

GGCA User Involvement Policy Statement

This policy statement has been produced to reflect the value that GGCA places on play and the importance of children in our society. It reflects our commitment to ensure that children and their needs are central to policy making and that provision is made to meet those needs. Although reference is made to parent and carers views and involvement, this user involvement policy statement is primarily concerned about the effective involvement of children and young people.

Founded on the principle that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK Government in December 1991, GGCA recognises the importance of play for the child. In aiming to ensure we meet Article 31 of the Convention, this policy statement aims to contribute to creating an environment that fosters children's play and is underpinned by the national strategy for providing for children's play needs. GGCA believe that:

- play is an important learning process developed to meet the needs of children and young people's instinctive desire to play. Children use play in the natural environment to learn about the world around them and to gain the benefits of play within learning and growth.
- play encompasses children's behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and naturally motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward, and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development - not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live.
- play is of critical importance to all children and young people as it aids in the development of their physical, social, mental, emotional and creative skills. GGCA welcomes every opportunity to support play and creates an environment that fosters it. Decision making at all levels of the GGCA has children and young people's voice heard either directly or via our Children and Young People's Development Officer.
- play is first and foremost the process of a child's own, self-directed learning and as such is a process that benefits all ages of children. By providing child centred play opportunities, the GGCA contribute towards and support children and young people's positive development.

This policy statement is predicated upon the principles that:

- every child is entitled to respect for their own unique combination of qualities and capabilities;
- the perceptions of the child, their views and opinions should always be respected to enable each child to feel connected at all levels.

What We Do

1. Every child, young person or parent/carer is a member of society. The GGCA therefore believe it is important that children and young people are consulted and involved in the play provision services.
2. Through consultation with and involvement of children, young people and their families our play provision is developed to be inclusive, relevant, cost effective, meet the needs of children, young people and their families/care provider and accessible. We always try to adapt opportunities to meet individual children's needs and abilities.
3. Children, young people and their families are provided with regular opportunities to have a voice, be listened to, contribute to and involved in establishing and developing opportunities they want and are encouraged to have their own ideas included and implemented within the play setting.
4. Children are encouraged to decide how they evaluate the sessions we deliver and use a range of their chosen methods to capture information that can be used to improve provision.
5. Children and young people determine how play opportunities can be improved in order to remain relevant to the changes in their interests, needs, wants and wishes.

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6. Staff help children and young people source information that helps them to make informed decisions about being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving so they can make a positive contribution and know their opinion, thoughts and feelings count.
7. Word Participation to enable children and young people to participate in activities to build, make and read other words, promoting cognitive, social and emotional development.

Parent/Carer and Family Inclusion

GGCA understand that parents and carers are the experts when it comes to their children. We therefore encourage all parents, carers and families to play a vital part in the development and delivery of play services. This allows provision to continually develop in line with local needs with support being offered to maximise inclusion.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC has 54 articles: It protects the rights of children and young people up to 18 years of age across the world. Articles 1-41 set out rights about how children and young people should be treated so they are safe, healthy and happy. The other 13 articles are all about how Governments and adults should work together to make sure children and young people can access and enjoy these rights (42-54) [Children's Rights Booklet \(gov.wales\)](#).

Article 31: children and young people have the right to have fun in the way they want to, whether by playing sports, watching films, or doing something else entirely. They have the right to rest, too. Children and young people should be able to take part freely in cultural activities, just like adults. We make this as easy as possible for children and young people whether they have a disability or not.

Article 12: Children and young people have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

Article 13: Children and young people have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others.

Article 17: Children and young people have the right to receive, seek and give information.

Article 23: Disabled children and young people have the right to active participation in their community.

Article 2: Requires all of the rights in the convention on the Rights of the Child to be implemented for every child, without discrimination

SEN Children and Young People

It is important to the GGCA that we capture the thoughts, opinions, ideas, interests, wants, needs and wishes of children and young people with additional needs or health conditions so that play opportunities can be adapted to reflect the age and abilities of all children and young people. Our first and foremost concern is to ensure the open access play provision is safe and equipped with resources that can be adapted for individual needs and abilities. We are therefore committed to working with the parents/carers of children and young people to gather relevant information that will enable us to put things in place. This may also include working with other agencies to gather information, advice and support that contributes to individualised risk assessments being developed and for procedures to be put in place for the benefit and safety of the child when accessing play opportunities.

Benefits of Consulting with Children and Young People

The benefits of participation can be seen from two aspects:

1. Benefits for children and young people and parents
2. Success of projects and initiatives develop sustainability.

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Through consultation, Children and young people will:

- Develop and improved skills and knowledge ranging from practical skills such as presenting ideas, speaking in and to groups, writing and preparing reports, newsletters, letters, posters, negotiation and public speaking.
- Gain increased confidence, in feeling valued, being involved in decision making processes, developing self worth amongst friends and peers, and feeling successful.
- Develop relationships with other children and young people and parents/carers.
- Gain a feeling of ownership over the services they access.
- Acquire greater awareness of their rights.
- Increased awareness of participation and decision making
- Enable a better targeted and more effective service for children and young people, and their families.
- Communicate more effectively with the service, organisation and Board of Trustees

- Feed into and support the planning, development and evaluation of provision
- Enable their needs to be better met, reducing barriers to participation
- Contribute to improving existing and developing new partnership working.
- Have a say in how best to manage resources including financial budgets

How Feedback is Gathered

We involve children and young people in:

- Planning participation and consultation events or holding an event for children and young people where they are supported to be involved in setting up the event themselves such as deciding when and where the event should be held
- Through using a range of evaluation methods appropriate for age and ability for example the Likert Scale using smiley faces, Feelings Ladder, Graffiti Boards, Traffic Lights System
- Through one to one and group discussions
- By asking solution focused questions
- Through the suggestion/ideas box
- Asking Children and Young People how they prefer to feedback

How We Inform Children and Young People About How We Use Their Feedback

We recognise how important it is for children and young people to know what we do with their feedback so that they understand they have been listened to. Strengthening our processes for listening and acting upon the feedback from Children and Young People is an ongoing process that evolves in line with the age, knowledge, skills and abilities of the children and young people.

We strive to be open, transparent and honest with children and young people and treat them with respect. We include them in the changes that are made as a result of their feedback so that they can see how worthwhile their contribution has been.

We look at ways that we can make continual improvements to the service we provide and incorporate individual needs of those who attend so that the provision is inclusive, supportive, safe and welcoming.

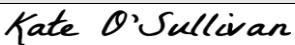

We respond to their feedback in a timely manner, including them in the decisions of how we make the changes they want to see happen.

We ensure children and young people's voices are represented in various forums, funding applications, within the wider organisation and the communities they reside in.

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We update and inform children and young people about the steps required to make the changes and support them to make the decisions are how, why, when, where etc the changes should be made.

This policy was adopted on 13.10.2025 and will be reviewed on or before 13.10.2026

Name and Position	Signed	Date
Kate O'Sullivan Community Association Manager		13.10.2025
Olive Frances Vice Chair of Trustees		13.10.2025

Title	User Involvement Policy Statement (edited)
File name	User Involvement P...ment (edited).pdf
Document ID	d791aec253d10e390c352f8ce99eb75d2f43cfae
Audit trail date format	DD / MM / YYYY
Status	● Pending signature

Document history



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