

Halton Borough Council Play Strategy 2007 – 2012

Appendices

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Appendix 1. The Play Partnership

The members

Tim Booth	Halton Borough Council	Parks and Countryside Manager
Tracy Dean	Halton Lodge Children's Centre	Area Network Manager
Geraldine Derby	Halton Borough Council	Divisional Manager
Barbara Egan	Halton Borough Council	Children's Services Manager
Phil Esseen	Halton Borough Council	Principle Landscape and Conservation Officer
Nicola Goodwin	Halton Borough Council	Community Development Manager
John Hatton	Halton Borough Council	Leisure and Community Services Manager
Justine Merton	Barnardo's Widnes Horizons	Children's Services Manager
Judith Temlett	Halton Borough Council	Extended Schools Manager
Tim Ward-Dutton	Halton Borough Council	Public Spaces Manager Specialist Team
Marie Wright	Halton Borough Council	Executive Board Member (Community)
Sally Hendry	Halton Play Council	Chair of the Playscheme Sub Committee
Tim Gibb	Halton Borough Council	Planning Officer
Dave Williams	Connexions	Head of Youth Service
Wesley Rourke	Halton Borough Council	Head of European and Regional Affairs
Jane Smith	Liverpool Housing Trust	Castlefields Project Co-ordinator

Appendix 2. The Play Partnership Terms of Reference

1 Role and Responsibility

1.1 The role and responsibility of the Halton Play Partnership is to:

- Develop, deliver and evaluate the impact of the Halton Play Strategy.

2 Membership of the Play Partnership

2.1 The membership of Halton Play Partnership will consist of those agency representatives invited to the first meeting, and then as agreed by the partnership itself

2.2 Membership should always include representation of the public, voluntary, community and faith sectors

2.3 Members will have sufficient authority to allow them to speak on behalf of their agency and to make provisional decisions

2.4 The Play Development Worker (and other staff as appropriate) will attend the Partnership meeting in a non-voting advisory capacity

2.5 Members shall be entitled to appoint an alternative representative on their behalf as necessary, who can vote at any Partnership meeting

2.6 The process for new members joining the Partnership will be via nominations that will then need to be ratified by the Partnership. Nominations can be initiated by writing / e-mail / telephone contact to the Partnership Chair

2.7 Visitors are welcome, by invitation to attend the Partnership, but have no voting rights.

3 Chairing of the Play Partnership

3.1 Members of the Partnership will elect a Chair annually, or sooner should the Chair be unable or unwilling to continue in that role

3.2 The role of the Play Partnership Chair is to ensure that Partnership meetings and any other business is conducted in accordance with the agreed Terms of Reference

3.3 The Chair may also make interim decisions on behalf of the Partnership between meetings, with decisions made in this manner referred for ratification to the next full Partnership meeting

3.4 The Chair may also convene any extra-ordinary Partnership meeting felt to be necessary, giving Partners a minimum of two weeks notice of the date.

4 Administration of the Play Partnership

4.1 Play Partnership meetings administration will be co-ordinated by the Play Development Worker (in consultation with the Chair), including emailing of invites and papers, booking venues and refreshments, and minute-taking

4.2 The Partnership will meet on a quarterly basis, or at another frequency as agreed by the Partnership

4.3 Play Partnership meeting details, agenda, and minutes of the previous meeting will be circulated before each Partnership meeting

4.4 Minutes will be taken, in particular of decisions made and actions to be taken.

5 Roles and duties of Play Partnership Members

5.1 The mission of the Play Partnership is advanced and that specific work identified in the Play Strategy is also being addressed

5.2 Attend regularly and actively engage in the Play Partnership meetings and business

5.3 Ensure that all Partnership business and decision-making is conducted with integrity, and within the agreed Terms of Reference

5.4 Take part in any Sub-Groups or other Partnership business between meetings as appropriate

5.5 Build understanding and co-operation between the Play Partnership, their own agencies, and other strategies, structures, and play initiatives.

6 Decision Making

6.1 There is no executive group; all members of the Children's Play Partnership have equal responsibility and authority within the decision making process of any particular partnership meeting

6.2 The minimum for a quorate meeting is a third of the voting members on the Partnership

6.3 Decisions are taken by consensus whenever possible, but can be actioned when judged necessary by the Chair by a simple majority

6.4 Partnership members can abstain from voting, as and when they consider this to be appropriate or necessary

6.5 Partnership members have a responsibility to declare any possible conflicts of interest as they arise. The Partnership expects that such members withdraw during discussions that might be compromised by their presence, such as decisions about funding projects they are involved in

6.6 Sub groups, as and when constituted, will operate within whatever authority has been delegated to them by the Partnership.

7 Sub Groups

7.1 The need for Standing Sub-Groups or Task Sub-Groups will be identified through the business of the Partnership

7.2 The Partnership will identify the remit for any Sub-Groups, its membership, and a Chair to co-ordinate (with the assistance of the Play Development Worker) and to lead the sub-group tasks. The Sub-Group Chair will also undertake to report back any findings or recommendations back to the full Partnership

7.3 The Partnership or the Sub-Group Chair may wish to invite non-Partnership members to contribute to a Sub-Group as appropriate to the Sub-Groups remit.

8 Accountability

8.1 The Partnership will report to the Universal Task Group within the Children & Young People Alliance Board.

9 Inclusion

9.1 The Partnership has responsibility of ensuring that the development, delivery and evaluation of the Play Strategy is inclusive

9.2 Meetings will run in an inclusive manner. It is the role of the Chair to ensure all members are heard.

Appendix 3. Taxonomy of Play Types

There are acknowledged to be a number of different play types (around 16) which provide playworkers, managers and trainers with a common language for describing play. These are now used widely, including the underpinning knowledge requirements in the Playwork Level 3 National Occupational Standards 2004.

Symbolic Play – play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding without the risk of being out of one's depth.

Rough and Tumble Play – close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength. Discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display.

Socio-dramatic Play – the enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.

Social Play – play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended.

Creative Play – play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise.

Communication Play – play using words, nuances or gestures for example, mime, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, debate, poetry.

Dramatic Play – play which dramatises events in which the child is not a direct participator.

Deep Play – play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear.

Exploratory Play – play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects.

Fantasy Play – play which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur.

Imaginative Play – play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply.

Locomotor Play – movement in any or every direction for its own sake.

Mastery Play – control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments.

Object Play – play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements.

Role Play – play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.

Recapitulative Play – play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness. Enables children to access play of earlier human evolutionary stages.

Devised by Bob Hughes, published in full in '*A playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types*' (PLAYLINK second edition 2002).

Appendix 4. The Contribution of Play to Every Child Matters

The five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes, with their emphasis on the 'whole child', provide a useful framework to review the wide range of research evidence, which shows the variety of benefits that play can bring.

Being Healthy

Play often involves energetic physical activity, which is known to release oxygen to the brain, helping to create good physical and mental health and a general sense of well-being. There is plenty of evidence of the biological and physiological benefits of active play, the most obvious being the development of motor skills.¹

Play encourages the development of flexibility through the opportunity to try out behaviours or information about the world, which would otherwise not be tried. Research has suggested that this may also perform the function of enabling the brain to retain 'plasticity', which is important in offsetting dementia in old age.²

Staying Safe

Children need and want to take risks when they play. Risk taking is essential to children's and young people's development and enables them to learn how to judge the world.

Play provides the freedom to act independently and to experiment without fear of the stressful consequences of failure. It also encourages self-initiation of activities. It is an important strategy in allowing children opportunities to exercise control over their world.³

Enjoying and Achieving

The significance of play in cognitive development, in terms of the acquisition of information and knowledge, was first identified by Plato and Aristotle: 'Enforced learning will not stay in the mind, so avoid compulsion and let your children play' (Plato). There are numerous examples of educationalists recognising the importance of play in the learning process, from Froebel to Steiner to A.S. Neill.

