## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of Play Strategy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider Strategic Context</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of Strategy Themes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision for Play</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1 – Play Aware</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2 – Play and Risk</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3 – Play and learn</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 4 – Play Opportunities</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 5 – Play for All</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 5 - Play Planning</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Plan Summary</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1 – Useful links and Publications</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome

Welcome to the first Midlothian Play Strategy – a Strategy that aims to make Midlothian a great place to play for all our children and young people.

With its impressive country parks, rich cultural history and strong local communities, Midlothian is a great place for children to grow up. We want to build on this to ensure all our children have access to high quality play opportunities throughout their childhood helping them achieve their full potential.

“When children play their brains do two things: they grow and they become organised and usable.”

(Hughes, 2013).

We believe that play is an essential part of a happy, healthy childhood. Children and young people play in many different environments including their homes, parks, playgrounds, streets, nurseries, schools, out of school care, with childminders and at playgroups. In fact, play happens wherever there are children!

The Play Strategy draws attention to six themes which shape the accompanying Action Plan. Its implementation will contribute to outcomes of the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child (Single Midlothian Plan).

The Strategy calls on partners to help deliver its priorities for play.

We would like to thank all the groups and individuals who contributed to the development of this Strategy and hope that they and others continue to contribute to achieving the Strategy’s vision.

“We want Midlothian to be a great place for children and young people to play.”

Midlothian Play Champion, Cllr Catherine Johnston
Background

Midlothian has 19,664 children and young people (aged birth to 18). The Play Strategy aims to help make it a reality that Midlothian equals a great place for them to play.

The approach taken in this Strategy is to call on relevant stakeholders to help achieve the priorities for play. A shared effort is needed to achieve the goals.

Parents and a wide range of professionals across the public, voluntary and business sectors have a role in ensuring children have access to play, while the planning process involves partners spanning those contexts. The Strategy encompasses all places children might play in Midlothian.

Parents of young children are being encouraged to spend time interacting with their children through the government’s PlayTalkRead campaign. This links into other government supported initiatives available in Midlothian such as Bookbug and Play@Home.

Older children similarly benefit from play activities with parents, playworkers or other adults as well as their own free play. There are a variety of organised play activities in Midlothian offered by a range of organisations and council services and a major Playday event is held annually by Midlothian Association of Play (MAP).

MAP is a membership-based charity supporting the development of play opportunities in Midlothian. MAP provides both services for children and for other groups working with children (including training, an annual conference and practical support). MAP works closely with Midlothian Council.

Other play providers include voluntary organisations (e.g. holiday playschemes) and the commercial sector (e.g. indoor soft play providers). Some of these, such as out of school childcare organisations, provide a service where play is the main activity for children within a care setting.
Implementation of the Play Strategy

The structures for enabling and overseeing implementation of the Play Strategy are:

- A cross-departmental and sector Play Strategy Working Group. This sits within the Community Planning Partnership through the Early Years Sub Group.

- A Play Strategy Steering Group comprising a representative from MAP and one or two Midlothian Council Officers. The Steering Group will assist the functioning of the Play Strategy Working Group.

- A larger Play Forum, which will be facilitated by MAP, with representatives from throughout Midlothian, comprising a wide range of stakeholders with interest in play. The Play Forum will feed in local knowledge and expertise and facilitate partnership working and resource sharing.

- Midlothian Council has the lead responsibility for monitoring and supporting progress.

An accompanying Action Plan provides our outline of the way forward for developing play in Midlothian. The Plan includes a number of actions from each of the six themes, informed by consultation days held during the drafting of this Strategy.

The Action Plan is organised into short, medium and long term tasks up to December 2019. The Working Group will review progress in order to identify continuing or new tasks to 2021.

Achieving the goals of Midlothian’s Play Strategy requires play to be a key element of strategic planning.

Play needs to be integrated into every future strategic or development plan for Midlothian.
Wider strategic context

Play is enshrined as a right of all children in article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In 2013 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) released General Comment 17, with guidance for Governments, private sector and all those working for or with children to ensure children’s article 31 rights are met.

