



# LONDON PLAY

## BUILDING COMMUNITY COHESION WITH PLAY STREETS

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LESSONS FROM A PILOT PROJECT IN HOUNSLOW, 2014

# LONDON PLAY

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- Working with play providers in the voluntary, community, statutory and private sectors to support their efforts to increase play opportunities for children in London's 33 boroughs
- Supporting organisations such as play associations, local playgrounds, play centres, playworkers and community groups to increase and improve play opportunities in London's neighbourhoods
- Directly providing more play opportunities through funded projects, working with local play organisations or community bodies wherever possible
- Engaging communities and children themselves to meet the need for play opportunities
- Raising the profile of play with politicians, decision-makers, parents, schools and other bodies that work with or influence children and young people (eg, working with the media and contributing to policymaking)

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*"Days like that are good. They don't cost anything. And because we've had our own experience, we could go and do the same somewhere else. Because we've had that experience we know what it's like"*

Project advocate, 2015

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## Executive summary

The London Play Hounslow pilot demonstrates the efficacy of the play street approach in building community cohesion. In poverty-stricken areas of the borough – estates marked by division, uncertainty, low morale and atomisation – the project brought local people together for a common purpose. It is a testament to the project that 60% of the play streets that delivered an event wish to do so again and continue building local community ties.

As the sun shone on these summer events, held between July and September 2014, residents of all backgrounds, cultures and languages broke bread together, danced, laughed, had fun – and like good neighbours, cleaned up afterwards. The best of these events were led by local people, for local people: London Play provided tips and offered simple materials for play, but the residents themselves took ownership of what happened on the day.

Consultation has shown that local people from the areas targeted feel forgotten, powerless, cast adrift. The Hounslow pilot gave them the tools to do the job, empowering them to take events into their own hands – an opportunity they were eager to take. In a general election year and as austerity cuts bleed councils, the social action witnessed offers a model for local decision-making, local empowerment and local renewal.

As academic research has proved, “playing out” offers children the best deal in terms of activity levels, health and wellbeing. Hard-to-reach and highly deprived areas lack the green spaces that make such activity easy to access, but shutting down streets and temporarily freeing them from traffic offers the next best thing. The physical and social benefits cannot be ignored.

Of course, all projects have their quirks and this pilot is no different: indeed, failure can be as informative as success in such a context. The Hounslow pilot shows that the best results come when residents take matters into their own hands; that consultation is a must; and that collaboration is key.



Key lessons learned from the project:

1. Play street events offer a low-cost and highly effective way for hard-to-reach groups to generate community cohesion from the inside
2. For best results, collaborative relationships with established community leaders/activists in the areas targeted must be established: this requires local consultation (a crucial step that cannot be skipped)
3. Consultation showed that hard-to-reach communities can feel forgotten by local authorities and sometimes local community groups, too: this can lead to entrenched passivity. Developing play streets empowers residents while generating social cohesion and a more socially active and engaged community. It can also help community groups to get to know their residents better
4. Children can help recruit, support, plan and deliver – don't overlook them
5. Find the right location: it has to be easy to access
6. Play streets work just as well with simple tools and resources for children: this is what makes them inexpensive but invaluable for users
7. Cross-pollination between highly deprived areas can be achieved through the willingness of those touched by such projects to act as “ambassadors”, showing their peers in other neighbourhoods how to put on play street events
8. Street play generates active intergenerational participation in neighbourhood affairs, cutting across age, background, race, language and creed
9. Children living in poverty (which deleteriously affects their physical and emotional health, and isolates them) hugely benefited from the project
10. London Play has a valuable role to play in providing continued support to and sharing expertise with motivated adults and young people across the borough and throughout the capital. This will build on the momentum generated by the pilot
11. Street play measurably increases children's physical activity and hones leadership skills among the next generation

Key recommendations for London Play:

**R1: Develop further partnerships with LB Hounslow and its residents**

**R2: Fundraise for more incubation projects to support the work in Hounslow and other boroughs where social cohesion is an issue**

**R3: Raise awareness about the costs/value for money of this incubation approach via more costly community engagement initiatives**

**R4: Continue to widen participation by supporting word-of-mouth promotion across local communities, as well as replicating approaches in different areas**

**R5: Support community cross-pollination by enabling residents from one area to become ambassadors and mentors to others (as successfully implemented in other London boroughs)**

