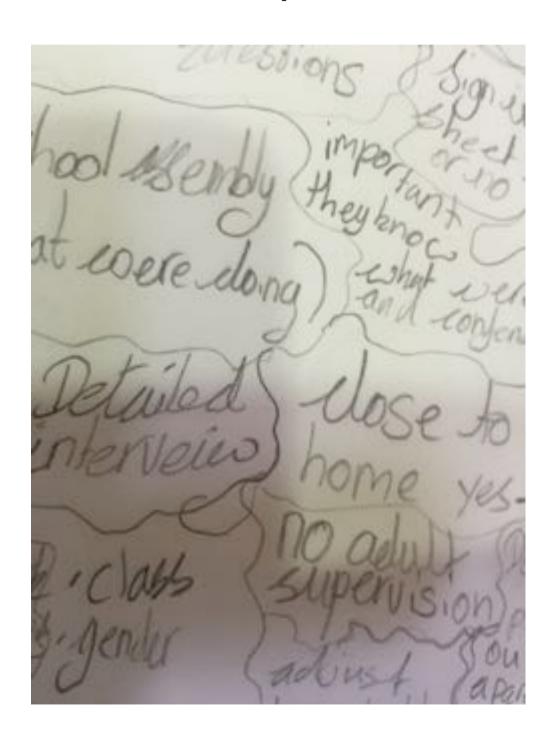
Playing Out in Hartcliffe Commission:

Gathering learning and engaging Hareclive children around play

By

Room 13 Hareclive

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1/ Background

Hartcliffe is a large, post-war housing estate on the edge of south Bristol. Compared to many residential areas in the city, Hartcliffe is very green. Many of the streets were designed to include small patches of green and there are several bigger green areas or parks (such as Wilmott Park) as well as some small 'play parks' (Space-makers and Morrison's supermarket). The estate is bordered by Dundry Slopes, a large, beautiful and very underused green area of countryside.

Hartcliffe has some very busy roads: Hareclive Road, Hartcliffe Way, Bishport Avenue, Fulford Road and others, with the new south Bristol Link road currently being built and due to open in 2017. It also has many small residential roads and closes and cul de sacs. The 20mph speed limit was introduced to the area in 2015.

Hareclive Academy is a large primary school of 380 children that serves Hareclive and the areas beyond. Many children have big extended families that live nearby (grand parents, cousins) and many have lots of brothers and sisters. Many children live in flats with no gardens and in social housing. For some children this also means they move around a lot. 68% of children at Hareclive are on free school meals, compared to 21% nationally being eligible.

Room 13 is an independent artists' studio based in the grounds of Hareclive primary, run by children and adults working together. Two experienced artist educators work in the studio, Shani Ali and Paul Bradley, and it is open 3 days a week.

In Room 13, children are free to work on their own creative ideas and projects as well as to work on any collective studio project, supported by Shani and Paul. An elected management team of children in years 5 and 6 work with Shani on all aspects of running the studio. Ingrid, Room 13's Development Worker, works with the studio team to develop projects, commissions, research, funding bids, relationships and other communications that support the interests of the studio.

Room 13 Hareclive has been in the community since 2003 with the same adult team. It is part of the international network of 100+ independent Room 13 studios and is one of the oldest and most established Room 13s in the world. Room 13 Hareclive is regularly visited by researchers and academics who want to know more about the Room 13 approach.

Room 13 Hareclive increasingly takes on commissions around our area of expertise: children, creativity, collaboration and voice.

www.room13hareclive.org.uk www.room13international.com

2 Focus, Methodology, Practical Approaches

Focus



At a special Management Team 'Play' meeting on Tuesday March 8th we discussed the Playing Out commission and agreed to carry out the Brief through focussing on the below:

- (i) Gather statistically meaningful Yes/No answers to 2 very simple questions from as many Hareclive children as possible, particularly KS2:
 - Do children play out?
 - Do they want to play out more?
- (ii) Gather qualitative feedback around aspects of playing out via different small trials/activities with various groups of Hareclive children, finding out more about:
 - Things children already do, places they go
 - How they feel about playing out
 - Main barriers and worries and issues stopping them playing out more
 - What they would want to do if they could go out more
 - Ideas and suggestions for change
- (iii) Invite parents to a coffee and chat about play, at drop-off or pick up time, to gather perspectives on barriers to playing out and possible improvements.
- (iv) Promote playing outside through a whole school assembly, and via our guided walk on Dundry Slopes, led by children, and via a summer exhibition at @ Symes.

Methodology

Children and adults discussed the methodology we could use for carrying out the research jobs with children. Children identified the following **challenges to the work**:

- Room 13 users are different ages with different abilities to understand and respond and also to write. Their answers will also be differently relevant, depending on age.
- Children may not know what 'playing out' means or may have different ideas of what it means. The team wondered if it counts if "you are in your garden", "your mum is there", "your older brother or sister are there"
- Children will need to be interested enough to want to engage with the subject, as children only do anything out of choice in Room 13

Through discussion, we collectively came to the following **solutions** to these challenges:

- Generally focus more on Key Stage 2 (years 4, 5, 6) as their answers are the key ones and they will also usually be able to understand and talk more
- Ask the two key yes/no questions to as many KS2 children as possible, and to all
 ages, so we have one statistically meaningful answer. We need to record their age as
 it is relevant to their answer.
- Interview a smaller amount of children of various ages in more depth
- Keep things simple for little children. Do more complex things with older ones
- We agree 'playing out' means playing out the front: by your house or further afield. You can be with older children, or an adult might be keeping an eye on you. But it's not about playing in your garden or being taken somewhere by an adult.
- Shani to address an earlier whole school assembly at the start of the week, to define 'playing out', introduce children to the work we are doing and why, and invite them to the studio to take part.
- The studio will devise some more creative activities (that are not all about word answers/writing) to engage children and keep their interest, as well as the more usual 'market research' activities. We can set up a 'route' round the studio to encourage children to sample several research activities, "like at Ikea". If we offer lots (a scatter gun approach) we will get more takers and more information.

We collectively decided the following **over-all plan**:

• **Week one (March 7-10th) Foundation:** we will focus on gathering learning and engaging small groups of children already in the studio, mainly via '1:1' work.