At a national level, Scotland’s first Play Strategy was published in 2013 in two parts:

- Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision

**Other relevant national approaches and strategies include:**

- The Early Years Framework
- Building the Ambition
- Good Places Better Health for Scotland’s Children
- The National Parenting Strategy
- Getting It Right for Every Child
- Equally Well
- Achieving our Potential
- Raising Attainment for All
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill (2014)
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)
- A More Active Scotland – Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games

**Local strategic links include:**

- Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child Single Midlothian Plan
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Midlothian Child Poverty Plan
- Midlothian Integrated Children’s Services Plan
- Midlothian Council Physical Activity Strategy
- Midlothian Open Space Strategy
- Children and Families Service
Introduction to strategy themes

**Theme 1 Play Aware**
This theme addresses the importance of everyone’s understanding of play, from parents through to the professionals working with children and young people, and the information, support, training and qualifications that may be required to ensure children can play in the ways they need.

**Theme 2 Play and Risk**
This theme looks at the particular benefits of children and young people being able to experience risk and challenge in their play, and the challenges this presents for adults who provide for play. This theme identifies steps to bring about a better balance of risks and benefits.

**Theme 3 Play and Learn**
Children’s way of learning through play is a powerful tool to facilitate their development and life chances in settings including schools and nurseries, and at all ages and stages. This theme looks at ways to better enable learning through play.

**Theme 4 Play Opportunities**
Children and young people need to be able to access a range of play opportunities which meet their play needs in their local communities. This theme is about the sufficiency and quality of public space and staffed provision.

**Theme 5 Play for All**
All children and young people have a right to play and the importance of inclusion underpins the whole Strategy. This theme looks at the particular steps that may be needed to improve access, reduce barriers to play and ensure quality and equality of play opportunities.

**Theme 6 Play Planning**
Planning processes including town planning and community planning are integral to ensuring play opportunities are available, accessible and of a good standard. This theme covers ways of maximising the benefit of those processes for children’s play in Midlothian.

Each theme has objectives with associated actions detailed in the Action Plan.
Vision for Play

We want Midlothian to be a great place for children and young people to play.

This Strategy recognises the right of children of all ages to play and that the form playing takes varies depending on a child’s age, abilities, circumstances and interests. This Strategy recognises the right of all children to equal opportunities to play.

To achieve this, we need to ensure that:
All children and young people have access to a variety of high quality inclusive play opportunities.

What is play?
Play can be defined as what children do when they follow their own ideas, in their own way, for their own reasons (DCMS, 2004). It is a process, not an activity (and therefore distinct from formal sport or other structured leisure activities). It can take place alone or with others and almost anywhere you find children, whether indoors or outdoors, and with or without equipment.

Why play?
Children play for fun, enjoyment, relaxation, to recharge their batteries, to make friends, to explore and simply because it’s what children do.

‘Playing is what makes children fun’
IPA Scotland

Play promotes physical and mental health in numerous ways. This includes helping to build resilience and the ability to cope with stress; learning to manage emotions; enabling lots of informal physical activity. Importantly, play gives children a way to make friends, and to learn about friendship and relationships with others.
Play builds children’s attachment to both people and place: when children have opportunities to play in natural environments it has been shown to foster an appreciation of the natural world which can last a lifetime.

Play is often described as a way of learning what cannot be taught – it facilitates first-hand experience of the world through all the senses. In this way playing shapes the brain, providing the vital foundations for more formal learning.

Play improves children’s life in the present moment and their future life chances.

High quality inclusive play opportunities

It can be difficult to define what makes a play opportunity high quality as this varies from situation to situation and child to child. Although children will play almost anywhere, children are more likely to play freely when they have time and space and can feel a sense of ‘permission’ to play.

When there are barriers to these, such as disapproving adults or “no ball games” signs, we need to tackle them. Rich environments for play, such as those with natural features, a range of spaces and atmospheres and resources that children can move around and manipulate, provide the most scope for play. Environments that enable a wider range of types of play are also more inclusive, enabling each child to play in their own way or find their own niche.

Play can take place without adults, though where adults are working with children’s play, this should be to established professional standards and with a good understanding of children’s free play.

“In terms of the provision of play opportunities and environments, in general we might expect ‘high quality opportunities’ to happen when:

- the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are put into practice
- the environment provides stimulus for play to flourish
- if adults are involved, they work to established ethical and professional standards.” (Scottish Government, 2013a)
**Principles**

The principles that underpin this strategy, and which should underpin play provision, are that:

- Midlothian values play as fundamental to what it means to be a child and recognises the benefits for children, families and communities.

- Children have a right to play and to express themselves.

- Play is initiated, directed and controlled by children for their own enjoyment.

