



#EQUALPLAY

**EVERY CHILD'S RIGHT
TO EVERYDAY PLAY**
REPORT 2022

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

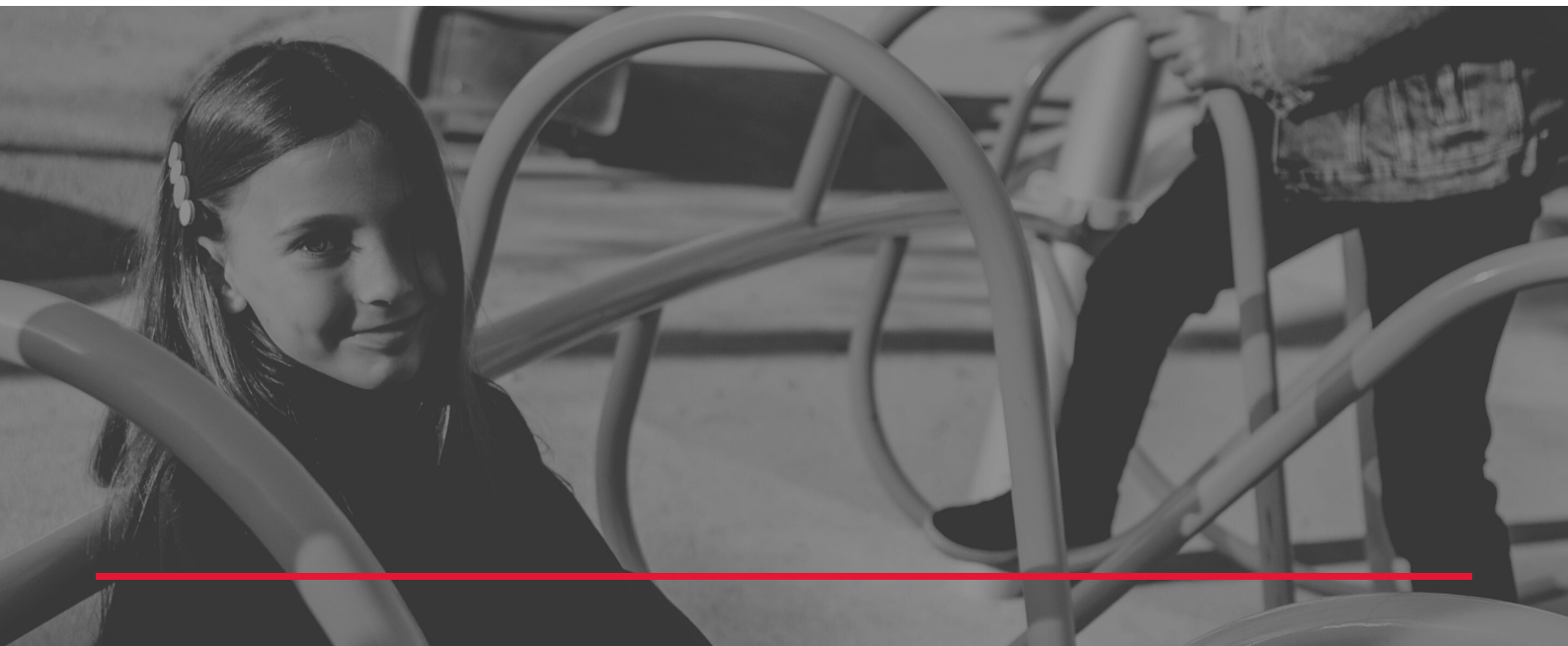
Every child's right to everyday play

The Equal Play campaign is based on new research which shows that children's access to public play areas is unequal and unfair.

A new Freedom of Information Act request has revealed that some areas of the UK have almost five times the number of children per playground as others.

Children's opportunities to play outdoors are a postcode lottery.

The Government's Levelling Up agenda must ensure equal access to public play spaces throughout the UK.



EQUAL PLAY

Every child's right to everyday play

The Association of Play Industries (API) carried out FOI requests in 2017 and 2018 that highlighted an **alarming decline in the number of playgrounds** and in the amount spent by Local Authorities on play provision.

The closure of public play spaces during the pandemic and the effects on children of lockdowns has brought about a **renewed appreciation** by the public of the importance of these community assets.

We therefore decided to conduct an updated FOI survey to find out how many play areas exist and what **Local Authorities' plans are for 2020 and 2021**.

We are pleased to see from the results that the **number of play areas is no longer reducing** and that the decline seems to have "bottomed out".

However, the data clearly shows that it is a pure **'postcode lottery'** as to the number and quality of play areas children have access to in their local area, with some areas well-served and others severely lacking.

The vast majority of children live in built-up urban areas, and those from the 1 in 8 UK households without a garden (1 in 5 in London), rely on public play areas for outdoor play and exercise. For many children, **community playgrounds are their only chance to play outdoors**. Disabled children's access to, and enjoyment from, playgrounds also needs to improve.

The Government's 'Levelling Up' agenda should include **levelling up the opportunities that children have to play** and get active in their local areas.

A black and white photograph of a child playing on a modern playground structure made of ropes and wooden beams. The child is in the foreground, reaching up towards a rope. The background shows more of the playground and some trees.

The Equal Play campaign is calling for:

Ring-fenced central government funding for play, to enable local authorities to provide EVERY child with a safe, high-quality playground nearby.