Play nurtures the development of creativity and problem solving. When playing make-believe games and using objects to represent other things, meaning gradually becomes separated from reality and the capacity for abstract thought begins to develop. Play may become increasingly complex with age, as it offers opportunities to explore alternative solutions and combinations of behaviour, leading to the development of creative problem solving. It has been suggested that play is the only situation where humans are free to be creative.⁴

Fantasy play involving characters and events encourages representational **thing** and symbolic actions. Socio-dramatic play, supported by literacy-rich environments, can foster confidence in literacy, whilst constructive play may involve opportunities for mathematical, scientific and technological learning.

Play provides the means for understanding new connections and relationships between ideas, experiences, skills and knowledge. It also supports the consolidation of learning as it involves practice, rehearsal, repetition, mastery and extension. Play promotes meta-skills and competencies in cognition, memory, language, communication and representation. These are seen as higher order thinking skills that enable children to make connections between areas of learning and experience.⁵

Fun and enjoyment through play is experienced by adults and children alike. As well as being important in its own right, this has been linked to physical and mental health benefits. Fun also often encourages us to concentrate and persevere on a task long enough for learning to occur.⁶

Making a Positive Contribution

Play is supportive of emotional growth. When children act out painful experiences in their fantasy play, they come to terms with their own feelings and those of others. As a result, they learn to manage their feelings more effectively. If play is inhibited, research suggests that the individual is likely to become neurotic.⁷

Play has an ego-building function, which leads to the development of physical and social skills that enhance self-esteem. This in turn encourages children to discover and explore their social world, including their cultural and social roles.⁸

Play promotes social interaction and socialisation. As well as knowledge, understanding and processing skills, children acquire an understanding of customs, rules and relationships. This significance of play was highlighted in a study on abandoned and abused children, which also suggested that play enables us to learn crucial social skills such as sympathy and empathy.¹³ It has been argued that this aspect of play is not only vital for individual development but for the evolution of the human species, because play is the mechanism that helps us cope with an ever-changing world.¹⁰

Achieving Economic Well-being

Play encourages children to take responsibility for their own learning. Allowing and positively promoting children to take control and ownership of their own activity is a very important aspect of teaching and learning. It is difficult to become more skilled at problem solving, investigating or discussing without balance between providing structure or direction and themselves in play and learning activities are more likely to become confident and creative learners than those who are continually 'spoon fed'. ¹¹

There is increasing agreement amongst politicians, economists and the business and academic communities that current approaches to learning are not equipping children and young people with the skills and dispositions necessary for Great Britain to compete in a global society. As indicated above, the kinds of cognitive and physical abilities identified as vital for people in the 21st century can, however, be fostered through a play-based approach to learning, for example:

- Making choices and decisions
- Negotiation
- Independence in thought and action
- Intrinsic motivation and persistence
- Using imagination and creativity
- Experimentation, exploration and investigation of ideas and objects
- Engagement in hypothetical situations
- Use of skills and interests already acquired for different purposes
- Use of a range of social and interpersonal skills
- Understanding rules and structures
- Functioning symbolically ¹²

This is not to say that core skills such as literacy and numeracy are unimportant, but rather that the efficacy of the teaching and learning of these skills would benefit from a more playful approach.

1 Gallahue, D., Understanding Motor Development, Benchmark Press, 1989

- 2 Sutton-Smith, B., *The Ambiguity of Play*, Harvard University Press, 1997
- 3 Bruce, T., *Time to Play in Early Childhood Education*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1989
- 4 Winnicott, D., *Play and Reality*, Routledge, 1971
- 5 Wood, E and Attfield, J., *Play, Learning and the Early Childhood Curriculum*, Paul Chapman, 2005
- 6 Ed. Moyles, J., *The Excellence of Play*, Open University Press, 2000
- 7 Else, P. and Sturrock, G., 'The Playground as Therapeutic Space: Playwork as Healing' in proceedings of the IPA/USA Triennial National Conference, June 1998
- 8 Erikson, E., *Childhood and Society*, Norton, 1963
- 9 Brown, F, and Webb, S., 'Children Without Play' in *Journal of Education*, March 2005
- 10 Hughes, B., *Evolutionary Playwork and Reflective Analytic Practice*, Routledge, 2001
- 11 Griffiths, R., *Mathematics and Play*, Open University Press, 2000
- 12 Moyles, J., *The Excellence of Play*, Open University Press, 2005

Appendix 5. The Play Charter

The Play Charter

1. Children need to play

Children have a natural inclination to play. It is essential to the healthy mental, physical, emotional and social development of every child. While the needs of older children and teenagers are different from those of young children they are no less important.

2. Children need freedom to play

Play takes place when children and young people get to decide what to do and who to do it with, when they negotiate their own rules and boundaries, and their imaginations are allowed free rein. It is not performed for any external goal or reward. In supervised provision, trained play workers have an important role in supporting children to create and explore their own play experiences.

3. Children need space to play

While children can and do play indoors, it is essential that children have easy access to outdoor space for spontaneous physical activity. Every child should have place to play close to home. General community spaces, such as streets or the spaces between buildings, are as important as dedicated play provision.

4. Children need time to play

Children should have the chance to play every day, when they are not being told what to do, who to do it with or where to go.

5. Children must feel safe and welcome where they play

Communities must make safe, welcoming, accessible provision for all children to play, no matter what their age, physical or mental abilities, personal circumstances or cultural background. Children and young people who are different from the majority have a right to play in the same places as other children, should they want to.

6. Children are the best authorities on play

Children know what they enjoy and what makes them happy. Playgrounds or other spaces and facilities that will be used for play including school grounds, will be more successful if children and young people are meaningfully involved in their design and in decisions affecting them.

7. Play is everyone's responsibility

The ability for children to play freely outside is a sign of a healthy, vibrant community. While children do not need adults to tell them how to play, parents, communities and government do have a duty to ensure that children have the chance to play every day.

Appendix 6. The Inclusion Charter

Inclusion is a right

All children have the right to be included in every aspect of society. Disabled children should not have to ask or fight to be included in the things that other children do. Inclusion is a right in UK law (the Disability Discrimination Acts) and international law (UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

Inclusion is about all of life

"We want to be part of society"

Inclusion is a process of change where all children are valued in every aspect of their life and in the life of their community.

Inclusion means no one is left out

Inclusion means all children, whatever their impairment, wherever they live and however they communicate.

Inclusion starts early

From the very earliest age, disabled children should have the right to play and learn with other children, enjoying all the aspects of life and friendships that other children do.

Inclusion means everyone is heard

"We want to be respected"

All children have the right to communicate. Some express their views without using speech and services must respond.

Inclusion is everyone's responsibility

"We want to go where other children go"

Disabled children are not just the responsibility of specialist disability services. All services need to ensure that disabled children can take part in everything they do.

Inclusion is built in

Everyone who works with children must have training in disability equality to equip them with the skills to ensure disabled children are able to participate.

Inclusion benefits everyone

Inclusion benefits all children and young people, as well as adults. It promotes citizenship and helps create a society that celebrates difference and is at ease with itself.

Inclusion works

All over the country, right now, there are thousands of examples where inclusion is working. Disabled children can and should be included in every area of life.

Appendix 7. Reporting of Consultation

This appendix contains the reporting on all the new consultation carried out by Halton Borough Council for the development of the Halton Play Strategy.

Halton Borough Council Play Strategy: Consultation with 5-10 year old children at East Runcorn, Castlefields and Norton South Wards Open Access Play Centres.

Methodology

Questionnaire to be completed by child with support of Play Worker.

Questionnaire involved pictures and simple tasks.

The three Play Centres chosen to carry out the consultation are operated as open access Play Centres and also deliver out of school childcare.

The centres are located in East Runcorn (Runcorn New Town) in Windmill Hill, Castlefields and Norton South Wards, all are in the top 20% most deprived areas and 2 (Windmill Hill and Castlefields) are in the top 4% most deprived wards nationally.

Sample size 34

Result

Q1 Where do you play?

