



# Playing Out Lawrence Hill & Redcliffe, Bristol 2016-2018

## Neighbourhood Play Initiatives on Central Bristol Estates

### Abstract

From 2016-2018 Playing Out, Up Our Street and residents of Twinnell House & Wills Drive (Lawrence Hill) and the vicinity of Somerset Square (Redcliffe) have endeavoured to bring about change for neighbourhood play on these estates.

This was rooted in experiments with the Playing Out / Play Streets model to see how pop-up outdoor play might best be enabled on outdoor spaces around the tower blocks.

- Initiatives trialled both
- creative ways the open spaces could be used
  - &
  - ideas for improving existing play amenity

### Initial considerations for an organisation wanting to support Playing Out on tower block estates

What is the budget / resource?  
 Much easier where:  
 -there are existing resident group(s)  
 -you know the local community/ies & are known (trusted) by them

Be prepared to go where the energy is (e.g. In Redcliffe a good 'way in' was to work alongside the local gardening club).

Networks - What other agencies can you work with / alongside? (Schools, churches, homework clubs etc).

Work out what languages are spoken / ethnic mix. -How will you manage this? Good to get resident(s) on board from the outset, particularly if you need someone to translate (both so residents understand what you are trying to achieve but also so you know what they might be feeling).

Are there any major development plans that could affect your project (building / park renovations, road works etc).

### Successful Approaches

Recruit residents to do some of any paid work required

Publicise little & often: Text messages (and flyers through letterboxes) are essential to remind people that the sessions are happening.

Use existing publicity channels locally (e.g. flyers distributed with parish magazine / sent out through local school / nursery bulletins)

In turn, the association with local institutions (schools etc.) gives legitimacy / trust

Door knocking is good to establish relationships

Ideally with a resident (particularly if they can assist with a common language barrier), or could be in partnership with representative of another agency already known and trusted locally.

Keep initial contact simple (outlining what the message is - e.g. Don't try to overload with questionnaires etc.)

Be present, visible and opportunistic in order to establish contact; Use the sessions themselves to give you an excuse to approach & invite passing families with a flyer:

*"You're probably busy today but we're playing out here at this time every week and you're very welcome to join us. Take this reminder and put it on the fridge!"*

Piggy back community events for establishing contact and publicising (Resident meetings, fetes, play groups etc).

Getting to know the potential spaces with residents is useful (green spaces, bits of street, car parks etc). This can be done by piloting play sessions in the beginning in different areas of the estate. Useful to understand safety issues, areas of conflict, and whether a consensus can be reached.

### Transferring Responsibility

Find key people (residents, parents, local community workers)

Need more than 1 person, ideally with a trust relationship (so they can support each other, & to ensure continuity when a key person can't do something)

If a budget enables, regular text message reminders and flyers can be distributed by a paid resident.

Holding the kit - Could this be supported by the council / housing association?

Parents/residents will & should do what they want - This doesn't necessarily have to include regular Playing Out sessions.

Finding someone else working in the area (whose ongoing involvement isn't dependent on temporary funding such as a local youth or community development worker) to do very low-key prompting, touching base etc. with key resident parents is invaluable.

Workshops (planned and advertised) are worth trying, to share skills and experiences. Best to promote these as social events, and include a social core to the session, as people are often put off by meetings.

Invite active residents (perhaps from other neighbourhoods) to share experiences.

Trial having an external project worker to kick start a session and then leave (where 2 or more parents can share responsibility for putting away any kit etc).

Sharing tea / refreshments & Encouraging older adults (e.g. elderly or isolated residents) to 'help' or join for a cuppa, encourages engagement in the neighbourhood generally.

### Other Considerations

Tendency for any paid workers to be seen:  
 -as 'official' or a route to authorities.  
 -as 'play leader' & / or child supervisor - Parents / carers must always be responsible for their own children (or arrange to take turns with a friend / neighbour).  
 -as essential outside support - perpetuating a false notion that residents can't do things for themselves.  
 Momentum always drops over winter & this makes it very difficult to be 100% resident led. Activities need a 'kick-start' in spring.  
 Consider how you might deal with any anti-social behaviour that may arise

People have complex lives & capacity to be involved will fluctuate.

Don't be too dependent on links through one person / family as people move and their situations change.



