

*Making space for children, young
people and play in Pride in Place*



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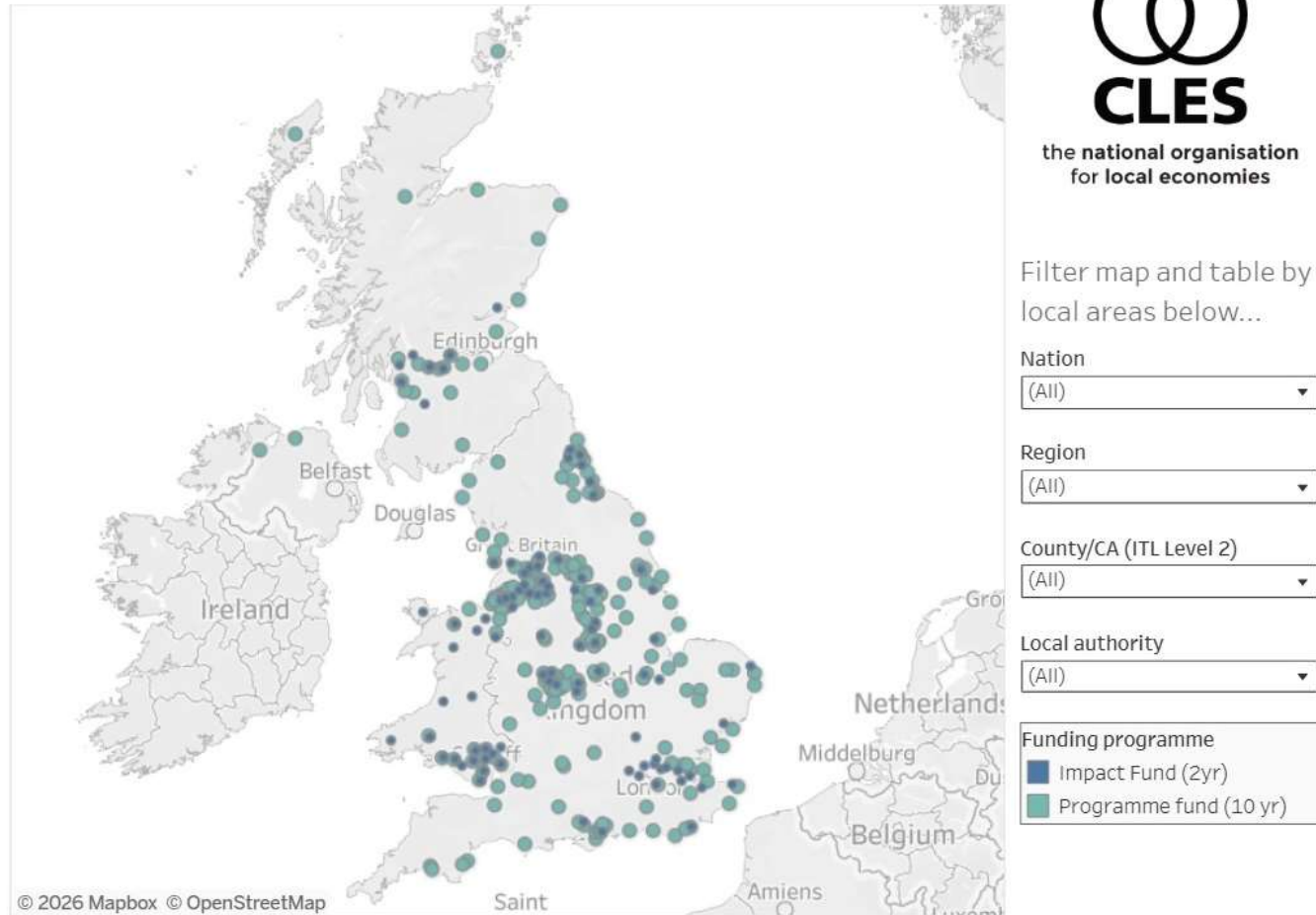
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*Marginalised Youth: Power, Precarity & Possibilities, Sociology at
Durham, 25th March 2026*

