



## Consultation on the Housing (Wales) Bill

Play Wales is the national charity for children's play. We work to raise awareness of children and young people's need and right to play and to promote good practice at every level of decision making and in every place where children might play.

We are the charity that provides advice, support and guidance for all those in Wales who have a concern or responsibility for any environment where children and young people might play. We uphold children's right to play. Playing is central to children's physical, mental, social and emotional health and wellbeing<sup>1</sup> and the right of all children to play is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Through play, children develop resilience and flexibility, contributing to physical and emotional wellbeing.

All children are entitled to quality play provision within their communities and we work strategically to achieve this goal on their behalf.

We are pleased to provide evidence inquiry into the general principles of the Housing (Wales) Bill being undertaken by the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee.

Play Wales is currently working with Save the Children Wales' Travelling Ahead project to develop information to support local authorities to consider and include play and early years provision when developing new Gypsy and Traveller sites in response to identified need for such from our constituency.

Therefore, we will be making comments on those particular parts of the Housing (Wales) Bill (hereafter 'the Bill') which makes provisions with regard to Gypsies and Travellers (sections 84 to 89.). Sections 84 and 85 concern the duty on local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and include a system of approval by the Welsh Ministers.

### Play for Gypsy and Traveller children

Play Wales has been approached at various times by early years, play and childcare providers, who voice concern that many Gypsy and Traveller children living on sites have inadequate access to safe play spaces and to appropriate facilities on site which will allow early years and family support services to be developed and delivered.

Consultations<sup>2</sup> with young Gypsies and Travellers have highlighted the importance that they place on space, time and permission for play. Whilst living on a site provides many children and young people with companions to play with, lack of space and facilities to play is a recurrent problem identified by young people.

One day Wales will be a place where we recognise and provide for every child's play needs

Un dydd bydd Cymru'n wlad ble y byddwn yn cydnabod ac yn darparu ar gyfer anghenion chwarae pob plentyn

National Office  
Baltic House  
Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff  
CF10 5FH

Swyddfa Cenedlaethol  
Tŷ Baltig  
Sgwâr Mount Stuart  
Caerdydd  
CF10 5FH

Tel (029) 2048 6050  
Cymraeg (029) 2043 6927  
Fax (029) 2048 9359

[mail@playwales.org.uk](mailto:mail@playwales.org.uk)  
[post@chwaraecymru.org.uk](mailto:post@chwaraecymru.org.uk)

[www.playwales.org.uk](http://www.playwales.org.uk)  
[www.chwaraecymru.org.uk](http://www.chwaraecymru.org.uk)

---

Registered charity No. / Elusen  
Cofrestredig Rhif. 1068926

A company limited by guarantee  
registered in Wales, No. / Cwmni  
Cyfyngedig drwy warrant  
cofrestrwyd yng Nghymru, Rhif.  
3507258



---

Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

In surveys with parents, often the most common reasons why sites did not meet respondents' needs included the lack of a play area.

The consultations and surveys have also identified that services such as playgroups and staffed play provision can support integration, and address the issues of mistrust and lack of respect.

Many current sites across Wales do not have facilities, which would enable formal early years and play provision to take place because they do not meet minimum requirements for registration purposes in terms health and safety or space or because there is not community facility on site.

In 2009 the Children and Young People Committee of the National Assembly held an Inquiry into the provision of safe places to play and hang out. Gypsy and Traveller children and young people told the Committee that they were often unable to access organised play activities because of the distance to them from their homes. The provision of new, well designed accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers will enable the early years and play needs of the community to be considered from the outset.

### **Synergy with other legislation**

Section 11 of the **Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010** places a duty on local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their area.

The Play Sufficiency Duty comes as part of the Welsh Government's anti-poverty agenda which recognises that children can have a poverty of experience, opportunity and aspiration, and that this kind of poverty can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds across Wales.

The Order which brings into effect section 11(1) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, which requires all Local Authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities for children within its area commenced on 1 November 2012. Local Authorities from across Wales submitted their first play sufficiency assessments to the Welsh Government on 1 March 2013.

The Welsh Government has produced Statutory Guidance, (Creating a Play Friendly Wales) to support Local Authorities to complete their Play Sufficiency Assessments, which sets out the matters to be taken into account. The Guidance indicates that play assessments should cover the extent to which play opportunities are appropriate to the requirements of children from diverse communities and cultures, including Gypsy and Traveller children and young people. As part of their Play Sufficiency Assessments, local authorities assessed to what extent it provides designated and well-maintained play space on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

The **Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011** places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Following Welsh Government's lead, a number of local authorities are beginning to consider 'adopting' the UNCRC. The Bill's provision to provide new Gypsy and Traveller sites might be one of the ways that local authorities can be helped to see tangible outcomes from having *due regard* and promote the UNCRC for Gypsy and Traveller children.

The 'reintroduction of a statutory duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers' was a 2008 Concluding Observation from the UNCRC Committee to the UK State Party. Through this Bill, Welsh Government will actively be implementing a recommendation and promoting children rights under article 27 of the Convention.

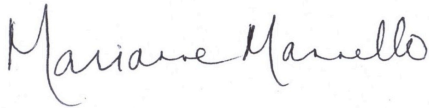
## Conclusion

Play Wales congratulates the Welsh Government on the introduction of these provisions, which we fully support. The statutory duty on local authorities to provide new Gypsy and Traveller sites where need has been identified will improve the standard of accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller families and provide better access to services. It will also help to address the inequalities suffered by Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Through good quality sites, children and young people will be better able to access education, healthcare, play, youth and community facilities, and become more integrated into society, which will benefit everyone in Wales.

Please feel free to contact Play Wales should you have any queries regarding our submission.

Kind regards,



Marianne Mannello  
Assistant Director

<sup>1</sup> Lester, S. and Russell, W. (2008) *Play for a Change: Play, policy and practice - a review of contemporary perspectives*, London: National Children's Bureau

<sup>2</sup> Cath Larkins and Trudy Aspinwall, Ear 2 the Ground, For Save the Children Wales (2010), Travellers and Gypsies: Generations for the Future