



Hastings & St Leonards Play Strategy 2014 -2019

Right to Play





This strategy celebrates the memory of Julie Sutton, whose loving commitment to play and many years of passionate work has helped the value of play to shine bright in Hastings.

Hastings and St Leonards Play Strategy

'Right to Play'

2014-2019

Foreword

Welcome to the new Hastings and St Leonards Play Strategy which aims for Hastings and St. Leonards to be a place where all children and young people enjoy their right to play.

This Strategy builds on a long legacy of local Play work and represents our further commitment to supporting children's play.

We would like to thank all of the children and families who took the time to help us understand local Play needs and to thank the local Play Forum and other partners who have helped develop this new Strategy.

We want Hastings to be the best place to grow up for all of our local children. This Strategy celebrates the value of Play and reminds us that everyone has a responsibility to ensure that our local children have the opportunity to enjoy quality play.

Cllr Emily Westley

Hastings Borough Council, Leisure and Amenities, Portfolio Holder

Hastings and St Leonards Play Strategy

'Right to Play'

2014-2019

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1.0 Our Vision

For Hastings and St. Leonards to be a place where all children and young people enjoy their right to play.

1.1 Our Mission

We want to improve the play experience for every child and young person in Hastings and St. Leonards by working in partnership to plan, improve and sustain play opportunities for all 0-16 year olds living within the Borough.

1.2 Introduction

According to the recent Centre for Cities Report (2014), Hastings is the ninth best place to live and work in the country. We want Hastings to be the best place to grow up.

Play is an essential part of a happy, healthy childhood and ‘when children play their brains do two things: they grow and they become organised and usable’¹. By investing in all of our children and young people we can strengthen their ability to achieve their true potential.

Play is recognised by Hastings Borough Council as vitally important to the wellbeing of Hastings; both economically and environmentally.

2.0 The importance of Play

“Play is a child’s first claim on the community. No community can infringe that right without doing deep and enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens”

(Lloyd George, 1926)

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises ‘the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts’.

Hastings Borough Council has a long commitment to and proud tradition of supporting children’s play. The first Hastings Play Strategy was launched in 1997. This is an extension of that strategy to 2019 and provides an opportunity to build on the foundations already in place to create a long lasting legacy of improvements for children’s play opportunities within the town. The aim of this strategy is to ensure that a

¹ Hughes, 2013

consideration of children's need to play, becomes part of the strategic policy framework for all decisions that affect the planning and design of community services and public space in Hastings into the future.

There are many different definitions of play but most agree that:

'Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.'²

'All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities'.³

Play helps to ensure that children have the best possible start in life. Opportunities to test out life through play ensure children can grow into confident, wiser, successful learners and responsible citizens. 'Play provides opportunities for independent learning and building confidence, resilience, self-esteem and self-efficacy'.⁴

Play is a fundamental part of childhood and everyday life and culture. Play takes place from birth, world wide, in families, neighbourhoods, schools, at home and in community settings, from streets to woodlands.

Play provision can make a real contribution to fostering a positive attitude to cultural diversity and can provide opportunities for people of all backgrounds to engage in civic life. It can provide the catalyst for culture change and community cohesion, benefiting all local residents. For Hastings and St Leonards 'cohesion applies to every member of our society, not just migrants or minority individuals. Many of our residents are unable to access suitable housing, education, jobs, healthcare, or social and recreational outlets. Deprivation, isolation and inequality of access can deepen divisions and increase disharmony within communities'⁵. Play activities can build bridges and forge lines of dialogue between 'minority groups, the Council and other organisations, enabling greater awareness and resolution of factors that can inhibit social inclusion, raise community tensions, and foster negative perceptions of the town'⁶.

All children should have access and the opportunity to play together regardless of disability, race or gender. There can be barriers to the provision of inclusive play opportunities, but looking at ways to address

² Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group, 2005

³ Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group, 2005

⁴ Lester and Russell, 2008

⁵ Refreshed Community Cohesion Framework, 2013

⁶ Refreshed Community Cohesion Framework, 2013

these could mean children and adults can come together with a shared universal enjoyment of play.