- Children benefit from encountering risk and challenge in their play; risk-benefit assessment is the approach professionals should use to balance risks and benefits.

- Play opportunities and environments should be stimulating, varied, well-maintained and appropriate to the children’s age, abilities, circumstances and interests.

- Play opportunities should be inclusive of children of all ages, abilities, circumstances and interests; all children should be enabled to play in the way they choose, to the fullest possible extent.

- The play needs and wishes of children should be central to policy, planning and design considerations.
Theme 1: Play Aware

All Children are encouraged by adults who have the skills, knowledge and confidence to enable quality play opportunities.

To help support the provision of quality play opportunities, adults (the workforce and parents/carers) must be supported to gain and share the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence

Opportunities for increasing adults’ play awareness should be created and developed in a variety of ways such as volunteering in play settings, training, career-long professional learning, study visits, involvement in play sessions and providing materials to promote play.

The more people understand and promote the principles and benefits of play, the more children will be given the time and space to access play.

Organisations should work together to ensure workers involved in play have a clear pathway to enter the play profession and to develop skills along the way.

We should acknowledge and support the contribution of the voluntary sector including playschemes, playgroups and out of school childcare services who promote play opportunities as part of what they do. These organisations should share their good practice knowledge with each other as well as with other sectors and with parents.

The role of the adult is to enable and facilitate play (but not to control it). Adults can create a supportive framework that gives children time, space and permission to play. Adults provide encouragement, support and access to play opportunities which nurture the child’s development and which allow them to encounter challenges appropriate to the individual. Through play, children make their own explorations and discoveries learning all the while from their interactions with their environment and the people around them.

We will:

1. Raise awareness of the broader benefits of play.
2. Ensure that the skills of adults are sufficiently well developed to provide quality play services and environments.
3. Develop a Play Forum for adults to share/discuss good practice.
4. Support all relevant organisations to develop their own Play Policy.
Theme 2: Play and Risk

All children and young people will have opportunity to experience risk and challenge in play.

Children need and want to take risks and experience challenge in their play. What feels exciting and risky can vary from child to child – for some it could be climbing a tall tree, for others it could be wobbling along on a bike. Risks can be emotional too, for example joining friendship groups or having to cope when other children don’t accept your ideas.

Children gain many things from risk and challenge including: learning how to manage risk for themselves; the chance to stretch their own physical abilities and limits; building confidence and simply the feeling of thrills, exhilaration and sense of achievement.

Encountering risk and challenge through play brings about particular brain development benefits which help children to manage emotions and to build resilience and their ability to cope.

Risk and challenge in play is not something adults can provide as a set activity – children must find it on their own terms at a level they feel ready for - however adults can create play environments which enable this to happen.

Adults providing space and support for children to play must engage in risk management, that is, to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risk of serious harm. Good risk management can involve up to four elements:

- a play policy setting out the approach to risk in play;
- written risk assessments containing judgments and actions to be taken;
- where adults are present, dynamic (on-the-spot) risk assessment of play as it unfolds;
- where fixed equipment is present, technical assessments and inspections.

Children must be protected from hazards that they cannot readily recognise for example faulty or poorly designed equipment. However the goal in play provision is not absolute safety nor is there any legal requirement that this must be the case.

Risk-benefit assessment is a particularly useful approach for managing risk in play. Through this approach the risks of a play opportunity are weighed up with the benefits before making a judgment on it.

The risk-benefit approach is endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive.

(See also Children’s play and leisure – promoting a balanced approach, 2012, Health and Safety Executive)
“The Care Inspectorate supports care service providers taking a positive approach to risk in order to achieve the best outcomes for children. This means moving away from a traditional deficit model that takes a risk-averse approach to a more holistic risk-benefit model. For example, we encourage services to use risk assessment to support children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities such as woodwork using real tools, exploring nature and playing in the mud and rain.” (Care Inspectorate, 2016)

We will:

1. Increase knowledge, skills and confidence regarding the benefits of risk in play and using risk management approaches, within all relevant professional roles.
2. Increase parental awareness of the benefits of children being able to experience risk in play.
3. Ensure public play spaces, including school grounds, enable children to experience risk and challenge.
Theme 3: Play and Learn

Children and Young people can access play opportunities that enhance their holistic learning and development.

