

## 13 Young People

### Main Findings

Around nine in ten households (92 per cent) with young children have access to some form of play areas within their neighbourhood. Around two thirds have access to a park (65 per cent), whilst over half have access to either a playground (56 per cent) or field or other open space (53 per cent).

Generally, households with young children within rural areas are more likely to say children would be very safe or fairly safe when walking or cycling to play areas on their own – the largest difference is 23 percentage points for being safe walking or cycling to parks when compared to urban areas (74 per cent and 51 per cent, respectively).

The average age that most householders with young children felt comfortable with children playing without supervision at such play areas was around 9 or 10 years old.

Around three-quarters (76 per cent) of young people aged 8 to 21 take part in some form of activity regularly, with taking part in a sports or sporting activity being the most common activity (53 per cent of young people).

These findings from 2016 are similar to the findings in 2014 when these questions were last included in the Scottish Household Survey.

## 13.1 Introduction and Context

This chapter starts with an overview of the types of play areas available for children to play in, followed by the measures on perceptions of adults on how safe it is for children to play there. Finally, this chapter looks at the types of activities young people engage in within their local area.

Data from these variables are collected every two years and were last presented in the Scotland's People Annual Report: Results from 2014 Scottish Household Survey<sup>82</sup>.

A key element of the Early Years Framework is improving the physical and social environment for children, with an emphasis on play. At the start of 2009, a series of questions on the opportunities for children to play in their neighbourhood were added to the Scottish Household Survey to measure progress on this framework. From 2012, the set of questions were only asked if there was a child aged 6 to 12 years in the household.

## 13.2 Opportunities for Children to Play

- Just over nine in ten households with children aged 6 to 12 years old have access to play areas within their neighbourhood.
- Households within the 20 per cent most deprived urban areas of Scotland say they have less access to a natural environment or wooded area in their neighbourhood, compared to the rest of urban areas.
- Children in rural areas have more access to fields, natural environments and woods whereas those in urban areas have more access to parks.

### Overall opportunities for Children to Play

Table 13.1 shows that just over nine in ten households with children aged 6 to 12 years old have access to play areas within their neighbourhood (92 per cent). Around two-thirds (65 per cent) have access to a park, and over half can access a playground and a field or other open space (56 per cent and 53 per cent, respectively).

### Differences in playing opportunities based on the level of deprivation

There are some differences based on the level of deprivation in urban areas. In particular, of those households within the 20 per cent most deprived urban areas of Scotland, only a third (36 per cent) say there is a natural environment or wooded area in their neighbourhood, compared to half of households (50 per cent) in the rest of the urban areas of Scotland.

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/08/3720>

## Variation in access to play areas for children between urban to rural areas

There is evidence of greater variation in access to play areas for children when comparing urban to rural areas. As expected, a higher proportion of households in rural areas have access to either fields or other open space (62 per cent) or natural environment / wooded areas (72 per cent) than urban areas (51 per cent and 46 per cent respectively). Conversely, a higher proportion of households in urban areas have access to a park (67 per cent) in comparison to rural areas (55 per cent). These findings are very similar to the findings from 2014 when these questions were last asked in the Scottish Household Survey<sup>83</sup>.

**Table 13.1: Types of children play areas available in the neighbourhood by Urban Rural Classification and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**

Percentages, 2016 data

Households containing children aged 6 to 12	Urban			Rural	Scotland
	20% Most Deprived	Rest of Urban	All Urban		
Playground	52	59	57	52	56
Park	64	68	67	55	65
Football or other games pitch	42	48	46	43	46
Field or other open space	46	54	51	62	53
School playground	35	45	42	39	42
Natural environment / wooded	36	50	46	72	50
Access to at least one play area	91	92	91	94	92
Access to none	9	8	8	6	8
<i>Base (minimum)</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>1,080</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>1,370</i>

Columns may add to more than 100 per cent since multiple responses were allowed.