• Week two (March 14-16th) – 'Play Week': responding to any initial learning and issues arising in week one, we will focus on key areas of interest and broaden out participants to reach as many children as possible. Normal studio activity will be suspended for 'Play Week' and the room set up differently and called 'Play Station 13': a space devoted entirely to play research.



• At the end of 'Play Week': The Team will meet again to review findings and gather together some possible ideas and solutions.

Practical Approaches

Children and adults together came up with the following practical ideas to carry out the research, all of which we then used:

(i) Y/N slips and a ballot box - "like voting"

The Management Team handed out Q + A slips to all KS2 children at the assembly asking if they play out or not, and if they want to or not. Children were encouraged to post answers into a ballot box, made by children in Room 13. The Team also went to classrooms to collect slips. We made sure that a significant proportion of KS2 children answered this one thing, so it is statistically meaningful.



(ii) 1:1 interviews

The Management Team, Ingrid and Shani developed some set questions. They carried out interviews with children of different ages. These gathered Y/N answers and also more detailed qualitative information around play:

- Where do you go and what do you do, or want to do more of?
- Why don't you play out (or want to play out more) what stops you?





(iii) Targeted interviews, some filmed

Shaped by what came out early on, Ingrid carried out some interviews with children specifically chosen for their insights around particular topics. This ended up being children who could talk about:

- Living on a very busy road
- Playing out when very young
- Living on a road where children do play out
- Living on Fulford Road, where a playing out session has happened
- Fear of strangers

(iv) Passport control

The Team set up and ran a desk just inside the studio door, to act as 'passport control.' At passport control you have to answer one question in order to come in: "what do you like best about playing out?" This question signalled the change in the studio set-up for children ("things are going to be different in here today.."), helped to put children 'in the zone', and was another chance to gather a bit of information from lots of children.



(v) Research stations

Children coming to the 'Room 13 Play Station' were directed around the studio via long paper with footprints on it ("like at Ikea") to respond to different 'action stations'. Many KS2 children were able to do these stations independently, but we walked round with younger ones and wrote things down for them. We created these stations after looking at feedback from Week One's research and identifying the most meaningful areas to pursue:

• **Parks + green spaces in Hartcliffe:** what do children think of these currently? We put pictures up and used stem sentences on big sheets of paper: "I like/don't like the play parks because..." "I like/don't like the green spaces because..." to capture feedback





- **Traffic:** we already know there is a problem with speeding cars in Hartcliffe, but do children experience this? We asked: "Have you seen any too fast or dangerous driving?" Also: "What would you do if your street had no cars on it?"
- **How does it feel to play out?** We drew a word cloud for children to fill, saying: "When I play out I feel..."



• Where is good to go? Where is not good to go? We laid out a map of Hartcliffe streets and using tracing paper on top, got children to put dots to mark good areas, and felt tips for bad areas...





- "Have you ever...?" questionnaire: we asked KS2 children to tick whether they have ever done certain things including: play out, call for a friend, ride a bike, make a den, walk to school without a grown up, walk to the shop alone...
- **Google Earth: Look at your street:** we set this up on one of the computers so children could look at their street and what the environment around it is like and talk about this.



(vi) 'Making/creating' activities

At the end of the trail of research stations, we set up some areas where children could more imaginatively engage with the questions and also with thoughts around play, without writing. These were areas where groups of children worked creatively, and we spoke to them or listened to what they had to say while they did the activities:

• For young children, a long paper 'road' to draw how they want their street to be





• For all ages, plastercine to make what they want to see on roads with no traffic:





A Few Notes relating to methodology and research with children...

Room 13 Voluntary participation:

As attendance and participation within Room are always voluntary, we decided that providing the above lots of 'different ways in' to the subject would maximise the numbers we could interest and involve. We knew that some activities would only get a few responses, but drawing on feedback from all of these activities, particularly from the interviews, we would be able to piece together qualitative information.

A Word about Writing and Spelling:

Writing and spelling can be a challenge for many children in the school, not just the younger (KS1) children. We addressed this in our methodology by including non-writing activities and by listening and writing down answers.

For writing up our results, whilst a child might write: 'plaing on aquitment', 'eny where', or 'playing on your playsashon' we include their answers in full correct English so our findings are as clear as possible: 'playing on equipment', 'anywhere', 'playing on your Play Station.'

The Season/Time of Research

It was still very much Winter when we carried out our research with lower temperatures and not yet long, light evenings. We think that some answers might be different if the same research were carried out during the summer, as children are very in the moment, and many did speak of the cold.

Children's research before adults

We wanted to carry out all research/results with children before talking to adults so that we could just hear their real perceptions first, and so that we could then compare the two.

Play in school

Current messages around play in Hareclive Academy are very focussed on Health and Safety concerns with areas of the big school grounds out of bounds and lots of rules around what can be done or not.

3/ Findings: Quantitive Feedback

As Reception classes cannot access Room 13, there are 324 children we potentially work with in Years 1-6 of Hareclive Academy. There are 152 children in Key Stage 2 (Years 4, 5, + 6). We focussed our efforts particularly on Years 5 + 6 /ages 9-11, so our KS2 results are mainly that.

(i) Ballot Box results: Do you play out? Do you want to play out more?

- 114 KS2 children (75% of KS2) responded to our Y/N question:
- 82/71% said they play out; 68 of these / 59% said they want to play out even more
- 32/29% said they do not play out; 25/75% of these said they do want to play out
- 93/81% of all surveyed said they want to play out more; only 6% of all children not already playing out don't want to play out more.

(ii) One to One Play Questionnaire interview results: do you play out?

62 children were interviewed by the Management Team, Shani and Ingrid: 20% of the school. Here are the results by age:

- Little children: 17 aged 5,6,7 (years Year 1+2) and 12 of these say they play out:
- Medium children: 7 aged 8 + 9 (from years 3,4,5) and 4 play out
- Older children: 38 children aged 10 + 11 (years 5, 6) and 29 play out/ 76%

(iii) "Have you ever ...?" Check List results

63 KS2 children filled this in / 41% of KS2. Here are the results:

- 18/28.5% have never played out on their street, 45/71.5% have
- 17/27%% have never called for a friend, 46/73% have
- 24/38% have never made a den, 39/62% have
- 20/32% have never climbed a tree, 43/68% have
- 5/8% have never ridden a bike, 58/92% have
- 35/55.5% have never walked to school with no adult, 28/44.5% have
- 26/41% have never walked to the shop on their own, 37/59% have
- 17/27% answered more No's than Yes's, 46/73% answered more yes than no

We'll analyse the content of our findings within the results of the qualitative research.

