



# Play Gloucestershire's My Park Project

Interim Evaluation  
Key Findings – July 2020



Proudly supporting  
youth social action



Department for  
Digital, Culture  
Media & Sport





# My Park Project

## About My Park

**My Park** is a social action project for 10 to 14 year olds, with the overall aim of making local parks in Matson, Springbank and Stonehouse, great places for sport and physical activity through volunteering, campaigning and fundraising. This social action project is vibrant, flexible and fun, empowering disadvantaged young people to effect positive change for themselves, their peers and their home community using the power of sport and physical activity. Our **Get Active Team** are the key influencers on this project, and have been building connections and building trust with young people, using their skills and experience as community based playworkers.

Through a combination of school and community based work, the project works hard to create a desire in young people to get more active through sport and active play, and enable young people to be confident enough to step out into their local park where they can co-create informal sports and other physical activities with peers, supported by our Get Active team on a weekly basis, developing a regular habit and desire to be outdoors and be active. Young people have the opportunity to formally sign up as 'Park Activists'. Participating schools and parks are within walking distance of each other, and we are seeing Park Activists encouraging peers to get active with them in their local park, for physical activity, friendship and fun. They are encouraging whole families to get active and involved. Our Get Active Team are helping them to campaign to make their park a better place to be, connecting them with stakeholders such as Town, District and County Councils.

The Park Activists have taken part in training, received 'on the job' mentoring support and have set up their own incentive scheme that recognises achievements with appropriate rewards such as head torches, neck warmers and water bottles. They are taking part in a range of informal unstructured sport and physical activity that we call 'jumpers for goalposts' type sport. No whistles, no coaching but lots of encouragement, movement and fun, supported by our Get Active Team who inspire, nurture and motivate young people. As confidence grows, week on week, young people are stepping forward and co-creating sports and physical activity, organising themselves and encouraging others to join in, 'like me'.

'My Park' is a Potentials Fund project funded by **The #iwill Fund**. The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund, and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and Sport England to support young people to access high quality social action opportunities.

## Where My Park Happens

The project targets three disadvantaged communities that we have previously worked in. These areas were chosen because of their deprivation, our previous experience, local knowledge, strong relationships with local partners and the needs of young people living here.

### Matson, Gloucester

Matson is a large community of predominately social housing on the south-east side of Gloucester. Delivery here is focussed in Evan's Walk Park, owned by Gloucester City Council and Moat Primary School, which is in close proximity to the park. Evan's Walk Park has a small children's play park in the centre and is surrounded by grass. The park is surrounded by social housing including flats, the school playing fields and a busy road.

Partnership work with Gloucester City Council, local PCSO's, Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, GL Communities and Art Shape have benefitted this project. School work based at Moat Primary School has seen 'Podders' get trained in playwork skills, and Year 6 going into Year 7 transition pupils benefit from outdoor play and activity. Youth Social Action has led to park improvements, community event planning and Park Activists coming to help the community after a local fire.

### Park Estate, Stonehouse

Stonehouse is a rural isolated market town with a pocket of deprivation on the Park Estate with the income deprivation affecting children in the top 10% nationally. My Park sessions take place in Stonehouse on two sites – Oldends Lane Playing Fields, a large green space including a park, skate ramp and multiple sports fields and The Three Greens, a small pocket of green space in the Park Estate which is surrounded by social housing. The project was originally entirely based at Oldends Lane Playing Fields. However young people told us that some children were not attending due to the busy main road to cross, so after a youth social action campaign in partnership with local community group All Pulling Together (APT) permission was sought to use local public space, the project now delivers sessions after school on The Three Greens and during school holidays at the larger playing fields at Oldends Lane. Numbers have increased due to this change in our approach and we have connected with more young people. School sessions are delivered at Park Junior School, within walking distance of the park.

### Springbank, Cheltenham

Springfields Park is located to the west of Cheltenham and is on the boundaries of Springbank and Hester's Way. In this large park there are multiple play spaces, a multi-use games area, a half pipe for skateboarding and lots of flora and fauna. The park is also very close to Springbank Community Resource Centre a hub of children's services, a dental surgery, a community garden and a small shop among other community-based projects. Working closely with Hesters Way Neighbourhood Project, local PCSO's, Cheltenham Borough Homes and Cheltenham Borough Council (and it's No Child Left Behind campaign) the My Park project and Park Activists have been nominated and won awards highlighting the Youth Social Action taking place on a weekly basis. Our weekly Get Active lunchtime sessions and Get Active Groups are based in Hester's Way Primary school which is within walking distance of the park. Hester's Way Primary school has 45.1% of children eligible for Free Schools Meals.



*Through a combination of school and community based work, the project works hard to create a desire in young people to get more active through sport and active play.*

## The Delivery Model

Our **Get Active Team** are based in each community for a day each week, co-creating sport and physical activity with children both in school and in the community.

Table 1 – Delivery in Numbers, August 2019 to July 2020

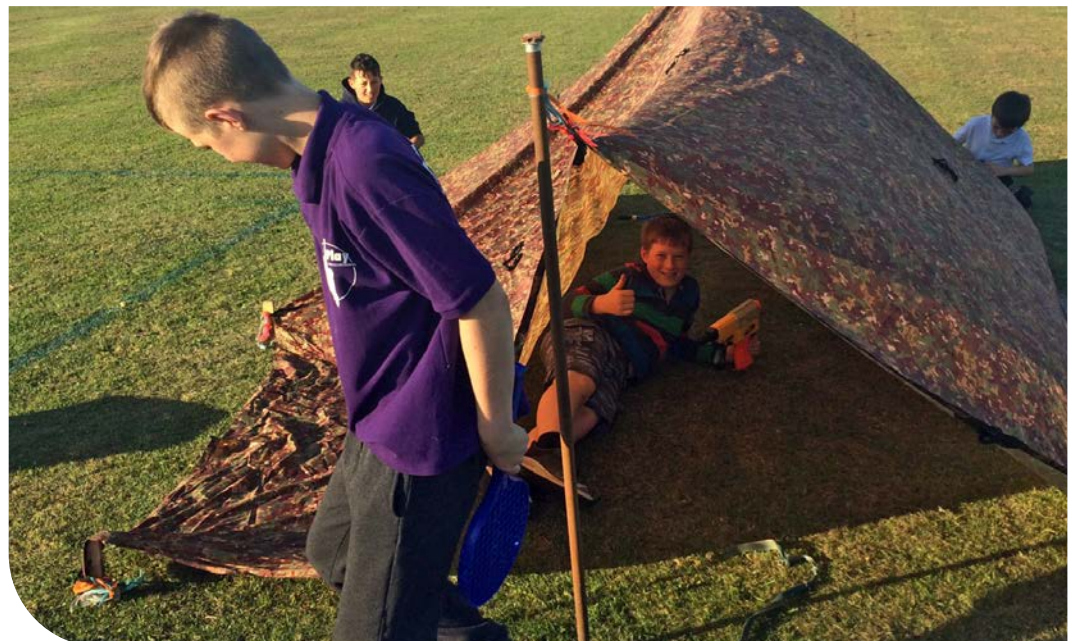
Numbers	Matson Gloucester	Springbank Cheltenham	Park Estate Stonehouse
Active Lunchtime sessions	20	20	20
In school Get Active Group sessions	8	5	0 <small>*Covid-19 pause</small>
After School Park sessions	20	20	20
Holiday Get Active Days in the park	5	5	5
Park Activists	22	27	15
<b>Total Beneficiaries</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>261</b>

## Outcomes and Impact

### Individual Impact

1: Young people develop their own individual skills, enabling them to become active and confident social activists. Success is when young people say “I’m more active and confident to help out in my local community and do so regularly”.