## Children's safety

- Most consider that 9 or 10 years old is the youngest age that children are able to play without supervision.
- Children are perceived to be safer in rural areas.
- The overall feeling of safety for playgrounds, parks and football or other games pitches are higher when going with two or three friends than they are when children travel alone.
- Those from rural areas are less concerned about bullying by other children compared to those from urban areas.
- Households in the 20 per cent most deprived urban areas of Scotland are more concerned about bullying by other children compared to other urban areas.

Generally, households within rural areas are more likely to say children would be very or fairly safe when walking or cycling to play areas on their own compared to urban areas

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/08/3720/14>

(Table 13.2). The largest difference of 23 percentage points is for walking or cycling to parks (74 per cent in rural areas compared to 51 per cent in urban areas).

**Table 13.2: Percentage of households that think it is very or fairly safe for children to walk or cycle to play areas on their own by Urban Rural Classification and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**

Percentages, 2016 data

Households containing children aged 6 to 12	Urban			Rural	Scotland
	20% Most Deprived	Rest of Urban	All Urban		
Playground	48	60	57	73	59
Park	41	55	51	74	55
Football or other games pitch	48	53	52	67	54
Field or other open space	45	56	53	69	57
School playground	53	53	53	67	55
Natural environment / wooded	28	36	34	53	39
Street/Road	48	57	54	63	56
<i>Base (minimum)</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>570</i>

Columns may add to more than 100 per cent since multiple responses were allowed.

Table 13.3 shows similar patterns of variation when considering how safe it would be for children to go to play areas with two or three friends to play. Again, those in rural areas are generally more likely to say they think it is very or fairly safe than those living in urban areas, (except for in the Street/Road where there was no significant difference). Intuitively, the overall feeling of safety for playgrounds, parks and football or other games pitches is higher when going with two or three friends than they are when children travel alone (compare with Table 13.2).

**Table 13.3: Percentage of households that think it is very or fairly safe for children to go to play areas with 2 or 3 friends by Urban Rural Classification and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**

Percentages, 2016 data

Households containing children aged 6 to 12	Urban			Rural	Scotland
	20% Most Deprived	Rest of Urban	All Urban		
Playground	59	66	64	78	66
Park	52	60	58	78	61
Football or other games pitch	58	60	59	70	61
Field or other open space	52	62	59	73	62
School playground	58	60	59	68	61
Natural environment / wooded	30	43	40	57	44
Street/Road	50	58	56	63	57
<i>Base (minimum)</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>570</i>

Columns may add to more than 100 per cent since multiple responses were allowed.

At the national level, the percentage of households being concerned about children being bullied or harmed by other children while playing in play areas varied from 26 per cent for streets around the respondents home, to 40 per cent for playing within a natural environment or wooded area (Table 13.4).

There are also differences when comparing different levels of rurality and deprivation. Those from rural areas are less concerned about bullying by other children compared to those from urban areas across all types of play areas (differences range from 12 to 22 percentage points). Households in the 20 per cent most deprived urban areas of Scotland are more concerned about bullying by other children compared to other urban areas (although there was no significant difference in the Field or Open space, School playground, and Natural environment/wooded play areas).

**Table 13.4: Percentage of households who are very or fairly concerned of bullying by children in play areas by Urban Rural Classification and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**

Percentages, 2016 data

Households containing children aged 6 to 12	Urban			Rural	Scotland
	20% Most Deprived	Rest of Urban	All Urban		
Playground	53	34	39	27	37
Park	49	37	40	28	38
Football or other games pitch	49	37	40	27	38
Field or other open space	44	37	39	23	35
School playground	46	36	38	16	35
Natural environment / wooded	54	42	45	25	40
Street/Road	37	24	28	15	26
<i>Base (minimum)</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>570</i>

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There is a similar level of concern amongst householders of children being harmed by adults whilst playing in play areas (Table 13.5). The greatest concern of safety nationally is related to those playing within a natural environment or wooded area (48 per cent). Households in urban areas are much more likely to be concerned about the safety of children being harmed by adults across all play areas than households in rural areas (ranging from 10 to 23 percentage points lower in rural areas, but there was no significant difference for Football or other games pitch).

