



Sports & Play Consulting

INDEPENDENT ADVICE
AND SUPPORT



Independent advice and support for organisations looking for a new outdoor play or sports facility, who do not have the time or experience to effectively manage the process.

Do you know how accessible and inclusive your playgrounds and sports facilities are?

How will you decide where to invest your play & sports budget?

We deliver Assessments for public play & sports facilities to help you prioritise your budget and focus your spend on where it will have the most impact.

Public play and sports facilities must be both '**accessible**' and '**inclusive**' under the Equality Act 2010 (this replaced the 'DDA' – Disability Discrimination Act of 1995). They should be compliant with safety guidance and also, fun, engaging and enjoyable for families to visit!

If your organisation needs guidance on how to make your facility more accessible, inclusive and appealing to everyone in the community, look no further.

We will visit your facilities and undertake an on-site assessment, reporting back to you with:

- ✓ A **graded Accessibility Assessment** - how easy is it for a family to find their way to your public play areas, to gain access into and move around that play area? This assessment generally considers environmental and way-finding factors.
- ✓ A **graded Inclusivity Assessment** - how well does your play area include children of all abilities, disabilities and backgrounds in the play activities? How well does it encourage everyone to join in? This assessment generally considers how visitors will use the equipment, surfaces and spaces.
- ✓ Finally, our **graded Play Value Assessment** describes the quality of your current play provision, what functions are provided and for what age group.

For all assessments the output is a graded overview of 'good' / 'adequate' / 'poor' – especially useful if you have a number of sites to prioritise – and a detailed score for each element. We also give you practical suggestions for improvements in each report.

Our Approach

Our aim is to help you provide a high quality experience for all visitors. Our approach is to advise on increasing choices that give all children the opportunity to play and interact with their peers without exclusion. Choices that are appropriate to their personal stage of development, their age and their ability, whatever that may be, and which meets their needs of today and in the future. The choice and possibility to play along with other children should they wish to and the choice to disengage from sensory exposure if required.

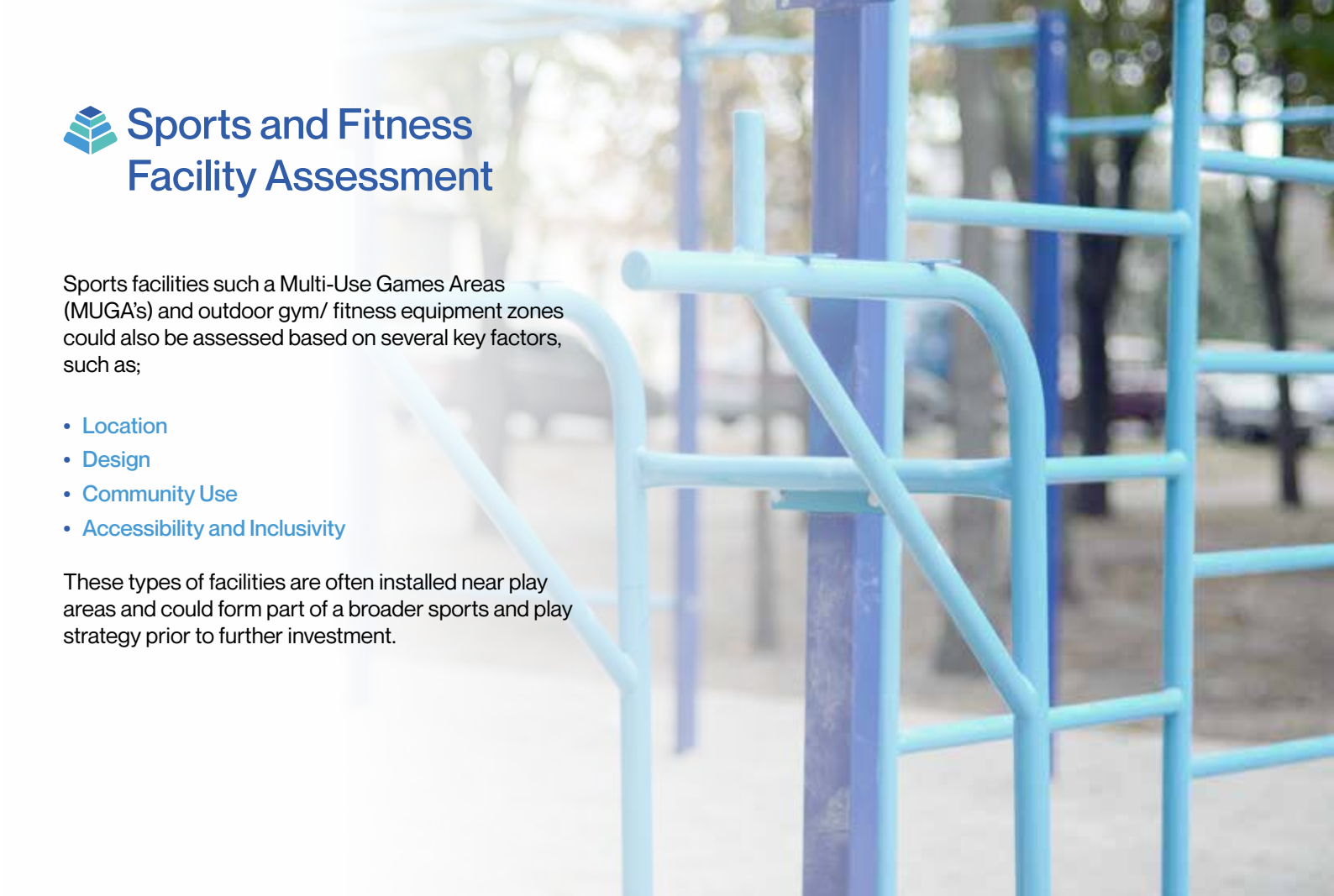
We understand that barriers to access and inclusion can be physical, cognitive and can also be cultural. We also understand that every site cannot be "everything to everyone". Creating inclusive play areas is about providing real choices and options for individuals in the community with a holistic view of all useable facilities in the area.

