

# Developing a Play Area in your Community

**A Step-by-Step Guide (2018.v.3)  
Wexford County Council  
Community Development Department**



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# Introduction

## Réamhrá

This booklet is designed to help you to develop a Play Area for the children in your community. It should be read in conjunction with Wexford County Council's Playground Strategy 2017-2022 and the Playground Development and Refurbishment Policy, 2014, which set out a framework for the future development of play provision in the County by enabling local communities to develop and manage play facilities at a community level. The following link will assist: [www.wexfordcoco.ie/community/plans-reports-and-committees/plans-and-reports/playground-strategy-2017-2022](http://www.wexfordcoco.ie/community/plans-reports-and-committees/plans-and-reports/playground-strategy-2017-2022)).

Many communities recognise the need for a Play Area in their locality. A Play Area is not just a playground; it could also be a landscaped green space, a natural play area or just a safer environment for the children in your community.

Where did YOU play as a child?

- ❖ Outside your house?
- ❖ On a street, in a field?
- ❖ In a playground?

In this age of hand held devices, urbanisation, decreased levels of physical activity and associated health issues amongst children, play areas provide part of the solution. One of the national outcomes in Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: National Policy framework for children and young people 2013-2020, is the active and healthy physical and mental wellbeing of all children. This outcome requires initiatives that enable children to enjoy play, recreation, sport, arts culture and nature.

Children use their whole environment for play, even when playgrounds are available. There are numerous choices for a community in developing a play area, so don't be confined to a playground. Take your cue from the experts on play in your area - ask your children!

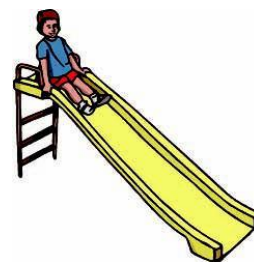
This booklet outlines 7 basic steps that communities can take to develop a Play Area for children and young people. One step doesn't have to be completed before the next one is started and the steps don't necessarily have to be followed according to the way they are presented in this booklet.

Good luck with your project and remember to celebrate your efforts and your success at

the opening of your Community Play Area. And, above all, enjoy it!  
Play areas are all about FUN!



## Step One - Getting Started Céim a hAon - Ag Tosú Amach



Before making any decisions about your play area, you must make sure that the people living in your community actually want one. To do this, you could hold a public meeting so that you get the broadest views possible.

Once you have identified the need for a play area, you will need a group of people who will work together to develop one for the community. In a lot of cases, an existing committee in the community may be willing to take on the task of developing the play area. An Existing community development committee often has built up the capacity, skills, commitment and experience to develop a community playground as part of their overall community development role. Ideally your Play Area committee should comprise five to 10 people.

Wexford Public Participation Network (PPN) is a network of community and voluntary organisations across Co Wexford. This network offers members the benefits of information sharing, capacity building and representation. As such it may be of benefit for your group to consider joining Wexford PPN, if you have not done so already, as you consider your playground development. Further information and online registration is available at [www.wexfordppn.ie](http://www.wexfordppn.ie) or by calling 053-9196553.

### **Key issues to consider before committing to the development of a community owned playground:**

- Do you have title to a suitable site?
- Funding
- Planning, to include compliance with relevant access and disability legislation
- On-going insurance, maintenance, repair & replacement costs to be borne by community group
- On-going inspection and monitoring of playgrounds e.g. litter and anti social behaviour
- To adapt a well known saying.... *'A playground is for life, not just for Christmas!'*





## Step Two - Ask people, including young people

### Céim a Dó - Fiafraigh de dhaoine, daoine óga san áireamh

#### Who should we talk to in our community?

#### Cé leis ar chóir dúinn labhairt inár bpobal?

Play Areas should be designed to meet the specific needs of each community. But how do you find out what YOUR community needs are? Ask the people who will be using the Play Area!

- Children and young people (Including children & young people with disabilities)
- Parents
- Carers

It is essential that children and young people be consulted regarding the planning and design of a playground area. Young people are defined in the Play Policy as 'all children and young people who have not yet progressed to second level education'.

#### How do we ask people for their views?

#### Conas a iarraidimid ar na daoine seo a dtuairimí a thabhairt?

In consulting children and young people, particular care must be taken to ensure that all children, including children with special needs, are consulted in ways that make sense to them. It is likely that more than one method of consultation will be needed to achieve a meaningful picture of your play area.

Now you're ready to start asking people in your community, children and young people what their play area should look like!

#### What type of consultation method should we use?

#### Cén sórt modh comhairliúcháin ar cheart dúinn a úsáid?

Several methods can be used to consult with different age groups. Advice on how to effectively engage with the community is outlined at the end of this section.

You can also seek children's and young people's views through talking to them and using maps, slides, photos, paintings, models or plasticine to help them design their ideal Play Area. Or ask them to make up a collage of magazine or brochure pictures. Design apps may also be utilised, where appropriate. Children are very creative with their playtime! A field trip with members of your committee and children to other Play Areas in communities like yours is also a good way of getting ideas.

As a group, you must ensure that all your target groups have been consulted with. The Ferns Diocesan Youth Service, your local Foróige club, the County Childcare Committee, TUSLA, CYPSC, Wexford Local Development or Wexford Comhairle na nÓg may be able to advise or support you in your consultation with children in your community.



