bridgend. The Project Brief listed the following influencing factors:

- Childcare Settings - such as the leadership within the setting; training opportunities; attitudes of staff and their confidence; attitude of staff to the outdoors; a supportive environment; out door space at the setting; appropriate equipment; regulation and staff perceptions of risk.

² Outdoor Physical Activity in Childcare Project: Research and Consultation Brief Version 2
1/11/2016

- Engagement of childcare settings with parents and carers - such as consideration of parents needs; opportunities for involvement; managing time and the individualisation of the engagement.
- Local Green space provision - such as awareness of what is available; proximity; ease of access; facilities provided; suitability of the group and condition of the provision.

Consultation Background

The key objectives of the consultation exercise was to:

1. review frequency and types of active play / physical activity provision in childcare settings in rural Bridgend^[1]_{SEP}
2. review what childcare staff feel are the barriers and opportunities to participating in and providing children with opportunities for active play/ physical activity outdoors
3. review current approaches used by childcare settings for engaging with parents and carers and gain an insight into what parents and carers feel are the best approaches for engaging with them about outdoor physical activity
4. gain perceptions of childcare staff and parents and carers about local outdoor physical activity provision^[1]_{SEP}
5. recommend services / approaches that will best fit the needs of childcare staff and families.

Consultation Scope

The consultation was made up of three sections. The main focus of the consultation was carried out with the staff and parents in childcare settings around the borough. In January 2017, 10 childcare settings from across the borough were invited to take part in the consultation exercise (see table 1 for details).

Name	Language	Type	Area	Additional information
Cylch Meithrin y Sger	Welsh	Playgroup	Cornelly	Flying Start and Private
Flying Start Sarn	English	Playgroup	Sarn	Flying Start
Flying Start Blackmill	English	Playgroup	Blackmill	Flying Start
CM Sarn	Welsh	Playgroup	Sarn	Flying Start and private
Y Bont	English	Day Care	Bridgend but children travel from all areas	Provision for children with additional needs
Bridgend College	English	Day Care	Bridgend	Private
Wildmill	English	Playgroup	Wildmill	Flying Start and private
Cefnglas	English	Playgroup	Cefnglas	Flying start and private
Fingers & Thumbs	English	Extended playgroup	Coity	Private
Flying Start Betws	English	playgroup	Betws	Flying Start

Table 1 - Childcare Settings that were originally contacted as part of this exercise

Five settings responded to the initial communication and dates were subsequently organised to visit these settings and interview staff and parents present.

A second consultation was held as part of a workshop with 3 members of the Steering Group in February 2017. This focus of this workshop was to unpick some of the organisational assumptions associated with this area of work and explore areas of common interest to be refined further (see table 2). The workshop also helped with planning and delivering the first stage of the consultation exercise in the childcare settings.

People	Places	Processes
Kids not doing enough	Kids spend a significant time in settings	Consulting parents a challenge
Staff not doing enough	Settings work with families	Identify role of settings
Parents not very active or aware or doing enough	Families don't access outdoors. Why? Barriers?	No such thing as bad weather
Can we use pester power	How can we help staff?	Getting messages home is a challenge

Table 2 - Organisational and Individual Assumptions

From this Steering Group workshop, it was agreed that the issues that would be explored as part of this consultation were:

- the barriers that parents, carers and staff face in achieving these long term impacts.
- current attitudes / behaviours of staff, carers and parents in relation to physical activity
- current attitudes / behaviours of staff, carers and parents in relation to going outdoors
- what do they see would encourage change and how?
- the ways in which the settings communicate with parents and
- how effectively the settings and parents / carers communicate with each other

In March 2017 a series of interviews were held with parents and staff at 5 childcare settings across the borough (see table 3 for details).

Most of the children who attend the childcare settings visited were between two and three years of age. These children are normally enrolled with each setting for approximately a year before moving onto a local primary school.

The exception to this approach would be Y Bont, where the age of the children ranged from about 6 weeks to 4 years of age. The length of time which they attend each venue depends on the needs of the child.

Name	No of Staff	No Children	Sessions
Flying Start Sarn	6	34	am and pm
Cylch Meithrin Sarn	7	24	am and pm
Y Bont	6	25	all day
Flying Start Blackmill	5	12	am only
Flying Start Bettws	5	31	am and pm
Total	29	126	

Table 3 - Childcare settings that took place in the consultation exercise

Three playgroups that took part in the consultation were based in Blackmill and Sarn. These areas have the highest proportion of children above a healthy weight in rural Bridgend.

Finally in May 2017, the following individuals were invited to a workshop to discuss the initial findings of the initial consultation exercise. It was of great benefit to this whole exercise to have this group reflect and comment on the interim findings and recommendations of the consultation exercise. Those who attended the workshop were:

- Phil Beaman, Green Spaces Performance and Development Officer
- Mike Catling, Principal Public Health Practitioner, ABM Public Health Team
- Lin Cooper, Healthy Schools Practitioner, ABM Public Health Team
- Jules Davies, Senior Public Health Practitioner, ABM Public Health Team
- Nicola Edwards Awen Trust, Programme and Events Manager
- Sue Evans Rural Development BCBC
- Helen Fletcher, Natural Resources Wales
- Emma Griffiths, Healthy Education Co-ordinator, ABM Public Health Team
- Judith Jones, Partnership Co-ordinator Bridgend PSB
- Kate Parry, Childcare Development Officer, BCBC
- Frances Samuel, Public Health Practitioner, ABM Public Health Team
- Judith Tomlinson, Consultant in Public Health, ABM Public Health Team
- Karen Winch AYPD, BCBC

Their feedback has helped shape the development of this report's discussion and recommendations.

Consultation Approach with Staff and Parents in the Settings

At each childcare setting, one to one interviews were conducted with the setting leadership, members of staff and a number of parents whose children use the facility (see Table 4 for the numbers of individuals that took part in the consultation exercise). In each case, the aims of the project was explained and individuals were asked if they understood what was happening and if they still wanted to take part in the exercise.

	Numbers
Leadership	5
Staff	8
Parents	14
Total	27

Table 4 - Numbers of individuals that took part in the consultation exercise

During each interview, each individual's attitude to the outdoors and physical activity was explored, including the types of activity these individuals normally take part in. They were then asked to name the outdoor activities that take place in each setting that they were aware of. They were also asked how issues are routinely communicated between parents / carers and staff and to identify which they feel are the most effective methods. Finally they were asked about the strength and quality of the relationship between the parents and setting staff (for a copy of the questionnaire see Appendix One and Two).

The questions focused on what worked in each situation and unpicked some of the barriers or challenges people might encounter. Similar questions were asked a number of times to check that the participant understood what was being asked and to see if the answers were consistent.

Each of the conversations was logged, then catagorised. Because a similar answer might have been given to a number of similar questions during each interview, key words were only counted once when compiling the results (see later notes).

In preparing for this consultation exercise, it was clear that there were limited opportunities to engage with many rural childcare settings within the Borough - because the majority of the services are situated along the M4 corridor or around Maesteg according to the Day Nurseries website³. The consultations that took place in this study were at the venues that responded to the invitation based on a list supplied by the BCBC Childcare Development Officer.

Due to a insufficient time, it wasn't possible to recruit other venues, such as individual child-minders, to take part in this consultation exercise.

3

https://www.daynurseries.co.uk/day_nursery_search_results.cfm/searchcounty/Bridgend#map-view

During the consultation, it was clear that some of the members of staff had an interest in this agenda and were enthusiastic about this area of work. Even if they had an interest, it didn't necessarily follow that could be described as 'exemplar settings,' as they might not have sufficient staff, resources or equipment in place.

It also doesn't necessarily follow that the parents and carers who were interviewed as part of the consultation were selected because they had an interest in the topic. More often than not, the parents who took part in the consultation were able to do so because they had the time to take part and were recruited whilst they dropped off or picked up their children.

Consultation Results

The following section contains a number of tag clouds as a way to display the data from the consultation interviews. The size of each tag cloud isn't comparable - but numbers for the words with the highest frequency have been included to help with interpretation.