We have taken industry good practice from a number of known and reputable sources and developed our own set of in-depth scoring tables that are relevant to today's legislative, economic and cultural requirements. We will continue to evolve our assessment content and style with developments in the market.



What we don't do

- ✗ We are not affiliated to a manufacturer of equipment or surfacing and we are not aiming for any product sales
- ✗ We do not provide routine or annual safety inspections



Sports and Fitness Facility Assessment

Sports facilities such as Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA's) and outdoor gym/ fitness equipment zones could also be assessed based on several key factors, such as;

- Location
- Design
- Community Use
- Accessibility and Inclusivity

These types of facilities are often installed near play areas and could form part of a broader sports and play strategy prior to further investment.

Public Consultation

Engagement with and feedback from the local community, including hard to reach groups can be very helpful in guiding a development plan and creating a successful play area that the community love.

Public consultation and engagement is critical when considering any changes or significant investment into either an existing or a new facility. Not only should the community be part of the process to help understand and ensure investment is being made in the right way, but the method for engagement and the way in which it is formulated and conducted is just as important to ensure the information collected is relevant, measurable, deliverable and beneficial.

A consultation can be designed and based on various factors, which may include:

- Strategic importance of the site
- Current and potential use
- Considered changes and impact, opportunities and conflicts
- Budgetary impact: initial and ongoing
- Time Frames of proposed changes

Sports and Play Consulting can assist by working with you to determine the best practice and format to undertake for your facilities.

We can support your project by providing the tools to collect public feedback. We structure our tools in a way that gives you tangible, focused evidence and information to create an action plan (as opposed to masses of 'comments' without structure or context).

We can create imagery and sketches to help facilitate feedback, to kick-start discussion and support a decision making process, helping you work through all the possibilities to define your brief ready for the procurement stage.

We can be hands on - if you'd like us to deliver a community workshop we'll be there. Or we can be hands off - we'll build you a digital tool for gathering feedback and we'll create you a report of the findings. Or both.



Design Concepts

Prior to going into a procurement process, creation of a design concept is critical to formulate a brief and scope of work for the project. It is a document that visually describes the key factors to be addressed and is especially useful for site locations that have existing facilities or features that should be incorporated, altered or replaced.

