



Everything To Play For:

An Evaluation of
The Oasis
Community
Play Project

2011-2015





Acknowledgments

Children and young people
Parent/carers of Community Play
Project users
The Community Play Project team
Wider Oasis team
Oasis management committee
A5cend
Local residents, partner schools
and stakeholders
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Introduction

Children's Forward

This is our report on our playground we have been working with the all the staff, answering questions and taking photos.

If you haven't been here before we would like you to know: 1) Oasis is a place with fun things to do
2) You start feeling nervous then you feel comfortable and confident everyday you come here
3) It is a big safe place in Stockwell and there's not that many places like the adventure playground

Our message to you is that we would like to keep our playground open and make it even better. We would like everyone who would like to play here to be able to come in.

Yunis (aged 11) Oasis Children's Committee

Director's Forward

The Oasis Community Play Project has had an unprecedented response from children and families from the local area of Stockwell and Larkhall. Every Summer for the past three years we have turned away children who come to play, because we're full. Our staffing ratio means we can't safely allow more children in.

In 2011 when the BIG lottery Reaching Communities programme granted 4 year funding, we knew there was a clear need for our Adventure playground to be open every day, but we did not anticipate how quickly the service would become stretched to capacity. Over 1500 children have participated in an infinite range of freely chosen, intrinsically motivated play activities that have helped to improve confidence, build skills and improve overall health and wellbeing. More than 3000 children have enjoyed playing and learning as part of play based school sessions.

This evaluation makes recommendations for developing the project further and also explains how it has helped children, families and the wider community to feel safer and more engaged in what's happening in their local area.

The careful analysis carried out for this report has enabled Oasis to identify clear priorities for the next four years. The key priorities are:

- Maintaining a consistent and stable service.
- Extending opening times and increase staffing levels, particularly in school holidays.
- Improving support for CYP with complex situations by providing time for targeted casework and investing in specialist training

The Community Play Project is now a vital hub for a significant number of children and families who are facing the daily challenge of coping with multiple disadvantage.

Oasis is determined to maintain and develop this service and so that the Community Play Project can continue to offer the service that local children and families need.

Joanne Brown, Oasis Children's Venture Director



Executive Summary Report

The key findings for each outcome area are described below:

Outcome 1 – Improved Wellbeing, Skills and Confidence Through Play

The CPP is leading to significant improvements in the confidence, wellbeing and skills of disadvantaged CYP. The CPP is contributing significantly to the happiness of CYP. Children frequently present with complex circumstances and needs and there is consistent evidence that targeted work with these individuals leads to improved outcomes. Significant numbers of CYP are being turned away during periods of high demand due to lack of places and the need to maintain safe adult to child ratios.

Outcome 2 – Improved Wellbeing, Skills and Confidence Volunteering

The CPP is successfully engaging volunteers including amongst hard-to-reach and underrepresented groups. CPP Volunteers demonstrate improved skills and report improved wellbeing. Volunteer opportunities are most successful when combined with regular supervision, support or mentoring. The CPP could benefit from the input of older adult volunteers

Outcome 3 – Improved Community Safety and Cohesion

The CPP has contributed a diverse programme of events to the cultural life of the area and is supporting local feelings of safety. The locality is safer than it was in 2011, with lower incidences of crime. The CPP is perceived by local people to be making a positive difference to the safety of the community for everyone and particularly for CYP.

Outcome 4 – Improved Access to Community Activities for Underrepresented Groups

The CPP is reaching users from diverse backgrounds including high numbers of users from black and mixed heritage backgrounds but the current data set is incomplete, with large numbers of users not stating ethnic background making it difficult to monitor the representation of local communities. The CPP has a significantly greater number of male users than female users. Targeted work with girls and young women is highly valued but has had little impact on the gap between numbers of male and female users.

Supplementary Outcomes: The CPP is improving the physical health of CYP in an area where levels of childhood obesity are very high. There is strong anecdotal evidence that the CPP is contributing to improvements in wider family wellbeing.

The key recommendations of this report are summarised below:

- Maintain a consistent and stable service. Extend opening times, particularly in school holidays. Ensuring these are considered part of the 'core service' and budgeted for accordingly.
- Work towards a Monday to Saturday service for CYP with further community activity on Sundays, ensuring maximum use of site and minimising gaps in service that might leave CYP vulnerable.
- Increase staffing levels (particularly at high demand times) to allow greater number of spaces, reduce waiting times, 'denial of service' levels and fear of 'denial of service' amongst CPP users.
- Improve support for CYP with complex situations by providing time for targeted casework and investing in specialist training.
- Provide increased management capacity for project and partnership work.
- Formalise the play leader programme and extend accredited opportunities for older young people.
- Increase arts, creative and cultural opportunities.
- Promote opportunities for imaginative play through staff training and 'role play' resources.
- Continue to address gender inequalities and under represented communities through outreach and the provision of targeted sessions and activities.
- Improve ease of background and attendance monitoring and invest in systems that streamline the use of staff time.
- Provide staff time for maintenance hours or a dedicated maintenance worker to ensure continued development of the physical space and the provision of high quality facilities and activities.
- The development of a robust 'Theory of Change' for the CPP, co-produced with users and CPP staff and inline with the broader organisational aims.

Section 1: Context & Methodology



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Background

Oasis Children's Venture is a local charity that runs three different, unique facilities for children and young people (CYP) in Stockwell, London. Oasis is about freely chosen play activities that are challenging and fun. Oasis runs a Children's Nature Garden, Karting Project and Adventure Playground in addition there is a Sports Project, Inclusion Project and volunteer project that work across all three Oasis sites.

All Oasis sites are open access and available for local children to attend after school, on Saturdays and during the school holidays. Specialist activity sessions are also provided for schools, youth groups, private groups and other agencies. Each project has a team of experienced play and youth workers who ensure that all children and young people are able to make the most of the opportunities and experiences that are available.

The Big Lottery's Reaching Communities Programme funded the Community Play Project (CPP) at the Oasis Children's Venture Adventure Playground (APG) for four years from November 2011. Prior to this funding the APG was open just six hours a week; the CPP now delivers the following services Tuesday – Sunday throughout the year:

- Free supervised open access after school play sessions, four days a week during term time.
- Free supervised open access Saturday clubs, weekly during term time.
- Free supervised open access holiday playschemes for a minimum of three days a week in all major school holidays (excluding Christmas).
- Affordable childcare scheme offering extended hours during school holidays (Ofsted registered).
- Bookable adventure play & learning sessions for schools and community organisations Monday – Friday during term time.
- Tailored volunteer activities for young people and adults aged over fifteen.
- Weekly forest gardening group for adult volunteers.

This internal report examines the impact, challenges and opportunities of the CPP in relation to the agreed Reaching Communities funded outcomes. It also seeks to identify and describe good practice, areas of weakness, key learning and any on going or emerging local needs. This evaluation aims to review the project and make recommendations for the next phase of its development.

Methodology

Oasis has previously commissioned a number of external evaluations but has chosen on this occasion to reflect on the project internally. This decision has been made for the following reasons: 1) To enable the staff team and users to engage in a full and active role in the evaluation of the CPP's impact. 2) To provide a space and platform for open reflection on the CPP and its future. 3) To build evaluation skills within the staff team. 4) To ensure that the voice of children and young people is embedded within the report and recommendations. 5) To use limited financial resources effectively.

This report analyses data collected between November 2011 and August 2015 (46 months of a 48-month project) to evaluate how effectively the CPP has met its outcomes and objectives, as set out in its grant agreement with the Big Lottery. Oasis regards evaluation as an essential cornerstone of sustainability: all longer term funding is now evaluated to help develop services and learning in response to local needs.

This report draws on the following quantitative and qualitative data collected by children, young people, Oasis staff, volunteers, trustees and commissioned external evaluators:

- Child Personal Progress Questionnaire (50 respondents between January – April 2015)
- Child Semi Structured Interviews (30 children 2013 – 2015)
- Oasis User Outcome Stars (40 outcome stars 2012 – 2013)
- User Co-production Activity (60 users, August 2013)
- User Co-production Activity (30 users, October 2014)
- User Talk-okies (80 users between 2012 – 2015)
- Children's Audio Descriptions of Oasis and Local Area
- User, Activity and Incident case Studies (Provided by staff between 2012 – 2015)
- Oasis Tuck Shop Build Film (2014)
- Statistical Analysis of User Demographics
- Adult Impact Survey (31 respondents between February – September 2015)
- Community Safety Survey (12 respondents May 2013)

- Stakeholder interviews (8 interviews between 2013 – 2015)
- Oasis Volunteer Surveys (47 respondents between August 2012 – July 2015)
- Oasis Volunteer Progression Targets (40 tracked targets between 2011 – 2015)
- Year one, two and three monitoring reports to Big Lottery (2012 – 2015)
- Big Lottery Eighteen Month Interim Report (2013)
- Desktop Research Into Local Area Including: Lambeth State Of The Borough Report 2014 and postcode crime statistics 2010-2014
- Desktop Research Into Evidence of Benefits of Play Including: Play For a Change – Play Policy and Practice: A Review of Contemporary Perspectives, 2008 and A World Without Play: a literature review, 2012
- Geographical Analysis of Local Services Available

Data Discussion

In years one and two data on children's progress was collected using an outcome star model. CPP staff reflected on the success of this approach and the quality of the data it was capturing and felt a different approach might be more successful, particularly with younger users who were inclined to give everything high scores regardless of the question. A semi-structured interview model was adopted, with a sample of thirty children and young people being asked a series of set questions but with space for discussion and exploration. These interviews were conducted on an annual basis from 2013 and were recorded on an audio-recorder and transcribed. In addition to these more detailed interviews a further sample of children and young people completed a personal progress questionnaire with CPP staff.

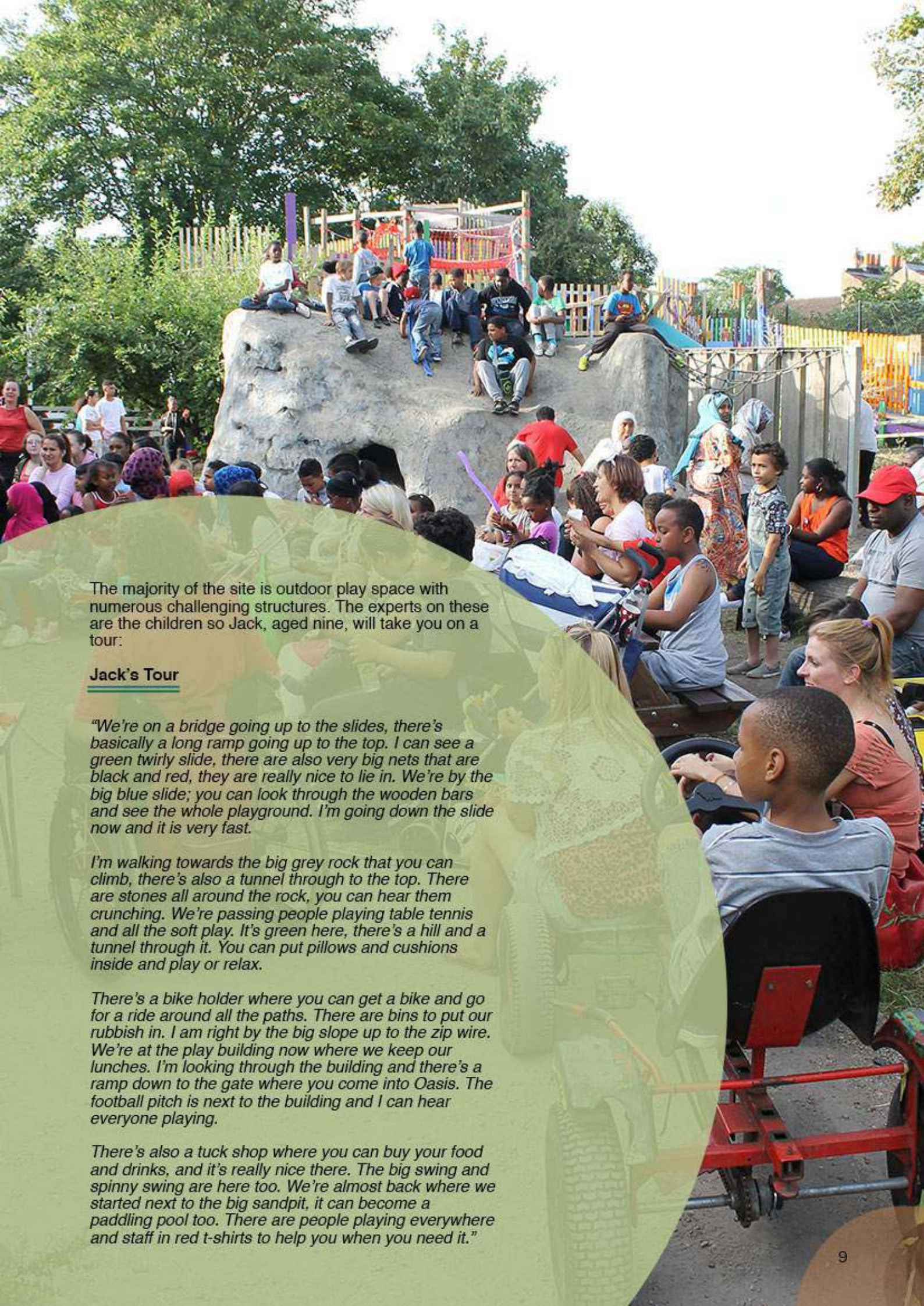
An arson attack on the CPP play building in June 2014 damaged some records, meaning that for some sampled users there were gaps in tracked data.