Questions 1 to 4 of the key objectives of the consultation exercise are presented below with the associated data.

Question 1: to review frequency and types of active play / physical activity provision in childcare settings in rural Bridgend



Figure 1: Types of active play in childcare settings mentioned by staff

Figure 1 shows that Gardening, Walking and Animal Activities (such as bug hunts or leaf picks) were mentioned the most by staff (with a score of 5). Next came Busy Feet (a dance activity), Gimme Five, Climbing, Mud and Running (scoring 4).

The usual day within each setting is a mixture of these activities where the children get the opportunities to walk, run, dance, skip or take part in energetic games. From visiting the venues it is clear that there is also a great deal of light physical movement when staff sing nursery rhymes or count with the children, even though they may do this whilst sitting together on the floor or at the table.



Figure 2: Frequency of going outdoors in childcare settings mentioned by staff

Figure 2 shows that the staff mentioned everyday 9 times in terms of the frequency that they go outdoors. Twice a week and Once a week were mentioned 3 times in comparison.



Figure 3: Types of active play in childcare settings mentioned by parents

From the range of physical activities that staff mentioned as taking place in childcare settings (see Figure 1), the parents only mention bikes (7 times), walking (5 times) and running (4 times) in Figure 3.



Figure 4: Frequency of active play in childcare settings mentioned by parents

Figure 4 shows that the parents mentioned everyday as the frequency that they go outdoors only 4 times. Once a week was mentioned 2 times.

There is a higher frequency of active play and physical activity provision over and above what the parents know or understand of the issue. As a member of staff put it “we make the most of opportunities when they arise and have ad-hoc pancake races or assault courses if appropriate.”

It’s worth noting the difference between figure 1 and 3 as it clearly shows the difference between the range of activities provided by the staff in each setting and the parent's understanding of the activities their children do. The difference between the two figures provides an indication about the effectiveness of the communications between parents and staff.

Question 2: Review what childcare staff feel are the barriers and opportunities to participating in and providing children with opportunities for active play/ physical activity outdoors



Figure 5: What the staff identified as barriers to participating in outdoor activities

Figure 5 shows that the staff identified cost as a barrier to participation in outdoor activities 9 times. This might include the cost of using a minibus just to get off site, even in the middle of the most rural areas. The staff then mentioned weather 8 times; (the interviews took place in March 2017 during a period of changeable weather); ratio 7 times and time 5 times.

The ratio of children to staff needed for when they go off site is one to one - to take account of regulations and manage risk. Some of the children would need 121 supervision because of either their behaviour or because of high levels of traffic between the setting and the destination. Not having the correct ratio of children to staff might stop any members of the group going outdoors altogether.

The staff mentioned that lack of time can also be a barrier. Sometimes trying to clothe 10 to 15 children, getting them to the toilet, out the door and back again within 2.5 to 3 hours isn't possible, particularly during bad weather.

Of particular concern was the feedback from one setting where the staff felt that the children were suffering because of a lack of opportunities to walk with their parents and carers. The staff felt the children were 'walking more like babies than toddlers, because they spend so much time in buggies.'

Question 3: to review current approaches used by childcare settings for engaging with parents and carers and gain an insight into what parents and carers feel are the best approaches for engaging with them about outdoor physical activity

Table 5 lists the range of different approaches used by the childcare settings to inform them of what's happening in the setting.

Routine	Use of Information Technology	Less Formal and personal approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menu Outside • Posters • Message Board • Pigeon Holes • Regular hand outs of notes, leaflets, letters, newsletters and food diaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and pictures circulated by Facebook, Emails, Texts and phone calls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to one discussions with parents on the door • Information coffee mornings with parents • A general open door policy where parents are welcome to visit anytime. • Even examples of sign language and literacy support.

Table 5 - The range of different communication and engagement approaches



Figure 6: What the parents could remember as methods to keep them informed

Figure 6 is a great illustration of what the parents remember about the different methods of communication and engagement used by the settings. Letters has the highest score with 9 mentions. Compare this to the very many ways of communications and engagement methods used by staff listed in Table 5, which don't even get a mention.

Next were the one to one meetings and pigeon holes at 5.

This gives an indication as to the challenges staff face engaging with parents.

Facebook was mentioned a number of times - although the messages were quite mixed. A few settings mentioned the problem of having an open group for the whole of Bridgend, so the parents wouldn't give their consent to have images of their children posted on the system. This in turn made taking pictures of groups of children an additional difficulty, with members of staff having to sort out images as to who had given consent and who hadn't before they could be posted.

Some members of staff said that it took time to administer their Facebook content - for example sorting photographs and uploading material. Another member of staff lamented, "if someone would only occasionally 'like' the pictures we send out, it would [make all our effort] feel a bit more worthwhile."

Engaging and involving the parents was a constant effort - with some mixed results. At one extreme, one member of staff put it, "Say we put something on - we have 23 parents here, and will get 4 responses. That shows how much they respond."

At the other end of the spectrum, a member of staff was pleased to see a parent put their child's sugary drinks in the bin, because the parent knew that the setting staff would confiscate the item once the session started. But even in this example, the fact that the parent had given their child a sugary drink on their way to the morning playgroup (just after breakfast) was an indicator of the constant effort required to engaging with parents about the dos and don'ts of a healthy lifestyle and diet.

Most of the conversations between parents and members of staff were about their child's behaviour during the day; their achievements; what they've eaten; have they slept; who they've played with and future events to get ready for.

Question 4: to gain perceptions of childcare staff and parents and carers about local outdoor physical activity provision^[1]_[SEP]



Figure 7: What members of staff identify as local opportunities

Figure 7 indicates the variety of places mentioned by staff in terms of outdoor opportunities. The beach is mentioned the most and scores 7. With the following beaches discussed during the consultation: Porthcawl, Newton, Rest Bay and Ogmore.

Destinations and parks were mentioned 5 times and included Cardiff Bay, Penyfan and Techniques in the destination category; and Bridgend Rec, Newbridge Fields, Pant yr Awel, Aberkenfig, Cwmfelin and Pontycymer in the park category. Country Parks such as Bryn Menyn and Bryn Garw were mentioned 4 times.



Figure 8: What members of staff identify as barriers to going outdoors

Figure 8 indicates that the weather was the biggest barrier with a score of 7 for staff. Time (5) and Family commitments (4) were the other highest scoring barriers.

Two members of staff said that they hadn't had very positive experiences with sport growing up, but despite that, they wanted to give the children in their care the best chances possible and were prepared to do all they could to get them active and enjoying the outdoors.

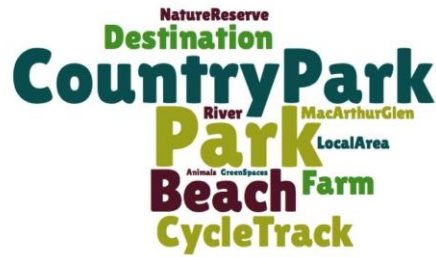


Figure 9: What parents identify as local opportunities

Figure 9 indicates the variety of places mentioned by parents in terms of outdoor opportunities. Parks scored the highest (10); followed by Country Parks (9) and the beach (7).

It's worth noting that more participants admitted going to MacArthur Glen and its soft play area rather than a local green space.



Figure 10: What parents identify as barriers to going outdoors

It was lack of information and the weather that were the biggest barriers to parents with a score of 8. The child's needs and costs followed with a score of 7. This is a contrast to the staff's perceptions of barriers, which focused on weather, time and family.

With regards to children or families needs, some of the parents commented that their children have to spend a lot of time in buggies because they have to get from one place to another in a short period of time due to the absence of public transport or location of local services.

Another example would be parents who have a number of children are unable to attend some venues because the path surfaces were unsuitable for buggies. This meant that it became difficult for the family to visit and make full use of the site.



Figure 11: How parents described the frequency with which they go outdoors

Figure 11 illustrates how the parents felt that they were most active at the weekend, or twice a week (with a score of 4). The score for the other categories (ThreeTimesAWeek, Everyday, FourTimesAWeek all scored 2) have lower scores for more frequent visits to the outdoors.