To help support children’s learning and development, we must provide opportunities for them to freely play and learn. Through play children learn to make sense of their world and develop social and cognitive skills for life.

“The experiences children have in their early life - and the environment in which they have them - shape their developing brain architecture and strongly affect whether they grow up to be healthy and productive members of society.” (Harvard University, 2007)

When play is valued, respected and promoted in schools, children will have opportunities to achieve the aims of the Curriculum for Excellence, becoming successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Schools should recognise play’s importance for both mental and physical well-being.

Children’s holistic learning and development could be improved by schools offering greater opportunities for play. Research has shown that physical activity enhances concentration, motivation, learning and well-being. Generally, lives have become more inactive and our children have fewer opportunities for physical activity each day. Greater emphasis should be given to the importance of time children are free to move and enjoy space through playing.

School playtime is particularly important to children since, due to other barriers to play, it may be one of few regular opportunities children have to play freely with their friends.
“All children and young people should enjoy high quality play opportunities, particularly outdoor free play in stimulating spaces with access to nature, on a daily basis in school, nursery and early learning and childcare”. (Scottish Government, 2013a)

**We will:**

1. Ensure that all organisations working with children value play and provide children and young people with spaces and resources to enable free play.

2. Encourage playful learner-led approaches that will be embedded within the delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence in nursery, primary, secondary and special schools.

3. Support schools to develop opportunities to value and increase usage of outdoor spaces for learning.

4. Increase understanding of free play opportunities in school as essential for every child’s health and wellbeing at all stages of development.

5. Develop adults’ knowledge and understanding of quality play resources and equipment.
Theme 4: Play Opportunities

All Children access a range of quality play opportunities within their own community.

Play opportunities include all of the actual play opportunities available to children in the community, such as public space, as well as staffed provision.

“Every child needs to play freely in order to grow into a healthy, happy, creative and confident adult. Every child wants, and will seek out, opportunities for play. It is the responsibility of the community to ensure that each child has access to a variety of stimulating play opportunities.” (PLAYLINK 2003)

Children should have sufficient accessible, inclusive, fun and stimulating play environments.

There must be sufficient high quality play opportunities for children that meet the ‘three frees’

- free of charge
- children can play freely
- children are free to come and go.

The places that should be considered include:

- In the home (including gardens and immediate streets).
- In staffed provision of all sorts (e.g. schools, playgroups, after school clubs, community centres, etc.).
- In community spaces (e.g. streets, designated play areas/playgrounds, green and open spaces, woodland, and any spaces that are ‘playable’ whether or not they would appear to adults to be for that purpose).

Play environments are spaces for children to explore, learn and play with their own ideas, in their own way, for their own reasons – more enriched environments provide more scope for this and are more inclusive.

Enriched play environments may include landscaping (such as mounds and pathways), natural features (such as trees, shrubs and logs), spaces with different atmospheres (for example to be quiet and absorbed or to run around), home-made structures (such as willow caves) and materials children can manipulate (such as sand and water).

Designated play areas can also take the form of skate parks, teen shelters, Multi Use Games Area’s (MUGA’s), soft play facilities and play equipment.
Wherever they live, children and young people of all ages, abilities, circumstances and interests should be able to play in a variety of ways, in high quality spaces, within sight of their homes or within easy walking distance, where they feel safe whether or not they are accompanied by adults” (Play Scotland, 2012).

Children should be able to access play opportunities that can provide a variety of adventure and challenge. They should have opportunities to experience all the play types, including sensory, physical, imaginary, creative and emotional types of play.

Housing, architecture, parks, transport, environment and planning, education, community organisations etc., all have a significant impact on children’s play opportunities.

We will:

1. Publicise and promote the right of children to play and support family play opportunities.

2. Ensure play equipment is accessible and inclusive.

3. Communicate play opportunities to ensure children and parents are aware of opportunities to play.

4. Consult with children and young people, and communities over play provision and changes to play provision.

5. Promote funding opportunities for play.

6. Monitor children’s levels of satisfaction with play spaces and set targets for improvements.
Theme 5: Play for All

All children and young people will have equality of opportunity to access play in a way that works for them and with the support they require.

Inclusion runs through this Play Strategy and underpins the ethos and philosophy it aims to promote. By its very nature inclusion encompasses all of the Strategy themes and consideration should be given to inclusive practice in all of the proposed actions.

