



**Minutes of the Scottish Play Policy Forum
Monday 12th January 2009
held Capability Scotland Head Office, Edinburgh**

Present

Frances Barbour (NAHPS), Marguerite Hunter Blair (Play Scotland), Jane Crawford (Scottish Childminding Association), Maureen Fraser (Barnardos), Gwen Garner (SPPA), Faye Gatenby (Capability Scotland), Amanda Godsell (Play Scotland), Sue Gutteridge (Playlink), Irene Hogg (International Play Association, Scotland), Marion MacLeod (Children in Scotland), Susan McIntyre (Play Scotland), Sue Palmer (SPPF), Laura Powrie (Scottish Government), Colin Rennie (Fields in Trust Scotland), Alastair Seaman (Grounds for Learning), Margaret Westwood (Play Scotland), Debbie Willett (SkillsActive)

Apologies

Margaret Bruce (SSSC), Stephanie Bruce (Care and Learning Alliance), Lesley Fox (Play Matters, NATLL), Douglas Hamilton (Save the Children), Ronnie Hill (Care Commission), Mary Howden (SSSC), Kevin Lafferty (Forestry Commission Scotland), Linda Lauchlan (Learning Teaching Scotland), Maire McCormack (SCCYP), Maureen McKissock (SOSCN), Eric Mitchell (Capability Scotland), Lesley Paterson (National Playbus Association, Scotland), Ishbel Proctor (NAHPS), Julie Proctor (Greenspace Scotland), Frances Scott (SSSC), Clare Simpson (Parenting Across Scotland)

1. Welcome

SP welcomed everyone and said we would skip to item 4 on the agenda as SG needs to leave early.

4 & 5. Sue Gutteridge on Playlink and Risk it!

SG used to work for Stirling Play Services, still has an advisory role for them and also works for Playlink which is an independent consultancy organisation. Playlink now has a branch in Scotland.

Their work is on the broad category of playable space (public play areas, school and nursery grounds) and they include as associates landscape architects, designers and people with expertise on play and children. Their work can involve reviewing use of space, consultation with children and families and work on risk assessment, policy and strategy.

On February 20th they are running a one day conference 'Risk it! Changing public play space'. People read 'Managing Risk in Play Provision: A Position Statement' and agree, yet it can be difficult for people to overcome the barriers there appear to be. The conference sets out to disentangle this and what people can do. It will focus on features that are not conventional play features e.g. changes of level, boulders, etc. Questions can be submitted in advance for the panel. Speakers include Prof. David Ball and Harry Harbottle.

SP asked if the Care Commission would be on the panel. They have been invited to attend the conference and SG will contact them again to emphasise they'd like them to be there.

AS asked if the conference output would be shared. Information will probably be on the Playlink website.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were approved with a few amendments. Alex Cole-Hamilton is from Aberlour not Capability Scotland, a spelling error in Marion MacLeod's name and a typo on the second page.

FG flagged up the UNCRC consultation 'Improving the lives of children in Scotland – are we there yet?' available on the Scottish Government website.

MHB pointed out that there is also a consultation on the role of the Children's Commissioner but was not sure how broad it is. It would be useful if SPPF were included in the process.

3. Update from the Children's Play Policy Forum (CPPF) – Marguerite Hunter Blair

There are various forums that SPPF could feed into – the Children's Play Policy Forum, the Play Safety Forum, the Play Design Network and the Play Research Network. The intention with SPPF has been to meet in advance of the CPPF meetings. The next is the 20th of January. The last CPPF covered Playday. A theme is chosen for the UK and there was discussion on making that relevant to policy development in each country.

CPPF has had small pockets of funding from DCMS and a chairperson from the Local Government Association. The incoming chairperson is Les Lawrence. They are reviewing the terms of reference as each home nation has different accountability. Also some memberships are being reviewed as some organisations are already represented through the Play England membership.

At each meeting there are home nations updates and updates from member organisations. In North Ireland they have been looking at the issue of how playwork and youth work link. The understanding is that youth work is from 11+ and what happens before that is play. This has huge significance for us as the Early Years Framework, great though it is, covers 0-8 years. Also in Northern Ireland, they are hoping that this year play will become a statutory duty for local authorities.

In England, Fair Play, the play strategy, was launched. Play England are looking into what they as an organisation might be in future.

Play Scotland is a member of the Play Safety Forum and is delighted that the Managing Risk in Play Provision Implementation Guide will be available this year. Play Scotland will launch the guide in Scotland.

