



tcpa

Raising the healthiest generation in history: why it matters where children and young people live

Recommendations and an evidence review from the Levelling Up
Housing and Communities Committee inquiry into children, young
people and the built environment

2024



Raising the healthiest generation in history: why it matters where children and young people live

©TCPA. December 2024

Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)

17 Carlton House Terrace
London SW1Y 5AS

020 7930 8903

tcpa@tcpa.org.uk

www.tcpa.org.uk

Author

Gemma Hyde- [TCPA](#)

Contributing authors

Alice Ferguson and Ingrid Skeels- [Playing Out](#)

Helen Griffiths and Alison McCann- [Fields in Trust](#)

Dinah Bornat- [ZCD | Architects & Engagement Specialists](#)

Tim Gill- [Rethinking Childhood](#)

Julia Thrift-TCPA

Sally Roscoe-TCPA

Clémence Dye-TCPA



This report is dedicated to the late Nicky Gavron

Nicky's advocacy and persistence played a pivotal role in securing the Levelling Up Housing and Communities Committee inquiry on which this report is based. This achievement was only one of many victories she won for children and families over some five decades of public life. As London Deputy Mayor (2000 to 2008) Nicky spearheaded *The London Plan*, and with it the first ever regional guidance for children and young people's play and informal recreation - key parts of which became policy in *The London Plan 2021*. This policy, probably unique for a major global city, means that children and young people's play needs are front and centre in London, for policy making and new housing development proposals.

As a leading London politician, Nicky was a longstanding champion for children and teenagers, especially those living in disadvantaged areas. Unlike many of her peers, she instinctively knew that decent neighbourhood amenities and public spaces were just as vital to families as good public transport or jobs. Thousands of London's families have her to thank for improved streets, parks and play spaces. Alongside her admirable political convictions and accomplishments, Nicky was – as several of this report's authors know from personal experience - a generous, warm-hearted person who was willing and able to set aside tribal allegiances to get things done. She will be sorely missed. If this report leads to a fraction of her successes, it will be a fitting tribute to her legacy.

Felicia Nicolette Gavron 1941 – 2024



Contents

Executive summary	5
Recommendations:	6
1. Introduction	7
Background to this report	8
Note on quotations and referencing	9
Committee members	9
Notes on language	9
2. Recommendations	10
Prime Minister	10
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government	10
Secretary of State for Transport	11
Secretary of State for Education	11
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care	11
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	11
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport	12
Equality and Human Rights Commission	12
3. Evidence summary	13
3.1 Government structures and ways of working	13
3.2 Rights of the child	15
3.3 The planning system and child/youth voice	17
3.4 Streets, neighbourhoods and mobility	20
3.5 Play: access and attitudes	23
3.6 Green spaces and nature	26
3.7 Healthy homes	29
Appendix one – Case studies cited in inquiry evidence	31
Appendix two – List of inquiry contributors	33

Executive summary

‘Arguably nothing says more about the state of a nation than the wellbeing of its children. So right at the core of our mission will be a bold new ambition to raise the **healthiest generation of children in our history.’**

Labour Party manifesto, 2024

For decades, governments, policy makers and the planning system in England have failed to create places and spaces where children and young people develop well and thrive. Poorly planned and designed homes, streets, neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities have harmed children and young people’s development and health and wellbeing, undermined their quality of life and negatively impacted on their life chances and opportunities as adults and later parents themselves. Critically, children from the most deprived backgrounds are even more likely to have poorer health outcomes including higher risks of mortality, poor physical health and mental health problems due to poor quality environments.

In November 2023, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee launched an inquiry looking at how better planning, building and urban design in England could enhance the health and wellbeing of children and young people. They received evidence from over 130 organisations and individuals. However, when the general election was called in May 2024 the committee was dissolved (all select committees cease to exist when an election is called because there are no longer any members of parliament) before it had published its report and recommendations to government. Under the new government, the committee has been re-established as the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee, with a new chair and members.

Raising the healthiest generation in history: why it matters where children and young people live takes the rich evidence base that the inquiry gathered and:

- Draws out **recommendations** for Westminster government ministers and departments, based on the evidence submitted to the inquiry.
- Provides a **summary of the evidence** submitted to the inquiry across seven themes
 - Government structures and ways of working
 - Rights of the child
 - The planning system and child/youth voice
 - Streets, neighbourhoods and mobility
 - Play: access and attitudes
 - Green spaces and nature
 - Healthy homes.
- Lists the **case studies** highlighted through the inquiry process.

Ahead of the election, the Labour Party committed to improving outcomes for children and young people, but to be successful this mission will have to be a central, cross-cutting priority for the new government. Overwhelmingly the evidence submitted to, and explored by, the committee highlighted the urgent need for change from the centre to support local and community actions.

This report picks up from where the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee left off and provides a set of clear recommendations to improve children and young people’s health and wellbeing in England through the built environment.

Recommendations:



Establish national leadership for children and young people's wellbeing

Create a holistic dedicated 'mission' for children's wellbeing; appoint a cross-departmental minister for children; and fully incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law to prioritise children's health and rights.



Prioritise opportunities for play

Develop a national play strategy for England, embed 'playful principles' in national housing and development design guidance and commit to providing all children with safe, accessible places to play through housing, street, park and neighbourhood design.



Enhance access to nature and green spaces where children and young people feel welcome

Deliver the Environment Act 2021 commitment to ensure a Green Infrastructure Standard of access for all to good quality green and blue space within a safe 15-minute walk from home and update the Equality Act 2010 to protect children and young people's rights in public spaces.



Change policy and practice to prioritise the creation of child-friendly places, spaces and communities

Revise national planning policies and guidance to ensure the building of child-friendly environments, which include elements like doorstep play, nature filled spaces close to homes and high-quality, safe well-connected streets and neighbourhoods that support and prioritise children and young people's wellbeing.



Commit to a spatial justice approach to transport and mobility

Provide national guidance to promote doorstep play, play and school streets, integrate a child-focused approach in transport policies including prioritising active travel to schools, and design streets that encourage independent and active mobility for children and young people.



Provide all children and young people with a secure, high-quality home

End the creation of homes that harm the health and wellbeing of children and young people and provide all children the opportunity of a safe and secure place to call home.

There is an opportunity to transform the health of our children and young people, and in doing so the future of our society. To do this we don't need to spend more money, but rather we need to make different choices. We need to choose to prioritise children and young people's needs and wellbeing, commit to the pursuit of their rights and hearing their voices, and adopt a 'child lens' in national and local policy making and decision taking.

1. Introduction

Year after year, evidence has demonstrated that England's children and young people's physical and mental health is in serious, long-term decline, significantly exacerbated by poverty and inequality. Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood¹. But more than half of all children aged 5-16 are not getting the minimum recommended physical activity level (one hour a day) needed to be healthy and well, with 30% averaging less than 30 minutes per day². One in five children aged 8-15 have a mental health disorder³ and by the time they reach 15-years old, the UK's children report having the lowest average life satisfaction compared to their peers in 26 other European countries⁴. Too many of our children are unhappy, and too many are growing up in unhealthy environments that stifle their opportunities to develop well and thrive.

There are many influences on children and young people's health and happiness from the earliest years of life, including experiencing caring relationships with family and friends and their experiences at school: but where they live – the built and natural environment around them – is crucial. A child's home, the street they live on, their neighbourhood and access to outdoor and green spaces matters. Being able to be outside, to play, socialise, move and get around independently matters. Feeling welcome in, and ownership of, public space, being seen and heard in their community, and having a voice in how places and spaces develop and change over time matters.

To raise the healthiest generation of children in history, urgent, fundamental change in attitudes and actions is required. What has gone before has been inadequate and ineffective. Existing strategies, policies and guidance need to change.

This opportunity to transform the health of our children and young people, and our future society and prosperity, does not require significant increased spending, but rather making different choices. We need to prioritise children and young people's needs and wellbeing, commit to pursuit of their rights and hearing their voices, and adopt a 'child lens' in national and local policy making and decision taking.

'It is absolutely crucial that infants, children and young people are given the very best start in life as these formative years shape future health both for the individual, their future families and the communities they live in.'

Sarah Muckle, Association of Directors of Public Health lead for Children and Young People⁵

For decades, governments, policy makers and the planning system in England have failed to create places and spaces where children and young people develop well and thrive. Poorly planned and designed homes, streets, estates, neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities have harmed children and young people's development, health and wellbeing, undermined their quality of life and negatively impacted on their life chances and opportunities as adults, and later parents themselves.

No-one set out to cause this harm. It is the end result of decision-makers not considering or understanding the needs and rights of children.

¹ [Institute of Health Equity - Give every child the best start in life](#)

² [Active Lives | Sport England](#)

³ [NHS England » One in five children and young people had a probable mental disorder in 2023](#)

⁴ [The Good Childhood Report 2024 | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)

⁵ [Infants, children and young people | ADPH](#)

Children from the most deprived backgrounds bear the greatest impact and are more likely to have poorer health outcomes including higher risk of mortality, poor physical health and mental health problems. These are the children and young people living in households facing income deprivation, living in temporary and poor housing conditions, unable to regularly eat fresh fruit and vegetables, lacking access to sufficient, quality indoor and outdoor space, and living in areas with poor air quality. The Royal College of Paediatrics says children's health in the UK's most disadvantaged communities is in crisis and it creates a terrifying picture that can no longer be ignored⁶.

'There is no doubt that the context within which young people are currently developing is limiting child development, suppressing health of both mind and body.'

(Learning Through Landscapes, CBE0042)

Children, young people and their caregivers make up more than 40% of the population in England, yet whilst the planning system and built environment professionals are obliged to consider statutory equality groups, as well as issues like wildlife habitat and biodiversity, they rarely consider children's needs, hear their voices or even acknowledge that children and young people will in time become the primary long-term users of the places being changed by their actions.

The good news is that with the will to change, this cycle can be reversed, with untold benefits for children and young people's health, wellbeing and opportunities to thrive.

'It's our shared responsibility to intensify efforts across the UK and actively listen and value the needs of young people in the environments where they will become the primary long-term users.'

(Thornton Education Trust, CBE0075)

Background to this report

In November 2023, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee⁷ (now re-established as the Housing, Communities and Local Government (HCLG) Committee) launched an inquiry looking at how better planning, building and urban design in England could enhance the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

The inquiry focused on four key areas:

- The experiences of children and young people of their built environment
- The planning system
- Best practice and evaluation
- Cross-government working

Over 130 organisations and individuals, representing a wide range of sectors and expertise, submitted written evidence and the committee heard three panels of oral evidence. All this evidence was published on the committee's website. However, because a general election was called in May 2024 the committee was dissolved before it concluded its work and could publish recommendations to government.