4/ Findings: Qualitative Feedback

In this section, we look below at Playing Out Currently, Barriers to Playing Out and Playing Out More.

Playing Out currently

(i) All children

There was a clear and natural understanding of what 'playing out' is amongst children, with only a very few in interviews and discussions thinking it meant with adults or in the garden.

As can be seen from the statistics, a large proportion – around two thirds - of KS2 children at Hareclive (ages 9,10,11) do play out in some way already. This proportion was consistent across several different forms of questioning. More than two thirds of this age group have also called for a friend.

However, whilst some children were able to do what they wanted, most children within this same group also spoke very clearly about the fears and restrictions on their freedom, not being able to be out as much as they wanted or where they wanted, with some older ones talking about feeling 'trapped' or not being allowed to do things. Although many KS2 children do have some kind of freedom, this is patchy (it is for different things, for different children) and they have clearly experienced the opposite as well. This finding fits with the fact that although many children say they play out, nearly all say they want to play out more. It also makes more sense when you read their answers to the challenges and obstacles that are there when you do play out.

Also, despite saying they play out, less than two thirds of KS2 children have ever walked to school on their own or been to the shop alone. This difference to the playing out figure could possibly relate to the very busy roads involved in getting to school, or to the fact that many parents are walking younger children to school and so they all go together.

Unlike in many other areas of the country, a significant number of younger children also said they had the freedom to play out. Of the 21 children under 9 we asked, 16 said they played out in some way, so still over two thirds. One older boy said he goes to Somerset a lot to see his dad and when he's there (Bridgewater) there are only teenagers out, but in Hartcliffe there are children of different ages out, and he really notices the difference.

(ii) Younger children playing out





The 5, 6 and 7 year olds playing out largely did so close to their home, or in a safely accessible patch of green close to their house, often with older children and with instructions to stay very close. Some of the 8 and 9 year olds who were interviewed said they were free to roam and play wherever, and one or two even to come back quite late, but most of them also played by their houses with friends and cousins. Younger children played games, football, with toys, and were out on bikes. Where children were not able or allowed to play out (we examine that later) they strongly did not. It was a very contrasting picture.

We don't know exactly how representative the positive responses are in terms of the younger children in the area, but they do perhaps indicate a difference to the norm:

3 x 5 year olds, 1 plays out:

"I can go to the park behind my house. I just open the gate. I don't have to cross a road. I go with my brother (8) and I take my little brother and sister (aged 2 and 1). We look after the little ones. We're not allowed out the front because the babies go in the road. We go back for tea. I can go out again after tea. Sometimes I stay out in the dark but the little ones don't. My friend Brook plays out and she is 4. She plays with her older brother who is 6." (Girl, 5).

9 x 6 year olds, 7 play out:

"I play with friends in the street...sometimes my older cousin is there who is 10 and my little brother who is 4. My mum says stay off the road... We play hide and seek and chase" (boy 6)

"I play next to the road. On my road you can go on my bike. I play games with my friends, on my bike with my dolls." (girl 6). She also goes further to a friends' house and her granny watches her go from the window.

"I go to the field (patch of grass nearby). My friend calls for me. He is 6. My mum and dad say don't go on the road. I do but I check carefully. Cars go very fast." (boy 6)

"The flats where I live make a pattern and I play in between and behind the flats. I made a den." (girl 6)

"I'm allowed to go anywhere. I'm allowed back late. Sometimes 10 at night... I ride my bike on the road and I don't worry about the cars. " (boy 6)

Another boy (6) says he plays on the street on a mini motorbike on his own, up and down. He gets called in at dinnertime. Another boy (6) says he plays with brother and sister in Morrisons' park and he plays out a lot.

5 x 7 year olds, 4 play out:

Boy (7) says he goes on his quad bike a lot. He plays with his remote control car and next door neighbours. He plays football. He can only play outside the house. He goes in at tea time and when it's dark. "My big brother can take me to Teyfant park further away."

Boy (7) says he plays out near a friend's house on the same street. Mum knows where he is. "I have to be home by 6."

Boy (7) says he plays out all the time, his mum always says yes. He plays with his older brother (9) in the park and on the grass near his house. He plays football and rides his bike. He stays out until 9.30pm. He goes to the shop on his own on his bike. Sometimes he plays alone on his skateboard. He goes to a friend's house quite far up the road.

7 children aged 8 + 9, 4 play out:

"I play out with my mates who are all 8, 9 and one is 6. We are a little gang. We all live on the same road. It's a long road with fast cars. I go out a lot. We do lots. We make a den. We do free running. We do what we want. We go to the field. I can stay out til it's dark." (boy 8)

"I play with my toys out on the street, and sometimes with other people" (boy 8)

"I play with my cousin at my cousins' house and outside, near the park." (girl 9)

A boy (8) plays with his friends sometimes down the street or on another street, or in a field "near my mate's house". "I walk to my nan's house with friends. I go up on Dundry with bikes. We ride around and have jokes. We park our bikes and climb trees." He has to be back before it's dark.

(iii) Older children playing out (age 10 and 11)





Of the more than two thirds of older children playing out, many had been playing out since about age 9. Many had phones. Many described needing to be home by a certain time, like 7pm, but quite a few also said they did not have to be in until 'the time it gets dark', so a time that changes with the seasons.

Older children were more free to go further afield to other parks and to friends' houses. Whilst they still described playing, they also described activity that was more like 'hanging around' and 'talking with friends.' The following list covers what they said they do when playing out, with the *indicating that many children said this:

- · Merchants' astro turf, football
- In the street *
- Skipping
- Play tag, run around island of grass
- Go to parks *
- Play daring games
- With cousins, friends *
- Morrissons' Park *
- Hengrove park *
- In the field, or grass near street (patches of green near houses) *
- "Chat, look around, random stuff..."
- Climb trees
- Sit down and talk to friends for hours
- Hang around and chat
- Get to know your friends better
- Walk around streets
- Go to shops
- "I go down to Blackfarm river to explore"

As described in (i), older children could also speak feelingly about all the fears, restrictions and barriers around their freedom, and how this makes them feel. So although two thirds of them do play out, they have experienced the opposite when younger and are still experiencing their lives as restricted/fearful in many ways, by many things (see barriers).