Physical activity rates in Hastings are particularly low⁷ and 18.6% of our children in school year 6 are classified as obese.⁸ 'Regular active play helps to prevent disease and relieves depression and anxiety. It is important to provide children with a safe place to play to help promote physical activity. Studies have shown that children are more likely to be active when they have better access to facilities in their neighbourhood and access to playgrounds with fixed equipment. During school breaks, children have been found to be more active when they have better access to equipment, permanent play structures or marked courts. Furthermore, the presence of attractive destinations, such as parks, has been linked with increased levels of physical activity in children'.⁹

There is now evidence of a rapidly growing increase in mental health problems experienced by children and young people. The Mental Health Foundation's report Bright Futures estimates that at any time 20 per cent of children and young people experience psychological problems linked to lack of self-confidence and resilience. The report recognises that this may also be linked to a decline in play opportunities and highlights the importance of supervised opportunities for play and the role of these services in supporting children's mental health.

A growing body of research has identified the disturbing consequences of children being denied access to stimulating play experiences. Play deprivation can manifest symptoms ranging from aggression and repressed emotions and social skills to an increased risk of obesity.¹⁰

Children playing in 'battery' as apposed to 'free range' conditions experience emotional and neuropsychological disadvantages.¹¹ Research concludes that children who have ample opportunity to varied play experiences have developed a playful innovative response to their environments, adapt in more flexible ways, displaying resilience, and enhancing their ability to survive and thrive. 'They are more able to 'roll with the punches' associated with daily social interactions'.¹²

'There can be no keener revelation of society's soul than the way in which it treats its children'

Nelson Mandela (1995)

⁷ Active People Survey 6/7, 2013

⁸ Public Health England, 2013

⁹ British Heart Foundation, 2013

¹⁰ Huttenlocher, 1990

¹¹ Hutton Moser and Degan Zimmermann, 1995

¹² Sivy 1998

3.0 Risk and Play

People learn by taking risks. This applies equally to children and young people. Play provision stimulates a child's need to learn through taking risk. When we fail to provide stimulating and challenging play environments and eliminate risk from play, children and young people will seek these elsewhere, possibly in ways that are dangerous or socially unacceptable to adults. Whilst acknowledging that children need freedom to take risk, all play facilities and schemes need to meet legislative requirements. Adults are responsible for ensuring that there are no 'unacceptable risks'. The Play Safety Forum has produced *Managing Risk in Play Provision* to help strike a balance between the risks and the benefits of offering children challenging play opportunities. This implementation guide shows how play providers can replace current risk assessment practice with an approach that fully takes into account the benefits to children and young people of challenging play experiences.

'If you play it safe in life you've decided that you don't want to grow any more' Shirley Hufstedler (1969)

4.0 What our strategy will do

Our strategy will continue to make a lasting difference to our town's children because it provides:

- A recognition that play deprivation is a serious disadvantage for children and that fully inclusive and accessible play provision can have an important role in enhancing the lives of children.
- A recognition that children's play as a theme cuts across a range of policy areas, from planning, open spaces, health, education and childcare.
- A greater understanding of the importance of play and ensuring children's needs are taken into account within the wider community.
- Enables us to set Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Targets (SMART) actions and responsibilities for delivering support for free play to be agreed.
- A planned and strategic approach to play provision is likely to allow for enhanced funding opportunities
- It will support the collaborative multiagency approach to improving the life chances of all children and to recognise that children's play as a theme cuts across a range of policy areas.

5.0 Strategic Context

Recent years have seen a growing interest in children and young people's play and informal recreation and the need to improve this is included in many national, regional and local policies. In developing this strategy a number of strategies and best practice guidance were considered (Appendix 1).

5.1 Local Context

Hastings and St Leonards is a predominately urban coastal town. The town faces a large number of social and economic challenges and whilst having enormous potential to change, it is the 24th most deprived area nationally (rank of wards, index of multiple deprivation 2010). 15 of our super output areas fall within the most deprived 10 percent of all communities in England. The number of children and young people living within the Borough is currently 21,418. Hastings has the highest birth rate in East Sussex.

The impact of this has resulted in Hastings facing significantly high levels of deprivation and is currently in the top 20 local authorities with the highest levels of child poverty. 'There is shocking evidence about the scale and depth of poverty in Hastings and St Leonards, for example, a child born and growing up in Hastings can expect to live nearly 5 years less than someone in Lewes (30 miles away) where average incomes are much higher'¹³. The percentage of children living in poverty in the town is currently 31%, up from 28% in 2011. Hastings was shown to have the highest poverty rates in the south and the 17th highest in the UK, well above the national average of 20.2%. Poverty can have a profound impact on the child, their family, and the rest of society. It often sets in motion a deepening spiral of social exclusion, creating problems in education, employment, mental and physical health and social interaction. For children who are under resourced to reach their highest potential we recognise the importance of lifelong benefits that children gain from play.