This report seeks to ensure that all the expertise, evidence and work from those who submitted to the inquiry, and all the questioning and debate by MPs, can still be used by the new government and other decision makers for public good and for the improvement of health outcomes for children. It has been written by the TCPA in collaboration with the group who initially called for the inquiry: Playing Out, Fields in Trust, childhood expert Tim Gill and architect Dinah Bornat.

This report:

- draws out recommendations based on the evidence submitted to the inquiry;
- provides a summary of the evidence submitted to the inquiry organised across seven themes; and
- provides a list of case studies highlighted through the inquiry process.

⁶ [Health outcomes continue to worsen for UK children – say leading children's doctors | RCPCH](#)

⁷ There are House of Commons committees for every government department, who examine department spending, policies and administration and decide upon lines of inquiry.

Note on quotations and referencing

Quotations are reproduced throughout this document from LUHC inquiry evidence files as published⁸ and attributed alongside the submission reference numbers or evidence session dates. Quotes from MPs on the committee are highlighted.

Within the text, where relevant, submission reference numbers are used to indicate to readers where further detail can be found e.g. CBE0001. A full list of inquiry contributors can be found in Appendix two.

Committee members

Membership of the LUHC committee at the time of the inquiry was as follows:

Clive Betts MP – Chair

Ian Byrne MP

Natalie Elphicke MP

Kate Hollern MP

Tom Hunt MP

Andrew Lewer MP

Mary Robinson MP

Nadia Whittome MP

Mohammad Yasin MP

Notes on language

Children and young people

‘Children and young people are as diverse a population as ‘people’ at large and the ‘one size fits all’ approach cannot work.’

(Chartered Institute of Housing, CBE0009)

The Children Act 1989⁹ defines a child as a person under the age of 18. However, in some circumstances a duty of care applies, and services provide, for young people up to the age of 25.

A unifying factor for children and young people under 18, is that they have almost no voice or agency in civil society – no vote, no or little financial power and little control over their environment and life situation. However, it is important to note that children and young people are neither ‘mini adults’ nor a homogenous group. Their needs and experiences of the built environment will vary depending upon their age, physical abilities, emotional, social and educational experiences, and socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The authors of this report recognise that it is imperfect talking about children and young people in broad terms, we risk losing some important details, however, this report is the beginning, not the end of the conversation, and we hope that those with greater expertise, including children and young people themselves, will drive the conversation deeper and broader.

Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) / Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

When the new government came into office in July 2024 it renamed the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Both titles are used in this document, and refer the same government department responsible for planning, housing, building regulations and communities before and after the 2024 general election.

‘It has been absolutely fascinating. I have been on the Select Committee for a long time, and this has been one of the most interesting sessions I have had. The two panels this morning have raised these issues in a way that I had not necessarily thoroughly understood them.’

(Clive Betts MP, Committee Chair, Oral Evidence 24 January 2024)

⁸ [Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee](#)

⁹ [Children Act 1989](#)

2. Recommendations

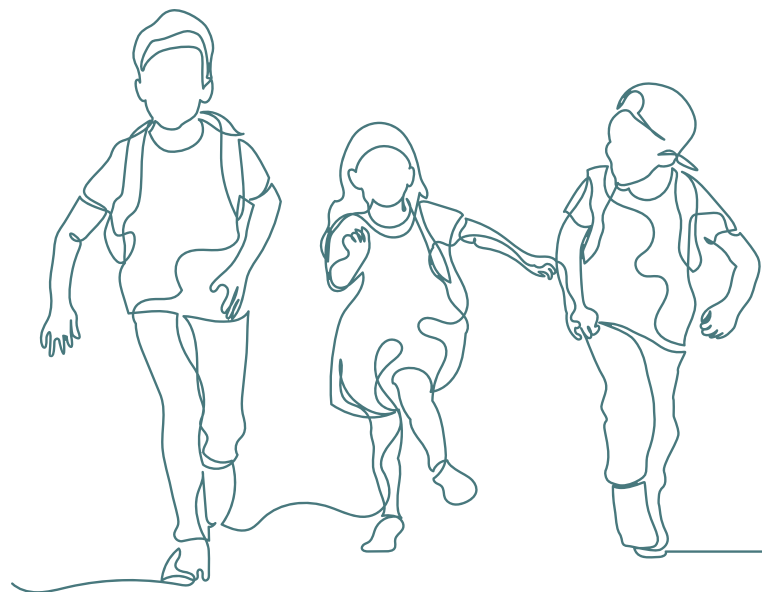
Improving outcomes for children and young people should be a central, cross-cutting priority for the government. Overwhelmingly the evidence submitted to and explored by the committee highlighted the urgent need for change from the centre to support local government, sector and community actions. Recommendations are set out below according to the minister or organisation with the power to implement them.

Prime Minister

- Create a Children's Wellbeing 'mission' to deliver transformational and sustained change to children and young people's health and wellbeing in England.
- Appoint a Cabinet level minister for children and young people with a cross-departmental remit.
- Fully adopt the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law.
- Lead a national conversation on the social and moral importance of healthy childhoods for all children, and for the country to prosper.
- Work with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to deliver the Green Infrastructure Standard of access for all to good quality green and blue space within 15 minutes' safe walk from home. This will include embedding it in planning policy.
- Improve long term protection and funding options¹³ and models for parks and green spaces, supporting local authorities and others to sustainably safeguard spaces in perpetuity.
- Provide all children and young people with a high-quality home, in a healthy, well-connected place by adopting the Healthy Homes Principles¹⁴.
- Ensure Homes England demonstrate commitment to child-friendly principles and best practice.

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

- Revise national planning policy and guidance (including the *National Planning Policy Framework*, *Planning Practice Guidance*, and *National Model Design Code*¹⁰) to require that children and young people be considered and included in plan-making and decisions that shape their environments.
- Require new developments and street designs to provide doorstep play¹¹ for all ages, and outdoor and public spaces that are welcoming, flexible and suitable for play and socialising.
- Adopt a pro-play approach, reviewing the use of 'no ball game' signs and other tools such as Secured by Design¹² that can discriminate against children and young people in public space with a view to protecting children's right to access space for play and socialising.



¹⁰ [National Planning Policy Framework](#), [Planning practice guidance](#), [National Model Design Code](#)

¹¹ There is currently no definition of doorstep play but in this report, it refers to public and semi-public space for play immediately outside homes, without having to cross a road.

¹² [Secured by Design](#)

¹³ For example, through Green Space Designation and [Fields in Trust's deed of dedication](#)

¹⁴ [Healthy Homes - Town and Country Planning Association](#)

Secretary of State for Transport

- Create a safe streets for children strategy that: embeds a child lens on highway design, development and spending decisions including schemes like low traffic neighbourhoods; includes a 20 mph default speed limit on residential streets alongside design interventions to ensure traffic speeds are low; and a revised road safety approach that places responsibility on drivers, not children.
- Provide national guidance to local authorities on promoting, enabling and delivering play and school streets.
- Ensure the update to *Manual for Streets* reflects children and young people's needs and wants from their doorsteps, streets, roads and travel.
- Support initiatives such as kerbside strategies, to re-image and reallocate space on residential streets.
- Ensure that the work of Active Travel England takes proper account of the experiences, needs and views of children and young people.

Secretary of State for Education

- Require that all new schools create car-free safe and sociable space immediately outside of their gates so that walking, wheeling and cycling to school is prioritised and normalised.
- Ensure that new school facilities are designed in ways that make them available to communities outside of school hours, especially outdoor spaces for children and young people to play and be active in.
- Provide schools with guidance and tools on how to share and manage facilities as community resources.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

- Re-commit to supporting all children to start well, continuing work begun by *The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days*¹⁵.
- Embed within starting well¹⁶ a recognition that children's ability to play, socialise and move around where they live is crucial for child development, health and wellbeing.
- Build, collate and disseminate across national and local government evidence on the importance of children's free outdoor play and independent mobility.
- Fund and support preventative physical and mental health and wellbeing services and actions, including early support hubs, through planning and the built environment and measures like social prescribing.
- Develop a national measurement of children's wellbeing as suggested in *A National Roadmap to a Good Childhood* by The Children's Society¹⁷.

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

- Work with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Department for Transport (DfT) to implement the Green Infrastructure Framework so that all children have access to open and green spaces that are multi-functional and meet nature and climate mitigation and adaptation objectives.
- Reinstate the principle of the Parks Action Group, originally specified in the *25 Year Environment Plan*, to create a cross-sectoral and departmental voice for parks and green spaces and ensure a specific focus on the needs of children and young people.
- Work with MHCLG to fully integrate air quality data and considerations into the planning process, especially for development likely to impact on children, young people and other vulnerable groups.

¹⁵ The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days - GOV.UK

¹⁶ [NHS Long Term Plan](#)

¹⁷ The Good Childhood Report | The Children's Society

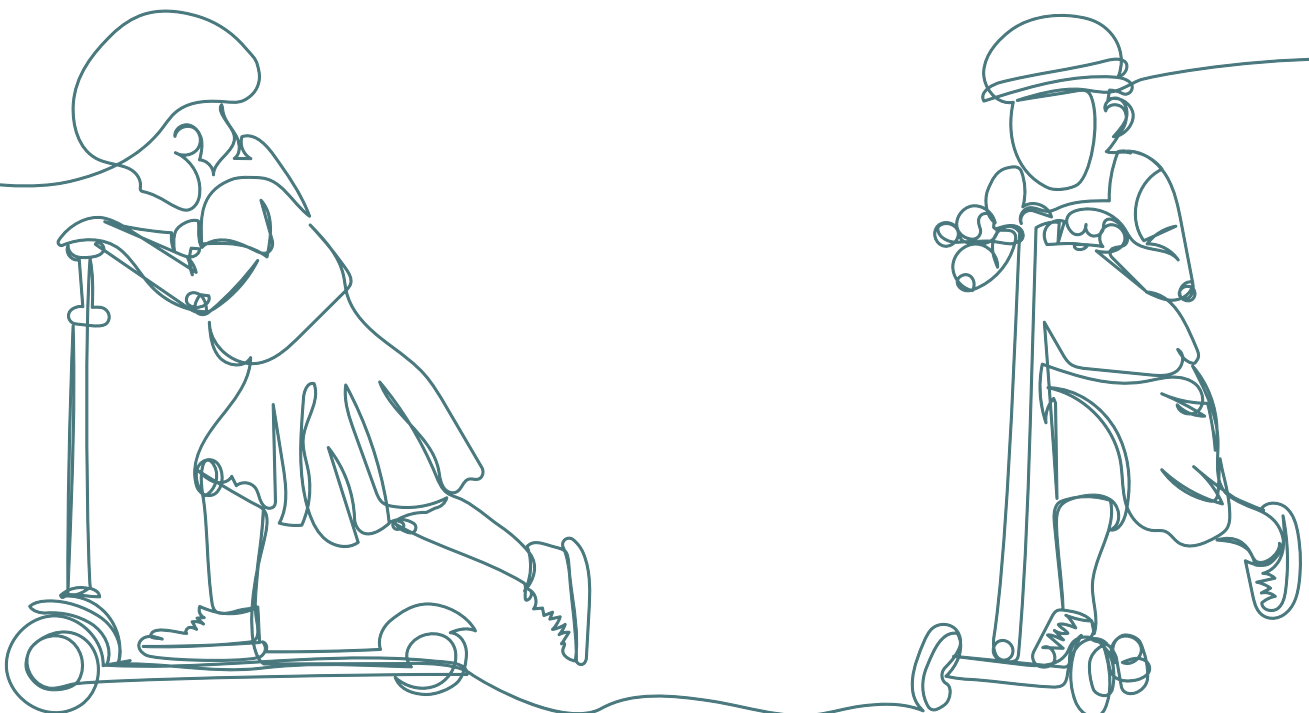
- Articulate across government the co-benefits of nature and wildlife for children and young people.