The Physical Space

The Community Play Project occupies one and a half acre site in Stockwell, South East London. There has been an adventure playground on this site since the early 1970's, first run by the London borough of Lambeth until 1984 and then by Oasis since 1999 following a 15 year period of dereliction. The Community Play Project is located near two other Oasis sites – The Oasis Go-Kart Track and The Oasis Children's Nature Garden. The site, which straddles two postcode areas, has an entrance point on Larkhall Lane and a second on Priory Grove, a secure perimeter fence encircles the playground.

The site has two main buildings: The Play Building at the front, (refurbished in 2011 with funding from the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme and then again in 2014 following an arson attack the same year) this is a child centred space and very much the hub of the project. The Walter Segal Building is situated towards the back of the site and is the organisational hub. This is a recycled building rescued from Landfill by Oasis and a community of volunteers and re-built on the site in 2012. This building provides office space, a kitchen and a large multi-purpose room for more structured activities and community use.





The majority of the site is outdoor play space with numerous challenging structures. The experts on these are the children so Jack, aged nine, will take you on a tour:

Jack's Tour

"We're on a bridge going up to the slides, there's basically a long ramp going up to the top. I can see a green twirly slide, there are also very big nets that are black and red, they are really nice to lie in. We're by the big blue slide; you can look through the wooden bars and see the whole playground. I'm going down the slide now and it is very fast.

I'm walking towards the big grey rock that you can climb, there's also a tunnel through to the top. There are stones all around the rock, you can hear them crunching. We're passing people playing table tennis and all the soft play. It's green here, there's a hill and a tunnel through it. You can put pillows and cushions inside and play or relax.

There's a bike holder where you can get a bike and go for a ride around all the paths. There are bins to put our rubbish in. I am right by the big slope up to the zip wire. We're at the play building now where we keep our lunches. I'm looking through the building and there's a ramp down to the gate where you come into Oasis. The football pitch is next to the building and I can hear everyone playing.

There's also a tuck shop where you can buy your food and drinks, and it's really nice there. The big swing and spinny swing are here too. We're almost back where we started next to the big sandpit, it can become a paddling pool too. There are people playing everywhere and staff in red t-shirts to help you when you need it."

Local Area & Project Context

The CPP serves one of the most diverse and deprived communities in the capital. 72% of households in the immediate neighbourhood are described as being deprived or severely deprived. The CPP is situated in the London borough of Lambeth, the 14th most deprived district in England (2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation). The CPP sits on the boundary of Larkhall and Stockwell wards.

Larkhall has the highest ward population in the borough, with a similarly high population density. The numbers of dependant children in out of work households and lone parents not in employment are high and there is a high rate of obesity amongst children in year 6.

Stockwell is a ward of average size for Lambeth but with a higher population density. The diverse population has a high proportion of residents whose first language is not English. Residents in Stockwell are amongst the least well off in the borough, it is the ward with the second lowest average income. 86% of properties are flats and a large proportion of these are social housing, 45%. Three of the eighteen large estates that surround the CPP are amongst the poorest in the borough. Stockwell has a high proportion of reception aged children who are obese and the highest rate of obese children by year 6. (Lambeth State of the Borough report 2014)

Audio Portrait of Stockwell (Transcription from a recording by Abdul, aged twelve)

"If you step outside Oasis you can see different buildings and people walking around and its mostly friendly people that are walking around and all the buildings are nice, there's no derelict buildings or anything. Stockwell sits near to Big Ben and the London Eye, you'll find it's very close to the statues and the monuments of London."

"In Stockwell there's mostly flats, there's some houses around. On every road you'll probably find at least one tree. Lots of people don't have gardens because there's more flats than houses. I don't think there's enough space and the flats are full of people."

"Some parts have gang activity which is not really good for the children that play around outside. The streets in the daytime are mostly safe but around the evening it gets really dangerous because you're more likely to get robbed or have something bad happen to you. The night time is when most of the criminals come out."

"At night it's more scary, if you go down an alleyway or something you don't know what's at the end, there's lots of drunk people and they leave bottles and cans everywhere and stuff around and it doesn't smell very good because of all the alcohol."

Why Children Come To Oasis

Asked why they came to Oasis children cited a variety of reasons including: needing space to play, wanting to make and meet friends, being safe and having fun. They described boredom, loneliness, crowding at home and fear of crime.

"At home I might be on my console or watching TV, the same old game or the same old programme. It's just so boring! I'm just sitting there watching programmes that I might not even like. I love to come here because it's fun and there's always staff to talk to and a lot to do." CPP user, aged 12.

"At home I'm trapped in the house, only playing inside. Sometimes my brothers want to play football in the house but they're not really allowed to. My mum needs to be with them to look after them but at Oasis they can have fun and there's a football pitch for my brothers to play on. Coming here makes it easier at home." CPP user, aged 10.

"I come to Oasis because it's a lovely place to be and it helps me understand how important being safe is. Being part of Oasis makes me feel happy because I'm shown how to make friends and I'm quite shy and I find it hard to make friends. It's a really loving environment and people are very kind and it's fun." CPP user, aged 10.

"Before I came to Oasis I was angry and didn't show it. Now when I'm angry or sad I come to Oasis to ride the karts and bikes to calm down." CPP user, aged 12.

73% of CYP said there weren't other places they could go to play. Of the 27% who identified other places they could go 45% talked about the local park, 33% mentioned the homes of friends or relatives, only 22% mentioned other supervised youth or play centres.

Section 2: Analysis of Outcomes



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Outcome 1 – By the end of year four 1100 (50% of participants) children and young people will report increased confidence and improved decision making, having learnt new skills as a result of participating in a range of inclusive adventurous activities.

All User Profile

The CPP has benefitted approximately 4750 individuals between November 2011 and August 2015, including 1517 children and young people (CYP) accessing as registered users of afterschool, Saturday and holiday provision. 3000 CYP accessed the service through their school and approximately 250 CYP have visited the CPP with their parent/carer.

Of the CPP's registered users 97% are aged 6-13 and 3% are 14-16. 62% of users are male and 38% are female.

32% of CPP users are from black backgrounds, 16% are white, 11% are of mixed heritage and 3% are Asian, 38% identified as other, with only 1% of these specifying an alternate ethnic background. For a detailed breakdown of CPP users ethnic backgrounds and discussion of the gender imbalance amongst users please see Outcome 4.

Semi-Structured Interview User Profile

The 30 children and young people tracked using the semi-structured interview approach consists of twenty boys and ten girls, aged between 6 and 14 at the point of initial interview.

The group is reflective of the wider CPP users and includes children and young people impacted by multiple disadvantages. The group includes two looked-after young people, three children with social work involvement, four with social and communication difficulties, five with a history of challenging behaviour and two of the young people were without a school place at some point in the last two years. 80% of the sample cohort makes their own way to and from the CPP, the remaining 20% are dropped off and picked up by parents, carers or other family members. The group is reflective of wider usage patterns of the CPP and includes children who attend multiple sessions per week and those who utilise the CPP more sporadically or for particular types of sessions.



Enjoyable, Adventurous Activities

The CPP offers numerous, diverse, adventurous activities and the staff team take a child-led approach. The site and facilities are un-precious spaces where children are encouraged to utilise and change their environment.

The satisfaction ratings for activities amongst children and their parents/carers are high, with 90% of CPP users and 100% of parents and carers rating the range of activities as good or excellent.

All sessions are based on a free-play approach, meaning children and young people choose what they do and how they do it. There are 'golden rules' that relate principally to the safety of particular structures. Additionally there is a list of expectations for both children and for staff. These were set by the children's committee and are regularly reviewed. They are an integral part of the welcome process for new users and staff.

The structures, activities and opportunities on offer are diverse, change frequently and are dictated by the children's interests and ideas. A snapshot of these is presented on the flowing page through the favourite memories of some of the semi-structured interview cohort.

The range of activities and opportunities the CPP has been able to offer to its users has been greatly extended by partnership working with other organisations and facilities. The number of partners to date is in excess of 50. Highlights from the last four years include:

- The South London Gallery who hosted New Years Revolution, a creative takeover day in 2015.
- The National Field Work Study Centre who hosted a rural residential adventure week in 2014.
- Cycle Training UK who supported the delivery of Bikeability and ride leader training to Oasis users and staff in 2013, enabling trips across the city by bike.
- The Southbank Centre and Giant Robots artist collective who facilitated a residency at the CPP in 2012.





"When we had the paddling pool in the summer, we turned the sandpit into a paddling pool."