On a regular basis, Park Activists account for at least half of the children and young people attending play sessions. Park Activists have developed resilience from volunteering throughout the year in different weather conditions. They are more confident to make suggestions about improvements to their local parks and green spaces after regular volunteering:



“ I really want to be a Play Ranger when I’m older. I don’t care what the weather is like, I’ll always be here to help out.”

Park Activist, H, age 10

## Case Study

### Stonehouse

After speaking to Stonehouse Town Council and our community partners at All Pulling Together (APT), The Get Active Team began the process of adopting the phone box (a national initiative for old unused BT phone boxes) before the Covid-19 outbreak and look forward to collaborating with L and the other Stonehouse Park Activists to complete this social action project.

*"I can't wait to paint that phone box, maybe we could make it look like the Tardis from Doctor Who? More children will be able to play with it when we make it look better."*

Park Activist, L, age 10

*"It's a very interesting and worthwhile project and we would be very interested to hear young people's views."*

Cllr Theresa Watt, Chair of Stonehouse Town Council



### Matson

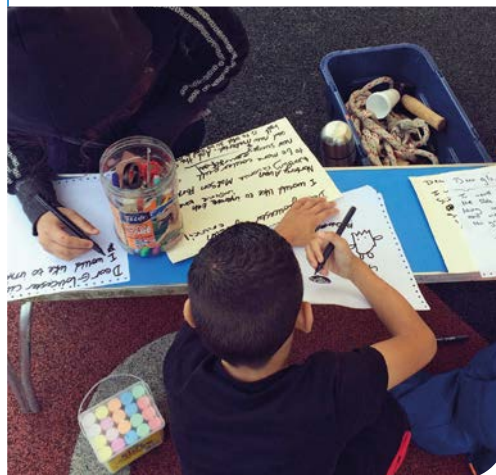
In Matson, Gloucester, Park Activists wrote letters to the city council to ask for the missing swings (removed without notice or explanation) to be replaced in the play area. The following week the swings were back. The confidence in the group to ask how to make a change, to take action, and to follow through with a formulated plan is testament to this project's successes. It highlights the ownership that the children feel for their local park, and having seen how their actions can achieve collective goals it has spurred on regular social action at various levels locally.

### During Covid-19 Lock Down

During the Covid-19 lock down the Park Activists have been encouraged to stay active with deliveries of Play Gloucestershire's Bags of Play. This initiative was enabled by a collective of local charities working together to fund and facilitate the creation of 1,500 Bags of Play. These Bags of Play were then given to children and young people across Gloucestershire, each bag contained items to promote and inspire play of all sorts at home or in the outdoors. Our My Park community partner Active Gloucestershire funded the inclusion of skipping ropes in the bags - this led to a lot of active play taking place.

 Play Gloucestershire @Play\_Glos • Sep 23, 2019

We chatted to our hardy #ParkActivists in #Matson about the missing swings and what they might like to change about their park. They started writing letters and went to get signatures from their local community 🙌👏  
#SocialAction @Sport\_England  
@iwill\_campaign @GL\_Communities



*"I learnt how to skip with the rope you sent!"*

Park Activist, J, age 10



“ I’m so proud how the community came together. ”

Matson resident

“ I can’t believe how much litter people have left, these bags are heavy! We need to keep the park looking nice so more people feel like they can use it safely. ”

Park Activist, H, age 10



## Case Study – Jaydan

Through conversations with parents, The **Get Active Team** were able to support Park Activist Jaydan with a social action project in his community. There had been a minor fire that had broken out in their block of flats during lockdown. Thankfully no one was hurt and the community rallied together helping to keep people safe and stop the fire spreading before the emergency services arrived on the scene.



Coupled with anxiety about social distancing in an emergency situation, the experience was scary for all involved. Jaydan’s mother wanted to give the children whose homes were affected something positive to cheer them up and asked if we could help. Thanks to our My Park community partners at Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, The Get Active Team were able to donate lots of treats and also gifted some remaining Bags of Play. Jaydan’s experience of being a Park Activist meant that he was confident to involve himself with this project, communicating with the Get Active team about what was needed, and helping to distribute food and supplies to the affected families. Jaydan’s confidence and awareness of social action has been directly improved through his involvement in the My Park project

**2: Young people have improved mental health from pleasure, happiness, and feeling good by helping others. Success is when young people say “I feel good when I help others.”**

*“I’m going to slide through that mud. That is celebrating childhood!”*

Park Activist, J, aged 12

*“I can’t believe we won [No Child Left Behind Award], this is the first award I’ve ever got!”*

Park Activist, S, aged 12

Young people tell us that they enjoy volunteering at our sessions, often competing to be the first to help with preparing and serving food and clearing the site of litter before we start play. Park Activists tell us that they are happy when they come to our sessions, some say they would otherwise be indoors using a games console, phone or tablet.

*“Litter makes the park look so messy, and poor animals can get stuck in it or eat it. People shouldn’t be so lazy.”*

Park Activist, F, aged 10

Following the example set by the Park Activists, more children and young people wanted to have a go with the litter pickers. It quickly became a regular event at the beginning of each session, ensuring where we set up was free of litter but also making the space inviting to all. There has been more than one occasion where we have noticed adults using the bin bags provided by us. They have witnessed the efforts made by local children, and feel compelled to follow their lead.

### 3: Young people have more and better social connections, bringing them and their families together in their home community. Success is when young people say “I now know more friendly people in my local community.”

The Park Activists are now confident to independently organise meeting up in groups to attend their local Get Active sessions, these groups highlight the positives of the weekly interactions with the Get Active Team and each other. They consist of children and young people of different ages, different schools, some even from different districts due to friendships made through the training days provided. These groups are often noticed walking together proudly wearing their purple t-shirts, ready to help set up, welcome people to site and explain what is on offer. Sharing the results of the Park Activists’ work with partner schools, community groups, national partners and the general public via social media has led to an increase of respect toward young people and their actions at a local level.

**A 2019 residents survey from Gloucestershire Gateway Trust highlighted the collective desire for children and young people “to feel empowered and find their inner spark”.**

The residents’ suggestion for action was to “support the ‘My Park Project’ where young people are reclaiming local parks.”

Park Activists across the three communities have an affinity to the project that they all co-create. Having the confidence now to become fully involved in community events throughout the year has resulted in even greater social connections for the Park Activists; with those in the organising committees, and fellow members of their community. This social trust is something that is hard to quantify, anecdotally we are told that these young people are becoming more engaged with local events, and with local discussions/consultations (that may have an impact on their futures). Even small details such as people (young and old) saying hello to each other as they pass in the street is something we have been told is happening more often.

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### 4: As a result of young people’s social action, the wider community will recognise the park as a good place to gather and take part in sport and physical activity. Success is when people say “This park is a good place to meet and be active.”