It is however vital that consideration is given to the multiple and often differing barriers faced by disabled and disadvantaged children and young people. These can be in relation to play at home, at nursery, in school, early learning and childcare and in the community. Children across the local authority area present a wide variety of additional support needs encompassing physical and learning disabilities, sensory impairments and developmental disabilities as well as social and emotional needs arising from circumstances in their lives. Such a broad range results in an even larger variety of barriers to overcome in accessing play, both to children and families and to the professionals who are supporting them.

The council and its partners must work to equip people with the confidence and awareness to support inclusive play opportunities for all children and young people. They must also work to embed not only the value of play in itself, but also the ways play can break down barriers for children and young people.

There is often a perception special resources are required to have an impact on inclusion. In reality, low-key, every day actions can make a big difference. In many cases, success is achieved through small adaptations made by people who know the individual children and are confident in their actions.

There is a need to address a reported gap in training and ongoing support for practitioners and professionals in a number of disciplines which would help to ensure all our children and young people have the play opportunities to which they have a right.

More attention should also be given to coordination across services and geographic areas to achieve inclusive opportunities and make best use of resources. The time available to practitioners is a significant factor in their ability to put inclusive actions into practice. Efforts should be made to improve the pathways to accessing the relevant information for both professionals and families in order to ease the time burden of such coordination.
Finally, the quality and accessibility of physical environments makes a significant difference to the quality of children and young people’s experience and opportunities for play. In recent times the improvement in wheelchair accessibility to large play equipment has been a noticeable success. However, there is still a need to consider in broader terms the barriers facing children in accessing play spaces such as social isolation, transport links and adaptations beyond those for wheelchair users.

“We will:

1. Provide access to play spaces and opportunities that are suitable for all children.
2. Ensure families across Midlothian have the support they need to give their children access to suitable play opportunities.
3. Increase the capacity of professionals across Midlothian to support children to access suitable play opportunities.

“Involve children with disabilities and consideration of outcomes is crucial from the outset.”

(Casey, 2015)
Theme 6:
Play and Planning

Children and young people’s play needs are prioritised in the development of Midlothian.

Play planning straddles a number of Council service functions and disciplines. The role and status of the Strategy in this context is important to enable effective delivery of the objectives and to ensure the Action Plan is successfully implemented and monitored.

Physical planning is also important to support the objectives of the strategy. Midlothian has a range of places and spaces capable of supporting and promoting play. From formal town parks with equipped play areas and multi-functional recreational facilities to informal and semi-natural open spaces allowing children free reign to explore and invent.

The Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP) provides a statutory land use planning and policy framework to manage the development and change of use of land. It includes policies and standards to protect, enhance and manage open spaces across communities. Where new development is proposed developer contributions towards improving existing spaces and/or providing new spaces and facilities can be sought (where the development gives rise to a need). The plan also provides a framework for the Council to determine planning applications, providing an opportunity to assess existing local play provision and requirements taking into account open space and play needs within communities.

Applications are assessed against a set of standards to determine the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and play provision in an area. The standards are designed to provide a degree of flexibility in terms of the type and level of provision made and what option/solution best meets the needs of local communities.

The Council’s Open Space Strategy identifies the different types of open spaces that exist within the towns and villages in Midlothian. These spaces have been identified through a comprehensive audit and are reviewed regularly and in line with the statutory review of the MLDP. The audit provides a benchmark on the quantity, quality and accessibility of different types of open spaces across Midlothian and can help inform policy development, define local requirements and inform decision making.
Central to the strategy is engagement with communities. Established links and practice through the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership will assist in delivering the key messages about play and the need to plan for play.

Through the Neighbourhood Planning process the Council can: help to raise awareness of the importance of play; help to identify community needs and aspirations for play spaces; help to shape and influence planning policy (and standards); and help to support communities to get involved with and respond to planning applications affecting spaces in their communities.

**We will:**

1. Develop appropriate governance arrangements in order to:
   a. raise awareness of and promote the Play Strategy across the Council;
   b. get "buy-in" from the Council services with a role to play in supporting the Strategy;
   c. ensure successful delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan; and
   d. ensure effective monitoring, review and update of the Strategy.

2. Assist the Planning Service in ensuring the MLDP is up-to-date and provides an appropriate policy framework to protect and enhance physical spaces for play, make good decisions over the future of spaces for play; and engage with the MLDP review process to inform future policy.

