

Merton's Free Play Strategy



South West London and St. George's **NHS**
Mental Health NHS Trust

Sutton and Merton **NHS**
Primary Care Trust



Developing play opportunities which are free of charge and where children and young people are free to choose what they do and free to come and go.



What is Merton's Free Play Strategy?

Children and young people's self-directed free play is the focus of this strategy.

Play is essential to children and young people's health, happiness and development. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 gives all children 'the right to rest and leisure, engage in age appropriate play and recreational activities'.

The strategy has been developed by Merton Children's Trust and responds to the views and experiences of play in Merton gathered from children and young people, their parents and carers and community organisations.

In setting out a vision for play in Merton the strategy recognises that:

- play takes different forms
- that older children and young people often describe their play in terms of meeting up with friends at informal meetings places in the locality or just "hanging out"
- play takes place within a range of places and circumstances
- parents/carers and people who work with children and young people have a role in making sure that play can happen.

Who is it for?

The strategy covers all children and young people up to 19 living in Merton. In the case of young people with a disability and vulnerable young people, it may be appropriate to extend the age range to 24.



How the strategy will make a difference

The 6 key themes, which have been developed in line with what Merton's community thought of free play experiences and how they can be improved, will aim:

1. To raise the profile and understanding of free play ensuring that children and young people's right to play is recognised across Merton.

- We will address the need for a co-ordinated approach to developing children and young people's play through establishing a Play Partnership.
- We will promote a wider understanding of why free play is important for children and young people and how, by providing positive support, it benefits the whole community.

2. To engage and involve children, young people, parent/carers and other stakeholders, in planning and decision making about play.

- We will provide a forum for discussion on the planning for play.
 - We will develop a toolkit that includes the views of children and young people, parents and carers in the design or refurbishment of play areas.
 - We will develop tools to include the views of children, young people and parents in evaluating play.
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3. To ensure that children and young people and parent/carers feel SAFE in play spaces.

- Address the issues raised by children and young people and parents and carers around safety and wanting more supervision in play areas through commissioning services.
- We will work with partners to identify safety concerns and seek ways in which they can be minimised.

4. To develop and improve the quality of play (playable) spaces across Merton for all children and young people.

- We will work together to maximise funding to improve play areas in line with the results of the play area assessment and the concerns of children and young people and parents and carers.

- We will develop new services through the Big Lottery Children's Play Initiative to increase the play opportunities for children and young people.

- Building on national models we will develop new tools to assess play spaces and promote their use across the borough.

- Develop the concept of flagship play areas across the borough that include play opportunities for all age ranges, abilities and need alongside general facilities that support wider community access and intergenerational use.

5. To increase the quality of play experiences for children and young people with disabilities in play spaces across Merton.

- New toolkits developed to evaluate and support the planning of play provision will specifically include the needs of disabled children and young people.
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How the strategy will make a difference

- We will ensure the needs of children with disabilities are included within the development of new services through our application to Big Lottery Children's Play Initiative.

6. To promote the importance of recognising and developing spaces where young people aged 11-18 years can lead their own activities.

- We will work with young people to understand their play needs and develop opportunities to involve them in the design of play areas.
- We will seek opportunities to develop greater inter-generational understanding

With a clear vision and ambition to work together the Free Play Strategy will create greater access to free play quality experiences for children and young people and parents/carers across Merton.



For more information or a full version of
Merton's Free Play Strategy
email: freeplaystrategy@merton.gov.uk
or visit: www.merton.gov.uk

If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address shown in the box below.

Albanian

Nese deshironi me shume informacion ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi te na kontaktoni ne adresen e dhene ne kutine me poshte.

Arabic

إذا أردت معلومات إضافية بلغتك الأصلية الرجاء الاتصال بنا في العنوان المدون ضمن الإطار أدناه.

Bengali

যদি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় লেখা আরও তথ্য চান তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন, তলার বক্‌সে আমাদের ঠিকানা রয়েছে।

Chinese

如果你需要用中文印成的資料，請按低端方格內提供的地址與我們聯系。

Farsi

اگر مایل به اطلاعات بیشتر به زبان خود هستید، لطفاً با ما از طریق آدرس زیر تماس بگیرید.

French

Pour tout renseignement complémentaire dans votre propre langue, veuillez nous contacter à l'adresse figurant dans l'encadré du bas.

Polish

Jeśli życzy sobie Pan/i więcej informacji w swoim języku, proszę się z nami skontaktować pod adresem podanym w dolnej ramce.

Punjabi

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਹਿੱਥਾ ਵਰਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਖਾਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Somali

Hadii aad u baahan tahay faahfaahin intaa kabadan oo ku soobsan afkaaka hooyo ama Af Somali fadlan lana soo xiira cinwaanka hoos ku qoran.

Spanish

Si usted desea más información en su propia lengua, por favor contáctenos en la dirección al pie del formato.

Tamil

உங்கள் மொழியில் மேலதிக தகவலைப் பெற விரும்பினால், அடியிலுள்ள பெட்டிக்குள் தரப்பட்டுள்ள விவரத்தில் எம்முடன் தொடர்பு கொள்ளுங்கள்.

Urdu

اگر آپ اپنی زبان میں مزید معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہم سے اس پتے پر رابطہ قائم کریں جو کہ نیچے کے بکس میں درج ہے۔

You can also get this information in large print, in Braille and on audiotape.

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