



Playing Out in Bristol 2015-16



Prepared for Bristol City Council
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148 North Street, Bristol, BS3 1HA
0117 9537167 hello@playingout.net
www.playingout.net

Background

The 'playing out' idea began in 2009 as a small, local, neighbour-led project, enabling children to play out on one street in South Bristol through the simple model of short, stewarded road closures. Children's freedom to play out has drastically reduced over the past generation due to a combination of factors. Meanwhile, their physical activity levels have also dropped to the extent that less than 1/5 of children meet the current minimum guideline of 1hr of moderate physical activity per day. The aim of this model was to provide an immediate way for children to play safely outside their own front door and at the same time, to raise awareness of the issues and build some of the conditions needed to make street play normal and acceptable: greater trust between neighbours, parental confidence, safer streets.

In 2010 we ran a pilot on 6 Bristol streets (report available to download at: <http://playingout.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/finalreport2010.pdf>) and set up the website playingout.net as a free resource for residents. In 2011, we constituted as a Community Interest Company whose key aim is to enable children to play out safely on the streets where they live, mainly through providing direct support for residents across the UK to organise their own 'playing out' sessions.

During 2011-12, we worked with the council to set up and trial the groundbreaking 'Temporary Play Street Order' (TPSO) policy, enabling residents to open their streets for play on a regular basis for the first time. 16 streets successfully applied during the first year, with 500 children and 200 adults actively involved. During 2012, interest in the idea grew, both within and outside Bristol, with national media coverage including the front page of Guardian family section and Radio 4 Women's Hour. Since 2013, funding from the Local Sustainable Transport fund, Bristol Green Capital and Bristol Public Health has enabled us to support the TPSO policy over three years, enabling the project to take root in all Neighbourhood Partnership areas, with the aim of creating 100 established Play Streets across the city by the end of March 2016.

This work aimed to benefit thousands of children and wider communities across the city and truly establish Bristol as a beacon city for street play. It also enabled us to build on our existing relationship with Bristol University to formally evaluate the model as a means to increase children's physical activity levels and community cohesion, particularly in areas of higher deprivation across the city. From 2013-16 we were also funded under the Department for Health 'Street Play Project' to provide support and advice for residents and organisations nationally, drawing on our direct work and experience in Bristol, so far resulting in over 250 street communities 'playing out' outside Bristol and 37 other local authorities putting 'TPSO' or similar policies in place.

Funding and projects 2015/16

During 2015-16 Playing Out has received funding for three distinct but complementary areas of activity across the city:

Funding	Funded activity
Bristol Public Health (final year of a three-year contact)	Core support for Playing Out's work across Bristol with a particular emphasis on ensuring activity is spread across all 14 Neighbourhood Partnership areas in the city.
Bristol Green Capital Strategic Grant (one-year grant)	<p>To begin to enable playing out in target areas of high deprivation and high-rise estates in Bristol and to share the learning from this widely, so children everywhere can benefit.</p> <p>To establish a sustainable model of peer-to-peer support for resident-led street play in Bristol neighbourhoods that can be replicated across Bristol, the UK and beyond.</p> <p>To establish Bristol as a true 'beacon city' for street play, nationally and internationally.</p>
Active Neighbourhood Transport Grant (continuation grant following 2-year LSTF funding for core work)	Specific funding for 20 road-closure 'kits', 3 networking events for street organisers and 2 steward training workshops to complement the other work.

Further to this, we received a small amount of neighbourhood partnership funding for targetted activity in Greater Bedminster and St George. Key reporting on this work is included under 'Area Activator' section below (full reports already submitted to the respective neighbourhood partnerships).

Overview of Activity in 2015/16

What level of activity is there?

During the year we have recorded 190 new enquiries from people in Bristol interested in playing out. Of these 174 were from individuals interested in street play where they live and a further 16 were from individuals contacting us on behalf of an organisation - including small community groups, schools or their parent teacher associations, housing associations or individuals in the council.

By the end of March 2016 a cumulative total of 117 streets had been given permission for playing out session(s) in Bristol. Additionally we know of nine streets where informal street play (either in cul de sacs or on pavements) has happened as a result of contact with Playing Out.

Growth and spread of streets with playing out sessions

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total number of streets that have played out	65	88	119
Number of neighbourhood partnership areas with playing out sessions (total =14)	10	11	12
Number of wards with playing out sessions (total= 35)	15	20	25

In response to demand from residents and a growing awareness that the street-based ‘playing out’ model may not be suitable or sustainable in all areas and types of housing, Playing Out facilitated an ‘action-research’ project across several different geographical and social settings within some of the most deprived wards in the city (Fulford Road and nearby streets in Hartcliffe; ‘tower block’ council estates in Lawrence Hill and Redcliffe). We worked in close partnership with community-based partner organisations (primarily Knightstone Housing’s Community Empowerment team in Hartcliffe and Up Our Street in Lawrence Hill and Redcliffe), who know and understand the local environment and residents. This led to resident-led playing out sessions in four non-street settings (fuller details in Bristol estate project section below).

During the year a total of 61 applications for Temporary Play Street Orders have been made, relating to 60 different streets. All but one of these applications resulted in the issue of a Temporary Play Street Order, with a total of 921 playing out sessions given permission, providing over 30,000 active ‘play hours’ (no. sessions x 2hrs x 20 children avg.).

During the year we have worked both to support residents who are interested in getting playing out sessions going on their streets and to raise awareness more widely to encourage people to think about the benefits and barriers to children playing out.

Our proactive engagement work has included participating in 165 different events, including five neighbourhood forums and 61 community events, where we had conversations with around 436 people. Our involvement ranged from talking to people at regular events such as toddler groups, coffee mornings and school PTA meetings to engaging people through chalking and skipping at larger events such as family fun days, Redfest, Easton Arts Trail, Knowle West Fest and many more.



We also attended all four local Make Sunday Special events with “Open the Door”, an interactive game, installation and play-scape involving audience participation, improvisation, instant drawing and making around a large cardboard front door and a small scale residential street

As well as much informal support throughout the process of initiating, planning and organising playing out sessions, our hands-on support to residents included attending 22 residents’ meetings, and 31 first (or one-off) playing out sessions, as well as meetings with organisations such as schools or residents’ groups who are interested in Playing Out. We were also involved with four other “placemaking” events, including the launch of a street pocket and schools events.