Pride in Place

- Sunak Government's Long-Term Plan for Towns (Oct 2023)
- Plan for Neighbourhoods (March 2025)
- **PRIDE IN PLACE** (Sept 2025)
 - up to £20 million over 10 years will be available to 284 UK places (22 in the north-east), from the scale of small towns to clusters of neighbourhoods
 - focus on local communities creating plans for their places and on the importance of what we might call 'social infrastructures'
 - seeks to enable and accelerate socio-economic change in some of the country's most marginalised locations
 - "doubly-disadvantaged" – economic and social - the Community Needs Index and the Index of Multiple Deprivation were used to identify the doubly disadvantaged areas included within the programme
- **95 other places** will receive **£1.5 million over two years** via the **Pride in Place Impact Fund** (Nov 2025)
 - "managed by local authorities and focused on quick, visible improvements"

Pride In Place Funding Allocations (13/10/2025)



<https://cles.org.uk/blog/pride-in-place-programme-mapping-the-community-wealth-building-opportunities/>

Pride in Place: Key Focus

Pride in Place

- To build stronger communities
- To create thriving places
- To empower people to take back control

Pride in Place Impact Fund

2.1. The Pride in Place Impact Fund has 3 objectives:

a. Community spaces: creating, extending, improving or refurbishing existing community facilities and enabling community organisations to take control or ownership of underused but valued local assets.

b. Public spaces: enhancing the physical environment in public spaces - examples of initiatives include new or improved green spaces or public squares, improved outdoor play, sports and leisure spaces, installing street furniture, public art or wayfinding.

c. High street and town centre revitalisation: making these areas more attractive and welcoming places where people congregate and which encourage economic activity. Examples of initiatives that could be funded are shop frontage improvements, adaptations that bring premises back into use, streetscape improvements, public art, trails and wayfinding, and creating or improving the infrastructure for regular markets.

Critiques of Pride in Place

- Limited to 384 neighbourhoods out of more than 7000 MSOAs (E&W 2021) and 686 “doubly-disadvantaged” in England alone (JRF, 2026)
 - Forces competition between places
- Funding reflects (in part) electoral politics:
 - “To ensure broader geographic coverage, funding was capped at the highest-ranking neighbourhood in any one constituency” (JRF, 2026)
 - Some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods haven’t received funding, and some much less disadvantaged have
- Rhetoric of bottom-up/community-led but “a list of pre-approved interventions”
 - “these areas must undertake deep, inclusive, community engagement work in less than a year — a timeline that is especially challenging in places with weaker social infrastructure” (JRF, 2026)
- Calls to fund councils properly (post-austerity), with recognition that cuts underline Pride in Place aims

Pride in Place: Children and Young People

- Children, and especially, young people, included in Pride in Place framing from the very start
- But with a dominant focus on “anti-social behaviour” and skills & training
- Aligned with government’s Youth Strategy and youth hubs
- Pride in Place Strategy
 - Children’s inactivity levels and childhood obesity
 - Services to tackle child poverty and provide essential support to families and young people
 - Regenerate youth clubs
 - Empowering young people

Pride in Place Pre-Approved Interventions

- the delivery of outreach, engagement, or participatory programmes for community spaces, including **youth centres** and public libraries
 - public realm improvements
 - regeneration of existing parks or community gardens, particularly in areas with poor quality parks and gardens
 - improving access to existing parks
 - development of a new park, particularly in areas with the least access to greenspace
 - supporting with neighbourhood public realm improvements, such as improving and securing domestic private and communal gardens, **upgrading play areas**
 - projects that bring people together from different groups
 - projects which build relationships within and between communities
 - supporting people, **including young people**, to develop volunteering and social action projects locally
 - renovating and developing existing or new community spaces, such as village halls, libraries (including libraries of things), **youth facilities** or community centres for local civil society and community groups to use
 - developing **youth engagements**
 - refurbishing and maintaining existing sports facilities
 - redeveloping an unused area to build sports facilities
 - creating new footways and cycle routes to key destinations
 - upgrading a junction or introducing crossings to mitigate severance, for example, between residential housing areas and the local high street
 - encouraging the active use of public spaces throughout the daytime, evening, and night
 - school-based programmes to support **young people's development** (targeted early help support initiatives to support children and young people with emerging mental health and wellbeing needs & facilitating access to arts, music, sports and other enrichment activities)
 - support to both reduce levels of child poverty and to prevent the negative impacts of child poverty on children and families
 - youth work, family learning and other early intervention work with children, young people and families
- BUT**
- installing signage in town centres to reinforce crime prevention messages and deter anti-social behaviour
 - using pavement markings or physical barriers to discourage loitering or clustering in high-risk areas
 - sports initiatives designed to tackle crime and minimise reoffending