Figure 12: How parents described the type of outdoors they visit

The dominant activity carried out by the parents is walking (which scored 6 mentions). Going to the part or playing ball in outdoor spaces had 4 mentions each.

Attitudes towards being physically active in the outdoors

In order to present the anecdotal information as part of this consultation exercise, the following framework from the Sports Council has been used to illustrate the differences between staff and parents in order to understand their different attitudes towards being physically active outdoors - see Tables 6, 7 and 8.

Staff	
Motivation	The members of staff who took part in the consultation seemed very motivated and interested in the topic.
Confident	The members of staff were able to give examples of the staff and leadership feeling confident in their knowledge and understanding of the issues.
Awareness	All council staff mentioned the Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme.
Opportunities	Staff very experienced in creating opportunities within the timetable and the syllabus. Often coming with things in an opportunistic or ad-hoc kind of way – such as pancake races or playing with mud.
Experience	From staff telling parents to bring old clothing to schools because they know the children will get muddy, through to using second hand materials creatively with children, the staff demonstrated a breadth of experience on how to be active in the outdoors and how to engage the children on this agenda.

Table 6 - Detail of results for Staff using the Sports Wales 2014 framework

Parents	
Motivation	Although some of the parents were interested, others weren't. There were a number of examples where "parents are fearful" or "lack confidence" to take part in events such as Gimme Five. For example, "at the start of one Gimme Five week, the parents came in and sat down on the chairs to watch their children play / dance. The next day, the staff had removed the chairs so that the parents had to participate in the activity with their child."
Confident	Members of staff gave examples of parents having bus anxieties or having the fear of the unknown, which doesn't demonstrate a great deal of confidence to try a new outdoor activity.
Awareness	Figure 12 demonstrates that most parents think of walking when considering outdoor activities - despite the range of venues and opportunities available within the borough.
Opportunities	Figure 9 lists what parents view as local opportunities for outdoor activity, mostly focusing on access to traditional park spaces.
Experience	Figures 3 and 12 demonstrate a limited range of experience in terms of what is possible outdoors locally. Some of the parents also mentioned how vandalism and the behaviour of

	older children in the parks had put them off taking their children to local green spaces.
--	---

Table 7 - Detail of results for Parents using the Sports Wales 2014 framework

An attempt has been made in Table 8 to summarise and compare the parents and members of staff in terms of their motivation, confidence, awareness, opportunities and experience of outdoor activities.

Framework Component	Staff	Parent
Motivated	Very	Variable
Confident	Very / Mostly	Some extremely low confidence
Awareness	Well informed	Insufficient information
Opportunities	Make the most of the situations but barriers do exist	Stick with what they know in terms of venues and activities
Experience	Breadth of experience and training	Stick with what they know.

Table 8 - Summary of results using the Sports Wales 2014 framework

Some of the members of staff involved in the consultation demonstrated a very positive attitude towards promoting increased physical activity in outdoor spaces. Some members of staff showed very little interest in the topic, but remained well informed; aware of local opportunities; had a range of suitable experiences; were motivated by wanting to do the best for the children in their care and were confident in their skills and ability to deliver.

As an example, two members of staff admitted to hating sports in school, but openly acknowledged that they needed to give the children in their care a positive and rewarding experience when it came to being active or being outdoors. They were extremely well motivated, well informed, experienced in the sector and delivering a range of engaging and interesting opportunities for the children in their care.

Complexity

The consultation exercise uncovered a number of examples of the complex connections that exist between individual experience and subsequent behaviour. These include:

- The lack of confidence that some parents have in physical activity or going outdoors and how that doesn't motivate them to engage activities such as the Gimme Five programme in the childcare setting.
- How older children's antisocial behaviour within communities can impact upon parents with younger children who are put off visiting or using local green spaces.
- The impact of antisocial behaviour by community members where equipment left out overnight can be either stolen or broken beyond repair.

This then influences how the childcare staff equip their settings, which in turn has a direct impact on the kind of opportunities children have in those settings.

Consultation Discussion

Broadly speaking, the results from the interviews show that the parents who took part in the consultation were unable to be more active outdoors because of lack of information, the weather and the needs of the child. They said they were mostly active in nearby parks, mostly at weekends, and that walking was their routine activity, despite the range of outdoor activities and experiences given to their children within the childcare settings. This finding is echoed by Natural Resources Wales (2015) outdoor recreation survey that walking is the 'dominant' activity in the open spaces across Wales.

According to Public Health Wales (2017), 'children who can walk on their own should be active for three hours every day. All children under the age of five should be active every day.' When the children are at the settings they have the opportunity to be physically active, both indoors and outdoors. But even if a child attends a session every day, is active for every second they are there, for five days a week, their physical activity levels aren't going meet the Public Health Wales guidelines.

As a result, other interventions need to take place outside the childcare settings to keep the children sufficiently active through engaging and motivating parents and carers to change behaviour. Despite the hard work and good intentions of the settings staff, more needs to be done to get children and their parents connected with local green spaces in Bridgend.

The following headings provide some detailed discussion of points raised during the consultation and how they might be taken forward as recommendations.

At the level of the Childcare Settings

Procurement Changes

Members of staff in a couple of the settings were frustrated with the difficulties they experienced in trying to buy materials and equipment that could be used with the children for either gardening or other outdoor activities. These individuals were then having to source materials through other means, which took time.

Its worth mentioning that these people persisted in trying to find materials, where other less motivated members of staff in childcare settings across Bridgend might not have put as much effort in. In other words, if its a 'hard to do' for members of staff who are motivated, then staff who are less motivated who are faced with such an obstacle are less likely to persist in obtaining the necessary equipment.

It is recommended that the procurement processes in childcare settings be reviewed, so that it's easier for staff across Bridgend to procure items and equipment they could use with the children for outdoor play or gardening.

It might be possible for other service areas within Bridgend County Borough Council to procure the equipment - rather than the Childcare Setting staff directly.

Another suggestion would be to explore ways of recycling or reusing old gardening equipment for use within Childcare Settings within the county. The risk of this final option is that it will take time and effort by someone to organise and implement.

Swapping the morning and afternoon sessions

Feedback from staff in the settings was that the children who attend the afternoon sessions after a morning with their parents were significantly harder to work with, when compared with the children who had come straight from home to the childcare setting in the morning.

Different explanations were given for this change in behavior by staff at the childcare settings - including diet; the children not being properly or constructively occupied at home; or parents not being sure of how to keep their children occupied.

A suggestion from this consultation has been to explore the option of changing the times that parents take their children to sessions in the settings. In other words, every week, month or term, the children who attend the morning session are moved into the afternoon session for a period of time and visa versa.

The major risk to this approach lies in putting undue pressure on the families where parents have childcare arrangements that dovetail with what the setting provides (for example involving other members of the family) or work commitments. This pressure on the families could cause further problems to those individuals involved.

Nonetheless, it's worth noting that there is a difference in behaviours between the morning and afternoon groups. This difference lends weight to the argument that parents need to be given sufficient skills, support and information on keeping their children occupied whilst at home or in their care. If support to parents were provided, the child would be better placed to learn and listen when they attend the afternoon session.

Support the Childcare Settings Staff

What is clear from this consultation exercise is that there are a number of staff members within the different childcare settings across Bridgend County Borough who have a great deal of expertise and experience on this agenda. Through their actions and decisions, they are able to excite and interest children and some of the parents about being active in the outdoors.

It has been possible to collate all the activities described by staff and settings leadership into a list of Good Practice on encouraging children to be active in the outdoors. For more information, go to Appendix Three.

It is also very clear that many of the individuals interviewed have responded very well to the Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme training made available by Bridgend County Borough Council.

It is reasonable to assume that most of the individuals who answered the call to take part in this consultation exercise were possibly more personally interested and motivated in this subject area than other colleagues across the county. There were examples during the consultation where these individuals discussed how they brought their personal interest into their professional practice. That said, those members of staff who weren't as interested were still able to discuss what was needed to be done with the children as they went about their work in the childcare settings.