At home (13)
On the street (20)
Informal play space (23)
Playground (14)
After School Club 1* (32)
Play centre 1*
Friends house (24)
Parks (30)
Childminders (5)
Playschemes (13)
Sports fields (6)
Other (1) tree house

*1 As the Play Centres offer both open access play and childcare we have assumed that the children mean the centre they are at.

Q1a Given a free choice where would you like to play?

Ice Rink (5)
Beach (2)
Park (12)
Skate Park (1)
Bowling Alley (3)
Home (4)
Football pitch (3)
Swimming baths (4)
Amusement park (6)
Informal space (3)
Cycle paths (2)
With friends (1)

Q2 What do you like doing?

Wheeled activities (8)

Football (9)

Bowling (4)

Fishing (2)

Swimming (3)

Sport (3)

Play station (5)

Board games (1)

Cinema (1)

Museums (1)

Amusement parks

Ice skating (1)

Play ground games (2)

Art activities (4)

Gender specific activities (2)

Going to the park (4)

Going out (2)

The interviewer felt that children seemed happy to offer one answer to this question rather than a range of answers, the opposite of how they responded to Q1 about where, when a range of options were offered.

Q3 Why grown ups may stop children from playing freely?

Choice of 4 boxes to tick

Scared will get hurt (20)

Bullying (17)

Traffic (23)

Don't like us hanging about (17)

Again children found it easier to respond to tick boxes.

Children where then asked to give any other reasons why they thought parents stopped them playing. Responses were;

Parents fear of strangers (18)

Drugs (2)

Condition of play areas (3)

Dogs (2)

Bus ways *1 (1)

Fear of water *2 (2)

General – parents don't like me playing out on own – no specific reason (11)

*1 a bus way runs through two of the wards

*2 a canal runs through Castlefields & Windmill Hill

Q4 Given a free choice what activity would you really like to do?

Go to ice rink (4)

Board games (2)

Football (6)

Bowling (3)

Play on bike, roller skates etc (6)

Playground (3)

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Drama (1)
Go to seaside (3)
Go swimming (5)
Golf (1)
Just play with friends (3)
Sports (3)
Fishing (2)
Cinema (1)
Farm (1)

Again, without prompting children automatically constrained themselves to one answer.

Q5 Children were given a series of statements (read to those who couldn't read) about what adults think we should put in the Play Strategy and asked did they think we had got the important things right?

Statements were;

- Make sure grown ups know that play is important for children
- Make sure there are parks and playgrounds near to where you live
- Make sure that your play can be exciting and challenging, but safe
- Make sure there are places for you to play how and when you want, with grown ups to look after you
- Make sure there are places for children to play when their parents are at work
- Make sure all children are included in play
- Make sure that the places where you play are safe and looked after

Replies:

Don't Know	7
Yes	27
No	0

Q6 Children were then asked if there was anything else they wished to tell us. Responses included;

- "Glad that 'someone' was doing something about play"
- "Would like a playground near me"
- "I want a safe place to play"
- A swimming pool on our estate
- Better outdoor play equipment at Play centre
- Open air swimming pool
- Would like an ice rink
- Cleaner play areas (no dog muck, needles, condoms, glass)
- Improve town park
- More/better toys in Play Centres

- o Basketball courts

In response to the questions relating to barriers to play, it is evident that there are some real or perceived barriers to young children accessing play opportunities.

Parents are reluctant to let children play 'out' unsupervised.

The children were unsurprisingly generally in favour of adults looking at play opportunities and trying to improve them and endorsed the statements made in the questionnaire.

Halton Borough Council Play Strategy: Consultation with 5-10 year old children at West Runcorn and Beechwood Open Access Play Centres

Consultation with 5-10 year old children at three Open Access Play Centres.

Methodology

Questionnaire to be completed by child with support of a Play Worker.

Questionnaire involved pictures and simple tasks.

The two centres chosen are located in West Runcorn in Mersey Ward (top 25% most deprived) and Beechwood.

Sample size 20

Results

Q1 Where do you play?

At home (9)
 On the street (14)
 Informal play space (19)
 Playground (14)
 After School Club (15)
 Play centre (5)
 Friends house (18)
 Parks (20)
 Playschemes (8)
 Other (1) Swimming Baths

Q1 a Given a free choice where would you like to play?

Where	No	0	6	12
-------	----	---	---	----

Street (1)				
Beach (2)				
Park (8)				
Bowling Alley (1)				
Home (3)				
Football pitch (1)				
Swimming baths (10)				
Amusement park (1)				
Informal space (3)				
With friends (1)				
Woods (1)				

Q2 What do you like doing?

Activity	No	0	5	10
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Wheeled activities (2)
 Football (3)
 Sport (4)
 Play station (3)
 Trampolining (2)
 Reading (4)
 Skipping (2)
 Playing with pets (2)
 Playing with friends (2)
 Garden (1)
 Going to beach (1)
 Going to the park (4)

The interviewer felt that children seemed happy to offer one answer to this question rather than a range of answers, the opposite of how they responded to Q1 about where, when a range of options were offered.

Q3 Why grown ups may stop children from playing freely?

Choice of 4 boxes to tick

Scared will get hurt (18)
 Bullying (8)
 Traffic (19)
 Don't like us hanging about (11)

Again children found it easier to respond to tick boxes.

Children were then asked to give any other reasons why they thought parents stopped them playing. Responses were;

Reasons	No	0	9	18
Parents fear of strangers	8			
Condition of play areas	9			
Dogs	2			
Make too much noise	3			
General – parents don't like me playing out on own – no specific reason	4			

Q4 Given a free choice what activity would you really like to do?

Activity	No	0	6
Skipping	1		
Board games	2		
Football	2		
Play on bike, roller skates etc	4		
Playground	1		
Go to seaside	1		
Go swimming	2		
Just play with friends	3		
Sports	2		
Trampoline	3		

Again, without prompting children automatically constrained themselves to one answer.

Q5 Children were given a series of statements (read to those who couldn't read) about what adults think we should put in the Play Strategy and asked did they think we had got the important things right?

Statements were;

- Make sure grown ups know that play is important for children
- Make sure there are parks and playgrounds near to where you live
- Make sure that your play can be exciting and challenging, but safe
- Make sure there are places for you to play how and when you want, with grown ups to look after you
- Make sure there are places for children to play when their parents are at work
- Make sure all children are included in play
- Make sure that the places where you play are safe and looked after

Replies

Don't Know	7
Yes	27
No	0

**Q6 Children were then asked if there was anything else they wished to tell us.
Responses included;**

- More places to play
- 'We support and love football'
- "To play with more friends"
- "I'm in the netball team"
- More dog bins
- "See a skateboard park by me"
- More litter bins
- More football pitches

In response to the questions relating to barriers to play, it is evident that there are some real or perceived barriers to young children accessing play opportunities which were consistent between the two sample groups.

Parents are reluctant to let children play 'out' unsupervised.

The children were unsurprisingly generally in favour of adults looking at play opportunities and trying to improve them and endorsed the statements made in the questionnaire.

Halton Borough Council Play Strategy: Consultation with 5-15 year old children at Chesnut Lodge Special School

Methodology

Questionnaire to be completed by the child with the support of the schools Extended Services Manager.

The questionnaire involved pictures and simple tasks. Given the setting some questions were omitted from the general questionnaire e.g. why grown ups may stop children playing freely?

The school caters for children aged 2 – 16 with medium to severe disabilities. The school caters for the whole of Widnes.

Sample size 20

Result

Q1 Where do you play?

- At home (2)
 - On the street (7)
 - Open Spaces (6)
 - Playground (9)
 - After School Club *1 (10)
 - Friends house (7)
 - Parks (18)
 - Swimming Baths (1)
 - Playschemes (7)
 - Garden (2)
 - Beach (1)
- *1 School offers some after school activity clubs

Q1 a Given a free choice where would you like to play?

Where	No	0	5
-------	----	---	---

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Open Spaces (3) | | | |
| Garden (2) | | | |
| Beach (1) | | | |
| Computer Club (1) | | | |
| Park (4) | | | |
| Caravan (1) | | | |
| With Friends (5) | | | |
| Home (1) | | | |
| In street (1) | | | |
| Play centre (1) | | | |

Q2 What do you like doing?