Pride in Place Impact Fund: Example Activities

- creating or improving parks or community gardens, particularly in areas with poor quality parks and gardens
- creating or refurbishing play areas and sports pitches/courts, installing outdoor gym equipment
- improved lighting and adaptations to reduce crime and the fear of crime
- provision of public toilets or improvements to existing facilities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pride-in-place-impact-fund/pride-in-place-impact-fund-prospectus#appendix-2-pride-in-place-impact-fund-example-activities>

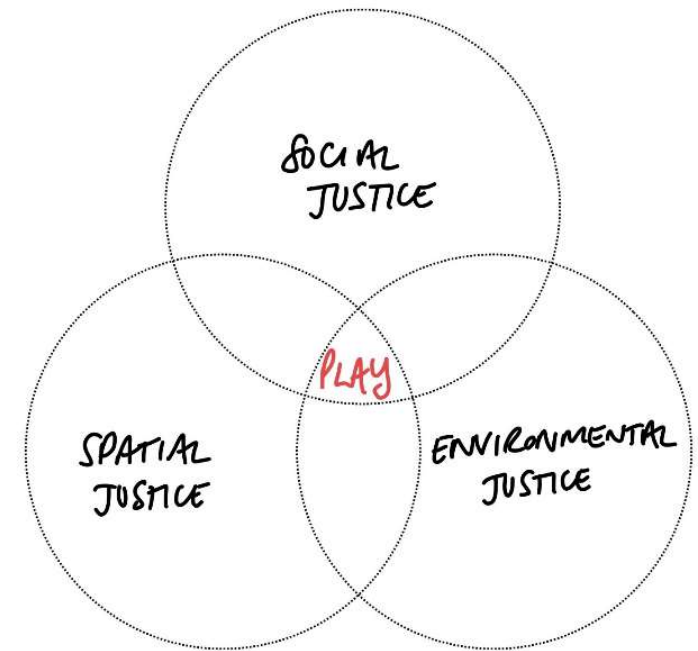
- In Canvey Island, where the community plan puts the cost-of-living front and centre - with funding directed at a stronger town centre, better local health services, more for young people to do, and improved job opportunities and wages.
- In Clifton, a new community hub at the heart of their neighbourhood will be built - a focal point for local services, activities and support. The funding will also improve parks, strengthen the high street, and open up new opportunities for young people.
- In Dewsbury, the Neighbourhood Board is funding the establishment of an enforcement and prevention team to address crime and anti-social behaviour.
- In Dudley, 15 trusted community representatives have been trained to lead conversations in their own networks, reaching residents who might not engage through traditional routes - building community power from day one.
- In Durham, the funding will create a 'children and young people's fund' and support local businesses to invest in street safety and active travel.
- In Eastbourne, the plan centres on bringing empty and neglected buildings back into use — giving them new purpose for the community. Funding will also target deprived neighbourhoods, revitalise the town centre and seafront, and create better opportunities for local people.
- In Greenock, a new Enterprise Hub will give start-ups and growing businesses a base to thrive — backed by investment in skills, heritage, town centre living, and place branding to attract residents, visitors and investors.
- In Leigh, young people are firmly in the driving seat, with strong youth leadership, extensive local engagement and clear power-sharing embedded from the start.
- In Torquay, residents are driving improvements to streets, the town centre, and skills and training.
- In Wrexham, the funding will go towards a new youth zone and making the town centre safer and more welcoming for everyone.

Phase 1 plans emerging

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/high-streets-revived-and-children-given-safe-places-to-play>

Pride in Place: Space for Play and Hanging Out

- Connecting social, spatial and environmental justice
- **We can argue that play (broadly defined) is how children and young people develop pride in their places.**
- Long history of connecting children, young people, and play to area-based regeneration (Street Playgrounds, GIAs, CDPs)



Connecting Play and Pride in Place

- Uneven geographies of play can be seen as a good indicator of neighbourhood need
- Play is community development
- Play animates communities
- A play-friendly neighbourhood is a neighbourhood that's better for everyone
- Play opens our eyes to the spaces and qualities of our streets and neighbourhoods
- Play enables public conversations
- Space for play is social infrastructure
- Play engenders a sense of belonging
- Play is prefigurative