**R6: Work with LB Hounslow to explore how the council can raise awareness and the profile of play streets by attending, publicising and celebrating such events more widely within the borough**

**R7: Support LB Hounslow and other boroughs to recognise the potential for working with newly mobilised residents' groups, and explore how they can be more active in neighbourhood issues and developments (particularly those that affect community cohesion and CYP's play and recreation)**

**R8: Work with Hounslow youth providers to explore potential apprenticeship routes for local young people interested in playwork**

**R9: Develop in-depth evaluation methods to measure the impact of play streets on young people's health and in terms of meeting local government priorities**

**R10: London Play to continue to research the impact of play street culture on community cohesion in order to document its relevance to meeting local priorities**

Play streets build community cohesion quickly and more organically than many alternative approaches. They don't require long-term investment, but do require initial incubation and continuing support. There is already a network of play streets and support for residents who wish to make these a regular affair – but kick-starting new additions is a worthy investment. London Play already offers a Facebook network of support, online and practical resources (eg, how-to guides, high-vis vests, starting play equipment, etc) and access to training and support via the play street advocacy worker (funded by the Big Lottery). However, in areas that face a host of socioeconomic barriers and lack a community feel, an injection of outreach work is required to get people playing and talking together.

The project worked. It delivered community cohesion. Local people jumped at the opportunity for empowerment. And London Play's model can be replicated throughout the borough, across the capital and further afield.



## Street party planning: the Hounslow project worker's 'top tips'

“Leave expectations at the door: the street party or play street will evolve according to the needs and desires of the community rather than yours.”

“Don't throw money at the event: the thrill for the children is a space free of cars. Bring low-cost and simple items such as clay, chalk and rope along on the day!”

“Acknowledge that you don't live there but residents do: they are the experts on their area. Ask for help to get around and to find the right residents to get the ball rolling.”

“Mobilise local support – it's always there. Ask local businesses to get involved (by contributing resources or refreshments, for example). Ask local practitioners to help distribute flyers and leaflets.”

“Make sure your key contacts are warm and inclusive people who other locals of all ages and backgrounds can and do relate to.”

“Learn a few words in the foreign languages spoken locally – it may get you a handshake rather than a shrug!”

“Get it to happen, whether or not everyone is on board: play streets have to be experienced to be approved. No one turning up to meetings means no one is objecting: no news is good news.”

## Background and introduction

London Play is a small but influential charity (founded in 1998) whose innovative projects include the award-winning Street Play and trail-blazing Natural Play projects: it has long extolled the fact that children and young people playing together acts as a “social adhesive” for diverse groups.

In February 2014, London Play was commissioned by LB Hounslow to support residents in several of the borough’s most deprived areas to plan and deliver play street sessions. The aim of this short pilot was to learn whether play streets have the potential to build community cohesion in deprived neighbourhoods.

The term “play street” is not to be confused with “street play”.

*“Street play is an activity that can be part of a street party or spontaneous event – it’s basically play happening in the community at an event and doesn’t necessarily require organisation or resources. A play street is a designated street (or non-green public space) where play regularly happens. They are usually small and locally run with big pay-offs for the community. They are resident-led and defy classification, with each street delivering play in their own way. It takes time to get a play street up and running, so support from an experienced advocate is often key to success”*

**Paul Hocker, development director, London Play**

Hounslow is a changing borough: its youthful, diverse population is growing at a rapid rate. Despite a healthier picture overall, it retains severe pockets of unemployment and deprivation, circumstances that often lead to social rifts between community groups. Four wards in Hounslow are among the UK’s top 10% most deprived, with child poverty standing at 22%.

In 2009, London Play began working on play streets with LB Hounslow. This formed part of the highly successful three-year Playful Ideas Lottery programme (winner of the prestigious *Children and Young People Now Award*). Eighteen Hounslow streets were involved in the project, including two from this pilot (Brabazon Estate and Syon Estate). It provided local people the opportunity to create street party celebrations supported by a full-time London Play playworker. The project showed that social capital is generated when people get to know each other and work together, and from adults and children enjoying activities together.

Children would meet their neighbours and play, and as a result parents/carers also started to mix. The project highlighted the potential impact of using streets for play engagement activities to incubate social cohesion. It also showed that local authorities lacked the capacity for extensive outreach work (part of the partnership agreement), with London Play’s project team employing a flexible approach and investing more time and resources to reach agreed targets.