If it is reasonable to assume that most of the individuals who took part in this consultation were interested in this agenda, then its likely there is a cohort of staff within Bridgend County Borough Council who don't feel as confident or motivated when it comes to encouraging children to be physically active or to go outdoors and explore, despite the support and encouragement of the council - although it isn't possible to put a figure on the size of this group.

Finally, a third cohort of staff exists who work with children and parents in Childcare Settings across the County who don't have access to as much support and training. These independent childcare settings, such as Y Bont and Cylch Meithrin Sarn, don't have the same levels of support as the other settings and would benefit from the opportunities to learn as well as share their expertise and understanding with their council colleagues. Again, it isn't possible to put a figure on the size of this group at this point in time.

It is therefore recommended that support be provided to the members of the Childcare Settings Staff to work with peers to share good practice on how to get children active in the outdoors. This might include sharing information about activities that could be done with children and parents; the materials used, how barriers might be overcome and which local venues they regularly access and why.

How the members of staff who need encouragement might best access the information from their peers; and how the ask the staff members who are able to provide the support find the time to do so, needs to be explored with those involved by asking them what would work best. One such opportunity for this might take place might be the Closure Days, organised by Bridgend County Borough Council for Childcare Settings Staff. Another might be a course or secondment to a Centre of Excellence linking childcare settings with use of the outdoors for physical activity (see later notes).

The Parent's Confidence, Experience and Motivation

Sports Wales 2014 identifies individual confidence, motivation and the experience as being key drivers when trying to encourage individuals to be more physically active in sports or the outdoors. From the consultation it is clear that work needs to be done with the parents and carers to build up their confidence, improve the experience and increase their motivation so that they can discover for themselves the assets they possess personally and locally; and how best they can change their own and their child's behaviour as a result.

That this type of approach is required is evidenced in this consultation by:

- the difference in morning and afternoon groups at childcare settings that might be caused by parents being unsure of how to keeping their children occupied and active whilst at home;
- that the parents who took part in the consultation had limited information and awareness of the kinds of opportunities that exist locally; and
- are reluctant to take part in the events like Gimme Five in the childcare settings.

According to Natural Resources Wales, The Come Outside! model was successful in supporting people from disadvantaged communities to take part in a range of memorable outdoor activities through the use of community development principles facilitating collaboration amongst existing community groups, organisations and outdoor activity providers. ^[1]_[SEP]The Come Outside! project evaluation found that motivating people to make substantial changes to their habits and lifestyles took much longer than was originally anticipated, and required considerable support and resource. It also found that those who have the most to gain from outdoor activity could be reached through a number of organisations working together - such as childcare settings and the local health visitors in this instance.

The Local Development Strategy⁴, Theme 1: Adding Value to Local Identity and Natural and Cultural Resources, Strategic Objective 1.3, mentions an integrated community development approach to contribute to rural Bridgend's 'sense of place.' Exploring this sense of place with parents and carers, might be a way to increase their individual confidence and motivation; and also understand what influences and gives meaning to their behaviour as parents in a particular rural community. Actions listed in the Local Development Strategy such as forestry skills, mapping forests or developing woodland trails could provide opportunities for parents to get physically active. If these parents were to get involved in this kind of activity, it could also provide a direct link between the environment and the childcare setting - with the parent as the conduit.

Issues for across the Borough

More Human Resources

⁴ Intervention Logic Table Page 2 <https://www.bridgendreach.org.uk/resources/toolkits-information-packs/> accessed 20 June 2017

As recommended earlier in this paper, support should be provided to the members of the Childcare Settings Staff to work with peers to share good practice on how to get children active in the outdoors.

In addition, the ratio of staff to children is a challenge that childcare settings face when they plan an outdoor activity. Having more support from suitably trained individuals during an outdoor excursion could help counter concerns regarding health and safety or child behaviour and a lack of staff confidence in getting children outdoors. More pairs of hands would also be a big help in getting the children ready to go outdoors in the first place - as time in a three hour session can disappear when dressing a large number of toddlers.

A recommendation is that suitably trained individuals are made available to pursue this agenda across the county. These individuals could be either:

- suitably trained parents who could work or volunteer within their own childcare setting supported by a volunteer coordinator - this would be a way to get parents involved; or
- suitably trained individuals working across the county and visiting each setting in turn - this could be a way to ensure that skills aren't lost to the project once the parent's child has left the setting and they stop volunteering.

According to the Local Development Strategy⁵, Theme 1: Adding Value to Local Identity and Natural and Cultural Resources, Strategic Objective 1.4 mentions working with volunteers to strengthen the benefits between the area's natural assets and community wellbeing. Providing suitably trained volunteers to support childcare settings on how they can get children active in the outdoors might be something that could be done via the Countryside Volunteering Network mentioned in the Strategy. If the Network is unable to provide individual support, then other approaches could include developing a training syllabus or delivering a training course for settings staff.

A Centre of Excellence

In preparing for this consultation exercise, it was clear that there were limited opportunities to engage with truly rural childcare settings - because the majority of such services are situated along the M4 corridor or around Maesteg⁶. One childcare setting that took part in the consultation exercise worked half a day in Blackmill and the remainder in Lewistown - partly due to local levels of demand for the service in both areas and partly due to the challenges the parents faced accessing services in a rural area with limited transport options.

There were very few playgroups or day care facilities at the upper end of Ogmore Vale or the Garw Valley.

⁵ Intervention Logic Table Page 2 <https://www.bridgendreach.org.uk/resources/toolkits-information-packs/> accessed 20 June 2017

⁶

https://www.daynurseries.co.uk/day_nursery_search_results.cfm/searchcounty/Bridgend#map-view

A recommendation from this report is to explore the feasibility of establishing a Centre of Excellence for engaging children and parents in childcare settings in outdoor activities in one of these areas. Such a place could be part funded by delivering childcare services for parents in the north of the County Borough - where such services are currently lacking. Another income stream might be accessed by developing the setting as a training centre - initially for childcare staff from across the borough; then growing to link with students studying at Bridgend College⁷; maybe even draw potential users from other neighbouring counties.

This Centre could be a place where the local country park operators from across the Borough get a better understanding of what parents and children need in order to access their venues and make full use of their resources. It might also be a hub for the Countryside Volunteer Network.

The Centre would aim to work closely with parents to try and understand their perceptions of the environment as a resource for physical activity. These insights would then be available to those who are trained at the Centre and beyond.

A proposal of this kind would link with:

- the Local Development Strategy's⁸ Theme 3: Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local resources, Strategic Objective 1.2 "developing rural services that explore new ways of developing sustainable rural services and strengthening the rural economy."
- the Local Development Strategy, Theme 1: Adding Value to Local Identity and Natural and Cultural Resources, Strategic Objective 1.4 to add value to local natural resources by understanding how childcare settings can be used to increase use and awareness of local green space opportunities in rural Bridgend.
- the Local Development Strategy's Theme 3: Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local resources, Strategic Objective 3.1 "piloting innovative interventions for community based learning."

Support Independents

As mentioned earlier in this paper, there will be staff who work with children and parents in settings across the County who don't have easy access to information on this agenda because they work within independent settings, such as Y Bont and Cylch Meithrin Sarn.

It is recommended that these independent childcare settings receive the same amount of support as the childcare settings run by the Council, as this is a Borough wide issue that will need to be addressed and adequately resourced. As noted in The Healthy Child Wales Programme, NHS Wales,

⁷ <https://www1.bridgend.ac.uk/our-courses/full-time-courses-2/care-childhood-studies/>

⁸ Intervention Logic Table Page 6 <https://www.bridgendreach.org.uk/resources/toolkits-information-packs/> accessed 20 June 2017

2016 "the emerging evidence shows that investment in the early years of life has significant positive impact on a child's health, social and educational development and their long term outcomes." Failure to work together at this early age might require further investment by Council educational and social services in the future, as these children may grow up to be more dependent on public sector services for their health and wellbeing.