Activity	No	0	5
----------	----	---	---

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| TV Games (2) | | | |
| Park (4) | | | |
| Friends (1) | | | |
| Football (1) | | | |
| Bikes (1) | | | |
| Running around (1) | | | |
| Caravanning (1) | | | |
| Helping Mum (1) | | | |

Q3 Why grown ups may stop children from playing freely?

Question was not appropriate for the group.

Q4 Given a free choice what activity would you really like to do?

Activity	No	0	5
----------	----	---	---

- | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| Football (3) | | | |
|--------------|--|--|--|

Playground (3)
Running About (1)
Go to friends house (2)
Sandpit (1)
Parks (2)
Fly on aeroplanes (1)
Ball pools (1)

This particular exercise was difficult in its execution without being too leading and as a result it is difficult to abstract any specific trends.

It was useful to observe that this group of children enjoyed access to a similarly wide range of places where they played as able bodied children do (a slightly smaller response on street and in open spaces and a slightly greater percentage utilising parks to which it is assumed they were taken by parents/carers and emphasises the value of these facilities to this group of children).

Halton Borough Council Play Strategy: Parents Consultation

Halton Lodge Children's Centre

Parents Group

9 Parents and Children's Centre Community Worker

Parents had a mixed but relatively traditional experience of play.

When discussing where they played the main locations identified were:

- Outside (generic response)
- Qualified as street, informal play space, shed, garage, park, woods, play area, school field.

They played with siblings and friends dependant on age. Their responses were again largely traditional – with 2 or 3 emphasising imaginative play e.g. making dens, pretending bikes were horse etc.

There was a general belief that children had fewer opportunities/locations than they did. It was not easy or no longer possible to play on the street (traffic/strangers), school field (locked high fence), park (either local ones removed or remaining ones too far away).

Their own children played at home in the garden. Outdoor and indoor play seemed equally popular. There was less mention of imaginative play and strong references to 'play station', 'computer' or specific toys.

On bikes, skateboard etc were still mentioned regularly.

All those with younger children took them to playgroups (unclear whether they did this because of the play/social development/early evaluation opportunity for their children or free time/shopping opportunity for themselves).

Several (4) indicated that they regularly took their children/grandchildren (2 were grandmothers) to local parks some of which they thought were inadequate. All expressed the view that getting to the parks was an issue unless you had a car (most didn't).

By and large the group were immensely 'risk averse' and felt that play areas should be better maintained/safer and certainly supervised ('too many perverts around' and 'smack heads kicking off'). This would appear to have been perceptual rather than based on experience. Only one parent expressed the view that play should involve risk/challenge and appeared to have an understanding of the concept of play as a learning /development experience.

One or two parents had a good knowledge of facilities and services and mentioned a number of parks and playgrounds, playschemes, splash and free swimming. Most had no knowledge of these or any clear idea of how to find out about them. They felt it was the 'authorities' responsibility to put leaflets in the paper etc. to inform them.

The main barriers to play have largely already been identified, namely;

- Access, too far away, no car, no public transport
- Fear of what can go on at play areas (strangers, bullying etc)
- State of play areas (dog muck, needles etc)
- Other (younger children) to look after
- Haven't got time

The general view was that there wasn't enough for children (mainly over 5's) to do; they felt someone should provide something but no clear perception of what.

The perception as interviewer was that the parents in the group

- Didn't understand or value play. Generally viewed it as something that kept them occupied; an objective that was often best achieved by watching television or playing with PlayStations
- Were unable or unwilling to devote a lot of their time to their children's play needs. As a generalisation the older the child is, the less they needed their time.

Stakeholder Interviews

A number of anonymous interviews were carried out with a range of agencies and individuals who are directly involved with children and young people in the Halton area. The individuals had expertise in;

- Disability and special needs
- Youth, anti social behaviour and offending experts
- 0-5 year olds, 6 to 10 year olds, 11 to 16 and 17 to 18 year olds
- The community and voluntary sector
- Children in care
- Hard to reach groups.

The following questions were asked:

2.1 Please give a brief description of your organisation's purpose and your responsibilities for play provision for children and young people in Halton

2.2 What is your understanding of play/free-time?

3.1 What do you think are the big issues around play in Halton?

3.2 What are the barriers to providing better quality play in Halton?

3.3 Is there a strategic approach to play provision within the borough?

3.4 Are there any specific play sites or playschemes that you feel are particularly in need of investment?

3.5 Do you have any play projects ideas that would benefit the children and young people of Halton?

3.6 Is there more that your organisation/department can do (resources, co-ordination etc) to improve play provision across the borough?

4.1 Are there any other issues about play provision in Halton that we haven't covered and that you think are important?

The main issues:

There is a general lack of knowledge of the value of play from the people in 'power' to parents. Hence play has an undeservedly low profile.

In the main our children and young people are being brought up by a generation who do not know how to play themselves or how to play with their children.

There is an uneven geographical spread of play provision in the borough. This needs to be addressed so that all areas have reasonable access to play provision

All future and current provision needs to be accessible and inclusive to all with physical accessibility, special needs and hard to reach groups taken into account.

Migrant families and children are currently confined to home. Play could and should encourage community cohesion.

Maintenance and the upkeep of play areas is important.

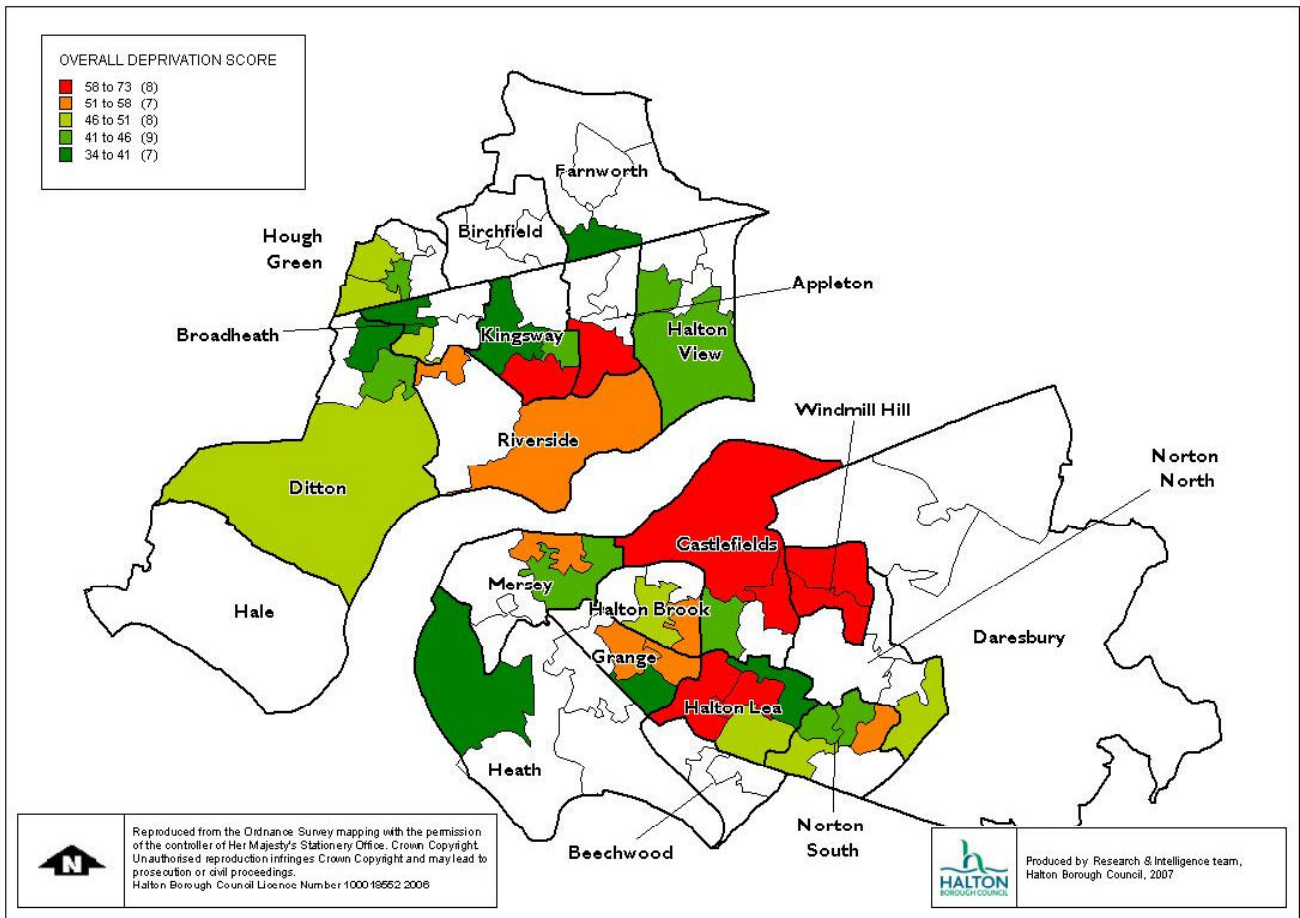
The overwhelming **barriers** to play in Halton were seen as:

- The lack of resources
- The lack of understanding of what play really is and its importance
- Too much focus on enjoy and achieve and not enough on play.
- The lack of visible supervision in play areas.
- The role the media has played in the past

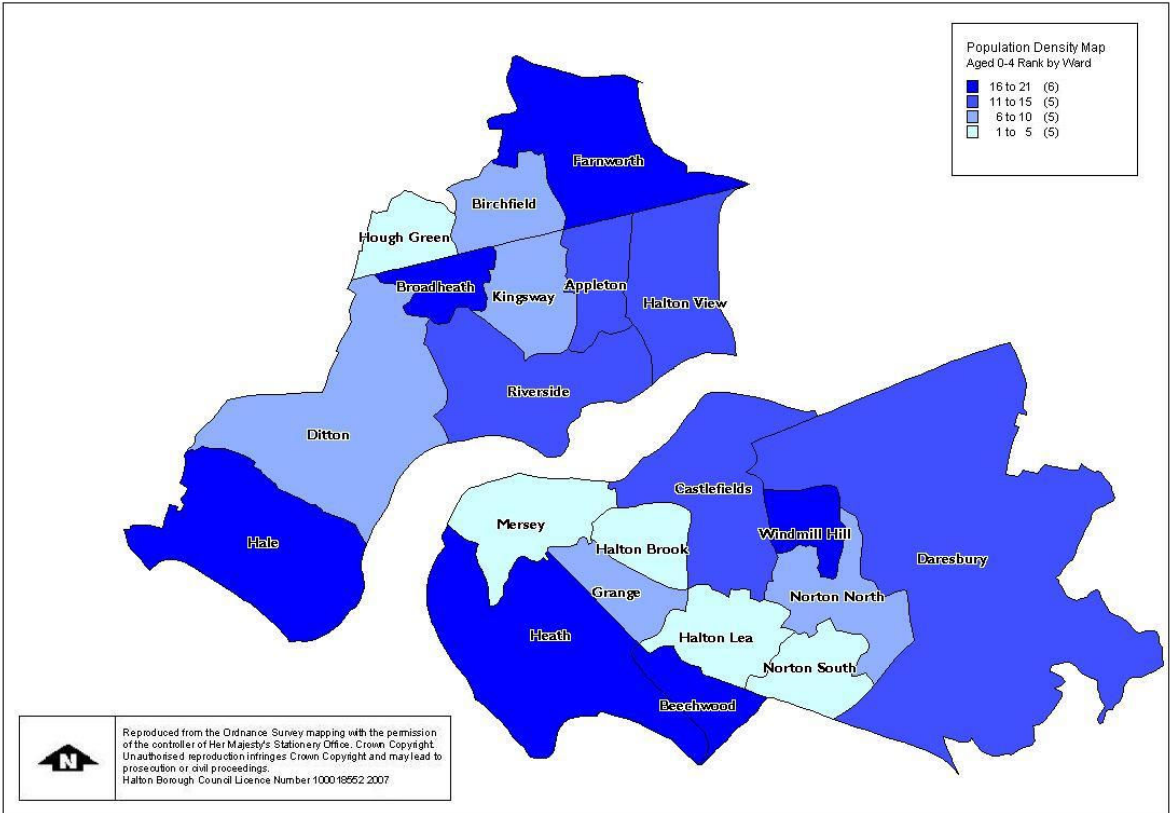
The majority said that although there currently is no **strategic approach** to play in the borough, there were excellent resources and very good schemes. There could be better coordination and the current approach is opportunistic.

Appendix 8. Mapping of Play in Halton

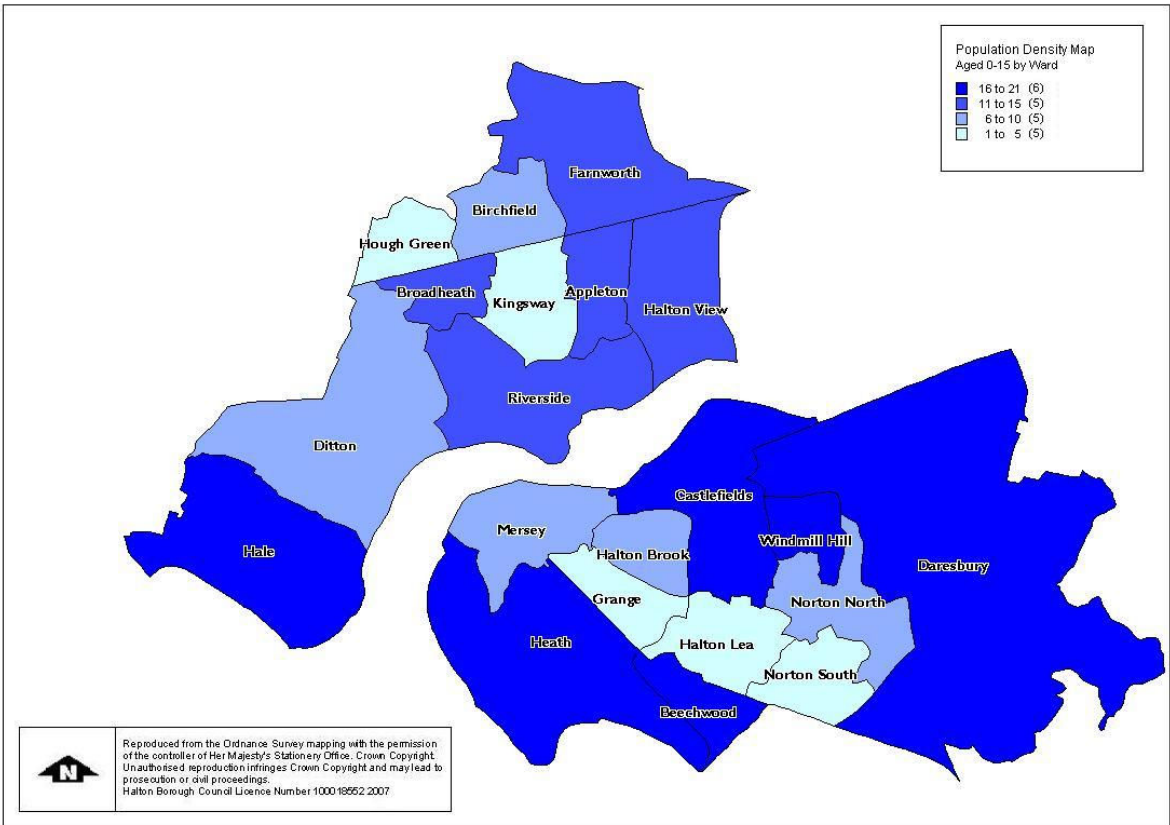
Map 1: Deprivation in the borough of Halton