3. Work with Community Planning Partners to raise awareness of the strategy and foster better community engagement by encouraging participation in Neighbourhood Planning.
References


Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013) General Comment No. 17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (art. 31) Geneva: United Nations


Photograph Acknowledgement

We wish to thank the following organisation for supplying the photographs throughout this document:

Cuiken Primary School: Page 2.

Midlothian Association of Play: Page 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,13,15,16,17,18,20,21,22,23,31.


Midlothian Council: Page 12.

Family Reachout: Page 14.

LASC Childcare services: Page 19.
Midlothian Play Strategy Action Plan

Summary

Our overall goal for implementation of the Play Strategy is that a collective responsibility for, and focus on, realising children's right to play develops in Midlothian, with a shared understanding of the roles of local authority, third sector, health agencies, funders, private sector, communities, individuals and media. Partnership working is key to achieving the Vision for children's play in Midlothian.

A Play Forum led by the Midlothian Association of Play (MAP) and made up of representatives from local authorities, third sector organisations and funders will be established in order to support and monitor progress. This should be underpinned by environmentally, economically and socially sustainable approaches to providing for play.

Children and young people's views must be taken into account and their ideas and participation encouraged and supported. Implementation of the Plan will open opportunities for children and young people to participate and contribute in a range of ways. In the same way that play runs as a thread through children's daily experiences, there are many points at which the actions overlap and support each other. This has to be taken into account in implementing the Action Plan.

The Action Plan includes a number of actions from each theme informed by consultation days held during the drafting of this Strategy. They are grouped into four categories:

- Information and communication of positive messages to help promote play for children, young people and families.
- Practical tasks to improve play opportunities for children and young people and families.
- Developing new and existing play services for children and young people and families.
- Developing training opportunities and resources for staff to improve play opportunities for children and young people and families.

