

MHCLG / Playground Stakeholder Roundtable 10.02.21 Readout

Feedback:

- Group are supportive of playgrounds being able to open during national lockdown, but there are unresolved challenges in this. Particularly, striking a balance between encouraging children to play/exercise and not allowing playgrounds to become an area for socialising and overcrowding.
- As one of the few places that remain open during lockdown, playgrounds have become an 'attraction'. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this incurs:
 - A lack of social distancing, there are some cases of playgrounds being used for socialising
 - Increase in anti-social behaviour
 - Increase in playground maintenance issues
 - People will travel further to visit a playground with more facilities (ie toilets, parking)
 - People are using playgrounds more frequently and for longer
- Concerns raised regarding funding to ensure playgrounds are covid secure (staff, maintenance, signage, wear and tear). Also raised that available funding often goes to district and county councils rather than town and parish councils who also own playgrounds.
- In instances where playgrounds are closed, measures need to be taken to ensure they are closed safely.
- Reported instances of non-compliance with social distancing and sign vandalism.

Potential opportunities:

- Bigger and more robust signage is more effective
- Comms regarding the usage of playgrounds, including further promoting play as exercise
- Whether there is scope to deploy staff/covid marshals to playgrounds