This project builds on Playful Ideas' successes, with LB Hounslow recognising the need to invest in outreach to gauge play streets' benefits in terms of community cohesion.

This pilot has taken a snapshot of what happens when people of diverse ages and backgrounds come together to meet and play on their street. The relaxed/informal nature of the project and the context of the communities it served made it inappropriate to expect residents to participate in extensive post-event evaluation: however, by carrying out observations, interviewing key users and staff, and gathering feedback where appropriate, we have developed this evaluation.

During 2014, London Play's Hounslow project worker supported residents from six deprived neighbourhoods:

Target area	Issues as observed/reported by local people	Play street date	Number of children	Number of adults	Project worker's impact report/ observations
Oriel Estate, Hanworth	Mainly white population, with smaller ethnic-minority groups feeling less integrated or appreciated. The area is seen as dangerous at night, with rapes and stabbings reported, as well as a recent murder nearby	July 2014	60	40	Huge amount of local support and large numbers of children; users felt the event had an overwhelming impact on local cohesion. Future events have been discussed by users
Brabazon Estate, Heston	Community committee dominated by elderly white residents, but the population is now three-quarters Asian. Low morale among committee members	September 2014	30	15	A diversity of ages and ethnicities got on at the event very harmoniously. The numbers were lower than anticipated, but there is no doubt that for the next one there will be many more. The members of the community association were delighted with the outcome, and some integration with elders from the Asian community was observed
Haverfield Estate, Brentford	Local community group/leaders were disengaged from the community. A severe lack of play space locally; residents were against children playing near their homes	August 2014	25	20	This event felt like the beginning of greater community cohesion. There was not much mingling between adults from different backgrounds, though the children led the way. There were Middle Eastern, Arabic-speaking women who showed huge enthusiasm for the event and are determined to repeat it regularly

Target area	Issues as observed/reported by local people	Play street date	Number of children	Number of adults	Project worker's impact report/ observations
Convent Way Estate, Southall – on the borough's border	Area seen as a sink estate, with anxieties about violence. High-rise and low-rise flats, with people reluctant to open the door. Majority Somali population, also some Asian, African, East European and Caribbean people. Lots of poverty, complaints of drug dealing, especially at night	August 2014	80	50	The event (though part of a larger community event to which London Play was invited) was thoroughly enjoyed by participants. The simple, creative resources brought by London Play were more popular than the two fairground rides provided by the community association. Further events are planned – but this wasn't so much a resident-led play street as a community group-organised event
Mayfield Road and Thornton Avenue, Chiswick	Leafy suburban streets of mostly Victorian owner-occupied houses, where residents have been running their own street party for six years. Many better-off families, but not much integration with poorer families living in the council flats nearby	July 2014	50	50	There were signs of better integration with the more marginalised communities. This project is already well-supported by residents: they are now in discussions with London Play about how they can regularly close the street so that local children can have a play street every month
Syon Estate, Brentford	Mix of council and owner-occupied houses, and a smaller number of flats	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unfortunately, this event didn't take place because of threats from two local men aimed at the project coordinator on the day (despite local support for the event during door-knocking)

Engaging residents at these events enabled London Play to gain valuable insights into how to effectively engage, support and work with areas marked by poor community cohesion, while acting as a “social pollinator” for diverse, inclusive and intergenerational street play cultures.

In total, 245 children and 175 adults benefited from the events, with around 12 people supported to become advocates.

