

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

YOUTH & PLAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 8 OCTOBER 2007

REPORT OF HOWARD COOPER
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

WIRRAL SUMMER HOLIDAY PLAYScheme REPORT 2007

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report outlines to the Committee the summer play opportunities provided through Wirral Play Council Summer Holiday Playscheme Programme and Youth & Play Service's playschemes 2007. The Committee is asked to note this report.

2.0 Background

2.1 Recruitment and Staffing

The recruitment process starts early in the year by sending out application forms to previous playworkers. It is also advertised in local papers, Wirral Play Council web site, sixth forms in schools and colleges and at local universities. The response to the advertisement was excellent and candidates were selected for interview to take place after the Easter break. The interview sessions are 3 hours in duration and the candidates were asked to participate in practical games and planning activities. This style of interviewing was a great success, it enables candidates could "show off" their skills more effectively and how they interactive with other people. There was a high standard of candidates and all the playworkers needed for the summer playschemes were recruited through this process.

2.2 Playworkers

This year there has been a good return rate with 53% of the playworkers having worked on Wirral Play Council playschemes previously. This experience along with the knowledge of the local playscheme organisers and community support is the key to a successful playscheme. However, some areas are lacking community support and the number of local volunteer organisers is still

decreasing. We continued to employ Lead Playworkers improves coordination and delivery of the playschemes. Below are some statistics relating to the 79 summer playworkers employed in 2007.

16 (20%) = Male 63 (80%) = Female

42 (53%) = worked for Wirral Play Council last year

The age range of the playworkers was as follows: -

18 yrs = 7 (10%)

19 –21 yrs = 36 (45%)

22 – 25 yrs = 20 (25%)

26 – 30 yrs = 4 (5%)

30+ yrs = 12 (15%)

3.0 Pre-summer Training

- 3.1 The format for this year's pre-summer training was structured on a theoretical and practical basis to provide the fundamental training for the new playworkers, and new ideas and skills for experienced staff.
- 3.2 Take Five for Play is a 15 hour introduction to Playwork, all students must complete a portfolio demonstrating they have completed 10 hours of work in a play setting. However, this recognised course does not cover the specific policies and procedures of the Play Council. Therefore, the playworkers also attended our in house training day on policies and procedures.
- 3.3 To meet OFSTED's standards we are working towards 50% of all staff having a recognised Playwork qualification. We worked with Wirral Metropolitan College and delivered two Take Five For Play courses. 31 new playworkers accessed the Take Five For Play training and will gain the equivalent of a level 2 qualification in playwork on completion of their portfolios.
- 3.4 All new playworkers attended a 2-day training course. The first day focuses on Wirral Play Council's policies and procedures the importance and value of play, rules, regulations and procedures, Children Act and Registration, Health and Safety, programme planning and Child Protection.

- 3.5 The second day is a practical day of arts and crafts and sports and games. Creating opportunities for group discussion, so that thought could be given to the theoretical aspects of the activities such as their importance and value, health and safety issues, equal opportunities, resources, programme planning etc. We also incorporated training in the correct and safe use of play equipment.
- 3.6 The topics discussed on the compulsory days were covered in the Wirral Play Council Playworkers and Organisers handbook "A Guide to Better Playschemes 2007". The information in the booklet reflects and compliments the Wirral Play Council Pre-Summer training and includes updated procedures and new information. It serves as a comprehensive ready reference guide for all staff and volunteers.

4.0 Mobile Play Training

- 4.1 The team of mobile playworkers were provided with specialist training in the safe use and operation of bouncy castles and other play equipment that they were to use on the schemes.
- 4.2 The mobile play team continues to be a successful and popular project, providing the facility for delivering and operating play equipment, with the aim of enhancing the playscheme programmes. Their activities included inflatable bouncy castles, badge makers, candle making, parachutes, and the provision of music and sports equipment.
- 4.3 This year returning playworkers made up the mobile team; they worked excellently as a team, each using their individual skills and enthusiasm to create a successful project. They were well received by each playscheme that they visited and were able to provide different play opportunities and diversity from the general activities. They were particularly welcome on the schemes on their busier days when they were able to help ease the staffing levels. However, the aim of the mobile team is to provide activities that are complimentary to the other planned activities taking place.

5.0 Outreach Play Sessions

- 5.1 During the summer we employed an additional five outreach playworkers to join the full time workers. They were divided into three teams and between them covered all areas of Wirral. Each team ran a play session in the morning and one in the afternoon from Monday to Thursday. Every Friday the team split in two and ran "Friday Fun days" at various parks. The teams re visited each site on a weekly basis giving each area one regular play session a week. The

popularity of the sessions varied from site to site and in many places children turned up on a regular weekly basis throughout the summer. In some areas children would attend a morning session and follow the workers to the afternoon venue, which shows how popular the activities were. The session's involved physical sports and games, such as football and rounders plus other arts and crafts activities, friendship bands, painting and the ever-popular face painting. Overall the outreach sessions were a success and we hope to build on these during next summer.