Tales from Redcliffe



Playable, sit-on-able, planting boxes codesigned and co-planted with Hot Soup House, Redcliffe Gardening Club and the families of Redcliffe. Part of a broader and deeper 3-year programme of engagement (and play!) with resident families and the spaces around their homes

### Tales from Lawrence Hill

**About**

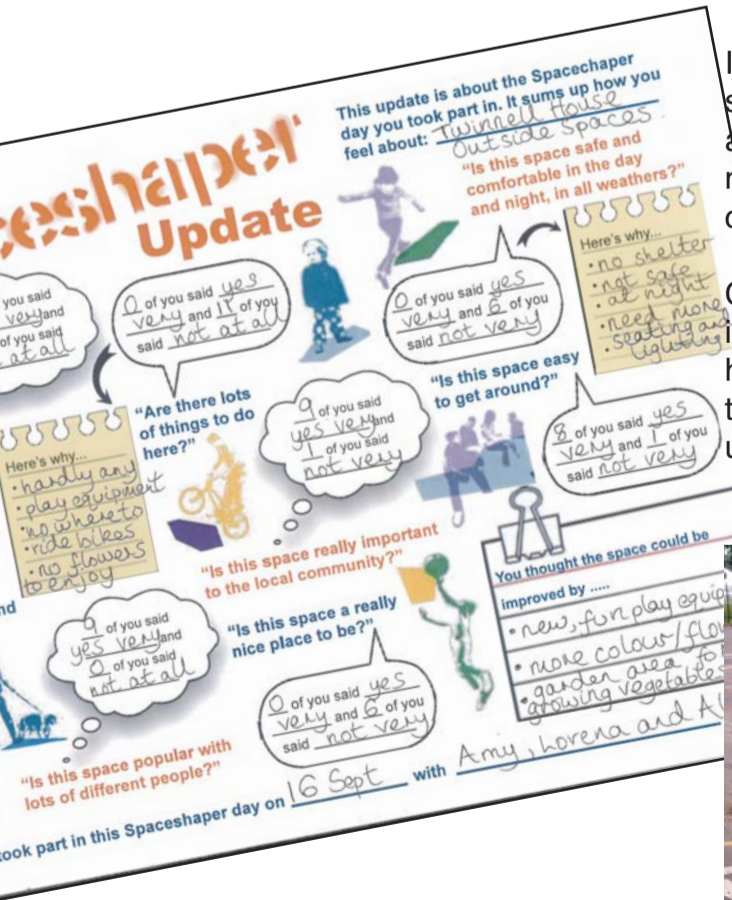
Playing Out Twinnell House & Wills Drive was established as a two year project of play initiatives and physical improvements to the public realm in the vicinity of these homes. The project is facilitated by Up Our Street and architect George Lovesmith.

Alongside a series of between 20-30 play sessions in 2016-17, children and their families have been invited to participate in the realisation of small interventions around their homes to enable more and better outdoor play.



### Background - Spaceshaper

This work builds on previous activity in the neighbourhood in 2015 including play sessions, bulb planting and a 'Spaceshaper' event to begin conversations about how the spaces around Twinnell House might be made better.



### Wills Drive Playground Markings

In late 2016, after years of building work the site compound was due to be returned to use as a playground. Designs for the playground markings were developed with around 20 local children and parents in a design workshop.



### Twinnell House Play Area Willow Planting

Residents old and young rolled up their sleeves in Spring 2017 and got their hands muddy planting willow. This talking point prompted discussions about what the space was like and what other changes residents wanted to see.



### An invitation to make change happen

We also invited local residents to put forward ideas for small scale changes that we could help fund and execute. We got lots of response and not always quite what we expected!



### 'Mums of Stapleton Road' gain momentum!

In response to our 'Invitation for Ideas' a growing group of around 20 parent residents, the 'Mums of Stapleton Road' group, met regularly to discuss and make plans for some significant and strategic changes to the play facilities around their homes. There wasn't a lot of money available but decisions about what might be done with it were carefully considered.

Optimism and drive were high but ultimately a lack of council support means things have now stalled.



George Lovesmith  
 george.lovesmith@uwe.ac.uk

Alice Ferguson  
 alice@playingout.net

Pat Pinkowska  
 pat@upourstreet.org.uk