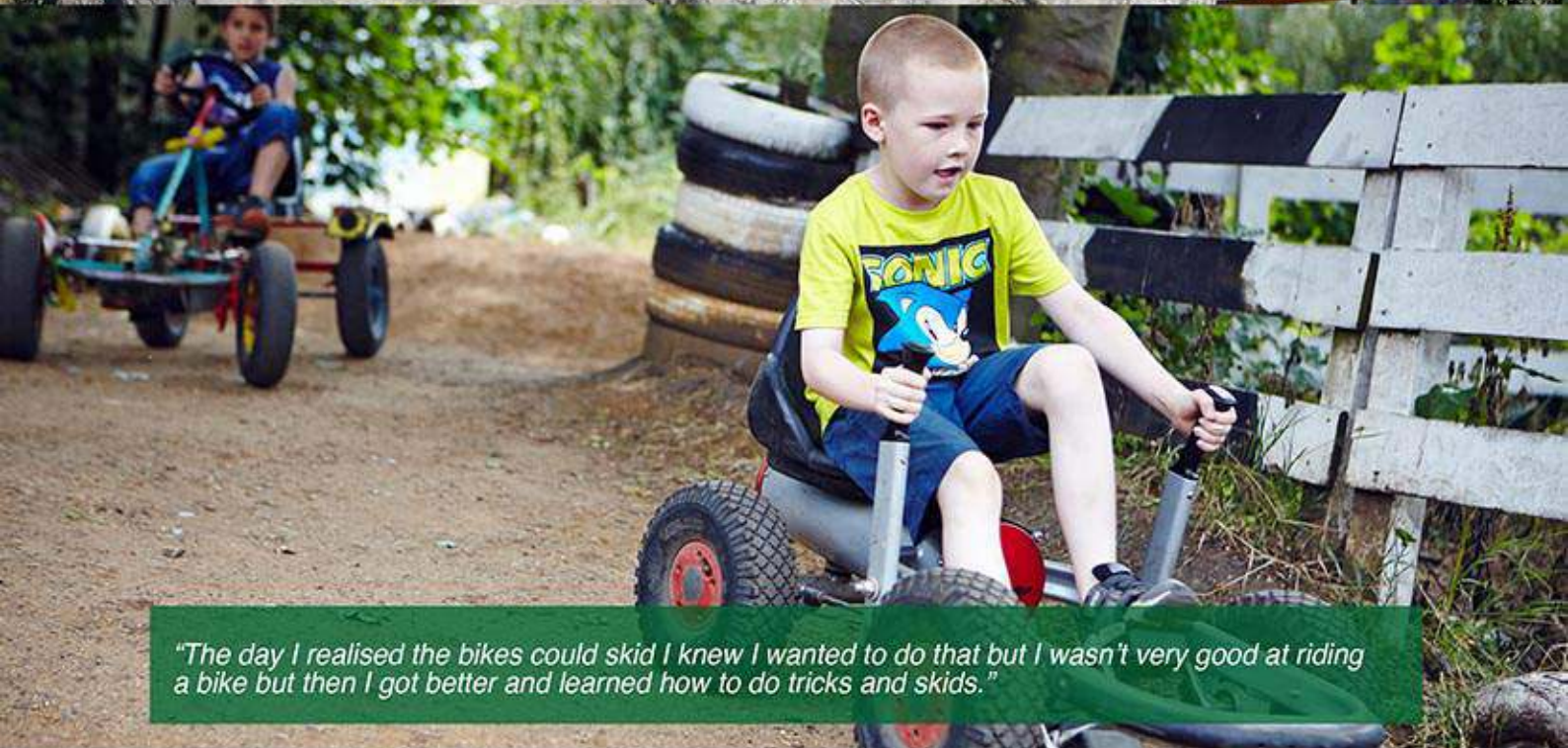
"The staff cooked a cheese cake in a cup and everyone sat together and talked to each other."



"The sunniest day last summer and also when it was raining and we had a fire."



"The first day I came here we did the rock jumping activity and it was so good I will always remember that because I felt welcome."



"The day I realised the bikes could skid I knew I wanted to do that but I wasn't very good at riding a bike but then I got better and learned how to do tricks and skids."



"Going to Littlehampton was good, exploring outside of where you live and seeing other things is important."

Partnership working has proved critical in meeting the diverse needs of CPP users and their families. CPP staff have established referral pathways with many local agencies including: social work teams, CAMHS and advocacy groups.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the responsiveness of some partner agencies has significantly diminished during the last four years, as local authority spending cuts and political and economic factors impact negatively on local provision.

Building partnerships requires the investment of staff time. The CPP and wider Oasis management team's capacity for building partnerships with external agencies has varied considerably during the last four years. Some of this variation is due to predictable pressures and seasonal increases in services, such as playschemes. But other factors are more unpredictable. The staff team anecdotally report an increase in the time spent supporting children and families with complex needs and circumstances. An analysis of all staff time spent attending multi agency meetings year-on-year supports this.

Period	Multi Agency and Social Work Meetings Approx Staff Hours Per Year
Year Before CPP 2010/11	26
Year One 2011/12	64
Year Two 2012/13	92
Year Three 2013/14	126
Year Four 2014/15 (10 months)	218

These figures do not reflect the staff time spent preparing for meetings or providing on-going support to families.

It is likely this increase is the result of a combination of the following factors: increased numbers of users, a decrease in local authority and other support available locally and national welfare reform policies putting increased pressure on families.

"The past 4 years have seen a significant increase in the amount of time staff have spent attending social work meetings. Oasis staff participate in these meetings as part of the on-going support that is provided to children and families who come to the Play Project. These extra duties have put added pressure on the whole team, as roles and responsibilities have to be juggled to make sure we can provide the support that is needed, without compromising the delivery of high quality play opportunities" Joanne Brown, Oasis Director



Confidence Discussion

92% of children interviewed using the personal progress questionnaire said that Oasis had helped improve their confidence. This is further evidenced within the semi-structured interview cohort, 100% of whom demonstrated improved confidence. Confidence was explained to the children as 'how happy you feel to try new things and how good you feel about yourself'. Analysis of the examples given by children in both the personal progress questionnaire and the semi-structured interview group show this confidence is having an impact in three key areas:

1. Improved confidence in doing practical things mentioned by 58% of respondents.

"When I was younger everyone encouraged me to jump off the rock during an activity. When I did it felt like a big achievement." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 11.

2. Improved confidence in social situations described by 71% of respondents.

"Oasis has helped me a lot, before when there were new people I was shy but I'm not any more." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 9.

3. Improved confidence in themselves discussed by 57% of respondents.

"I've learnt to be myself in front of other people so they can get to know more about me." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 7.

One child (a twin) who was tracked using the semi-structured interview process described in her interview in 2013 mainly playing with her sister and neighbours. In her 2015 interview she said:

"I've definitely got braver. Because I'm really shy my sister always does the talking for me but when she's not here it gives me a chance to be myself. I like to talk in my own words." Semi-structured interview respondent, aged 11.

These findings were echoed by adults completing the annual impact survey, with 87% saying Oasis had helped improve their child's confidence or the confidence of a child they know.

"The combination of choice, supported play and creativity gives the children the opportunities they need to improve their emotional resilience and their confidence." Parent/carer, 2015

90% reported that Oasis had made some difference, or a substantial difference to their child's willingness to try new things.

"My son's learnt to cycle, swing high, climb net ropes and go on scary looking zip-lines. The biggest challenge though was his willingness to get dirty and messy. He now thoroughly enjoys getting knee deep in sand, water and earth." Parent/carer, 2015

Analysis of parent comments shows that they particularly value the social and emotional benefits to their child, with these being cited by 65% and 53% of adult respondents respectively.

"Getting the opportunity to interact with children of other ages has been so beneficial to my child. Usually he's only with his year group, he's also been able to try things he couldn't do at home: the challenging, the fun and the messy." Parent/carer, 2015

And

"The first time my child attended Oasis she was very shy, with the help of the staff she's now much more confident and is able to socialise with other children without staff involvement. She's now one of the children that staff will ask to help show new people around." Parent/carer, 2015

We know improved confidence and self-esteem is significant in terms of future life chances. Research such as 'Top of the Class', a 2013 study by the Centre for Economic Performance, showed that confidence 'boosts pupils' academic success'. In contrast a 2015 paper 'Damaged Self-Esteem is Associated with Internalizing Problems', showed a link between low self-esteem and the risk of future mental health issues. If the CPP is achieving improved confidence, research suggests it will also be contributing to improved academic performance, mental wellbeing, resilience and aspirations.

Happiness and Wellbeing

A review of outcome stars, semi-structured interviews, personal progress questionnaires and responses from parent/carers and stakeholders paints a clear picture of the positive impact the CPP is having on confidence and self-esteem. But the improvements in child wellbeing appear to extend beyond this

84% of parent/carers report that the CPP is improving their child's physical health and 89% report improvements in emotional wellbeing. 100% of children said that they felt healthier: "Six hours of running about, playing football and doing so much more stuff makes you feel good." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 14.

And the responses to the open question, "How does Oasis make you feel?" are particularly revealing. 80% specifically mentioned happiness, including:

"Like I'm God" (interviewer: "wow, what does that feel like?") "Really, really happy and in control, and safe." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2014, aged 9.

"It makes me feel happy." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2013, aged 7.

"Very happy, and makes me feel like I can be part of something." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 8.

"Happy, because before I was never part of a community." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 12.

"Really happy and really excited." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2014, aged 8.

"More happy and more safe." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 7.

"Happy." (Interviewer's note: 'Big smile!') Semi-structured interview respondent, 2014, aged 12.

These are just a handful of many similar responses and indicate that the CPP is making a consistent difference to how happy and secure children and young people feel. This question also offered a glimpse into the significance of the emotional support and stability the CPP provides.

"It makes me feel unlonely because sometimes when I go home I feel lonely because my mum is studying and has to do lots of writing." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 7.



"Oasis makes me feel like people care about me and people want me to achieve something."
Semi-structured interview respondent, 2013, aged 13.

The respondent quoted above showed significant challenging behaviour in the first years of the CPP, requiring intensive support from staff, close working with his family and the investment of staff time in establishing a positive and trusting relationship. He is now a young volunteer, has achieved a number of AQA and ASDAN accredited awards and is a reliable and respected member of the young volunteer team.

The importance of the CPP to the wellbeing of its users was recognised by parent/carers and stakeholders in their comments as the quote below illustrates:

"It gives children a place in a welcoming community catering to their needs and interests and access to reliable caring adults. The activities also push them to challenge their own boundaries, I've seen this be a huge benefit to vulnerable children." Stakeholder, 2015

Happy Children Have Better Outcomes

The Children's Society's Good Childhood Report 2014 revealed that children in England ranked ninth out of 11 countries surveyed for subjective well-being, ahead of only South Korea and Uganda.

Chief Executive Matthew Reed said: "Childhood is a happy time for the vast majority in this country. But we can't shut our eyes and ears to the half a million children who say they are unhappy and dissatisfied with their lives."

Children who felt poorer were twice as likely to say they were unhappy and almost three times more likely to say they had low life satisfaction.

We know that happiness and wellbeing is significant from reports such as 'Are Happy Youth Also Satisfied Adults? An Analysis of the Impact of Childhood Factors on Adult Life Satisfaction', this research from 2015 found that childhood happiness levels influenced adult life satisfaction significantly.



New Skills Discussion

100% of children interviewed using the personal progress questionnaire said that Oasis had helped them learn new skills. This is further evidenced within the semi-structured interview cohort, 100% reporting new skills during each interview.

Every CPP user tracked or questioned was able to identify examples of acquired or developed skills. The skills described were wide ranging when these were analysed they tended to fall into five key areas:

1. New or improved physical skills mentioned by 61% of CYP.

"When I first came I didn't know how to ride a bike, now I can do wheelies and stuff."
Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 8.

2. New or improved communication and social skills cited by 55% of CYP.

"I've got better at asking for help and listening to what I'm being shown." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 7.

3. New or improved cooperative skills described by 24% of CYP.

"Since I've been coming here I've learnt how to share. My brother and sisters used to get quite sad when I didn't share. But now I do share with them and that makes them happy." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2014, aged 10.

4. New or improved imaginative and creative skills described by 16% of CYP.

"I was the worst at drawing and now I can do lots of different things and make things using my hands." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 12.

5. New or improved emotional skills described by 37% of CYP.

"When I had anger problems (which sometimes I still do) the staff helped me to learn how to not fight back." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 10.

Interestingly 18% of CYP also talked about improved ability to adapt to different situations, such as following rules or adjusting their approach in different circumstances.

"I used to get angry but now I stop and think about if I'm right or wrong and then decide what to do."
Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 13.

It is notable that there was a significant difference between how frequently semi structured interview respondents (83%) and personal progress questionnaire respondents (10%) gave examples of improved emotional skills such as ability to self regulate behaviour.

The personal progress questionnaire group being greater in number means that the overall combined average is 37%. The CPP team hypothesise that this disparity is due to the method of data collection, with the semi-structured interview approach allowing space for more detailed discussion and reflection. If this hypothesis is correct then it seems likely that the level of emotional skill development the CPP is supporting might be significantly higher than the average suggests. This was the only skill area where there was a significant gap between the two data sets.

