



The Power of Place

Workshop discussions



We asked charities their thoughts on how physical spaces for children, such as play centres, youth clubs, homes and schools, can allow children and young people to feel safe and secure. This was explored in the context of the charities and their work, and also within the local community. Shared practices were discussed and there were many insightful conversations which we have captured below.

What charities can do to ensure children feel safe in their spaces

- Make sure basic needs (e.g. food, warmth) are met first when children arrive to the service as it helps to build trust and rapport
- Provide emotional support that allows children to feel heard
- Raise staff awareness of issues and context around children's needs in their local area
- Ensure policies are up to date and have clear safeguarding measures in place
- Empower children and their families by giving them opportunities to be involved in decision making/ making changes
- Utilise lived experience and service user feedback for improving services

What communities can do to increase children's sense of safety

- Ensure that there are multiple community spaces that are available, accessible and safe (e.g. community kitchens or gardens)
- Promote volunteering among community members, as this can enable more charity/ outreach projects to take place and increase reach
- Encourage networking and integration between community groups (e.g council, youth centres, police, businesses, faith leaders, schools etc) for increased cohesion in the community
- Develop more family support services in the community. Ideally in the form of holistic, whole family support, childcare, and intergeneration spaces.



Including the voice of children and young people

There was also a discussion about how we can ensure children and young people's voices are heard in the work we carry out to create safe and secure spaces:

1. Gather regular feedback in engaging ways (via peer to peer research, voting, focus groups, online comms, observations, survey)
2. Give children and young people opportunities for involvement, responsibility and ownership (youth boards, representatives/ ambassadors, alumni) and pay young people for their time.
3. Understand varying needs in terms of: age, additional needs, culture, family make-up, and think about what adaptations need to be made to ensure they are heard.

"Listen to service users - what does a safe space look like to them"

[Further guidance on youth involvement](#)

[Youth voice in practice: Action for Children](#)