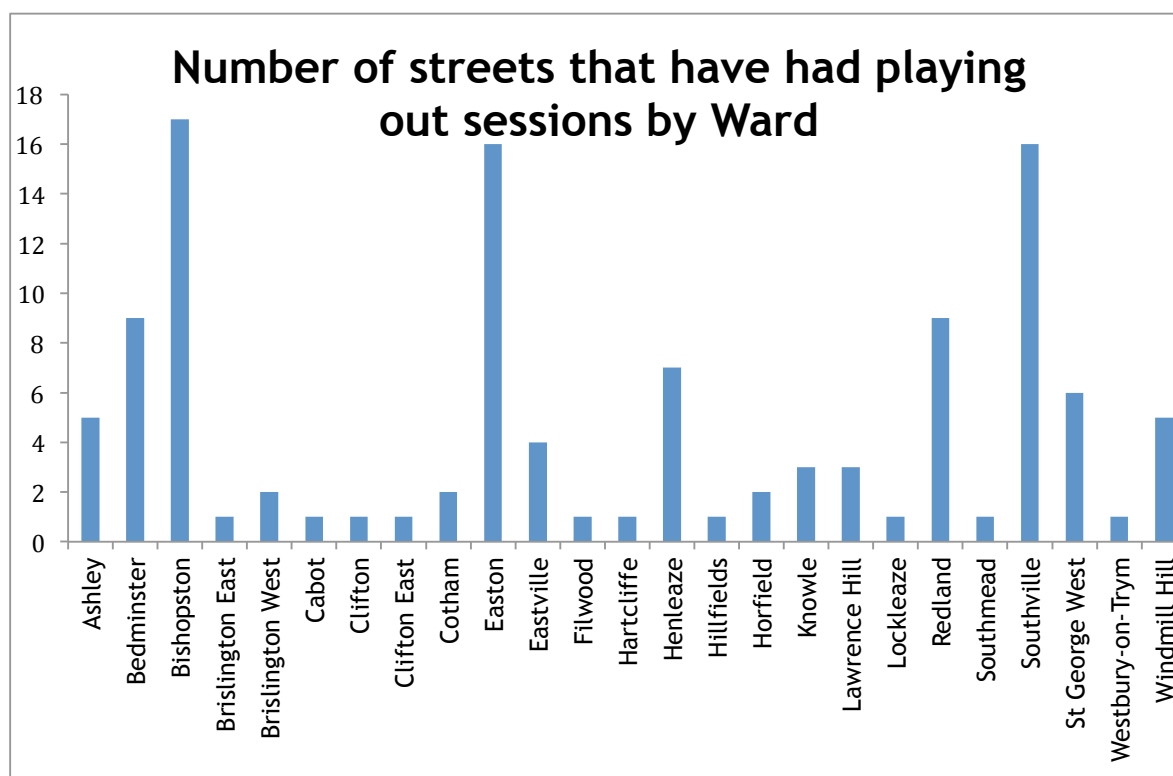
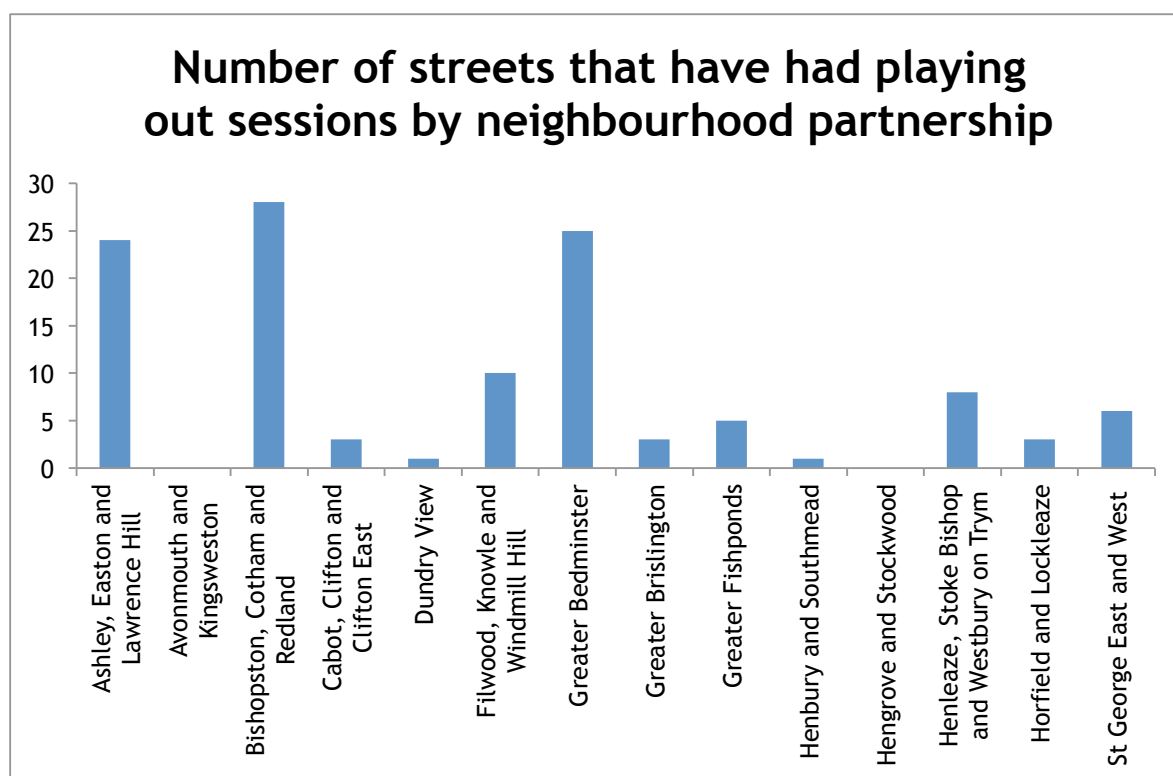
Whereabouts in the city is this activity located?

The new enquiries received about during the year came from people in at least 28 of the 35 Bristol wards (we had no location details for 15 of the enquiries). Playing Out has now received enquiries from every ward in the city. This is a significant increase on the 25 wards recorded at the end of 2014/15.