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

- Create a national play strategy embedding informal play as integral for children and young people's physical activity levels and consider the role of a play sufficiency duty in England.
- Require and resource all local authorities to ensure children have sufficient access to outdoor play through open space strategies and local sufficiency measures.
- Give careful consideration and a written response to the findings of the Play Commission¹⁸.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

- Amend and clarify the Equality Act 2010 to more widely protect children and young people on the basis of age as well as other protected characteristics.

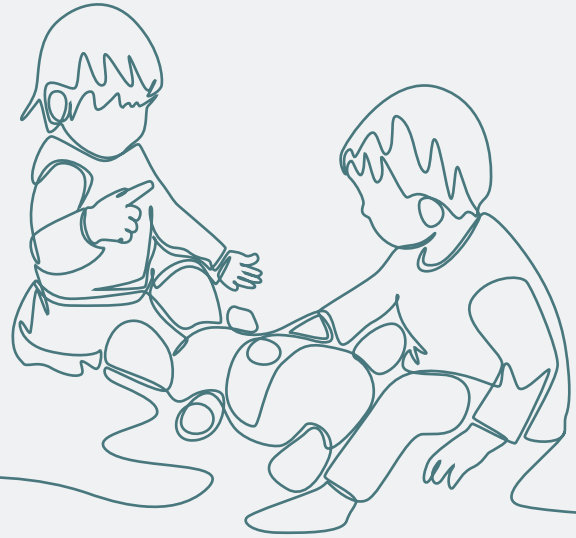


¹⁸ [The Play Commission](#)

3. Evidence summary

A brief review of the evidence submissions to the inquiry is set out below using seven organising themes. There is naturally overlap between the themes and so some evidence is discussed from different angles in more than one theme.

- Government structures and ways of working
- Rights of the child
- Planning system and child/youth voice
- Streets, neighbourhoods and mobility
- Play: access and attitudes
- Green spaces and nature
- Healthy homes



3.1 Government structures and ways of working

Why this matters?

The structure of government and its operation influences every opportunity that children and young people have to thrive and grow into healthy, happy adults. Yet, they are rarely considered, or their input accepted, in policy making and decision taking at the national and local government level.

The Labour manifesto¹⁹ declares that *'politics has enormous potential to change lives for the better, but too often different parts of the government have pursued their own narrow goals rather than working together.'*

Effective cross-government collaboration is essential to address many of the complex problems the UK faces today – including the climate and health crises – but this will only be effective if the broad, complex and unique vulnerabilities and needs of children and young people are included in thinking and actions. The government must ensure that children and young people's voices, needs and wellbeing are prioritised in decision-making, demonstrating and demanding more inclusive and child-friendly policy and practice environments. Such an approach would help to tackle persistent, unfair problems like child poverty and contribute to long-term societal benefits, including improved health, reduced strain on public services like the NHS and enhanced productivity.

England is lagging behind both Scotland and Wales, both of which have ministers for children as well as adopted strategies and policies that explicitly recognise the importance of supporting children's wellbeing in every decision that government takes.

¹⁹ [Mission-driven government – The Labour Party](#)

‘There is a desperate need for joined-up governance throughout the public sector on meeting the needs of children. The state of childhood in this country is in crisis and as a result both the economy and the National Health Service are going to be threatened, but most important of all is the fact that the potential of every child is being suppressed by our failings as a nation.’

(Merrick Denton-Thompson FLI, CBE0054)

The built environment is a crucial factor in children’s health and wellbeing, however in national and local government, children’s needs are rarely considered outside of education or social care, when in fact they need to be considered in every department. A disjointed approach which includes a lack of central coordination, means that responsibility for children and young people and the places where they live falls into a diverse range of national and local authority departments, government agencies, third sector and private providers and importantly across multiple budget and power silos (CBE0015). Without explicit consideration, children’s needs are not met – they are subsumed by those of the adult majority.

A cabinet minister for children and young people, whose remit extends beyond the Department for Education, would provide holistic and cross-sectoral leadership and accountability across the extensive policy overlaps at the national level including public health, planning, housing, transport, policing and safety, net zero, nature and green spaces, environmental sustainability and productivity (CBE0018; 0059). A minister could also drive linkages between the extensive but fragmented data which many departments hold, seeking better data to improve decision making (CBE0010).

The need for greater collaborative working is raised consistently in the evidence. There are calls for the government to champion the message that children and young people’s needs and voices are important, and to coordinate research, evidence and good practice (CBE0052) that can flow down into and empower local government working (CBE0087; 0104; 0114) and influence private and commercial practice.

Without coordination, there continues to be a real risk that national departmental policies and guidance, such as from the Department for Transport, or the Home Office, may conflict, undermine each other and be counter to the best interests of children and young people (CBE0074).

Finally, there is evidence that – quite understandably – young people themselves do not distinguish between different governmental silos in the way they think about place, and that this should be reflected in the ways that government and professionals engage with them (CBE0092).

‘...the issue of children, their health, children’s play and how they respond to the built environment is not just the responsibility of one Department. You [Minister for Housing] have very significant responsibilities, but children looks a bit like the Department for Education. Play might be the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Children’s health might be something for the Department of Health. It is cross-Government, but it seems that Government have not got their act together.’

(Clive Betts MP, Committee Chair, Oral Evidence 25 March 2024)

3.2 Rights of the child

Why this matters?

England is failing to mainstream the rights of children across all areas of government and policy, including planning policy. One in five of the English population is under-18 and yet they have no voice in the primary issues and decisions that affect their lives (growing, learning and playing).

The UK signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1991. Article 31 of the UNCRC states that children have the right to play, rest and participate in cultural activities. Play is recognised in international law, not merely as a 'nice to have' addition to children's lives but as fundamentally necessary to healthy child development. Play, wherever it happens, is the business of childhood and vital for good physical and mental health.

Children and young people have a right to be direct participants in the processes that affect them, not only now but for years to come. Their unique perspectives can improve outcomes, particularly in planning and urban design. When involved in the decision-making process, children feel empowered, develop confidence and are more likely to engage in community life in the long-term. However, despite these rights, children often face exclusion, as national policies rarely account for their specific needs. Children should be treated as a statutory equalities group based on age.

Wales made the UNCRC part of its domestic law in 2011 and in 2015 adopted the Well-being of Future Generations Act which requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people (of all ages), communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

Scotland achieved the same UNCRC domestic law milestone in 2024. The UNCRC exists to protect the rights of children and young people, embeds a listening culture that takes their needs and opinions seriously and is about building a culture of awareness, learning and respect for what children need to flourish.

To date there has been a lack of political priority given to children's rights in England as the 2023 UN report on the UK government and child rights demonstrates²⁰.

'Children have as much "right" to the city as adult citizens – yet they lose out in the urban spatial justice stakes.'

(Dr Michael Martin and Dr Hannah Fairbrother, CBE0055)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) adopted by the UK in 1991 is the 'gold standard' across the world for children's rights. It covers all aspects of a child's life and explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights. Yet, as evidence submissions highlight, the Westminster government has to date failed to fully incorporate the Convention into English law, meaning that the rights of children and young adults are not well known or understood, and are often ignored, including in the planning system. There is also a challenge that the principles of the UNCRC are not necessarily reflective of England's societal, cultural or political standpoint on children in society (CBE0051; 0072; 0075; 0085; 0087; 0094; 0099).

'If the Government have a stated commitment to promote, protect and realise children's rights, that should flow into everything that the Government are thinking about in a really holistic way.'

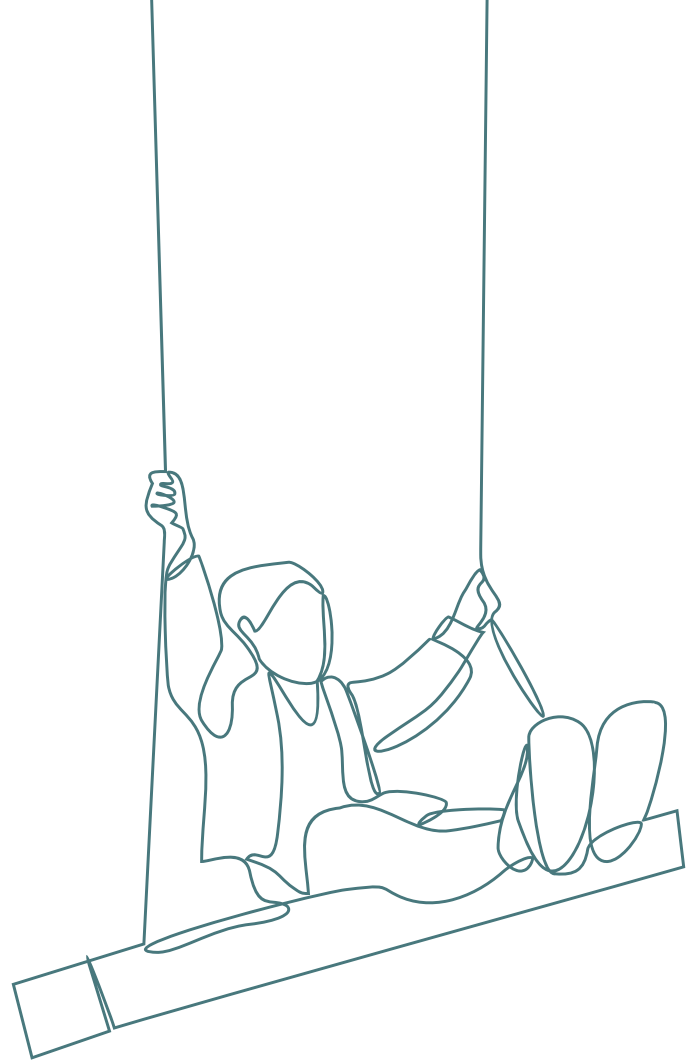
(Gemma Hyde, TCPA, Oral Evidence 24 January 2024)

The Equality Act 2010, another potential protective rights-based mechanism for children and young people, theoretically prohibits age-based discrimination, but only applies to under 18s in relation to employment, meaning that children and young people's rights are overlooked in all areas relating to the built environment like housing and planning. There is no clear public sector duty to recognise children as an equalities group based on their age and as such children and young people are not protected from discrimination by the Equality Act (CBE0027; 0030; 0070; 0127; 0081).