*“I love coming to the park to play, it’s better than just being inside or on the Xbox”.*

Park Activist K, aged 11

*“Great to see our park being used this way. Thank you Play Gloucestershire”.*

Councillor Suzanne Williams (Springbank, Cheltenham)

At the beginning of this project, children, young people and families accessing their local sessions would appear as soon as the Get Active Team arrived to a relatively empty/unused play space. They would spend the whole session engaged but would often go home as soon as the session ended. Now the team are regularly greeted by children, young people and families who have been out playing since their school day ended (many of our My Park locations are located near our partner schools, so walking home via the park is a regular occurrence), waiting for us to arrive. Recently the end of the session has not signalled a cut off time, a time to leave. In fact, the opposite is happening, play is extending beyond the Get Active Team’s time on site.

*“I left at the end of the session and could see more than 10 families still happily playing, this is such a contrast to when we first started running sessions here. No one played out unless we were running a session. It feels like the group are also more resilient to stay out in the rain and colder weather, whereas when we started playing here, a downpour of rain would see everyone running inside!”*

Charlie, Get Active Team

*“ They really are outside in any weather! The other night the rain and wind was coming in sideways, and they were still out on the green running around in their head torches. ”*

Jacky Edwards,  
All Pulling Together,  
Stonehouse

*“ When the Play Rangers come to the park with their van it brightens up the park, because there’s so much to do. ”*

Park Activist, R, age 10

## Volunteering and Social Action

Using experience and knowledge to support 10-14 year olds with quality long-term volunteering opportunities the My Park project has tested some simple approaches that can be scaled up with the right people in place. These approaches include:

**1: How key influencers from a non-sport specific sector have effectively engaged and motivated young people to take part in social action that encourages the use of public open spaces for sport and physical activity.**

“ I didn't get how to play touch rugby like the others so the Play Rangers made it into a dinosaur egg game where you had to steal it from each other. We were the baby dinosaurs, it was so fun! ”

Boy, age 7

“ I was really shy when I first came to a play session, Taylor (Park Activist) was really kind and helped me make a den and listened to what I wanted to do. ”

Boy, age 9

*“The work Play Gloucestershire has done with its young Park Activists is great to see... [The Get Active Team] have a remarkable way of inspiring and supporting young people. They focus on developing children who attend into young leaders and ambassadors for the organisation. What they offer is different to all other sport and youth clubs and teaches young people and children new skills and provides them with new opportunities. I hope they continue to provide this offer to the community for many years to come!”*

James Hayward, Community Investment Officer

“I'm no good at sport” or “I hate football” and other such comments have been heard across all the settings of the My Park project. Years of working with children and young people means this is not the first time the Get Active Team have encountered this feeling towards any sport involvement. Providing sport equipment as well as other ‘interesting items’ such as loose parts, dressing up and arts and crafts at community sessions, there is the freedom to choose and use the imagination. This results in adaptations of games and equipment to suit the needs and abilities of the group. For those that may want to experiment playing a sporty game “I would like to try having a go...”, the Get Active Team encourage involvement, initially with active play. As experienced play workers they are able to facilitate child-led play and encourage children to take ownership of their play through free choice. With no pressure to perform to a certain standard it means mistakes can be made, they can be learned from and they can build a desire to do more, with the added support from the Get Active Team and now the cohort of Park Activists keen to help everyone enjoy their time at the sessions.

**‘Like Me’** is an important message here, the Park Activists are local young people, their attendance at the Get Active sessions promotes more engagement from local children and young people because they see their peers taking part in a game of ‘jumpers for goal posts’ park football and want to join in, they feel confident because of the mix of people taking part or the kindness shown when they first arrive.



Play Gloucestershire in #Stonehouse last night, #ParkActivist Sierra came running over to tell us she had scored her first ever goal during a kick about on the green! She said she had started to learn football in school but found it difficult in a big group.

She was keen to practice her new skills so we played one-on-one for the last 30 minutes of the session 🎉

@officialsportengland @iwill\_campaign  
#girlsinfootball #thisgirlcan #physicalliteracy  
#repetitionequalsmastery #activeplay #childledplay  
#informalgames #outdoorplay #communityplay  
#MyPark #teampurple





*"There's this Irish game called Camogie. I'm going to run home and get my stick so I can show everyone how to play it."*

Park Activists M, aged 10

**A positive impact of the Covid-19 lock down restrictions was that the country was being encouraged by the government to exercise once a day (at the beginning of lock down), as an individual or as a family. We have been told by Park Activists and regular visitors to community sessions that coming to these events has increased their ability to set up an active game and have shared these ideas with their family during lock down.**



*"The Park Activists are really kind and helpful; I can't wait until I can be one too when I'm older."*

Girl, age 8

We spoke with a number of Park Activist families whilst delivering bags of play and by phoning them to check they were coping, offering extra support if they needed it. One mum with two sons at home during lock down told us:

*"They have been playing in the garden LOADS, the nice weather has helped. They have been less bored playing together than usual I'd say. They seem to constantly be changing games to keep them going, like games of football changing to football tennis over my garden chairs."*

Parent, Springbank

## **2: How a broad range of approaches both in schools and communities supported by a range of partners helps to engage with 10 to 14 year olds including vulnerable young people experiencing anxiety, stress and mental health difficulties.**

*"I used to get scared and feel anxious walking to the park on my own but now I always have a friend to walk back with since we're all helping out at the park."*

Park Activist L, aged 10

The continued presence of the Get Active Team both in local schools and parks or green spaces, means there is a trust that forms quickly as play and activity happens. Over time, coupled with the unconditional positive regard for the children and young people when they are engaged, they feel safe and secure at the sessions and are able to confide in the team if they are struggling with anxiety, stress and/or mental health difficulties. Coming out to the park and knowing there are trusted adults who they can talk to is very important.

*"This is like stress relief, if you leave me with this (cornflour and water in a tub) I'll be happy all day!"*

Boy, aged 11, enjoying some sensory play

*"Helping out at Play Rangers gives me something to do so I am busy and don't feel anxious anymore because I know everyone really well now."*

Park Activist T, aged 10

*"I have anxiety"*

*"So do I, what helps you to cope with it?"*

Park Activists R and C, aged 10 and 14, chatting by the fire



This collective drive to do good helped to strengthen the bonds between children and community groups when they delivered bags and chatted to families.

The Get Active team regularly use skills gained through completing the 'Place 2 Be' training course 'Counselling Skills for Working with Children' to actively listen to any worries or concerns children may be experiencing. They use this training and play work experience to guide responses, deciding whether a distraction or play cue is needed, or time and space to talk.

The multiple strands of the My Park project (lunchtime play, targeted group sessions and community play sessions) provides the Get Active Team with a privileged position of trust with the children and young people that attend each week, as well as their families and community partners.

During lockdown this was particularly important, we asked our community partners in each area to help us distribute the Bags of Play to vulnerable children and families. This collective drive to do good helped to strengthen the bonds between children and community groups when they delivered bags and chatted to families.

