

An Executive Summary of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) 2025: The State of Play in Denbighshire

1. Local Authority Summary Statement

“Making Denbighshire a Play Friendly Community”

Denbighshire County Council understands the importance of the role in which Play contributes to the wellbeing and development of children and young people. It is a fundamental and an integral part of healthy development – not only for individual children, but also for the society they live in. We believe that all children and young people should have access to and take part in play opportunities as recognised by:

1. The Welsh Assembly Government’s National Play Policy (2002) “Play encompasses children’s behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated”. That is, it is what children do when they follow their own ideas for the own reasons.

2. Core Aim 4 of the Welsh Assembly Government’s Seven Core Aims for Children and Young People, which states that: “All children and young people have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.”

3. Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and further defined within General Comment 17, which states that: “Parties recognise 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.”

Denbighshire County Council recognises that the impact of modern society on children’s lives has significantly restricted their opportunity to play freely and has resulted in a poverty of play opportunities in the general environment.

The Play Ranger Service delivers play opportunities across the county all year round. Working with services within the local authority and third-party organisations encouraging and promoting the benefits of play and organisations to help combat this and provide meaningful play opportunities across the county. The service increases the opportunities of play throughout Denbighshire.

Play is a child led agenda which is freely chosen, personally directed, and intrinsically motivated and performed. It is what they want to do and what they choose to do when given the freedom, independence, time and space to determine their own behaviour.

“Play encompasses children’s behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development -not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live.” (WG Play Policy 2002)

Freely chosen means that children themselves choose when, how and what to play. Play is not part of a set programme and does not have any steps that need to be completed.

Personally directed means children themselves control the content of their play and they decide the rules and roles they take when playing.

Intrinsically motivated means that play is undertaken for its own sake, and not performed for any reward, certificate, or status. Play is the process that children are involved in rather than the end product.

Play transcends age, ability, ethnicity, social standing, religion and gender. It can take many different forms and it has many different characteristics. It is this scope and potential in play that makes it inclusive to all children and young people.

The Need to Play -

“Play is the elemental learning process by which humankind has developed. Children exhibit a behavioural imperative and instinctive desire to play. It has contributed significantly to the evolutionary and developmental survival of our species. Children use play in the natural environment to learn of the world they inhabit with others. It is the very process of learning and growth, and as such all that is learnt through play is of benefit to the child.” (WG Play Policy 2002)

Play is critical to all children and young people’s physical and emotional well-being and is central to a healthy child’s life. It impacts on the development of both their bodies and their brains. When given the opportunity to play children are more likely to be physically active by running, jumping, dancing, climbing, digging, lifting, pushing or pulling. Through play children experience a wide range of emotions including frustration, determination, achievement, disappointment, confidence and upset, and through practice, can learn how to manage these. By playing with their peers children also develop their social skills and build strong friendships, which lead to positive feelings of happiness and belonging.

Children deliberately seek out physical and emotional uncertainty in their play. From birth children are inquisitive and curious with a deeply rooted and compelling drive to explore the unknown and experiment with their surroundings. By taking risks and having adventurous play experiences children can challenge themselves, test the limitations of the environment around them, develop problem-solving skills and find creative approaches to new situations. Ultimately play influences a child’s ability to be adaptable and resilient, to cope with stressful events and therefore enables them to support their own well-being.

Play is the essence of childhood, and anything other than free access to the broadest range of opportunities for freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated play, will have a detrimental effect on the development of the child.

Within Denbighshire County Council, we value the children and young people within our communities and see them as equal citizens and we advocate to uphold their right to play whether we are involved in providing for play or by ensuring restrictions on play are avoided whenever possible. Due to the impacts of modern society we

are committed to developing more high quality compensatory play spaces; however we also recognise that the freedom to play should not be constrained to these areas but should instead be promoted throughout the child's community.

We recognise that play is a cross-cutting theme and encourage all stakeholders, organisations and communities to understand the role they have in securing sufficient opportunities for playing within children's communities as part of the statutory duty.