- 5.2 The summer outreach play sessions comprehensively covered all of Wirral and took place in areas, which do not have a open access playscheme provision. Below is a list of the venues, where play sessions took place:

Tower Grounds, New Brighton
Newton Park, West Kirby
Egremont School Playground, Seacombe
Thornton Hough Village Green
Stanton Road, Bebington
Leasowe Millennium Centre
Queens Park, Hoylake
Tollemach Road Play Area, Bidston
Upton Park, Moreton
Coronation Park, Greasby
Juliet Avenue, Bebington
Harrison Park, New brighton
Meadow Crescent, Woodchurch
Birkenhead Park
Mersey Park Tranmere
Central Park, Liscard, Wallasey
Somerset Road, West Kirby

6.0 Play Day

- 6.1 Wirral Play Day took place on Wednesday 1st August at Birkenhead Park. The venue was changed from Royden Park as the Play Day theme was street play, "Our Streets to!" By holding the event in Birkenhead Park it enabled us to utilise the road that runs through the park. We blocked the road access to cars and encouraged children to play street games. Birkenhead is also a more central location and some playschemes could use public transport or walk to the event. More than 600 children joined in the day from Playschemes across Wirral and it was great to see a large number of parents taking part with their families.

6..2 Wirral Play Council along with Wirral Borough Council organised a fun packed day of activities and events giving children from across the Wirral a wide range of play opportunities. The Mayor opened the event and judged the playscheme banner competition. Activities included the old favourites, face painting, talent show, bouncy castle, circus skills, kite making circus skills and the very loud drum circle. New for 2007 and extremely popular was a climbing wall, street games and cardboard city. Children built and created their own houses, shops, etc from large pieces of card and decorated them. Some children took them away with them and on my way home I saw children playing with their structure outside their house on a street in Birkenhead! A very popular activity was the den building area that engaged hundreds of children, and playworkers building dens from hay, which began as a stack but gradually fell apart during the day! The BBC bought along its bus enabling children to access the Internet.

6.3 Steve Chan (Acting Deputy Head of Youth and Play Services) was interviewed by the BBC and went out live on radio Merseyside promoting play and the Play Day event. The event was also reviewed in Play England North West. Feedback from children and playworkers has been very positive and we are looking to build on the event for Play Day 2008! Thank you to all the staff and children for making the day a great success!

7.0 OFSTED

7.1 The OFSTED inspections run on a three years cycle which meant none of Wirral Play Councils playscheme were inspected this year as they have been inspected in 2005 or 2006.

7.2 The Wirral Council's Gautby Road Open Access full-time play scheme were inspected this summer by OFSTED. They received a good for the quality and standard of care.

8.0 Playschemes

8.2 New Schemes - This year we received requests to run 2 new playschemes and Courtney Park playscheme also applied for some support. The 2 new playschemes were based at Christ Church Higher Bebington and the Seacombe Children's Centre. The scheme could not be registered with OFSTED in time for the beginning of summer so both schemes operated 5-14 age range in the morning session and 8-14 age range in the afternoon session. Both playschemes were very successful and by the end of four weeks Christ Church had 103 children registered and Seacombe Children's Centre had 148 children

registered. On the back of this success the playschemes will be registered with OFSTED for 2008 so every session will be available to the under 8's.

- 8.2 Full-time open access play provision were delivered from six sites, Beechwood, Charing Cross, Gautby Road, Leasowe Adventure Playground, Livingstone Street, and Woodchurch. These playschemes run all year from play and community centres. The registrations figures (see appendix B) contributed to the overall summer programme of free play activities available on the Wirral. In each open access play centre, children aged 5 -14 years engage in freely chosen play opportunities in naturalistic settings, which help them to develop a sense of ownership of the facilities whilst respecting the rights of others who use the same space.
- 8.3 This summer's menu of play opportunities included canal boat residentials, day trips to Chester Zoo, Drayton Manor, Manley Mere and Camelot. These trips provided an opportunity for children, families and the local community to go out for the day. Children from Woodchurch participated in a healthy eating session preparing their own food. Children also participated in themed drama production with 'Perspective Theatre' about bullying, culminating in a short production performed for playscheme members, parents and siblings. Children attended a residential at Ivy Farm and were also involved in a Healthy Eyes Project and a Community Foundation funded environmental project in Birkenhead.