(iv) How playing out makes children feel / what they like



"Playing outside with my friends makes me feel... (word cloud all ages)

- "...happy, safe, excited..."
- "...really happy because my friends play with me. We play fun things."
- "...fun"
- "...lots of things to do."
- "...happy because I can do what I want to do and no one is bossing me around."
- "...lonely if you are on your own, but happy if you are with friends."
- "...you can ask your friends to come out"
- "...you can do cartwheels"

- "...you can skate"
- "...it's better being outside"
- "...playful"
- "...People are doing skipping"
- "...happy, joyful and amazing"

"What do you like best about playing out?" (Passport control/ 44 children all ages. * = particularly frequent answer)

Swings / park (often with older brother or sister)*

Friends / playing with friends / talking with friends / cousins *

bike * / go-car / motorbike

football / basket ball

Playing with dolls or toys outside *

Skipping * /Duck duck goose / tag / hopscotch

Playing on the street / going round the houses

"I like grass."

"When you run around, you see things you like."

"When you run around you can make new friends."

"I like when I go out and play with my friends and the people outside."

"I like that I'm getting fresh air and that I'm socialising."

"I like to play out because you get to be free and play anywhere and play any game"

"I could see friends and family who is walking around."

"chat and be parent free, almost no boundaries"

"I like playing with family and climbing and playing with friends and playing nicely."

"I like playing with equipment and going every day."

"I like playing out because if your playing in your friends and you're on your play station then you're not actually doing anything, all you're doing is just using your hands. But if you're outside then you're using your body as well."

"playing tag with my friends and races on a scooter down the hill."

"I like messing about, swinging where you're not meant to swing, inventing stuff."

(v) Playing in Parks and Green Spaces



Many older children can go to parks/spaces alone, and most younger children go with parents or with older siblings or cousins. However some younger children (aged 8) go

alone. Quite a lot of younger children can access the small patches of green space like roundabouts or 'fields' close to their homes. Children mentioned the following parks they go to: Morrisons' Park, Space makers, Hengrove and various 'fields'.

Things children (all ages) did not like about parks and green spaces included:

"Not much stuff in them that's good. Need more equipment." *

"Not much to do in Morrison's park. Only climbing stuff." *

Morrison's Park is too tiny. *

"People take their dogs in. Dog muck"

Graffiti swear words and vandalism written onto equipment

Lots of broken glass, so not good for your bike...

"Litter is a big problem. People chuck everything like papers and chewing gum." "There's all rubbish in the parks."

"Once I went to the park (Spacemakers) and there was a new swing and it was really good. I was really excited. Next day I went back to go on it again, and it was all burnt down." Leah (10).

You can't get to Hengrove very easily.

Playing "nicely" and then you don't get "told off."

"When big children come we don't always feel safe"

"Sometimes we don't feel safe as there are motorbikes on the grass"

"We worry about going by ourselves"

Things children liked about parks included:

"Hengrove is very good, everyone likes it. Lots of exciting stuff." *: things to climb. More challenging things. Skate park *

Things children liked about green spaces:

"They are good because you can look at nature."

Leah and Daniella (10) said they "love being in green spaces and seeing nature and creatures." They "love to lie under a tree in the sun and see the clouds, see a butterfly. It's so peaceful. Play parks should have more stuff in them, and nature parks should have nothing. Nature parks are just for nature."



Barriers to Playing Out

There were strong reasons why some KS2 children and younger ones did not play out, or why all children did not play out more. Those playing out also talked about these barriers. The two key ones were traffic and strangers, with this describing a few different things:

(i) Cars and Traffic

There was a great deal of worry about cars, drivers and traffic both coming from parents (as reported by children, mainly younger ones) and coming from children themselves (mainly older ones). Children said cars can go very fast and far over the speed limit. Some are dangerous and can go up onto the pavement". Many children had stories of seeing dangerous driving, parking, reversing, and using the pavements. Toby + Bradley (10) said "cars and traffic are speedy and dangerous" and they both spoke about their experiences of this. Some children were not able to play out because they lived too close to a main road and could not get anywhere. An interview with Madi (10) revealed big fears about the new link road and its effects on play and freedom for her. [NB since this research there have been two incidents of Hareclive children being knocked down, one with a child being knocked off a bike and an ambulance called. The car drove off without stopping]

There was some confusion amongst children about whether speed limits are right and what is safe and not safe. Erin (10) said her mum was always late for work because of the 20mph limit and she needs it to be higher so she can go faster. Another child said that if cars go faster you can cross the road more easily, because when they're slower you have to wait for longer. Other feedback included:

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"My mum is afraid of the massive road, and lots of roads, and of me getting hit." (girl 10)
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[&]quot;I don't go out because of the busy road and worried about getting run over." (boy 10)

[&]quot;I can't play out because I live on a main road and can't get past it."

[&]quot;I am worried about getting run over."

[&]quot;My mum is very worried about the lots of cars. She thinks I might get hurt." (girl 7)

[&]quot;I am very worried about traffic and being run over." (boy 6).

[&]quot;My dad's very worried about me getting knocked over. Cars go very fast. It should be 20mph but my dad's seen them go 60. If cars went slower I would go out." (girl 7)

[&]quot;When we go out, there's sometimes cars on fire. People call the police and fire engine."

[&]quot;Yes I've seen fast driving. I saw a man hit the curb."

[&]quot;Some drivers don't warn you they want to get through."

[&]quot;I've seen near misses."

[&]quot;They go too fast."

[&]quot;People steal cars and they don't know how to drive."

[&]quot;Some people on phones go very fast too."

[&]quot;I don't like cars – they run you over."

[&]quot;In Hartcliffe if you park in their space they egg your car."

[&]quot;Dangerous reversing.. they reverse too fast going backwards."

[&]quot;I don't feel safe with the cars. I feel like they're going to run me over. Even in the car park (at Morrisons)."

[&]quot;Sometimes I see cars going really fast, zooming."

[&]quot;Some people have 5 cars."

[&]quot;Nice people park in funny places."

[&]quot;People try to knock us over."