Interestingly analysis of parent/carer and stakeholder comments on improved skills supports this idea, with 53% mentioning improved emotional skills. Social skills were the most frequently cited at 65% and physical skills (described most frequently by CYP) were the least referenced group by adults with just 35% mentioning these. This perhaps suggests that adults place the most value on social and emotional skills, with CYP placing more emphasis on physical skill development. It is also likely that ability to recognise and describe 'softer', internal skills increases with age and experience.

The improvements in children's ability to recognise and describe what they had learnt was evident in many CYP tracked using the semi-structured interview model. For example when interviewed in 2014 a child, then aged 6, said

"Oasis makes a big difference to people I know, because I used to be a not very good boy and since coming here I've changed a lot and I've become a better boy."

In his follow up interview in 2015 he was able to describe in more detail what being 'better' meant: *"being kind and friendly, I've got better at listening and following instructions."*

Interestingly only 16% of CYP and 11% of adults mentioned creative skills. This is surprising given that 90% of CYP and 85% of adults surveyed said that Oasis had made a big or some difference to their or their children's access to arts and creative activities.

This could suggest that both groups prioritise other types of skills over those that are explicitly creative or it could indicate a lack of opportunities in this area.

There is evidence to suggest a lack of access to creative and cultural opportunities locally. A survey of CPP users in 2014 showed that 80% had not been to a theatre, gallery or museum in the last year. The measures of national wellbeing show that 83% of the population engage in an arts or cultural activity at least three times a year, CPP users seem to fall significantly short of the national average.

The CPP staff team responded with increased creative partnerships including: Tate Modern, Battersea Arts Centre and The South London Gallery significantly all these are within a single bus ride of the CPP site.

It is also relevant that only one child from the semi-structured interview group described make believe play within any of their favourite memories of the CPP.

"Playing with Gary (staff member) and pretending he was a dog and we'd walk him round."
Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 11.

CYP's distancing of themselves from engaging in imaginative play was also evident in the outcome stars completed in the first two years of the project. Of these CYP were consistently reluctant to score outcomes relating to 'pretend and role play', particularly as they got older.

Ensuring on-going opportunities for age appropriate imaginative play seems to be an area of the CPP practice that would benefit from further development.

Increasingly older young people have the opportunity to have the skills they learn and develop at the CPP recognised and evidenced through certificates and accredited awards. 117 accredited awards have been achieved between November 2013 and September 2015. This is a piece of emerging good practice that shows significant potential, particularly for supporting and inspiring young people who struggle to achieve in more formal educational settings.



Individual Case Study – Child A

Child A has been known to Oasis since 2011 when aged five he began accessing the Oasis Children's Nature Garden. He was the younger sibling of a young man who accessed the go-karting project. His older sibling had been referred to the kart track by the Youth Intervention Support Panel following concerns about his behaviour.

In 2013 Child A transitioned to the CCP. Child A frequently showed extremely challenging behaviour, he was quick to become agitated or distressed. This presented either in physically violent behaviour towards other children, often requiring physical intervention or in Child A becoming very emotional and teary.

Discussion with his mother revealed difficult circumstances at home caused by the unpredictable behaviour of his brother now in his late teens. In addition Child A's school placement broke down and he was without a school place for several months.

The CPP staff team worked closely with Child A and his mother to establish a consistent and stable routine. Child A attends the CPP every afterschool session and on Saturdays. There is daily communication with his mother about his progress and the CPP staff team ensure feedback is balanced with descriptive praise as well as addressing any more challenging behaviour. Child A and his mother have established deep rooted and trusting relationships with many of the CPP team. These have been critical in enabling Child A to improve his skills, confidence and emotional resilience and ensuring his challenging behaviour is understood and addressed in a consistent way.

The focus of work with Child A has been on supporting him to identify and manage his own emotions. This has been a slow process and has been very intensive of staff time but is showing considerable success.

Child A has been supported through targeted work, conversations and consistent responses to recognise his own distress and seek out an adult that he trusts. The CPP team recognise and praise this achievement every time, regardless of the incident and what needs to happen subsequently. This coupled with motivating positive activities, supporting development of stable friendships and having clear consequences has made a significant impact over time.

Incidents of serious challenging behaviour from Child A have gone from being a daily occurrence in 2013 to occurring much less frequently at a rate of about once a fortnight. He is now able to get through the majority of sessions without serious incident or staff intervention. Child A's behaviour clearly continues to present serious issues for him, particularly as he moves towards the transition into secondary school. But he is making significant progress, has a new school place which he is maintaining and is clearly happier, healthier and better able to cope with conflict as it arises.

Challenges and Considerations:

- Building a trusting relationship with Child A and his mother was possible because of consistent staff. This meant when challenges needed to be addressed this was received more positively and supportively than on previous occasions when staffing was more fluid.



A Place to Take Physical, Emotional and Social Risks

The challenging and riskier nature of some of the activities that the CPP offers is clearly motivating to many CYP. Both children and adults interviewed frequently mentioned 'over coming fears' and getting better at understanding and assessing risk in a supportive setting:

"The nurturing manner of the staff really helps to grow children's confidence. They support the children to try new things and take calculated risks so that the children become more sure of themselves." Parent/carer, 2015

Amongst parents and carers surveyed 'the ability to decide whether something is safe or dangerous' received the greatest number of made a substantial difference options of any question, with 75% reporting this. Combined with those who stated it made some difference, the overall number reporting improvements in this area is 92%. This is also recognised by CYP, 88% of whom report improvements in this area.

"The Oasis staff help me learn what's safe and dangerous and I can then pass it on to other people." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 12.

"So when I get to a situation when I might get hurt I know when to stop." Semi-structured interview respondent 2015, aged 14.

The risks described were not just physical but emotional and social risks such as: sharing opinions, playing with children of different ages, speaking in public and doing things that might not work.

"At first I was scared because there were lots of older kids but then it felt really nice." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 10.

"I'm better at doing what I love and not copying others." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 9.

That the CPP provided a safe space to get things wrong and make mistakes was recognised as strongly as the role it played in helping CYP achieve.

The role that positive interaction with adults and other children can play in developing skills and confidence was illustrated within several examples including:

"During a game of chase I ran and jumped down the slide, the staff said how fast I was and this made me feel proud and like a little jelly." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged

"I was really scared of the slide but my friends encouraged me and I went up and did it twice." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 10.



A Friendship Hub

Analysis of semi structured interview responses give an indication of the important role the CPP is playing in the lives of its users. 90% of interview respondents talked about the role the CPP played in their social life, mentioning making and maintaining friendships. This was often identified as a reason for coming to Oasis and friends featured heavily when children were asked about favourite memories. It was clear that some children were quite isolated before accessing the CPP despite living in a densely populated urban area.

"Before coming to Oasis I didn't have any friends. But all the people here are very friendly and it's been easy to make friends." Personal progress questionnaire respondent, 2015, aged 9.

This was also evident through some children's scoring on their initial outcome star. Friendships were repeatedly mentioned by children and adults interviewed, tracked and surveyed in the last four years. It is clear that it is being used by CYP as a friendship hub in a number of different ways – children are meeting new friends here, they are arranging to meet existing friends here, extended family are using it as a place to be together and parents and carers are using it as a place to meet and catch up with neighbours.

"I like to meet my cousins here and then we can play together." Semi-Structured Interview respondent, 2014, aged 7.

"It's a great place for the community to meet and share interesting experiences." Parent/carer, 2015

There is a growing body of research which evidences the importance of friendships and strong social networks in our lives, including research by the Economic and Social Research Council into 'Mental Health and Social Relationships' which found: People "with no friends are the worst off psychologically. There are significant health cost implications from the impact of this social isolation". This report also cited international research showing that "having no social exchange with neighbours has a large negative impact on men's and women's quality of life." Research into 'Friendship Networks and Young People's Aspirations' by the University of Bristol's Centre for Market and Public Organisation found that: "Young people's aspirations are amenable to change. The circumstances and values of their good (long-lasting) friends do appear to modify their own aspirations."

This evidence suggests that by connecting CYP from diverse backgrounds, supporting the formation of strong positive peer groups and by providing diverse constructive activities the CPP has the potential not only to impact on immediate individual wellbeing but also to support widened aspirations and therefore future life chances. CYP interviewed talked frequently about the role staff played in supporting their friendships with other children, particularly when these relationships faced challenges:

"I become more mature and sensible, for example, if people are fighting I feel more in control because I've learnt from staff how to respond." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 12.

Interestingly when CPP users were asked in 2014 to complete an activity that involved ranking ten factors that might make a good place to play 'Knowing there are adults to help out if I need them' ranked very highly second only to: 'Being for everyone including disabled and non-disabled children'. These were prioritised over types of activities, equipment and even the principle of 'free play'.



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Decision Making Discussion

91% of CYP and 84% of adults reported improvement in their or their child's ability to make choices and decisions.

"Oasis is full of choices for children, from what to play to how to interact with the children and adults around them. The staff support the children to learn how to make positive choices and how to understand the consequences of the decisions they make." Parent/carer, 2015

Although a variety of areas of decision-making were described, those most frequently cited by children and adults related to improved independence and improved decision-making relating to risk.

"At home we can't really make so much decisions, but here we get opportunities to and this gets us ready for decisions as we grow up." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2013, aged 10.

"Oasis helps with Independence and resilience – children learn that their voices matter and that they should take responsibility for their own opinions." Parent/carer, 2015

"Many of the activities in the playground offer an element of risk, the children begin to understand this and learn how far to take their ideas." Parent/carer, 2015

"Being in an environment where he has to choose for himself what he wants to do and how he wants to do it adds to his feelings of independence. He doesn't get that freedom at home or at school." Parent/carer, 2015

For CYP growing up in a busy urban area, impacted by gang activity and facing the pressures of multiple disadvantage, having improved ability to understand and assess risk combined with improved self confidence, as described in earlier discussion, has the potential to improve safety and protect against dangerous decision making. Both children and adults valued the user led nature of the service:

"Almost everything is user-led and where not, the children are very heavily involved." Parent/carer, 2015

"We helped to decide the rules of the whole playground." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2013, aged 10.



Activity Case Study – Oasis Tuck Shop (Video: <https://vimeo.com/131642114>)

In October Half Term 2014 Oasis partnered with an architecture student from London Metropolitan University and specialist playground builders APES (Adventure Playground Engineers) to deliver a project in which six young people aged 11-14 designed and built a tuck shop at the CPP site.

The need for a tuck shop had been identified by the CPP Children's Committee who wanted a place to buy affordable snacks on site, to prevent playtime being wasted on trips to local shops. The staff team were also concerned by the quality of the food being consumed by CPP users and were keen to provide affordable, healthier alternatives as well as opportunities to discuss the food choices children were making.

Three girls and three boys took part in the project, they committed to being involved every day for five days. The project was supported by a member of Oasis staff who worked in collaboration with the student architect and young people. The group worked in a cordoned off area of the playground during playscheme week. The progress of the project was visible to the other children and staff.

The group took part in every aspect of the tuck shop build including designing the structure, assessing risks, digging the foundations, preparing the wood, measuring and cutting pieces using a circular saw, working together to construct the structure and using power tools to secure it in place. The young people were also responsible for recording their progress using film and photographs.

The project involved levels of responsibility and skills that none of the young people had undertaken before. They were excited and motivated by the challenging nature of the project and all six arrived on time and worked diligently everyday. All of the activity was carefully risk assessed using a risk/benefit model and parental consent was sought.

The group included young people who can exhibit challenging behaviour, those who can be quiet and lack confidence in a group and those who can find it difficult to work with others. The small group size and intensive, project based nature of the activity meant that the young people were able to learn a broad range of skills in a short space of time and visibly grew in confidence over the week.

The completed tuck shop was opened with a celebration event attended by CPP staff, other users and the families of the children involved. All six young people who participated received an AQA accredited certificate in woodwork. Three young people assisted in editing the film and two visited London Metropolitan University to present the project to architecture students.