'Whilst the Equality Act does protect children and young people from discrimination on the basis of other protected characteristics (e.g. race and sex), it does not protect them as a group on the basis of age (except within employment). The fact that there is no explicit/clear public sector duty to consider children as an equality group in their own right on the basis of age underpins routine discrimination of children and failure to consider/meet their needs within the planning system and wider policy and services.'

(Playing Out, CBE0127)

Additionally, the Housing Act 2004 and guidelines for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) fail to adequately consider children's needs, often offering insufficient space and neglecting their right to play (CBE0116). Currently, there is no statutory obligation to incorporate children's rights, including their right to play and play sufficiency, into English planning processes, despite its recognition in international law (CBE0068; 0072; 0103; 0104). An adult's right to 'quiet enjoyment' is a standard condition of tenancy agreements, whereas children's right to play is not. As a result, children are commonly banned from playing out on housing estates and 'no ball games' signs continue to proliferate, making children and young people feel unwanted and unwelcome, even though these signs carry no legal weight (CBE0136).



Submissions also raise the point that some groups can experience places differently than others. Girls and young women face unique challenges to their right to access outdoor spaces that are not adequately recognised in policy or practice, and children from ethnic minorities are more likely to be excluded from public places (CBE0026; 0060). Yet, public space where children of all backgrounds come together have proven benefits. Recognising children and young people as an equalities group and including them in Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA), as well as Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments, could help identify and address these disparities (CBE0026).

'...it is really important for recommendations to come forward that install children at the heart of what we are talking about here.'

(Ian Byrne MP, Oral Evidence 24 January 2024)

3.3 The planning system and child/youth voice

Why this matters?

The planning system shapes the places where children and young people grow up, live, play, move and age. These places and environments are key to whether or not children, young people and their care-givers can lead healthy lives and make healthy choices. Planning is a social determinant of health but currently planning processes in England do not, and are not required to, recognise or reflect the specific and diverse needs of England's youngest citizens.

The places and environments we are creating fail to support children and young people's right to space, play, active mobility, learning and healthy development including supporting them to successfully transition to adulthood. Children have distinct perspectives on the places where they live and understand their own needs, which can differ significantly from those of adults. Including their needs and voices in planning processes would ensure that places and spaces are designed to meet their specific needs and wants, including safe places for play and socialising immediately outside their homes. Using the planning system to create child-friendly environments would also be inclusive and supportive of other demographics and support other goals such as reaching net zero, nature restoration, community cohesion and improved public health. There are researched and established principles for creating child-friendly environments (including international examples) that could be drawn on to inform policy and practice in England, but without central leadership application of principles is patchy and inconsistent.

At a local and site level, children and young people's participation in planning can also empower them and foster a sense of belonging. When young people are involved in design and decision-making processes they feel valued and heard, which can lead to improved confidence and engagement in their communities. Tools such as Voice Opportunity Power²¹ and good practice on engaging young people in design exist but there is no universal mandate or approach requiring it to happen everywhere.

If planned effectively, the built environment can play a significant role in fostering children's healthy development and sense of connection to the community. Reform of the planning system should ensure children and young people are considered, and national policies should promote child-friendly principles and design.

'The importance of the design, planning and use of indoor and outdoor space cannot be overstated as generally the world, to date, has been designed for adults, by adults, with the needs of children being secondary.'

(British Association for Child and Adolescent Public Health, CBE0059)

Again and again, in relation to the planning system and planning policy in England, evidence submitted to the inquiry points out that children and young people are missing from national and local policy and guidance on the design and planning of places. National planning policy and guidance, including the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) barely mentions children and young people at all and the impact of this is the creation of environments that inadvertently exclude and discriminate against children and young people, and that don't meet their needs or support them to have the best start in life (CBE0017; 0021; 0089 0104; 0109; 0111; 0112; 0127).

²¹ [Voice Opportunity Power youth engagement toolkit](#)

There is a clear call in the evidence for the government to amend national policy so that the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and *National Model Design Code* (NMDC) to include explicit consideration of children and young people's needs in the built environment (CBE0070; 0117 0133) and demand a child-friendly approach that integrates the best interests and rights of children and young people.

Various evidence submissions discuss a potential role for Child Impact Assessments (CBE0026; 0059; 0072; 0086; 0087; 0104; 0129) or using 'age' as a protected characteristic to capture proposed policy and development impacts on children and young people into existing equalities impact assessments (EqIA) (see 3.2 Rights of the child). However, there is also concern raised in the submissions that any child-friendly approach should set out clear 'quality asks' and not create vague principles that add barriers to development and house building (CBE0074; 0089).

At present, children and young people's voices are rarely heard within discussions about planning. Not only does this mean they can feel shut out of the process, but it weakens and worsens planning by seeing solutions only through adult eyes.

(Youth SportTrust, CBE0069)

The needs and voices of young people are currently not represented adequately within the planning system. It is an opaque and inaccessible system even for built environment professionals, so to expect young people to be able to meaningfully participate in it is unrealistic.

(MATT+FIONA, CBE0049)

Across the evidence, community engagement and participation in the planning system is considered to be generally low-quality and ineffective, with little to no consideration given to younger age groups (CBE0061). The dearth of policy and guidance at a national level on including children and young people in the planning system makes it very difficult for local planning authorities and developers to prioritise listening to and acting on children and youth voices (CBE0017; 0075). This is compounded by a lack of skills, time, resources and sometimes the power to turn engagement responses into tangible actions (CBE0058). There are also issues with engagement activities only focusing on school-age children as an easier to reach group, over younger children and teenagers (CBE 0092; 0101; 0106; 0111), or on groups already using a space like a park, where one group, often in this case girls and young women are missing, and so their voices and needs are not heard (CBE0037; 0060).

There is a call in the evidence to recognise at every level that children and young people have a deep understanding and appreciation of their neighbourhoods, which is unique and valuable. Not engaging them in the planning and design of places and spaces, embeds in decision making an unnecessary risk of creating environments that will fail future generations (CBE0008; 0022; 0069 0105; 0115).

Inclusion of child and youth voices in the planning system at all stages, from policy making to engagement on site specific proposals, must be appropriate and meaningful but should not replace adult responsibility for understanding and meeting their needs.

Practitioners in place-making and the built environment need to accept a responsibility for children and young people's needs, to draw on existing good practice in planning and design for children and seek out a broader range of expertise where their own falls short (CBE0030; 0055). Local authorities can also use existing mechanisms such as Statements of Community Involvement, with examples being provided from Leeds City Council and Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (CBE0083; 0089).

‘What we are trying to get to the heart of in this session is that children and young people matter and they should be a central part of the planning process. They should not be an afterthought.

Would it not be sensible to have children and young people specifically front and centre within the NPPF and the other policies? Is this not critical? [The NPPF] lists bats. Why are we not listing children? Should we be defining specifically what matters to create really healthy fantastic childhoods?

(Natalie Elphicke MP, Oral Evidence
25 March 2024)



3.4 Streets, neighbourhoods and mobility

Why this matters?

Streets and neighbourhoods are vital spaces which can support or obstruct the wellbeing and healthy development of children and young people. The World Health Organisation and UNICEF state that it is normal for children to carry out activities in street and road environments – such as playing, walking, running, cycling, and other group activities²². It is important for healthy physical and social development that children, from an early age, undertake such activities and so it is important that these activities can be undertaken without the child's safety being put at risk.

Only a few decades ago, it was the daily norm for children in the UK to play out, socialise and move around independently in most public spaces, with all the benefits this brings to health and wellbeing. Today, parked cars, moving vehicles and passing traffic, vehicle speeds, blocked pavements and a lack of safe, segregated active travel infrastructure restrict children and young people's opportunities to be outside of their homes, play, socialise and gradually become more independently mobile as they grow up.

Doorstep play, which is playable space immediately outside homes, without having to cross a road, is critical for all ages of children and builds strong communities. New developments should be required to provide these spaces in addition to green and blue spaces within a safe 15-minute walk from homes. Play space that is 'close by' but still 400-800m away from homes is often not accessible for children independently. Instead, it has a role as destination space, providing a greater range of facilities for families and for older more independent children.

Compact and walkable neighbourhoods, where everyday services such as schools are nearby, encourage physical activity through walking, wheeling and cycling. Yet most guidance and regulations that relate to highway and neighbourhood design do not consider the needs of children and young people as users at all and certainly take no account of the child's right to play as set out in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Understanding and mitigating road traffic collisions and care-givers' concerns about safety, especially traffic danger as well as other fears, are key to changing children and young people's access to their streets and local areas.

Proximity to busy streets and roads also means proximity to air pollution which is a threat to children's health. Children are more vulnerable than adults because they breathe faster, live closer to ground-level where pollution can accumulate, and their organs are still maturing. This exposure can lead to exacerbated asthma, hindered lung development, cognitive impairments, and increased susceptibility to respiratory diseases.

'Over the last century children and their needs have been designed out of the built environment, with roads, parking and traffic often taking priority, particularly in residential areas.'

(Built Environment Trust, CBE0029)

'Too often, car centric planning continues to put amenities out of reach of children themselves. More often than not, we continue to design for a 'backseat generation' that needs to be driven to be able to play and be active rather than being allowed to do this in their own street.'