(ii) Strangers

'Strangers' were talked about by some children as their own worry, and they said they did not want to play out at all because of the fear of being kidnapped. This included a girl in Year 6 where the fear was very big and real and prevented her from doing many things. Other children, particularly younger ones, mentioned it as the worry that their parents have, and also as a typical young child 'afraid of the bogey man' feeling:

Once the subject was raised in joint discussions with older children however, everyone had lots more to say about 'strangers' and it became clear it was a bigger concern than we first realised. Worry about 'strangers' meant both the worry about classic 'stranger danger' (a strange man who may take a child away), but also just about 'strangers' (adults they did not know) seeming threatening, or worrying, or shouting at them.

Many children had stories of odd strangers being around, a feeling that people were following them in cars or on foot (it was hard to tell if this was imagined or real as it was a feeling they had) and even of being chased sometimes, by older boys/men (the children concerned were not sure why this happened, they didn't understand). Many said they sometimes felt uncomfortable.

However many older children also said they knew how to deal with all this: how to avoid these adults, to know where to run to and which grown ups to go to ("my Nan's" or the shop). One child (10) said: "you need to be trusted first before you can go out, because of strangers". This was a strange way round to look at it, with the child assuming all the responsibility, but it meant 'being able to look after yourself.'

Many children also agreed that there are kind and nice grown ups around too who would help you if you needed it. "There is good and bad people everywhere." Leah 10 talked about how you can think someone is threatening and feel scared because they have tattoos and then when you walk near them they aren't, they are nice.

(iii) Restrictions: car damage and 'no ball games'

A group of Year 6 children felt that people and their own parents cared more about cars than about them playing. On further discussion, it was clear the adult worry was sometimes about their child damaging a car and them maybe having to pay for it, but the children perceived it as care for cars. Some children also lived in areas with 'no ball game' signs.

Taylor (10): "People just care about their cars. They don't care about us"
Remi (10): "I think they care more about their cars too. When you play out grown ups always say 'make sure you go nowhere near a car' or 'look out for cars."
Romany/Stevie (10): "On my street it says 'No Ball Games'. They don't want you to do anything."

[&]quot;We're not allowed out in Hartcliffe because people might steal us. I live in a flat and if you play on the grass they might get you." (girl 5)

[&]quot;I don't like playing out. I am worried about someone grabbing you." (girl 9)

[&]quot;My mum is worried about me being taken away."

[&]quot;I'm worried about being kid-knapped." (girl 7)

[&]quot;Streets aren't safe because of getting kidnapped and I'm worried" (Daniella 11)

[&]quot;My mum reads the news and is scared of children going missing." (girl 10)

(iv) Other barriers

Some older children said that sometimes other children who play out can get to be **very tough children** and can swear a lot. These groups did not make children not go out, but they wanted to avoid them if they could. One boy (10) said that he was worried about **catching diseases and getting ill** (the research was carried out at a time when lots of children were ill with Swine flu in the school and Scarlet Fever had also occurred, so this might have affected his answer). Others talked about the **cold weather** and not wanting to go out (this may also be that they don't dress prepared for the cold weather).

Playing out more...

The vast majority of children 81% - of both those playing out and not playing out – said they wanted to play out more.

(i) What children would want to do if they could play out more



In interviews, **younger children** (under 9) said they would want to do the following things if they could play out more:

- "Go on a swing"
- "Play in the little playground near my house, but you have to cross a road"
- "Go to Hengrove. I've never been"
- "Go to Morrisons' park which is further away"
- Play out more in my den/park/street
- "Play in the fields near my house on ramps on my motorbike. I want to learn to do a backflip."
- "Go to the forest!"
- "I want to go to the shop on my own."

- "Play football at the football pitch."
- "I want to play for longer and later."
- "Meet other friends, play tag, go on scooter, on fields."
- "Go to the shop"
- "Visit Nan and Granddad"
- "See more places in Hartcliffe"
- "See Dundry"
- "Show my mum and dad places"

In interviews, **older children** said they would want to do the following things:

- "Go to my cousins' street"
- "Go to fields and to Hengrove if I could get there"*
- "Meet new friends" *
- "Be with friends on my own"
- "Watch other people play"
- "Go clothes shopping"
- "Go further away"
- "Go to fields, courts, play football"
- "Go to a beach"
- "Go to Legoland"
- "Play in fields and streets"
- "Play football"
- "Go to bigger parks"
- "Skate"
- "Play and mess around and have laughs and jokes"
- "Go to the woods and have adventures, camping"
- "I would like to climb higher and explore more"
- "Anywhere, anything, everything..."



In the Word Cloud exercise, children of all ages said the following:

"If my street had no cars I would.... "

- "Make a new street with cars in it!"
- "Moss would grow on the roads."
- "That would be good! I would feel more safe. There would be more space. I would play. It would be fun and funny."
- "I would play all around the street."
- "Be happy."
- "Go out more."
- "Play out with friends."
- "There would be more room to play."
- "Feel really calm and could cross the road."
- "I would dance on the road all day."
- "I would go to sleep in the road."
- "We would have more space. I would take all my toys out."

(ii) What would they like to see on their street?

Younger (KS1) children drew what they would like to see on their street including lots of animals, trampolines, flowers, scooters...

All ages of children made things out of plastercine that they would like to see in streets without cars. These included: ponds, fish, animals, flowers, trees, scooters, people, imaginary creatures like a mermaid, benches.





(iii) Closing Roads



We discussed road closures with groups of children. Some children said they liked Make Sunday Special when the road was closed and "you can go on roads without worry."

One girl was with her mum when she drove into a road that said 'road closed' and the girl said she asked her mum to stop, as she wanted to see what was going on, and it was a kind of street party (Playing Out?). She was very interested. Ingrid interviewed two children who live on Fulford Road, which has been closed to traffic for a Playing Out session:

McKenzie (10): "It was fun... No traffic is fun. You can be out there with your toys. It's more exciting, more free. Freedom to do what you like. When the street closed it felt like I can just enjoy it for once and you didn't have to worry about any dangers coming up. It's nice it is with the adults out there too. I do want it happening more."

Charlie (10) very much enjoyed the sessions and the feel of the road on these days, with adults and children out there together.

(iv) Children who don't want to play out more

19 % of KS2 (older) children said they didn't want to play out more, but this included children who were already playing out lots, so perhaps did not need to. Only 6% of KS2 children who do not already play out did not want to.