2. Methodology

The Play Sufficiency Assessment has been conducted and completed by the Play Sufficiency Lead Officer and the Play Ranger Team which falls under Education and Children's Services. The team is managed and includes a Childcare and Play Development Manager, Accessible Play Co-Ordinator, Play Ranger, Play Ranger Assistants and a pool of supply Play Ranger Assistants.

The assessment has included contributions from the following departments within the Local Authority:

Education
Children's Services
Transport
Youth Services
Families First
Flying Start
Family Information Service
Childcare Development Team
Integrated Children's Centre
Local Integrated Families Team (LIFT)
Planning
Strategic Planning and Performance
Refugee Resettlement Team
Homelessness Service
Streetscene
Housing
Countryside Services
Highways
Environmental Services

A Play Sufficiency Workshop was delivered by Marianne Mannello - Play Wales in January 2025. All identified partners and stakeholders were invited to attend the workshop which provided an opportunity to further their understanding of Play Sufficiency and how it relates to the services they deliver and how they can contribute to the assessment. A total of 36 people were sent invites to the workshop and there were 19 people in attendance. The attendees took part in various activities and group work to help further their understanding of the play sufficiency assessment.

We received contributions to matters and support from the following partners:

- Primary schools
- Secondary schools
- Menter Iaith Ddinbych
- Denbighshire Leisure Limited
- Denbighshire Arts Service
- Urdd
- STAND
- Dyserth Community Council
- Conwy County Borough Council
- Prestatyn Football Club
- Canolfan Ni South Denbighshire Community Partnership
- Streetgames
- Morrisons
- Tesco
- North Wales Police
- Public Health Wales
- Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs

The Play Ranger Service work with services within the local authority to identify and provide play opportunities in key areas of need across Denbighshire.

Families first provide a grant to support Play and Leisure opportunities for children and young people who need support to access opportunities. This is managed within the Play Ranger Service.

Dyserth Community Council provide funding for a weekly term time after school open access play session which provides opportunities for all children and young people in Dyserth.

The assessment highlights positive multi-agency collaboration across departments and external organisations including Denbighshire Leisure Limited, Families First, Flying Start, North Wales Police, local schools, and community councils. These partnerships have enabled a more integrated approach to play development, though further cross-sector engagement is needed to strengthen support for children with complex needs.

3. How engagement with children and families has informed the Play Sufficiency Assessment

All year-round consultation is ongoing with children and young people who attend the Play Ranger Service open access sessions. Online and paper consultation forms are used to gather information.

31 Parents have taken part in an online survey consultation after “Let’s Play Out Sessions”

Ongoing consultation happening through the form of discussions during open access sessions during term time and school holidays.

531 Year 5 pupils attending school in Denbighshire completed an online questionnaire about their current play time.

226 Year 8 pupils also completed the same questionnaire. This data has been compared to the year 5 data collected in 2022, as the current year 8 pupils were in year 5 on 2022, when the last play sufficiency assessment was carried out.

The questions asked about young people's current views and their opportunities to play. There was a good cross reference of responses from rural schools, Welsh language schools and special schools. The data provided from the questionnaires will be used by the Play Ranger service to improve play opportunities within local communities.

Questions were sent out in Welsh and English and included the following:

1. Faint yw dy oed?

How old are you?

2. Beth yw côd post dy gartref?

What is your postcode at home?

3. Pa ysgol wyt ti'n mynd iddi?

Which school do you go to?

4. Pa mor aml wyt ti'n mynd allan i chwarae neu yn 'cymdeithasu' gyda ffrindiau?

How often do you go out to play or hang out with friends?

5. Oes gen ti ddigon o amser i chwarae neu gymdeithasu gyda ffrindiau?

Do you have enough time for playing or hanging out with friends?

6. Pan nad wyt ti yn yr ysgol, ym mha fath o lefydd wyt ti'n chwarae neu'n cymdeithasu?

When you're not in school, what types of places do you play or hang out in?

7. Wyt ti'n gallu chwarae ym mhob lle yr hoffet ti chwarae?

Can you play in all of the places you would like to?