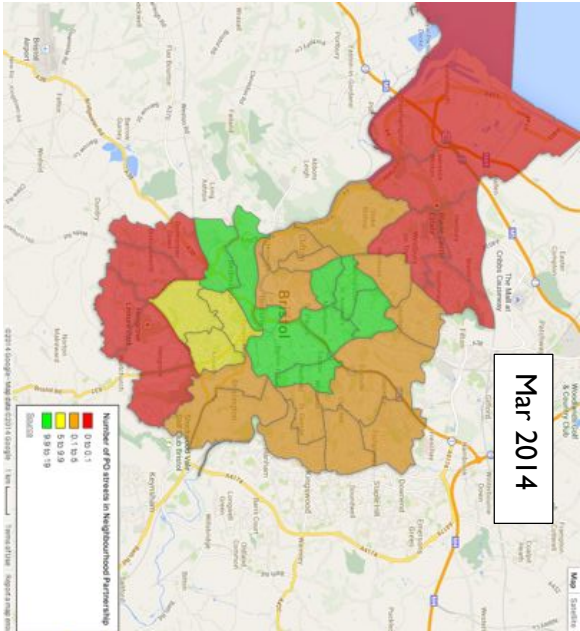
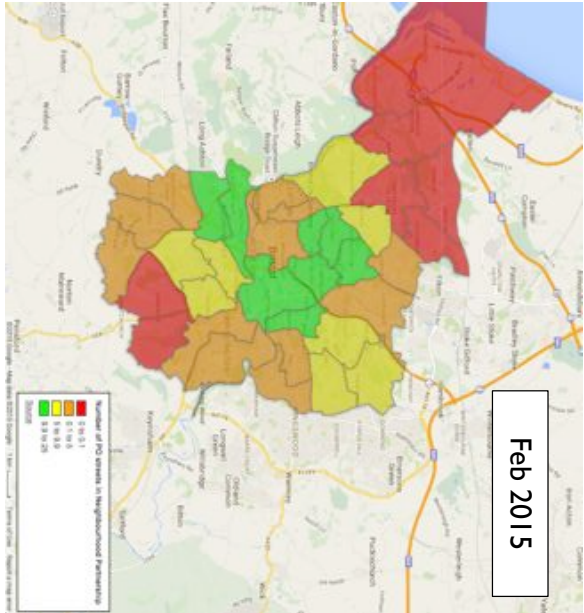
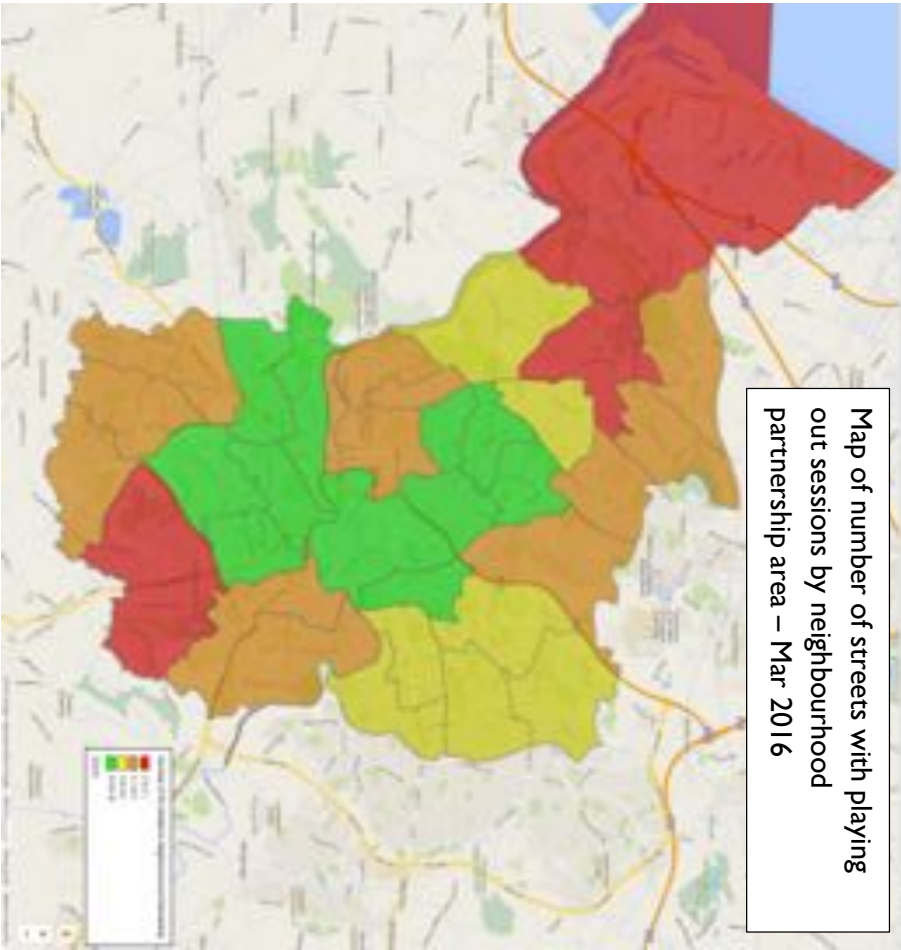
Ward	Enquiries in 2015-16	All enquiries since 2011
Ashley	8	39
Avonmouth	4	5
Bedminster	10	37
Bishopston	15	50
Bishopsworth	1	1
Brislington East	3	3
Brislington West	4	11
Cabot	0	2
Clifton	0	11
Clifton East	0	1
Cotham	1	4
Easton	33	87
Eastville	7	17
Filwood	0	2
Frome Vale	5	8
Hartcliffe	2	5
Henbury	2	2
Hengrove	4	4
Henleaze	3	13

Ward	Enquiries in 2015-16	All enquiries since 2011
Hillfields	3	9
Horfield	0	8
Kingsweston	3	3
Knowle	4	9
Lawrence Hill	11	19
Lockleaze	6	12
Redland	3	23
Southmead	7	9
Southville	12	54
St George East	5	12
St George West	12	23
Stockwood	0	1
Stoke Bishop	0	2
Westbury-on-Trym	1	2
Whitchurch Park	1	2
Windmill Hill	5	25

The streets that have had playing out sessions come from 12 of the 14 neighbourhood partnership areas (all except Avonmouth and Kingswood NP, and Hengrove and Stockwood NP) and 25 of the 35 wards in Bristol. Since March 2015 this is an additional five wards that have had playing out sessions.



The maps below illustrate the spread across the city and how this has progressed over the last three years.



How regular are the sessions?

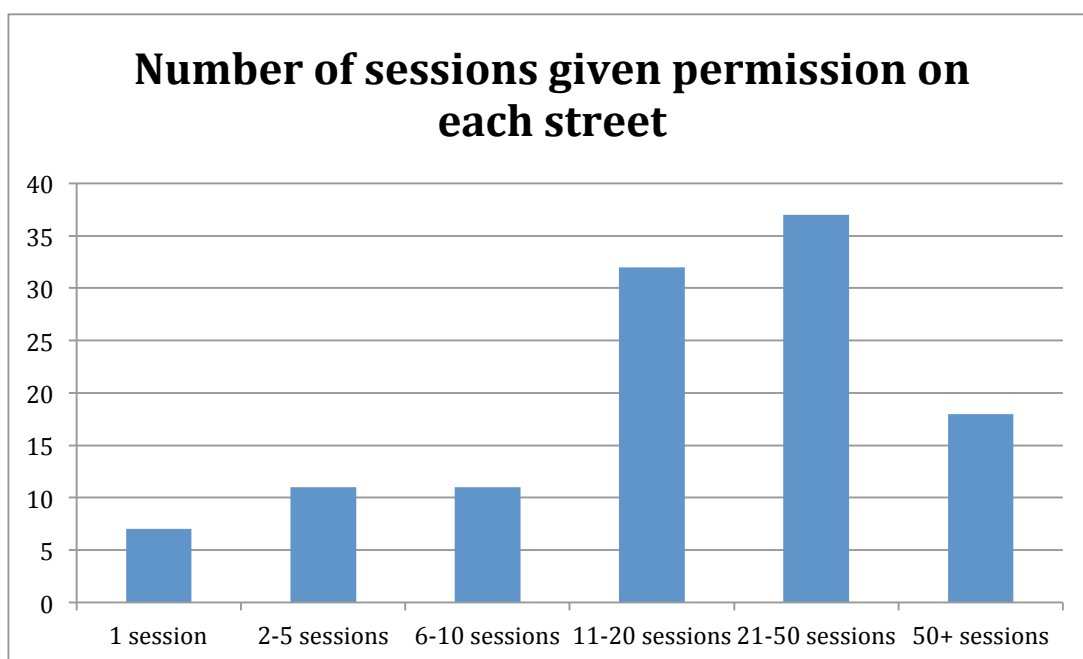
7 streets have had a single session, either to introduce the idea, to try it out before applying for more sessions, or as a catalyst for normalising street play.

112 streets have had multiple playing out sessions.

Additionally, we know of 9 streets doing semi-organised pavement or cul-de-sac play sessions as a result of Playing Out.

A total of 3,159 sessions have been given permission since 2010. This is an average of 26 permitted sessions per street. These are spread as follows:

Sessions given permission	Number of streets
1 session	7
2-5 sessions	11
6-10 sessions	11
11-20 sessions	32
21-50 sessions	37
50+ sessions	18



Which Bristol streets have held playing out sessions?