# Consultation with residents living in four Hounslow neighbourhoods, 2014

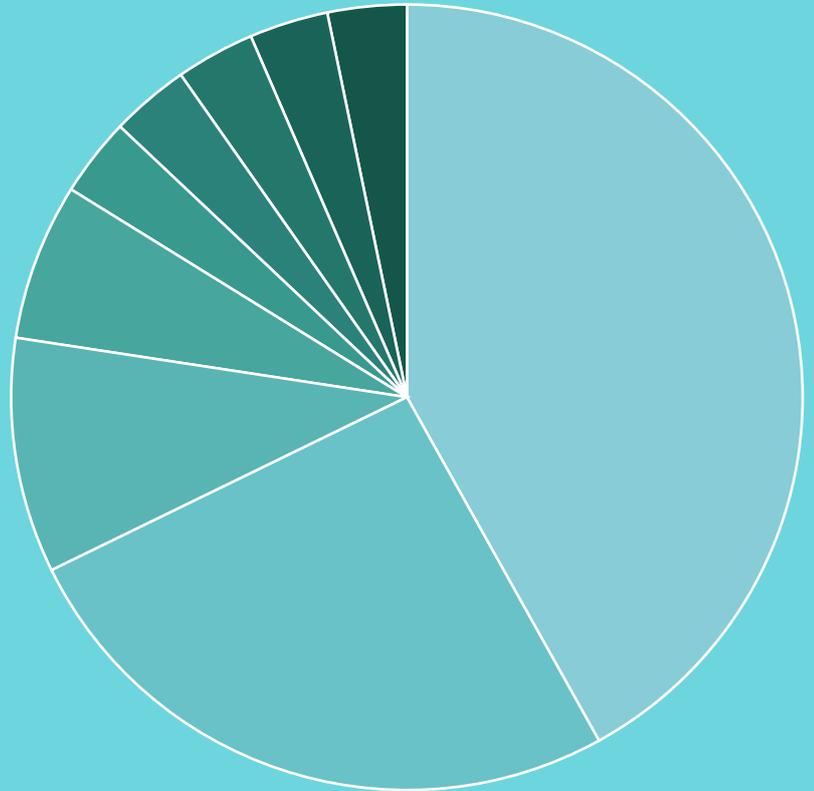
Before kick-starting the activities, the project worker consulted with five of the neighbourhoods to ascertain local needs and potential barriers to play streets. Consultation included attending local and community groups (eg, a parenting class) and door-knocking (sometimes with support from the advocates), utilising both focus groups and surveys. In total, 95 people were surveyed. Responses included:



*“What would improve community spirit in the neighbourhood?”*

Consultation on two Hounslow estates, 2014

- More street parties/events - 13
- More activities for children - 8
- Better facilities (library, sports courts, parks) - 3
- No idea - 2
- Activities for children and adults at the community centre - 1
- Knowing more about what's on locally - 1
- More police patrols - 1
- A nearer bus stop - 1
- Cleaner communal areas - 1



London Play’s support (eg, liaising with the council, providing resources and ideas, etc) was instrumental in igniting interest and creating a template for the future: for example, Oriel Estate residents are considering holding a street party every half-term.



## What worked?

### Getting to know the community

As described above, the Hounslow project worker got to know the streets and residents by meeting with community centre staff, approaching local groups and clubs, and knocking on doors to canvas interest. The programmes were advertised via community noticeboards and the local press to raise awareness.

Face-to-face meetings with residents via local community groups and classes proved to be the most effective approach: attitudes, concerns, desires and some of the barriers to greater community cohesion were explored in this manner. These interactions led the project worker to acknowledge that locals had the greatest expertise when it came to their neighbourhoods. This took time, but helped build trust. At the one site where adequate consultation did not take place, the event was cancelled: the one earmarked for Brentford's Syon Estate was scrapped on the day because of vociferous opposition from two residents.

### Collaborating with community leaders

As a result of dropping into an informal Oriel Estate parenting class, the project worker was able to recruit a local mother to the cause. This resident, along with many parents at the class, felt strongly about the need to increase play opportunities for local children.

*“When you’ve got six children and there’s not a lot of facilities and things to do, you just want things to be done and get more people involved”*

**Project advocate, 2014**

The mother became a project advocate for street parties and events on the estate, joined by her children, who knocked on neighbours' doors to drum up interest. The family, well-known and liked locally, became instrumental in generating the energy needed to plan the street party. This collaborative approach with dovetailing motivations proved essential for gathering project impetus.



## Children can plan and deliver

In consultation, residents highlighted how children and young people form the heart of the community: relationships coalesce around their play.

*“When children mix, people come together”*

Resident, Oriel Estate, 2014

Unfortunately, children and young people are often mistrusted in areas experiencing low community cohesion and suffering high levels of petty crime and anti-social behaviour. On the Oriel Estate, older children initially described their own fears about spending time out on the street. However, when helping to canvas interest, their presence opened doors and served to alleviate residents’ fears: indeed, the response to the proposed intergenerational community event was highly positive.