8. Pa mor dda ydi'r llefydd yr wyt ti'n chwarae?

How good are the places you play in?

9. Pa mor ddiogel wyt ti'n teimlo pan wyt ti'n chwarae neu'n cymdeithasu?

How safe do you feel when playing or hanging out?

10. Sut mae'r oedolion yn ymddwyn pan wyt ti'n chwarae neu'n cymdeithasu?

Ticia un ateb yn unig

What are grown-ups like when you're playing or hanging out?

11. Wyt ti'n cael chwarae allan ar ben dy hun neu gyda ffrindiau?

Are you allowed to play out on your own or with friends?

12. Sut wyt ti, fel arfer, yn teithio i'r llefydd ble rwyt ti'n chwarae?
How do you usually get to places where you play?

13. Sut wyt ti'n teithio i'r ysgol fel arfer?
How do you usually get to school?

14. Ar y cyfan, pa mor dda ydi dy gyfleoedd i chwarae a chymdeithasu?
Overall how good are your opportunities for playing and hanging out?

15. Beth sy'n dda am dy ardal ar gyfer chwarae a chymdeithasu?
What's good about your area for playing and hanging out?

16. Beth sydd ddim yn dda am dy ardal ar gyfer chwarae a chymdeithasu ac sydd angen ei wella?
What's not good about your area for playing and hanging out and needs to be made better?

25 pupils were consulted in Ysgol Tir Morfa – ALN School within Denbighshire. This was carried out alongside delivering play opportunities.

The questionnaire was made in partnership with the Play Ranger Service, Disability Wellbeing Navigators and Ysgol Tir Morfa using Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), to make the questionnaire more accessible.

The questions included were:

1. Are you a boy / girl / other
2. Where do you live?
3. Do you play with your friends?
4. Where do you play?
5. Where do you want to play?
6. Are you allowed to play?
7. Who goes with you?
8. How do you get there?
9. Do you play outside?
10. What stops you playing outside?

The Play Ranger Service also formed focus groups in 9 schools across the County to gain as full an insight as possible into children's thoughts on play within Denbighshire. There was a good balance of schools from the North and South localities of the county. Each group was made up of between 8 to 25 KS2 children from a range of year groups and backgrounds. As a result, we now have a total of 139 children who are part of a School Play Focus Group, advocating their right to play within their school. We encouraged the children to express their opinions on their current opportunities to play and any barriers they face. We did this by encouraging open discussion and providing some worksheets for the children to write any information on.

The focus groups involved started with a little ice breaker game to help the children feel more relaxed about talking to Play Rangers. The children were then asked about what they think play is and what play means to them. They wrote their answers on post it notes which were collected in at the end.

There were 3 separate discussions that took place with the Children which were:

- **Time to play - When do you play?**
- **Spaces to play - Where do you play?**
- **Permission to play - Who lets you play?**

The children were given worksheets to record this information on and also used a flip chart to record it as a group. These activities aided the discussions that were taking place between the play team and the children. Some of the schools had teachers present who also took part in the discussions. Children were also discussing play amongst themselves and the conversation were recorded on flip charts.

The discussions highlighted the following points:

- **Most Children are satisfied with their play opportunities however;**
- **Most children have had a negative experience of playing out due to grumpy members of the public, usually neighbours.**
- **Many children would like to go to the beach or mountains to play but they aren't allowed without an adult due to their parent's safety concerns.**
- **Many children attend structured activities most evenings such as sports teams, dance lessons, music lessons, therefore limiting the time they have to play.**
- **Many children attend after school clubs and don't enjoy playing as they aren't with their friends.**
- **Most Children do have gardens that they can play in and enjoy many different activities within their home but they are not allowed out to play out on the street on their own. This was mainly due to their parents being concerned about strangers and cars going too fast.**
- **Teenagers were a big barrier for them playing out due to them hanging around in gangs and "saying mean things"**
- **Too much dog poo or litter means they cannot play in the grassy areas they want to.**
- **Many children are playing outside of their local community such as leisure centres, soft play centres, roller discos which are all located within the wider community.**