Acramans Road, Southville	Ellicott Rd, Bishopston
Allington Road, Southville	Elmgrove Road, Eastville
Alpine Road, Easton	Exeter road, Southville
Argus Court, Bedminster	Foxcote Rd, Southville
Banwell Road, Southville	Fulford Rd, Hartcliffe
Bartletts Road, Bedminster	Great Ann Street, Lawrence Hill
Battenburg Road, St George West	Greenbank Avenue East, Easton
Battersea Road, Easton	Greville Rd (upper), Southville
Beauchamp Road, Bishopston	Greville Rd (lower), Southville
Beauley Road, Southville	Grove Rd (with Lodore Road), Eastville
Beckington Road, Filwood	Halsbury Road, Redland
Belfry Ave, St George West	Hamilton Road, Southville
Belton Rd, Easton	Hapgood Street, Lawrence Hill
Birch Road, Southville	Harbury Rd, Henleaze
Bloy St, Easton	Harrowdene Rd, Knowle
Bourneville Rd., Easton	Hawthorne St, Windmill Hill
Breach Road , Bedminster	Hedwick Avenue, St George West
Brenner Street, Easton	Highbury Road, Bedminster
Brynland Avenue (North End), Bishopston	Holmes Street, Lawrence Hill
Brynland Avenue (South end), Bishopston	Howard Ave, St George West
Burghley Road, Ashley	Julius Road, Redland
Cairns Road,, Henleaze	Kendon Drive, Horfield
Carlyle Road, Easton	Kennington Avenue, Bishopston
Chatsworth Rd (applied with Edward Rd), Brislington West	Langham Road, Knowle
Chelsea Park, Easton	Leighton Road, Southville
Church Avenue, Easton	Lena Ave, Easton
Churchlands Road, Bedminster	Leonards Ave, Easton
Claremont Street, Easton	Lime Road, Southville
Clift road, Southville	Lodore Road (with Grove Road), Eastville
Clovelly Close, St George West	Lynmouth road, Ashley
Codrington Rd, Redland	Maple Avenue, Hillfields
Colston Road, Easton	Mascot Road, Windmill Hill
Cornwall Road, Bishopston	Milford Street, Southville
Cottrell Rd, Eastville	Monk Road, Bishopston
Cricklade Rd, Bishopston	Monmouth Road, Bishopston
Crowther St (with Parker St), Bedminster	Morley Road, Southville
Delvin Road, Southmead	Newlyn Walk, Knowle
Devonshire Road, Henleaze	Northumberland Road, Redland
Drake Rd, Southville	Nottingham Road, Bishopston
Dugar Walk, Redland	Oakwood Road, Henleaze
Edward Rd (applied with Chatsworth Rd), Brislington West	Parker St (with Crowther St), Bedminster
Eldon Terrace, Windmill Hill	Paulton Drive, Redland
	Pendennis Park, Brislington East
	Quarrington Rd, Bishopston

Queens Drive, Bishopston
Queen's Parade, Cabot
Radnor Road, Bishopston
Risdale Rd, Bedminster
Rousham Road, Lockleaze
Ruby Street, Bedminster
Salisbury Road, Redland
Sandgate Road, Brislington West
Sefton Park Road, Ashley
Seymour Avenue, Bishopston
Shadwell Road, Redland
Shipley Road, Westbury-on-Trym
Springfield Avenue, Bishopston
St Albans Rd, Henleaze
St John's Rd, Clifton East
St Ronans Avenue, Cotham
St Vincents Road, Clifton
Stadium Road, Henleaze

Stanley Hill, Windmill Hill
Stanley Park, Easton
Stonebridge Park, Eastville
Talgarth Road, Bishopston
Tudor Road, Easton
Tynning Road, Windmill Hill
Upper Belmont Rd (Longfield), Bishopston
Upper Cheltenham Place, Ashley
Upper Cranbrook Road, Redland
Victoria Avenue, St George West
Walliscote Road, Henleaze
West View Road, Bedminster
Windsor Road, Ashley
Woodchester Road, Horfield
Woodstock Avenue, Cotham



Impact of Playing Out

Although the playing out model is intended as a catalyst for widespread social change around children's freedom and use of streets, the most direct and immediate beneficiaries are the people who live on the streets and estates where playing out sessions are held. Our estimate is that on average 30 children and 15 adults are directly involved from each street where playing out sessions are organised.

In 2015/16 60 streets successfully applied for TPSOs in Bristol. This means around 1800 children and 900 adults will directly benefit from regular sessions, as well as those involved in playing out sessions on estates (see separate section below).

For each street with playing out sessions, there are many positive outcomes for the children and adults directly involved and for the wider community. The four main areas of impact we are seeing are:

1. Children have a chance to play freely and actively outside their front door.

The University of Bristol will be publishing research later this month showing that, as a direct result of playing out sessions, children's physical activity levels are increased compared to a normal day after school and that they are also learning important skills such as cycling and road sense, which further enable and encourage independence and physical activity.



*“My children are active, they **want** to be active and my son is currently working on ‘how many laps can I cycle around our street’, my daughter will ask to play out in the street pretty much everyday - so I literally have NO concerns about their health/activity levels - they sleep SO well after a playing out session and always eat a really good tea after it”. (Bristol street organiser)*

“Wow, I’ve never ridden my bike on the road before - it’s amazing!” (Child, Ashton Vale)

2. Communities are stronger and better connected

“It was so nice to see everyone come together as a community” (Resident, Ashton Vale)

“Being able to ask people in my street to babysit never used to be an option, but now we know each other better this has changed and it’s SO handy” (St George resident)

“My partner comes out to steward/play on the weekend sessions and gets to socialise with other men in the street - it’s like getting him out of his ‘cave’ - and I think its really important that the whole family get out in the street. Sometimes we want to be active but we are not in the mood to drive to the woods, or go down the hectic park - so being able to open the front door, pull up a chair/get a cuppa while the kids happily zoom around is wonderful” (Bristol street organiser)

3. Active citizenship is nurtured

“I now go to the St George Neighbourhood Partnership quarterly forum. It helped me feel connected to the local politicians, the local police and connect up with interested/motivated people who want to shape local life - I feel empowered to use my voice, and not just sit back in criticism of national political decisions.....I found the meeting much less ‘dry’ than I expected, and have got a few people in my street/local school interested in coming too!” (St George resident)

“The older children want to help out during the playing out sessions - a 15yr old boy asked for a high vis at our recent session and I had 3 of them helping the little ones plant sunflower seeds - they want that responsibility and the little ones just adore them!” (St George resident)

4. A wider culture-shift starts to happen around children’s freedom and use of streets

Ultimately we hope that the ‘playing out’ model will be part of making a more fundamental change in how we see and use our streets and children’s ability to play out near where they live and we are starting to see signs of this.

“Outside of the formal playing out sessions I can see that parents/carers are more confident about letting their children play in the street generally - because I see their kids out on their own on the pavement/road”. (St George resident)

“Anyone starting up, I’m posting this to say that change will happen in your street through playing out - it’s more than worth the effort!” (Resident posting on Bristol Facebook group)

Specific strands for 2015/16

Active Travel Neighbourhood Grant

The active travel neighbourhood grant was awarded to buy road closure equipment and cover the costs of a number of events to support and build the network of playing out organisers across Bristol.

Road closure kits

To ensure the safety and smooth running of street play sessions, we provide (on loan) to any street organiser in Bristol the equipment required to close the road and run the session.

Since March 2015, this has included a new style of signs developed by a local sign manufacturer in conjunction with staff from Bristol City Council highways team. This equipment is more formal than that previously used and complies with appropriate highways legislation but is a lot more portable and easy to store than more traditional traffic management signs.