### **Where can we distribute the questionnaires or information about our Playground Area?**

**Cén áit is féidir linn na ceistneoirí nó eolas faoinár gclós súgartha a thabhairt amach?**

Information and questionnaires can be distributed in a number of ways:

- Parent and toddler groups
- Playschools and pre-schools
- Schools
- Public libraries
- Post offices
- Local churches
- Community centres
- Social Media

### **Do we need to consider anything else?**

**An bhfuil aon rud eile is gá dúinn a chur san áireamh?**

It is important to be aware of and implement recommended best practice and legal obligations with regard to child protection when interacting with children or vulnerable adults during any consultation process. Compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is also important with regard to any information collected as part of the consultation process. A link to a suggested best practice guide to market research is included at the end of this section which may also prove useful during the consultation process. Suggested links to GDPR and child protection information is also included in the useful reading section below.

Children and adults should be told how important their role is in the consultation process, that their input will help the local community to decide on the most appropriate Play Area for their community.

It may not be feasible to include everyone's ideas in the final design, but all suggestions should be considered by the committee.

## How to effectively engage children, young people and parents in the consultation process

### Methods:

There are a variety of methods which can be used to consult in advance of planning your playground. We recommend that your committee spends some time considering different ways to consult with different groups. Early consultation which creates opportunity for community involvement in concept, design and implementation stages will result in increased community ownership and greater involvement into the future.

	One to one	Targeted Group Discussions or Activities	Surveys
Who	Residents neighbouring the development	Parents, children, young people through clubs, childcare facilities, schools	- Full community - Young people, parents
Benefits	Gather specific details of concerns and return to individuals with solutions	- Safe environment - Open discussion can inspire more ideas - Recruitment of volunteers with vested interest	- Collect a wide range of views - Useful if asking end users or parents to rate interests or experiences - feedback easily collated
Variations		- Use of open discussion - Exploring through play - Art competitions - Young people: Collect using videos via Instagram / Snapchat networks	- Great free online survey building tools available - Can distribute via social media easily - results are collated by the survey tool

### What information should you gather?

Experienced play scape designers have consistently found asking children (and parents) what they would like in their playground results in responses heavily influenced by what they are familiar with i.e. swings and slides. Collecting information focused on experiences and interests, rather than what physical amenities people would like, supports the development of creative facilities which more readily meet the end users needs.



Any of the previous methods referenced can be used to collect this information; to inspire creativity and ‘thinking outside the box’ we recommend focusing questions, discussions or play activities around the following areas:

- experiences which children enjoy
- activities which are of interest to children
- experiences which their parents enjoyed as children or see their children now enjoying
- experiences parents would like to see their children exposed to

To follow is a sample of questions which could be used to start a conversation on interests and experiences related to play:

Ask children:

- What are the most exciting playgrounds you have ever been at?
- Where would you like to play with your friends alone together?
- Where would you like to be right now?
- What fun play things do you do that your parents tell you not to try?
- What is the highest you have ever climbed?
- What is the silliest thing you have ever done?
- What games do you invent?

Ask young people:

- How do you like to spend your time...group activities, solo activities?
- Where do you go to be alone with friends?
- What activities would you like to try which you haven’t tried before?
- What would you like to change about existing outdoor spaces for young people?

Ask adults:

- Where did you play as a child? As a teen?
- Tell me about the neighbourhood where you grew up.
- What crazy things did you do when you were young?
- Where do you spend free time now?
- What is the best activity you and your kids share?
- Do you have a favourite private space?
- What value or sensation do you want your kids to experience e.g. risk, fear, failure, satisfaction, accomplishment, beauty, tranquillity, action?

**At the end of this step, you should have collected:**

- Letters of support from your local community, local businesses and local schools
- Proof of your consultation meetings, for example, copies of:
  - public meeting advertisements
  - questionnaires
  - minutes of meetings
  - photographs of discussion groups/field trips etc.

#### **USEFUL READING:**

- **‘Children’s Playgrounds’**

An Information Pack for Community Groups. Published by Sugr adh available at [www.sugradh.org](http://www.sugradh.org)

- **Children First - National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children**

An information guide published by The DCYA, available at [www.dcy a.gov.ie](http://www.dcy a.gov.ie)

- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

An Information guide on GDPR published by The Data Commissioner, available at [www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie)

- **Market Research Society – Code of Conduct**

An Information guide on market research best practice published by The Market Research Society, available at <https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/mrs%20code%20of%20conduct%202014.pdf>



## Step Three - Site identification

### Céim a Trí – Suíomh a fháil

#### Where will we find our site?

#### Cá bhfaighimid ár suíomh?

This is one of the most important steps. If your site is not suitable, the playground area may be used inappropriately or, worse still, not at all. Identify possible sites in and around your area, taking into consideration the following questions:

- ✿ Is the site within easy walking distance of the target users?
- ✿ What is the site being used for at the moment?
- ✿ How big is the site? Is the site at risk from vandals?
- ✿ Is the site easily visible from surrounding properties, the road front, parking areas, seating areas or footpaths?
- ✿ Are there parking areas within easy access of the proposed play area?
- ✿ Are there existing public facilities, such as shops, toilets, public lighting or benches close to the play area?
- ✿ Is the site prone to flooding or are there any other weather considerations - is it exposed to the elements?

Finding a suitable site is vital in creating a safe and appropriate play area for your community. **Ownership of the site will have to be identified and transferred to the community to allow you to develop your Play Area. A long term lease may suffice in certain circumstances.**

#### What size site is recommended?

#### Cén mhéid a mholtar don suíomh?

Location and size should be such that disturbance to neighbours is minimised but that the Play Area is still overlooked. It will depend on a number of factors, such as the age-group for which the Play Area is intended, size and type of equipment, proximity to services and neighbouring houses, shops etc.

The size of the Play Area will depend on the size of the community it is going to serve.

#### What do we do next?

#### Céard í an chéad chéim eile?

You will need to confirm ownership of the site and details of any rights of way that may be

required to access the site. You will need to get a letter of legal interest from the property owner as this is required when you apply for planning permission (see Step Six).