*"Our Trust are strong supporters of the Play Gloucestershire My Park Project and the Park Activists who volunteer. This project has been essential during lockdown to keep our local parks as valuable safe spaces for everyone in Matson and Stonehouse. Green spaces and parks have never been more valuable on our social housing estates for residents physical and mental wellbeing. [The Get Active Team] have been making connections, giving away brilliant Bags of Play. The My Park project is making a unique contribution to our community's recovery from the COVID crisis".*

Mark Gale, Chief Executive, Gloucestershire Gateway Trust

Volunteers at All Pulling Together (APT) in Stonehouse were inspired by the Bags of Play campaign and decided to take it one step further, creating a display featuring photos of children, who usually attend local Get Active sessions, with their play bags.

*"We decided to do a display in the window at APT of a "Summer of Fun" using these photos and adding some from our children's books, which were given out to the Park Estate during lockdown. The volunteers are now working on setting up a further 50 bags ready for August to give out to the community."*

Jacky Edwards, APT

## Case Study

Park Activist Arthur knew of Play Rangers before the My Park project began, attending council funded sessions in Springbank when he was quite young, with his two brothers. This familiarity with the Play Rangers as trusted adults meant that he was delighted when we returned and keen to sign up as a volunteer as soon as possible. He was only 9 when the My Park project began, so he and his twin brother Dylan were the first to begin volunteering informally. The Get Active Team logged their hours until they could officially sign up as Park Activists when they turned 10.

At the beginning of last year, Arthur became involved with the Aston Project which is run by Gloucestershire Police and local PCSO's. The project builds on the 'work for reward' ethos



Very proud moment in #Springbank last night #ParkActivist Arthur showed us his medal from Gloucester Marathon! As part of the @aston project he #volunteered handing out water to the competitors 🍷🏃👧💧 @officialsportengland @iwill\_campaign #MyPark #teampurple #SocialAction #volunteering #RoleModel



and aims to inspire young people (aged 9-17) by identifying their interests and engaging them in constructive activity through which they build credits towards a reward activity through time banking. Arthur arrived on site in January sporting a medal from the Gloucester Marathon and told us he had volunteered by handing out water bottles to runners throughout the day. The Get Active Team were immensely proud of his achievement; it was a great example of how beneficial it is for young people to be able to access multiple volunteering opportunities in their local community. The confidence and social action knowledge Arthur had built through volunteering with the My Park project, allowed him to fully engage with the Aston project and see the benefit and reward of helping others in the community.

 Play Gloucestershire @Play\_Glos • Oct 15, 2019

Great to see these [#5waystowellbeing](#) posters in the playground at our partner school in [#Stonehouse](#). We definitely helped the kids to [#beactive](#) with line tag, bulldog and cops and robbers 🐶👮🏻👮🏻  
[@Sport\\_England](#) [#ActiveLunchtimes](#) [#GetActive](#)  
[#MentalWellbeing](#) [#MentalHeathAwareness](#)



### 3: The key characteristics that motivate young people to volunteer

#### Key Characteristic – Making it fun and appealing

*"I'm excited to come and help and play".*

Park Activist A, aged 10

*"This is the best day of my life, this is so much fun!"*

T, aged 10, taking part in his first Get Active Group Play Pod session

*"Can I come every week?"*

Girl, aged 10

#### Key Characteristic – Feeling valued and part of the team

*"I always wear my t-shirt, it makes me feel that I'm going to work in my uniform, which I guess I am, but it's the best job ever!"*

Park Activist J, aged 12

 Play Gloucestershire @Play\_Glos • Oct 22, 2019

It was great to see so many [#ParkActivists](#) in [#Matson](#) proudly sporting their [#teampurple](#) shirts! They led the session and encouraged others to join in with hammock building, sports and creative play 🌿🎨🎨  
[@Sport\\_England](#) [@iwill\\_campaign](#) [#riskyplay](#)  
[#thisgirlcan](#) [#MyPark](#) [#childledplay](#)

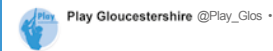
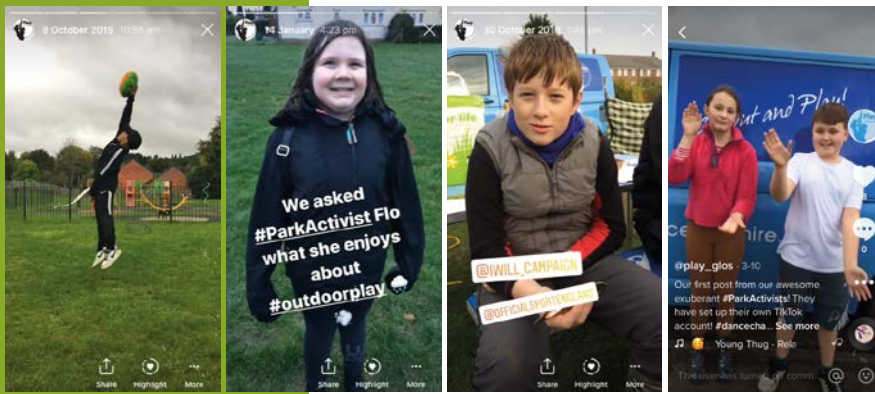


Clothing-based rewards have been integral to the My Park project's #TeamPurple image. Park Activists are proud to wear their purple shirts to show that they are volunteering and feel part of the team. Since the social action training day, they are now aware of Park Activists in other areas. Bonds have been formed, and it will be a priority for the Get Active Team to try and get Park Activists from different communities together again before the end of the project if they are able to do so whilst complying with Government restrictions. Because of the success of the purple shirts, the Park Activists requested purple hoodies for their next reward. Helping to decide on the reward scheme also gives the children ownership and ensures they feel valued as part of the team who make decisions about the project.

The Get Active Team were keen to give the Park Activists more ownership on Social Media platforms, giving them the confidence to share their volunteering experiences and ideas for social action. A successful example of this was when Instagram live stories were used to share James's Geocaching event as the day unfolded. The Get Active Team also interviewed Park Activist Flo as

*"I wish Play Rangers could come to the park every single day, they are the best!"*

Boy, age 8



Our self titles 'amazing, exuberant' #ParkActivists in #Stonehouse came up with the idea of creating their own @tiktok account to share information about the #MyPark project and the fantastic work they do through #volunteering and #SocialAction! The account will be supervised by Rangers for safety but the content will be entirely #childled and they are excited about creating dance and #getactive challenges online 🥳🕺🕺 @officialsportengland @iwill\_campaign #teampurple #rolemodels #innovators



Many Park Activists and children attending play sessions were taking part in dance challenges and posting videos, excited to show the Get Active Team how it all worked.

part of 'Outdoor Classroom Day' and she told them the benefits of playing outdoors and meeting friends to play in the park. It was very apt that the weather on this particular day was wet and windy which highlighted the resilience of our Park Activists. Another of our 'Team Purple' members wanted to share his newfound American football skills so the Get Active Team filmed him and added the outtakes and successes to Play Gloucestershire's Instagram live stories, showing the importance of trial and error when learning a new skill or sport. This format worked well to emphasise the child-led nature of this project and gave the Park Activists their own platform to share their message.

One Social Media Platform that has become hugely popular among children and young people in recent years is 'TikTok'. Many Park Activists and children attending play sessions were taking part in dance challenges and posting videos, excited to show the Get Active Team how it all worked. This sparked an idea in Park Activist Jayden, who asked if he could set up an account that the Park Activists could post on.