(Create Streets, CBE0074)

²² [World report on child injury prevention \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/world-report-2019/child-injury-prevention)

The fact that the car has come to dominate the built environment, and that places have been redesigned to give way to vehicle traffic and parking, pushing children and young people out of the areas closest to their homes is raised frequently in evidence. Submissions highlight that this is a spatial justice issue and that the combination of fear of traffic danger, traffic speeds, limited sight lines due to parked vehicles and a lack of suitable public open space near homes are key factors behind the erosion of children's 'right to roam' (CBE0088; 0102; 0129; 0072).

'Although children's freedom of movement brings instrumental benefits, it is also an issue of spatial justice.... motor vehicles, both parked and moving, are the primary users of residential streets. There are over three times as many motor vehicles as children in the UK. Space taken up by parked vehicles, together with road widening and pavement narrowing, has significantly eroded potential space for playing.'

(Dr Wendy Russell, CBE0023)

The evidence discusses how important streets and outdoor spaces are for children and young people's everyday life, their health and their happiness. Indeed, children and young people constitute the main groups using these spaces, either for play, hanging out or 'just walking', while adults only travel through them. The car's supremacy over these spaces deeply influences children's physical and mental wellbeing by restricting their movements and socialising opportunities (CBE0008; 0021; 0072; 0129; 0006; 0088, 0093).

In 2023 (the latest published statistics) 1,832²³ under 16-year-old pedestrians and cyclists were killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions including on pavements and pedestrian crossings. Each child death has untold impact for families and communities. Children are at greater risk of pedestrian injury than other age groups, with road traffic injuries being the second leading cause of death in 5 to 14-year-olds.

Studies have shown that primary-aged children fail to accurately detect cars travelling above 20 mph due to developmental limitations in perceiving and judging the speed of approaching vehicles, increasing the risk of accidents as they misjudge crossing opportunities (CBE0093). Children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are at least five times more likely to be killed on the roads as pedestrians than their peers from the highest socio-economic groups²⁴.

In this context, parents, caregivers and children themselves, are understandably fearful. Car dominance on streets is limiting children and young people's freedom to move around and play safely. Submissions call on the government, especially the Department for Transport, to introduce a national 20mph speed limit in residential areas and ensure street design considers children's safety and independent mobility as a priority.

'It's a duty of care by adults and those planning roads and their regulation, to mandate for road danger reduction. The single most significant, cost-effective improvement to the built environment is the presumption of 20mph limits. This is the case now for Wales, is policy for Scotland and Southern Ireland. In Wales it is expected to prevent 1200-2000 casualties per annum and 6-10 deaths.'

(20's Plenty for Us, CBE0093)

'I am intrigued by the discussion around the way people used to play and the way that they play now, and the work you are doing in scrutiny. Many years ago, people felt safer and children felt safe being out and able to roam.'

(Mary Robinson MP, Oral Evidence
26 February 2024)

²³ [Reported road collisions, vehicles and casualties tables for Great Britain - GOV.UK](#)

²⁴ [Deprivation and road traffic injury comparisons for 4-10 and 11-15 year-olds - ScienceDirect](#)

There is a cultural challenge around discussion and actions that impact on car and vehicle use. This can be seen in recent debates about 15-minute cities and low-traffic neighbourhoods. Car dependency is deeply ingrained in people's lives, it has become the norm and parallel reductions of public transport and safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes mean that many people cannot see realistic ways to live and work without access to a car. Submissions to the inquiry call on the government to re-frame this debate and that using a 'child-friendly lens' is one way to shift attitudes.

'Despite the personal, social, and economic benefits de-prioritising car transportation can be seen as controversial as car dependency has been deeply ingrained in citizen's perception of status, freedom, and quality of life.'

(University of Surrey, CBE0048)

'People just care about cars. They don't care about us – Taylor, age 10.'

(Room 13 Hareclive, CBE0134)

'A focus on children both makes concrete what good places look like—they are walkable, compact, green and welcoming—and helps build consensus and a long-term, robust vision.'

(Tim Gill, Oral Evidence 26 February 2024)

Several submissions also call for an improved national framework to enable play streets and school streets. The publication of the long-anticipated update to *Manual for Streets* (guidance on residential street design)²⁵ is called for, although it is also noted that children and young people were the only equality group not represented in the steering group (CBE0105; 0030; 0114).

Play streets and other temporary re-prioritisations of streets, for example outside schools, unlock more opportunities for play and create safer community and movement spaces closer to children's homes. Examples of where they have been implemented demonstrate that parents and children value and want these types of intervention.

School streets, pedestrian and wheeling zones outside schools during term-time introduced by some local authorities, make active travel modes to school safer and more enjoyable for children and their families. Evidence shows that these initiatives improve children and young people's experience of the built environment by making it easier for them move around independently in environments with less noise and air pollution (CBE0126; 0134; 0105; 0113). They also demonstrate the potential positive impact on children's lives that would result from more permanent changes to streets and road safety building public support for such changes.

Neighbourhood design is also raised in the evidence, with an emphasis on the need for connectivity between homes and places children and young people want to go. When the need for a car is designed in this disproportionately affects children and young people who cannot independently access cars and are forced to rely on adults to move around, and not all households have a car. Affordable and reliable public transport provision is key for older children and young people. Poor public transport provision and linkages compound children and young people's inability to access vital services such as schools, parks, public spaces and leisure facilities, leaving them essentially marooned. (CBE0008; 0009).

'As architects, when we design housing developments, the planning system demands us to consider bird migration routes, bat nesting seasons, the habitats and scavenging routes of animal wildlife and even the root systems of trees - to ensure their healthy survival. Conversely, there is little regard for children's safe passage across a site, or protection of accessing independent play in a range of natural and manmade environments, accessible from their home and in their neighbourhood. And yet the developmental, health and societal benefits of enabling such play and independence in the public realm is overwhelming.'

(ROAM, CBE0117)

²⁵ Manual for Streets explains how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets and was first published by the Department for Transport in 2007.

3.5 Play: access and attitudes

Why this matters?

Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital for their enjoyment of childhood as well as for their social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.

In short, play is how human young learn and develop. Play is often defined as what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons – i.e. what they do when not being directed by adults²⁶.

Through play, children build key skills like socialisation, creativity, decision-making and risk management. Access to outdoor play is particularly crucial, improving the physical architecture of the brain, fostering physical activity, which is essential in developing physical literacy, combating childhood obesity and supporting mental health. Outdoor free play also helps children to further develop social relationships, which are often limited in more structured or adult-led activities and cultivate a connection with nature and the outdoors.

For all these reasons, play is recognised as a fundamental right under Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Time, space and permission to play are the enabling factors for children and young people – as well as being able to mix with other children.

However, many children in England face barriers to accessing safe play space, with research showing that free, outdoor play has fallen to its lowest level ever, with now only one in four children playing outside regularly compared to their grandparents' generation where almost three-quarters played outside on a regular basis²⁷.

This access is even more restricted in areas of deprivation where children are more likely to live in high-rise or other social housing developments with no gardens or poor access to outdoor space, where road traffic and air pollution can be greater and where local authority cuts have led to the degradation and closure of playgrounds. The loss of outdoor play and freedom for children has had a further greater impact on children from the poorest backgrounds, as they are often not able to access the 'compensatory' outdoor activities such as organised clubs, classes and activities that require money, a car or a parent to take them.

Unsafe streets and societal attitudes towards children playing in public, such as 'no ball games' signs, further hinder the freedom of children. It is clear, social and economic inequalities deeply impact play opportunities. Young people and children are highly conscious of the quality of their local environments and this also strongly influences their perceptions of where they can play and hang out safely. Ensuring equitable access to diverse and safe play spaces is therefore critical to fostering healthy, inclusive environments that support the wellbeing and development of all children through play.

'Playgrounds and play spaces can be important for children's play, but they are often planned in to make up for inadequacies in the street layout. It is not segregated playgrounds, but appropriate spaces within their neighbourhoods that children value the most. The design of streets, particularly outside children's homes, needs to reflect children's potential use of these for play and socialisation.'

(Dr Holly Weir, CBE0051)

²⁶ [Charter For Play – Play England](#)

²⁷ [Save the Children](#)

Play deprivation and prevailing poor attitudes and structural discrimination towards children and young people being playful in public space feature heavily throughout the evidence submissions. Many highlight evidence that play is a core need for children, as vital to development as clean air and water (CBE0008; 0009; 0085; 0124; 0125; 0130), and that children and young people report playing out less than older generations, but that they want to play and be more active outside (CBE0006; 0104; 0112; 0134).

There is a strong message of the need to move away from a primary focus on traditional designated playgrounds with fixed play equipment, towards more playable landscapes supporting street and doorstep play (CBE0105; 0107; 0112; 0115) (see also 3.4 Streets, neighbourhoods and mobility). This is in response to updated understanding of child and youth development and recognition that limiting opportunities for play to playgrounds, rather than more unstructured opportunities, deeply affects young people's ability to engage in physical activities and social interactions, critical to healthy development and the successful transition to adulthood (CBE0015; 0130). An exclusive focus on playgrounds also reinforces the unhelpful view that children have no claim to spend time in any other public space. Evidence submissions also discuss that children and young people routinely appropriate and enjoy places that are not designated play spaces and that this can bring children and young people into conflict with adults who see their play as anti-social or a nuisance.

'There is also evidence of increasing societal intolerance towards normal behaviour by children, which often more tangentially related to the built environment. For example, the plethora of 'no ball games' signs on housing estates, and reports of angry residents complaining about noise from adjacent playgrounds or children playing in the streets.'

(London Play CBE0068)

'...pervasive misconceptions surrounding play as anti-social behaviour.'

(Clarion Housing Group CBE0070)

Within the evidence is commentary on the over-regulation of play, excessive 'adult gaze' on young people in particular and a risk-averse culture resulting in negative outcomes for children and young people including a 'surplus of safety' that is leading to significant long-term risks to physical and mental health owing to a lack of important developmental experiences (CBE0066).

'Attitudes towards children in the public space have focused on children as vulnerable or nuisances, leading to environments of surplus safety or hostility. Children's presence and play in public spaces should be acknowledged as beneficial for children and society as a whole and should be encouraged.'

(Dr Naomi Lott, CBE0066)

'Do we need a PR campaign for people to remember how they lived their lives? When you are talking, I am just thinking back. In the summer, we used to have a car park that would be a tennis court, a cricket field or a football pitch. Everybody would play out in the street on it. That was where you would go. It was a car park on the street. People have probably forgotten how we used to utilise those sorts of areas. We are probably all of the age to be doing the moaning about the kids. Do we need a PR campaign for people to realise how lucky we were in the respect that we had that bit of freedom? It is not fair that we are blocking future generations out from that.'