If the local authority owns the land, you should contact your local office for further advice. Whatever you do, do not purchase land without planning permission for a play area.

**At the end of this step, you should have collected the following information to support your application to the local authority:**

- **An Ordnance Survey map of the location of the proposed playground area**
- **Proof of site ownership or long term lease and/or a letter of legal interest**

## Site Selection Criteria

- *Location:* The proximity of the site to the built-up area, especially residential. It is important that play areas are within close walking distance of their main target users.
- *Existing Land Use:* The current use of the site. A site that is already suitable for the location of play equipment is preferable to one that would require a lot of remedial work. Linkage with existing recreational facilities is also favoured, creating multi-functional recreational areas.
- *Adjoining Land Uses:* Ensure that there are no conflicting adjoining land-uses (e.g. quarries, noisy industrial areas, etc.)
- *Size:* The size of the site available for play area/equipment
- *Topography:* The contours of the site and its suitability for different types of play areas
- *Safety & Overlooking:* Visibility of the site from the surrounding properties, the road front, parking areas, footpaths, seated areas, etc.
- *Parking:* Available parking areas within easy access of the proposed play area.
- *Flood Risk:* Is the site prone to flooding?
- *Public Facilities:* Existing public facilities (toilets, public lighting, benches, rubbish bins, etc.) on or within close proximity to the proposed play area.
- *Safe Access Points:* Availability of safe access points in terms of pedestrian & vehicular users.
- *Security Of Property:* Assessment of the security risk to the play equipment in terms of vandalism, etc.
- *Natural Shelters:* Existing shelter belts/areas providing natural protection for users and equipment from the elements (wind, rain, etc.)

## Step Four - Plan & Design

### Céim a Ceathair - Plean & Dearadh



Designing outdoor play areas can be a complex process. All designs should give consideration to the different development needs and ability ranges of different age groups of young people. You need to remember to plan for all children, including children with disabilities and additional needs. Don't forget to go back to your consultation outcomes: paintings, drawings or models!

Try to be innovative and original in your design. Many Play Areas incorporate activities such as hopscotch, adventure trails and mazes in their design. Play Areas should not be just about fixed equipment - where possible, try to enhance or create natural environments with planting in your play area. Also, try to reflect your own community location: if you're close to a beach, how about a sand pit or having a nautical theme to your play area?

Remember, a play area will only be used if it provides a more attractive play environment than other open spaces. Here are some points to remember before you start to develop your play area:

- Children use their whole environment for play: streets, waste land, public open space, anywhere accessible
  - Children play mostly on the street or in open areas, even when playgrounds are available
  - Children get great play value from the natural environment, e.g. slopes, trees, bushes, sand, long grass and water. Natural features such as these should be retained or provided in play facilities. Just ensure they're safe!
  - Vandalism can be reduced by informal supervision, the provision of purpose-built seats and shelters and facilities for older children and young teens, such as basketball and five-a-side pitches.
  - Playgrounds are a base for play, not somewhere to spend hours of play. They are only part of a community's provision of play for children; they are not the only answer!
  - Natural play spaces are cheaper to provide than fixed equipment sites
- (Source [www.playireland.ie](http://www.playireland.ie))**





While planning the design, you should consider the following questions:

- ✓ What is it like to be a child in your community?
- ✓ What is the purpose of the Play Area?
- ✓ What are the age levels for which the playground area is intended?
- ✓ What makes your community unique?
- ✓ Can the location, history and culture of your area be incorporated into the design of your playground area?

## Who should we contact about the design?

### Cé leis ar chóir dúinn dul i dteagmháil maidir leis an dearadh?

There are many different options for this, depending on whether you opt for a landscaped Play Area on its own with natural play areas or a playground with fixed equipment, or a combination of the two. Try not to limit your options to a Playground - sometimes, the natural area can be easier to maintain or supervise than a Playground. It can also be far cheaper!

If you're interested in using landscaping in part or all of your Play Area, it may be a good idea to contact the Irish Landscape Institute which will provide you with a list of architects in your locality who will help you design your area. Or you can contact playground equipment companies which will design your play area around the equipment you've chosen after your consultation process with people in your locality. Consideration should also be given, at design stage, to engaging the services of a reputable independent playground inspections provider to help quality assure the design and thereby help to avoid any potential costly post installation non-compliance issues.

### Procurement: Soláthar

If your committee opts for a formal playground, make a short list of playground equipment companies and/or landscape architects before looking for quotations. Ask at least three companies to provide design ideas based on your requirements, including the need for universal design and the need for companies to demonstrate the accessibility level of equipment. Most playground equipment companies or landscape architects will provide the first design consultation free of charge. The estimation of costs for the development of a playground can be complicated; as such you might consider employing the services of a qualified Quantity Surveyor to assist you with the drafting of a tendering specification. The tender specification is a very important document as it ultimately is the basis of the agreement on the level of goods and services provided at the end of the procurement process.

### Publically funded playgrounds and Procurement: Soláthar agus Clóis Súgartha a Mhaoinítear go Poiblí:

If your playground is being funded through a publicly funded scheme then it may be subject to prescribed public procurement rules e.g. LEADER rules. It is very important that the public procurement function is discharged with probity, transparency and accountability in a manner that secures best value for public money. Most publicly funded schemes require a formal tendering process to be followed through the etenders Office of Government Procurement website – see [www.etenders.gov.ie](http://www.etenders.gov.ie) for further details. You

should satisfy yourself of the procurement rules for any funding scheme to which you are applying to assist with the development of your playground.