Alongside the road closure equipment, we provide a kit box of materials for street organisers (see right) which includes hi viz jackets, whistles and briefings for stewards, chalks and skipping rope, posters and leaflets to publicise playing out sessions.

During the year we have used the funding received to buy 20 complete sets of equipment and have distributed these to all new streets before their first sessions, demonstrating how to close and open the road safely.



Stewarding workshops

We held two stewarding workshops for new and existing playing out organisers, in July 2015 in Horfield and in March 2016 in the city centre.



The workshops included facilitation and role-play provided by the “Desperate Men” theatre company, based in Easton. Participants are able to practice some of the potentially more challenging aspects of organising a playing out session, in particular dealing with any difficult drivers during a road closure. By giving organisers confidence to deal with these situations, we believe that sessions are more likely to run smoothly and safely. They help to make the project more sustainable through giving residents the skills and confidence they need.

Another aspect of the workshops was the opportunity for participants to learn about playing out and understand the support they could receive, and to share experiences of playing out on their street and learn from others.

Both existing street organisers and people who are interested in starting playing out sessions attended the workshops. Additionally the March 2016 event was attended by two PCSOs from the Easton beat which was particularly valuable to share perspectives.

Feedback from workshops:

“Just wanted to say thanks again - what a lovely group and valuable workshop.”
Participant, March workshop

“Been to the Playing Out workshop - had the most inspirational time of my life! What a great idea to bring communities to life and bring the true meaning of neighbourhood partnerships to every street and everyone.”
Participant, March workshop



Networking events

It was our plan to run a series of at least three local networking events across the city. The idea was that we would bring together existing and new/potential street organisers to share their experience, offer each other support and build a real network of streets playing out across the city. We would also use these events as an opportunity for skill-sharing and gathering learning about the barriers and benefits of the project. We knew that similar events had worked well for playing out organisers in Hackney.

However, we had little success in organising these events at a neighbourhood level. Early in 2015 we held two informal events in parts of the city where Playing Out is well established. Despite much publicity, both had very low attendance. In reviewing this, we decided that a larger event, held in the city centre with more of a “pull” was needed at this stage. Feedback from organisers was that they would be interested in events but, because people had little spare time, they would prefer something with more of a specific purpose than simply ‘networking’. We also continued to build our network of organisers via online means - a Bristol specific newsletter and a Bristol Facebook group.

On this basis we organised a bigger “celebration evening” at a central Bristol venue. As well as the opportunity to network and meet others involved in playing out, the evening included a series of presentations:

- A Bristol street organiser told the story of her first year of playing out in Easton - detailing the highs and lows.
- A Hertfordshire ‘area activator’ told the story of the challenges involved in introducing playing out to a local authority area with no street play policy in place.
- Dr Angie Page presented ground-breaking research by Bristol University looking at children’s physical activity levels during playing out sessions, which shows the very real benefits of street play to children’s health. Residents on playing out streets in Bristol were involved in this research so it was a valuable opportunity to share the results back with them.

The event was also a chance to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of the hundreds of Bristol residents who have put their time and energy into starting playing out where they live, helping to inspire a national movement. It was a lively event with over 50 street organisers, stewards and supporters attending.



Green Capital Strategic Grant

Playing Out was one of 32 organisations/projects to receive a Bristol 2015 Green Capital Strategic Grant. Our work under this grant was split into three different strands, reported on separately below:

Estates Project: To learn about and support playing out in target areas of high deprivation and non-street settings and to share the learning from this widely.

Area activators: To establish a sustainable model of peer-to-peer support for resident-led street play in Bristol neighbourhoods.

Beacon City: To establish Bristol as a true 'beacon city' for street play, nationally and internationally.

Estates Project

Project outline

In response to demand from residents and a growing awareness that the street-based 'playing out' model may not be suitable or sustainable in all areas and types of housing, Playing Out facilitated this 'action-research' project across several different geographical and social settings within some of the most deprived wards in the city (Fulford Road and nearby streets in Hartcliffe; 'tower block' council estates in Lawrence Hill and Redcliffe). We worked in close partnership with community-based partner organisations (primarily Knightstone Housing's Community Empowerment team in Hartcliffe and Up Our Street in Lawrence Hill and Redcliffe), who know and understand the local environment and residents. We seconded, trained, supported and worked alongside experienced workers from these organisations to deliver the projects on the ground. These workers identified, engaged and supported key residents to trial and evaluate new, innovative and sustainable solutions to enabling playing out.

Expected outcomes of this project were:

1. Over 100 children in target settings have increased opportunities to play out together and gain a sense of belonging in their immediate outside space, benefitting their physical and emotional wellbeing, whilst also increasing parents' confidence to let children play out on an on-going basis.
2. Key residents gain the necessary skills and confidence to initiate, collaboratively implement and sustain creative, innovative solutions enabling children to play out more (addressing the specific needs and circumstances where they live).
3. The wider local community is more supportive of children playing out where they live.
4. Playing Out and partners gain valuable learning from these projects to be used to enable children to play out in similar environments across Bristol and internationally.

5. Playing Out forms strong and lasting partnerships with community-based organisations and develops ways of working that can be applied to any similar project (looking at how children's freedom to play out can be increased in a wide variety of settings) in the future.

Progress and activity through the year

Playing Out sessions and estimated number of individual residents present/engaged:

Location	Number of sessions	Number of 'visits' *	Total adults engaged**	Total children engaged
Fulford Rd, Hartcliffe	7	122	20	40
Croydon House, Lawrence Hill	2	89	25	40
Twinnell House, Lawrence Hill	9	130	10	40
Norton House, Redcliffe	1	26	10	16
St Jude's Lawrence Hill***	1	28	8	20
Total	20	395	73	156

* Several of the children came to multiple sessions whereas some only attended one or two sessions. Therefore the number in this column is sum total of head-counts at each session.

***'Total' adult and child numbers are estimated numbers of individuals engaged through the project.

***St Jude's residents were directly supported by a council officer, using Playing Out's model and resources.

Other activity:

With our community partner, Up Our Street, we engaged with residents of Lawrence Hill and Redcliffe on the subject of outdoor play where they live, across **57 different opportunities** (including resident meetings, consultation events, attending other resident events, agency meetings, drop-in sessions, interviews, door-knocking, pop-up and formal playing out sessions).



'Spaceshaper' consultation event at Twinnell House

In Hartcliffe, our community partner was Knightstone Housing and, as well as providing a half-day professional training session for their community engagement team we co-organised three key events in the area:

- Steward training for residents and community empowerment officers
- ‘Connecting Communities’ focus group linking up interested local residents
- Play partnership meeting for local organisations

Outcomes / impact

A summary of some of the positive outcomes reported and observed in the Lawrence Hill estates follows:

Positive outcomes for children

- More ownership of their space - the children have loved playing out where they live.
- Increased care of the environment (litter picking)
- Access to more play space (road), especially for cycling/scooting
- Mixing with other children outside of their normal social and cultural groups
- Learning new games
- Increased physical exercise
- Children were modelling / leading the way on integration - forcing parents to talk / mix



Positive outcomes for parents

- Increased sense of belonging in outdoor space: *“We now know we have the right to play outside our building - we have the courage”* (Somali mother, Croydon House)
- Residents feel more empowered by organising playing out sessions - increased confidence demonstrated by publicising the event widely and speaking at a local meeting.
- As a direct result of organising playing out sessions, Somali women now represented on residents’ committee at Croydon House. One mother said, *“It is good - they now listen”*.
- Active citizenship: a mum/organiser in Hartcliffe said, *“I’d never done anything like it before but the applications for street closures were really easy and I’d be happy to show other people how to do it”*.
- Residents engaging in wider issues locally
- More opportunities for socialisation
- Reassurance children are getting more exercise and outdoor play: *“It’s a massive relief for children to be outside. We now know that children are happier where they live, joining in, feeling together”*. (Somali dad, Twinnell House)
- Feeling a bit more significant (people felt before that events did not happen close to where they live)
- More parents starting to think about the importance of free outdoor play: *“Before this [Playing Out], I didn’t know how important it was for children to play outside. Most of the mums, they don’t know it’s important”* (Croydon House resident).