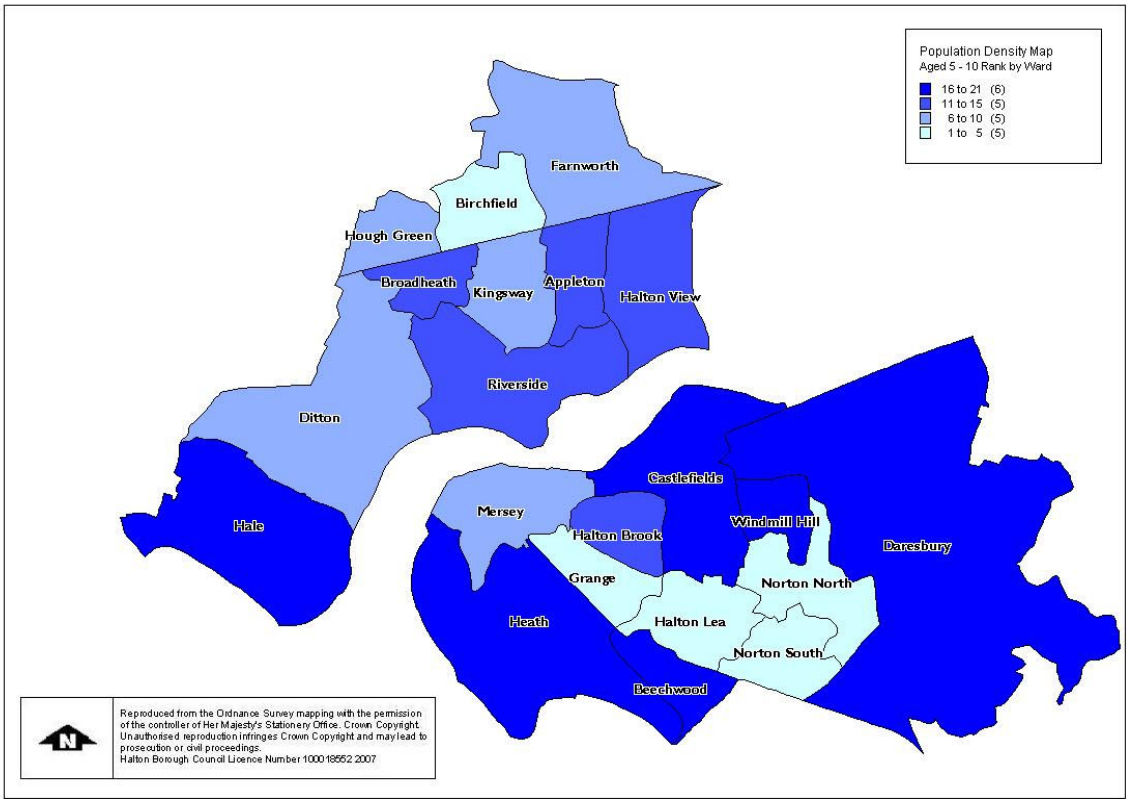
Map 2: Population density (Aged 0 - 4)



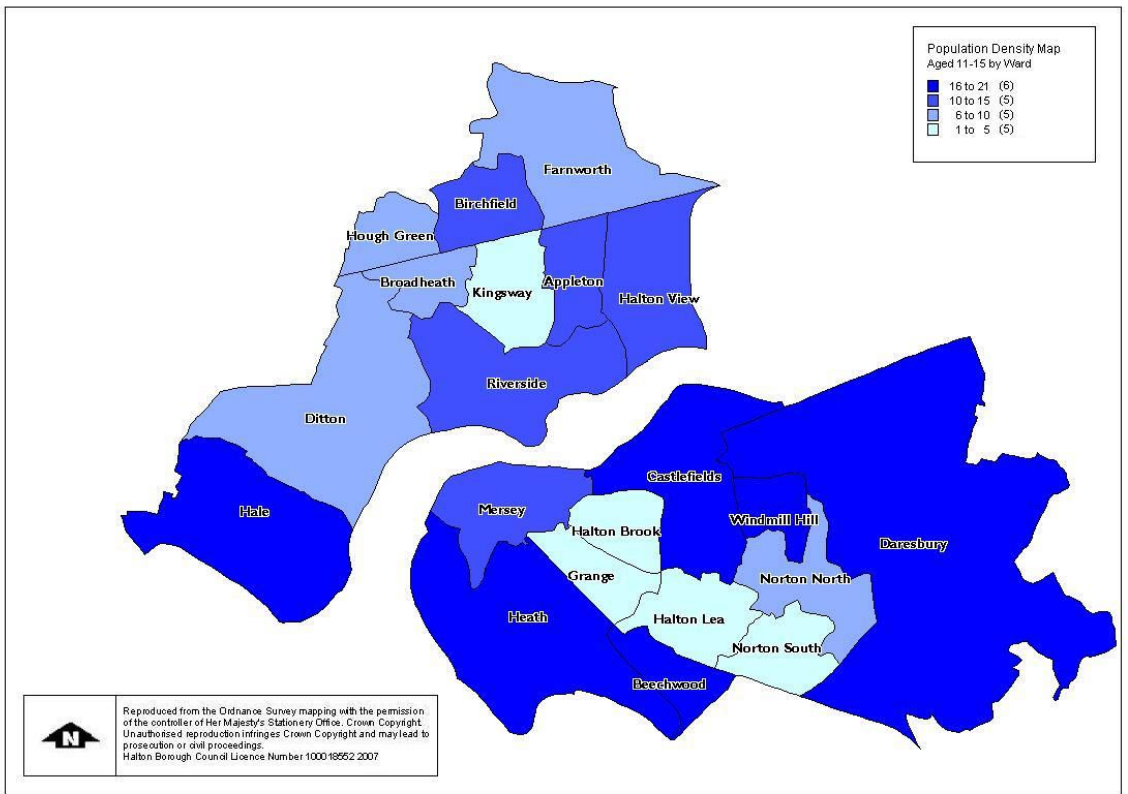
Map 3: Population density (Aged 0 - 15)



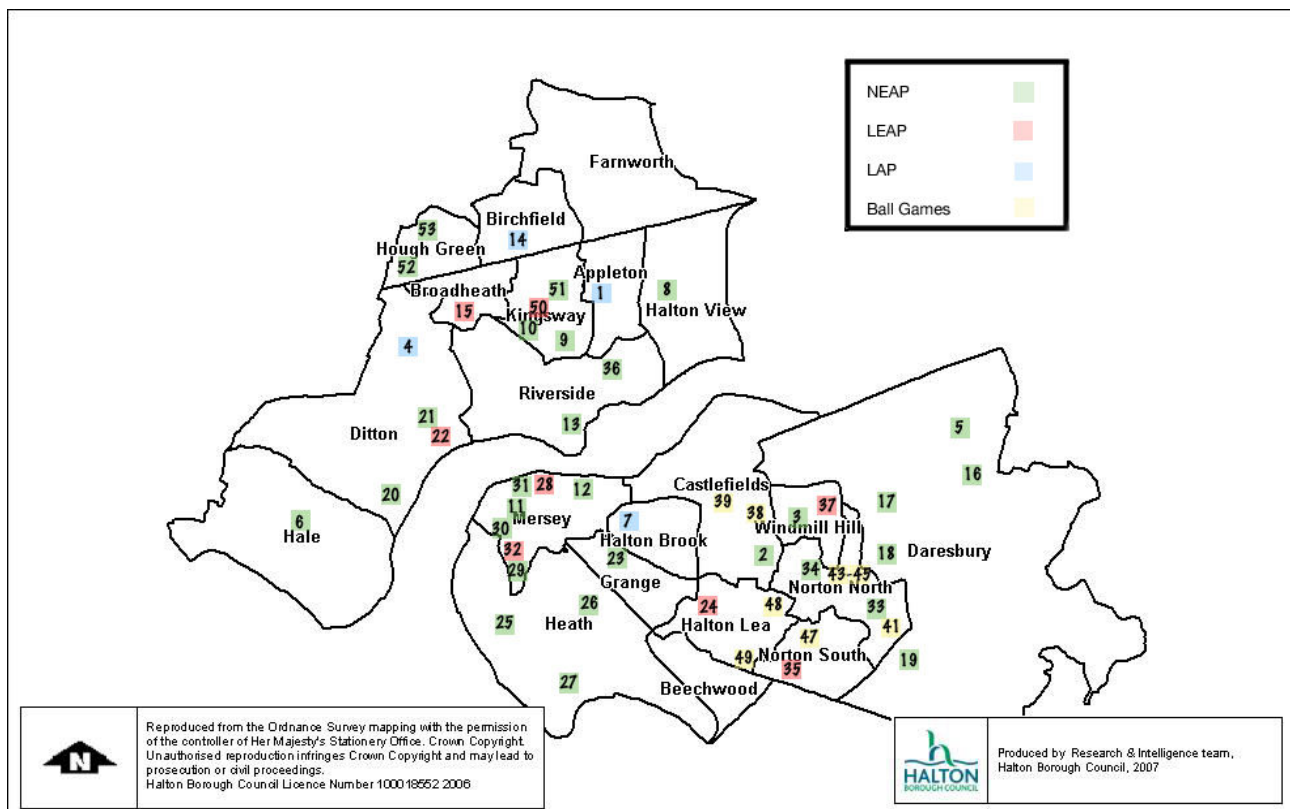
Map 4: Population density (Aged 5 - 10)