Playgrounds Fund

- £18 million to revamp play areas announced at Budget (Nov 2025)
- Cash for 66 local authorities (200 children's play parks) across the country (21.3.26)
- “Part of the Government’s wider Pride in Place programme, focused on strengthening communities and reducing inequalities” (Play England)
- “This funding will breathe new life into play areas across England, creating safe, exciting spaces for thousands of children. **It will enrich and empower communities** – giving every child a place to play and grow, wherever they live.”
- “This investment is a downpayment not only on better playgrounds, but on **brighter, stronger communities.**” (Tom Hayes MP, Chair of APPG Play)



Labour
announces
new



multi-million
fund for
playgrounds

5796_26 Promoted by Hollie Ridley on behalf of the Labour Party, both at 20 Rushworth Street, London, SE1 0SS

Play and Pride in Place

Play England
playengland.org.uk



Briefing - Pride in Place: Delivering for Play

For: Chief Executives of Recipient Local Authorities

Subject: Briefing -Pride in Place: Delivering for Play

Date: 14 October 2025

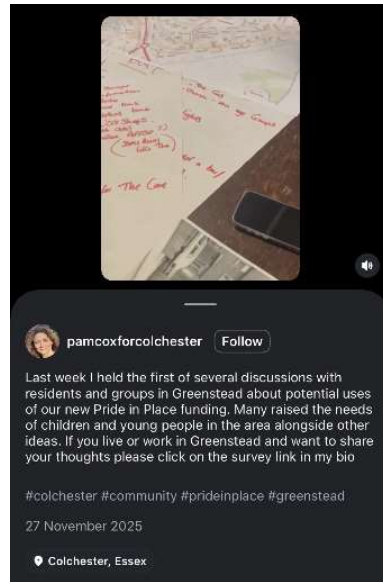
Why this matters

The Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund is investing **£150 million across 95 areas** (including 64 areas in England, each receiving £1.5 million over two years, totalling £64 million) to improve public spaces, including play and leisure facilities, as part of the wider £5 billion Pride in Place programme for local renewal.

This is a significant opportunity to improve the spaces that matter most to communities. But for children and young people, the benefit will only be real if delivery is **planned, evidence-led and rooted in the principle of Play Sufficiency**.

Play England: asking Pride in Place (impact funds) to commit 20% of their funding to children's play, reflecting children's representation in the population

Play and Pride in Place

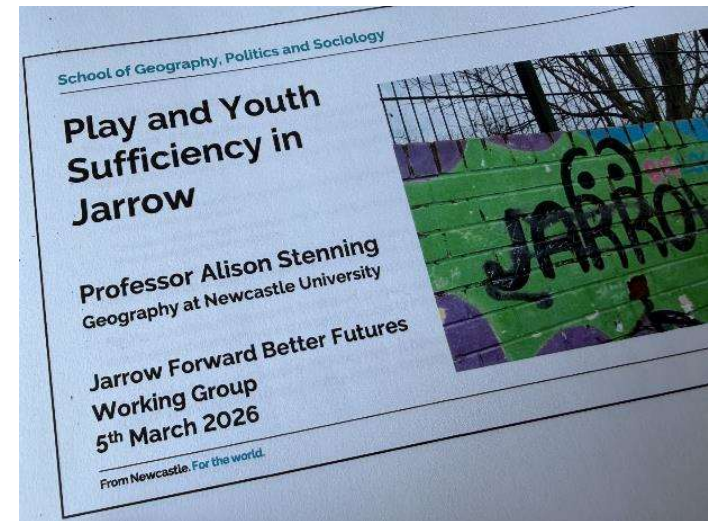


The council spokesperson added: "The adventure playground currently has free use of this building and the playground land, but we recognise it needs to be in good repair if it is to have a long-term use.

"The government recently announced significant **Pride in Place funding** for this area, and while we're still exploring how it'll work, it could be available for projects such as this."

