

# The London Plan and play in London

October 2024

The London Plan is the regional spatial strategy for London and was originally published in 2004. Since 2011 it has included a specific policy on play. Policies in the Plan are intended to inform decisions on planning applications across the capital. Borough's Local Plans must be in 'general conformity' with the London Plan.

In 2021 the policy on play was updated and expanded to include references to independent mobility of children and stipulating that play provision should not be segregated by tenure.

## Policy S4 Play and informal recreation

### A Boroughs should:

- 1) prepare Development Plans that are informed by a needs assessment of children and young person's play and informal recreation facilities. Assessments should include an audit of existing play and informal recreation opportunities and the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision. Boroughs should consider the need for cross-borough collaboration where appropriate
- 2) produce strategies on play and informal recreation facilities and opportunities, supported by Development Plan policies, to address identified needs.

### B Development proposals for schemes that are likely to be used by children and young people should:

- 1) increase opportunities for play and informal recreation and enable children and young people to be independently mobile
- 2) for residential developments, incorporate good-quality, accessible play provision for all ages. At least 10 square metres of playspace should be provided per child that:
  - a) provides a stimulating environment
  - b) can be accessed safely from the street by children and young people independently
  - c) forms an integral part of the surrounding neighbourhood
  - d) incorporates trees and/or other forms of greenery
  - e) is overlooked to enable passive surveillance
  - f) is not segregated by tenure
- 3) incorporate accessible routes for children and young people to existing play provision, schools and youth centres, within the local area, that enable them to play and move around their local neighbourhood safely and independently
- 4) for large-scale public realm developments, incorporate incidental play space to make the space more playable

- 5) not result in the net loss of play provision, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no ongoing or future demand. Where published, a borough's play and informal recreation strategy should be used to identify ongoing or future demand for play provision.

## **The 2011 version of the London Plan introduced a new policy for play**

The 2011 update of the London Plan introduced Policy 3.6 Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation Facilities. It was published alongside Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Play and Informal Recreation. The 2016 update left Policy 3.6 unchanged.

### **POLICY 3.6 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAY AND INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITIES**

#### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor and appropriate organisations should ensure that all children and young people have safe access to good quality, well-designed, secure and stimulating play and informal recreation provision, incorporating trees and greenery wherever possible.

#### **Planning decisions**

- B Development proposals that include housing should make provision for play and informal recreation, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs. The Mayor's Supplementary Planning Guidance Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation sets out guidance to assist in this process.

#### **LDF preparation**

- C Boroughs should:
- a undertake audits of existing play and informal recreation provision and assessments of need in their areas, considering the qualitative, quantitative and accessibility elements of play and informal recreation facilities
  - b produce strategies on play and informal recreation supported by LDF policies to improve access, safety and opportunity for all children and young people in their area.

## **More information**

London Plan: <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/planning/london-plan>

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Play and Informal Recreation

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/planning/implementing-london-plan/london-plan-guidance-and-spgs/play-and-informal-recreation>