Map 5: Population density (Aged 11 - 15)



Map 6: Locations of NEAP, LEAP, LAP's in the borough of Halton



Summary of NEAP / LEAP / LAP

NEAPS - Neighborhood Equipped Areas for Play

Each site should be a minimum distance of 1000m / within 15 minutes traveling time of housing units.

Each site should be of a minimum area of 1000m and surrounded by an appropriate buffer zone (total area requirement 8500m including Buffer Zones).

All equipment and facilities must have been assessed as safe for continued use by a competent playground inspector.

All equipment should comply with BSEN 1176 and surfacing with BSEN 1177.

All equipment with a fall height greater than 600mm must have appropriate impact - absorbing surfacing.

Each site should have a minimum of eight different activities. Multi-play equipment may be counted as having up to three separate activities (e.g. sliding, climbing, rocking, swinging or social play).

Each site should have a hard surfaced kick about / skating / cycle play area within the boundary of the playground.

Each site should be entirely fenced with self closing gates. *

Each site should have signs excluding dogs. *

Each site should be overlooked by housing, pedestrian routes, or other well-used public facilities.

LEAPS - Local Equipped Areas For Play

Each site should be a minimum distance of 400m / within 5 minutes traveling time of housing units.

Each site should be of a minimum area of 400m and surrounded by an appropriate buffer zone (total area requirement 3,600m including Buffer Zones)

All equipment and facilities should have been assessed as safe for continued use by a competent playground inspector.

All equipment should comply with BSEN1176 and surfacing with BSEN1177.

All equipment with a fall height greater than 600mm must have appropriate impact - absorbing surfacing.

Each site should have a minimum of five different activities. Multi-play equipment may be counted as having up to three separate activities (e.g. sliding, climbing, rocking, swinging, or social play).

Each site should have a small games area (may be grassed) within the boundary of the playground.

Each site should be entirely fenced with self-closing gates. *

Each site should have signs excluding dogs. *

Each site should be overlooked by housing, pedestrian routes, or other well-used public facilities.

LAPS - Local Areas for Play

Each site must be formally designated by the Council as a play area catering mostly for children aged 3 - 6, close to where they live (1 minutes walk /100m).

Each site should be enclosed by a fence or barrier (e.g. hedges or planting).

Each site should be of a minimum area of 100m and surrounded by an appropriate buffer zone (total area requirement 400m including Buffer Zones)

There does not have to be play equipment included, however, most authorities advocate the inclusion of small indicative items of equipment within LAPS – such provision would be considered on merit.

Each site should be overlooked by housing, pedestrian routes, or other well-used public facilities.

Each site should have a sign excluding dogs.*

In essence, the six acre standard requires the above criteria to be met. Items marked with an asterik are additional requirements of the audit commission and not the NPFA.

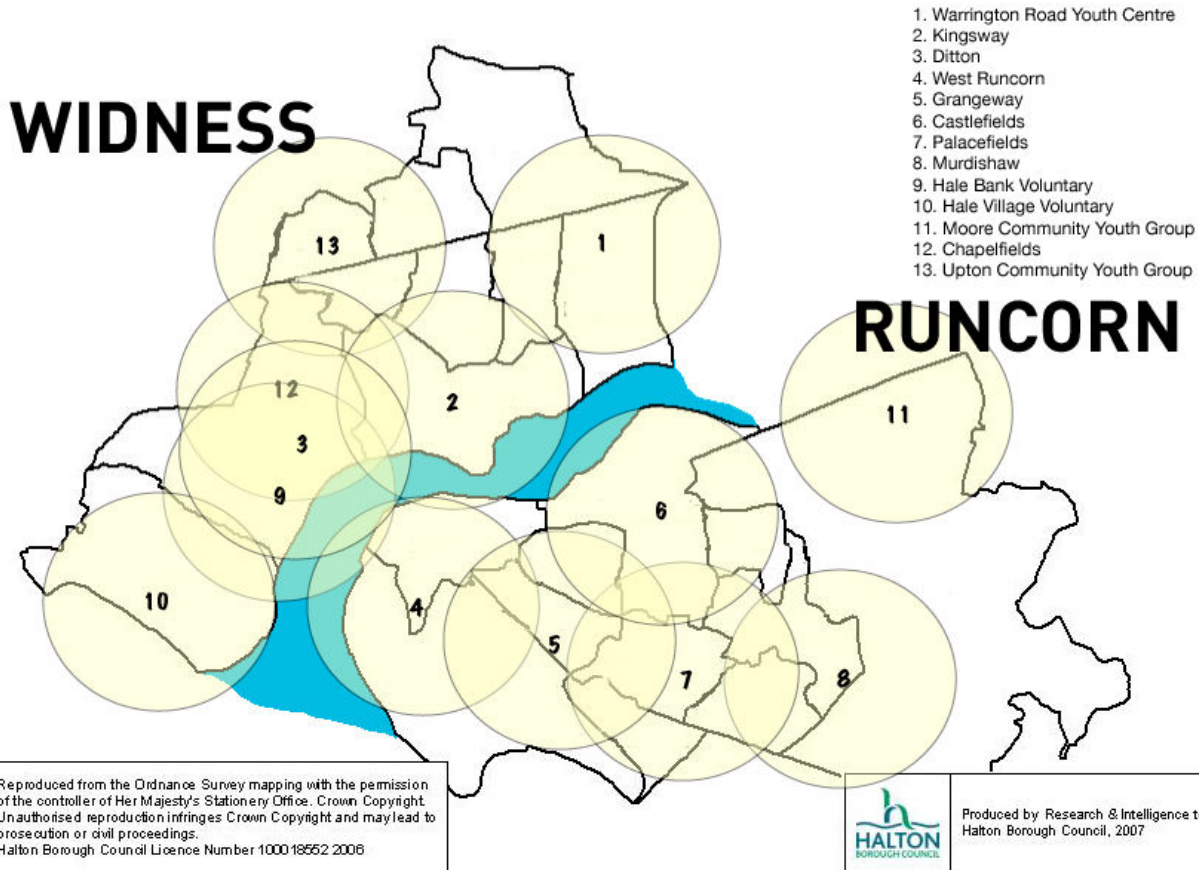
Play Spae Audit by Ward/Population and Deprivation

