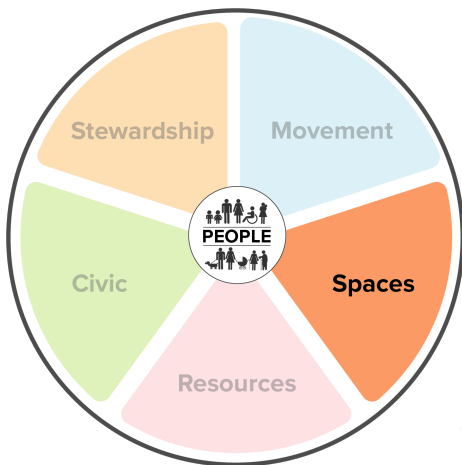


Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

Play and Recreation: Impact on Clydebank's Community



Play and recreation can have a positive impact on people when everyone can access:

- A range of high quality, safe, well-maintained, accessible places with opportunities for play and recreation to meet the varying needs of different population groups and the community itself.

This is why it is one of Scotland's Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.

The evidence tells us¹:



Play and recreation is beneficial for adults and children's health through the encouragement of physical activity and social interactions.



Play is important to the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and wellbeing of young children.



Undertaking play or recreation in natural spaces and accessing them through active travel has benefits for the environment.



Play in outdoor environments can help develop children's motor skills, understanding of risk and environmental awareness.



Perceptions of poor design, quality and safety can lead to children and young people not using play and recreation spaces.



More deprived areas are less likely to have good-quality spaces for children to play or have unsafe recreation areas compared to less deprived areas.



Creating places where people can come together to share their skills, ideas and resources in an open, playful and equitable way, can help build confidence, connectedness and a legacy of collaboration in local places.

1. Source: [Evidence Behind Place Standard Tool & Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#)

Indicators for Play and Recreation in West Dunbartonshire²

Satisfaction with Council sport and leisure facilities (% of adults, 2019)

- Latest figures show 42% of residents in West Dunbartonshire are satisfied with facilities and this has increased since 2012.
- In Scotland, 44% are satisfied though this level has decreased across the same time period.

Satisfaction with nearest green or open spaces (% of adults, 2019)

- 64% of West Dunbartonshire residents are satisfied, though levels have decreased since 2013.
- In Scotland, 73% are satisfied and again, levels have decreased over the same time.

What we heard from a range of communities, organisations and practitioners in Clydebank in 2023



Local play and recreation activities

It was generally noted that there are good statutory leisure facilities available locally, including Clydebank Leisure Centre and a range of West Dunbartonshire Council run parks, pitches and community venues. Reference was also made to the range of play and recreational activities provided by third sector and community groups, including sports, cultural and creative activities for both adults and children.



I'm tired in the evenings, but coming to sing with others on a Thursday night really makes me happy. (Community Choir member)



The provision of play opportunities for children during school holidays was particularly valued. Parents welcome Active Schools play events, including activities they can participate in alongside their children, noting the physical and mental health benefits of this.

It was highlighted that local communities would welcome more play opportunities, particularly for families and young people. It was also noted that the town centre would benefit from having a wider range of recreational activities for young people. It was suggested that this could address current issues relating to anti-social behaviour amongst young people.

Several groups also noted that families and children with Autism spectrum disorder would welcome the opportunity of 'quiet' play spaces, out with a noisy environment.



Having a playscheme here this summer has been so good for my family and myself. I had worried about how I was going to be able to pay for days out and activities during the school holidays. (Parent at local group)



2. Data Source: <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-household-survey-data-explorer/>, West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust Annual Report 2021/22.

Cost is a barrier to play and recreation

Whilst people were positive about a range of facilities, there was concern that the cost of accessing play and recreation opportunities is a barrier for many individuals and families. In addition to the cost of classes or activities, the cost of the kit and equipment for some activities and the cost of travel to facilities based at Queens Quay was also highlighted as a barrier. This was of particular concern for families with more than one child, especially across a range of ages.

It was recognised that many people on low incomes cannot afford public transport to access Queens Quay and town centre play and recreation activities. The importance of local community facilities was therefore highlighted as essential to ensure that opportunities for play and recreation are both accessible and affordable for individuals and families on low incomes.

I would love to be able to send my son to Mini Kickers, but I cannot afford the fees. There's a cost too for kit, boots and bus fares for myself to get him there. (Parent at local group)

Outdoor play and recreation

Feedback from local groups indicated that the health benefits of participating in play and recreation outdoors, particularly in natural spaces, is well understood amongst the local community. It was suggested that awareness of this grew during the Covid lockdowns, with West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust reporting a 62% increase in outdoor recreation activities in 2021/22.

It was fed back that local people who actively take their families to parks and playgrounds, also enjoy the adult interaction opportunities. Families have also welcomed the use of natural play and traditional play equipment within park re-developments and value affordable outdoor events throughout the seasons. The popularity of local events amongst families was frequently mentioned and were considered as inclusive to all, including being accessible to people on low incomes, with free, pay as you can afford or very low-cost entry and food. As the events are held within local communities, there is no need for transport costs.

Local groups noted the success of such events was largely due to local stakeholders working

together to make this happen, also recognising the involvement of the local community through volunteering.

While these events have a positive impact on those who attend them, in community conversations there was an acknowledgement that these opportunities are not always known about. It was felt that more joined up communications to reach a wider audience would be beneficial.

Safety concerns

Concerns expressed about play and recreation tended to focus on safety issues, including:

- Damage to play equipment and seating areas in local parks contributes to people not feeling safe and discourages use.
- Anti-social behaviour in local parks can also contribute to people feeling unsafe, with parents in particular discouraging their children from using the space.
- Potential danger to children when traffic and parking is next to designated play spaces.
- Reduction in grass cutting and perception of reduced maintenance of pitches and public grass areas contributing to feelings of a space not being cared for and potentially not being safe.