**Table 13.5: Percentage of households who are very or fairly concerned of children being harmed by adults in play areas by Urban Rural Classification and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**

Percentages, 2016 data

Households containing children aged 6 to 12	Urban			Rural	Scotland
	20% Most Deprived	Rest of Urban	All Urban		
Playground	53	32	37	27	36
Park	52	35	40	24	37
Football or other games pitch	47	35	38	28	36
Field or other open space	47	39	41	21	37
School playground	43	32	34	17	32
Natural environment / wooded	61	52	54	31	48
Street/Road	37	27	30	17	28
<i>Base (minimum)</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>570</i>

Columns may add to more than 100 per cent since multiple responses were allowed.

Table 13.6 shows the average youngest age that households consider it would be safe for a child to play in each of the different play areas without supervision. Most would feel comfortable with children being aged around 9 or 10 years old to play without supervision at such play areas.

**Table 13.6: Youngest mean age at which it is considered it would be safe for a child to play without supervision by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and Urban Rural Classification (SIMD)**

Percentages, 2016 data

Households containing children aged 6 to 12	Urban			Rural	Scotland
	20% Most Deprived	Rest of Urban	All Urban		
Playground	10	10	10	9	10
Park	10	10	10	9	10
Football or other games pitch	10	10	10	9	10
Field or other open space	10	10	10	9	10
School playground	10	10	10	9	10
Natural environment / wooded	11	11	11	10	11
Street/Road	9	9	9	8	9
<i>Base (minimum)</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>570</i>

Mean age presented

### 13.3 Participation in Activities

- Taking part in a sports or sporting activity, whether played competitively or not, is the most common activity among young people.
- Young people in rural areas are more likely to take part in activities compared to those in urban areas.
- In the 20 per cent most deprived areas less young people take part in activities than in other urban areas.

Households with someone aged between 8 and 21 years old are asked a series of questions within the SHS on whether they take part in a series of activities regularly. A fuller description of the activities is provided in Annex 2: Glossary.

Table 13.7 shows that taking part in a sports or sporting activity, whether played competitively or not, is the most common activity among young people (53 per cent). Young people in rural areas are more likely to take part in activities (82 per cent) compared to those in urban areas (74 per cent). In the 20 per cent most deprived urban areas, two thirds of young people (68 per cent) take part in activities which is lower than the three quarters of young people (77 per cent) in other urban areas.

**Table 13.7: Activities young people aged 8 to 21 take part in by Urban Rural Classification and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)**

Percentages, 2016 data

Households containing anyone aged 8 to 21	Urban			Rural	Scotland
	20% Most Deprived	Rest of Urban	All Urban		
Music or drama activities	18	28	25	31	26
Other arts activities	7	8	8	8	8
Sports or sporting activities	44	55	52	54	53
Other outdoor activities	16	20	19	29	21
Other groups or clubs	16	21	20	28	21
Representing young people's views	2	3	3	5	3
Mentoring or peer education	3	4	4	6	4
None	32	23	26	18	24
<i>Base (minimum)</i>	<i>460</i>	<i>1,360</i>	<i>1,820</i>	<i>470</i>	<i>2,290</i>

Columns may add to more than 100 per cent since multiple responses were allowed.

## Conclusion

This chapter has summarised Scottish Household Survey findings on young people. The findings show that most young children have access to play areas; but there are differences in the availability of different types of play areas for different levels of deprivation within urban areas, and between urban and rural areas. The findings also show that the majority of households perceive that children are both safe in, and travelling to, most play areas; apart from natural environment or wooded areas. However, a slim majority of households in the 20 per cent most deprived urban areas don't think it is safe for children to travel alone to most play areas, and the percentage of households in this group that perceive that children are safe from harm is lower than the percentage of households from other urban areas and rural areas. The majority of young people take part in some form of activity, irrespective of the level of deprivation or between urban or rural areas.