

Play Sufficiency Leeds

New Wortley

New Wortley area profile

Play Pamphlet
New Wortley (1)
Through the
lens of the
child

New Wortley sits within the Armley Ward. There are above average numbers of children living within the area (approx. 25% of the local population), and a larger number of 25 – 35 year olds. Whilst 74% of the population classify themselves as white British, there are 14.6% of households who don't have English as a first language.

Although close to the city centre, New Wortley as a whole has been described as being like an Island, surrounded by busy road systems such as Leeds Gyratory, Tong Road and the high walls of HM Prison Leeds overlooking one side of the area. The area is served by 3 main primary schools, with Castleton Primary School being the closest. Child obesity has fluctuated greatly in the area but is currently showing some of the highest levels in the city. There have been reports of groups of youths causing harassment and concern, damage to property (mostly broken windows), and deliberate fires.

The closest parks greenspace is Old Oak Recreational Park (known locally as Jaily Fields) which is a 5 minute walking distance from the Holdsworth and Clyde's estates, and a 10 minute walk from New Wortley Community Centre. However it came through from children and adults that they felt there wasn't much within Jaily Fields which invited play. The closest play area at the time of research is located in New Wortley Recreation Ground. However access to this park involves crossing busy main roads, and is approximately a 15 minute walk from much of the estate.



Children from New Wortley that took part in our research, saw play as something fun that made them happy. Play was often an activity done with friends, or seen as a way of making new friends. Although technology was mentioned as being play, such as time on a tablet, play was also described as a way of being active, running, getting fresh air, and getting time off technology. Children recognised play benefitted their mental health and helped them feel energised. However, accessing opportunities for play was compromised in a range of ways.

"My parents just do not let me"

(female child, aged 10)

Over two thirds of the children we worked with in New Wortley rated their opportunities for play as just ok or unsatisfactory, with the rest reporting it as good. Over half the children were not allowed to play out without a grown-up present, the quotation above being representative of many of the children's experience. When asked if they meet up with their friends to play outside of school, one young person stated *'No because my parents say it's too dangerous'*, another saying *'I'm not allowed to go to the park because it is dangerous. The teenagers set fire to things'*. Over half the children in New Wortley mentioned bullies (in person and online) as negatively affecting their play. Nearly two thirds of children said they didn't feel safe when playing out.

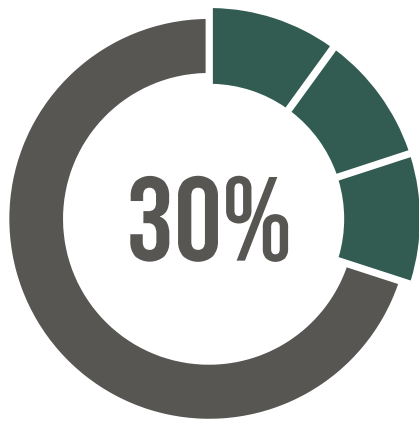
Although some estates are largely car free, inability to cross some busy roads impacted where children could go without a grown up present. Children spoke about not being allowed to cross certain roads (such as Tong Road, Green Lane and Hall Lane. The distance of a space such as a park, green space, or a play scheme was mentioned by many as being too far, or somewhere they needed a grown up to take them to.

Do you have enough friends to play and hang out with?



1 in 7 from LS12 answered no, they would like more friends

Year 5 survey 2022
82 LS12 responses



30% of Year 5 children surveyed from LS12 area hardly ever or never played out

For many of the children in New Wortley parental permission to play and the associated freedom of movement necessary to access play and friends was significantly constrained due to parental concerns about safety, as a result of the perceived threat of anti-social behaviour and parental fears about both the volume and associated dangers of traffic.

Many children spoken to in New Wortley lived in flats so weren't playing out in spaces like gardens. Most children were happy with the places they did play, but nearly all the children stated they can't play in as many different places as they'd like to. The range of places they were playing was small. Some could only name rooms of their house or school as places they did play and sometimes those spaces were shared 'I wish I had a bigger bedroom to play. I live in the flats and share a bedroom with my brother and Sister.'

Nearly all the children felt they did have enough friends to play with, but playing with friends was mostly only available to children when in school, in their home or via technology. Some weren't allowed to go to friend's houses 'I am not allowed to go to my friends houses. My parents just do not let me.' Lack of access to a variety of spaces for play children can access free from parental accompaniment is significantly affecting these children's experience of play sufficiency. School provides the main place for play and access to friends for many of these children, raising questions about further reduced opportunities for play and socialisation outside of term time. Access to opportunities to play is a challenge for many of the children in New Wortley but for some with protected characteristics, they can face additional barriers as represented by a young carer from our New Wortley research cohort, who does not have any time outside of school to play with friends. 'I cannot play because I have to look after my mom, I am only allowed people around if they are older and helping'.

Despite over two thirds of children in the New Wortley cohort reporting play experiences as just OK or unsatisfactory, and reporting limited access to spaces to play, limited variety in the spaces they could play and limited access to friends they are still acutely aware of the things that would enhance their play. Nature was seen as being really important to enable play by all the children. Children listed individual elements such as water, grass and trees as things that would help them to play. This final quote from a child encapsulates the general mood of discussions in a simple call for action 'Make sure that nature stays, we need trees. I want to make tree swings to play on'.