- Parents seeing what they could potentially do as a group
- Feeling that someone cares and is fighting their corner (e.g. for improved play space at Twinnell House).
- Linking parents with other services such as public health outreach team.

Positive outcomes for wider community

There is evidence of the following:

- Some evidence of cultural/racial barriers starting to be broken down
- Stronger links have been made with local community hubs
- Visitors to the area have seen playing out in action and even joined in
- Inadequate play facilities at Twinnell House have been highlighted to Bristol City Council and Mears, and pressure has been put on these organisations to improve this.

One of the Knightstone community empowerment officers in Hartcliffe said, *“Certainly this project - in partnership with the Sustrans Street Pockets project - has had a positive impact on building community cohesion and a sense of empowerment (and provided an inspiring demonstration of hopeful possibility) for residents in Fulford Rd. The stories of this have had a positive impact across the Hartcliffe area”*. During the project, three further streets in Harcliffe have shown an interest in starting their own sessions.



Fulford Road resident street organisers

Learning

As well as the direct impact of the project, we aimed to gather in-depth learning around the following questions:

1. Where, when and how much do children currently play out?
2. What barriers are there to children playing out?
3. What positive features or conditions exist to enable playing out?
4. What would enable children to play out more?

We also wanted to identify barriers to resident action and successful approaches to resident engagement, as well as successful ideas/approaches for enabling play or shifting attitudes. Our findings on these questions will be written up in a fuller project report to be disseminated later this year.

Where, when and how much do children currently play out?

We found that, on the whole, children are not regularly playing outside close to where they live due to multiple barriers and concerns (see below). In Hartcliffe, where some children play out a lot (but others barely at all), this is often seen both by other residents and agencies as a sign of parental neglect rather than a positive choice. In the Lawrence Hill and Redcliffe estates there was a strong feeling amongst parents that they wanted their children to play out far more than they did but, as well as other barriers, there was a lack of safe, accessible and suitable space for them to do so.

Twinnell House had the additional problem of long-term building works taking over the usual space used for football, as well as impacting on the (poorly equipped and neglected) play area for younger children. Photo shows the dangerous 'temporary' bulky waste site immediately adjacent to this play area. Parents expressed grave concern about their children playing here due to broken glass and other hazards. This situation remained through the duration of the project despite many attempts to get it resolved.

One mother we spoke to at a meeting at Easton Community Centre said she makes sure her kids stay at after-school club so they can safely run around for a few hours as *"it's not possible for them to play out on the street"* and she doesn't have the time after school to take them to the park. She knows they are not active enough. Similarly, a dad at Twinnell house said, *"I lived with my grandad in St Pauls and our front door was always open. Kids need to grow up outdoors and have some sort of childhood. The kids are desperate to get out"*.

What barriers are there to children playing out in these settings?

Across the different settings in this project, we identified 25 separate barriers to children being able to play out freely and independently, mostly reported by residents in conversation. In the Lawrence Hill and Redcliffe (tower-block) estates these included:

Physical/spacial...

1. Lack of safe space for play within estates - cars dominate outdoor space (parking and driving)

2. Nearby parks and play areas inaccessible due to busy roads surrounding estates
3. Nearby play parks dominated by older kids and teenagers - nowhere for small kids to play
4. Inadequate, old and broken play equipment (particularly Twinnell House) and nowhere suitable for ball games
5. Outdoor space unpleasant/oppressive e.g. design of blocks creating wind-tunnels
6. Legitimate health and safety concerns about hazardous waste and rats in designated 'play' areas (see right).
7. Drinking, drug use and debris and ASB (often from non-residents) making outdoor spaces unfriendly/unsafe for children.
8. Intimidating large/aggressive dogs and dog mess; also cultural taboos around dogs
9. Private housing management unsupportive of play and community use of space (e.g. one developer built 'no outdoor play' clause into tenancy agreement)
10. Lack of open space - accessible green spaces often very small; space reduced further by building works and other uses

Social/attitudinal...

11. Opposition and disapproval from neighbours - dominant residents determine what is 'acceptable' in space. Historical friction, particularly over ball games.
12. Lack of community cohesion and sense of belonging/ownership
13. Poor integration between cultures
14. Lack of other children out playing (safety in numbers, interest, normality)
15. Parental worry about playing out in bad weather causing illness
16. Lack of parental prioritisation of / support for free, outdoor play
17. Mixed tenancies creating sense of mistrust/fear of neighbours
18. Concerns about 'stranger danger' and paedophiles (particularly in Redcliffe)
19. No organisation or 'safety in numbers' amongst parents (particularly in Redcliffe)
20. "Nothing to do" - expectation of services being delivered
21. Increased draw of indoor entertainment



As well as many of the above, additional barriers identified in Hartcliffe were:

22. Speeding, racing and highly dangerous driving precluding even pavement play
23. Playing out often associated with parental neglect
24. Lack of adult supervision e.g. in parks
25. Lack of free facilities (e.g. local skate park cost £7 per session)

Quotes from children in Hartcliffe: *"Especially for children in our area, cars are really dangerous", "Sometimes it's hard to get home from school or meet our friends. It's almost impossible to get past the cars".*

What positive features or conditions exist to enable playing out?

On the more positive side, we found that, as well as a strong interest amongst parents in the possibility of their children playing out more and (for some) in taking community/personal action to enable this, there were certain existing features of the estates that lent themselves well to playing out. These included:

In Lawrence Hill and Redcliffe:

- More immediately accessible car-free space than most streets.
- Mix of tarmac (good for wheels) and green space
- Some natural and man-made 'playable features' - steps, path, grass, balconies, stairs, walls, underpasses, slopes
- Residents see the outdoor space as very important "this is our garden"
- Good visibility of communal activity / overlooking of shared spaces.
- Local community hubs - particularly Faithspace in Redcliffe; Easton Primary and Easton Family Centre are supportive and available for resident meetings.
- Somali families have a good social network within their community and an outdoor culture, so keen to get out, but only in good weather.
- Generally families know each other due to living in such close proximity and low turnover due to challenges of being rehoused with social housing.

In Hartcliffe:

- Dundry Slopes (large natural space) very nearby and Room 13 Hareclive conducting project to encourage greater use.
- Independent playing out is more normal (though according to Knightstone's officer, *"sometimes this represents freedom and is positive, sometimes it can be neglect on the part of the parents"*).
- Extended families often live nearby and support each other.

What would enable children to play out more?