*"Yes I'm so excited to do our first TikTok! We've already rehearsed what we're going to do and it's a dance challenge."*

Park Activist H, aged 10

### Key Characteristic – Flexible through life's ups and downs

The Get Active Team's unconditional positive regard and understanding of what can impact on a young person's life helps with the feel of flexibility and removes the pressure to attend sessions every week. The Park Activists know they will get the same warm welcome, even if they haven't volunteered for a long period of time.

*"Danielle told Play Ranger Charlie about how her dad has moved out, and then didn't mention this for the rest of the day so, it was almost as if she just needed to get out in the open."*

Simon, Get Active Team

*"It's nice that Hannah feels happy to invite us into her world through the window of her phone! It often leads to conversations about cyber bullying or age appropriateness and it's good to get it out in the open so she feels confident if there is an issue."*

Charlie, Get Active Team

### Key Characteristic – Unconditional positive regard for young people

*"B's behaviour has dramatically improved since he started coming regularly to sessions. We have overheard adults talking about his behaviour in a negative way. We have noticed a marked difference in his anger and emotional outbursts. The responsibility we have given him and now signing up to become a Park Activist have had a really positive effect on his ability to work with others and be less disruptive."*

Charlie, Get Active Team

*"I like the Play Rangers because they're just really funny and nice."*

Park Activist T, aged 10

*"I talk to you more than I talk to my parents as they're always at work".*

Park Activist C, aged 14

The Get Active Team ensure that each child is treated fairly during play sessions, using positive role modelling and active listening. Upholding the notion that each session is a fresh start, children know that any previous behaviour, challenging or otherwise, will not be held against them and this helps to develop a positive, trusting relationship.

Following the NCLB awards event, the Get Active Team made it a priority to share the children's successes with their schools, parents and carers.

*"Thank you so much for sharing this – I will definitely make sure we talk about this as a whole school and have Alfie up to celebrate."*

Headteacher, of partner school Hesters Way Primary in Cheltenham

*"I just wanted to drop you an email to say thank you for the shared information regards James. He is a wonderful young man – always so pleasant and polite and I am not at all surprised at the glowing report you have shared with us. I have taken the liberty to share with the Head, who along with myself and the Head of Key Stage 3 will congratulate James on his achievement. Again, thank you for sharing."*

Head of Year, St. James' Catholic Secondary School

### **Key Characteristic – Good quality and meaningful volunteering opportunities including training**

The Get Active Team had planned their next training day in April 2020 which sadly had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. After speaking to Park Activists about what they were interested in learning as part of their volunteering role, many of them mentioned First Aid.

Our Park Activists have seen the Get Active Team dealing with First Aid incidents; grazed knees, trips and falls etc, and as part of their role they feel inclined to help where possible. This prompted some First Aid role play during one of our holiday sessions.

*"Chatted with Park Activists about training day, great to see their excitement. Henry is loving the planning process, great to see him integrating more with the others and bonding over their shared Park Activist role."*

Charlie, Get Active Team

### **Key Characteristic – Recognising achievements with appropriate rewards**

Using a child-led reward scheme has greatly influenced our Park Activist's commitment to volunteering. If children have missed sessions and see their peers receive rewards such as water bottles, head torches and lanyards, they instantly want to find out how far away they are from their next reward. This encourages them to keep logging more volunteering hours so that they can reach the next stage, the competitive element also has an influence between groups of Park Activists.

*"I want a head torch like her, how do I sign up?"*

Boy, age 10

*"I'll help you find the dog's owner; does that mean I'm doing volunteering?"*

Girl, age 10





### Key Characteristic – Supporting young people’s journey over several years and through key transitions

*“Sorry I haven’t been for a while, I’ve just started college doing a life skills course and am really enjoying it, I’m hoping to get a job at an outdoor clothing store. I’d also like to keep volunteering for you after I finish college on a Tuesday because I’ve missed coming to help out.”*

Park Activist C, aged 16

At this stage in the project, many young people have been supported through key transitions. The most common in our target age group has been the transition to secondary school. In terms of volunteering, the Get Active Team have found that this can have a big impact.

There have been Park Activists who have stopped attending sessions due to changing friendship groups, the places their friends go to socialise, less time or energy after the school day to come out to the park and travel time to and from school. Contrary to this, many Park Activists have continued, or even increased their volunteering with the project despite the change of school. They have found the support and unconditional positive regard of the Get Active Team invaluable when facing various changes and difficulties. The sessions provide a welcome break from the teenage pressures of school work, peers and social media use. These are often topics that young people want to discuss with the team. They feel comfortable and relaxed when doing so because of the positive relationships and social trust that have already been built through the project. They also recognise that volunteering can help them with life skills and experience for the future.

### Key Characteristics – Progression from informal to formal volunteering

When children under 10 regularly attend sessions, they look up to the Park Activists as role models and cannot wait until they can begin their volunteering journey with us. The rewards given to Park Activists are a huge attraction for them. The Get Active Team continue to offer informal volunteering opportunities for children in the hope that their interest will be piqued enough to make the transition to formal volunteering. We have seen this happen on many occasions, often when siblings or close friends have signed up as volunteers.

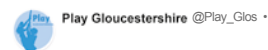
## Project Partners and Other Collaborations

### Art Shape

In Matson, community partner GL Communities introduced the Get Active Team to the local charity ‘Art Shape’. They provide bespoke training courses and information, advice and progression guidance to aid personal and professional development in the arts. Amy, an Artist from Art Shape attended one of the My Park play sessions in Matson and met a core group of Park Activists. She helped them design and create their own lanterns for a lantern parade due to take place in the local community. This led to many of the Matson Park Activists attending the event after making their lantern and the positive interaction with Art Shape.

*“Thank you for inviting me, it was great to meet you all. Had a great time and thought the group did really well considering the light!”*

Amy Iles, Project Coordinator, Art Shape



Huge thanks to Amy from #artshape\_glos who came to #Matson last night and helped the kids make lanterns ready for the Christmas parade! It was lovely to see their different creative approaches 🌟  
@gl4cic @MyPark #creativeplay #processnotproduct



*Another positive of this event was that many of the Park Activists chose to stay with the Get Active Team, volunteering their time to help visitors feel welcome.*

## Stonehouse Town Council – Stonehouse Goodwill Event

Through the Get Active Team's close partnership with Community Group All Pulling Together (APT) in Stonehouse, they were asked to attend this Goodwill Event for the second year as part of the My Park project. The team saw a huge increase in the numbers of children recognising and approaching their stall, owing to a continued presence in the local community. Another positive of this event was that many of the Park Activists chose to stay with the Get Active Team, volunteering their time to help visitors feel welcome. This was testament to their positive relationships with the Get Active Team, their feeling of ownership and belonging to the team.