In interviews with young children, they were clearly either not ready or had appropriate and age relevant fears:

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"No – cars drive too fast" (girl, 6)
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Older children said the following:

[&]quot;Worried about the dark." (girl, 6)

[&]quot;I'm worried about the bogey man." (boy, 7)

[&]quot;I'm worried about being on my own." (boy, 7)

[&]quot;It's too dangerous because of the roads and cars." (boy, 9)

[&]quot;I don't like being social." (boy. 9)

[&]quot;I have a fear of diseases." (boy, 10)

5/ Ideas/solutions for improvements to playing out in Hartcliffe



(i) Specific Ideas:

We gathered ideas and suggestions along the way, as children took part in activities. Here are some of the ideas and suggestions we collected:

Trees:

"It's nice to have trees. You can play on them, climb them, tie a swing, and they're green..."

Benches:

"There are not many in our area. Parents need them to sit on with little babies or old people need them."

Water:

There are lots of streams in the area. "One at the end of Fulford, one near Lidl... You can play in them and go fishing.. Lots of people play in them." Can they be better used/known about?

Lighting:

"There's not very good lights in all the parks."

[&]quot;I hate the cold."

[&]quot;My parents don't trust me."

[&]quot;It's too cold. I sometimes like being indoors. When it's cold outside I just feel like it's an indoors day."

[&]quot;I'm scared of the dark."

[&]quot;I don't have any friends to play with."

Traffic, space + play

"If there was no traffic we all could be out."

"We should bring back horses and carts because they are not dangerous and there is no pollution. Only horse muck that can be compost."

"One idea I have – I told you about it – is we could use water vapour to power cars because it isn't like dirty gases. Water comes from clouds and can go back." [steam power?]

"Cars should go slower and have gears that actually make them slow down."

"Cars should have an automatic thing in them that when they pass the speed signs they scan them, and then they just slow to that speed. There would need to be a lot more signs." We talked about the idea that in the future, driverless cars may do just this.

"There should be roads made just for children."
We talked about pedestrianizing roads and spaces.

"They should make an extra bit of ground just for children when they build the road.

Sometimes there is no room for more than one person. Sometimes children have to step onto the road to get by and there could be an accident."

We spoke about planners making pavements wider, or building in play spaces and green spaces to make it easier to play out. Then we discussed the idea that designers and planners need to think about children. We spoke about the need to remind these people about childhood and playing out.

Play parks and green spaces:

"Play parks should have more stuff in them and nature parks should not have any stuff."

(ii) Changing hearts and minds around play

We held a second Management Team meeting dedicated to play on Weds 16th March to specifically look at the results of our research, and to discuss some solutions and ideas for change. We discussed ideas for how we can get adults to better understand the importance of play and that going out is not dangerous in itself, and that some fears are not necessarily real; but also that there are real dangers that we need to address together like traffic. Here are some of the ideas and suggestions the team discussed:

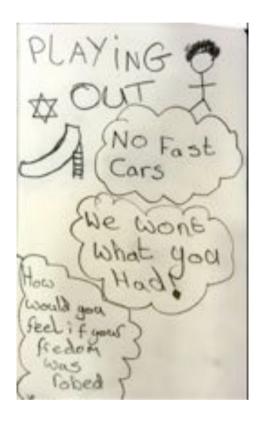
"We should get someone who has already been out the front, already played out, and get them to talk to people who have all the worries. They can say their experiences and say it's fine."

The importance of children talking to children and to parents/adults "to show that their fears don't happen." (Leah)

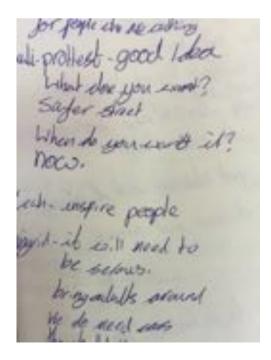
One child said that **children's voices on a street** would remind people that children need to play. This led to a jointly developed idea of children's voices being played on a street to remind drivers. Like at M Shed you hear the sounds of people's voices who used to work on the docks when you walk by, with this idea you would hear the sound of children playing or saying they need to feel safe to play. "When you press the traffic light button, that could be the time that a voice comes out so cars can hear."

"We could **do a protest** with banners." We could get media attention. We looked at slogans: "What do we want? Safer streets! When do we want them? Now!" Children shouted this many times and got really got fired up and excited by shouting this and said they really wanted to do a protest, maybe in Morrison's car park.

We talked about protests also having speakers, on boxes, who give talks, like a kind of Speakers' Corner, and how children could do this rather than adults. Other slogans were: "We want what you had" and "Don't rob us of our childhood."



Shani and Ingrid questioned whether shouting this might set up an 'us and them' situation, and annoy drivers and car owners, when actually we really need to take people with us.



The team was collectively reluctant to let go of the idea of the protest as it so excited them, so we wondered if it would work around other things from Child Friendly City, like children's rights, children's voices: "We have rights.. We have a voice..."

Asking the question of how we can take people with us, Ingrid spoke about how in Playing Out, people often start a conversation about people's **memories of childhood**, so they remember their own, and this takes them to a different and more receptive place.

The team suggested: "we're in pairs, walking round the streets, and we talk loudly about play, to spread the idea." (Madi,10). Ingrid said this was 'starting small' which is a really good way to begin to change things. She suggested maybe **starting conversations**, asking people in the area where they played out and saying how it is different now. Children were very keen to do this too, to meet in a park and then sit next to someone and to engage them on this topic and see what happens. [They did this that night – see Other Activity below].

Ingrid said that together we had looked at different ways of influencing people: individual to individual (very small and direct, where one conversation might change them, which is important and maybe needed - but then that conversation once happened has gone); individual to live group, like at a protest or speakers' corner (reaching a medium a mount of people, where the presentation might get a group to think differently, but again, once over it's gone...). How could we reach way more people?

Daniella (10) suggested: "We could make our own children's TV/You Tube channel and reach so many people." The children said they could interview people, and give children's thoughts and ideas, and that maybe this had not been done before. "Millions of people watch a baby eating a cup cake or animal films so maybe we could make ours spread and be popular?" Ingrid said even if they did not go viral, it would be good just to have some of the thoughts and interviews on film as that would mean they could be sent to people in the council, or forwarded to others, and seen again and again, with more influence and impact. The Team was keen to do this.