Facebook

Facebook was routinely identified as a means that parents and staff were able to communicate with each other. Examples were given about the settings using Facebook to inform parents about what was planned for a particular week, such as Gimme Five, or as a means to illustrate the achievements or activities of each child in the setting's care - such as meeting members of the Welsh Rugby Team in Y Bont. Facebook wasn't something that was ever used to discuss the details of an individual child - that was done using other means mentioned earlier (see page 14).

The experience of staff using Facebook was rather more mixed and they felt didn't make the most of a system that the majority of the parents said they used regularly. Some of the problems identified by staff included:

- the time it took to download photographs;
- the lack of time in the day that staff had to usefully administer the system;
- the lack of 'likes' by parents;
- the lack of any incentives the settings had to engage and motivate parents; and
- many parents hadn't given their consent for pictures of their child to be shared in an open, Bridgend wide open group

It is recommended that each setting is able to establish its own closed Facebook group so that parents have faith in the system not being open to abuse by others.

It is recommended that settings staff are given training so that they can use the Facebook system to its maximum potential - such as how best to market their services, including the dos and don'ts of social media marketing and attracting users with engaging Facebook content.

This type of activity could either be done exclusively for settings staff, or with other individuals from different sectors - with the added potential of a cross pollination of ideas and identifying new potential markets in a mixed group of trainees. This meets the requirements of Theme 5 of the Local Development Strategy, Strategic Objective 3.4 "to increase the use of digital technology among rural businesses and communities to maximise productivity, sales and marketing profile."

Venues Engaging Parents with Small Children

Parks scored highest in the discussion with parents - this included places like Bridgend Rec, Pant yr Awel, Ynysawdre, Penyfai and Pontycymer. The next item on the list were the country parks such as Brynmenyn and Bryn Garw.

The barriers to using these outdoor spaces more often was a lack of information, problems with the weather, high costs and transport (a particular challenge for parents who live in the rural parts of the county with limited public transport opportunities). In addition, when parents spoke about using these venues, they gave examples of not being able to make full use of some venues because of:

- the materials used to surface the paths;
- the lack of mini destinations within each venue that encouraged children along (compared to the centralising facilities in one area); and
- not being sufficiently confident or knowledgeable to engage with the venues about their needs and interests.

These insights are echoed by the Active Healthy Kids Wales Report Card 2016 which noted that 'more places to play' was the highest priority for children aged 3 - 7 years. The paper refers to perceptions of safety, access, and availability of facilities and spaces that provide opportunities for physical activity and reduced sedentary time of children and parents. The report references Sallis and Glanz (2006) and the relationship between the built environment and levels of physical activity.

It is recommended that the different venues and parks within the Borough work with the childcare settings and other organisations to understand what visitors with young children need and what would encourage them to visit these places more often. The Centre of Excellence could facilitate this process.

More information

A great deal of information exists on the topic of finding ways to get young children physically active⁹. Equally a lot of information is available to find out about local parks and suitable venues. Yet, from the consultation it is clear that some of the participants don't or are unable to access these sources of information.

It is recommended that the different approaches are used to inform different audiences about what is available and where. Suggestions include a regular newsletter, information packs for new parents or welcome packs for new tenants.

Unpicking the complexity and working in partnership

As mentioned previously, the consultation managed to uncover a number of seemingly unrelated factors that exist between an individual's experiences of

⁹ <https://www.scope.org.uk/support/families/play/games>

10 steps to a healthy weight Public Health Wales

<http://www.ssehsactive.org.uk/userfiles/Documents/parentleafletoddlers.pdf>

the outdoors whether as a parent, child or member of staff. These experiences then played a significant role in determining whether these individuals would use a particular venue again or go outdoors at all.

The Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) model of the wider determinants of health (see figure 13) illustrates how the social, economic, and physical environments interact with individual factors and behaviors to shape healthy choices.

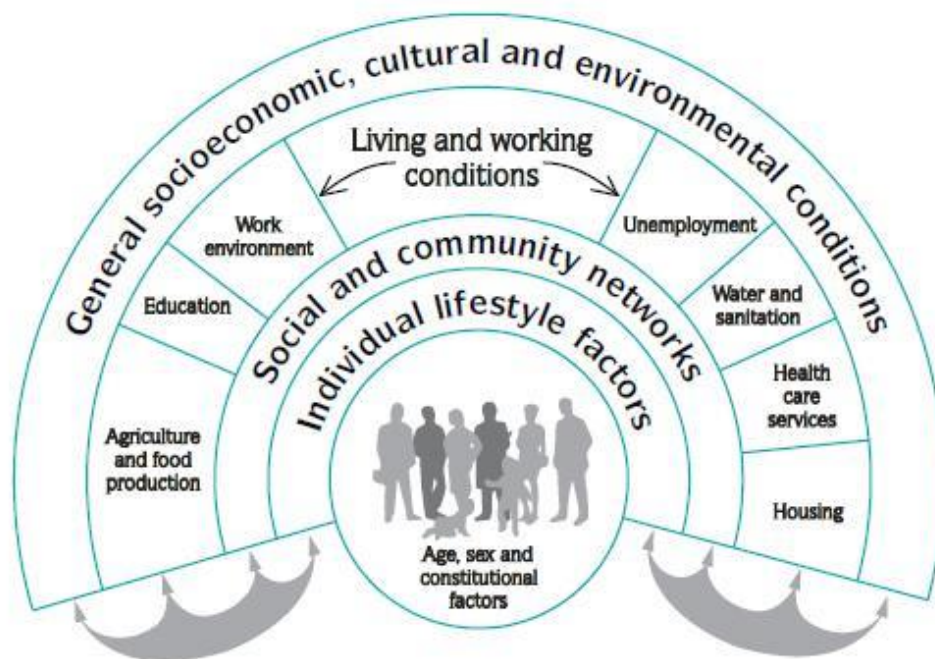


Figure 13: The Dahlgren and Whitehead model

Looking at the diagram its possible to see that antisocial behaviour within a particular community can impact on living and 'playing' conditions, which in turn have an impact on how people view and make use of the local environment. It is clear from the discussions with some of the parents and staff that antisocial behaviour, vandalism or older children intimidating parents will stop people from going to local parks or going outside.

In addition, antisocial behaviour like vandalism or theft in this context can have an impact on what staff do within the setting to promote physical activity outdoors in terms of the equipment they buy or activities the play group does during the day.

Not taking the complex nature of these relationships into account can mean that understanding what works and why can be at best challenging and at worst misleading. Kurtz and Snowden 2003 describe the three basic assumptions that 'pervade the ... theory of decision-making and policy formulation'. They are:

- i. The assumption of order: that there are underlying relationships between cause and effect in human interactions. They imply that the causal links in past behaviour allow us to define best practice for future behaviour.
- ii. The assumption of rational choice: that faced with a choice between alternatives, humans will make a rational decision. In this way their behaviour can be managed.
- iii. The assumption of intentional capability: We assume that things are logical and people do the things they do deliberately.

Snowdon 2004 recognises that as a result, policy makers and programme managers have a tendency to look for best practice solutions and imitate them and give up too early when exploring for other solutions to difficult or complex problems.

In order to understand to better understand complex change, Snowdon and Cognitive Edge have developed a narrative-based research methodology that enables the capture and analysis of a large quantity of stories in order to understand complex change called SenseMaker. It is a form of meta analysis of qualitative data that bridges a gap between case studies and large-sample survey data.

The methodology involves collecting large numbers of short stories that, together, create a nuanced picture of a given topic, in the same way that many pixels come together to produce a clear image. The methodology often involves using community and staff members and to collect the information in a way that is involving and engaging in itself.

The SenseMaker process starts with a story prompt. The open-ended nature of the prompt allows storytellers to share stories of their own choosing and enables researchers to collect narratives on the same topic from a variety of perspectives. Each respondent also gives his or her story a unique title. Following this, respondents convey the meaning of their stories through completing a series of analytical questions called the 'signification framework'.