We had a lovely festive time making lanterns at [#Stonehouse @goodwillfest](#) on Saturday, huge thanks to [@StonehouseTC](#) for the invite. Thanks also to our [#ParkActivists](#) who came to support us and helped other children to get creative 🎨  
[@iwill\\_campaign](#) [@teampurple](#) [#volunteering](#)



## Tackling Holiday Hunger

### The Wiggly Worm and Barnardos Food boxes

Food is a key part of the Get Active sessions, whether it's a fruit snack or preparing bigger meals during the school holidays, it is a chance to come together as a group and have meaningful conversations with Park Activists and young people. It is also a great opportunity for Park Activists to help prepare and share out food to the rest of the group. The Get Active Team are always pleased when Park Activists take ownership of this time, they often request food for the following week and are excited to learn new skills, from chopping vegetables to cooking on the fire.

Through this project, the Get Active Team were fortunate to have help with providing food from The Wiggly Worm, Gloucestershire's leading food charity, in Matson and Springbank during the school holidays. Children, young people and their families enjoyed free healthy main meals and desserts as part of their project combatting holiday hunger. For families whose children would usually be entitled to free school meals during term time, the extra cost of feeding wholesome, balanced meals during the holidays is a struggle.

During October half term in Stonehouse, the team were thankful for food donated through Barnardos, who provided 17 free vegetable boxes for families with an easy recipe guide. These collaborations helped to promote healthy food, fuelling natural energy for play and physical activity.

*"This is all free? Fantastic I've got three kids eating me out of house and home so this is a godsend!"*

Parent, Springbank

Both organisations benefitted from this collaboration because of the social trust that the Get Active Team have built with children and families in each area. Without their presence in local parks and green spaces, they would have found it more difficult to engage with the community and ensure enough people were benefitting from the free food.



*"This is great we can make soup later with all these vegetables, thank you!"*

Parent, Stonehouse





## Crime Stoppers

Play Gloucestershire is a Crimestoppers ambassador, aiming to help communities speak up and stay safe. During the summer of 2019, an outreach worker from Fearless attended several community play sessions in order to talk to young people about knife crime. Fearless is Crimestoppers' dedicated youth service.

### Get Active Session Log Sheet Extract

One of our teenage Park Activists told us that a girl had once threatened to stab her. They spoke about knife crime and the dangers and we were able to signpost her to Fearless and give out business cards about who to contact about knife crime concerns following our training. After a few instances of harsh words between young people on this site it was a good opportunity to discuss how insults and threats can often escalate into situations where it becomes difficult for either side to back down.

### Local Police and PCSO's

During a holiday play session at Oldends Lane Playing Field in Stonehouse, the Get Active Team noticed Police officers monitoring car speeds along the busy road next to the park. Parental concern about crossing this road was the main rationale for moving after school play sessions to the 'three greens' in the middle of the Park Estate. Seeing the Police officers sparked a lot of conversation with children and adults on site, traffic calming on this road would be high on the agenda for future social action in this location.

*"Your work is something that a lot of people have commented on as I am on the beat. Keep up the great work and hope to see you again soon."*

Jon Glover, PCSO, Springbank.

## Case Studies

### No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Awards

*"In the region of 4,300 children and young people are growing up in poverty (in Cheltenham) and those children, when compared to their more affluent peers are then facing significant challenges such as poorer education attainment, higher rates of exclusion, at higher risk being victims of crime, higher risk of being obese, higher risk of being open to social care, higher risk of self-harm."*

NCLB, 2019.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a Cheltenham based campaign that ran throughout 2019, seeking to highlight and improve the inequality and lack of opportunity that exists between children living in poverty and their more affluent peers.



Our #MyPark youth social action project funded by @officialsportengland & @iwill\_campaign was celebrated at the No Child Left Behind Awards run by @cheltenhambc winning for the best project that was #CelebratingChildhood We took some of our #TeamPurple members along & they had the chance to explain their part in the project to the dignitaries, they played games & ate (a lot) of the buffet food, they also had the chance to meet lots of other winners. 🏆 🍷 🍕



*It felt very special to celebrate so publicly the achievements of our volunteers and they made us proud in their responses to the many dignitaries and adults from other organisations.*



In January we discovered that we had been shortlisted for the NCLB awards in two categories, 'Physical Activity' and 'Celebrating Childhood'. We were able to transport six of our Park Activists to the evening award ceremony, held at the prestigious Cheltenham Town Hall. The event was very well organised and catered for the children extremely well, offering a healthy dinner buffet and age appropriate games and activities for them to take part in.

We were delighted to receive the award for Celebrating Childhood, being able to share the experience with six of our Park Activists was particularly enjoyable. It felt very special to celebrate so publicly the achievements of our volunteers and they made us proud in their responses to the many dignitaries and adults from other organisations who approached them wanting to find out about the project. They were confident to share their experiences and explain what they enjoy about being Park Activists. The judges in attendance were:

**Dame Janet Trotter** – Chair of Child Friendly Gloucestershire

**Martin Surl** – Police & Crime Commissioner

**Chris Spencer** – Head of Gloucestershire County Council's Children's Services

**Roger Whyborn** – Mayor of Cheltenham

*"I'm very proud of Cheltenham and the great work over the last year. The town has led the way on this agenda. I hope this marks a beginning of a countywide effort to make our county a place known as a child friendly place where every child can thrive."*

Martin Surl, Independent Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner and NCLB Awards judge.

After the awards ceremony, we noticed an increased interest in volunteering. Having shared the 'glory' and the excitement of the awards evening, other children wanted a part of it. This was great to see and the buzz among the Park Activists was infectious.

*"I was pleased to see that Demi came along with Alfie today, I think it may have been the fact that Alfie (younger brother) went to the awards ceremony that tempted her to come along again. Hopefully seeing more teenagers coming along will encourage Demi to continue volunteering."*

Charlie, Get Active Team.



*"These awards provide a great platform to shine a light on those who make a difference to the lives of children and young people across Cheltenham every day. Congratulations to all of those involved. They really deserve this well-earned recognition."*

Chris Spencer, director of Gloucestershire County Council's Children's Services and NCLB Awards judge.



*After the awards ceremony, we noticed an increased interest in volunteering. Having shared the 'glory' and the excitement of the awards evening, other children wanted a part of it. This was great to see and the buzz among the Park Activists was infectious.*

*"I'll definitely be here next week, and I'll wear my purple shirt."*

Park Activist D, aged 12

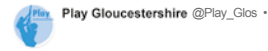
## Cheltenham Borough Homes

Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) housing association have been exceptionally supportive of our work in the Springbank and Hester's Way Community since the beginning of the project. We received confirmation at the end of January that we'd been shortlisted for the CBH Partner Impact Award as part of their 2019 Tenant Awards evening. CBH had nominated us for the aforementioned award, but we had also submitted a nomination for the 'Young Star' award on behalf of Park Activist James, who has volunteered the highest number of hours across the My Park project. Sadly, the awards ceremony in April had to be cancelled due to the Coronavirus outbreak, but it is a great example of our strong community partnerships and recognition of our work supporting children and young people.