- **Children in rural areas talked about farmers who were having an impact on their play as they wouldn't let them play on or near their land.**
- **A lot of the activities the children were talking about involved a cost.**
- **Lots of activities adults used to play as children cannot be enjoyed now due to modern technology such as ring door bells. "Knock a door run" / "Dingle Ditch"**
- **Glass in the park due to teenagers hanging around drinking and then smashing bottles.**

After discussing these issues with the children, they were then asked what the solutions would be to the issues and they said:

- **Parents being less protective and letting them do more on their own.**
- **Schools letting them play, having longer play times and not being taken away for misbehaving in class.**
- **Having more play resources in school to make play times more fun.**
- **Having more Play Ranger sessions (Open Access Play). They would like the Play Rangers to be there every day, within a walking distance from school or on the school grounds.**
- **Having more sessions in parks so the older teenagers won't say mean things to them and they won't be scared of going into the park**
- **Dog owners to pick up dog poo or have more grassy areas where dogs aren't allowed to go or dogs must be kept on leads at all times. Dog wardens to fine people that don't pick up dog poo and the council to have more bins around and dog poo bins. Free poo bags available for people. Posters or signs encouraging people to pick up dog poo.**
- **More free activities for everyone to take part in. Free trial days at leisure centres, ninja tag, laser tag**
- **Play sessions for girls. Most girls don't like joining in with the boys and would prefer something just for girls.**
- **Roads to be less busy and traffic keeping to the speed limits to make it easier for them to cross.**
- **Ring doorbells to be banned!**
- **Harsher consequences for anyone found to be drinking in the children's play area and the Police to regularly check the area. Regular clean ups**

of the park and grass areas, including the hidden areas behind the trees as this is where they make dens.

Now the focus groups have been formed, this will inform how the Play Team and the local authority can work to try to break down or remove some of the barriers by finding ways to implement the solutions they came up with and identify priorities in the Play Action Plan

4. Maximising resources

The local authority and partners use existing budgets to support opportunities to play across Denbighshire in various strategic and practical ways. Examples of this include partnership working with several departments and organisation in joint delivery of play related activities using shared resources and staff. There is no specific local authority budget for play, funding is purposed from a number of Welsh Government programmes and services bought in from Town and Community Councils and schools which see various match funded initiatives to ensure play opportunities are on offer. Funding is utilised from:

- Childcare and Play element of the Children and Communities Grant
- Families First
- Flying Start
- AWPOG Playworks Holiday Project

Funding has also been provided by Welsh Government in previous years for the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing programmes however these funding streams ended. This had a significant impact on the level of play opportunities being provided across the county as schemes and services which expanded as a result were either cut completely or services reduced significantly. A number of schools previously bought in the Play Ranger service to model and deliver play sessions and to use as interventions for targeted groups of pupils such as refugees and behaviour support. The schools in the majority used their Pupil Deprivation Grant to fund the service however due to budget cuts across all schools and a number of schools finding themselves in financial difficulty, they all had to review the non-essential services they were funding which resulted in cutting the Play Ranger school delivery programme. The impact of this has been reflective within the children's voice when completing the Play Sufficiency Assessment through the year 5 survey, consultations with parents, teachers and the school focus groups. Schools have seen an increase of unwanted behaviours during play times and children have reported that break times are of curtailed, have no resources to play and are not fun.

The local authority's Play Ranger Service was set up using Welsh Government's All Wales Play Opportunities Grant by purchasing 2 vans to provide a peripatetic play service out in the local communities across Denbighshire. The staffing for the Play Ranger Service is funded jointly through the various grants as listed above and from service level agreements with some Town and Community Councils to deliver a continuous play service in their locality. Without the funding from Welsh Government the Play Ranger Service would not be able to operate which would have a significant impact on the level of play opportunities available in Denbighshire. The Play Ranger Service is well established and utilise resource in the community and the children

and young people right across Denbighshire recognise the team as a part of their right to play.