The signification framework is a set of questions based on predefined topics of interest for investigation that allows the storyteller to analyse his or her own story. Patterns and linkages later emerge during the analytical process, making sense of the diverse and complex stories being shared.

It is recommended that efforts be made to further understand people's experiences about being outdoors, whether good or bad in order to identify the factors that influence those choices. Suggested topic could be asking why families perceive the outdoor environment to have a lack of facilities for physical activity. Or working with young people to capture information on what they see as the limitations for being physically active and engaged with others within their communities.

This approach fits neatly with the Local Development Strategy¹⁰, Theme 1: Adding Value to Local Identity and Natural and Cultural Resources, Strategic Objective 1.3. It states that an integrated community development approach would be used to contribute to rural Bridgend's 'sense of place' and lists interventions aimed at engaging with young people such as forestry skills or developing woodland trails.

From the Wellbeing Planner's firsthand experience, insights collected using the SenseMaker system would help identify emergent patterns and linkages that inform future interventions. Again from the Wellbeing Planner's experience, these insights would also indicate if the interventions currently being planned or delivered, such as teaching young people forestry skills, were effective and why.

It is also recommended that a partnership or network be established to work up interventions that work across institutional silos and service areas and help the communities across the borough connect with local green spaces and increase physical activity rates.

The SenseMaker and establishing a partnership would to the local Public Service Boards efforts to meet the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) and meet their Wellbeing Goals by doing something preventative; that involves communities and organisations; facilitates collaboration; all in an integrated way.

¹⁰ Page 2 <https://www.bridgendreach.org.uk/resources/toolkits-information-packs/> accessed 20 June 2017

Recommendations

As required by the Local Development Strategy priority interventions, Theme 3: Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local resources, Strategic Objective 1.2, this report has a number of new recommendations and approaches to embed outdoor physical activity into service provision in childcare settings. They are as follows:

For Childcare Settings

- Review the procurement processes so that it's easier for staff across Bridgend to procure items and equipment they could use with the children for outdoor play or gardening.
- Provide support to the members of the Childcare Settings Staff to work with peers to share good practice on how to get children active in the outdoors.
- Work with parents and carers to build up their confidence, experience and motivation so that they can discover for themselves the assets they possess and how best they can change their own and their child's behaviour.

Across the Borough

- To train and support members of staff or parents to work with childcare settings to share good practice on how to get children active in the outdoors - this support and training could be provided by the Countryside Volunteering Network ¹¹.
- To explore the feasibility of establishing a Centre of Excellence for engaging children and parents in childcare settings in outdoor activities.
- The independent childcare settings should receive the same amount of support as the childcare settings run by the Council, as this is a Borough wide issue that will need to be addressed and adequately resourced.
- Each setting establishes its own closed Facebook group so that parents have faith in the system not being open to abuse by others.
- Settings staff are given training so that they can use the Facebook system to its maximum potential - such as how best to market their services, including the dos and don'ts of social media and digital technology marketing and attracting users with engaging Facebook content.
- For venues and parks within the borough to work with the childcare settings and other organisations to understand what visitors with young children need and what would encourage them to visit these places more often.
- To develop targeted packages of information for the different audiences across the borough - for example setting staff, parents or new tenants, so that they can be informed about suitable venues and activities in the

¹¹ Page 2 Local Development Strategy Intervention Logic Table
<https://www.bridgendreach.org.uk/resources/toolkits-information-packs/> accessed 20 June 2017

outdoors in the area. Suggestions include a regular newsletter, information packs for new parents or welcome packs for new tenants.

- Steps are taken to further understand people's experiences about being outdoors, whether good or bad in order to identify the factors that influence those choices using a system like SenseMaker.
- A partnership is established to work up interventions that work across institutional silos and service areas in order to contribute to the Wellbeing Goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015).

References

Active Healthy Kids Wales Report Card (2016), Is Wales Turning the Tide on Children's Inactivity?

Dahlgren G, Whitehead M. (1991), Policies and Strategies to Promote Social Equity in Health. Stockholm, Sweden: Institute for Futures Studies.

Kurtz C.F. and Snowden D. J. (2003), The new dynamics of strategy: Sense-making in a complex and complicated world IBM Systems Journal.

Natural Resources Wales (March 2016), Come Outside! Final Evaluation Report, Executive Summary.

Natural Resources Wales (July 2015), Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014: Final Report.

Public Health Wales (May 2017)
<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/84915>

Sallis, J.F., Glanz, R (2006) The role of Built Environments in PA, Eating and Obesity in childhood, [electronic] vol. 16, no. 1, Available at:
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ795891.pdf>

Snowden, D.J. (2004) "Facilitating innovation within the organisation" in Finance & Management, Sept. 2004: 5 to 7

Sports Wales (2014), Active Adults Survey 2014, State of the Nation.

Welsh Government (May 2015), Department for Natural Resources, The Essentials, Guidance on the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Appendix One - Questionnaire for Childcare Setting Parents

Date

Icebreaker:

Can you tell me about the last time you had a really enjoyable outdoor experience? When was it? What were you doing? What happened? Why did you enjoy it?

Q1:

I'm really interested in understanding the kinds of things you personally do outdoors. Can you tell me about an outdoor visit in the last 12 months?

Prompts

What did you do? Types of physical activity?

Why did you do it?

Anyone with you?

For how long were you outdoors?

Where were you outdoors? Issues of access, location, availability?

Did you get out of breath or hot and sweaty?

Can you think of any costs linked to this outdoor experience? Is it a lot or a little?

Q2:

Can you tell me about an outdoor visit in the last 4 weeks?

Prompts

What did you do? Types of physical activity?

Why did you do it?

Anyone with you?

For how long were you outdoors?

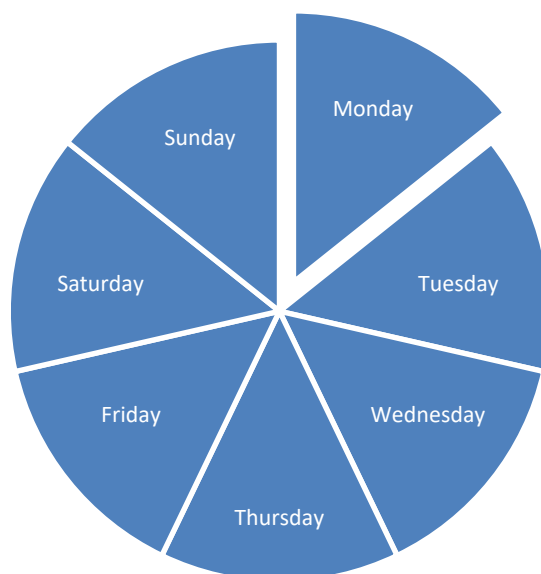
Where were you outdoors? Issues of access, location, availability?

Did you get out of breath or hot and sweaty?

Can you think of any costs linked to this outdoor experience? Is it a lot or a little?

Q3:

Can you tell me about the opportunities you personally get to go outdoors during an average week? When is it and what kinds of things do you do? Do you take the children with you? What do they do?



Q4:

Can you describe the types of places you go regularly when you think about going outdoors?

Please give me a name and a small description of each so that I'd be able to visit it.

Q5:

If you haven't been outdoors, can you give me any reasons? (Remember timescale)

Prompts

Time?

Health?

Responsibilities?

Weather?

Outlook?

Costs?

Q6:

Is there any kind of outdoor activity you would like to do more of?

Q7:

Is there anything that has stopped you from taking part in these activities?
(Remember timescale)

Q8:

Is there any kind of places you would like to go to more often?

Q9:

Can you tell me about an outdoor visit the playgroup or other have done recently? How do you know?

Prompts

What did they do? Types of physical activity?

