

Some past Play Shaper pledges:

- 'I will be thinking about the value for money of play in terms of meeting targets. With limited budgets, play is potentially a good way of joining up local authority services.'
- 'I will ensure that principles of play are embedded in the commissioning process.'
- 'We have now seen commitments to embed the principles of play in a variety of strategic plans, including local transport plans, landscape design briefs and the Local Strategic Framework.'
- 'As a result of today we are going to look at budget pooling between departments to increase the amount of money available for commissioning and refurbishing play areas.'

For more information:

Play England

8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE

www.playshaper.org.uk

playshaper@ncb.org.uk

020 7843 6300



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What is Play Shaper?



What is Play Shaper?

Play Shaper: Engaging Communities in Play is a professional development programme to help those who plan, design, build and manage public space understand the importance of children's play and their role in enabling it within the public realm. Play Shaper enables partnership working across local authorities and communities to create and maintain genuinely child-friendly public space.

Play Shaper is a one-day accredited seminar targeted at all those with a stake in engaging the local community including:

- voluntary and community sector organisations
- play associations or partnerships
- adventure playground staff
- planners and developers
- landscape architects and designers
- highways and transport organisations
- health organisations
- regeneration and housing
- schools and children's services
- police
- parks and leisure staff
- local councillors or members of parliament.



Big Society is not a new concept to the play movement, which began with local people organising themselves to respond to children's need for somewhere to play together. The need for that movement is greater than ever. We are looking forward to working with the government to identify ways that it can help today's communities to make more and better space for their children to play.



Adrian Voce
Director, Play England
2010

Play Shaper is part of Play England's Engaging Communities in Play programme aimed at empowering local communities to take control of spaces where their children would like to play and promote the long-term sustainability of local play provision developed through the play pathfinder and playbuilder capital programme.



What is the role of the local authority or voluntary sector lead in a Play Shaper event?

Either the local authority or the lead from the voluntary sector is responsible for sponsoring a Play Shaper event. This includes identifying and bringing together up to 20 participants, some from across the Local Strategic Partnership who hold key strategic positions for delivering the play strategy, and senior professionals within the voluntary and community sector.

A Play England contact will provide support throughout the process of organising an event, including guidance on who to invite, promotional materials and venue requirements. Facilitators and all supporting materials will be provided free of charge.

What happens at a Play Shaper event?

Play Shaper is a one-day seminar comprising practical exercises, case studies and group discussions, facilitated by experts in their field. Each event is tailored to the specific requirements of the local community and focuses on how the local authority, and voluntary and community sectors can work together to meet local play needs and priorities.

What happens after a Play Shaper event?

All Play Shaper participants will have access to online resources and professional development materials through the Play Shaper website (www.playshaper.org.uk). Participants can complete further online learning to gain accreditation for 10 hours of continued professional development.

Participants will also be encouraged to access information and resources provided by the Playful Communities website (www.playfulcommunities.org.uk) which are aimed at supporting community groups and others to develop a local play provision.

The programme includes:

Introduction to Play Shaper

- local priorities
- how play fits in with your aims.

Places to play

- introduction to play
- essential features for play
- more than playgrounds.

Supporting play throughout childhood

- benefits of play for children and communities
- how supporting play can help your professional practice
- how your professional role can support play.

Playing safely

- how children use outdoor spaces
- balancing benefit against risk
- community safety.

Child-friendly communities

- what are child-friendly communities?
- the role of children and communities in place making
- engaging with local communities.

Working with communities

- cross-professional and community collaboration
- overcoming barriers.

Embedding play in local communities

- reviewing gaps identified in local plans
- participant's next steps and actions
- signposting to further resources and support opportunities.