The experiences, skills and relationships established during this project continue to impact positively on the young people involved. The tuck shop continues to operate and CPP users take turns to run it. The tuck shop stocks a selection of snacks at low cost and fruit is free. It is notable that 35% of semi-structured interview respondents in 2015 specifically mentioned the tuck shop.

"I helped to decide to do the tuck shop, I was part of that idea." CPP, user aged 14.

This project has evidently had an impact on a number of different levels including:

- Direct benefits to the young people involved in the building project who developed practical and core skills that included: carpentry, photography, problem solving, teamwork and communication as well as improving the confidence and self-esteem of those involved.
- Increased positive role models for younger CPP users.
- Benefits to those involved in the children's committee who have seen their ideas enacted, resulting in increased sense of control and ownership of the CPP.
- Improved opportunities to make healthier eating choices, improving long term wellbeing and impacting positively on the behaviour of users during sessions.
- On-going opportunities for participation and skill development through the child-led running of the tuck shop.

Challenges and Considerations

- Due to the risky nature of this project it was intensive in terms of staff time.
- A very small number of young people benefited directly from the opportunity.
- This project was possible because of partnership working and because of the capacity to invest staff in developing the project and relationship with partners.



Outcome 1 – Challenges Discussion

Demand and Capacity

The levels of demand for the service amongst children and their families also indicate the quality and enjoyable nature of what is offered. 82% of children and young people surveyed in 2015 had at some point been turned away due to the playground being at full capacity. Records on the number of children being turned away due to lack of spaces were kept during the five-week summer playscheme in August 2015, this numbered over 270. Children reported arriving up to an hour and a half before the start of the session in order to secure a place.

"I don't think I've had problems getting in because I try to come early. But that's one thing Oasis need to sort out, the waiting thing... (Interviewer: How early do you come?) During the summer about 9/9.30am." Semi-structured interview respondent aged 14.

The site opens at 10.30 am. Some children described other strategies for securing a place:

"If my brother just leaves us here and there's no adult with me they have to let us in."
Semi-structured interview respondent aged 7.

Another child interviewed had to wait to get in for two hours on the day she was interviewed. Asked what made her decide she was going to stay and wait rather than do something else she said:

"Because I wanted to be at Oasis, because it makes me better and because it's a great place to play. If I wasn't here I wouldn't be playing." CPP user, aged 8

The issues relating to the capacity are at this stage always one of the staff to child ratio rather than physical space. The current operating ratio of the CPP is one adult to ten children (1:10).

Standard capacity during a term-time session is fifty children; where possible this is raised in the school holidays to sixty. The data collected in August 2015 suggests that despite this an average of eleven children per day are being denied a service due to lack of space. These figures do not take into account children who wait, often several hours. Below is a transcript of a conversation with two brothers aged nine and fourteen.

Interviewer: Describe where you are now.

Child 1: Outside Oasis waiting to get a space

Interviewer: How long have you been waiting?

Child 2: For two hours.

Interviewer: Tell me how that feels.

Child 2: We're bored and sad.

Interviewer: Why are you waiting, why is it important for you to come in today?

Child 1: Because it's the last day of Oasis summer holidays.

Child 2: And we're not going to have a chance to come in.

Interviewer: Do you understand why the staff aren't letting you in?

Child 2: Because there aren't enough staffs.

Interviewer: What would you like us to do to solve this?

Child 1: More staff so more children have a chance to play.

The brothers were eventually able to come on site an hour later along with three other children who had also been waiting. The CPP Manager explains the balance with between safe staff ratios on site and the staff time needed to manage children waiting outside:

"Children outside the gate inevitably try and make their own fun, which is often a nuisance to the neighbours and involves staff time to keep them safe. However if we go over our ratios on site it makes children and staff vulnerable. As a playworker it is unnatural to restrict children from doing what is most natural to them, and making them wait to play. Until we can increase our ratios and while demand is high, having children waiting outside when we are full feels like the only option."
David Ogwe, CPP Manager

Staff Capacity

Discussions with staff and stakeholders painted a picture of a service that is often operating at full capacity and a staff team balancing the increasingly complex needs and circumstances of its users with the need to expend time developing projects and partnerships that enrich the opportunities it provides. Similarly investing time and energy in monitoring and evaluating the project has at times been difficult given the competing demands on staff time.

Restricted Horizons

A significant number of semi-structured interview respondents reported very limited opportunities to leave Stockwell:

"I'm happy because we're doing a trip out of London...I never really go out of London, only if there's a wedding. I've only been to Canterbury out of London. I've never been to the seaside before." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 11.

"My favourite memory would be when I went on the London Eye. It was the first time I went on it and if I didn't come to adventure I wouldn't be able to explore these opportunities." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 12.

Increasing CYP's experiences outside their immediate area may have a role to play in widening horizons and tackling territorialism. There is a high demand amongst users for increased day and residential trips. A co-production activity held in August 2013 saw children overwhelmingly asking for more off site activities particularly opportunities to swim. The level of swimming trips and onsite water play activities were increased in 2014 and 2015.

Research and Policy Discussion

The evidence base for benefits of play is strong and continues to grow. The seminal 2008 Play England report: 'Play For a Change – Play Policy and Practice: A Review of Contemporary Perspectives' sets out the case for the importance of play for individuals, communities and society based on a review of evidence-based research. Key messages included:

"We are now beginning to understand the interrelationship between genes, the brain, the body, behaviour and the physical and social environment. This has enabled a greater understanding of how play contributes to children's physical and emotional wellbeing and to their development."

Contrary to the dominant belief that it is a way of learning specific motor, cognitive and social skills, play has an impact on the architectural foundations of development such as gene expression and physical and chemical development of the brain."

And

"Play makes a major contribution to developing emotional regulation, building strong attachments and peer friendships... and enabling children to cope with stressful situations"

And

"Children valued the informality of their relationships with playworkers and the fact that they allowed them the freedom to play in their own way."

The research shows that play is not a 'luxury' for children; it is not a 'nice thing to let them do' it is biologically and neurologically essential to their development. Failing to provide for play is failing to provide for the basic needs of a child.

Outcome 1 Findings

"Sometimes it makes a difference in a small way, sometimes in a big way. It always makes me happy coming here." CPP, user aged 11.

- The CPP is leading to significant improvements in the confidence of disadvantaged CYP. Particularly in relation to their willingness to try new things and their confidence in social situations.
- The CPP is contributing to the improved wellbeing of CYP. CYP report feeling happier, having more friends and feeling safer.
- The CPP is supporting the development of a wide range of practical, social and emotional skills. Opportunities to accredit and evidence these could be increased, particularly for older users
- Semi-structured interviews with CYP, staff and stakeholders indicate that many CYP present with complex circumstances and needs. There is consistent evidence that targeted work with these individuals leads to improved outcomes. Staff capacity to provide this type of on-going support is currently outstripped by the needs of users.
- There is compelling evidence of a need for an increased number of child spaces, particularly during playscheme sessions to prevent CYP being turned away.
- There is a clear need to increase CPP opening hours during school holiday periods to reduce the likelihood of CYP making unsafe choices.
- There is evidence that some CYP leave Stockwell very infrequently. There is strong demand amongst users and their parent/carers for increased trips and off-site opportunities.



Outcome 2 - by the end of year four 120 adults and young people will have improved wellbeing, acquired new skills and report increased involvement in their community through volunteering.

Oasis Volunteer Programme Overview

Since its inception in 1973 volunteers have played a key role in the development and life of Oasis. Volunteering remains central to the work undertaken by the organisation. Diverse volunteers support the delivery of Oasis services across three innovative play projects. The energy and talents of volunteers enhance the quality of the services Oasis is able to deliver. Volunteering also provides unique opportunities for individual volunteers to extend their skills and experiences. Oasis is committed to ensuring that volunteering opportunities are accessible to all, including young people, disabled people and people considered harder to reach.

All volunteers complete an application form and application process including any necessary checks. All volunteers complete an individual volunteer target, receive an induction and regular supervision and target review sessions.

Volunteer activity at Oasis is divided into seven key programmes, described below.

Young Volunteer Programme (All Oasis Sites)

Oasis has an established programme for young people wishing to develop their skills and experience through volunteering. Young volunteers are aged between 15-21 years and can help support service delivery across all three sites. Young people wishing to volunteer complete an application process, including a CRB check when necessary, prior to being inducted into the areas of their choice. Where applicable young volunteers are offered the opportunity to work towards an AQA accredited certificate in an area relevant to their volunteering activity.

Play Leader Programme (Pilot at CPP)

The play leader programme is for young people aged 13-15 years. Based at the CPP, this programme recognises the needs of older users to have increased responsibility within the setting. Play leaders are allocated to playworkers who act as mentors and support them to assist with the delivery of specific activities. Play leaders are primarily existing users who have been identified as being ready to develop new skills and become increasingly involved in the service. (See play leader case study).



Volunteer Development Programme (All Oasis Sites)

This programme is targeted at young people aged 15-25 who are NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) or at risk of becoming NEET. It combines tailored volunteering opportunities with regular mentoring sessions, action planning, and practical support. The volunteer coordinator works closely with young people to identify their strengths, aspirations, support needs and any potential barriers to volunteering. Volunteers are provided with opportunities to develop core skills and improve their employability.

Adult Volunteer Programme (All Oasis Sites)

Oasis values the input of adult volunteers at all stages of their working lives. They undergo a careful application process, CRB check, interview and induction before starting to work at any of the Oasis projects. Adult volunteers are encouraged to develop their particular interests and strengths, as well as develop new ones.

Supported Volunteer Programme (All Oasis Sites)

This programme provides tailored opportunities to disabled young people aged 15-25 across all Oasis sites and services. The volunteer coordinator and inclusion manager oversee this programme jointly. Young people are usually referred to this programme by their allocated social worker. All supported volunteers receive 1:1 support from an experienced inclusive youth worker who facilitates their volunteer experience. The volunteering activities undertaken by supported volunteers are tailored to reflect their strengths, interests, support needs and communication preferences.

Special Interest Volunteer Programmes (All Oasis Sites)

Oasis offers a number of volunteer programmes for people of all ages aimed at developing skills in particular specialist areas, these are:

Permaculture and Forest Gardening (CPP)

Cycling and Bike Mechanics (CPP)

Sports Coaching (CPP)

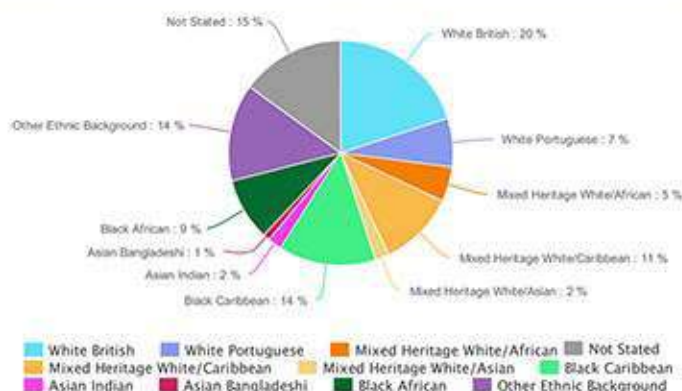
Corporate Volunteer Programme (All Oasis Sites)

Corporate volunteers play a key role in maintaining and developing Oasis' large play spaces. Corporate volunteers assist Oasis as a group usually over a single day or a small number of days. Volunteer groups undertake distinct projects at a particular site with the support of either a member of the Oasis staff team or a corporate volunteer facilitator provided by a volunteering bureau. Volunteer groups typically consist of between 10-50 volunteers. Corporate volunteers participate as part of their employers corporate responsibility programme. The company volunteering usually provide an allowance for materials. Oasis ensures that a risk assessment is undertaken for all volunteer projects. Corporate volunteering is managed by the volunteer co-ordinator.