The Play Research Network members share up-to-date play research in a brief format. If people are interested we could try to get permission to circulate those minutes.

Public petition PE913 update – Marie Forsyth who submitted the petition on behalf of To Play or Not to Play, calling for a play strategy for Scotland, has until Friday to respond to the Public Petitions committee on whether what they were asking for has been met by the Early Years Framework. Not all children are covered by the framework. We have copies of letters that were sent and can circulate these but if others feel that gaps are still there please respond individually.

6 & 7. Play in the Early Years Framework – Laura Powrie

LP's presentation is appended – see attached PowerPoint for full presentation. Other points made were that –

- Although play does cover a wider age range, the document would be too large if it covered the wider range, but they can still look at how to make sure the 9+ range is covered.
- The framework links with 'Equally Well' and 'Achieving our Potential'
- The Scottish Government have won a social marketing bid for the Early Years Framework. Television and radio broadcasts will, on the advice from the communications team, focus on the key messages of the importance of the first three years (e.g. reading to your child, talking to your child) and that it's ok to ask for support. They wanted to include play but were advised there would be too many messages for one campaign.
- There will be a national debate on play and risk involving groups such as the Scottish Government, Play Scotland, the Care Commission, the police and COSLA.
- This will hopefully tie in with the social marketing campaign in some way e.g. use of the web – this will be discussed soon.
- The Inspiring Scotland draft report is positive about play but the committee have not met yet so nothing can be confirmed.
- They are increasing the number of government directors responsible for working with local government
- The biggest challenge for local authorities is re-aligning resources – spending more on early years should mean less spending is required on some other areas.

The discussion that followed covered the feasibility for local authorities to take the framework on board. Concerns were raised by MM –

- The financial difficulties local authorities will experience this year.
- It will be difficult for community planning partnerships as the Concordat is linked to local authority budgets and it is hard to see incentive for health boards to invest.
- Most finance is already committed to statutory duties and cannot be re-aligned

Other points made were –

- LP: It will be a hard year but that the purpose of the Concordat is to give local authorities more flexibility over how they spend their finances. It is their responsibility to make sure the ten areas of transformational change happen

- MHB: A lot of what we are trying to achieve in the play sector does not require a lot of money but the capacity of the play sector on the ground to be supported to e.g. get involved in community planning partnerships. Support communities to engage with the planning partnerships rather than just releasing a lot of money at once.
- LP: There are people in communities who want to get involved and it is about how you support that.
- SG expressed that the community engagement approach is a red herring and what people devise to do when there is no money. Often what people want done is simple but there is no money to do it.

There was discussion about the impact of policy. MHB expressed that play is in a policy framework now which it wasn't before. SG said that parks have been in strategies before and it didn't make a difference on the ground. MHB raised that this is the first time we've had single outcome agreements though.

The question was asked by FB whether there is anything in the framework about training the people who will be involved. LP said this was not her area but would find out and get back to her. MHB pointed out that the workforce development task group had been looking at cross-professional training.

The point was raised by MW that workforce development money is being spent on childcare and so would be difficult to get it spent on more esoteric areas. LP replied that the Scottish Government are doing everything they can to address the affordable childcare issue.

MF queried the possible Inspiring Scotland money and whether the £4million Government money that would be dedicated to play is dependant on Inspiring Scotland investing. LP highlighted there is nothing definite as yet.

MF made a suggestion on community planning partnerships. The government directors that work with local authorities cover everything. Maybe four or five areas where additional direction is needed to supplement government policy could be identified. More guidance is needed that would allow them to put specific actions, outcomes, cost etc into the single outcome agreement – more help with what it means in practice. LP said she would make that suggestion.

DW pointed out that SkillsActive are working with Play Scotland on a document looking at how play can sit within the single outcome agreements. They will put this out to consultation with the forum. LP suggested showing it to her COSLA education contacts.

Further issues and responses were raised on the implementation of the framework –

- MM raised that before we can solve a problem we have to know what it is, working out what needs to be addressed in each area and where the money will come from. Process of community planning is Byzantine and expecting a parent to be able to have involvement and see some benefit is unrealistic.
- SP said we need a much wider appreciation of play amongst parents and professionals – concerned that the social marketing campaign won't emphasise that.
- LP said that if the money was there, the Government would do more adverts. The campaign will hopefully link in to a website with information on play.
- MHB pointed out that the framework did draw on a large number of wider documents and then focused in on where it could make more impact.