Shani said what about the **parents' worries**, what else might address these? Charlie (10) said "the adults on the street could take turns 'on watch' on a bench with tea or coffee, one time each after school each week." Ingrid told the children about the Japanese idea of **older people helping out**. Erin said that there are retired volunteers at 'Life Skills' (the Create Centre experience that children do) and maybe they would do that on streets?

Children in the team were over-all very keen to take action and to change things.

6/ Other Activity

(i) Independent Research by children

Wednesday 16th March 5pm, following the Management Team meeting described above, 5 Year 6 Room 13ers met up at Willmott Park to go and ask questions to the public, male and female. They questioned 15 adults, recording the answers in a notebook and on a mobile phone. They chose the following questions:

- 1. At what age should children play?
- 2. What are their concerns?
- 3. At what age did THEY start playing out?

The team of Room 13ers also chanted at Willmott Park and outside the Doctors' surgery: "What do we want? Safer streets! When do we want them? NOW!"

They also took the data from question 1 and came up with an average.

(ii) Whole School Assembly

Following the research, Shani and 6 children from the Management Team delivered a whole school assembly for 30 minutes engaging over 400 children again in the subject of play.

In the form of an on-stage interview, and showing images, three children presented some of the results of the research, talking about the barriers of traffic and strangers, and telling children about Playing Out and road closures that might be in the area.

Three other children then presented Room 13's map of Curiosity and Wonder on Dundry Slopes and launched the idea of children exploring and playing up there more. Maps were distributed to all children.

(iii) Guided Walk Led by Room 13 Children and Adults on Dundry Slopes

This was organized by Room 13 to be part of Bristol Walk Fest 2016. Our walk was widely advertised in the festival publicity and took place on Monday May 23rd at 1pm.

Ten separate (didn't know each other) adults from the local community and across Bristol (including Redcliffe, Bishopstone, Spike Island..) attended the walk, led by children. The group explored the Slopes and children and adults were able to discuss this little used beautiful green area, as well as discussing play and playing out in the area and for children generally. Room 13 maps were distributed.

(iv) Exhibition at @ Symes building on Dundry Slopes: the map and play

This is currently being worked on and will happen later in the summer.

7/ Engagement with Parents

In May, after our research with children was completed, Shani interviewed 13 parents responding to a message home via the school asking for people willing to talk about children and play. Discussions were 1:1 interviews, group talks or a talk in the playground.

We spoke to 12 mothers and 1 father. Many had several children (one had 10) and their children ranged across all ages from very small to secondary school and older. Parents lived on different kinds of road (busy, main, cul-de-sac etc).

As parents were self-selecting, it is probably accurate to say we spoke to those who are actively concerned about play and their children's safety and well-being. The parents identified themselves as "the parents who care." All knew that playing out could be good for children and were interested to hear more. Many remembered doing so themselves when young. Their feedback supported and in some ways explained children's feedback.

(i) Barriers

All of the parents had **lots of worries** about letting their own children out, even those in Year 6. Most said they trusted their own children but not anything else. A couple were worried about their own children being influenced and so not trusting them. Between them they reported lots of **rules**, **limits**, **communications** and **other checking** around keeping their children safe (no crossing the road; only go to this place; constant texting..). There was lots of worrying and – in a bigger sense – **lots of fear**. Only one parent said that she felt that her child going out and knowing about what is out there empowered her child.

Traffic was by far the biggest barrier and all parents were extremely worried. They said cars can drive very fast indeed (100mph has been seen on Paulette road. A child had also mentioned these speeds and we had assumed they did not know speeds!). There is also very dangerous driving (parents have seen double driving – ie using both lanes - and mounting pavements). They felt that speed limits and bumps on their own have done little for this. One mother recently let her Year 6 daughter go and buy an ice cream alone for the first time and she was knocked down. The car was slow, but a trip to the hospital was necessary, and it left them all shocked and put them off going out.

Anti-social behaviour was also mentioned as a huge barrier. This included other groups of children: "not all children are brought up the right way" and some have "no respect, no manners." It was also about adults on the street: motorbikes; 'weirdos'; drugs; fires ("there was a fire on Fulford Road green/field last night"). Parents felt there was 'bullying and drug addicts' around. One parent said a neighbor – an old man who had lived on the road always – was taking pictures of local children and sending them to the police. This seemed to be because he was experiencing noise or threat, and at the same time the parent felt it as a threat to her and her children,n "feeling watched all the time". She was quickly very angry.

Along with the fear of 'stranger danger', and the fear of children being snatched, the above added up to a strong and real **fear around strangers generally.** "You can't trust anyone anymore – not teachers, doctors, no one."

Several parents said that there is **nothing much to do in the area**: "no decent parks" and Hengrove is "too far and there is a busy dual carriageway and underpass to get there." One parent also felt the residential area was very dark, with not enough good lighting. The council puts 'No Ball Games' signs up.

Parents also felt **worried about the costs involved in everything**: "To do anything, it costs, so we are very limited in where we can go." And "Even a trip to the park can cost if there is a coffee shop there." Play schemes are good but there are no activities that don't cost.

To summarise, parents felt that they have been made very aware of all the dangers, through school communications (letters, texts...), the media, and their own experiences. Yet there are not really any solutions and few places to go that are safe and don't cost, and so there is general worry and fear and lack of trust around letting their children out.

(ii) Thoughts on solutions

On specifics?

"More traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, anything to slow traffic."

"Lollipop person on school days on Bishport Avenue" as it's so dangerous.

"The Roundhouse/allotments area is nice." Roundhouse + school = good meeting places.

"A free regular bus to Hengrove for children"

Better parks and more spaces for younger children. Wardens for parks. More things/something to do for older children.

On road closures?

All parents who responded to this were positive. One said she enjoyed Make Sunday Special. One said it would be good to make a space safe for a few hours for children. One said 'Sundays'; another that it would need to be regular, and once a week; another once a month.

One parent expressed worry around mixing with other neighbours: they don't know everyone, so what if someone is 'dodgy'? Then again, "it could be good to meet each other".

One parent said she would prefer organized activities in the street not just skipping/chalk.

On the suggestion of a public meeting?

Most parents said they would go to a meeting if it was about "making streets safer for children" / "making things safer and helping my children socially." One said they would need to "see the agenda, to see it's relevant."

