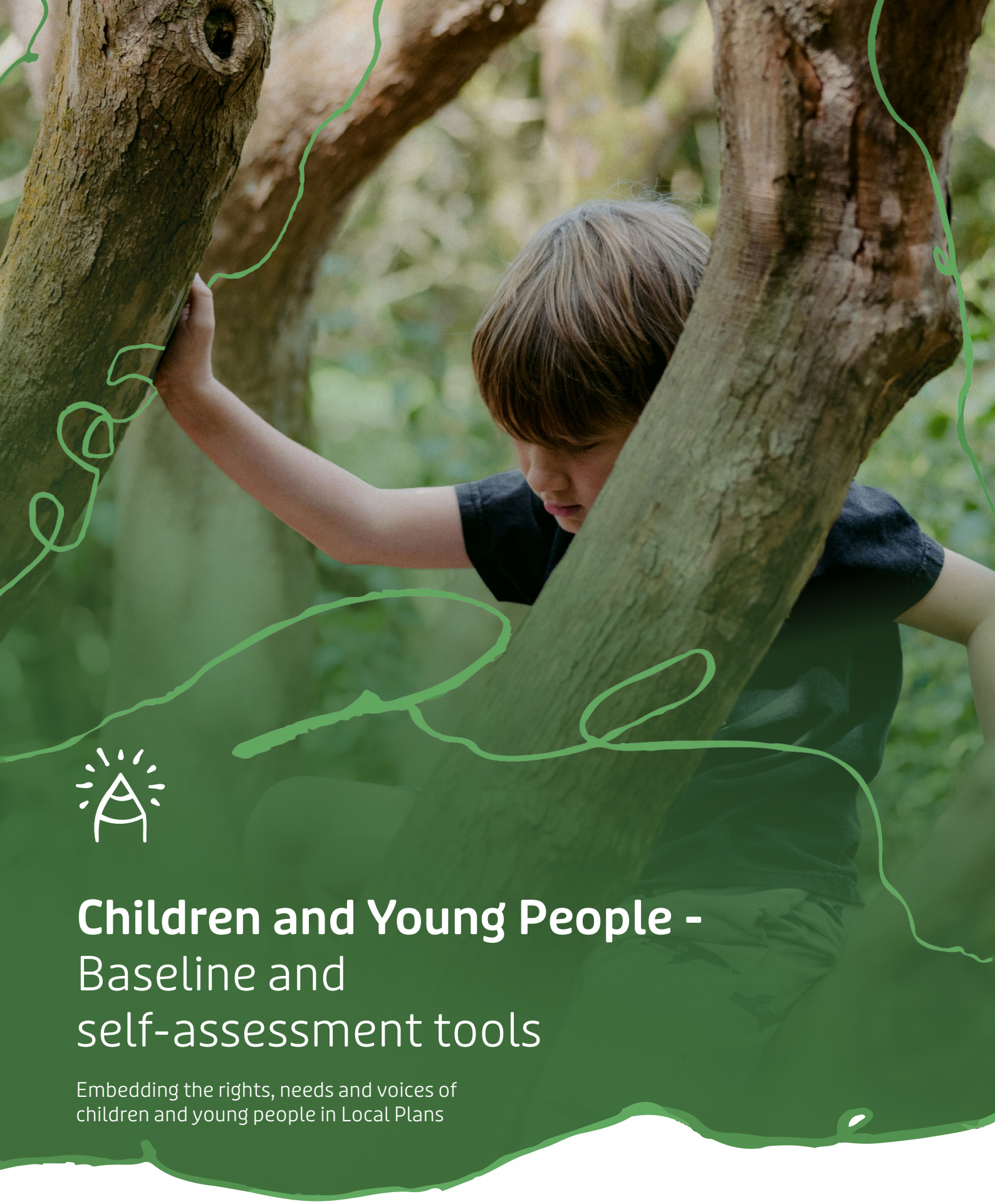


Children and Young People - Baseline and self-assessment tools

Embedding the rights, needs and voices of children and young people in Local Plans

tcpa

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Loughborough University

Baseline audit self-assessment tools

Introduction

These self-assessment tools are designed to help Local Planning Authorities quickly and easily review how well existing policy, and related practices, embed the rights, needs and voices of children and young people in the Local Plan. Further detail on the principles that inform the assessment can be found in the *Child-friendly planning principles and policy prompts* document.

The self-assessed score helps to identify strengths and gaps.

- Option 1 Policy audit - takes a structured approach looking at sections of the existing Local Plan. For each section key questions provide a prompt to self-assess and assign a rating.
- Option 2 Principles wheel - utilises seven child-friendly principles and requires a self-assessed ranking to be mapped onto a wheel to provide a visual representation of the current policy position.