Each action is linked to an objective under one or more of the six themes (Play Aware; Play and Risk; Play Opportunities; Play for All; Play and Learn; Play and Planning). Information is also included on who will be responsible for carrying out each Action and a timescale for completion: short term by Dec. 2017; medium term by Dec. 2018; long term by Dec. 2019.
These actions relate to the giving and collecting of information and look to improve the communication of positive messages to help develop improved play opportunities for children, young people and families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will we do?</th>
<th>Why - Which Theme does this action link to?</th>
<th>Who will be involved in carrying out this action?</th>
<th>By When: Short, Medium or Long term</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Publicise the benefits of play and publicise the rights of children to play. | Play Opportunities 1  
Play Aware 1  
Play and Risk 1 | Midlothian Association of Play (MAP) Manager  
Midlothian Council Communication Team  
Play Forum  
Midlothian Council Childcare and Workforce (MC C&W) Development Officer | Medium | 1 |
| Develop information on play areas and parks for Midlothian Council website. | Play Opportunities 1  
Play Opportunities 3  
Play Aware 1  
Play For All 1  
Play For All 2 | Land & Countryside Manager  
MAP Manager | Short | 3 |
| Provide a play webpage detailing area locations, maps of play spaces and provisions for inclusive play and opportunities for teenage play. | Play Opportunities 1  
Play Opportunities 3  
Play For All 1  
Play For All 2 | Land & Countryside Manager | Short | 10 |
| Provide and hold a database of groups involved in play provision that the public can access. | Play Opportunities 1  
Play Opportunities 3 | Land & Countryside Manager  
MAP Manager | Medium | 11 |
| Network with groups such as the Scouts, Brownies, Cadets etc. and promote play opportunities available i.e. on web and promote seasonal play opportunities indoors and outdoors. | Play Opportunities 1  
Play Opportunities 3 | MAP Manager  
MC C&W Development Officer  
Midlothian Play Champion | Medium | 13 |
| Consult with children and communities over play provision and changes to play provision when designing new play areas or when undertaking significant improvements to local play facilities. | Play Opportunities 4  
Play For All 1 | Land & Countryside Manager  
Planning Officer  
MAP Manager | Medium | 14 |
| Consult with teenagers in large communities that do not already have any teenage provision in the form of a skate park or a teen shelter. | Play Opportunities 4 | Land & Countryside Manager  
Regeneration Officer | Medium | 15 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will we do?</th>
<th>Why - Which Theme does this action link to?</th>
<th>Who will be involved in carrying out this action?</th>
<th>By When: Short, Medium or Long term</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote consultations undertaken on the Council website, through local groups and on social media.</td>
<td>Play Opportunities 4</td>
<td>Land &amp; Countryside Manager</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure groups and organisations supported by the Council who provide play services are required to provide evidence of their consultation with children and young people.</td>
<td>Play Opportunities 4 Play Opportunities 5</td>
<td>MC C&amp;W Development Officer Grant Officer</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information on funding opportunities for play services and play provision on social media and on the web.</td>
<td>Play Opportunities 5</td>
<td>MC C&amp;W Development Officer MAP Manager Land &amp; Countryside Manager</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production of regular newsletters/social media updates for parents and staff on play issues and topics related to school and wider community.</td>
<td>Play and Learn 1 Play and Learn 5</td>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about play environments should be shared on school websites and social media.</td>
<td>Play Aware 1 Play and Learn 5</td>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information resources on risk in play and risk management, including risk benefit assessment, to all children's services.</td>
<td>Play and Risk 1 Play and Risk 4</td>
<td>MAP Manager MC C&amp;W Development Officer</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness amongst parents on the benefits of risk in play.</td>
<td>Play and Risk 2</td>
<td>MAP Manager MC C&amp;W Development Officer</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the Play Strategy to the local community.</td>
<td>Play Aware 1</td>
<td>MC C&amp;W Development Officer Play Strategy Working Group</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure play is on the agenda of relevant meetings e.g. NHS, voluntary sector, Council, partnerships and forum.</td>
<td>Play Aware 1</td>
<td>MC C&amp;W Development Officer</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take forward learning from MAP's Play for All consultations about disabled children's access to play in Midlothian.</td>
<td>Play for All 3 Play Aware 1</td>
<td>MAP Manager Midlothian Play Forum</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These actions relate to carrying out practical tasks that look to improve the physical environments to help develop improved play opportunities for children, young people and families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will we do?</th>
<th>Why - Which Theme does this action link to?</th>
<th>Who will be involved in carrying out this action?</th>
<th>By When: Short, Medium or Long term</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work towards it being Council policy for schools to be open for play outwith school hours.</td>
<td>Play Opportunities 1 Play and Risk 3</td>
<td>Midlothian Council Childcare and Workforce (MC C&amp;W) Development Officer Midlothian Play Champion Midlothian Association of Play (MAP) Manager Head of Education</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure it is Council policy to restrict the erection of ‘no ball games’ signs only to locations where there is a safety hazard.</td>
<td>Play Opportunities 1 Play Opportunities 3 Play Opportunities 4</td>
<td>Land &amp; Countryside Manager Housing Manager</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a box of toys/books at all Council reception areas.</td>
<td>Play Aware 1 Play and Learn 1</td>
<td>MC C&amp;W Development Officer</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure all Midlothian Primary Schools have play facilities within the school grounds.</td>
<td>Play Opportunities 1 Play Opportunities 4 Play and Risk 3</td>
<td>Land &amp; Countryside Manager Head Teachers</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the provision of fixed play equipment for those with additional needs within existing play areas.</td>
<td>Play Opportunities 2</td>
<td>Land &amp; Countryside Manager</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the Midlothian Play Forum is a consultee in the planning process.</td>
<td>Play Planning 1</td>
<td>Senior Planning Policy Officer</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop schools’ outdoor spaces to enhance play opportunities.</td>
<td>Play and Learn 3 Play and Learn 4</td>
<td>Head Teachers MAP Manager Outdoor Learning</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure play is an integral part of every child’s school day and avoid its use as a reward or withdrawal as a sanction.</td>
<td>Play and Learn 4</td>
<td>Head Teachers MC C&amp;W Development Officer</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose parts and open ended resources should feature highly in playgrounds.</td>
<td>Play and Learn 5</td>
<td>MAP Manager Head Teachers</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commence a programme of leaving trees with their lower branches intact in public play spaces to allow children to climb if they wish.</td>
<td>Play and Risk 3</td>
<td>Land &amp; Countryside Manager</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued overleaf*
Training