9.0 Summary

- 9.1 The summer was busy and the playworkers engaged with hundreds of Wirral's children giving them access to some a range of play opportunities. Overall the number of children registered across all the playschemes has increased since 2006. Several playschemes saw a significant increase in registrations for example New Ferry had 174 registrations in 2006 that increased to 240 this year. I think this is due to the excellent teamwork and organisation by the playworkers who provided a wide range of activities encouraging all children to get involved. Greasby and Noctorum also saw increases in numbers which may be due to the playscheme being the only free play provision available in the area for children aged 5 to 14. Two new playschemes in Christ Church, Higher Bebington and Seacombe Children's Centre were very successful and registered 103 and 148 children respectively. We hope to run these playschemes again in 2008.

9.2 The local Authority grant (£58,000), and support for Lead Playworkers from Wirral SureStart Support Team (£7,000) enabled us to employ 79 playworkers and provide small equipment grants to each playscheme and provided a Play Day event in Birkenhead Park. Wirral Play Councils was also awarded £20,000 from Wirral SureStart Support Team to buy play equipment for the schemes and t-shirts for the playworkers. Each of the playschemes received a wide range of arts and crafts materials and equipment for sports and games. Throughout the summer, children from all the playschemes utilised the equipment. Many play organisers and their respective committees also fundraise throughout the year to supplement our grant to provide extra playworkers, play equipment and to cover the overheads on the venues they use. The most successful schemes are those that foster local this type of parental and voluntary involvement. Their support is paramount and some playschemes could not operate without it. Many thanks to the local communities play organisers, staff, volunteers and parents for their hard work, commitment and support in collectively providing summer play opportunities for the children of Wirral.

10.0 Financial and Staffing Implications

10.1 This year 30 Playschemes and projects were funded primarily by a grant of £58,000 from Wirral Borough Council. These included full-time summer schemes, schemes for children with disabilities, Outreach Play programme, Mobile Play Project and the Wirral Play Day held at Birkenhead Park. Six full-time playschemes are staffed and funded by the Wirral Council.

11.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

11.1 The summer holiday programme reflects inclusiveness and promotes equal opportunities and access.

12.0 Community Safety Implications

12.1 There are none arising from this report.

13.0 Local Agenda 21 Implications

13.1 There are none arising from this report

14.0 Planning Implications

14.1 There are none arising from this report.

15.0 Anti - poverty Implications

15.1 There are none arising from this report.

16.0 Social inclusion Implications

16.1 There are none arising from this report.

17.0 Local Member Support Implications

17.1 There are none arising from this report.

18.0 Background papers

18.1 Summer Holiday Registration Figures (Appendix A)
Full-time Playscheme Registration Figures (Appendix B)

19.0 Recommendations

19.1 The committee is asked to note this report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

Appendix A

Summer Registration Figures 2007

Playscheme	Days	No Of Children Registered	Under 8's Registered	Total Attendance	Daily Average
Courtney Park	20	55	14	660	33
Eastham	20	144	41	1185	59
Greasby	20	162	36	1172	59
Heswall	20	171	89	1283	64
Higher Bebington	20	103	54	637	32
Irby	20	85	41	542	27
Moreton	20	89	17	762	38
New Ferry	20	240	68	1779	89
Noctorum	20	145	48	810	41
Overton	20	109	47	1267	64
Pensby	20	142	37	1022	51
Prenton	20	109	29	1159	58

Seacombe	20	84	32	867	43
Seacombe Childrens Centre	20	148	58	829	41
Shaftesbury Youth Club	12	112	54	408	34
Tam O Shanter	20	139	61	414	21
Tranmere	20	115	33	1035	52
Vale Park	20	99	37	1137	57
West Kirby	20	194	92	1635	82
Williamson Art Gallery	20	46	N/A	220	11
Women & Children's Aid	20	15	11	N/A	N/A

Specific Needs Schemes

Belvidere Centre	12	36	3	245	21
Foxfield	16	50	N/A	352	22
Wirral Play Council	20	115	25	700	35

Outreach Play Sessions

Central Park, Liscard	2.5	98	71	N/A	N/A
Juliet Avenue, Bebington	3.5	57	35	N/A	N/A
Queens Park, Hoylake	2.5	22	12	N/A	N/A
Bromborough Recreation Ground	3.5	24	14	N/A	N/A
The Puddydale, Heswall	3.5	69	35	N/A	N/A
Thornton Hough Village Green	3.5	73	37	N/A	N/A
Newton Park, West Kirby	3.5	22	12	N/A	N/A
Somerset Road, West Kirby	3.5	42	24	N/A	N/A
		3114	1167	20120	

Appendix B

Open Access Full-time Playschemes

Centre	No Of Children Registered	Under 8's Registered	Total Attendance
Beechwood	118	41	1633
Charing Cross	238	95	2249
Gautby Road	66	28	1796
Leasowe Adventure Playground	153	65	3306
Livingstone Street	161	84	2995
Woodchurch	156	46	2625
Total	892	359	14604