Both tools can be completed by an individual or in a participatory group setting and should form part of the early stages of a Local Plan review or scoping. They could be completed with a diverse range of stakeholders including planners and where appropriate children and young people themselves. It is not necessary to complete both tools, but each may illuminate slightly different gaps, strengths and opportunities and support wider conversations about embedding children and young people into the Local Plan.

Consider:

- Repeating use of the tools to check progress at key stages of the Local Plan making process
- Keeping notes of assessments, ideas and decisions can assist in explaining approaches at Examination

Option 1 - Policy audit:

This tool is designed to quickly review how well existing policy and related practices embed the rights, needs and voices of children and young people through key audit questions across themes and then a self-assessed rating for each theme, helping identify gaps and strengths.

Instructions for use

For each theme, review the prompts and assign a self-assessed rating based on your current Local Plan and practice:

- No Evidence – no clear reference to children and young people
- Essential – minimal or baseline provision in place
- Good Practice – consistent consideration and evidence of intent
- Strong Practice – embedded, innovative or child-led practice

Theme	Audit Prompts	Your Assessment	Notes		
			Current status	Ideas and options for change	Decisions
Appraisals and assessments	**1.** Have children and young people been considered in any of the statutory or non-statutory assessments undertaken in the plan making process e.g. Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA) or other?	◯ No Evidence ◯ Essential ◯ Good Practice ◯ Strong Practice			
Vision and Objectives	**1.** Is the wellbeing of children and young people mentioned in the spatial vision or strategic objectives? **2.** Do objectives support child-friendly outcomes or address child friendly planning principles? **3.** Are wider LA child and youth strategies referenced in the Plan?	◯ No Evidence ◯ Essential ◯ Good Practice ◯ Strong Practice			

Theme	Audit Prompts	Your Assessment	Notes		
			Current status	Ideas and options for change	Decisions
Evidence Base	**1.** Is local data on children's needs signposted or utilised in the Plan? **2.** Have children or youth representatives contributed to any evidence-gathering for the Plan?	◯ No Evidence ◯ Essential ◯ Good Practice ◯ Strong Practice			
Engagement and Participation	**1.** Is engaging with children and young people included in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)? **2.** Are children and young people involved in consultation or plan-making activities? Including children from seldom heard groups? **3.** Are their views meaningfully reflected in shaping policies?	◯ No Evidence ◯ Essential ◯ Good Practice ◯ Strong Practice			
Policy Content	**1.** Are children and young people referenced in key policy areas (e.g. green space, mobility, design)? **2.** Do policies actively address the rights, needs of voices of children? **3.** Do design policies promote child-friendly principles such as playable space, child-friendly streets or intergenerational design? **4.** Are policies informed by CYP needs or behaviours?	◯ No Evidence ◯ Essential ◯ Good Practice ◯ Strong Practice			

Theme	Audit Prompts	Your Assessment	Notes		
			Current status	Ideas and options for change	Decisions
Site Allocations	**1.** Are sites assessed to consider the needs of children and young people for services and facilities as well as proximity to schools, play, green space or facilities children and young people access? **2.** Are child-friendly features considered in site requirements?	◯ No Evidence ◯ Essential ◯ Good Practice ◯ Strong Practice			
Implementation and Monitoring	**1.** Are there measurable outcomes related to children and young in the monitoring framework? **2.** Are there delivery mechanisms that support children and young people-focused outcomes?	◯ No Evidence ◯ Essential ◯ Good Practice ◯ Strong Practice			
Cross-departmental Working	**1.** Is there input from Public Health, Education, Youth Services or Leisure in plan-making?	◯ No Evidence ◯ Essential ◯ Good Practice ◯ Strong Practice			