Some publicly funded schemes do not require the formal tenders public procurement process to be followed if the level of public contribution does not exceed 49%. In such circumstances the following general procurement and value for money advice may be useful:

- Be very clear about the scope of services you are employing particularly concerning your requirement for playground equipment. Add-ons, particularly outside the scope of the contract may prove costly.
- Research the market thoroughly to determine what you can afford within your budget. Although the formal procurement procedures do not apply, Wexford County Council has an obligation to obtain best value for all public expenditure.
- Assuming your budget is fixed, approach a number of certified companies and see what they are prepared to offer for the sum you have (don't be afraid to negotiate and always check the quality certification of the equipment).
- Determine the maintenance cost of the equipment. For example it may well be that a company offers you less in the way of equipment, but often better quality so the maintenance costs will be lower thus creating a saving for you in the long run.
- For any construction contract, the client is required to employ a Project Supervisor at Design Phase and a Project Supervisor at Construction Stage. The following link to the Health and Safety Authority website provides a useful guide for construction clients; [http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications\\_and\\_Forms/Publications/Construction/Clients\\_in\\_Construction\\_-\\_Best\\_Practice\\_Guidance.html](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Construction/Clients_in_Construction_-_Best_Practice_Guidance.html)
- Before entering into any agreement or contract with a supplier, ensure that they, or their subcontractors, are competent to install the equipment. Ask for a copy of all appropriate certification and health and safety documentation. You may also ask about their previous experience and obtain references and/or visit other playgrounds they have installed.
- Ask for a copy of their insurance documents, particularly public liability, employers' liability and product liability – ensure you are happy with the level of cover provided.
- It is strongly advised that any contract is examined by a solicitor prior to signing – this is for your protection.

- Be proactive in managing the contract – if you are not satisfied with the service inform the contractor immediately. Your contract should detail the process for resolving disputes.
- Keep a record of all communications, consultations, contracts, invoice, quotations etc.

### How do we select the 'right' equipment for our play area?

#### Conas a roghnóimid an fearas 'ceart' dár láthair shúgartha?

All equipment selected must meet with Irish and European Safety Standards ISEN 1176. This covers the requirements for the design, manufacture and installation of playground equipment. Equipment must also comply with all relevant Disability and Equality Legislation to ensure inclusive play – see section 5 for further advice on accessibility requirements. The following factors should also be considered before you select the equipment:

- ✿ Equipment warranty
- ✿ Maintenance requirements
- ✿ After-sales service and time taken to repair damaged equipment
- ✿ Availability of spare parts
- ✿ Age of user
- ✿ Play function
- ✿ Disability and accessibility compliant

### Are there different types of equipment for different age groups of children?

#### An bhfuil cineálacha éagsúla fearais d'aoisghrúpaí difriúla leanaí?

Playground equipment companies cater for all children and young people who have not yet progressed to second-level education (0-12 plus). In your Play Area, there must be a clear separation of equipment for the different age groups of children and young people.

To help you select the most appropriate equipment and design for your Play Area, here is an example of some of the things that children and young people like to play with at different stages:

- ❖ Infants 0-1 need an area that is separate from toddlers; they need soft surfaces and many soft objects to manipulate.
- ❖ Toddlers 2-3 need opportunities to walk on various surfaces in order to find ways to deal



with their equilibrium and footing.

Opportunities to climb and to be near other children should be provided.

- ❖ Children aged 4-5 need opportunities to walk, run, jump, hop, gallop, skip, slide and leap.
- ❖ 6-7 year-olds may need opportunities to climb and test their developing strength! Equipment such as climbing pieces and overhead ladders may provide for their development needs.
- ❖ At the age of 8 to 11, children are ready to begin developing sport skills. Challenging equipment that encourages them to improve accuracy and consistency, such as obstacles to move around are appropriate. Physically demanding equipment is also popular - climbing frames and monkey bars.
- ❖ Young people from the age of 12 need plenty of space for team games. They also need to be able to interact socially - through the provision of separate spaces for these groups to congregate.

In recognition of legal requirements (and social inclusion & justice) around access and disability & equality, consideration should be given to children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, which could include physical, mobility, sensory (vision-hearing), intellectual and cognitive levels of ability. For example, activity panels/sound boards, quiet/rest areas, wide slides, colour zoning/contrast etc, should be incorporated into your design.

### **What type of surface should be provided?**

#### **Cén sort dromchla ar chóir a chur ar fáil?**

The surface of the Play Area must meet Irish and European Safety Standards ISEN 1177 with impact-absorbing surfacing beneath the equipment. This covers a range of materials, e.g. woodchip, manufactured rubber tiles, sand and wet pour. But watch out! Tarmac and concrete are not recommended under any equipment. Ease of access and the level of accessibility should be considered in the choice of surface to be provided.

### **Should there be a fence around the playground?**

#### **Ar chóir claí a bheith timpeall an chlóis súgartha?**

Unless the Playground borders on a busy area or the area would be unsafe without it, your area may not need a boundary fence. If it is needed, this fencing should be low in height, approximately 1.2 metres high is recommended. You should advise your insurance provider of your particular circumstances to ensure full disclosure of all material facts.



### Is lighting necessary?

#### An bhfuil gá le soilse?

Sufficient lighting should be provided and identified in the design drawings. This keeps the area visible at all times and discourages anti-social behaviour.

### Are green areas allowed in a play area?

#### An gceadaítear limistéir ghlasa sa láthair shúgartha?

Yes, yes, and YES!!! Green areas are not just allowed but encouraged in play areas. If possible, there should be open space for free play purposes.

Enough space should also be reserved to allow for expansion and further development. It is important that children experience the benefits of nature and seasonal changes. The use of low-growing vegetation and single-stemmed trees is often recommended for play areas.

### Who is responsible for maintaining the green areas?

#### Cé atá freagrach as cothabháil an fhéir?



This issue should be considered at design stage and discussed with your local community.