Volunteer Profile

300 regular volunteers supported Oasis as an organisation between November 2011 and September 2015. Of these 124 individuals volunteered at the CPP. Including 68 young people aged 15-18, 45 volunteers aged 19-30 and 9 were aged over 30. The ethnic backgrounds of these volunteers are detailed in the diagram below.



The table below shows the number of CPP volunteers per year.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Number of Volunteers	40	46	68	53

34 of the volunteers were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and 66 were young people identified as being at risk of becoming NEET (ARN). Most volunteered for an average of six hours a week but some for as often as 18 hours a week.

In addition 2000 people from 45 companies volunteered at the CPP with their businesses through the corporate volunteering programme. Their achievements included creating a network of paths around the site, creating a sensory trail and an accessible sand and water play area.

Types of Volunteer Activity

Volunteers undertake a wide range of jobs at the CPP including supporting the delivery of play sessions, coaching sporting activities, maintaining the structures and grounds, undertaking administrative tasks, maintaining cycles, stewarding events and facilitating trips. A group of adult volunteers have met regularly on a Sunday throughout the CPP to create, develop and maintain an urban orchard on the site.

Outcome for Volunteers Discussion

90% of volunteers surveyed said Oasis has helped them gain confidence in themselves. This is also evidenced by their progress towards their individual targets. Analysis of twenty volunteer targets shows an average increase in scores of 7.2 for wellbeing targets, 6.6 for community engagement targets, 6.5 for knowledge and skills targets and 5.5 for personal goals.

Qualitative feedback also highlights improvements across these four areas:

"I most enjoy leadership and having responsibility. Oasis is a place that can help you out with your problems and also teaches you new skills." Young volunteer, aged 15.

"Oasis has given me loads of different experiences. With the help of the mentors I have learnt how to control my anger in a better way. It has become my second family, a place where I feel like I can relax." Young volunteer, aged 17.

"Coming to Oasis keeps me off the streets and has helped me decide what I want to do in the future." Young volunteer, aged 16.

"I feel like I've helped make Oasis better, like when I said we should go on a trip and then we did it and everyone had fun." Young volunteer, aged 15.

95% of volunteers surveyed said volunteering at Oasis has supported their career plans.

Activity Case Study – Play Leader Pilot

In Summer 2014 the CPP project manager and volunteer coordinator initiated a pilot play leader programme for older users aged 13 and 14. This was in recognition of a need for increased activities for older users and a desire for increased responsibility emerging within this group. The pilot was based on earlier successful trials with individuals.

Six young people took part in the pilot, all were existing CPP users who had expressed an interest in volunteering. To participate in the formal young volunteer programme at Oasis young people need to be aged 15 or above. The young leaders project aimed to boost skills, confidence and knowledge amongst the pilot group, preparing them for more formal volunteering opportunities.

The play leaders attended two induction sessions prior to the summer play scheme these sessions covered their roles and responsibilities, explored their specific skills and interests and allowed opportunities for them to contribute ideas, express concerns and ask questions. These sessions formed part of an AQA accredited unit award undertaken by all the play leaders.

Play leaders supported specific activities related to a specific area of interest. All play leaders were allocated a buddy from within the CPP staff team. They contributed no more than an hour and a half per session allowing for a balance of play, relaxation and more structured activity.

All play leaders completed the pilot period, achieved the AQA unit and gave positive feedback on the experience. Four young people went on to undertake more formal volunteering opportunities with Oasis and two decided that although they had enjoyed the experience they would continue primarily as users for the time being.

Challenges and Considerations

- Existing knowledge of the young people, their strengths and support needs was important to the success of this pilot. A longer induction and assessment process might be necessary for young people new to the service
- Care was taken during the induction sessions to help young people understand their position as role models to other young people. This supported the transition from user to play leader but some young people still found adjusting to new responsibilities more challenging.
- Staff time to support, supervise and guide play leader activity was essential; the experience of staff buddies and their understanding of the aims of the pilot was important in ensuring success.



Volunteer Wellbeing Discussion

For some volunteers low confidence and expectations are already quite deeply embedded. Young people who have had negative experiences within their home or school environment can be reluctant to try new things and take social or emotional risks. This is an on-going challenge of working with this group, to support us to meet this challenge we have increased opportunities for small group work, creative partnerships and unusual motivating opportunities.

Analysis of volunteer target forms indicate the strong improvements in wellbeing volunteering at the CPP has helped initiate. Interviews with volunteers indicate that this is the result of three key factors:

1. Tailored volunteer activity that plays to individual strengths and interests building self-esteem and feelings of achievement.
2. Practical support, mentoring and signposting that help maintain engagement and addresses factors that might be negatively impacting on wellbeing.
3. Greater connection to their local community and strengthened local networks.

Many volunteers have contributed time to the CPP over multiple years. The significant number of young people aged 15 to 18 indicates a strong interest in developing practical skills and experiences amongst this group. For many CPP users and volunteers accessing work experience and internships can be difficult because of a lack of confidence, parental connections and financial resources.

Volunteer Skills Discussion

All volunteers identified development of skills as a key area of progress with 100% reporting having learnt new skills. They described a diverse range of practical, social and more academic skills including: communication, teamwork, problem solving and budgeting.

Oasis provided a number of training opportunities for volunteers including a business skills course and a youth leadership course. 61 volunteers achieved at least one accredited certificate or qualification. 10 young volunteers took part in a residential weekend aimed at strengthening core transferrable skills and employability. A number of volunteers were facilitated to make applications for jobs through the Young London Working Initiative.

"Oasis is a fun place that helps young people make decisions in life and develop better skills and communication." Young volunteer aged 16.

A total of 16 courses have been delivered or signposted to resulting in 117 training places for volunteers. These included: Basic Woodwork Skills, Introduction to Digital Photography, Youth Leadership and Inclusive Playwork training.

A key challenge in this area was around building partnerships with other opportunity providers in a climate where many services are under pressure. Additionally assessing and getting an accurate understanding of a young persons existing skills and abilities takes time and the creation of trusting relationships.

Volunteer Community Discussion

90% of CYP surveyed in both 2014 and 2015 said 'the young people (play leaders and volunteers) who help out at Oasis are good role models'. 67% reported aspiring to be a CPP volunteer when they were old enough.

"Once, when I fell off my bike a volunteer helped me inside and gave me a plaster so I felt ok, I'd like to help people feel ok when I'm older." User volunteer survey respondent, 2014.

Young volunteers seem very conscious and proud of their position as role models to younger users.

"My little brother looks up to me and he really wants to be a volunteer at Oasis one day." Young volunteer, aged 16.

"I most enjoy leadership and having responsibility. Oasis is a place that can help you out with your problems and also teaches you new skills." Young volunteer, aged 17.

Having a relatively broad age range of volunteers seems to be valued amongst CYP, parent/carers, stakeholders, staff and volunteers. Opportunities for intergenerational learning appear limited locally and learning from people with different life experiences to their own was mentioned by a number of people interviewed.

Individual Case Study – Marigona

Marigona is a woman in her mid twenties of Kosovan decent, she arrived in the UK in 1996 following conflict in the region. Marigona has three children aged 4-7 when they began accessing the CPP in 2011.

Marigona was keen to be more involved in the CPP and began to volunteer regularly in June 2012. Marigona volunteered an average of twelve hours a week. She met regularly with the Oasis Volunteer Coordinator and rated her progress towards achieving personal targets in four key areas. These included:

Wellbeing: "I will be more confident to try new things"

Knowledge & Skills: "I would like to work with children and young people long term"

Community: "I will help families from different backgrounds share their culture"

Personal Target: "To be more confident and have more self esteem"

Marigona was raising her family on a very low income and they were negatively impacted by Welfare Reform including the 'Bedroom Tax'. English is an additional language for Marigona and she lacked confidence in her spoken and written ability.

Marigona was supported to take on new challenges and get involved with a wide range of activities. Volunteering while her children played meant that Marigona was able to develop her skills, confidence and connections within the local community.

In addition to volunteer opportunities Marigona was signposted to benefit advice, training information and helped to develop her personal statement and CV. Marigona was supported to apply for funding for a paid traineeship at the CPP during summer playscheme 2013, she was successful and thrived within this role.

Following her traineeship Marigona undertook paid work as a playworker with other South London children's organisations and in June 2015 she joined the CPP team as a playworker after successfully applying for a vacancy.

Marigona explains the difference volunteering at the CPP made to her:

"Volunteering gave me hope, in fact it was beyond hope. Volunteering gave me emotional wellbeing, social opportunities, will power. I was made to feel that I could contribute to society. It's opened the world to me. I've also come to understand child development more and this has helped me understand my own kids better."

The CPP provided Marigona and her family with a stable supportive environment in which they could all learn new skills and grow in confidence. For Marigona volunteering was a route to increased confidence, a career she enjoys and financial independence.

Challenges and Considerations

- Stability of staff and sufficient time, capacity and expertise within the team enabled the CPP to provide Marigona with on-going high quality opportunities. This is likely to have had much less impact had there been changes to key staff or had it not been combined with more holistic support.
- Not all volunteers aspire to work with children long-term. Offering a range of opportunities and tailoring these to individual needs, strengths and schedules is important in reaching a diverse range of volunteers.
- Marigona's transition from volunteer to paid post took three years highlighting the need for consistent services that work with individuals in an on-going and responsive way.

Challenges of Volunteering Discussion

The key challenges described by staff and volunteers include:

Complex Circumstances – The complexity of needs and circumstances impacting on some volunteers. These complex needs often take several months to surface as relationships with CPP staff develop and trust is established. It is likely that there are volunteers whose activity was impacted by external factors such as: low income, mental health difficulties, low confidence, caring responsibilities or fear of moving between areas before CPP staff were able to build sufficient trust for these to be identified, explored and supported.

Gang Activity – Stockwell is a gang active area. The impact of this on young people locally was particularly evident in 2011 and 2012. Gang activity remains an area of concern although tension in this regard seems to have reduced slightly in the last couple of years. Safe routes to and from the project are discussed with all young volunteers. 85% of young volunteers reported feeling that Oasis helped keep them safe from gang activity or involvement.

Transitioning – For older CPP users moving into a volunteer role was something many aspired to and was a way of continuing to engage and benefit from the project, despite changing interests and motivations. For some young people this transition was a difficult process. Some staff also reported finding it challenging to adjust to a young person's new role. Clear expectations, communication and induction were important in managing successful transitions. There is a natural progression for some older CPP users to move over to the more youth orientated environment of the Oasis Kart Track.

Outcome 2 Findings

- The CPP is successfully engaging volunteers including those often underrepresented amongst volunteers – young people, parents, and people with English as an additional language.
- There is strong evidence that the CPP is improving the wellbeing of volunteers, particularly within self confidence and feelings of self worth.
- Volunteers demonstrate improved skills, having these recognised is important to volunteers of all ages but young volunteers particularly benefit from opportunities where these skills are accredited and evidenced.
- The play leader pilot was successful in supporting older CCP users to engage positively with the project in new ways.
- Volunteer opportunities are most successful when combined with regular supervision, support or mentoring.
- The CPP could benefit from the input of more older adult volunteers.



Outcome 3 – by the end of year four 250 community members will report feeling safer and having increased access to local community activities such as open days, workshops and volunteering.

Community Event Data

Five large-scale community events were held between 2011 and 2015, benefiting approximately 4000 people. A further 12 small-scale events were held for approximately 1000 participants. These events featured prominently within a number of semi-structured interview respondents' favourite memories.

The community events included the Oasis Summer Party 2012, an inclusive accessible arts and sports event featuring, Robot Day in 2012 which celebrated the end of a residency by artist collective The Giant Robots, Neighbourhood Improvement Day in 2013 which was a partnership with Lambeth Councils' neighbourhood team. There have also been community films nights and seasonal celebrations such as a Fireworks Night event in 2014 and a takeover day at a local art gallery in January 2015 called New Years Revolution.

