

The state of play in Scotland:

Detailed data analysis shows children's play opportunities are a 'postcode lottery'

Last month, the Association of Play Industries (API) launched its [Equal Play](#) campaign based on [new research](#) which showed that access to public play spaces in the UK is unfair and unequal. A Freedom of Information survey revealed that some UK regions have almost five times the free-to-access play provision of others.

Given the enormous variation in play provision across the UK, the API has since been inundated with requests for more localised data. In response to these queries, we are today sharing the first of four maps outlining the state of play in each of the four nations, starting with Scotland.

API Chair Mark Hardy, says:

"Our UK-wide map revealed that, on average, children in Scotland enjoy the best free-to-access play provision in the UK, with almost five times fewer children per playground than the worst area in the UK, the West Midlands.

"However, averaging out statistics across large regions inevitably means sacrificing some of the crucial local data. A deeper dive reveals that although children in Scotland appear well-served overall, this is not the case for all Scottish children. Analysing the data local authority by local authority we see that, within Scotland, access to public play spaces is as much of a 'postcode lottery' as anywhere else in the UK, with some areas well-served and others severely lacking.

"The variation is so extreme that areas range from 575 children per playground to just 63. Whilst the First Minister of Scotland's £60m fund to renew every play park in Scotland is hugely welcome, this data clearly shows that much more needs to be done to provide equal play opportunities for all.

"We are asking Westminster for ring-fenced funding for play, to enable local authorities to provide every child in the UK with a safe, local and high-quality playground nearby. Play provision in Scotland is extremely patchy and so we are lobbying the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to provide all local authorities with access to a national funding stream for public playgrounds.

"The Government's Levelling Up agenda must include children's access to outdoor play in all the four nations. Play is fundamental for childhood development and millions of children are being disadvantaged by this postcode lottery."

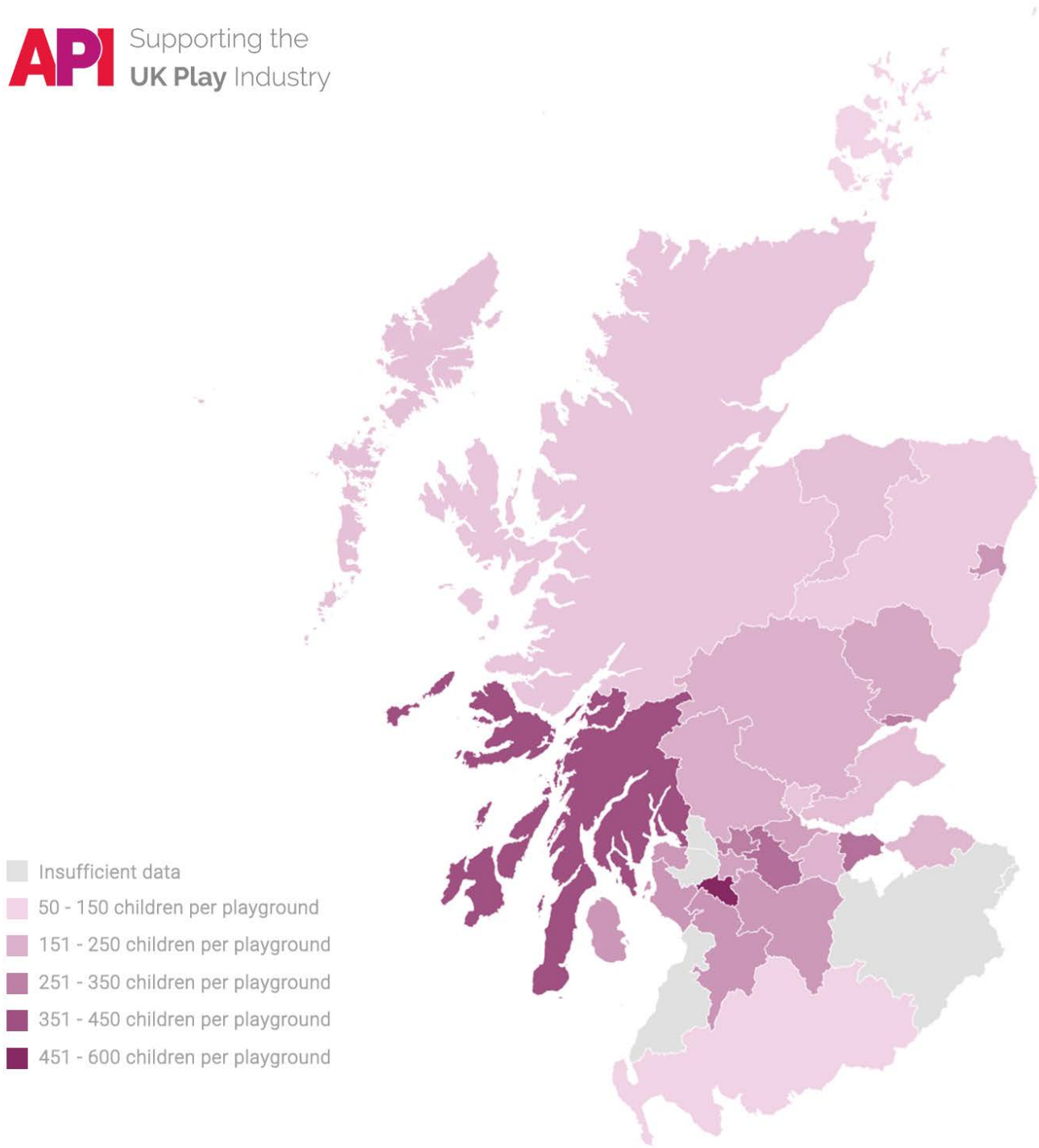
Marguerite Hunter Blair, Chief Executive of Play Scotland says:

"Scotland's Play Strategy vision is for every child to experience life-enhancing play opportunities, every day. It's clear from the API heat map that there is a wide variation in

formal playground provision across Scotland. We know that play is a social justice issue and the inequalities around access to play have been compounded by the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on children’s mental health and wellbeing.

“Local authorities fulfil a critical role in providing quality opportunities for children’s play, including formal play sites. A new Play Sufficiency Duty and the role out of the Play Park Renewal Fund (underpinned by National Play Principles) means that the voice of children, families and communities is at the heart of plans for play. Resourcing these plans must be a top priority.”

API Supporting the
UK Play Industry



CHILDREN PER PLAYGROUND ACROSS SCOTLAND