*“Normally, when a crowd of people knock on a door, people say ‘Oh, no!’, shut the door and go away, but nearly every single door we knocked on, they listened to the kids more than they did to us. Soon they said: ‘A street party bringing the adults and children together!’”*

Project advocate, Hanworth

Young people’s initial involvement carried through to the day itself, with up to 20 children helping to put up the Oriel Estate gazebo and bring out provisions. Later on they served drinks to older residents and put out signage to redirect traffic.



Children explained proudly how they had helped.

*“I put the signs up!”*

**B, eight years old**

## Creating the space

Choosing streets with good access that were easy to shut to traffic was crucial, especially first time round. The street was then issued with a temporary road closure order by the council, with the support of London Play. Residents put up signs and volunteered to patrol the boundaries, letting drivers know what was happening on the day.

Putting up decorations, including bunting and the gazebo, helped generate excitement, curiosity and expectation that drew people out of their homes, including reticent children and adults previously unaware of the event.

*“On the day, lots of people saw the bunting and came, about 100 of all ages, mostly younger and from this end of the estate”*

**Project advocate, Hanworth, 2014**



## Facilitating participatory outdoor play

Consultation uncovered a sense of disempowerment among parents in relation to the play opportunities available to their children, especially in light of austerity cuts.

*“They’ve got nothing now. All the funding has stopped except for problematic children”*

**Mother, Hanworth, 2014**

The sense that there was “nothing to do” if nothing structured was provided flew in the face of older community members’ reminiscences about their own childhoods, with some blaming the “we’re powerless” attitude on too much technology making young people “spoilt”. Another factor was play becoming associated with paid-for activities structured and organised by adults.

Free play had also been problematised locally, with many children not allowed to play on the grass, climb or make dens in council- or housing association-maintained “public” spaces.

The project offered a way to traverse these barriers.

*“The beauty of a play street is children are not given things to do, to play with, to occupy themselves. They are simply allowed the space in which to play safely, creatively, letting their imaginations provide the opportunities”*

Hounslow project worker, 2014





The separately organised event at the Convent Way Estate in Southall provided a contrasting approach. Prearranged entertainment (including ice cream vans and fairground rides) was put on: although enjoyable, this meant that attendees consumed experiences created and controlled by adult organisers, rather than collaborating in the creation of their own.

The LP project manager brought along rope, chalk and clay to the event, laying them out on a table to be explored and used by residents. These easy and inexpensive materials proved far more engaging to locals than rides, firing their imagination and creativity: indeed, the level of absorption generated among participants young and old was striking.



In contrast, young people from the Oriol Estate organised themselves and their own street party from beginning to end. The 2014 World Cup, which was running at the time, stimulated boys to use rope to fashion goalposts on a wall, backed up by chalk “netting”. The rope also formed a kind of harness between carts and trolleys. Another boy decided they could have races and painstakingly drew out lanes, with a volunteer DJ sounding the start: nearly every child and most of the adults participated.



*“I liked the running race.  
And the water pistols”*

**B, eight years old, July 2014**



# Running an organic, user-led play event

## Case study 1: Hanworth – a community-led street party on the Oriol Estate

*“I think it was just amazing. I didn’t think it would work out; I said: ‘It ain’t gonna work out, it’s gonna flop.’ But it actually worked!”*

Resident, 14 years old, 2014



Thanks to the collaboration between London Play and local people of all ages and backgrounds, a five-hour street party took place one July weekend. “Do we have to stop at 6?” asked the children.

Although only the project manager, the project advocate, her friends and her children had attended pre-event meetings, around 100 people came out to play and socialise on the day. Beyond the project manager buying refreshments and procuring bunting and a gazebo, the event evolved according to residents’ ideas, skills, resources and initiative. For example, one young person became the party’s “expert biscuit decorator”, showing younger children how to use the icing and sprinkles. Later she showed them how to work with clay.

*“We done eight packets of biscuits! I felt proud!”*

B, aged 14

A young man brought a sound system and DJ’d, while his dancer friend taught older women from the neighbourhood some moves. Residents ate burgers cooked on a neighbour’s barbecue and sang and danced together after a few drinks.

The day was a huge success: residents have since asked the project advocate the date of the next one.

## Outcomes

### Community street events generate enthusiasm for more

*“Can we have more?”*

**Resident, Hanworth, 2014**

The idea of a street party immediately appealed to residents during initial consultations.