The process of creating a Design Concept helps to form and refine the priorities for the client. Using a design concept to form part of the project brief creates a consistent and clear communication of the project requirements, decided in advance of engagement with any contractor or manufacturer chosen to deliver the project. It may be used to describe key design factors for altering layout and flow and/ or for defining a material and colour palate and 'design code' or style appropriate to the location.

The process of creating a design concept would typically consider the following:

- The outcome and conclusions of Accessibility, Inclusivity, Play Value and Safety Inspection assessments.
- Community input through consultation and engagement.
- Broader site considerations, opportunities or conflicts
- Input from key stakeholders such as councillors, officers, maintenance team, community police, funders (as appropriate).
- The budget available for investment.

Sports and Play Consulting can assist by working with the Council to develop design concepts for your site locations.



Master planning

It's rarely possible to achieve everything within one single project and often gathering genuine community feedback goes hand in hand with master planning for a bigger picture.

If you have a portion of funding in place for part of the project, consider what may be a bigger plan for your recreation space that develops over a number of years. This avoids a 'piecemeal' approach that is rarely successful.

Now is the time to build a long term strategy and roadmap so the big picture fits together like a jigsaw. We help you look at the bigger picture, consider aspects of community life that perhaps you hadn't thought of, to create a cohesive design masterplan that will serve the needs of the whole community as it develops.

This can be used to support further funding bids, demonstrate your green space and recreation strategy and help your community understand the stages of work, managing their expectations.

Procurement and Tendering



If the Council decides to allocate funding to a project, this will fall under the 2015 Public Procurement Regulations which all government bodies including Town and Parish Councils are required to adhere to. A robust and proportionate tender document and brief is critical in the process to ultimately get the best design and contractor selected for the work.

Having the right specification, evaluation process, scoring criteria, and supporting details will allow all parties to make an informed choice as much as is reasonably possible.

Sports and Play Consulting using both play design experience and procurement advice, can manage this process on behalf of the Council.



Project Management

Having a project manager either employed by the Council, or a 3rd party contractor, will help mitigate potential risks, provide advice before and during the actual site works, and ensure the contractual agreements have been met. Also, regular and effective communication is important for all parties and stakeholders.

Sports and Play Consulting can offer a project management role which can be a key resource, particularly for larger projects. This also includes a Building Agreement that has been created for these types of public recreation facilities by a construction lawyer to help protect the Council and be clear on roles and responsibilities.



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Who are we?

We have 20 years' experience of delivering cross-generational community recreation spaces, including play, sport and fitness. We add the pieces that most landscape architects and play & sports contractors don't offer: asking, listening to and including the local community. We are the experienced 'glue' that links communities with design input, independent specification and delivery that meets expectations.



Michael Carter

Michael is the Managing Director of Sports and Play Consulting, who has worked for several play manufacturers, delivering facilities to Local Authorities, Councils and Schools for over 10 years. Based in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, and having moved from Sydney, Australia, he has an extensive understanding of play and sports design, public procurement and project management. Previously having worked for some of the largest telecommunication companies in the world as a Key Account Director, his focus is to deliver exceptional communications and customer service to clients.

Michael started Sports and Play Consulting in 2017 and has since been involved in over 100 projects to assess, procure and help deliver a range of new playgrounds and sports facilities.



Liz Townsend

Liz is a designer by trade with great vision for the bigger picture and attention to detail that makes design solutions really work for the people who use them. Liz has worked with some of the largest industry organisations in Europe on product design, play research and to deliver community engagement, master-planning and bespoke design solutions on multi-site and destination site community recreation projects with:

- Thurrock Council, Parishes & Community Groups
- Barnet Council & Community Groups
- Enfield Council & SEN groups
- Barking & Dagenham Council & Community Groups
- North Lanarkshire Council & Schools
- East Staffordshire Council & Parishes
- Oadby and Wigston Town Council & Community groups
- Nuneaton and Bedworth Council, Parishes & Funders
- Alliance Leisure Ltd. at various Leisure Centres and destination locations
- Private leisure companies such as Centre Parcs, Dobbies & Merlin

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