### Should there be signs in our playground area?

#### Ar chóir comharthaí a bheith inár gclós súgartha?

Appropriate signs must be displayed in all play areas. If equipment is supplied, signs that indicate the age group that the equipment is designed for and the importance of adult supervision must be displayed, for insurance reasons. The information should be clear and concise and displayed in both English and Irish and formats (e.g. pictographic form) relevant to the people who will be using the playground area – this should be discussed at planning stage (see section 5). All signs should also be weather and environment resistant, in an accessible format and easily understood. See below for an example sign.



<h2 style="text-align: center;">Fáilte</h2> <p>Is do pháistí idir 2-12 bliana d'aois amháin an clós súgartha seo.</p> <p>Ní mór gach uile pháiste a bheith faoi chúram duine fásta i gcónaí.</p> <p>Ní mór páiste a bheith i bhfochair duine fásta.</p> <p>Tabhair faoi deara, le do thoil, gur ar a bpríacal féin a úsáideann páistí fearas an chlóis súgartha.</p> <p>Ná fág aon lorg - beir leat abhaile do chuid bruscair.</p> <p>Cosc ar chluichí liathróide, rothaíocht, lannrolláil, chlárscátáil agus úsáid scútar.</p> <p><b>Eolas Teagmhála:</b></p> <p>Comhairle Contae Loch Garman    053 9196000 Seirbhísí Éigeandála                    112</p> <p><b>Clóis Súgartha Phobail Chomhairle Contae Loch Garman</b></p> <p><b>Is leatsa an clós súgartha seo - bain sult as, bíodh spraoi agat, bain úsáid ach ní mí-úsáid as.</b> <b>This is your playground - enjoy it, have fun, use it, don't abuse it.</b></p>	      	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Welcome</h2> <p>This playground is for use only by children aged 2-12 years.</p> <p>All children must be supervised by an adult at all times.</p> <p>All adults must be accompanied by a child.</p> <p>Please note that children using playground equipment do so at their own risk.</p> <p>Leave no trace - bring your litter home.</p> <p>No ball games, cycling, roller blading, skateboarding or scooter riding.</p> <p><b>Contact Information:</b></p> <p>Wexford County Council    053 9196000 Emergency Services                    112</p> <p><b>Wexford County Council Community Playgrounds</b></p>
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### Should bins be provided and who will empty the bins?

#### Ar chóir boscaí brúscair a chur ar fáil agus cé a dhéanfaidh iad a fholmhú?

Hygiene and cleanliness is very important, particularly in areas where children play. Suitable litter bins could be located around the periphery of the playground area. Comic bins can be purchased: these usually resemble a comic character or an animal and have a small opening appropriate for the litter demands of a playground area.

**The issue of who will empty the bins should also be considered at design stage and discussed with your local community.**

### Should seating be provided?

#### Ar chóir suíocháin a chur ar fáil?

The needs of adults should also be carefully thought out. Seating, for example, should be provided, so parents and carers can watch and enjoy their children play. The location of seating is also important: seats should be located in sheltered areas, not too close to fences or gates (one metre away is sufficient) and in a way that encourages social interaction. Seating should not impede on circulation routes and should be provided for on a firm surface with sufficient space to the side to allow for a buggy or wheelchair to be positioned alongside the seat.

Seats should also be provided with backrests for elderly carers or carers with disabilities. If benches are provided, they should be designed to allow for disabled access.

### Are dogs allowed in a play area?

#### An bhfuil madraí ceadaithe sa láthair shúgartha?

Out, Rover! Play Areas must be dog-free zones and alternative dog walking areas are recommended.

## Once the design drawings are completed, what do we do next?

## Nuair a bheidh an líníocht deartha críochnaithe, céard í an chéad chéim eile?

You should make colour drawings of your proposed Play Area available to the wider community. For example, you could hold an Open Day where members of your community could view and comment on the design. Social media is also a good way to let people know about your design.

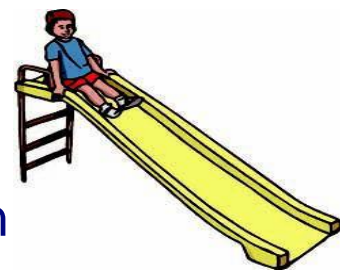


**At the end of this step, you should have collected:**

- Detailed coloured drawings of your proposed playground area.
- Written confirmation that the equipment and surfacing meets with Irish and European Safety Standards ISEN 1176 and ISEN 1177.
- Written confirmation of the estimated final cost of the project and estimated maintenance costs.
- Outcome and agreement of your procurement process.
- Details of your fundraising strategy and how you intend to raise the finance to finance to your proposed playground area.

### USEFUL READING:

- *A Guide to the European Playground Equipment and Surfacing Standards* (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents - RoSPA).
- *Playgrounds for Children with Special Needs* (RoSPA).
- *Growing Spaces for Play* (RoSPA).



## Step Five - Applying for Planning Permission

### Céim a Cúig - Cead Pleanála a Iarraidh

#### When do we apply for planning permission?

##### Cathain a dhéanfaimid cead pleanála a iarraidh?

Once the site has been agreed upon by the community, ideally, you should apply for planning permission in advance of full ownership or incurring pre construction expenditure (a long term lease may be sufficient in certain circumstances). You will need to get a letter of legal interest from the property owner as this is required when you are applying for planning permission.