There has been a number of emerging outcomes identified as part of the completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment with lack of funding, lack of play opportunities linked to schools and provision for children with disabilities and additional needs all being reoccurring gaps throughout the assessment. Funding streams are key messages amongst the majority of shortfalls with several solutions being the same to address many of the emerging outcomes of the assessment.

5. Monitoring

The Childcare and Play Development Manager takes strategic responsibility for play in the Local Authority. The rest of the Play Ranger Service is made up of the following:

- Accessible Play Coordinator
- Play Ranger
- Play Ranger Assistants
- Supply Play Ranger Assistants
- Holiday Support Assistant for one to one support

The Accessible Play Coordinator works closely with the Play Officer in Conwy County Borough Council and both jointly deliver in both county's through applying for regional grants jointly. The Play Officer for Conwy also is the named Play Lead for the Regional Partnership Board who represents play leads across North Wales who raised any play sufficiency issues and advocates for play on behalf of the consortia.

Play Sufficiency and Childcare Sufficiency are monitored closely due to the cross overs and interactions of both assessments, The Childcare and Play Development Manager chairs the local authority Childcare and Play Forum meetings which has a number of members attending and contributing including:

- Strategic Planning and Performance
- CWLWM organisations
- Public Health
- Healthy Schools
- Childcare Development Team
- Family Information Service
- CIW
- Flying Start
- Early Education
- Play Ranger Service

Play Sufficiency is a standing agenda item and an update is provided at each meeting with feedback or issues play related raised. These are then used to inform the direction of play delivery, identify any gaps and to find solutions and inform the play action plan priorities. The group meets bi-monthly and is well attended. An outcome of the play sufficiency assessment was to revisit the terms of reference to

ensure all officers who's work stream are linked to play sufficiency are included in the group.

6. Conclusion

This Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) 2025 provides a detailed evaluation of the current state of play provision for children and young people across Denbighshire, as required by the Welsh Government's Play Sufficiency Duty. Led by Dawn Anderson, Childcare and Play Development Manager, the report reflects the Local Authorities commitment to upholding every child's right to play.

Population Trends and Inclusion seen a steady population increase, with significant growth in the 12–17 age group. Diversity has also increased, with more children speaking a first language other than English or Welsh. The Play Sufficiency Assessment reflects improved provision for ethnic minority children, LGBTQ+ children, refugees and asylum seekers, and children in temporary accommodation. However, although there are services dedicated to support the needs of disabled children or those with additional needs, it does appear there are still some access barriers. Children and young people in rural areas are also facing barriers to accessing provision.

Open access play sessions delivered by the Play Ranger Service remain central to the council's play strategy. While significant progress has been made in enhancing inclusive and bilingual provision, further efforts are needed to expand reach into rural communities and areas affected by deprivation. An audit of play spaces has helped inform plans for more inclusive, accessible equipment and environments.

The children's voice has been strongly considered in all areas of the Play Sufficiency Assessment. Children across the county value the Play Ranger Service and the open access play sessions they provide. There is a general consensus that the Play Ranger's not going into schools is missed and children feel this has impacted on play opportunities available to them during the school day.

A key finding in all matters was the reduction or in some instance complete removal of funding streams. This has impacted play opportunities since the 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment where there was a significant amount of funding made available to all services to support the recovery from the Covid Pandemic. There is no specific local authority funding stream for play and in previous years funding which has come from Welsh Government for play has been made available from other budget underspends or been made available to local authorities to late in the financial year to have significant impact. More consideration needs to be given to the funding and importance of play from Welsh Government to local authorities in order for them to meet the statutory duty to provide sufficient play opportunities and the funding streams currently in place a very minimal.

The action plan that has been formed as a result of this assessment will provide a way forward to improve provision for children with disabilities and additional needs, improve play opportunities for children and young people in schools and during the school day, raise the awareness of Play Sufficiency on officers work programmes and how they can play their part, expand the play opportunities further across more

local communities in Denbighshire and improve the areas to play, making them more accessible and inclusive.