*"Cheltenham Borough Homes have really enjoyed our partnership with Play Gloucestershire over the last 2 years, the sessions they have provided to CBH families and the local community have been brilliant to witness and brought a fresh new approach to the way children play and encourages them to explore outdoors and have fun with nature. They have been a great partner organisation on many projects including our CBH community consultation back in 2018 as well as supporting the Springbank Summer Fair last year, they regularly promote and signpost families to other local events and their blue van has become very popular with people in the area!"*

*The work Play Gloucestershire has done with its young park activists is great to see and naturally this has been recognised with their nominations at the NCLB Awards and CBH Tenant Awards, both for the Partner Impact Category and the Young Star Category."*

James Hayward, Community Investment Officer



We captured this great moment whilst four #ParkActivists were joining in with a huge game of 'back to base' in #Springbank last night. It was refreshing to hear Demi and Shannon, who both attend secondary school, telling us that they play it during lunchtimes 🏹🏹 @officialsportengland @iwill\_campaign @thisgirlcanuk #MyPark #TeamPurple #thisgirlcan #teenageplay #activeplay



## Young Star Award

**In July 2020, we were informed that Park Activist James had been awarded first place for the CBH 'Young Star' Award.**

A fantastic achievement and worthy recognition for his 142 hours of volunteering and social action since the My Park project began. The team at CBH were able to deliver the award and conduct a socially distanced interview. James is a brilliant advocate for play and volunteering, we are excited to see where James' social action journey takes him next with our support.

*"I thought you may like a photo of me with my award. Thank you so much for nominating me. A film crew came and did an interview with me and presented me with my award this morning."*

James, Park Activist

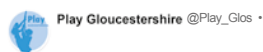
## Get Active Group Play Pod / Bristol Scrapstore

From January until the beginning of lockdown in March, we ran our second term of Get Active Group sessions at our partner school in Gloucester. After consulting with the school, they informed us that they had installed a new shed containing loose parts and material from Bristol Scrapstore, as part of their 'Play Pod' scheme. They had nominated some of the children as 'Podders' who had the responsibility of helping to pack the scrap away at the end of lunchtime play. Having seen the benefits of loose parts play in our own practice and also in other schools we have worked in, we offered to train our group of year six children to maximise the use of the Play Pod whilst minimising conflict.

The school were receptive to this and throughout the sessions we introduced different principles that would help the children to deal with any conflict arising between children using the scrap, avoiding the cessation of play, but allowing it to continue safely after a small intervention or distraction. We gave the children ownership of the sessions by allowing them to create different ideas of how to use the loose parts, forming a new challenge each week. This included creating games, animal shapes, movement challenges and building the highest tower using loose parts. This helped the children to bond as a group and learn to work together.

*"They brought toys and games and taught us how to play with them in exciting ways. I loved drinking hot chocolate and drawing!"*

Year 6 child talking about a Get Active Group Play Pod session in school.



Introducing the dynamic #ParkActivist duo Sierra and Florence! Tonight's missions including #activeplay, plenty of laughter, helping younger children and saving the planet one hydro flask at a time! 🌍♻️  
@officialsportengland @iwill\_campaign #iWillfund #SocialAction #volunteering #TeamPurple #savetheplanet



*Having seen the benefits of loose parts play in our own practice and also in other schools we have worked in, we offered to train our group of year six children to maximise the use of the Play Pod whilst minimising conflict.*

## Impact of Covid-19

### Impact on the project

The impact of Covid-19 on the My Park project began with the immediate cessation of school and community sessions from March 17th. As a charity we then had to furlough 15 of our staff in order to survive. This meant that the charity director, office manager and the My Park team were still operational. With the flexibility offered by Sport England we were able to pause and prioritise supporting our most needy beneficiaries whilst taking measures to ensure that Play Gloucestershire could survive the pandemic disruption to outputs and income.

Further impact of the Covid-19 outbreak was that the Get Active Team were unable to complete the latest experience surveys with Park Activists. For previous surveys the team used their work phones on site so that children could complete the questions with more privacy and immediately. The paper surveys have always proven harder to get engagement, the written answers being on public show for example was one of the reasons why using the phones was a preferred choice. Some printed versions of the survey have been delivered for completion but there hasn't yet been the opportunity to receive these back.

## Our response as a charity

Our immediate response was to form the 'Virtual Play Rangers', collating and sharing online content twice a day, a play idea or activity in the morning, and a mental health related post in the afternoon. At the start of lock down it seemed like everything went online, from Joe Wicks doing PE on YouTube to home educators running classes on Facebook Live. We wanted to be able to provide focus on what content was out there, try and test what works and then share with our online community so they knew they could open the link and be able to take part because of the trust they have in us. This was well received by our online audiences and we found that our focus on simple, low cost ideas for keeping children active and creative were most popular.



## Bags of Play Campaign

Keen to do something practical, being mindful of digital exclusion and to keep play happening despite our absence from community green spaces, our 'Bags for Play' campaign was born. What if we could create a bag that was a mini version of the kit we take out in to the heart of local communities in our fleet of vans? Loose parts, arts and crafts materials, chinks, sporty equipment that could led to play at home, in the garden, on a balcony, at the local park. The contents had multiple uses and could be adapted to suit all ages and abilities only bound by the users' imagination. At first, funding was secured for 500 of these bags, but with the help of some external funders and long-term local council funders, and generous donations via our 'Bags of Play Appeal' on JustGiving, we packed and delivered another 1,000 bags for vulnerable children and families across Gloucestershire.



## How we connected with Park Activists during lockdown

The first contact with the Park Activists was via our online Virtual Play Ranger content. We had images sent to us of them trying our suggested activities out, some even sent us their own ideas to share with the wider audience. Following this, deliveries of personalised Bags of Play to each of our Park Activists were made. Hand delivering these bags, where possible, meant we could check in with the children at their home whilst maintaining social distance. These visits highlighted the inequalities facing children during lockdown. Our Park Activists who lived in less rural areas were often living in flats and sharing communal indoor and outdoor spaces which meant that during lockdown it was very difficult for them to socially distance. Checking in via phone calls with Park Activists and their families has proven an important part of our My Park lockdown routine, and has reinforced the strong relationships formed through community sessions and school lunchtimes.

As a follow up to the Bags of Play deliveries, contact was made with the recipients to see how the bags were used and how lockdown continued to affect activity levels: some of the questions and responses are as follows.

### Who are you playing with at the moment?

*"I play with my friends online on the PlayStation. It's been quite fun, spending time with the family, it's been very nice. I've been back to school for about a week now, it's been great to have my friends."*

A, aged 10, Springbank



**Are you missing anything about not being able to go to Play Rangers? If yes, what are you missing?**

*"I'm missing being able to go there because sometimes there's new faces, sometimes there's people that sign up. And then I'm also missing looking forward to Monday and I'm about to ask my mum can I go to My Park! Now it's just different."*

J, aged 10, Matson

**How and where do you play at the moment?**

*"Just recently I started to be able to go out a little bit and my brother's friend fixed my bike so I can ride my bike now, but also before that I've been playing on the field and I also have a paddling pool so on hot days I can go in it."*

D, aged 10, Matson.

**Are you missing anything about not being able to go to My Park? If yes, what are you missing?**

*"Playing with friends and I miss that we missed out on the My Park training day."*

D, aged 10, Stonehouse.