**It is recommended that a pre-planning meeting is held with the planning authority at an early stage to avoid wasting time and money on a potentially unsuitable site. Accessibility and equality for end users, as required under the relevant Disability and Equality Legislation will form part of this process. All other planning related matters can also be discussed. If you are developing a playground in partnership with Wexford County Council it would also be important to mention this at your pre-planning meeting, as such a development 'may' be considered a Part 8 development, which has a specific planning process depending on the specifics of the proposed development. Pre Planning is a free service – application forms are available from your local council office or at [www.wexford.ie/wex/departments/planning/](http://www.wexford.ie/wex/departments/planning/)**

#### Where do we apply for planning permission?

##### Cá ndéanaimid cead pleanála a iarraidh?

To obtain planning permission, you must make a planning application to your Local Authority.

#### How do we apply for planning permission?

##### Conas a dhéanaimid cead pleanála a iarraidh?

You must complete a planning application form and submit it, together with the required documents, to the local authority.

#### Where do we get a planning application form?

##### Cá bhfaighimid foirm iarratais pleanála?

Contact your Local Authority for a planning application form or access the website on [www.wexford.ie/wex/departments/planning/](http://www.wexford.ie/wex/departments/planning/)



### Can I get advice from the Planning Authority?

#### An féidir liom comhairle a fháil ón Údarás Pleanála?

Absolutely! Advice and guidance is available from the Planning Authority to help you make your planning application. A pre planning meeting can be arranged to discuss the following and any other planning related matters:

- ✚ Site location and development options
- ✚ Whether your proposal complies with the County Development Plan
- ✚ The documents required with the application
- ✚ Accessibility and Disability requirements
- ✚ What fee should be paid, as may be relevant (Not-for-Profit organisations are exempt from planning fees)
- ✚ Public notice requirements

### Who can make a planning application?

#### Cé atá in ann iarratas pleanála a dhéanamh?

You must have a sufficient legal interest in the site to carry out the development, or the written consent of the person who has that legal interest. If a prospective purchaser or tenant is making the planning application, the owner's written consent should normally be enclosed with the application.

Every planning application will be different and will therefore be decided upon on it's own merits.





## Step Six - Organise funds Céim a Sé - Cistí a Eagrú?



### How much will this cost?

#### Cémhéid a chosnóidhséseo?

Although this is a very important question, it cannot be easily answered as the cost is based on many different things, such as the size of the site, the equipment, surfacing, fence requirements etc.

It should be remembered though that rubber surfacing usually accounts for up to 60% of a Play Area budget - natural surfaces or 'loose fill', such as sand and woodchip, can be just as protective. Fences can also be expensive - ask yourself and your architect if your Play Area really needs one.

### Who will be able to advise me on the cost?

#### Cé a bheidh in ann comhairle a chur orm faoin gcostas?

Depending on what type of Play Area you have decided upon, a good landscaper, landscape architect, playground equipment company or qualified quantity surveyor will view the potential site, make a site analysis, gather the information about the design criteria and will give you a projected design fee proposal.

You are advised to get more than one quotation to ensure that you get value for money - and an idea of the different costs involved. Please see section 4 for further details and advice on the various procurement processes.

### What details should be included in the final cost?

#### Cad iad na sonraí ar chóir a bheith san áireamh sa chostas deiridh?

The design proposal should include costs for both drawings and final construction documents. The proposal should also include time for consultation and construction, co-ordination and monitoring in addition to a final site visit from an independent body, to verify that the Play Area was constructed according to the prepared documents and is compliant with the ISEN 1176 Standards and ISEN 1177 Standards.

Unforeseen circumstances can often arise and it would be in the interest of the local community to allow for the costs associated with these. These include, for example: security costs and the costs of soil excavation while the play area is being built.

## Where can we source funding for our Play Area?

### Cá háit is féidir linn teacht ar fhoinsí maoinithe dár láthair shúgartha?

At the time this booklet was produced, these were the known potential funding sources:

- Wexford County Council Playground Development & Refurbishment Policy, 2014 – see under for further details.
- LEADER Programmes – Wexford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and Wexford Local Development
- Windfarm Community Fund
- Clár Programme (In designated Counties)
- Local fundraising
- Town and Village Renewal Scheme
- Sports Capital Programme
- Commercial Sponsorship

Because you will be responsible for sourcing funding, it is advisable that you apply to the Revenue Commissioners for charitable status and charitable tax exemption. The application form is known as a CHY1 form. It is available, free of charge, on the website, [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie) (under the heading 'Publications - leaflets and guides').

Alternatively, you can contact your local tax office for an application form or the Charity section of the Revenue. Appropriate professional advice should be sought where required.

Any bridging finance requirements should also be fully considered in adequate time.



## USEFUL READING:

*Sustainable Communities: A funding Handbook for Community-Led Groups.* Available from [www.wheel.ie](http://www.wheel.ie)

## Wexford County Council Playground Development and Refurbishment Policy, 2014

### Polasaí Chomhairle Contae Loch Garman um Fhorbairt agus Athchóiriú Clós Súgartha - 2014

Wexford County Council is committed to providing capital grant assistance to community groups towards the cost of developing or refurbishing playgrounds in County Wexford.

Wexford County Council Playground Strategy 2017-2021 sets out a framework for the future development of play provision in the County by enabling local communities to develop and manage play facilities at a community level. The Council will contribute to the development of such playgrounds through the Playground Development and Refurbishment Policy, 2014.

The Council will provide a capital grant, from the Development Contribution Scheme, to a community group, up to maximum of 49% of the total agreed capital cost, subject to a maximum overall contribution of €25,000. The provision of the grant will be subject to the following criteria:

- The playground project must be initiated by the community group and planned and designed in consultation with the local community.
- The proposed project must demonstrate a need for the provision of such a facility, and must have regard to the proximity of existing playgrounds, projected levels of usage and benefits to the community.
- The design must maximize the range of play opportunities available to all children, particularly children who are marginalised, disadvantaged, or who are disabled.
- The local community group will work in partnership with the County Council in the identification of a suitable site and access and parking arrangements.
- The necessary planning permission/exemption and insurances must be in place prior to the commencement of any site development.
- A sustainable strategy for local fundraising must be demonstrated to ensure that the necessary funding is in place prior to the commencement of the development.
- Privately owned/operated facilities must ensure that they have appropriate insurance and management of maintenance of the facility.