Ref:	Type	Ward	0-16 population	Deprivation rating in Halton
1	NEAP	APPLETON	1235	7
14	NEAP	BIRCHFIELD	1417	21
15	Ball Games	BROADHEATH	1229	13
2	LEAP	CASTLEFIELDS	1147	3
5	LEAP	DARESBUY	1060	20
16	LEAP			
17	LEAP			
18	LEAP			
19	LEAP			
4	NEAP	DITTON	1357	11
20	LEAP			
21	LEAP			
22	Ball Games			
23	LEAP	GRANGE	1586	9
6	LEAP	HALE	313	17
6	LEAP			
7	NEAP	HALTON BROOK	1420	8
7	NEAP			
24	Ball Games	HALTON LEA	1670	2

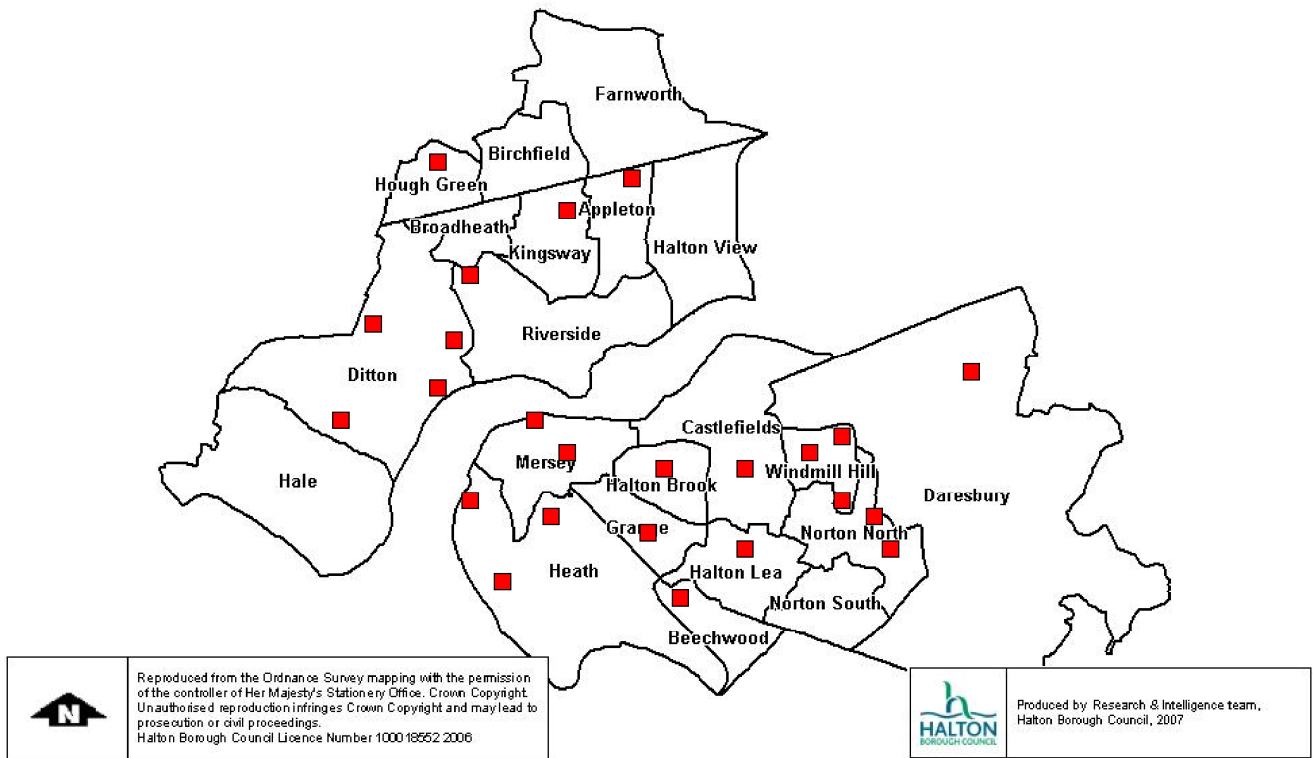
8	LEAP	HALTON VIEW	1224	14
8	LEAP			
25	LEAP	HEATH	1065	16
26	LEAP			
27	LEAP			
52	LEAP	HOUGH GREEN	1466	12
53	LEAP			
9	LEAP	KINGSWAY	1484	5
10	LEAP			
10	LEAP			
50	Ball Games			
51	LEAP			
11	LEAP	MERSEY	1371	10
12	LEAP			
28	Ball Games			
29	Ball Games			
30	LEAP			
31	LEAP			
32	Ball Games			
33	LEAP			
34	LEAP			
35	Ball Games			
13	LEAP	RIVERSIDE	1149	4
36	LEAP			
3	LEAP	WINDMILL HILL	651	1
3	LEAP			
37	Ball Games			

Play Spae Audit by Ward/Population and Deprivation

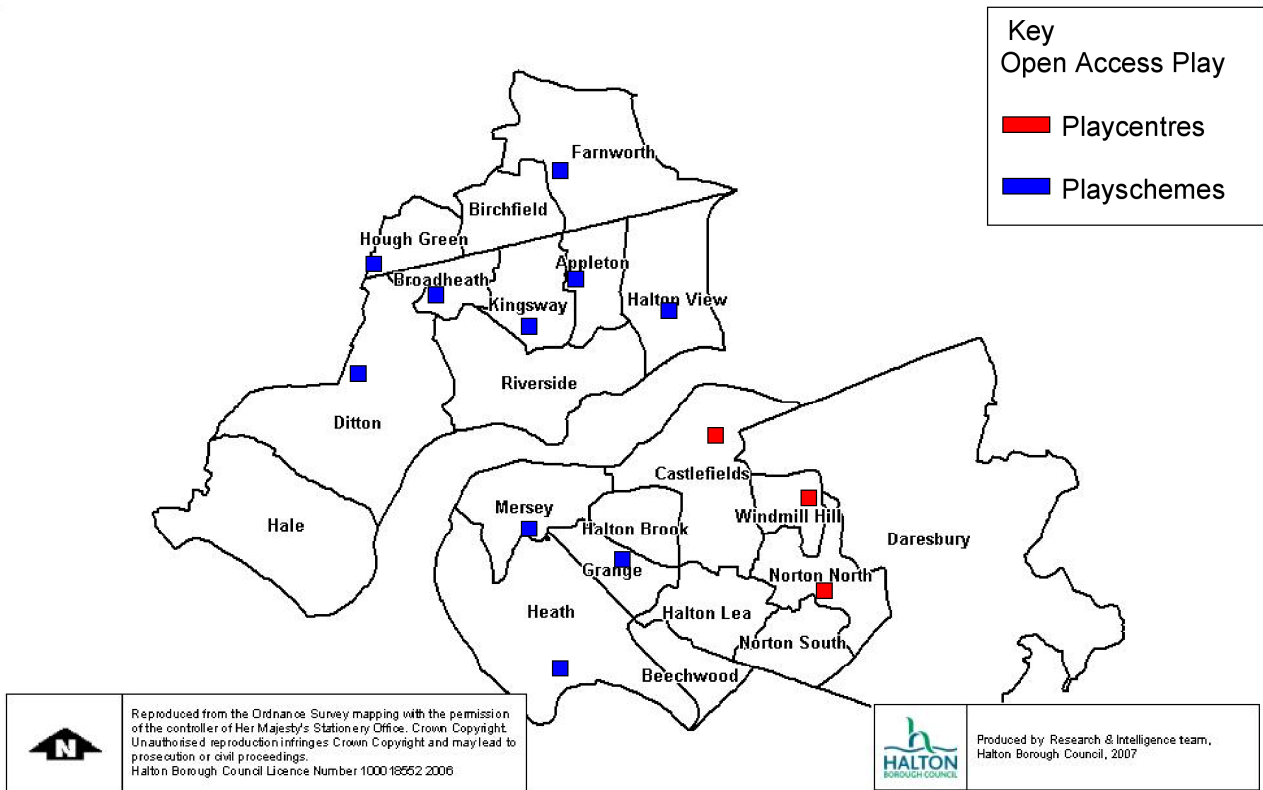
Map 7: Location / mile spread of youth centres throughout the borough of Halton



Map 8: Under 5's playgroups



Map 9: Open Access Play



Map 10: Children's Centres (New and Developing)