(Ian Byrne MP, Oral Evidence 24 January 2024)

There is also discussion of conflicting frameworks and practices within the built environment and urban design space that need to be addressed by government and resolved so that children and young people can exercise their rights to public space. The Police Preferred Specification Standard to deter and reduce crime, *Secured by Design*, identifies infrastructure for children and young people 'such as playgrounds, toddler play areas, and seating facilities have the potential to generate crime' (CBE0131). This and other practices to deter children and young people from public spaces, like 'no ball games' signs, 'mosquitos' (sonic 'anti-loitering' devices that emit sustained high-frequency sound which affects those under 25) and anti-skating measures are harming the ability of children and young people to be in public space and feel welcome and part of the community (CBE0104; 0131).

'Children and young people's presence in streets, parks and other public spaces should also be normalised through a review of current legislation and policing, including a review of police involvement in planning through Secured by Design.'

(Newcastle University, CBE0107)

Within play and park provision there are calls regarding creating spaces for teenagers and for more research on how to make these spaces more inclusive. Current provision for young people is seen almost entirely in terms of facilities such as skate parks, playing pitches, BMX tracks and enclosed multi-use games areas, however emerging research by Make Space for Girls and others has shown that these facilities do not meet the needs of all teenagers and can be overly dominated by a minority of boys and young men (CBE0008; 0017; 0112).

'Overall, teenage girls do not feel that public spaces – whether parks, recreational grounds, urban areas or facilities – are intended for their use or are places where they are welcome. When [we ask] teenage girls about their preferences for park facilities, the same strong preferences tend to recur: for social seating, where they can sit and face each other; for large swings for their age; for trampolines and hammocks; and for playful equipment...'

(Make Space for Girls, CBE0060)

Providing a diversity of spaces and ensuring they are accessible and inclusive for all is important in allowing and maintaining play and physical activity for all children and teenagers, regardless of sex, ethnicity or other protected characteristics. Research commissioned and referenced by Playing Out in the inquiry found that, despite clear evidence that black and minoritised children can experience additional complex barriers to accessing outdoor space, play and physical activity, there is an urgent need for more research and understanding of these issues²⁸.

Finally, there is a strong call in the evidence to create 'play sufficiency' legislation for England. Such legislation would establish statutory guidance for local authorities (and others) to follow and comply with a duty to assess for, and secure, sufficient play and recreation opportunities for children and young people. They would also need to conduct regular play sufficiency reports. Sufficiency is more than provision, it is characterised as permission to play. It applies beyond designated spaces for playing and can support planning for, designing and enacting child-friendly environments. Several international and UK examples are highlighted including the duty existing in Wales and Scotland and examples emerging in England for example in Leeds (CBE0019; 0023; 0026; 0038; 0085; 0089; 0103; 0104; 0107; 0112).

'Play sufficiency is about securing sufficient opportunities for children's play and is more in-depth than reviewing designated provision. Securing sufficient opportunities for play involves cultivating the time, space and attitudes needed for children's play to flourish in our city. We want children and young people to have opportunities to play in their homes, on their doorsteps, in their streets and community places and in adult institutions. Children will play wherever and whenever they can, however, their ability to do so is dependent on many variables. By taking a play sufficiency approach and looking at our built environment through the lens of a child we can better understand how to create more favourable conditions which invite play within a variety of spaces important to children and young people that are beyond traditional playgrounds.'

Leeds City Council (CBE0089)

²⁸ **Playing fair: How does race affect children's access to outdoor play? - Playing Out**

3.6 Green spaces and nature

Why this matters?

Outdoor spaces of all kinds including green and natural spaces are crucial for the physical, mental, and emotional welfare of children and young people, but providing them is not a statutory requirement in new development. Access to, and the quality of these spaces also differs drastically between places. Living near open and green spaces directly impacts on health and brain development in children from before birth. Mothers who live near green space have healthier weight babies and less pre-term delivery. Children who then grow up near green spaces develop larger hippocampi (centres of the brain that deal with emotion and memory) and have longer telomeres (the end of the chromosome that decides how long we are going to live and what diseases we are going to get in later life- the longer they are, the better). Improved outcomes in child and youth mental health can also be linked to time spent outdoors and green space can act protectively against chronic stress and poor mental health in children²⁹.

Time spent outdoors fosters physical activity, social interactions, and the development of motor skills, all of which contribute to healthy development. Studies show that children exposed to nature experience improved resilience and reduced stress levels. On the contrary, children who have limited access to outdoor and green spaces are more likely to experience issues such as obesity and long-term health conditions.

Currently, 38% of the English population do not have access to publicly accessible green space within a 15-minute walk from their home, and research by Fields in Trust has found that almost 500,000 children in the UK live more than a 10-minute walk from any type of park, playground or green space, with significant geographical variation meaning that for some children it is much further than 10-minutes.

In addition, children and young people value outdoor spaces, considering them essential to their wellbeing. Many actively seek opportunities to engage with nature, demonstrating a desire to protect and care for the environment. However, access to well-maintained and safe green spaces is also a matter of social equity. Children from minority or lower-income backgrounds often face having limited or poor-quality green spaces near their homes and have overall less access to nature. Lack of maintenance and upkeep of free to access outdoor spaces is a significant barrier. Children and their parents are far more likely to use clean, safe, and well-lit green spaces, playgrounds and recreation areas. Safety concerns in local parks and public spaces, such as the fear of being stopped or perceived as troublemakers, further restricts access, especially for young people. Therefore, ensuring that all children can safely enjoy outdoor and green spaces on their doorsteps and close to their homes is essential for their holistic development.

²⁹ Dr William Bird, LUHC inquiry, Oral Evidence 24-January-2024

‘We will be talking a lot about the play and the other aspects, but we now know that the actual environment itself, and particularly green space, has a major effect on the child, including the development of their brain and their health later... There are 2,100 children who will turn 18 today. They are now adults and we have lost them if they have had a really poor environment, because they do not have those health attributes [from being outside] to take forward.’

(Dr William Bird, Oral Evidence 24-January-2024)

The benefits of green spaces and nature for children and young people’s physical and mental health are discussed extensively in the evidence submitted to the inquiry. These spaces can be formal or incidental spaces in the built environment. They support a wide variety of play and activity forms and are valued by children and young people. They also support family and social bonds as children bring adults into open spaces, as well as co-benefits for climate change resilience, mitigating air pollution and community cohesion (CBE0010; 0019; 0021; 0040; 0061; 0085; 0087; 0088; 0089; 0091; 0097). There is however also recognition that indoor spaces for meeting friends and hanging out are important, especially for teenagers, but that public provision of such spaces has declined alongside the degradation of children and youth services, and that costs to access private spaces prohibit children and young people from using them (CBE0092; 0102; 0107).

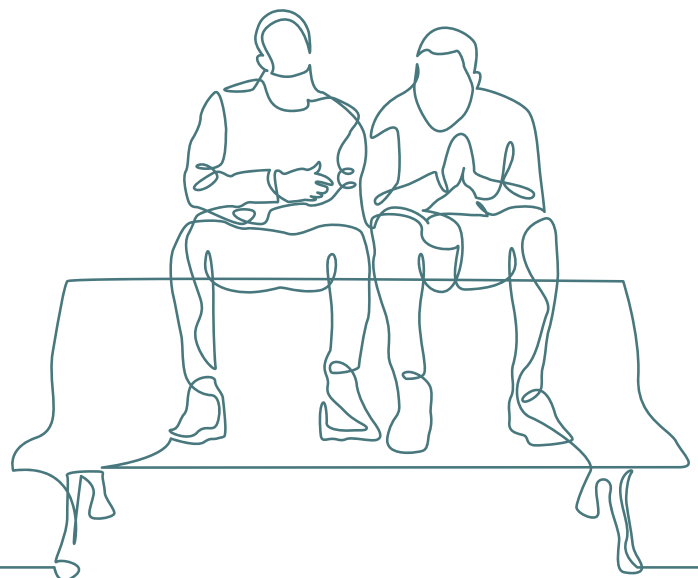
‘Listening to Dr Bird on the impact this is having on children’s health is really alarming. One in eight children live in homes without gardens or balconies, and shockingly one in five in London. Where do these children play? Where do they go outside?’

(Kate Hollern MP, Oral Evidence 24 January 2024)

Research cited in the evidence shows that the proximity of open spaces to homes is important to children and young people in terms of frequency of use, higher levels of independence and autonomy and greater levels of free play not least because road safety and other factors mean many children can’t easily get to local parks or playgrounds. The younger the child, the closer the space the better, including doorstep provision (see also 3.5 Play: access and attitudes). Beneficial outcomes from access to spaces include increased levels of activity and decreased risks of becoming overweight (CBE0010; 0017; 0019). In the context of providing green infrastructure close to homes, the existing *Natural England Environmental Improvement Plan* is discussed as it contains a clear commitment to ensure that anyone can reach green or blue space within 15-minutes of their front door (CBE0053; 0086). This standard could be adopted into planning policy. Local authorities could also work to encourage children and young people to use their local green spaces through providing information on where they are, safe routes to access them, and relevant activities and events to increase social support and community ownership of spaces (CBE0096).

‘Interacting with nature spaces is important for health and wellbeing. Evidence suggests that the higher quality, and more local the space, the better the outcomes... Children and young people who spend time in nature are also more resilient and have improved responses to stress.’

(Barnardo’s, CBE0006)



Inequality of access to green spaces and nature is raised in the evidence submissions, with a focus on the disparities in the quantity and quality of green spaces that children and young people face depending on factors including levels of deprivation, ethnicity, physical ability, gender and geographical region (CBE0006; 0017; 0028; 0033; 0108). Fields in Trust's 2024 Green Space Index³⁰ found that 44% of under nine-year-olds in the north-east are more than a 10-minute walk from a play space compared to 25% in the south-west. There is also discussion of tensions over open spaces which can be overcrowded, not providing for a mix of users and compounded by complex ownership patterns which can bring children, young people and adults into conflict (CBE0006; 0008; 0018; 0101).

'Parks and green spaces are not a statutory function... This is not just about the children and young people who are using these spaces today. How are we setting that up for the future so these spaces are permanently protected and we know we have provision within the built environment to for children to access these spaces.'

(Helen Griffiths, Oral Evidence, 24 January 2024)

'Residents of the wealthiest areas in England and Wales have 80% more paths in their local area than the residents of the most deprived areas. In addition to disparities in the provision of outdoor spaces, there are additional physical and sociocultural barriers for certain people and groups of people, including disabled people and people with reduced mobility, girls and young women, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds to access and enjoy outdoor spaces.'