**How and where do you play at the moment?**

*"Outside in the garden, I've done some skipping with the skipping rope you gave me and I've been swimming in the paddling pool."*

G, aged 10, Stonehouse



**Who are you playing with at the moment?**

*"Mostly by myself and I've also been playing with some of the craft stuff that I got sent from you guys. My mum just said to tell you that I also learnt how to skip with the rope you sent!"*

F, aged 10, Stonehouse

**Parental Feedback**

Speaking to parents/carers during our phone calls (in April and May) the majority of feedback was that lockdown had been a nice pause, and meant more family time. The weather encouraged a lot of outdoor play, and the Park Activists' newfound confidence in adapting games using minimal kit clearly benefitted their families as they found their 'new normal'. There was a strong feeling of community spirit and people helping others. This is something to highlight and emulate when speaking to Park Activists about future social action ideas.

*"It's been alright thanks, they've just been out playing in the garden a lot, the weather's helped."*

Parent, Springbank

*"I work at a pub and I've been furloughed, my routine has just gone out the window. I had an email the other day saying my job is still safe and I can't wait to go back."*

Parent, Matson

*Checking in via phone calls with Park Activists and their families has proven an important part of our My Park lockdown routine, and has reinforced the strong relationships formed through community sessions and school lunchtimes.*

The focus can shift more towards social action exploring the local area noting evidence of what people are doing to help others during this time and where there is a need for extra support.



## Going forward

*“One thing that has become abundantly clear during the lifting of the lockdown restrictions is that on the ground level there is a network of community groups and local leaders that are keen to help communities return to some sort of ‘new normal’. The financial support, as well as help with any changes in policies and procedures needed to be ‘Covid safe’ from local/central government, National Governing Bodies and funding streams like the lottery has mobilised this community workforce. There is immense local knowledge to be tapped into to lessen the effects of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of residents, which of course includes young people.”*

Ben Morris, Play Gloucestershire’s Urban Team Leader.

As this situation develops the need to be flexible and find ways of continuing to connect with our Park Activists is important. Community gatherings cannot resume yet. We have plans in place to run socially distanced small group work in private outdoor spaces with our Park Activists in the three locations throughout August. There will again be a focus on Year 6 transitions, particularly because the majority of our Park Activists will be starting secondary school in September.

Testing a new approach, called ‘Stepping Out’, two members of the Get Active team will take a small group of Park Activists for a socially distanced walk around their local community. Here, the focus can shift more towards social action exploring the local area noting evidence of what people are doing to help others during this time and where there is a need for extra support. These walks will of course have active play elements along the way, for example, using a pack of chalks to draw obstacle courses on the pavements to encourage other members of the community to get active on their journeys to and from the shops/work/the park/school. There is also the potential for siblings who usually attend My Park sessions to join in with these walks if they are from the same household, providing the opportunity to engage with yet more children in the community and inspire the next generation of Park Activists.

It is disappointing not to be able to offer our usual open access sessions in the community, and obviously Park Activist recruitment will be greatly affected. However, a positive outcome is that our sole focus during August will be on our Park Activists and their ideas for social action. After speaking to our partner schools during this time we know that many children who have been attending school are in a better place mentally, despite the huge changes inflicted on them, because of the smaller class sizes and more focussed, one to one attention they have been able to receive in these extraordinary circumstances. In addition to this, there has been an increase in outdoor learning, play and free play because of the reduction in potential spread of the virus. As a playwork charity, this is exciting for the future because schools and leaders have seen first-hand the benefits of more outdoor play and exercise without the usual pressure of exams or inspections.

For the last two weeks of the Summer term, newly appointed My Park Project Manager Charlie Marsh was able to return to our partner school Moat Primary in Matson, to deliver active lunchtimes and Year 6 transitional active play sessions using physical distancing guidelines to ensure the safety of those taking part. It has been a test for the Get Active Team and the Park Activists/those attending to come up with adapted games that are ‘Covid safe’. It has been a good challenge that has spurred on many discussions about the importance of play and being active.

*“We’ve been focussing on the Curriculum with the Year 6 children who have been coming in, to give them the best start we can for Secondary school. This is why I’m so glad they are able to have these sessions with the Get Active Team to just let loose and have fun.”*

Year 6 Teacher, Moat Primary Academy

## Evaluation Key Findings –

As we approach the final 8 months of our My Park project, we have presented evidence to show our key findings and outcomes. The Get Active team are now fully integrated in the three communities, this position of trust and the longevity of our presence is encouraging more children to get involved and volunteer. This evaluation has shown:

- Park Activists are confident to create and implement their own social action projects, with less help and support from the Get Active Team needed
- Increasing awareness in Park Activists that their social actions are helping others and making them feel good at the same time
- Park Activists enjoying their sense of agency, being in control of what they do and how they do it, which is helping their self-esteem and independence
- Children and families in Matson, Springbank and Stonehouse gathering on a weekly basis in local parks to meet and make new friends, be active and have fun resulting in increased physical activity
- A range of people feeling safer using their local park when the Get Active Team including the Park Activists are present
- Appreciation by the wider community of the park being used in a positive way and each park being used in our absence as well as during our play sessions
- Continuation of our valued partnerships through the work of the Park Activists and the Get Active Team, including schools, community organisations, the police and local councillors. These partnerships have been instrumental during the Coronavirus outbreak to connect with our Park Activists and conduct outreach work in the three communities
- Nominations and awards for the impact the My Park project has had on children and young people in the three communities
- Joining up multiple strands of Play Gloucestershire's work – both school and park based – has built the trust and confidence of young people by starting in school and created a desire in them to be active and sociable in their local park
- Non-sport specific staff being highly effective in engaging and motivating young people to take part in social actions supporting physical activity. It's all about a non-directive approach built on reliability, trust and mutual respect
- The project is fun and appealing. The Park Activists have a strong sense of team and belonging and are proud to be part of 'Team Purple'
- Young people have been well supported through life's ups and down with trained and experienced staff who are able to provide nurture and support, and resilient enough to cope with some challenging situations
- The range of social actions are growing with Park Activists coming up with bigger ideas as they become more experienced and more confident, they are taking increasing ownership of the project through social media and ideas for social action
- Young people feel their contributions are valued in their home community and recognised by the rewards scheme they have developed
- School transitions are supported with mentoring and young people benefit from My Park continuing during this time of disruption and change
- Park Activists are supported through the Covid-19 outbreak and returning to active play and volunteering safely
- The project has effectively built trust with children and families living in low-income communities.



*Increasing awareness in Park Activists that their social actions are helping others and making them feel good at the same time.*



## Acknowledgements

Play Gloucestershire would like to thank **Sport England**, the **#iwill fund**, **The National Lottery** and **DCMS** for funding the 'My Park' project. Thanks to **Hester's Way Primary School**, **Moat Primary Academy** and **Park Junior School** for welcoming our Get Active Team on a weekly basis. We are grateful for the support of our hard working local community groups, especially for their continued support and collaboration during the Covid-19 outbreak. We'd like to thank the land owners and Councillors for enabling us to use the parks and green spaces that are essential for our sessions. **And of utmost importance, we'd like to thank our Park Activists, children and families for their continued enthusiasm and for making the project what it is today.**

“Great to see our park being used this way. Thank you Play Gloucestershire.”

Councillor Suzanne Williams, Springbank, Cheltenham

### Play Gloucestershire

Unit R7-R9 City Works, Alfred Street,  
Gloucester GL1 4DF.

T 01452 505548

E [info@playgloucestershire.org.uk](mailto:info@playgloucestershire.org.uk)

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