These actions relate to providing and developing training opportunities to help develop improved play opportunities for children, young people and families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will we do?</th>
<th>Why - Which Theme does this action link to?</th>
<th>Who will be involved in carrying out this action?</th>
<th>By When: Short, Medium or Long term</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage annual technical inspection of equipment in play areas in non-Council services.</td>
<td>Play and Risk 1</td>
<td>MAP manager</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Land &amp; Countryside Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess available spaces for play for their current provision of risk and prioritise spaces for improvements.</td>
<td>Play and Risk 3</td>
<td>Land &amp; Countryside Manager</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure play is a consideration on the planning applications decision-making process.</td>
<td>Play Planning 1</td>
<td>Senior Planning Policy Officer</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure play is included in the development of the Midlothian Green Network.</td>
<td>Play Planning 2</td>
<td>Senior Planning Policy Officer</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the safeguarding and development of play spaces through involvement in Midlothian Council’s Local Development Plan reviews.</td>
<td>Play Planning 2</td>
<td>Senior Planning Policy Officer</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers will include outdoor play and learning opportunities within their planning, utilising a variety of environments and settings.

To raise awareness of the Rights of the Child (Article 31 UNCRC) and the Children and Young Persons Act 2014.

Make available training on the benefits of risk in play and risk management approaches.

Encourage creative use of play/break times in schools.

Introduce a compulsory play module for all Council employees working with children and encourage all other staff.
New Services

These actions relate to developing new and existing play services or policies to help develop improved play opportunities for children, young people and families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will we do?</th>
<th>Why - Which Theme does this action link to?</th>
<th>Who will be involved in carrying out this action?</th>
<th>By When: Short, Medium or Long term</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support groups or organisations to provide play provision ensuring inclusion of children and young people with additional needs.</td>
<td>Play Opportunities 2 Play Opportunities 5 Play For All 1</td>
<td>Midlothian Council C&amp;W Development Worker MVA</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All curriculum planning should include opportunities for children to learn through play.</td>
<td>Play and Learn 2 Play and Learn 4</td>
<td>School Head Teachers Play Strategy Group</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote provision of ‘play ranger’ model services facilitating risk and challenge in play in spaces that otherwise would not offer much scope for varied play.</td>
<td>Play and Risk 3</td>
<td>MAP Manager</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each school encouraged to appoint a School Play Champion.</td>
<td>Play and Learn 3 Play Aware 1</td>
<td>Head Teachers MC C&amp;W Development Officer MAP Manager</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a Play Forum in Midlothian.</td>
<td>Play Aware 3</td>
<td>MAP Manager MC C&amp;W Development Officer Midlothian Play Champion</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage organisations to adopt their own Play Policy.</td>
<td>Play Aware 4</td>
<td>MAP Midlothian Play Forum</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1

National Play Strategy Publications

*Play At Home* report, March 2015
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/03/6973

*Learning About Play* report, 2015
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/10/6809

*Policy Mapping* infographic, 2015
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/11/3826

*Play Map Resource for Community Planning Partnerships*, 2015
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/12/6702

*Playing with Quality and Equality, Inclusive Play Review*, November 2015
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/10/1795

http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/10/1442

*Play Outside Hours! Use of School Grounds for playing out of teaching hours toolkit* 2016
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/02/6688/2

*Inspiring Scotland Go2Play Publications*
http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/our-funds/go2play

Scotland’s Play Ranger Toolkit

Funders of Play - a guide
http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/media/55289/Funders-of-Play-2016.pdf

*Risk Management*
Managing Risk in Play Provision: implementation guide

*Risk-Benefit Assessment (RBA)* Form in two formats: a blank form and a hypothetical worked example based on a tree swing.

*Care Inspectorate*

**My World Outdoors** Sharing good practice in how early years services can provide play and learning wholly or partially outdoors
http://hub.careinspectorate.com/improvement/my-world-outdoors/

*PLAYLINK articles*
Covering topics such as: Public Realm, Risk/Standards/Inspection, Consultation, Schools and Maintenance:
http://www.playlink.org/articles-issues.html

*Child In the City*
Lively source of up-to-date reports on projects, design and initiatives including:
http://www.childinthecity.eu/2015/12/02/parks-for-teens-10-features-teens-want-to-see/

*Local Authority*

**Midlothian Open Space Strategy** – The Strategy aims to ensure that there are enough quality open spaces to meet the needs of local communities.

*Learning through Landscapes*

**The good school playground guide** – Developing school playgrounds to support the curriculum and nurture happy, healthy children.
http://www.ltl.org.uk/resources/results.php?id=712

*Play Scotland*
Getting it Right for Play – A toolkit to assess and improve local play opportunities

Getting it Right for play - The Power of Play: an evidence base