(Wildlife and Countryside Link, CBE0108)

Children and young people feel that the safest parks, playgrounds or sports grounds are those where there are other children and young people, and parents with their own children, where there is good informal oversight from other users, passers-by and nearby buildings (CBE0122). Young women and girls in particular face physical and sociocultural barriers to accessing parks and green spaces, with many feeling judged, unsafe and unwelcome outside, or their independence being policed by parents, carers and siblings (CBE0008; 0009; 0028; 0037; 0050; 0060; 0089; 0106; 0108; 0111; 0112; 0121). There is a noted drop off in girls using parks during adolescence, with mid-teenage years also being associated with a 'break point' in nature connectedness (CBE0037).

Provision of facilities such as toilets and changing places, visible staff and maintenance of green spaces and recreation areas is a key factor in whether children and young people can access opportunities to play and participate in physical activity (CBE0014; 0037; 0060). Lack of maintenance and upkeep is a significant barrier, with children and their parents far more likely to use clean, safe, and well-lit green spaces, playgrounds and recreation areas. However local authority park and leisure budgets have fallen over the last decade leading to difficulties maintaining spaces and facilities (CBE0020; 0070; 0121).

There is also discussion in the submissions of the value of different types of green spaces, including allotments (CBE0012), woodlands (CBE0073) and wild spaces (CBE0022).

'I just want to touch on something that really struck me before. We all have the big identifiable parks within cities, but sometimes it is a small piece of green space within a local community or a housing estate that is absolutely precious and vital.'

(Ian Byrne MP, Oral Evidence 24 January 2024)

³⁰ [Green Space Index | Fields in Trust](#)

3.7 Healthy homes

Why this matters?

Having a safe, stable, decent home is something that every child and young person needs to thrive. Homes are critical building blocks for health and development, and are foundational for involvement in education, employment, making social connections, and all the other social and economic factors that shape the different health outcomes, or inequalities, that people experience³¹.

Housing for children and young people is fundamentally important to having a sense of security in the world³² and a good start in life, however in 2021, almost two million children in England – one in every five – were living in overcrowded, unaffordable or unsuitable homes³³.

The effects of poor-quality housing can be devastating to children and young people's physical and mental health and wellbeing. Damp, cold and overcrowded homes contribute to respiratory problems and developmental issues among children. Fuel poverty and cold homes exacerbate health inequalities, placing children at higher risk of asthma and related respiratory conditions. Overcrowding affects nearly 1.1 million children, leading to heightened risks of anxiety and depression, tiredness and delayed development³⁴.

Experiencing these issues can leave lasting effects on children as they grow up with research by Shelter England finding that children growing up in poor quality homes have an increased risk of severe ill health and disability not only during childhood but also into adulthood³⁵.

Growing up with no-where to call home detrimentally impacts on the satisfaction of basic human needs in childhood – the need for shelter, belonging, stability, safety and friendship. When families struggle with unsuitable housing it can have knock-on effects on children's education and academic performance, particularly as insecure and poor-quality housing has increasingly become a barrier for children's school attendance^{36,37}. Impacts on education can affect children for the rest of their lives.

For too many years debates on housing in England have focused only on increasing housing supply, which is needed, but housing quality and supporting healthy childhoods demands that the housing debate must look beyond numbers alone.

Although the inquiry primarily focused on the built environment outside of the home, some of the evidence submitted made clear the links between good, healthy homes and healthy childhoods. The wider built environment also becomes even more important for children and young people if their homes are poor quality or raise other health and wellbeing challenges.

³¹ Written evidence from the Chartered Institute for Housing (CBE0009)

³² [Moving always moving | The Children's Society \(childrensociety.org.uk\)](https://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

³³ [National Housing Federation - 1 in 5 children in need of a new home](https://www.nationalhousingfederation.org.uk)

³⁴ [Exploring the impact of housing insecurity on the health and wellbeing of children and young people in the United Kingdom](https://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

³⁵ [Chance of a lifetime - the impact of bad housing on children's lives – Shelter, England](https://www.shelter.org.uk)

³⁶ [The link between housing and education – School-Home Support](https://www.school-home.org.uk)

³⁷ [Poor housing a growing barrier to school attendance in England, charity reveals](https://www.shelter.org.uk)

‘Access to good quality homes is a vital pillar of children's health. For those children experiencing poor housing, the external built environment becomes critical for healthy social development and to help prevent negative health outcomes.’

(Impact on Urban Health, CBE0036)

There is a discussion in the evidence submissions of the impact of insecure, poor quality and overcrowded homes on children and young people with associated costs to the NHS, education and other sectors. Poor quality housing, particularly damp and cold homes directly harm the physical health of children and young people (CBE0009; 0021; 0086; 0111; 0125). Overcrowding affects one in six children, impacting on school attendance and achievement due to lack of sleep and no-where suitable to do homework (CBE0021). Lack of access to private gardens and outdoor space exacerbates inequalities and impacts on levels of overweight and obesity (CBE0027; 0030; 0061; 0068; 0070) as well homes with inadequate kitchen and dining space provision making it challenging for families to safely store food, and cook and eat nutritious meals with fresh produce (CBE0017; 0031; 0084).

Housing insecurity (experiencing or being at risk of multiple house-moves that are not through choice and are related to poverty) has damaging impacts on children’s physical and psychological health (CBE0009). There are also issues raised in relation to children and young people living in temporary accommodation.

‘...when you count the standard sizes for temporary and emergency accommodation, babies are not counted. They are physically not seen as a person. Effectively, you can house a single parent in a room that is big enough for a single person, but they have their baby there with them, with no space for a cot and nowhere to crawl around.’

(Dinah Bornat, Oral Evidence 26-February-2024)

‘Ample evidence that poor housing has significant impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals. Insecure housing negatively impacts the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people and can lead to increased behavioural problems and reduced educational attainment. Likewise cold and damp housing that is unaffordable to heat can also impact mental and emotional health, physical health and educational achievement thus affecting future employment prospects and perpetuating cycles of financial insecurity into the next generation.’

(British Association for Child and Adolescent Public Health, CBE0059)

Despite the clear need for healthy homes, evidence submissions point out that the current approach to securing decent homes and communities is fragmented and spans building regulations, planning policy, the health and safety regime, environmental health protections, and other legislation. This complex array of policy and regulatory requirements weakens attempt to improve health outcomes and no part of the system is centring the needs of children and young people for a healthy home. To ensure a more comprehensive approach to delivering better health outcomes, the TCPA Healthy Homes Principles³⁸ could be adopted by national and local government to embed health promotion as an overarching aim through the entirety of the housebuilding process.



Appendix one – Case studies cited in inquiry evidence

Strategies

Architecture in Schools (West London)
 Belfast Healthy Cities initiative
 Friends of Market Place Playground (Leeds)
 Gateshead Council hot food takeaways SPD
 Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity
 Greater Cambridge Shared Planning's Youth Engagement Service
 Hackney Child Friendly Supplementary Planning Document
 Holiday Activities and Food Programme
 Homes England's Garden Communities Toolkit
 Inclusive Engage Toolkit
 Modeshift STARS Education accreditation scheme
 Place Standard Tool for Children and Young People (Scotland)
 Play Streets Enablement Project (Leeds)
 Play Sufficiency Assessment (Scottish National Framework)
 Playable Spaces Strategy (Bradford)
 Playful Learning Landscapes (America)
 Public Realm Inclusivity Panel (Earl's Court)
 RIBA West Midlands and Birmingham Young Person Design Council
 The Children's Commissioner's Big Ambition
 The Doorstep Sport approach (UK)
 The Lundy model of child participation
 The Missing Link: Social Prescribing for Children and Young People
 The Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012
 Voice Opportunity Power
 Welsh Play Sufficiency Duty

UK Projects

Aberfeldy, Tower Hamlets
 Ashbrow Community Coalition in Huddersfield Ten Point Plan
 Balsall Heath, Birmingham
 Barnet Homes- Please Play Here campaign
 Borders Garden Community, Tendring, Colchester
 Bradford Moor Park
 Cardiff UN Child Friendly Status
 Cathedral Garden's Pop-up Play Space, Belfast
 CommUNITY Hub, Lewisham
 Didsbury Park
 Emslie Play Area, London
 Euston Tower Creative Producer project
 Folkstone Street
 Friends of Market Place Playground
 Horton Park
 Join Us: Move, Play (Bradford)
 Kettlewell Snicket
 London Cycleway Network
 Mayfield Park, Manchester
 Milton Keynes, Woughton Council youth project
 North of Tyne – Culture and Creative Zones
 Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit workshop
 Nottingham Central Library and The Broadmarsh Regeneration Project
 Oxhey Activity Park, Watford
 Palmers Green Play Quarter, Enfield
 Peel Park
 Play Streets (UK wide programme)
 Pound's Park, Sheffield
 Rowntree Park, Leeds

School Streets London Borough of Brent
Snap Dragon Children and Family Festival, Hinckley
and Bosworth Borough Council
Swaffham Masterplan
Tendring Colchester Borders Garden
Community Engagement Activity
Tower Hamlets, PUSH project
Triangle Adventure Playground (London
Borough of Lambeth)
Worlds End Play Area, Mid Sussex
YMCA Lincolnshire's programme of social
action with young people in Mablethorpe

International Projects

Accessible tube system, Athens
Co-design and co-build of school grounds
with children and community, Bangladesh
Darling Quarter, Sydney
Fremantle Esplanade Youth Plaza, Australia
Piazza Aperte, Milan
Plan for Play in Barcelona's Public Spaces
Playful Learning Landscapes
Portland Citywide Design Guidelines
Rabalder Skatepark, Copenhagen
Rodens Rosa Matta park, Malmo
Rotterdam UN Child-Friendly City
Singapore Biophillic City
Sport New Zealand: The Neighbourhood
Play System
Strandpromenade activity park, Norway
Superblocks, Barcelona
Tussaparken, Oslo, Norway



Appendix two – List of inquiry contributors

Reproduced from the [UK Parliament website](#)

Written evidence

Citation	Inquiry contributors
CBE0134	Room 13 Hareclive
CBE0135	Devorah Block (Independent educator and strategic advisor)
CBE0136	Playing Out (on behalf of the pro-play housing network)
CBE0132	Centre for Young Lives
CBE0133	Adfree Cities
CBE0131	Phineas Harper (Researcher and Urbanist)
CBE0130	Anonymous
CBE0129	Urban Transport Group
CBE0128	Slade Gardens Community Play Association CIO
CBE0123	ZCD Architects
CBE0124	Triangle Adventure Playground
CBE0125	Prof Luca Csepely-Knorr (Chair in Architecture at University of Liverpool School of Architecture)
CBE0126	Joy Burgess
CBE0127	Playing Out (supplementary evidence on children as an equality group)
CBE0121	StreetGames
CBE0122	Pupils 2 Parliament
CBE0120	Anonymous
CBE0117	Naomi Fisher (Strategic Lead at ROAM)
CBE0118	Michelle Golding
CBE0119	Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)
CBE0116	Miranda MacLaren (Architect at RIBA)
CBE0115	Jo McCafferty (Levitt Berstein Architects)