Several said that a meeting would need to result in some action and changes. "Nothing comes from lots of meetings." One parent said it would be good to have a meeting where "people listen and take things on board." One wondered "will our ideas change anything?" School was suggested as a good place for any public meeting.

One parent summed up her solution: "Parents need encouraging. They feel the fear."

8/ Playing Out in Hartcliffe: Room 13 Hareclive Commission Summary

The commission involved Hareclive children helping to discuss, plan, develop and carry out research into play in the area with other children, and with parents. The project was about gathering information as well as about engaging children around play locally.

Work carried out (by older children and adults together):

- 1 whole school assembly slot, raising the questions around play
- 3 dedicated Management Team meetings to discuss play. These involved 12 Yr 5/6 children, 2 artist educators, 1 development worker
- 2 days of interviews 62 one to one interviews carried out with children of all ages; 3 group interviews; 6 in depth interviews around specific issues
- 1 studio week dedicated to Play research activities including: a ballot box/voting (114 children); questionnaire (63); passport question (44), and a range of 'finding out' and creative activities re traffic, parks, streets and play
- independent research carried out by a small group of 5 children
- Second whole school assembly 30 minutes feeding back research and discussing play
- Guided walk by adults and children on Dundry Slopes
- Small exhibition (forthcoming) @ Symes on Dundry Slopes, Room 13's map + play

Children + others involved/engaged:

- 12 children aged 10/11 (the Management Team) involved in great depth around all issues, ideas, work and findings.
- Around 100 further Hareclive children engaged with the questions and ideas via involvement in research. Mainly KS2 but also around 25 younger children.
- All Hareclive children 380 and many staff aware of the work and engaged with the question around playing out
- 13 parents engaged in discussions around playing out
- 10 adults on child led walk on Dundry
- Links strengthened with some Hartcliffe groups interested in play including @Symes/ Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership; Friends of Dundry Slopes

Outputs:

- A written report detailing in full the research brief, methodology, quantitative and qualitative findings, and recommendations for further action
- Photographs
- A short film of some interviews: "A Chat With Madi About Play"
- Guided walk and future: exhibition @Symes, both around launching the Room 13 Dundry Slopes map

Outcomes:

(i) Key Findings of the research

Many children live in flats/social housing and have no garden

- Children receive strong adult messages about play via their school life. Current directives inside (this) school are very focused on 'health and safety issues' and risk averse, with many rules around play (where and what).
- More than two thirds of older children (10/11) play out in Hartcliffe in some way. Some described freedom to go where they want and to be in by a set time.
- From a very small sample, **more than two thirds of younger children (under 9) also played out in some way**, significantly different to the national picture. This was mainly but not always with older siblings or cousins, and usually close to home in the street or 'field'
- Although so many older children played out, they all had strong experience of fears, restrictions, dangers, rules, prohibitions. These they had experienced when younger, or still did even though they were out. Some older children did not go out at all, or only in a restricted way.
- This also came through in parent interviews with parents expressing many worries and a strong sense of fear around children playing out
- 81% of all children asked said they wanted to play out more, and this rises to 94% if you don't count those already playing out ie only 6% say they don't want to play out at all. Even those playing out don't feel they have enough freedom.
- 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: Traffic – their worry and parents' – a massive worry: speed, busy roads and dangerous driving and parking. Many had experienced and seen incidents. Strangers as in 'stranger danger' – mainly this was reported as parents' worry, but also of some children, that of '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. **Anti-social behaviour** and unpredictable adults was also a very strong parent worry. This worry could tip into anger and hostility towards 'dodgy' neighbours and other residents.
 - **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 better parks, more benches, trees; and some of the parks need better lighting.
- Parents suggested a free bus to Hengrove, a Lollipop person on Bishport Avenue, anything to slow traffic, better parks and more things to do that don't cost
- **Bad things about local parks** included: they are not very good or very many; litter, vandalism, rude graffiti, dog muck, not much equipment, broken equipment, only tiny play parks, Hengrove too hard to get to
- 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-desacs 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
- Parents that were engaged were keen on the idea of safe spaces/road closures and would come to a meeting if it was about safety and there would be change.
 Parents need encouragement and solutions. Not talk and no action.

(ii) Recommendations for further local action coming from research:

- Encourage/offer temporary road closure support to parents for their streets, or around the school, and spread understanding of children's need for safe play
- Start this off with a public meeting at Hareclive school (possibly involving Room 13? And/or the other Hartcliffe groups involved?)
- There needs to be 20mph + awareness raising with adults/drivers around safe play
- · A Lollipop person is needed on Bishport Road
- What provision is being made around children/play/improvements/safety in connection with the new Link road? Something to look into
- Can there be a safe and easy route for all children to Hengrove?
- Improvements for play parks and protecting green 'nature' spaces
- There need to be more activities/places that don't cost
- Use the report to high-light children's experiences/needs re play in Hartcliffe

(iii) Ideas for further awareness-raising:

Children had lots of creative ideas for this. We outline these in report – how to change hearts and minds and understanding locally around play and some of the barriers. A You Tube channel/using films of children was one. See report.

(iv) This year's Management Team members were independently active and interested, with a sense of active citizenship, with increased research skills and confidence:

- The Team met up in a local park and carried out further independent research into
 play with adults on a 1:1 basis, recording answers on their phones. They are also
 keen to look at how they can get their voices heard by more adults on these issues of
 play and safety.
- (v) The report findings can be used to further things around play with local and city wide decision makers

Ingrid Skeels, Shani Ali, Paul Bradley Room 13 Hareclive June 2016

Appendix 1:

Playing Out Questionnaire: Playing outside your house

Name:				
Age: Class: Girl / Boy (please circle)				
What road do you live on?				
1/ Do you play out? YES \(\text{NO} \) \(\text{NO} \) \(\text{If YesWhere do you play? What do you do? What do you like about it?}				
If NoWhy don't you? What stops you?				
1/ Do you want to play out more? YES \(\square\$ NO \(\square\$ If Yes Where would you like to go? What would you like to do?				
If you don't want to Why don't you?				

Appendix 2:

Have You Ever...?

Played out in your street?	YES □	NO 🗆
Called for a friend?	YES	NO 🗆
Made a den?	YES	NO 🗆
Climbed a tree?	YES	NO 🗆
Ridden a bike?	YES	NO 🗆
Walked to school no adult?	YES	NO 🗆
Been to shop on own?	YES □	NO 🗆