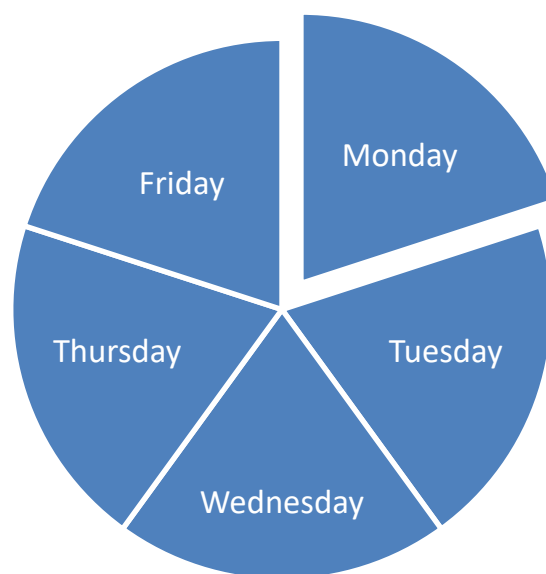
For how long were they outdoors?

Where were they outdoors? Issues of access, location, availability?

Can you think of any costs linked to this outdoor experience? Is it a lot or a little?

Q10:

Can you tell me about the opportunities as a playgroup or other get to go outdoors during an average week? When is it and what kinds of things do they do? How do you know?



Q11:

Can you describe the types of places they regularly go?

Could you please give me a name and a small description of each so that I'd be able to visit it.

Q12:

If the playgroup (or other) hasn't been outdoors in any of the above questions, can you think why? (Remember timescale)

Prompts

Time?

Health?

Responsibilities?

Weather?

Outlook?

Costs?

Q13:

Is there any kind of activity you would like your child to do more of?

Q14:

Is there anything that has stopped your child taking part in these activities? (Remember timescale)

Q15:

Are there any kind of places you would like to go to more often?

Q16:

What kind of equipment do you know about that is provided within the playgroup that helps keep the children physically active?

Prompts

Equipment or landscaping
local provision of off site venues
accessibility of places off site?

Q17:

How would you describe the playgroup or other's relationship with the mums / dads / parents / carers?

Q18:

How do you know what's going on in the playgroup (or other)?

Prompts

What works well?
Why?
What doesn't work quite so well?
Why?

Q19:

Does the playgroup (or other) use social media such as Facebook / Twitter / other?

Q20:

What kind of conversations or discussions do you have with the childcare setting staff?

Q21:

Any events coming up about some of the issues we've discussed today that you use to get parents and children involved?

Q22:

Anything you'd like to add or further comment on?

Impressions from interview not to be shared?

Appendix Two - Questionnaire for Childcare Setting Parents

Date

Icebreaker:

Can you tell me about the last time you had a really enjoyable outdoor experience? When was it? What were you doing? What happened? Why did you enjoy it?

Q1:

I'm really interested in understanding the kinds of things you personally do outdoors. Can you tell me about an outdoor visit in the last 12 months?

Prompts

What did you do? Types of physical activity?

Why did you do it?

Anyone with you?

For how long were you outdoors?

Where were you outdoors? Issues of access, location, availability?

Did you get out of breath or hot and sweaty?

Can you think of any costs linked to this outdoor experience? Is it a lot or a little?

Q2:

Can you tell me about an outdoor visit in the last 4 weeks?

Prompts

What did you do? Types of physical activity?

Why did you do it?

Anyone with you?

For how long were you outdoors?

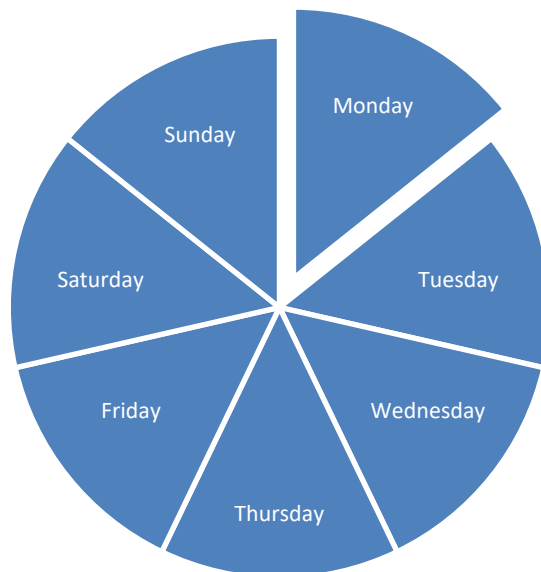
Where were you outdoors? Issues of access, location, availability?

Did you get out of breath or hot and sweaty?

Can you think of any costs linked to this outdoor experience? Is it a lot or a little?

Q3:

Can you tell me about the opportunities you personally get to go outdoors during an average week? When is it and what kinds of things do you do?



Q4:

Do you own a dog or have children yourself?

Q5:

Can you describe the types of places you go regularly when you think about going outdoors?

Please give me a name and a small description of each so that I'd be able to visit it.

Q6:

If you haven't been outdoors, can you give me any reasons? (Remember timescale)

Prompts

Time?

Health?

Responsibilities?

Weather?

Outlook?

Costs?

Q7:

Is there any kind of outdoor activity you would like to do / do more of?

Q8:

Is there anything that has stopped you from taking part in these activities?
(Remember timescale)

Q9:

Is there any kind of places you would like to go to more often?

Q10:

I'm really interested in understanding the kinds of activities you undertake as a playgroup (or other) during your outdoor visits. Can you tell me about an outdoor visit in the last 12 months?

Prompts

What did you do? Types of physical activity?

Why did you do it?

Anyone with you?

For how long were you outdoors?

Where were you outdoors? Issues of access, location, availability?

Did you get out of breath or hot and sweaty?

Can you think of any costs linked to this outdoor experience? Is it a lot or a little?

Q11:

Can you tell me about an outdoor visit in the last 4 weeks as a playgroup or other?

Prompts

What did you do? Types of physical activity?

Why did you do it?

Anyone with you?

For how long were you outdoors?

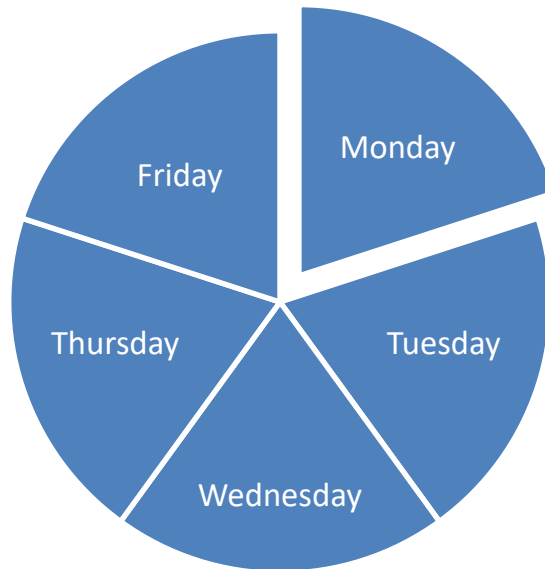
Where were you outdoors? Issues of access, location, availability?

Did you get out of breath or hot and sweaty?

Can you think of any costs linked to this outdoor experience? Is it a lot or a little?

Q12:

Can you tell me about the opportunities you get as a playgroup (or other) to go outdoors during an average week? When is it and what kinds of things do you do?



Q13:

Can you describe the outdoor places you go to regularly with the children from the playgroup (or other)?

Please give me a name and a small description of each so that I'd be able to visit it.

Q14:

If the playgroup (or other) hasn't been outdoors, can you give me the reasons why? (Remember timescale)

Prompts

Time?

Health?

Responsibilities?

Weather?
Outlook?
Costs?

Q15:

Is there any kind of activity you would like to do more of with the children from the playgroup? Or even the parents?

Q16:

Is there anything that has stopped the playgroup (or other) from taking part in these activities? (Remember timescale)

Q17:

Are there any kind of places you would like to go to more often?

Q18:

Part of this project is to help children and their parents maintain a healthy weight. What do you know about what children and their parents can do to maintain a healthy weight?

Q19:

How are you kept up to date about what children / parents can do to maintain a healthy weight?

Q20:

What kind of equipment is provided within the playgroup or other setting that helps the children to maintain a healthy weight?

Prompts

Equipment or landscaping
local provision of off site venues
accessibility of places off site?