5.2 Poverty and Play

Play can work towards preventing social exclusion. Play can shield children from some of the negative aspects of poverty and allow them to develop inner resources to build resilience to difficulties to uncertainty in the home and in other parts of life. Some of our children who live in poverty often face socio economic obstacles that impede their rights to access quality play opportunities, therefore affecting their healthy social-emotional development.

¹³ Hastings and St Leonards Anti-Poverty Strategy 2011

Good quality play opportunities, which are free to access and easily accessible for all children gives every child equal access to these life enhancing chances. Free play opportunities provide the biggest benefit in a child's development and they are all around us. We can support our local parents and carers by helping to provide quality opportunities to provide their children with a rich variety of experiences, where cost is not a barrier. Free play provision is often available when families need it most, filling in gaps when other services are unavailable. It gives an opportunity for both children and adults to extend their social and peer networks and offers informal respite for both parents and children free of charge.

6.0 Barriers to Play

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of play, opportunities to play are subject to more and more restrictions and factors outside of their control.

A 2013 survey of 3000 children and adults found that over 50% of adults reported playing out at least seven times a week when they were growing up, compared to less than a quarter of children (23%) today, with 40% of children saying they want to play out more'. The survey, commissioned by Play England, Play Wales, Play Scotland and Play Board Northern Ireland, lists factors which stop outdoor play including; intolerant attitudes from neighbours and lack of community spaces. Although a third of parents believed playing games outdoors would cause problems with their neighbours the research also shows "that play has the power to bring communities together; with 40% of adults saying that children playing out where they live improves community spirit, and almost half (45%) saying it helps families to get to know each other".¹⁴

Other barriers to play included stranger danger and traffic hazards. Stolen Streets, Stolen Childhood publication states 'The fact is that where our children used to play years ago has almost entirely been taken over by cars and children have paid a price, of the loss of almost all of their street play space'.

Children have to access play opportunities in increasingly dangerous neighbourhoods and environments. Our children are not always able to access a well planned, safe and stimulating play space. Some of our children who live in flats often can't escape the captivity of their home without playing in areas where their play is restricted or dangerous. Their play is often hindered by cars, intolerant neighbours and conflicts over the use of public and private open spaces. Fear for personal safety and lack of tolerance towards children and young people means many of our young residents may be living within a restricted play environment, and are not allowed to 'play out'.

¹⁴ Play England, 2013

'According to a recent British Freedom of information exercise, it is mainly children and young people who have been issued with 55,000 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts often because they were outside, annoying neighbours. The new Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill proposes the power of courts to impose injunctions on children as young as 10 for behaviour that could annoy or cause nuisance'.¹⁵

Family lifestyle changes include the increase in computers and sofa entertainment and new patterns in busy family working life mean that the time to either plan for or allow spontaneous play has decreased. 'Children are on average spending four and a half hours a day surfing the internet or watching TV'.¹⁶ Play is everyone's responsibility. Play provision should be delivered in partnership with parents, communities, central and local government who all have a duty to ensure that children have the chance and time to play every day.

The People Make Play report, commissioned by Play England (revised in January 2012) calls for resources to enable the maintenance and growth of staffed play provision where it is most needed. It illustrates how lack of time and spaces for play, and hostile attitudes towards children playing outdoors can have damaging implications for children's health and happiness.

Drawing on a wide range of evidence, the review indicates the potential consequences of 'a world without play'; that is, a world where play is placed at the bottom of adult agendas and the value of play in children's lives is not fully acknowledged. Children will always play, but adults must provide children with opportunities, time to themselves and spaces for play if they are to get the full benefits.

The findings show that staffed play services, built around the children's own ideas about how they want to play, make a significant difference to the children, parents and neighbourhoods. Such provision can be integral to the broader network of support for children and families to live better lives, achieve more positive outcomes and belong to a thriving community. Investment in the skills and commitment of dedicated staff and volunteers can provide some of the best opportunities for the children most in need.

7.0 Consultation and audits

The preparation of this play strategy has been informed by extensive consultation. Hundreds of local children, young people and their families

¹⁵ Fair Play for Children, 2013

¹⁶ Childwise, 2013

have told us about what they enjoy and value, need and what could be improved.

We have created opportunities for different groups to share and exchange ideas and provided an enjoyable approach to consultation. Different types of consultation have been carried out at large centrally located play events and at street play sessions during 2012 and 2013. 10,000 copies of our children's play consultation books were distributed through all of our local schools and groups. Hundreds of responses, which included lots of valuable opinions, information, suggestions and drawings were analysed. The results gave clear evidence of the importance of play to children, young people and their families.