Option 2: Child-friendly principles wheel

Instructions for use

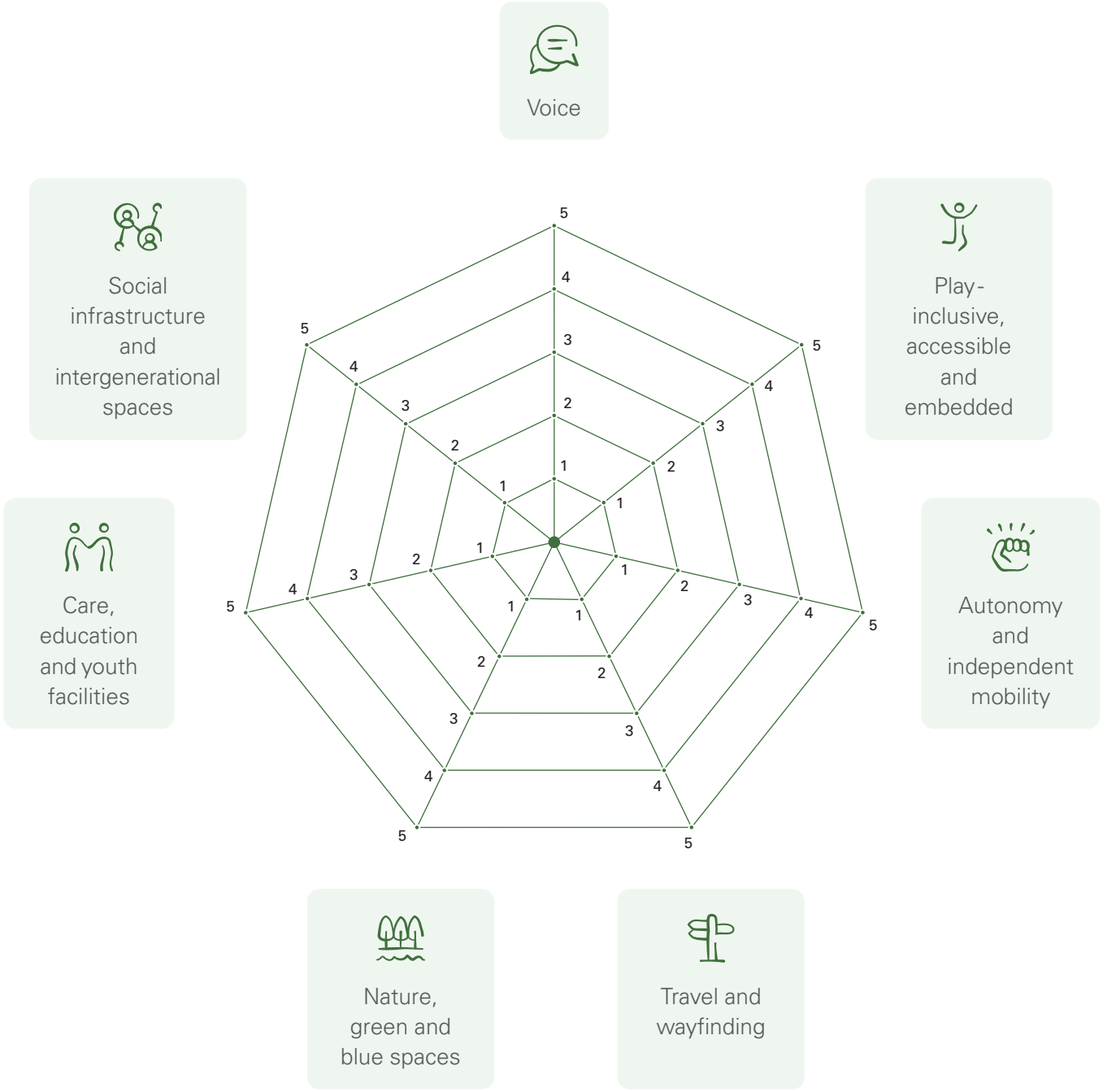
The child-friendly principles are explained in ***Child-friendly planning principles and policy prompts***.

For each principle, assign a self-assessed score (0 to 5) based on your current Local Plan and practice. Once a score is agreed for each principle, map these onto the diagram and join the scores to draw a shape of the current situation.

This exercise can be repeated as a Local Plan progresses, and when complete, to provide a visual sense of progress in achieving child-friendly principles in the Plan.

Score	Description
0	**No consideration** - No consideration of principle in the Plan.
1	**Minimal** - Limited or indirect consideration of the principle. Principle included in generic or not age-inclusive way.
2	**Basic** - Some reference to principle, but lack of depth or specificity. Limited alignment, no clear delivery or monitoring mechanism.
3	**Good practice** - Principle evident in Plan, alignment with relevant evidence and some design considerations addressed.
4	**Strong** - Principle explicitly considered in policy intent, wording, design considerations and monitoring mechanisms, based on relevant evidence.
5	**Full consideration** - Principle fully embedded across the Plan—from evidence gathering to policy, delivery and monitoring. A rights-based approach is visible, supported by robust youth engagement approach, local evidence etc.

Theme	Score	Notes
Voice		
Play - inclusive, accessible and embedded		
Autonomy and independent mobility		
Travel and wayfinding		
Nature, green and blue spaces		
Care, education and youth facilities		
Social infrastructure and intergenerational spaces		


Voice
Play-inclusive, accessible and embedded
Autonomy and independent mobility
Travel and wayfinding
Nature, green and blue spaces
Care, education and youth facilities
Social infrastructure and intergenerational spaces

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