THE POSTCODE LOTTERY OF PLAY

Every child's right to everyday play

The data clearly shows that it is a pure 'postcode lottery' as to the **number and quality of play areas** children have access to in their local area, with some areas well-served and others **severely lacking**.

API Supporting the
UK Play Industry

- 
- 0 - 100 children per playground
 - 100 - 200 children per playground
 - 200 - 400 children per playground
 - 400 - 600 children per playground
 - 600 - 800 children per playground
 - 800+ children per playground

CHILDREN PER PLAYGROUND ACROSS THE UK

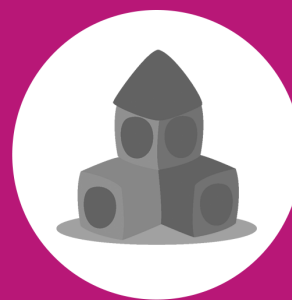
THE STATE OF PLAY IN THE UK

Key facts from the data

The British Children's Play Survey, the largest study of play in Britain – a sample of 1919 adults with a child aged 5-11 years in 2020.

Playgrounds are the **no. 1 location** for children's play

(away from the home)



Children in London have access to almost **5 times fewer** public playgrounds than children in Scotland.

Scotland has 196 children per playground compared to 866 in London.

The West Midlands also has the worst childhood obesity rate in England (Year 6).

The West Midlands has the worst play provision in the UK with **929 children** per playground.



THE STATE OF PLAY IN THE UK

Key facts from the data



London has the **second worst** play provision in the UK with **866 children** per playground.

1 in 5 households in London has no garden or outside space.

Wales has 392 children per playground compared to 866 in London.

Welsh children enjoy access to over **twice the number** of playgrounds than children in London.



Every playground in the North East and the North West serves over 600 children, compared to

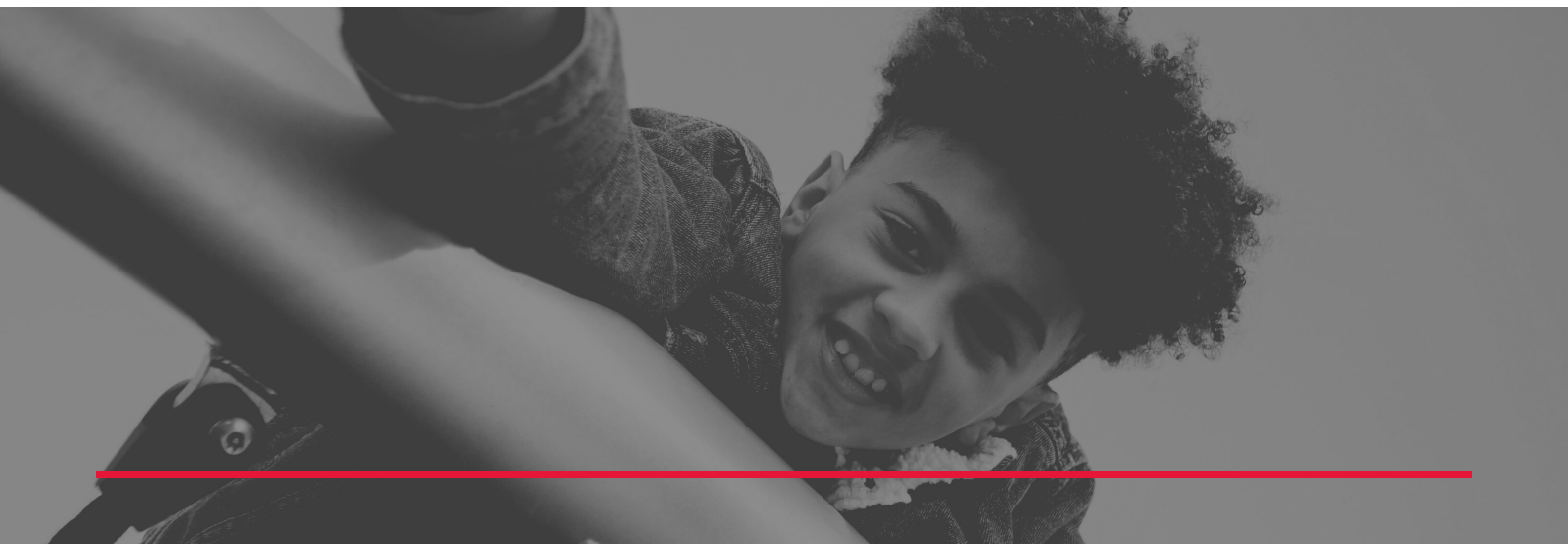
The North East has 616 and the North West has 626 children per playground.

EQUAL PLAY

Every child's right to everyday play

Public playgrounds ensure every child's right to everyday play

- Playgrounds help tackle **childhood obesity, mental health and sleep problems**.
- Playgrounds are a **free public service** and open to all children.
- Children play out more and are **more active** when they have a playground nearby.
- For children in the 1 in 8 UK households without gardens, **playgrounds are often the only outdoor space in which to play**.
- Playgrounds are **spaces created just for children** – all children.
- Playgrounds are the **heart of communities** and connect people every day.
- Playgrounds are **inclusive**. Children from all walks of life and all abilities play there.





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