7.1 Top priorities from Community Consultation:

1. Tackle the barriers to 'playing out' that many local children have sited.

These include:

- Traffic
- Lack of parental supervision
- Lack of transport
- Cost of public transport ie buses
- Dog fouling in public spaces (in particular pavements)
- Requests for improved playgrounds and spaces to play in local neighbourhood
- 'Stranger danger'
- Bullying

2. Promote the Adventure play ground as a town wide resource.

Many children and parents said that they are aware of the Hastings Adventure Playground but had not visited as they perceived it to be a resource for the local neighbourhood. Comments also reflected a perception that the area was not always safe to visit.

3. Work with schools to improve break time and afterschool play opportunities.

Many children felt that their playtime at school could be vastly improved. Almost every child said they would like to be able to have the opportunity to play on school grounds out of school hours. Lots of children cited bullying as an issue that stopped them from enjoying playtime in schools.

4. Continue to provide the large scale Summer Playdays events and look into ways to extend the amount of community events that are delivered.

The Playday events are organised by Hastings Borough Council with support from the local Play forum. The Playdays in Alexandra Park have been popular since 1996 and typically attract approximately 4000 people to each event. Almost all of the children and parents who responded to our questionnaire said that they have attended Playdays and value the event and would like more to be delivered.

7.2 Consultation in Partnership with the Play Forum

The Hastings and St Leonards Play Forum is facilitated by Hastings Borough Council's Play development officers. The Forum is a network of play and childcare providers from statutory and voluntary groups and organisations that share an interest in play. The forum meets quarterly to share information and to co-ordinate resources to impact on the Play Strategy Action Plan.

The local Play Forum have been involved in the development of this Play Strategy and have offered their recommendations based on their collective knowledge of overall need within the borough and analysis of consultation gathered.

Key themes were as follows:

- Increase access to quality freely chosen play opportunities by improving on where children currently have the opportunity to play and creating new spaces.
- Continue and extend on free large and small scale community play events and free staffed neighbourhood street play sessions that encompass traditional and new play opportunities.
- To work in partnership to provide children and their parents/carers with information on and directions to play friendly places.
- For Hastings Borough Council to continue to facilitate the Play Forum.
- For providers of playgrounds, including HBC, to disseminate playground information to enable the forum to remain fully informed and involved in playground development.

7.3 The Parks and Opens spaces strategy 2006

In late 2005 extensive consultation was carried out on our parks and open spaces facilities, which included research and mapping of playgrounds and spaces for children and young people. The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2006 is a 10 year plan, which includes the following recommendations:

- Design local green spaces in such a way to maximise their play value for children of different ages with opportunities to hide,

climb, run, see nature, handle sticks and stones and get dirty and wet.

- Have a relatively small numbers of large equipped play spaces at key locations around the borough.

7.4 The Hastings and St Leonards Play Space Strategy 2011

Amicus Horizon Ltd and Hastings Borough Council are the principle providers of publicly accessible equipped play space sites in Hastings. They have agreed a shared strategy which sets out the vision for future play space provision. To inform the strategy, a new audit was carried out which highlighted the quality and value of play provision. It is clear that large numbers of poor value sites can no longer be sustained as lifetime maintenance costs or improvement costs are very high.

The aim of the Play Space Strategy is to work together in order to improve and sustain existing play areas and subject to funding, develop new key location sites so that the maximum numbers of children can access good value and good quality equipped play, within a reasonably short distance of their home. The Play space strategy includes recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. 600 metre catchments for each good quality/ good value playground (considered to be a 15-20 minute walk) have been mapped using the new audit information. We also recognise that children still need 'informal' space to play within their neighbourhoods where possible.

The development of the play space strategy included community consultation undertaken by various community personnel at Amicus Horizon and by the Council's Play Hastings team. Detailed audits accessing the play value, quality, accessibility and maintenance of all of the Boroughs play sites was also carried out. This is now in the process of being updated to reflect the work carried out over the last two years and to include Orbit Housing in future plans and will run alongside this strategy to ensure actions to improve play spaces are met. The play space strategy will impact on the priorities below by improving some of our outdoor spaces, specifically fixed play sites.

8.0 What we will do now

The strategy will focus on two set priorities to support us in delivering the recommended local play need, increase play opportunities freely available for every child within our Borough and to raise the profile of every child's right to play.