Visual Case Study – The Ruby Do

Inclusive community event 27th July 2013, 1000 participants, 20 volunteers and a lot of red fur, paper glasses and accessible activities.



Community Safety Discussion

In 2012, 87% of local people surveyed said that the CPP made a positive difference to the local community, in 2013 and 2015 this rose to 100%. There was no formal community impact survey in 2014.

96% of CYP said Oasis made them feel safer.

"I know that I can come here and I'll be safe and I could come here if I was in danger."
Semi-structured interview respondent, 2014, aged 10.

Desktop analysis of UK crime statistics for the postcode area SW8 shows a total of 16,370 offences in the year preceding the start of the CPP (December 2010 – November 2011) of these 6196 offences were recorded as Anti Social Behaviour (ABS). In the most recent complete year of the project – year three (December 2013 – November 2014) the total offences recorded in the same area were 11,464 of which ABS offences were 3307. This shows a drop in total crime of 30%; almost double the trend nationally for the same period (18%). ABS offences appear to have dropped by 47%, over seven times greater than the national average (6%). The dramatic decrease in ABS figures is likely to be in part due to changing guidance on defining ABS offences introduced in 2012. However these figures do appear to support a picture of greatly improved community safety in SW8 that significantly exceeds national trends.

It is unlikely that the CPP alone has led to these improvements but there appears to be a strong perception amongst local residents that it has been a contributing factor. 68% of adults surveyed and 90% of children said they felt that the CPP had improved the safety of everyone who lives nearby.

"More children are going to Oasis than ever. Because it's open all the time they know it's a safe place for them to go and their parents trust the staff to deliver a good quality service. For local residents this means less worry about children in the neighbourhood playing out and getting into trouble or getting hurt." Local resident, 2015

"Everyday Oasis is open, that's between 40/50 less children playing on the street or getting in trouble doing things they shouldn't be doing" Local resident, 2015

When asked the open question how Oasis made them feel a number of CYP explicitly mentioned their sense of community:

"I feel like I belong, it's like a community." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 13.

"It makes me feel good about myself because it's like being part of a big family." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 10.

96% of CYP and 81% of local people surveyed reported that the CPP has improved their sense of community. Some children interviewed seemed to describe having a strong sense of community without necessarily having the language to label it as such.



Incident Case Study – Whitsun Half Term

Due to funding constraints (no local authority funding is available for half term holiday provision) the CPP was only able to run a three-day playscheme during the Whitsun holidays in 2015. The project opened, 10.30am – 4.00pm, Wednesday to Friday in that week.

At lunchtime on the Wednesday a young volunteer from the kart track alerted CPP staff to an incident he'd witnessed in a local shop. He said that he'd just seen a child from the CPP being led along the street against his will by a man who was angry, being verbally abusive and being physically rough. Staff immediately called the police and informed the Oasis Project Coordinator (the most senior member of staff on site that day).

Three staff carried out a search of the local area for the child who had previously been on site but had left with two other children to buy some lunch. The police arrived and within fifteen minutes all the children and the adult had been located and all returned to the playground. The adult was still very agitated and angry, shouting at and threatening the children who were evidently distressed.

It was clear that the incident related to a game of Knock Down Ginger* the previous day and damage to the adult's property. The project coordinator and CPP staff calmed the children and took them to the main office building. The adult and his partner, who had also arrived, were calmed too and taken to a separate room in the main building. The police and the Project Coordinator spoke to both groups. The incident took approximately two hours of police and staff time to resolve and was distressing for everyone involved.

It emerged that the previous day (when the CPP had been closed) a group of approximately nine children, aged 7-11, (all regular CPP users) had been playing on the streets and estates near Oasis. The group included a child on a child protection plan. The children had been knocking on the doors of local residents and then running away, this had escalated at one house and had included kicking the door and throwing stones at the windows. Reportedly causing damage to the door.

The police explained the potential seriousness of what had happened to the children and also spoke to the adult about his actions. The children apologised to the householders, who accepted this apology and left seemingly happy with how the situation had been resolved. The project coordinator spoke to the families of all the children involved. The children were settled back into positive activities for the rest of the day.

The police, householders and children all acknowledged that this situation is unlikely to have occurred had the CPP been open and was the consequence of the children being bored and unsupervised and making poor decisions as a result.

This incident highlighted the role that the CPP plays in promoting community safety both for children and adults locally. It hints at the increased conflict and subsequent resources expended resolving issues that might occur when the CPP was not open and providing consistent services.

The CPP was able to provide a neutral, safe and supportive space for the resolution of this conflict, preventing it from escalating further within the local community.

*Knock Down Ginger is a street game in which children ring a doorbell or knock loudly on a door, as though very urgent, and run away as fast as possible.

Access to Local Activities Discussion

An analysis of local services in 2011 revealed 6 active provisions for CYP locally reviewing this map in 2015 reveals 4 have been lost or reduced as a result of local authority spending cuts. In 2012 Lambeth council abolished its play and youth service, handing its adventure playgrounds, one 'o'clock clubs and youth centres to a wide variety of external agencies. This scheme has faced a number of high profile difficulties as the result of breakdowns in contractual arrangements.

The situation in terms of services available to vulnerable CYP locally deteriorated further in August 2015 with the closure of Kids Company. A number of CPP users were accessing Kids Company services through their school. Oasis has been part of the local response to this situation, working with the local authority and other agencies to limit the impact on vulnerable CYP.

Outcome 3 Findings

- The CPP is supporting feelings of safety locally.
- The locality is safer than it was in 2011 with lower incidences of crime.
- Inclusive community events are highly valued amongst CYP and their parent/carers.
- The CPP has contributed a diverse programme of events to the cultural life of the area.
- The services available to CYP and families locally have reduced since 2011.

Outcome 4 – by the end of year four local people from diverse and under represented backgrounds will report having improved opportunities to participate in community activities.

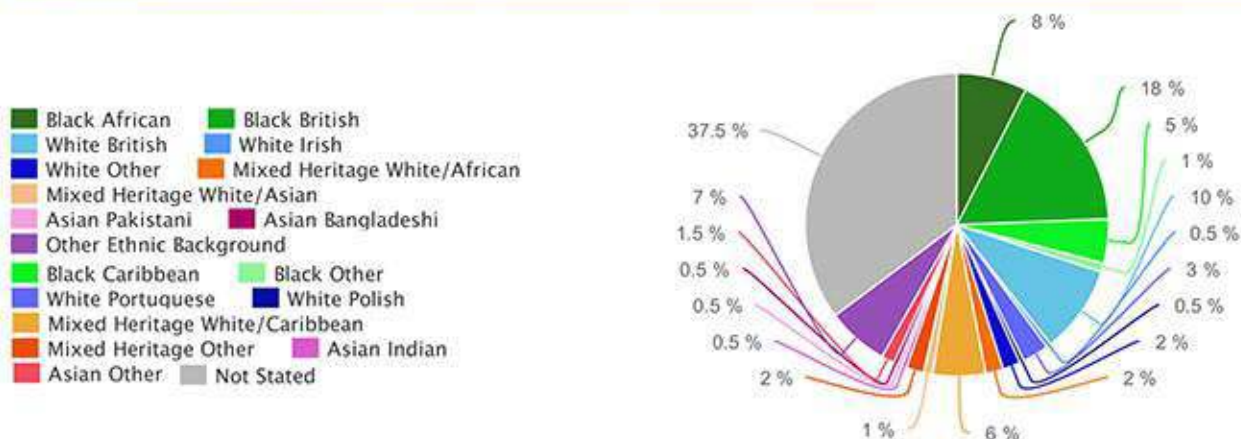
Equality Plan Review & Discussion

94% of the CPP diverse users reported improved opportunities to talk to people and share ideas. 96% reported an improved sense of local community (people knowing & looking out for each other more) and 94% described increased local activities such as workshops, open days and special events.

The equalities plan developed to support improved and embedded equality within the organisation is considered a live document. It is regularly reviewed and new actions have been added and completed throughout the life of the CPP. The annual review of this document in 2015 showed action on every recommendation but progress and levels of success vary. Of the 17 actions listed 8 have been successfully completed, 6 have made substantial progress and there are 3 recommendations where only a small amount of progress has been made.

Ethnicity Discussion

CPP users are largely representative of the local community. There are some groups who are slightly under represented, specifically CYP from White and Asian backgrounds. A detailed breakdown of the ethnic backgrounds of CPP's registered users is shown below:



A comparison of CPP user ethnic background and those of the local wards suggests that the CPP is slightly over represented in users of Black and Mixed Heritage when compared to the local population and under represented in those of White and Asian backgrounds. White other has been included in these charts given the significant numbers of people of Portuguese decent resident in the area. The CPP has a very high number of users not stating their ethnic background and this makes it very difficult to draw clear conclusions on the balance of ethnic backgrounds in relation to the local population. More complete ethnic monitoring information is needed if user demographics are to be better-understood and meaningful outreach undertaken to under represented communities.

Outreach Case Study – Stockwell Partnership

In June 2013 the CCP Manager and Oasis Volunteer Coordinator undertook a joint piece of outreach work with the Portuguese speaking community in partnership with local community advocacy organisation Stockwell Partnership.

Stockwell Partnership provides a number of dedicated community specific advocacy workers who provide support and services to parents/carers raising children under five. The Oasis team visited a number of sessions including drop in groups and a language class to promote the CPP and volunteer opportunities. A number of targeted open days were held at the CPP, specifically for members of Stockwell Partnership's Portuguese group. These were facilitated by Portuguese speaking workers who were on hand to help translate information and support with the completion of child registration and volunteer application forms.

The visits were enthusiastically received and a small number of families began using Oasis services regularly. A larger number continued to get involved in one off events, including community food celebration days. Three volunteers signed up but only one of these undertook regular activity.

Stockwell Partnership and Oasis were keen to develop a joint project that supported families using community specific outreach services for their children to transition to Oasis when their child turned five. Lack of staff capacity within both organisations meant that this was not realised at that time.

Gender Discussion

Of the CPP's registered users 62% of users are male and 38% are female, this gender distribution has been pretty consistent throughout the four years of the CPP despite attempts to address this through outreach, marketing and targeted activities.

It is possible that the challenging, physical, outdoor activities the CPP offers are sought out more frequently by boys, young men and their parent/carers than by girls and young women because of societal associations and assumptions about gender.

The CPP team continue to promote the service to girls and young women. This has included the provision of a girl's night, introduced in 2013 that has proved consistently popular. It provides an opportunity to undertake targeted work to improve the confidence, self-esteem, independence and communication skills of girls and young women, particularly in relation to issues of gender and gender inequality. See detailed case study. Young women have also been encouraged to take on leadership roles within the CPP's Children's Committee and a girls football team initiated in 2014 has proved popular with female users and their families.

Girl's night was mentioned by two of the ten female semi-structured interview respondents. "I like what we do on Girl's Night because we go to lots of different places and people come in and speak to us...It's important because some people are more shy if there are other genders around." Semi-structured interview respondent 2015, aged 12.

The Oasis senior leadership team is considering ways that CYP can express non-binary gender identity within the collection of records and data.

Activity Case Study – Girls' Night

The CPP equalities plan and the eighteen-month report for the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities funding stream highlighted a gender imbalance amongst the CPP users with boys accessing in significantly greater numbers than girls.

The team hypothesised that the following factors may be contributing to this

1. Preconceptions about the suitability of particular activities in relation to gender
2. A tendency for challenging outdoor activities to be promoted more heavily to boys within society at large.
3. For the behaviour of boys to be perceived as more challenging and in need of positive redirection into physical activities
4. There is anecdotal evidence from girls and young women that they can find it difficult to assert their preferences in male dominated environments. 'Some people are more shy when there is other genders around them'. Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 12.