*“When we knocked on the doors, I didn’t expect a response like we got. Because normally, people say ‘No, no, no!’ But they were all up for it!”*

**Project advocate, Hanworth, 2014**

Older residents’ reminiscences about street play past fired locals’ enthusiasm for recreating such experiences in the present.

*“When you said street party, I thought of the fun times when we had them when we were little. We used to go to Brentford and they used to shut off the whole road and the estate. I remember loads of people participated”*

**Project advocate, Hanworth, 2014**

The event itself did not disappoint: 90% of residents consulted after the street party asked for more. The prospect of further street play dates for children was particularly welcomed. Months after the event, the project advocate reported that older people wanted more of the same.

*“Everyone got on very well on the day, so we want more”*

**Resident, Hanworth, 2014**

### Getting to know the neighbours

Throughout the project, residents’ hunger for more meaningful community interaction was apparent, particularly among newcomers to the area.

*“I’d feel more like I belonged if people came together as a community”*

**Mother of three, Hanworth**

A palpable sense of camaraderie was generated at the Oriel Estate street party as people made friends with neighbours, sang and danced together. Residents' testimony backs this up:

*"I've never talked to so many people on the estate"*

*"I've lived here five years and I've never spoken to so many"*

*"This reminds me of being young and all coming out on the estate"*

Feedback months after the event underlined the value of street parties/play for encouraging good neighbourliness in areas of low community cohesion.

*"A lot more people talk now. A lot more people say hello"*

**Project advocate, 2015**

The intergenerational mixing the events encouraged was striking. Neighbours of different ages shared skills and enjoyed unexpected and positive collaborative experiences, such as dancing and decorating cakes together.

*"I find it absolutely stunning that it only takes a few hours to realise something completely different is possible. A girl showing younger ones how to decorate biscuits...a boy showing older women how to dance"*

**Hounslow project worker, 2015**

## Coming together for a common purpose

In at least two settings, locals who had been disparaging about residents from different backgrounds were seen enjoying their company during the street parties.

### Case study 2: the Brabazon Estate, Heston

The estate houses a majority Asian population plus some white British families. Older residents from both groups had experienced similar barriers and fears about the lack of community cohesion, but also similar desires to see children playing out on the street again.



With the support of London Play, an event was organised, with input promised from both groups. Slow to get going, the play street project eventually led to a family event attended by 35 residents once the children ventured out. Chairs were set out for the elderly and the two communities were observed socialising together merrily. A strong sense of intergenerational collaboration and community was apparent on the day.

The attitude of the deputy chairman of a long-standing and largely white British local community group went from *"This is terrible!"* to *"This is brilliant!"* by the end of the event.



## Community participation, empowerment and ownership

Pre-event consultation found that the majority of residents felt they had little or no ownership over local decision-making. Such disempowerment was absent from the street parties, where London Play encouraged residents to take the lead on shaping their own events, thus generating spontaneous collaboration and willing involvement.

Community spirit quickly formed once people had spent a relaxing and enjoyable few hours together, whether playing, eating, dancing or talking. *“It’s up to everyone to help, isn’t it?”* one resident was heard to remark during the clean-up at the end of the day. When one woman complained about the chalk on her wall, a local male resident helped scrub it off, stating: *“It’s for the good of the community.”*



The project worker noted that the street was cleaner at the end of the day than it was at the start.

Young people were also proud to help, climbing lamp posts to attach bunting, perhaps enjoying the freedom to clamber (having been discouraged in the past by site staff from doing so).



London Play's empowering approach, using simple and readily available materials to facilitate creative play, also inspired residents to plan future events. Children's play is no longer something that parents feel dependent on local services and businesses to provide, nor is it out of reach financially.



*"We'll get skipping ropes, footballs and all stuff like that, get more clay...and this time we'll get paints – kids' paints"*

Resident, 2015

## Children's enjoyment and the physical and emotional benefits of playing out together

*"The kids all had fun, they all enjoyed themselves, there were no arguments or fighting, and that's a good thing. Normally if you have a party, there's an argument, there's a fight. But there was nothing like that"*

Project advocate, Hanworth, 2014

The children's enjoyment is apparent from the photos in this report, which represent just a fraction of the available photographic evidence.

The sheer number of games and activities observable at the Oriel and Brabazon events points to the value of community-generated street parties/play streets for stimulating a broad range of imaginative and adventurous play.