## Wexford County Council Playground Strategy 2017-2021

### Straitéis Chomhairle Contae Loch Garman um Chlóis Súgartha, 2017-2021

This strategy maps the current playground provision in the County and includes in this process both Local Authority and non Local Authority Playgrounds. This mapping exercise has illustrated provision, overlaps and gaps in the play opportunities available in County Wexford. The strategy sets out a framework for the future development of play provision in the County by enabling local communities to develop and manage play facilities at a community level.

The Council will cease to develop community and neighbourhood playgrounds. The Council will contribute to the development of such playgrounds through the Playground Development and Refurbishment Policy. The maximum support available from the Council under the Playground Development and Refurbishment Policy will be up to a maximum of 49% of the total agreed capital cost, subject to a maximum overall contribution of €25,000.

Play areas will be designed to suit the site in which they are to be developed or refurbished.

Wexford County Council requires the procurement of goods and services, in a manner, to ensure at all stages of the development and / or retrofit of playgrounds that accessibility and equality (access and equality for end user) is accounted for. In this regard and in line with Disability and Equality Legislation, Wexford County Council will require that all future playground developments and / or retrofits partially funded by Wexford County Council submit evidence of the provisions made to disability and equality proof the proposed development at the design and procurement stage. Advice on accessibility can be sought as part of a pre-planning meeting – see step 5 for further details on this process.

**Further issues to consider before applying for funding to Wexford County Council for financial assistance for the development of a community playground:**

**Ceisteanna eile ar chóir a chur san áireamh roimh chúnaimh airgeadais a iarraidh ar Chomhairle Contae Loch Garman le haghaidh forbairt clóis súgartha pobail:**

- Do you have title to a suitable site?
- Matching funding
- Planning, to include compliance with relevant access and disability legislation
- On-going insurance, maintenance, repair & replacement costs to be borne by community group
- On-going inspection and monitoring of playgrounds e.g. litter and anti social behaviour

If you wish to proceed, having considered the above issues, an initial application should be made in writing to The Community Development Section, Carricklawn, Wexford County Council, Wexford Town or email [community@wexfordcoco.ie](mailto:community@wexfordcoco.ie).





# Step Seven - Installation & Management of Play Area

## Céim a Seacht – Suiteáil & Bainistiú na Láithreach Súgartha

### Who should install the equipment and surfacing in the Play Area?

#### Cé is ceart an fearas agus an dromchla a shuiteáil sa láthair shúgartha?

The playground equipment company is responsible for installation. This company must give written confirmation on completion that the equipment and surfacing have been installed to the manufacturers' instructions and to Irish and European Safety Standards ISEN 1176 and ISEN 1177. Wexford County Council does not have any health and safety responsibility for any project for which it provides full or partial funding. Organisations seeking to procure and install a play area under this scheme are reminded of their obligations under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, to ensure the safety of all persons constructing or erecting playground equipment. The new European Standards (EN 1176 and EN 1177) will apply to the purchase, installation and maintenance of playground equipment; more information is available on the website of The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

### Who is responsible for insurance during the development of the Play Area?

#### Cé atá freagrach as árachas le linn forbairt na láithreach súgartha?

If you are completing a Play Area, your Community will need to ensure you have Public Liability insurance while the area is being developed. If you are installing a Playground, the company installing the equipment i.e. playground equipment company, is responsible. Make sure this is clarified in writing before work begins.

Responsibility for the provision of adequate insurance cover of the playground rests with the community group retaining ownership of the playground. As Insurance costs on publically owned playground can be quite significant, it is recommended that the availability and cost of appropriate insurance cover is researched and considered at an early stage. Regular periodic inspections should be carried out to ensure the playground is maintained in compliance with insurance cover requirements. An annual inspection by a suitably qualified organisation may also form part of the condition of insurance cover.

Community groups often opt to become a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) in order to protect personal liability against playground insurance claims. Relevant persons will have to perform the role directors of the CLG. The formation of a CLG will attract set up fees with regard to the establishment of robust and appropriate corporate governance

structures etc. On-going audit and company registration fees should also be factored into the company's budget planning. Legal advice should be sought on these matters.

### Once the equipment is installed, what should we do next?

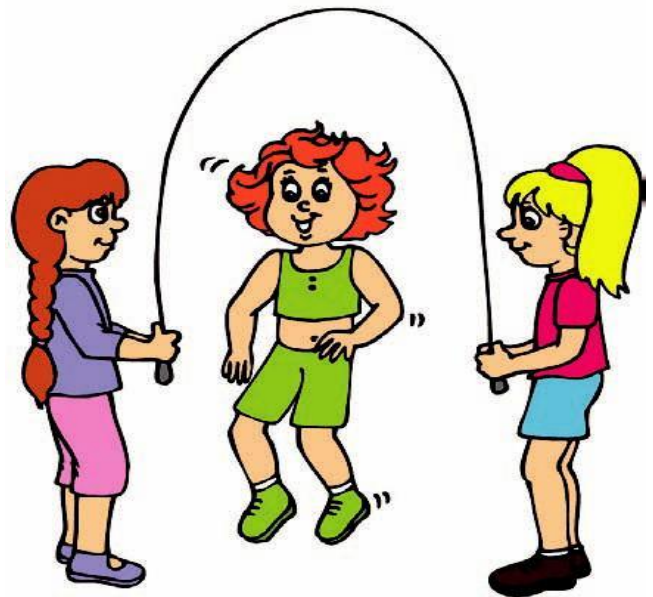
#### Agus an fearas istigh, céard í an chéad chéim eile?