- LP highlighted that playing with your child can be part of the importance of the first three years.
- JC suggested use could be made of parent councils to spread the message.
- Discussed that the framework is universal but the campaign is targeting a particular group – although it will be seen by everyone. They were advised to choose a key target audience.
- Point was raised by MW of whether people targeted would go online – the research shows that those are the people who do tend to have a computer at home and use the internet.
- MW expressed that Play@Home is a good way of reaching people. However the number of people targeted through this has been reduced. Is there any work being done on how this can be extended? LP said she would find out.
- GG expressed delight that a focus on 0-3 is being brought to public attention.
- Group echoed this but concern was raised again that the framework focuses on 0-8. LP said 0-8 is where they began, the youth framework would cover 9+ and that she would look into the categorisation in Northern Ireland.
- SP expressed that was the right way to do it, easier to start with 0-8 and build up than to start at the middle age group and work back.

LP thanked MHB for the fantastic bits on play that are in the framework. MHB passed that onto staff too and the Play Scotland membership, that always responds to requests for support.

CR pointed out that the attitudinal barriers to playing out can be addressed through the framework. Things can be achieved and we have to do what we can, be positive and where we have criticism take it up with the minister.

LP stated that the debate on risk would get the ball rolling and that she would keep the forum update with all information she could share.

There was some discussion around supporting practice on the ground e.g. work such as SG shared that would benefit from being repeated rather than just a one off. The Managing Risk in Play Provision Implementation Guide by Play England will be out but not sure when it will be launched.

SP enquired about Playday. AG explained it is coordinated by Play England and that Play Scotland is on the steering group as is Play Wales and PlayBoard Northern Ireland. MW added Playday is always on the first Wednesday of August. There was discussion on making Playday bigger in Scotland.

MF suggested that the Government could have half a day devoted to play, through schools, nurseries, etc – something that promotes the Early Years Framework. LP commented it could be linked to the risk debate. Have ministers pushing it, rather than inviting ministers to events. MW suggested Holyrood Park as the venue.

8. Leaflet and logo competition

The forum looked at two possible styles of leaflet. There was agreement that the punchier campaigning style drafted by SP was preferred, although it does depend who the leaflet is for. Get people who it is intended for to look at it and say if it's relevant to them. It could be put out in corner shops, colleges, doctor's surgeries. Agreed this has more value than

producing the formal one, information which can be distributed online or by email anyway. Aiming it at general public does turn it into a bigger undertaking with larger distribution – this has a financial implications. Can the group extend to this level? Discussed use of work ‘kids’ on the front instead of ‘children’ and agreed this was more in-keeping with how people generally speak. Play Scotland to look into options.

The logo competition was agreed as tabled, although information should read that the logo will be chosen in March. It was agreed that the SPPF reference group should choose the winners rather than the whole forum. Other logos were suggested as examples – Children in Need, NAHPS and Save the Children. Permission would need to be sought.

9. Future chairperson

MHB extended a huge thank you to SP for chairing during the first year. It has been great having a figurehead. The ambition is to build links with COSLA, but MHB asked if SP could continue for now. SP agreed, would like another chairperson to be found as soon as possible and would very much like to stay in the forum.

10. Suggestions for future agenda items

Contributions from the forum were:

- SP – Wellbeing agenda
- SP – Commercialisation of childhood – toy consumption takes the place of play. There is a book on this due soon – ‘Consumer Kids’ that could be influential. Could have co-author Agnes Nairn speak at the forum.
- SP – Gender – the involvement of men in children’s play, involving fathers. MM proposed two people who could talk about that (details to follow).
- AS – The forum sees itself as a policy forum but does it see a role in culture change and where would the levers be? Forum could have some discussion on that. John McKendrick could speak on that.
- IH – Children with disabilities and how we can get them out to play. MF –Could go visit The Yard rather than bringing someone in. The Yard has integrated non-disabled children on the disabled children’s terms. MHB – Or the Chief Executive could come and show us footage they have on DVD.

LP suggested the next SPPF could be hosted at the Scottish Government – will check if possible on March 12th. Agreed we could be flexible on the time to suit the venue.

In relation to culture change, SP suggested writing to newspapers or blog online in response to any relevant articles.

11. Meeting outcomes and points for CPPF

- Early Years Framework and debate on risk
- Review on the Children’s Commissioner – question about whether there will be a stand alone Children’s Commissioner.
- UNCRC report follow up that SACR is working on
- Cultural change and how