Residents told us that the following would enable children to play out more regularly:

- More / better play equipment in immediate vicinity (swings and slide)
- Access to car-free space so kids can practice with scooters and bikes
- Fencing to separate green space from road (Redcliffe, Twinnell)
- Somewhere for parents/carers to sit
- Bins (and education in using them!)
- 'DIY' activities (e.g. tree swing)
- Seeing more children playing out - no one wants to play out alone
- Training / workshop for parents to support outdoor free play
- Feeling safer in their immediate environment (parents and children)
- Neighbours getting to know each other better
- Parents actively engaging in play
- Keeping football and smaller children separate

Some residents recognised the importance of setting up a group of residents that would like to see improvements where they live (although this took months of facilitated discussion at Twinnell

and stalled at Redcliffe). Access to a community room / space to meet, plan and hold activities was also raised as an issue to be addressed in some places.

In the last few months of the project, we commissioned Room Thirteen Hareclive (an art studio in Hartcliffe run by children) to discuss, plan, develop and carry out research into play in the area, particularly with other children. The project is about gathering information as well as about engaging children around play locally. A full report will be included in the overall learning report from the estates project but the initial results of their work with the school community are:

- Although around 2/3 children had some freedom to play out (and some had a lot) **81% of all children asked wanted to play out more - 94% if you don't count those already playing out** ie only 6% say they don't want to play out at all
- Children describe a **wide range of experiences they want more of** including parks, green spaces, seeing more things, playing (on bikes, physically active, imaginative games, with toys outside), wanting to meet up with friends or family
- Children **liked to have different kinds of spaces**: green spaces (nature, free play), 'play park' spaces, 'field' (scraps of land near houses), streets, safe spaces...
- **Key barriers** to children playing out more were:
 - Many children live in flats/social housing and have no garden**
 - Traffic** - their worry and parents' - speed, busy roads and dangerous driving and parking. Many had experienced and seen incidents. Worry around the new road.
 - 'Stranger danger'** - mainly parents' worry and it's quite strong, but also some children - about 'being taken'
 - Strangers** as in 'people we don't know' - children's worry - threatening or odd adults that may include much older children who are around
 - Restrictions** - 'no ball games' and parents' worry that cars will get damaged and they will have to pay
- Children also suggested the area/streets needed more **benches, trees**; and some of the parks need **better lighting**
- **Bad things about local parks** included: litter, vandalism, rude graffiti, dog muck, not much equipment, broken equipment, only tiny play parks, Hengrove too hard to get to, new stuff getting burnt or broken quickly
- **Good things about local parks and green spaces** included: Hengrove is good and exciting, nature in the green spaces, lots of small green patches and 'fields, cul-de-sacs and roundabouts in streets where you can play, streams to explore
- **Children who had taken part in road closures through Make Sunday Special and Playing Out sessions eg on Fulford Road were extremely positive** about these experiences and wanted more

We intend to continue building on this relationship and others in Hartcliffe during 2016-17 and help support more streets to play out.

Future plans for estates project

Whilst not the long-term answer, it does look like the 'playing out' model (or an adaptation of it) could help provide a temporary solution and start to address many of these social and attitudinal barriers in estates, in the same way it does on residential streets. We found that the idea of

‘playing out’ sessions appealed because people like the idea of the space being safe from cars and showing that the session is organized and supervised. A bonus to the layout of the estates was that, when a session happened, those indoors could easily hear/see it happening and come out to join in.

However, in order to enable children to play out safely as part of their normal lives, a joined-up approach is needed - including investment in spaces and vast reduction in traffic speeds - to ensure all children in the city have safe access to suitable play space on their doorstep.

During 2016-18 we will build on this project with funding secured from the People’s Health Trust to enable more playing out in Lawrence Hill and Redcliffe. We will also continue to share the learning from this work nationally, Bristol-wide and locally between residents.

Bristol Area Activators

Project objectives

This strand of the project aimed to find, train, mentor and support at least three ‘Area Activators’ in different areas of the city, probably recruited from our existing network of experienced ‘playing out’ streets organisers, but possibly including new people wanting to start with their own street. Once trained, these ‘Area Activators’ would develop their own project plans and generate and respond to interest from other streets in their area, giving advice, encouragement and support.

Activity

In the end, with some extra funding from Greater Bedminster and St George Neighbourhood Partnerships, we recruited a team of 6 Area Activators who had experience of playing out (or similar resident-led activities). They worked in the following areas:

Kate Staniforth	Easton, Lawrence Hill, Ashley
Sharon Redfern	Greater Bedminster, Greater Brislington, Bishopsworth, Filwood, Knowle, Windmill Hill
Jo Chesterman Jacky Jarrett and Tamsin Harcourt	St George, Greater Fishponds
Frances Robertson	Southmead, Horfield, Henleaze, Stoke Bishop, Westbury on Trym
Gaby Solly	Bishopston, Cotham, Redland, Ashley

Additionally, we recruited two extra freelancers to promote playing out within their specific communities of interest: stay at home dads and home-educators.

Each area activator was responsible for devising a plan that best suited their own style and area of work and the approaches and priorities they had identified as relevant. A significant level of autonomy in terms of approach was encouraged in order to generate specific local knowledge and

learning about what works well in different circumstances and in response to different variables, best known to those living close to them.

Playing Out supported the area activators by providing a range of resources including

- initial induction information
- core resources including materials and written guidance; road closure kit
- general advice, guidance and trouble-shooting,
- advice and resources on working with the media
- knowledge-sharing events and team meetings

Much of the activators' work during the year is reflected in the general reporting above. However, specific highlights of their work include:

Using the team of activators we were able to attend a wide range of events across all Neighbourhood Partnership areas. The spread of events attended was as follows

Neighbourhood partnership area	Number of events attended
Avonmouth & Kingsweston	4
Bishopston, Cotham and Redland	13
Cabot, Clifton & Clifton East	1
Dundry View	4
Easton, Ashley and Lawrence Hill	34
Filwood, Knowle & Windmill Hill	7
Greater Bedminster	33
Greater Brislington	2
Greater Fishponds	5
Henbury, Brentry & Southmead	7
Hengrove, Stockwood & Whitchurch	1
Henleaze, Stoke Bishop & Westbury-on-Trym	6
Horfield and Lockleaze	6
St George	19
Stockwood, Hengrove and Witchurch	2

From October onwards, we contracted one of the activators, Kate Staniforth, to work specifically in the areas that had had little or no resident-led activity. Although early days, this has led to a number of jointly organised informal street play sessions. As an example of the depth of work undertaken by all the area activators, this is Kate's report of her work:

"I have been working in areas of Bristol where there is no Playing Out activity. This has been focussed in 3 NP areas: Henbury Brentry & Southmead; Avonmouth & Kingsweston; Hengrove, Whitchurch & Stockwood. In all areas (apart from Southmead) there is no Playing Out activity - so the main objective has been to make people aware of the scheme. As people haven't

come across the idea before I have used pictures and videos - as well as my own experiences to explain the benefits of street play and also to show how logistically a session works.

In order to speak to parents I have visited Children's Centre 'stay & play' sessions, school parent forum meetings and set up my own coffee mornings to introduce the idea in all of these areas. I have also met with Head Teachers and managers, building good relationships with these schools and centres, and have been invited to attend further events to promote Playing Out. It is worth noting that all schools and CC's I have visited have been very supportive of the scheme and have been keen to help promote it in their newsletters and by telling parents about it.