7. Theme analysis

Population:

Matter A: The number of children in respect of each age range within its area

Matter B: The needs of children from different cultures and backgrounds within its area

Matter E: Whether there is a charge for play provision and where there is a charge

What children have told us:

- **28%** of year 5 children in Denbighshire **do not** play out with their friends **regularly** with **7% never** playing out with friends outside.
- **38%** of year 5 children don't think there is any room for improvement with their opportunities for playing and hanging out and **62%** say they would like better opportunities for playing and hanging out with **6%** wanting to see significant improvement.
- **31%** of year 5 children are not allowed to play out on their own or with friends.

Strengths

The Play Ranger Service provide free accessible open access play provision across the County in parks, schools and community spaces. Locations chosen are based on data from the Census and the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation. The Local authority has an extensive equal opportunities policy which is underpinned with the delivery of the vision for the Play Ranger Service.

Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 sets out what we want to achieve for the people and communities of Denbighshire over the next 5 years and to deliver the "Denbighshire We Want" and incorporates all of our equality, diversity and human rights activities taking place throughout the council. Equality and diversity is embedded throughout all services in the Council.

Free Community events provide communities with free access to play opportunities, as well as connections to a range of services and support. One key example is the annual National Play Day in Rhyl, which attracts over 3,000 attendees each year. The event offers children a variety of engaging play experiences while also supporting families through information, guidance, and signposting to other available sessions and community events.

The various services across Denbighshire collaborate wherever possible, especially when working together delivers greater benefits to the community than working in isolation.

Weaknesses

Children in some rural areas may struggle to access provision due to transport and the play team not having capacity / funding to deliver in these areas. There are no Local Authority hosted sites for Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities in Denbighshire. Whilst the Local Authority continues to work to find suitable solutions, the Council acknowledges that temporary sites will be set up on different land within the county. The Local Authority understands that any future plans for GRT sites will ensure play needs are provided for. Provision for children with disabilities or additional needs is in greater need. More partnership working is needed to identify and ascertain play spaces which need adapting or improving to provide better accessibility for disabled children or those with additional learning needs.

Opportunities

Funding opportunities to provide sessions in the rural areas and to provide transport for children from rural areas to attend play sessions. Strengthening collaboration between partners will create more opportunities for children, young people, and families to access play provision. This joint approach can help expand resources, share knowledge, and improve the success of future funding applications for events and sessions.

Threats

Further reductions in funding could further impact the play opportunities available across Denbighshire and make it difficult for the local authority to meet the emerging outcomes of the action plan and address the highlighted issues.

Places where children play:

Matter C: The space where children can play, including open space, and any other space

Matter F: Traffic measures that are used to promote access to play

Matter I: The extent to which education and local development planning policies take into account the need to enhance play opportunities for children

What children have told us:

- **57%** of year 5 children would like to see improvements of the places in which they play
- **43%** of year 5 children are happy with the places they have to play
- **24%** of year 5 children can play in **all** of the places they would like to
- Most year 5 children usually feel safe when they are playing out with **47%** of children saying they feel safe **all** of the time.
- **2%** of children say they **never** feel safe and **7%** don't play out at all.
- **62%** of year 5 children would like better opportunities to play or hang out with friends, with **6%** wanting to see major improvements.
- **23%** of year 5 children make their own way to school, either alone or with friends.
- **52%** of year 5 children get taken to the places they play by an adult, with **30%** being driven by car, **47%** of year 5 children either walk, ride on their own or with friends to the places they play.
- Most year 5 children usually feel safe when they are playing out with **47%** of children saying they feel safe **all** of the time
- **38%** of year 5 children think their opportunities for playing out are **great** and couldn't be made much better and **39%** think they are good but could still be made even better
- **23%** of year 5 children think they need better opportunities for playing and hanging out, with **6%** wanting to see significant improvements made.