As part of the response to this identified gender imbalance, Oasis ran a pilot Girls' Night in 2013. This was developed into a full project in autumn 2014 with three year funding from Sport Educate.

Girls' Night focuses on developing the confidence and skills of girls and young women aged 11 – 18. They meet weekly and undertake an hour of group or mentoring activity and an hour of sports activities. The girls co-lead the sessions making decisions about visiting speakers, workshops and types of activities.

The group is popular and attracts a regular group of girls approximately 50% of these are existing users and the other half were new to Oasis. Of the new users some have gone on to access other CPP services while others have preferred to just use Girls' Night sessions.

Interestingly Girls' Night has had an impact on the CPP beyond the individuals who access the session and has acted as a catalyst for broader discussions with male and female users about gender and wider inequalities within society.

Challenges and Considerations

- These targeted sessions are reliant on securing additional funding for staffing and activity costs
- The creation of Girls' Night initially led to some challenging discussions with male users. Girls' Night sessions were occasionally disrupted by boys curious or frightened of missing out. This was addressed by the CPP staff team through discussion, the Girls' Night users also made posters explaining to the boys and other potential participants why these sessions were necessary.
- While these sessions are popular and having a positive impact in terms of the confidence of girls and promoting positive discussions around gender issues, they have not yet made a significant impact to the imbalance between male and female users at the CPP.



Disability Discussion

In tandem with the start of the CPP in November 2011 Oasis also launched the Oasis Inclusion Project (OIP) a specialist team of inclusive play and youth workers who support disabled children to access all Oasis services. OIP users receive support tailored to their needs at either a staff to child ratio of either 1:1 or 1:4 depending on individual requirements. The OIP has flourished and has positively impacted on every aspect of the organisations life. The benefits to disabled users were discussed in detail in an evaluation of the project produced in 2014. The positive impact of the OIP on non-disabled users was very evident in discussion with both semi-structured interview respondents and personal progress questionnaire respondents. 86% of CYP said that Oasis had improved their understanding of disability and different needs.

One semi-structured interview respondent specifically mentioned the impact of the OIP when asked 'what he'd learnt':

"My attitude to disabled children has changed because of inclusion, now I can see and understand their situation rather than me having the perception that they are disabled and there's not a lot they can do. Oasis brings in another dimension to activities and stuff like that." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 14.

This was further born out in a co-production activity undertaken in 2014, when CPP users repeatedly ranked 'Being for everyone including disabled and non-disabled children' as the most important factor in making a good place to play.

Outcome 4 Findings Discussion

- The CPP is reaching users from diverse backgrounds including high numbers of users from black and mixed heritage backgrounds.
- The current data set is incomplete with large numbers of users not stating ethnic background, making it difficult to monitor the representation of local communities.
- The CPP has a significantly greater number of male users than female users.
- Targeted work with girls and young women is highly valued but had little impact on the gap between numbers of male and female users.
- The inclusive nature of the service is heavily valued by non-disabled CYP.



Supplementary Outcomes

In addition to the outcomes already described within this report a number of supplementary outcomes emerged from the data set, these are described below.

Improved Physical Health

100% of semi-structured interview and personal progress respondents reported improved physical health. CYP cited 'being more active', 'being outdoors' and making 'healthier choices' as key factors in their improved health.

"It's a place to run around in." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 12.

"It's helped me eat different things and feel better." Semi-structured interview respondent, 2015, aged 8.

Given the very high levels of childhood obesity locally this is a significant outcome. A British Heart Foundation Report on 'Physical Activity Statistics' in the UK from 2015 found that: In England the proportion of children aged 5 to 15 years meeting physical activity recommendations fell between 2008 and 2012.

Supporting Families

Feedback from parent/carers, staff case studies and observations of play sessions give insight into the impact the CPP is having on families locally. Over the last four years it seems that local families are increasingly aware of the CPP, its services and spaces and are using these together. While the CPP is still primarily serving CYP, there are a significant number of parent/carers benefiting from support from staff, improved local networks and improved access to high quality green space. While little data has been collected on wider family wellbeing there is strong anecdotal evidence of that the CPP is positively impacting on adults and reducing feelings of isolation.

Building Sustainability

As part of the Oasis Sustainability strategy we are operating a paid for childcare scheme which runs alongside our free open access scheme. The childcare scheme supports working families who need extended hours childcare and also generates an unrestricted income which can be used to help sustain all the Oasis activities. Providing activity sessions at each of the three sites for schools, colleges and youth groups, both through term time and school holiday periods generates a useful income. Oasis is currently registering as an AQA hub so that we can offer accredited training, initially around Karting and volunteering, which will strengthen our offer to schools and colleges. All three sites are available for private hire – usually for birthday parties, outside our regular operating hours.

Further ideas for income generation include:

- Providing training to other organisations around Inclusion, Play and Environmental play/education
- Hiring out our unique spaces for corporate away days and meetings
- Hiring out our new 3G football pitch when it is complete

Enhanced Physical Space

At the start of the CPP in 2011 the physical space of the adventure playground site looked very different. There were three large derelict overgrown areas that could not be used for play. The site had limited toilet and indoor facilities and no clear path network around the space. Access for people with mobility difficulties was limited and many of the play structures were aging. The activity on site over the last four years has radically transformed the quality of the physical space. This is partly due to volunteer activity as discussed in outcome 2, the impact of children using the site and the work of the staff team to secure investment in the facilities. Numerous pieces of research such as The London Sustainable Development Commission's 'Sowing the Seeds' report identify the need for improved outdoor and green space in urban areas. For the CPP to continue to develop and improve what it is offering; continued investment in the site, its structures and its accessibility needs to be maintained.

Section 3: Recommendations and Conclusions



Section 3: Recommendations

As the CPP moves towards a new phase in its development the evaluation team proposes that the following recommendations be considered in the continuation and development of services:

- Maintain a consistent and stable service. Extend opening times, particularly in school holidays. Ensuring these are considered part of the 'core service' and budgeted for accordingly.
- Work towards a Monday to Saturday service for CYP with further community activity on Sundays, ensuring maximum use of site and minimising gaps in service that might leave CYP vulnerable.
- Increase staffing levels (particularly at high demand times) to allow greater number of spaces, reduce waiting times, 'denial of service' levels and fear of 'denial of service' amongst CPP users.
- Improve support for CYP with complex situations by providing time for targeted casework and investing in specialist training.
- Provide increased management capacity for project and partnership work.
- Formalise the play leader programme and extend accredited opportunities for older young people.
- Increase arts, creative and cultural opportunities.
- Promote opportunities for imaginative play through staff training and 'role play' resources.
- Continue to address gender inequalities and under represented communities through outreach and the provision of targeted sessions and activities.
- Improve ease of background and attendance monitoring and invest in systems that streamline the use of staff time.
- Provide staff time for maintenance hours or a dedicated maintenance worker to ensure continued development of the physical space and the provision of high quality facilities and activities.
- The development of a robust 'Theory of Change' for the CPP, co-produced with users and CPP staff and inline with the broader organisational aims.



Conclusion

The evaluation team found clear evidence of the considerable impact the CPP is making in the lives of CYP in Larkhall and Stockwell wards as well as those from across Lambeth and Wandsworth.

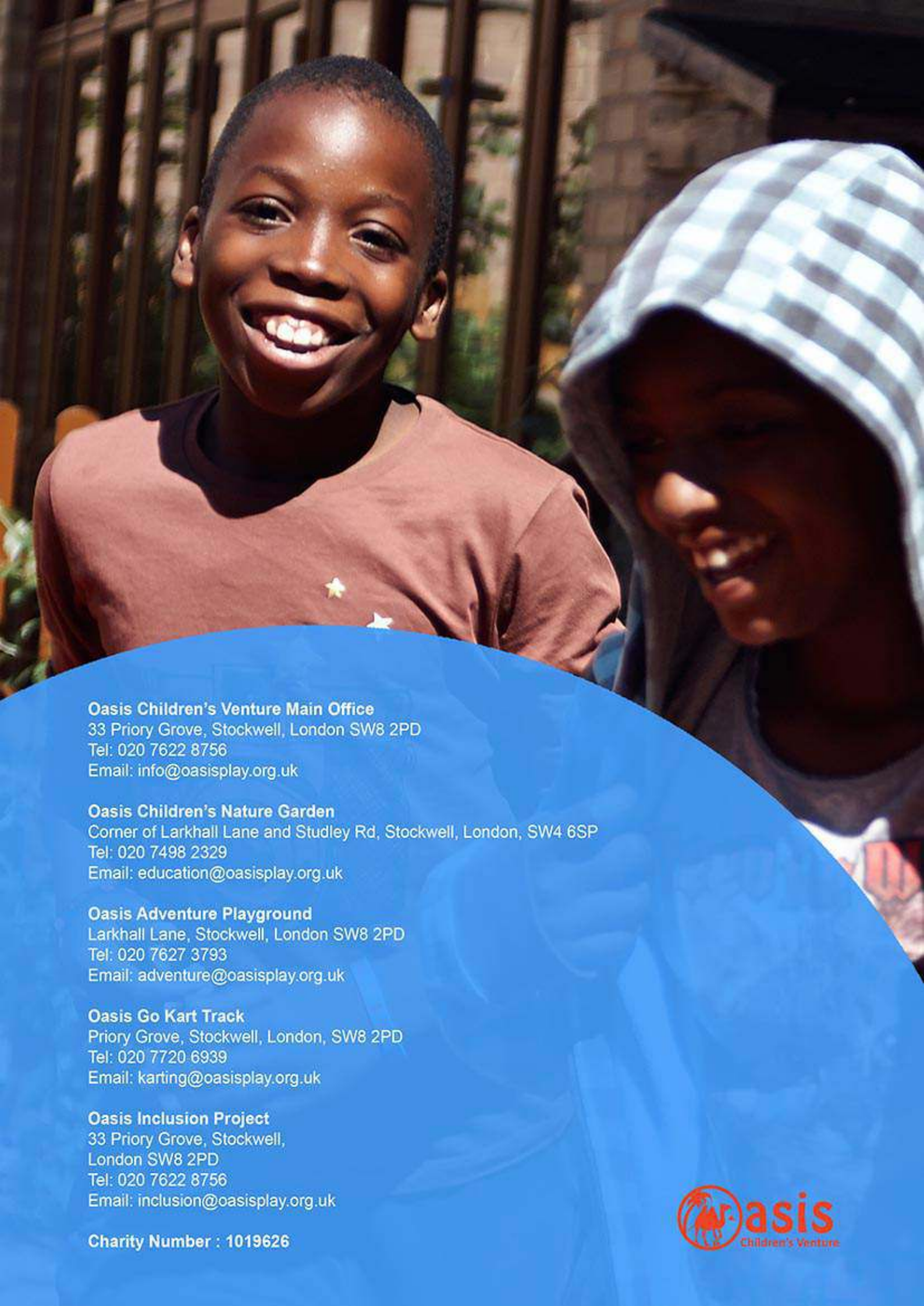
The findings of this document show significant improvements in CPP users confidence, skills and feelings of community safety and belonging. This coupled with what we know from wider research into the impact of children's play at regional, national and international levels further supports our understanding of the significance of the CPP in improving the wellbeing, attainment and life chances of its users.

While it is clear that the project is having a significant impact and is highly valued by its users, their families and the wider community it is also apparent that there are areas of the service which would benefit from further development. Particularly in relation to demand and capacity, meeting complex needs and developing services for older and transitioning users.

On an organisational level there is evidence of innovation particularly relating to the reuse of materials, co production practice and varied uses of spaces and facilities. Investment in sustainable models of service delivery should be continued.

The research and analysis undertaken for this report paints a picture of a vibrant, dynamic project with an embedded child centred approach, treasured by CYP and respected by the local community. A hub of friendship, inclusive practice and play in an area facing considerable challenges.





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