The priorities will have a clear action plan which will include many partnership targets developed and agreed with our Hastings and St Leonards Play Forum members and partners

8.1 Priority One

Ensure children's needs and wishes about play are heard and promote the importance of play for all children and young people.

We will:

- Increase the understanding of the value and the power of play as a tool in tackling poverty and health inequalities is understood. Use marketing, delivery of free large scale play events, street play and social media to disseminate the information
- Create a system to enable young people to become advocates for play through volunteer opportunities and life long learning through play, supporting every child's right to best start in life.
- Work to support providers to ensure that the principles of inclusive play are built into the core of all of our new fixed and staffed play opportunities, meeting the needs and improving the quality of life of all our Borough's children.
- Enhance skills, understanding of play and build the capacity of the play workforce including volunteers by providing and supporting training in the sector locally, making use of resources such as the Adventure play ground.
- Work with local schools to ensure children's voices are heard on issues that affect their play in school and neighbourhoods.
- Work with children, young people and their families seeking and valuing their views and opinions about play opportunities and their needs. Involve all children and young people in the design and redesign of play space and the wider environment.

8.2 Priority Two

Improve and extend the range, quality and accessibility of FREE play opportunities Borough wide by working in collaboration with partners, sharing resources and maximising opportunities to attract external funding.

We will:

- Work in partnership with other internal and external departments and organisations, to meet identified play needs, break down barriers and balance community expectations. Pool budgets and share projects to enable enhancement of play opportunities, within the resources currently available.
- Provide or support others to provide play schemes, crèches and groups for formal and informal play activities within neighbourhoods, meeting local needs, narrowing the gap and increasing the provision available Borough wide.
- ‘Narrow the gap’ by increasing the opportunities for play available to children living within our most deprived communities. Support communities to make use of non traditional playable space and increase the provision of staffed street play sessions in target areas. Support the adventure playground to grow into a town wide provision.
- Increase opportunities for active play supporting children and young people to be physically active, concentrating on narrowing the gap between our most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the town.
- Chair the Play Forum, who will support the strategy delivery, identify issues related to standards of provision and advise on the development of best practice throughout the local network.
- Maintain a flexible and co-ordinated approach to play services and partnerships and continue to be involved and aware of policy at national level through county, regional, national, agencies and groups.
- Support the Play space strategy by seeking community partners to assist in drawing in new external funding to aid improvements and continue to support housing associations as the providers of public play spaces to sustain and improve their stock.

9.0 Action Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

An annual action plan will be agreed with SMART targets involving a range of partners including Hastings Borough Council.

A sub group will be formed to monitor progress against priorities. Regular updates will be submitted to the Hastings and St Leonards Play Forum.

The Strategy reflects local need and community involvement, but further consultation throughout the life span of the strategy will be required to keep the document relevant and 'live'.

The sub group will revise the action plan as required to take into account changes to local need, partners and financial implications.

The action plan will be developed inline with available resources from the Council's Play Development budget and external funding sourced. Partners will resource their own actions. In future years the level of impact will be dependant on available funding, therefore the action plan will be subject to an annual review.

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10.0 Appendix 1

Strategic Context

In developing this strategy a number of national, regional and local strategies and best practice guidance were considered. The play strategy influences and is influenced by, the following:

National

- UN Convention of the Rights of the Child Article 31 (the right to play and recreation) and article 23 (disabled children must be able to take a full and active part in everyday life)
- National Planning Guidance and National planning policy framework (Objective 8, Promoting Healthy Communities :- safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion)
- The Education act 1996 and Education and inspections act 2006 and the Extended Schools agenda
- Children's Act 2004 and Every Child Matters Agenda (to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve , make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing)
- The disability discrimination act 2005

County

- East Sussex Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP 2008-2013) (Aspiration 3: Support for children, young people and families facing difficulties to build their own skills and resilience, Aspiration 4: Children and young people of all ages are physically healthy and have a good level of emotional wellbeing, Children,

young people and families have a say in services and what's on offer for them, and on the future of their areas)

Local

- Hastings and St Leonards Anti poverty strategy 2011
- Hastings and St Leonards sustainable community Strategy 2009 - 2026
- Hastings and St Leonards Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2006
- Hastings and St Leonards and local housing associations fixed play provision Strategy 2011
- Hastings and St Leonards Sports and physical activity strategy 2012
- Corporate plan and council priorities
- Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy Targets (Child poverty is a key indicator)

11.0 Appendix 2 Case Studies

11.1 Case Study - Hastings Adventure Playground

In 2009 Hastings Borough Council received Play Pathfinder funding through central Government to develop our very own Hastings Adventure Playground. The Playground is accessed by lots of children from the local community on a daily basis.