I have also set up informal 'chalk & chat sessions' to catch parents during the holidays and on the school run, to talk about the idea and show them how easy it is to start playing out on their street. To make contact with active citizens and existing groups, I contacted the local NP officers in these areas who have helped me tap into existing positive active networks.

One of these has been Twenty Acres in Southmead - I have held 2 stay & play sessions here - both during school holidays. This was to build on existing movement within the estate - I met with a local resident who has been working with the NP officer to improve the estate, and arranged to hold two sessions when the kids aren't at school. The area has no cars so was perfect for Playing Out". (Kate Staniforth, April 2016).



PCSOs joining in the skipping at St Marks Road Eid Celebration

Generally the role of the activator has been well received. One activator reflecting on her work in an area that hadn't had playing out sessions reported:

"People were just really interested in seeing how Playing Out works in practice and that it is something that can be done within their local community. There was a real sense that the Hub and Playing Out Session helped bring the local community together."

The aim is for activators to gradually become more self-sufficient and part of this requires their feeling empowered to take on this role in their local community. One activator said:

"As an activator I've made friends with the other activators and been inspired by all of them. I feel a greater sense of self and more empowered to become a part of things in my local community and help make it a better place for my daughter. Also, I meet a lot of people at local events - sometimes the same few people so am getting to know people from different organisations".

Key Outcomes

During the year, seven individuals have been supported to be area activators and four will be continuing to work in and around their areas of Bristol through 2016-17.

28 new streets across Bristol have applied for TPSOs, all but two of which were in areas covered by our team of activators.

We attended 156 events across the city to raise awareness of and support people interested in street play.

Our experience through supporting these Bristol area activators has enabled us to develop a guide for area activators outside Bristol, which we have already distributed to 40 key residents around the UK. Additionally, we have been able to support 8 of these activators with a package of support (funded by Department of Health) to initiate and grow playing out in their local areas.

We have secured some funding for activators in Bristol in 2016/17 and are working with individuals to support their raising funds locally.

Beacon city

Project outline

The intention was for Playing Out to work with key partners in Bristol during Bristol Green Capital year 2015/16 to build and sustain a reputation and profile as a beacon city for street play.

Activity included:

- Facilitating and attending regular Street Play Steering Group meetings, involving senior council officers and police.
- Attending regular sustainable transport group and play network meetings

- Setting up of Bristol Child Friendly City working group (with Room Thirteen, Architecture Centre and University of Bristol), building relationships and delivering activity throughout the year.
- Supporting University of Bristol's 'Outdoors and Active' conference for dissemination of street play research to Public Health audience
- Representing Playing Out and Bristol at other national events including regional street play seminars in London and Leeds, the Save Childhood Movement national conference, a Sustainable Cities network event, a debate at the Barbican Centre's "Battle of Ideas" and the national conference of the Federation of Detached Youthworkers.
- Conducting media work highlighting Bristol's key role in regenerating a national street play movement
- Organising and leading a national policy round-table discussion on children's freedom to play out
- Input into the Good Transport Plan for Bristol.
- Contribution to Architecture Centre's 2016 exhibition on transport and streets

Key outcomes included:

- Consolidated, stronger relationship with Bristol City Council through street play steering group.
- Consultant offer from key Bristol City Council contacts for other local authorities on street play nationally
- Consolidated, stronger relationship with Avon & Somerset Police through street play steering group. All policing incidents flagged up and good follow up through key police contact.
- Consultant offer from key Avon & Somerset Police contact to advise forces outside Bristol on policing aspects of street play
- Bristol as pioneer city for street play highlighted at key forums in and outside Bristol, including three major street play conferences aimed at Health and Wellbeing boards. Representatives from over 30 local authorities heard about the success of Bristol's playing out sessions.
- Broader strategic relationships built with others involved in sustainable transport in Bristol via the BGP Sustainable Transport Action Group
- Policy roundtable hosted by University of Bristol in October 2015, attended by 12 experts and policy campaigners from areas including law, public health, play, shared space, sustainable transport and children's independent mobility. A definite 'gap' in this area was identified and Playing Out was encouraged to continue building on this.
- Bristol Child Friendly City initiative launched with Playing Out as one of three founding organisations. (see details <http://bristolchildfriendlycity.blogspot.co.uk/>)
- Child Friendly City launch event/workshop held at University of Bristol's graduate school on 9th July, attended by 50 representatives of organisations across the city.
- Child Friendly City Symposium took place in November at Openspace, involving academics, Bristol City Council director of children's services, Bristol's elected mayor and young people from Hartcliffe and Easton. It was attended by around 80 people and began a dialogue with key city stakeholders about an overall vision of Bristol Child Friendly City.

- A short documentary film for a UK-wide academic audience was launched, featuring footage from a Bristol playing out session and interviews with residents, Playing Out and a member of Bristol City Council's public health team.
- Playing Out's "Information for Local Authorities" website page updated to include Bristol City Council highways and public health contacts. This has since generated enquiries from other councils and shown the leading role of Bristol City Council to other authorities.
- BBC Breakfast (22nd Jan) ran a live feature focusing on Bristol's bid to be a child friendly city, including interviews with a Playing Out area activator, experts and council representatives. Link here: <https://vimeo.com/152706344>
- University of Bristol is supporting Child Friendly City working group to find seed funding to take the project to the next stage.



Children from Room Thirteen Hareclive at Bristol Child Friendly City Symposium, Nov 2015.

Other feedback received during the year

“.. crime and anti-social behaviour will not thrive in strong communities. The benefits of playing out go way beyond the fun the children have. It is the community coming together to achieve something they can see and hear that really makes the difference. Getting to know each other, understand each other, trust each other and develop a sense of community achieves much more to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour than patrolling police officers can.” (*Chief Inspector Kevan Rowlands, Avon and Somerset Constabulary*)

"We love Playing Out! It takes real commitment to get enough stewards each week (would be MUCH easier if we could just close the road to all traffic for 2 hrs a week). But it's worth it. There are many social benefits to hosting PO on our road - increased community cohesion overall, many shared cups of tea and borrowed milk, less isolation, greater sense of security, greater participation in local cultural events such as Window Wanderland, sharing of baby clothes, deliver of meals to neighbours with illnesses, a sense of belonging." (Bristol resident)

"We had a great time, thank you to everyone who made it possible". (Resident at Ashton Vale hub session)

"The kids loved it - one girl said 'why can't we do this on my square' so I gave her some chalk so she could carry on playing out in half term. We decided that the next session would be in Easter Holidays & in the girl's square" (Resident at Twenty Acres Stay and Play)

Future plans

Our organisational plan for 2016-19 includes continuing to support the grassroots 'playing out' model of temporary road closures, both in Bristol and nationally, with a particular focus on growing and developing the semi-autonomous 'Area Activator' model which has emerged as a natural and effective way to enable street play at a local level. Over the 3 years from April 2016, the plan is to gradually and responsibly scale-back our direct support for the model, whilst establishing an effective, sustainable peer-to-peer support network and a leaving in place an on-going 'light-touch' resource for essential information and support. We will need a certain level of core funding to enable us to do this, some of which is still to be secured. At the same time, we plan to take on more commissioned work and develop new resident-focussed/led ideas and models related to our wider aims to enable children to play out in the streets and open spaces near home.

We have secured funding from Bristol Public Health and People's Health Trust for continued activity in Bristol during 2016/17, particularly targetted in Health Priority Areas and high-rise estates. We have a number of other funding applications pending to continue our core national work.