Jarrow

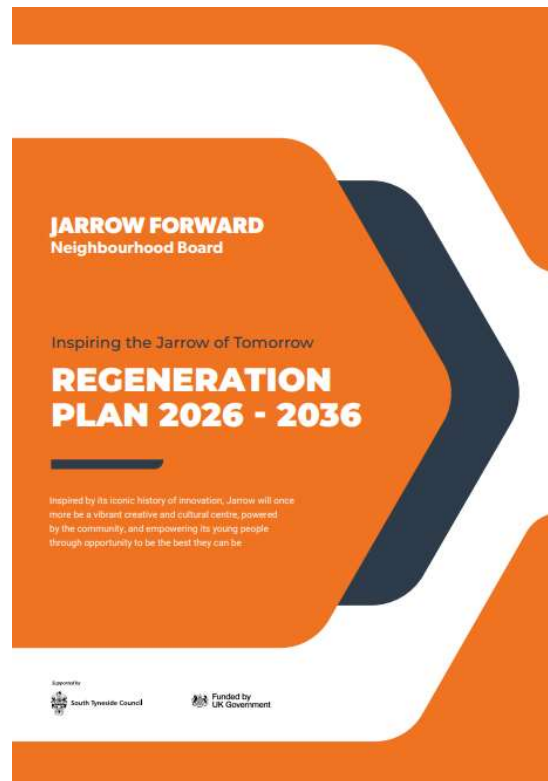
- Long Term Plan for Towns (October 2023)
- Safety and Security; High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration; Transport and Connectivity
- “Need for more youth provision and diversionary activity ... to help reduce anti-social behaviour, increase skills levels ... and raise aspiration amongst young people”
- “Support for parents and families ... given the cost-of-living impact and deprivation in pockets of Jarrow”
- “Engage young people through the South Tyneside Youth Council and other routes”



- A “play and youth sufficiency” audit
- Mapping space for play and hanging out

Jarrow Forward

1. **Better futures for Jarrow's young people** - more opportunities to be creative and learn new skills, and better facilities for sport, play, leisure and culture
2. **A re-energised town centre** - transforming the look and feel of Jarrow, improving connectivity, supporting new attractive events and initiatives
3. **A connected, cohesive community** - communicating about existing and new assets, services and opportunities, supporting community groups and boosting pride in the town



- We will, therefore, prioritise play and creativity, exploring innovative solutions such as adventure playgrounds, youth facilities and equipment, talent programmes and events
- A new play hub which will encourage and facilitate play across the town and possibly have a key focal point in an adventure playground
- Use creativity, play and sport to empower our young people to be the best they can be
- Reconfigure and green the town centre, focusing on play, health and improving the route from the Metro and town centre connections

Space

- Pay attention to children's doorstep spaces (cleanliness, risks and hazards, etc.)
- Play-friendly neighbourhood spaces with opportunities to develop child-led play and just hang out, safely and comfortably in all weathers and all seasons (lighting, benches, shelters)
- Improve play value and permission to play in and around the Viking Centre
- Ensure safe everyday mobility for children and young people, by tackling road danger and maintaining and developing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure
- Repair damage to play parks as a matter of priority, and improve the quality of provision (especially for over 8s)
- Promote neighbourhood play with support from youth and play workers, improving safety and extending opportunities
- Build an adventure playground
- Develop a play streets programme

Time

- Embed play even more consistently in the school day, including for older children (late primary and early secondary)
- Enable 'play on the way' to make the most of small bits of time (on the way to school, at the shops, etc.)
- Integrate play strategy into child poverty work, in the hope that parents' time might be freed up to facilitate children's play
- Create spaces that enable neighbourhood play in bad weather and darker afternoons, extending the play day and all-seasons play
- Make neighbourhood play possible in all seasons

Acceptance

- Remove all No Ball Games signs
- Work with community and resident groups and other stakeholders, across a range of neighbourhoods and circumstances, to explore and embed the value of everyday play, including for older children and teenagers
- Develop a pro-play policy within the council, such that the council and its officers start from a premise that play should be permitted

Rights

- Integrate children's right to play (Article 31 of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) into a full range of council policy and practice
- Embed the right to play in child poverty work, acknowledging the impact that poverty has on realising children's right to play
- Explore the possibility of adopting a play sufficiency approach to put the right to play into practice
- Ensure that more children with additional needs, children from migrant and refugee families, and others with protected characteristics are equally able to access space to play

Play and Pride in Place

- Emphasis on “young people” rather than children
- Focus on playgrounds and parks, including “destination playgrounds”, skateparks, etc.
- Less on doorstep play and/or playable public space
- Limited recognition of the wider power of play

- Some evidence of some Pride in Place programmes beginning to engage with a more substantive approach to play (e.g. play strategies, adventure playgrounds)

- But questions remain...