Children organised themselves, collaborating with peers of different ages as well as playing independently, older ones sometimes helping younger ones. They were seen improvising with simple and readily available material, using fine as well as gross motor skills to do and make, and were often energised for long periods (vital activity in the fight against obesity). All this points to the potential for street play to lead to improved health and emotional outcomes for children, results in line with research findings from other street play initiatives (for example, see *Evidence, Policy and Practice Briefing, Outdoors and Active: delivering public health outcomes by increasing children's active travel and outdoor play*, written by Dr Angie Page and Professor Ashley Cooper of the University of Bristol's Centre for Exercise, Nutrition and Health Services, 2014).

*"It was the little things that worked, like the clay"*

Project advocate, Hanworth, 2015

## Areas for development and recommendations

1. There are clear beneficial outcomes to be had from supporting residents of low-income/atomised neighbourhoods to hold street parties as the first step in generating community wellbeing, spirit and enthusiasm for street play. There is much resident demand in Hounslow for this work to continue.

R1: London Play and LB Hounslow to develop further partnership working opportunities

R2: London Play to fundraise for further incubation projects to support the work in Hounslow and other boroughs where social cohesion is an issue

2. Successfully generating the initial motivation for resident-led street events requires a face-to-face awareness-raising approach. Looking beyond the usual tenants' associations and residents' groups and meeting people on their own terms helps initiate collaborative relationships with community leaders and activists. This approach is more labour-intensive than London Play's usual support for resident groups, but the work in Hounslow points to its potential.

R3: London Play to raise awareness about the costs/value for money of this incubation approach via more costly community engagement initiatives

R4: London Play to continue to widen participation by supporting word-of-mouth promotion across communities, as well as replicating approaches in different areas

3. The local women who organised the Hanworth party wanted to become community ambassadors to other areas, starting out by encouraging street parties/events.

R5: London Play to support community cross-pollination by enabling residents from one area to become ambassadors and mentors to others, as successfully implemented in other London boroughs

4. Consultation has uncovered how hard-to-reach communities regularly feel "forgotten" by local authorities, which can exacerbate their sense of powerlessness and lead to entrenched passivity. The Hounslow pilot shows how street play generates active intergenerational participation in neighbourhood affairs.

R6: When communities become engaged, London Play could work with LB Hounslow to explore how the latter can raise awareness and the profile of play streets by attending, publicising and celebrating such events more widely within the borough

R7: In turn, the council could work with newly mobilised residents' groups to explore the potential for involving them in neighbourhood issues and developments, particularly area maintenance and CYP's play and recreation

5. To build on the momentum generated by these initial street events, London Play should offer continued support to motivated adults and young people across the borough and throughout the capital. This could include: support and training with social media to generate interest, document successful events and publicise future ones; support with arranging temporary road closure licenses; provision of ideas and resources for imaginative play; fundraising; training for young entrant playworkers from the borough and further afield; and forging links with other networks and organisations.

*“We want to create a Facebook page so it’s wider, beyond one street. Get people to help with posters, use photos from the first street party on Facebook and use it as a hub to get more people involved”*

**Project advocate, Hanworth, 2015**

R8: London Play to make links with Hounslow’s youth providers to explore potential avenues into apprenticeship for local young people interested in playwork, for example recruited from those motivated by their involvement in the street events. This could follow the model London Play has recently successfully implemented in other boroughs, and would entail participants gaining AQA qualifications

6. Research by the University of Bristol shows how play streets measurably increase children’s physical activity, dovetailing with national concerns about the obesity epidemic. Residents’ feedback from the pilot points to beneficial outcomes from these initial play street events in areas of low community cohesion. However, longer-term involvement would be necessary to thoroughly evaluate and document outcomes for residents (including children) and invite their participation in the learning process.

R9: Future play streets could include a well-defined evaluation plan that works with younger residents to document the differences such projects make to their health and to the status of the street as a safe space to play. This data could answer the question of whether there is a case for encouraging play streets as part of a range of preventative approaches to meet Hounslow’s health and wellbeing priorities for local children

R10: London Play to continue to research the impact of play street culture on community cohesion in order to document its relevance to meeting local priorities

**LONDON  
PLAY**

London Play, Unit F3, 89-93 Fonthill Road, London N4 3JH

[www.londonplay.org.uk](http://www.londonplay.org.uk)