CBE0104	Architecture for Kids
CBE0105	Children's Commissioner Evidence
CBE0106	Earls Court Development Company, and ZDC Architect
CBE0107	Sally Watson (PhD at Newcastle University)
CBE0108	Wildlife & Countryside Link
CBE0109	Nicky Gavron and Joanna Chambers
CBE0110	Helen Prentice
CBE0111	Royal Institute of British Architects
CBE0112	Sport England
CBE0113	Transport for London (TfL)
CBE0114	Waltham Forest
CBE0002	National Association for Therapeutic Education
CBE0003	Prof (Dr) Monica Lakhanpaul (Professor of Integrated Community Health at UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, University College London)
CBE0004	Friends of Didsbury Park
CBE0006	Barnardo's
CBE0007	Claudia Fussell
CBE0008	Professor Peter Kraftl (Professor of Human Geography at University of Birmingham), Professor Sophie Hadfield-Hill (Professor of Human Geography at University of Birmingham), Dr Charles Goode (Assistant Professor in Urban and Regional Planning at University of Birmingham), Dr Dilum Dissanayake (Associate Professor in Human Geography and Transportation Planning at University of Birmingham), Dr Katia Attuyer (Associate Professor in Urban Planning and Environmental Management at University of Birmingham), Dr Gethin Davison (Associate Professor in Urban and Regional Planning at University of Birmingham), and Mr Adam Sheppard (Assistant Professor in Urban and Regional Planning at University of Birmingham)
CBE0009	Chartered Institute of Housing
CBE0010	Groundswell
CBE0011	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
CBE0012	The National Allotment Society
CBE0013	Professor Sarah Marie Hall (Professor in Human Geography at University of Manchester), Dr Alison Briggs (Research Associate at University of Manchester), Dr Elizabeth Ackerley (Research Associate at University of Manchester), Dr Laura Fenton (Research Associate at University of Manchester), and Dr Santiago Leyva del Rio (Research Associate at University of Manchester)

CBE0014	National Network of Parent Carer Forums
CBE0015	University of Liverpool- Dr Jon Winder
CBE0016	The University of Manchester
CBE0017	Public Map Platform
CBE0018	Living Streets
CBE0019	Ludicology
CBE0020	Association of Play Industries (API)
CBE0021	Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)
CBE0022	Dr Anna Bocking-Welch (Senior Lecturer in Modern British History at University of Liverpool), Dr Richard Huzzey (Professor of Modern British History at Durham University), Dr Cristina Leston-Bandeira (Professor of Politics at University of Leeds), and Dr Henry Miller (Associate Professor and Vice Chancellor's Fellow at Northumbria University)
CBE0023	Dr Wendy Russell (Independent Researcher and Visiting Fellow at University of Gloucestershire)
CBE0025	Play Worcester
CBE0026	A Place in Childhood CIC
CBE0027	Professor Helen Dodd (Professor of Child Psychology at University of Exeter), Dr Lily FitzGibbon (Lecturer in Psychology at University of Stirling), Dr Kathryn Hesketh (Senior Research Fellow at University of Cambridge), Dr Rachel Nesbit (Lecturer in Psychology at University of Exeter), and Brooke Oliver (PhD Candidate at University of Reading)
CBE0028	Dr Esther Sayers (Senior Lecturer in Art and Education at Goldsmiths, University of London), Dr Francis Gilbert (Senior Lecturer in Educational Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London), and Dr Sheryl Clark (Senior Lecturer in Educational Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London)
CBE0029	Built Environment Trust
CBE0030	Playing Out
CBE0031	Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming
CBE0032	UK Health Alliance on Climate Change
CBE0033	PRP
CBE0034	Sustrans
CBE0035	Health Equity North
CBE0036	Impact on Urban Health

CBE0037	University of Leeds, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Make Space for Girls, and Keep Britain Tidy
CBE0038	Play Wales
CBE0039	Historic England
CBE0040	Dr Azadeh Fatehrad (Senior Lecturer at Kingston University), and Dr Davide Natalini (Senior Research Fellow at Anglia Ruskin University)
CBE0041	Mrs Alison McCann (Policy and Research Manager at Fields in Trust)
CBE0042	Learning Through Landscapes
CBE0043	Professor Shelley McKeown Jones (Professor of Social Psychology at University of Bristol)
CBE0044	Professor Carrie Paechter (Professor of Childhood, Youth, and Family Life at Nottingham Trent University), Dr Michael Keenan (Senior Lecturer at Nottingham Trent University), Dr Lyndsey Stoodley (independent academic at n/a), and Chris Lawton (Community Development Officer at Skateboard GB)
CBE0045	The Heritage Alliance
CBE0046	Food Active
CBE0047	Healthy Air Coalition
CBE0048	Dr. Matteo Giusti (Research Fellow in science of sustainable development at University of Surrey)
CBE0049	MATT + FIONA
CBE0050	Environmental Horticulture Group
CBE0051	Dr Holly Weir (Independent researcher at Active People Active Places)
CBE0052	Buckingham Town Council
CBE0053	Natural England
CBE0054	Merrick Denton-Thompson (Trustee of the Learning Through Landscapes Trust at Landscape Institute- Past President)
CBE0055	Dr Michael Martin (Lecturer in Urban Design and Planning at University of Sheffield / Sheffield- Child of the North (N8 Research Partnership)), and Dr Hannah Fairbrother (Senior Lecturer in Public Health at University of Sheffield / Sheffield- Child of the North (N8 Research Partnership))
CBE0056	Wheelscape Ltd
CBE0057	Bruno Waghorn (Student at University of East Anglia)
CBE0058	Professor Melody Smith (Professor at The University of Auckland)

CBE0059	BACAPH British Association for Child and Adolescent Public Health
CBE0060	Make Space for Girls
CBE0061	London Sport
CBE0062	Dr Jennifer Wills Lamacq (Child & Educational Psychologist at p/t Self-employed & p/t employed by University College London)
CBE0064	Sharon King
CBE0065	Natasha Sturrock
CBE0066	Dr Naomi Lott (Research Fellow at University of Oxford)
CBE0067	Mr Tim Gill (Independent researcher at Rethinking Childhood)
CBE0068	London Play
CBE0069	Youth Sport Trust
CBE0070	Clarion Housing Group
CBE0071	Alliance for Childhood
CBE0072	Ellen Weaver
CBE0073	Dr Janine Coates (Senior Lecturer in Qualitative Research at Loughborough University), Dr Helena Pimlott-Wilson (Reader in Human Geography at Loughborough University), Dr Verity Postlethwaite (Vice-Chancellor Independent Research Fellow at Loughborough University), and Mr Paddy Smith (Senior Public Affairs Manager at Loughborough University)
CBE0074	CREATE streets
CBE0075	Thornton Education Trust
CBE0076	Professor Danielle Sinnett (Director, Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments at University of the West of England), Dr Issy Bray (Associate Professor at University of the West of England), Dr Paul Lintott (Senior Lecturer at University of the West of England), Mark Drane (Post graduate researcher and practitioner at University of the West of England), Rebecca Reece (Post graduate researcher at University of the West of England), Samuel Kyei (Post graduate researcher at University of the West of England), and Yarden Woolf (Post graduate researcher at University of the West of England)
CBE0077	UCL Institute of Education, and Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination
CBE0078	Bite Back 2030
CBE0079	University of Central Lancashire
CBE0080	Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination
CBE0081	Greater Manchester Moving

CBE0082	TOWN
CBE0083	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
CBE0084	The Food Foundation
CBE0085	Play England
CBE0086	Intelligent Health
CBE0087	Playing Out, Tim Gill and 23 other signatories
CBE0088	Samantha Haycock (Co-Chair at Friends of Market Place Playground)
CBE0089	Tomas Johnson (Senior Planner at Leeds City Council), and Jennifer Rutherford (Play Strategy Officer at Leeds City Council)
CBE0090	Stephanie Edwards (Co-Founder at Urban Symbiotics)
CBE0091	Prof Helen Lomax
CBE0092	Simeon Shtebunaev
CBE0093	Ann Semlyen, 20's Plenty for Us
CBE0094	Grosvenor Property UK
CBE0095	Professor Scarlett McNally (President at Medical Women's Federation)
CBE0096	University College London
CBE0097	Alex Smith
CBE0098	Rebecca Bryant
CBE0099	Kelly MacKinnon (Associate Professor at Northumbria University), and Northumbria University
CBE0100	Modeshift
CBE101	Dinah Bornat
CBE102	Harriet Grant
CBE103	Newcastle University

Oral evidence sessions

Date	Inquiry contributors
24 Jan 2024	<p>Dr William Bird, CEO, Intelligent Health</p> <p>Professor Helen Dodd, Exeter University</p> <p>Professor Alison Stenning, Newcastle University</p> <p>Dr Jennifer Wills Lamacq, DECPsy Academic and Professional Tutor, UCL</p> <p>----</p> <p>Gemma Hyde, Projects and Policy Manager, TCPA</p> <p>Alice Ferguson, Associate and Board Director, Playing Out</p> <p>Harriet Grant, Freelance reporter, Guardian</p> <p>Helen Griffiths, Chief Executive, Fields in Trust</p>
26 Feb 2024	<p>Tim Gill, Researcher and author of 2021 RIBA book, Urban Playground</p> <p>Dinah Bornat, Co-Director, ZCD Architects</p> <p>----</p> <p>Jo McCafferty, Director, Levitt Bernstein</p> <p>Jonny Anstead, Founding Director, TOWN</p> <p>Sarah Scannell, Assistant Director Planning, Birmingham City Council</p>
25 Mar 2024	<p>Joanna Averley, Chief Planner, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities</p> <p>Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy, Deputy Chief Medical Officer</p> <p>----</p> <p>Lee Rowley MP, Minister for Housing, Planning and Building Safety, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities</p> <p>Joanna Averley, Chief Planner, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities</p>



**Raising the healthiest
generation in history:**
why it matters where children
and young people live

2024

**Town and Country Planning
Association (TCPA)**

17 Carlton House Terrace
London SW1Y 5AS

020 7930 8903

tcpa@tcpa.org.uk

www.tcpa.org.uk

