

How To Help Street Play Happen In Your Area

What do people need to make their street or estate a place to play?

- Motivation and understanding of the benefits
- Time, energy and confidence to make it happen
- Interest and support from neighbours
- Simple, free 'temporary play street' application process
- Road closure 'kit' (signs, barriers, hi-viz etc.)
- Clear guidance and resources
- Hands-on support through the process as needed
- Political and practical support for children's right to play in streets and estates

Who is needed to make street play happen locally?

- 1. Residents.** The most important group - they are the driving force, do the bulk of the work and without them nothing would happen!
- 2. Local support.** This could be a resident 'local activator' who has started playing out sessions on their own street and wants to help others do the same, or it could be a local community-based organisation – or, as in the case of Hackney, a partnership of the two.
- 3. Council members.** High-level political support is essential if the council is to fully commit to enabling and promoting street play in both policy and practice.
- 4. Council officers.** Local schemes work best and have most impact where there is cross-council support, especially from Highways, Public Health, Children's Services, Community Development, Housing and Communications, all of whom have different roles to play.
- 5. Other agencies.** Support from the police and other organisations with an interest in the area, such as housing associations, can also be very helpful.

What can the council do to support street play? As well as providing funding for local support and materials, the council has a crucial role to play in ensuring the right policies and support are in place. Best practice includes:

- Vocal high-level support
- Working closely with residents and listening to their needs
- Co-ordinated cross-council working (e.g. Lead officer and steering group)
- Simple, free application process, backed up in practice
- Promoting the scheme and benefits to residents
- Signposting to other sources of support (e.g. www.playingout.net and local support)
- Looking at how other policy can support street play (e.g. 20mph)
- Publicising the positive outcomes and encouraging other councils to follow suit

Working together: Some areas, including Bristol and Hackney, have set up a Street Play Steering Group, bringing all the players together to ensure cross-sector support and consistency.

What support do residents need on the ground?

Whilst the aim is for residents to initiate and sustain activity themselves, it is clear that the right support is invaluable in giving people the tools and confidence to get started – and keep going! There are various local support models arising, from council-run to volunteer/resident-led. It seems to work best (as in Bristol and Hackney) where support is provided on a peer-to-peer basis, led by active local residents, supported by community-based organisations and the council. In Bristol, we have successfully trialled and are now rolling out a 'local activator' model at a neighbourhood level.

Specific local support includes:

- Workshops and drop-in information sessions (in schools, community centres)
- Promoting the idea at local community events
- Hosting of local playing out Facebook groups
- Organising demonstration playing out sessions outside schools
- Initial visit to residents on their street to talk through issues and look at options
- Printed guidance and publicity materials e.g. organiser packs, leaflets, posters
- Attendance at first residents' meeting
- Help with application process
- Design, printing and delivery of consultation letters, publicity etc.
- Help dealing with objections or concerns
- Road closure 'kit' e.g. road closed signs, cones, bin stickers, hi-viz jackets
- Help with safely setting up and stewarding first sessions
- Help dealing with any problems arising
- Liaison between residents and council
- Supporting residents to get positive media coverage
- Facilitation of local peer-support networks
- Ideas and support for sustaining sessions over time

How much does this cost? Relatively little! Of course, the more funding there is, the more support can be given and the more children and communities can benefit. At a basic level, a paid street play support worker or 'local activator', plus budget for publicity, kits and guidance materials, would be a great start. More resource may be needed to kick-start activity in harder-to-reach areas – learning around this is emerging from Hackney and Bristol.

What other sources of support are there? Playing Out exists to support resident-led street play across the country by providing free guidance and resources, training and peer-to-peer support through its national street play network. London Play provides support and advice to residents, councils and organisations in the capital. Play England advises local play associations and councils on supporting street play. Active residents, local community-based organisations and lead officers in active councils are also a useful source of expertise. See www.playingout.net for a map of active streets and list of active councils across the UK, or contact Playing Out to find out if anyone is already doing anything in your area.



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