Children were asked what types of places they play in when they are not in school, the results are below:

In my house or a friend's house 18%

In my garden or a friend's garden 9%

In the streets near my house 7%

On a local grassy area 8%

In a place with bushes, trees and flowers 5%

In a play area with swings, slides and other equipment 11% In a woods near my house 3% On a football field near my house 5% In my school playground 5% Somewhere with sand or water 4% On the bike or skate park 6% In a community centre or leisure centre 3% In a youth club 1% In an afterschool club 5% There was a significant difference between the places children play 2025 to 2022 when the last PSA was carried out. Most children played in their own house or a friend's house in 2022 (43%). This is likely a result of Covid with more children choosing to stay at home.
Strengths Children and young people are venturing further to access play opportunities now than they were 3 years ago.
Weaknesses More than half of the children and young people would like to see improvements of the spaces in which they play. The Local Authority do not currently have a formal process for assessing play spaces for play value. Children feel that break times in school are not fun or they have little resources to play with.
Opportunities To develop a formal assessment process of play spaces where they can be assessed for play value. Raise awareness of the importance of play in school and that break times are protected. Improve facilities available in play spaces to provide better accessibility.
Threats Further reductions in funding could further impact the play opportunities available across Denbighshire and make it difficult for the local authority to meet the emerging outcomes of the action plan and address the highlighted issues.

Supervised provision: Matter D: Supervised play provision Matter G: Playwork training and workforce development
What children have told us: The Play Ranger Service carry out ongoing consultation with Children, young people and parents around their play satisfaction and experiences. Many children reported that they wanted open access play available to them more than once a week. Parents have told us they prefer their children to attend supervised provision due to certain factors such as strangers, teenagers hanging around, smoking, other children.
Strengths The Play Ranger Service offers free open access play across the county to all children and young people. Locations are chosen based on the need in the area, and how accessible the space is. Dyserth Town Council fund weekly play session which runs 39 weeks of the year. Weekly open access play sessions are provided after the school day in the Oaktree Integrated Childrens Centre in Rhyl, Denbigh, Prestatyn and Meliden.
Weaknesses Town and Community councils not wanting or being able to provide funding for play provision. No supervised play provision in the rural areas mainly due to the lack of funding available.
Opportunities More opportunities for staff development through playwork training to be delivered within the Local Authority. Opportunities to advocate for play to the town and community councillors to have open access play in more locations across the county. Schools to open up their grounds for play out of school time.
Threats Further reductions in funding could further impact the play opportunities available across Denbighshire and make it difficult for the local authority to meet the emerging outcomes of the action plan and address the highlighted issues.

Policy synergy, engagement, advocacy and information: Matter F: Measures used to promote access to play, including the provision of information, publicity and events Matter G: Training opportunities for the play workforce Matter H: The level of community engagement and participation Matter I: The extent to which other policies of a local authority take into account the need to enhance play opportunities for children
What children have told us: • 90% of year 5 children say most adults are either okay or great about them playing out. • Most year 5 children think that adults are OK about them playing out, with only 10% saying adults are grumpy. • Most year 5 children are allowed out to play without an adult, with 31% never being allowed out without an adult • 24% of year 5 children can play in all of the places they would like to • 76% of year 5 children feel they are unable to play in all of the places they would like to, with 6% saying they can hardly play in any of the places they would like to.
Strengths Dyserth Town Council fund a weekly open access play session which runs for 39 weeks of the year during term time. The Play Ranger Service is well established and recognised service with all the children in Denbighshire who feel the value and importance of the open access play sessions available to them demonstrated in over 20,000 attendances during 2024. The local authority recognises the value and importance of children's right to play and has a strong passion to improve play opportunities across Denbighshire.
Weaknesses Town and community councils have a lack of understanding of play and the benefits for the children and the community. Not all departments understand that their work impacts on children's opportunities to play and the local authority's statutory duty for play sufficiency.
Opportunities Opportunities to advocate to town and community councils to enable more funding for open access play in more locations around Denbighshire. Advocating opportunities to parents to allow children access to more play opportunities. Raising the awareness of play sufficiency to professionals and decision makers whose work impacts on children's opportunities to play.

Threats

Further reductions in funding could further impact the play opportunities available across Denbighshire and make it difficult for the local authority to meet the emerging outcomes of the action plan and address the highlighted issues.