



# Annual Impact Summary 2020



**Play Gloucestershire** is the local charity that helps children to **Get Out and Play!** Our mission is to transform children's lives using the power of outdoor play.

We believe that outdoor play is an essential part of a happy and healthy childhood, and benefits children, families, schools and communities. Our Play Rangers provide active and creative play in urban and rural communities in the **Cheltenham, Cotswolds, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury** districts. Activities are both school and community based, providing adventure, friendship and fun for hundreds of young people each year. School aged children and their families are the beneficiaries of our work. We particularly support children from disadvantaged and rurally isolated communities, and those impacted by adverse childhood experiences.

## Playing through a pandemic

Children always need to play and especially now during the Covid-19 pandemic. Play helps children cope with adversity, build resilience and make sense of the world around them.

2020 has been a year like no other, with children adversely affected by restrictions on going outside and playing with friends, interrupted education, increased stress levels for many families and reduced support from trusted adults including our own Play Rangers.

Play Gloucestershire have been unable to deliver any open access community play since March 2020. A dramatic loss of income resulted in us focussing on new and creative ways to support children, whilst fighting hard for our survival. We have adapted and will be ready to help children in their recovery when the pandemic ends, using our skills and experience to re-build both physical and emotional wellbeing through the power of outdoor play. We want to be there for the children who need us most during 2021.

## Our Play Outputs

### January to Lockdown in March 2020

- ★ 12 Community Play Days
- ★ 69 After-School Sessions
- ★ 63 In-School sessions
- ★ 294 hours of play delivery
- ★ 3,322 Play Visits
- ★ 12 Young Volunteers supporting community play
- ★ 66 Park Activists taking part in social action

### From April 2020

- ★ 2,250 Bags of Play
- ★ 53 Stepping Out Sessions
- ★ 7 Playful Transition Days for 54 young people moving from Year 6 to Year 7
- ★ 84 Play Nurture Sessions supporting 122 disadvantaged children



## Highlights of 2020

- ★ Pre-lockdown **Community play** gatherings in 17 communities providing free, fun outdoor play for 567 children
- ★ **New Virtual Play Rangers** launched in April to provide playful ideas and emotional support on social media through lockdown
- ★ Joined forces with **Gloucestershire Gateway Trust** and our fellow charity partners to provide food and fun during summer holidays
- ★ Food and fun continued over October half-term, feeding 150 children with healthy picnics at **Play Nurture** days
- ★ Christmas hampers distributed to families in need
- ★ **My Park** team worked with 66 **Park Activists** on social actions to improve their local parks in Springbank (Cheltenham); Matson (Gloucester) and Stonehouse (near Stroud)
- ★ Worked with Gloucestershire County Council's **Early Help** team and secondary schools to help young people make a positive transition from year 6 to year 7 during the pandemic
- ★ Piloted our **Stepping Out project**
- ★ Provided 74 children with vital **Play Nurture** support during August across all six Gloucestershire districts, working closely with local schools and community organisations
- ★ **PAClife project** began, as we worked with European partners and the University of Gloucestershire to build resilience in young people from migrant or disadvantaged backgrounds through a physical and cultural activity programme
- ★ Secured critical financial support from the **Coronavirus Community Support Fund** to support children in need and ensure our charity's survival through to April 2021
- ★ Created 2,250 **Bags of Play** for children and families needing a play boost across Gloucestershire, supported with deliveries by local community activists
- ★ Collaborated with **The Virtual School** to provide **Play Nurture** and emotional support for children in care at **Milestone Academy**
- ★ Piloted individual **Play Nurture** sessions, which prove effective at preventing school exclusion for children in crisis

## Play Nurture Bubbles

Concern about the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown for the most vulnerable children in Gloucestershire created the opportunity for us to work with Gloucestershire County Council and local partners. We adapted our open access services into a more targeted way of Covid compliant working to keep staff and beneficiaries safe.

We created six 'Play Nurture Bubbles' across six districts and invited, via referrals, children to join us for some therapeutic outdoor play. It helped children re-connect with their wider world; improved physical and emotional wellbeing whilst enjoying adventure, friendship and fun.

Thanks to a grant from Gloucestershire Community Foundation, each child had their own pop up tent, providing shelter and a safe space. The project was so successful that it was subsequently funded by the Coronavirus Community Support Fund.

*"Whatever you have been doing has worked. She is a different girl to the one that started 4 weeks ago."*

Parent of child with separation anxiety



## Playful transitions

Gloucestershire County Council's Early Help Team commissioned Play Gloucestershire to provide seven Play Nurture days for young people in transition from primary school year 6 to secondary school year 7. Primary and secondary schools and the Early Help team identified children who it was felt needed some extra support to make a successful transition. This transition has been made especially challenging due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with school closure and lockdown adversely affecting children's health and wellbeing.

The project helped young people to meet and make friends; to spend time together on their new school campus and to build confidence and to have fun together.

*"I just want to say this is a really good idea. We get to know each other by playing so when we start school we already have friends!"*  
Alison, 11



## Bags of Play

Like most other charities, we had to quickly adapt with our Play Rangers no longer able to go into parks and schools to deliver play. We became Virtual Play Rangers, posting activity ideas and support to people through our social media channels. However, we were acutely aware that many children were living in stressful circumstances, perhaps without digital access or basic play items. This is why we came up with our 'Bags of Play' idea, to create bags filled with active and creative play resources to give disadvantaged children a playful boost, enabling them to be active, creative and better cope with the adversity they faced.

*"Thank you so, so much for my daughter's play package. She was completely overwhelmed with it. She's been struggling with her anxiety so it's all going to be well used. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"*

Evie's Mum



# Get Out & Play



## Stepping Out

**A new way to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of children during the pandemic.** Coronavirus has been the catalyst for our innovative approach called 'Stepping Out'. This targeted support involves playful, socially distanced walks around children's local communities with our Play Rangers.

It has the dual benefit of increased physical activity and improved emotional wellbeing. Stepping Out has massive potential to support children during Coronavirus recovery, as they begin to reconnect with their wider world. The simple concept of 'Walk/Talk/Play' offers so much: time and space with trusted adults, child-led play, control, freedom, physical activity, emotional support and fun. It is also accessible – neither money or transport is required.

*"This is a good idea. If kids are lonely or depressed from Covid it gets them out of the house. You can talk while you walk."*

Ashleigh, 12



## How you can help support our great work:

To support us please go to [www.VirginMoneyGiving](http://www.VirginMoneyGiving) and add our name into the 'Make a Donation' search. Thank You.

(Please add Gift Aid if you can!)

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Registered charity number 1126562