The Adventure Playground is a space dedicated solely to children's play. A space where skilled play workers enable and facilitate the ownership, development and design of the space by the children playing there. Adventure playgrounds are, by their nature, distinct and particular to

their location and their users. Hastings Adventure Playground is staffed and managed by In2play, who are a local not for profit community play organisation. The running costs are covered by a combination of funding from Hastings Borough Council (£26k management agreement in 2013/14) and successful external fundraising by In2play.

The Hastings Adventure Playground offers a range of play opportunities and a variety of playable spaces including self built challenging play structures and features, informal sports areas, wild nature and planted areas. The playground is staffed to allow for regular access to fire play, cooking outdoors and for the use of tools and heavy materials to build and modify a flexible and evolving play space. The outdoor play space contains a zip wire, tyre swings, slides and lots of loose parts to build and play with. The indoor play space has room for cooking, arts and crafts etc. There are toilets on site including a best practice 'changing places' accessible toilet facility and free parking close by. The Playground is aimed at 8 to 13 year olds and is open, free of charge, from 3pm every day after school. A family session takes place every Saturday morning and the Playground is well used during the day by a range of groups and users.

11.2 Case Study - Young Volunteers Programme

The Young Volunteers Programme has been managed by the Council's Play Hastings team for the last 14 years and informally since Playdays began almost 20 years ago.

During the 2013 Summer holidays, young people aged between 12 and 17 years from Tressell Ward, spent part of their free time supporting the Summer Playdays in Alexandra Park. The young people who were recruited came into contact with the Play Hastings team either through the Street Play outreach work or through the Adventure Playground (from either drop in sessions or through an alternative education scheme in partnership with the Hastings Academy).

The young people who volunteered were all facing challenges in their lives, including living in unstable family environments, living in poor housing, struggling with educational attainment, living with or amongst poor health or debt problems. Three of the young people involved had been finding school and learning particularly hard due to confidence issues and/or bullying. Three of the young people's attendance levels at school were poor and one of the young people was fostered.

Their volunteer role involved using and practising a range of skills. The young people assisted with a diverse range of practical play and sports activities, communicating with children of all ages and their parents/carers and all of the event staff. The volunteer scheme supports our young people by providing them with chances to act responsibly, show patience, be flexible, work in an outside environment and to build

confidence. This scheme seeks to subtly improve the life chances and employability of socially excluded children and young people. It seeks to act as an anti-social behaviour prevention activity, helping to change attitudes as to what is acceptable behaviour, to create opportunities to widen the individual's social network, to build on peer networks and to advocate the rights of children and young people to be free to play.

The scheme seeks to help counteract inequalities in family backgrounds and home environments. It also seeks to counteract current negative expectations and aspirations which some parents and children may have. The scheme aims to promote to the young people's school, neighbourhoods, families and the 4000 Playday attendees; that aspirations, attitudes and behaviours can be improved using play as a driving force for improved social mobility.

11.3 Case Study - Playdays

The celebration of National Playday happens in many towns all over the UK. In 2013 Playdays celebrated its 20th year in Hastings. The Hastings Playday started as a very small free play session in 1993. After a couple of years the event moved to Alexandra Park. Now in its twentieth year, the Playdays continue to offer free quality play opportunities during the Summer Holidays for all local families. During 2013 two Playdays were held, with each event attracting over 4000.

The Playdays are managed by the Council's Play Hastings team in partnership with the Hastings and St Leonards the Play Forum. Partners work hard to ensure that the Playdays successfully engage families from all over the town, including many hard to reach families.

Playdays brings communities together at one venue, with a shared enjoyment for play. Playday events have involved numerous partnership projects and have helped to foster new partnerships between statutory and voluntary organisations. In addition to this the Playdays facilitate and enable local organisations to interact with new families and contacts. For example, the local Children's Centres have used Playdays for many years as a resource for their families to attend but also to promote their service to additional families town wide. Playday resources enable joint work with In2play, Play Sense and The Links project to give additional support to families who face difficulties accessing the events. Examples include help with transport and inclusive play workers who offer help for families who may have specific needs.

Other regular partners who have supported the Playdays and celebrated a child's right to play over the years have included; NSPCC, Targetted Youth Services, Princes Trust, RSPCA, Hastings Trust, NHS Public Health, Hastings Voluntary Action and many more.

12.0 Appendix 3

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