The community must ensure that a post-construction inspection of the site is undertaken by an independent body, such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) or Play Services Ireland Ltd. (Other providers may also be available).

### Who is responsible for maintenance of the playground area after the equipment has been installed and inspected?

#### Cé atá freagrach as cothabháil an chlóis súgartha i ndiaidh suiteáil agus iniúchadh an fhearaís?

Responsibility for the on-going repair and maintenance of the playground rests with the community group retaining ownership of the playground. Regular periodic inspections should be carried out to ensure the playground is maintained in accordance with insurance cover requirements.



**Do we have to contribute financially to the upkeep of the Playground Area?**

**An mbeidh orainn íoc as cothabháil an chlóis súgartha?**

Yes, responsibility for the on-going repair and maintenance costs of the playground rests solely with the community group retaining ownership of the playground. **The establishment of a sinking fund to cater for these costs should be considered.**

**What type of supervision will be provided?**

Cén sórt maoirseachta a chuirfear ar fáil?

The Play Area remains the responsibility of the community and the group should provide informal supervision of the area in respect of vandalism, litter, dog control and anti-social behaviour.

**What if we want to install additional equipment or upgrade the Play Area?**

**Cad a dhéanfar má theastaíonn uainn tuilleadh fearais a shuiteáil nó uasghrádú a dhéanamh ar an láthair shúgartha?**

If you wish to carry out further development on the Play Area e.g. install additional equipment or extend the boundary of the Play area, your community will have to go through the same process again. The community will also be responsible for sourcing funding for new equipment and/or any other upgrading costs.

**That's it. Don't forget to celebrate your efforts and your success at the opening of your community playground area!**



# Appendices

## Suggested consultation method

### Modh comhairliúcháin molta

Several methods are recommended to consult with different age groups. Surveys, questionnaires and focused group discussions are often recommended. The questionnaire, however, is not the first step in carrying out a survey. Again, the Ferns Diocesan Youth Service (FDYS) and Wexford County Childcare Committee will be able to advise you on consultation with children and the Community Development Section of Wexford County Council will be able to advise you on the adult consultation process. The purpose of the survey should be made clear to the respondents.

Below is an example of a method used by a group in Co. Kerry

Questionnaires were designed and distributed to:

- + A group of parents of pre-school children
- + Children in a local primary school

Focused group sessions were also held with primary school children in First, Fourth and Sixth class. The children were asked to draw the type of playground/Play Area they would like. All this information and the results of the questionnaire were reviewed by the local playground management committee and presented to the playground equipment suppliers for consideration.

### Sample Pre-School Questionnaire (distributed to parents)

#### Ceistneoir samplach réamhscoile (le dáileadh ar thuismitheoirí)

- + What is your child's favourite activity / plaything in the playgroup?  
(e.g. play dough, painting, water, sand, cars, dolls etc.)
- + What does your child play with at home?  
(e.g. dolls, cars, blocks, colouring, books etc.)
- + Where is your child's favourite place to play?  
(e.g. garden, bedroom, street, bathroom, park etc.)

### Sample Primary School Questionnaire

(students could be asked these questions in class or as homework)

#### Ceistneoir samplach bunscoile

(D'fhéadfaí na ceistanna seo a chur ar leanaí sa rang nó mar obair bhaile)

- + What do you like about playtime in the playground?  
(e.g. swings, slide, fun, free-time, football, don't like it, etc.)
- + What do you like about playtime at home?  
e.g. sports, computer, playing in the street, TV, Music, playing with friends etc.)



✚ **Where is your favourite place to play?**  
(e.g. home, fields, park, playground, football pitch, leisure centre etc.)



# Useful Contacts

## **WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**

Community Department,  
County Hall, Wexford

**W:** [www.wexford.ie](http://www.wexford.ie)

**E:** [community@wexfordcoco.ie](mailto:community@wexfordcoco.ie)

**T:** 053 919 6611 / 053 919 6559

## **WEXFORD COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE LTD.**

Enniscorthy Enterprise & Technology Centre,  
Milehouse Road,  
Bellefield,  
Enniscorthy,  
Co. Wexford.

**E:** [info@wexfordchildcare.ie](mailto:info@wexfordchildcare.ie)

**T:** 053 9237156

## **Department of Children and Youth Affairs**

43-49 Mespil Road  
FREEPOST F5055  
Dublin 4, D04 YP52

**E:** [contact@dcya.gov.ie](mailto:contact@dcya.gov.ie)

**Web:** [www.dcya.gov.ie](http://www.dcya.gov.ie)

**T:** 01 6473000

**F:** 01 6473101

## **FDYS - Ferns Diocesan Youth Service**

Francis Street, Wexford

**W:** [www.fdys.ie](http://www.fdys.ie)

**T:** 053 912 3262

**F:** 053 912 3880

**E:** [fdys@iol.ie](mailto:fdys@iol.ie)

## **WEXFORD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

Spawell Road, Wexford Town.

**W:** [www.wld.ie](http://www.wld.ie)

**E:** [leader@wld.ie](mailto:leader@wld.ie)

**T:** 053 915 5800

## **Other websites of interest**

[www.sugradh.org](http://www.sugradh.org)

[www.foroige.ie](http://www.foroige.ie)

[www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie)



**Disclaimer:**

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# NOTES

## NOTAÍ

Contact Us:  
Community Development Department  
Wexford County Council  
County Hall  
Wexford Town  
Y35 WY93  
Email: [community@wexfordcoco.ie](mailto:community@wexfordcoco.ie)