Q21:

What kind of processes are in place within the playgroup or other setting that helps the children to maintain a healthy weight?

Prompts

what does the timetable look like?

what training or information is provided?

what links are made within the venue's curriculum?

what's communicated to parents / carers / staff / children?

Any budget for this work?

Any contingency plans made for activities with regards to the weather / inside / outside?

Q22:

How would you describe the playgroup (or other)'s relationship with the mums / dads / parents / carers?

Q23:

How do you keep the mums / dads / parents / carers informed about what's going on in in the playgroup or other?

Prompts

What works well?

Why?

What doesn't work quite so well?

Why?

Q24:

Does the playgroup (or other) use social media such as Facebook / Twitter / other?

Q25:

What kind of conversations or discussions do you have with the parents or carers?

Q26:

Any events coming up about some of the issues we've discussed today that you use to get parents and children involved?

Q27:

Anything you'd like to add or further comment on?

Impressions from interview not to be shared?

Appendix Three

Good practice in encouraging children to be active in the outdoors

The following suggestions are based on conversations with the staff and parents who took part in the consultation on how childcare settings could encourage children to be active in the outdoors.

1 People

Information and Training:

Provide the leadership and staff within each childcare setting with the right information and training. For settings managed by Bridgend County Borough Council, that would mean working with the Childcare Development Officer and taking part in the Healthy Preschools Programme.

Obtaining the right information and training will help increase childcare settings staff confidence, understanding and ultimately enthusiasm for this area of work.

Leadership:

Of course responsibility for integrating physical activity using the outdoors lies with the setting manager, but delivering more opportunities to be active within the outdoors is a shared responsibility amongst every member of staff.

Good practice and effective leadership by setting managers means giving members all members of staff plenty of opportunities to learn about the issues. Better information, increases understanding and confidence about what to do. As a result it becomes possible to share the responsibility to plan and deliver outdoor physical activity in the setting curriculum.

In addition, good leadership means giving staff with an interest and experience on particular aspects of this agenda time and opportunities to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with colleagues. Topics of discussion might include identifying the location and stories associated with sites of historical interest in the area; the location of green spaces that the children would enjoy exploring; animals and plants they might see in different areas and at different times of the year; the location of rural activities like farming or growing crops; or how can the setting interact with what's available on their doorstep such as local forests, streams, hedgerows or beaches.

Parents:

Good practice also includes involving parents about how to be active in the outdoors. At a basic level, this might include informing the parents of what their child is doing; where these activities are taking place and how is their child reacting to these experiences. It might include going a step further and including parents in outdoor activities themselves - for example picnics, walks

or visiting local country parks. Another way to get parents involved and interested might be to invite some of them to share their experiences and interests in the local outdoors with the children from the setting.

2 Places

In this instance, places includes what's available on site at the childcare setting, but also understanding where's available locally for the setting to use for regular outdoor activity.

Improve Confidence

Children and their parents may not be particularly confident when it comes to something new, or being taken out of their comfort zone. Good practice in this instance means slowly building individual confidence about new activities or experiences in the setting. Once each individual is more confident, that experience can be transferred to the outdoor environment.

In practice these means incorporating physical activity into the daily routine of each setting. During the consultation, countless examples were observed of the staff using movement and music to effectively engage the children both mentally and physically.

The following items of equipment would be present in a setting trying to encourage physical activity amongst the children. Although not an exhaustive list, items include: balance beams, scooters, bikes, stepping stones, ball pool, crawl tunnel, obstacle course, assault course, climbing frame, climbing ropes, stop and go signs and hoola hoops.

It's worth bearing in mind that parents may not be as willing to take part in activities because of a lack of confidence. Doing something that they feel uncomfortable doing won't excite or engage them or help them change their minds for the long term. Getting parents confident at the start of an activity will help them enjoy the experience which may lead on to further activity in the outdoors.

Improve Motivation

It's important to motivate children to want to go outdoors and take part in new activities.

Visiting sites with lots of little destinations that encourage the children to walk further along a path or explore a site further are one way of motivating these individuals. Giving children simple maps or directions to follow or pictures of animals or plants they might find will also interest them.

Alternatively finding out what the child's interests are is a way to get them excited about visiting different sites - for example counting sheep at a farm, bug hunts in a green space or splashing in muddy puddles and streams.

If parents are attending it might be worth finding out what they are interested in and what might motivate them to go outdoors. Find out what they like or what they did as children. It might even be possible to see if the parents themselves want to share their experiences of the places you visit, the things you see or the activities you do.

Increase Awareness

Knowing what's available and interesting to different people locally can sometimes be a challenge. Good practice in this instance might mean asking other individuals or agencies to share their knowledge of the local environment and local amenities. What do other people know about the site? Ask parents or grandparents to share what they know to raise your awareness and their engagement.

Increase Opportunities

Good practice in a childcare setting means having regular planned activities using the outdoors - for example Welly Wednesday. Its also about taking every opportunity to incorporate unplanned activities indoors or outdoors whenever possible.

Since the weather in Wales can be unpredictable, making sure that the children have decent waterproofs is a great help and means that they can go out irrespective of the rain outside. For children with additional physical needs, having a water cover on a pram or wheel chair will mean that they don't get wet and miserable on their outdoor trip. Finally, in terms of staying out of the rain, a rain cover that shelters part of the setting's outdoors area means the children can be outside but out of the rain.

Given the choice, most children are happy to get muddy, whereas most parents might worry about children and parents getting their best or newest clothes dirty. A way round this is to ask the parents to dress their child in old clothing so that they can happily play outdoors. In this way the child is able to make the most of the opportunity, enjoy the experience and not worry about getting dirty. This suggestion could also extend to the parents if they attend an outdoor activity with their children.

Once outdoors, its possible to do more things to increase physical activity levels.

Good practice might mean taking some items with you that keep the children active whilst outdoors or on their way to a destination. Balls, pictures or magnifying glasses are suggestions to keep the children busy.

The following list contains suggestions by settings staff from the consultation exercise, on the kinds of activities the do with their children in their setting:

- Gardening - digging things up; planting things; pushing things like wheelbarrows; watering plants; making shapes and structures with items you find or materials like willow; or collecting items to make a collage;

- Using their imagination to build things using cardboard, bits of wood or natural materials like leaves, grasses and mud;
- Having an outdoor 'kitchen' for imaginative play to make mud pies, mud cakes and grass sandwiches;
- Muddy areas for splashing, jumping or avoiding; or
- Going to green spaces to encourage games such as treasure hunts, bear hunts, teddy bears picnics, hide and seek, parachute games, skipping ropes, or tug of war.

3 Processes

Having good processes provides a basis for good practice that includes the following:

Policies

In trying to get children active in the outdoors they need to have fun and positive experiences, but they also need to be safe and cared for. That means sticking to policies that identify, mitigate and manage any risks associated with taking young children, and often their parents, outdoors.

Similarly adopting policies that promote a healthy lifestyle that balances a healthy diet within the setting and meeting the required levels of physical activity will provide the foundation for each child to get the most out of their outdoor experiences.

Communication

Keeping parents informed of what is going on is important. It's essential to give an explanation of why its important and the kind of activities their child will be involved in when they go outdoors. Coming back to the parents and explaining what their child was excited by and why, will be an opportunity to talk about the kind of activities the parent might like to try with their child when they get home. This will build up the child's confidence and motivation to go out outside more often.

Planning Activities

Planning regular outdoor events is good practice. Examples in some of the settings include Welly Wednesday and Tasty Tuesday. By having a regular event, it becomes something that the learn to children expect and the parents can plan for.

When planning activities think of opportunities that keep the children motivated, confident and happy. Linking up with other local providers to see if they can help or support the activity will help - particularly if its about getting the parents involved.

Plan to get wet and dirty as opposed to trying to stay clean and dry.

Delivering Activities

Having an open door policy or a free flow within the childcare setting means the children can go inside and outside as much as they want or are able.

Where possible, challenge the children to try something new and praise them if they try - whether it's an activity or a food that they haven't tried before.