

# Play Sufficiency Assessment

## St Paul's R.C. High School



#HearingYoungPeople'sVoices

CENTRE  
FOR  
CIVIC  
INNOVATION



# Play Sufficiency Assessment:

## St Paul's R.C. High School

### Background

Play is central to young people's enjoyment of life and essential to their physical and emotional well-being and their healthy development.

In May 2023 new regulations came into force which mean that planning authorities must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for young people. The Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) is intended to provide an overall picture in terms of the current provision and distribution of outdoor play opportunities across the whole of a local authority area. It should include statements with regards to the overall quality, quantity and accessibility.

As part of these new regulations Glasgow City Council has a statutory requirement to engage with young people across the city to understand more around the current opportunities to play, their experiences whilst playing in the city as well as understanding what their current barriers to play are. Key insights will be used to form part of the evidence report for the City Development Plan and will be the start of an ongoing conversation with young people about what it is like to live, learn and play in Glasgow.

To support the required engagement, the Centre for Civic Innovation were approached by colleagues in Planning and Development to co-create and facilitate an engagement model that would provide as many young people as possible an opportunity to share their experiences. It was agreed that the model would focus on young people aged 12 to 16 years old.

### Our approach

It was agreed with Planning and Development colleagues that in order to complete the PSA, we would identify one school that we could work with to co-design with young people a proposed model of engaging, roll it out across the school, evaluate and take the learnings from this to inform our citywide approach.

As we were already working closely with a group of young people at St Paul's High School, it was agreed that we would work with them in this phase.

Over the course of 10 workshops we co-designed an engagement model to support the PSA. The model developed gave all young people an equal opportunity to engage in a way that is truly representative.

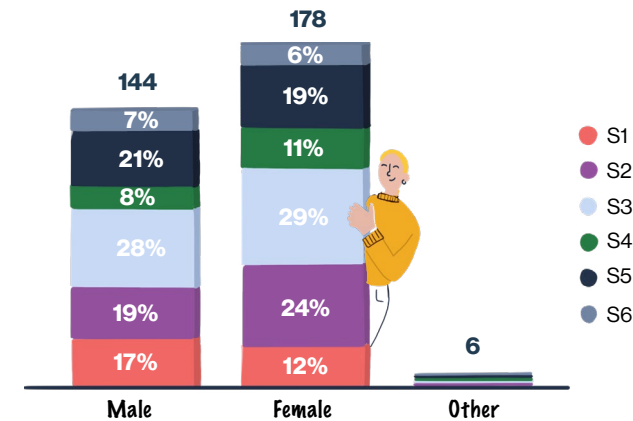
The model was then tested in St Paul's High School over a 4 week period with learnings being used to further develop the model.

### Demographics

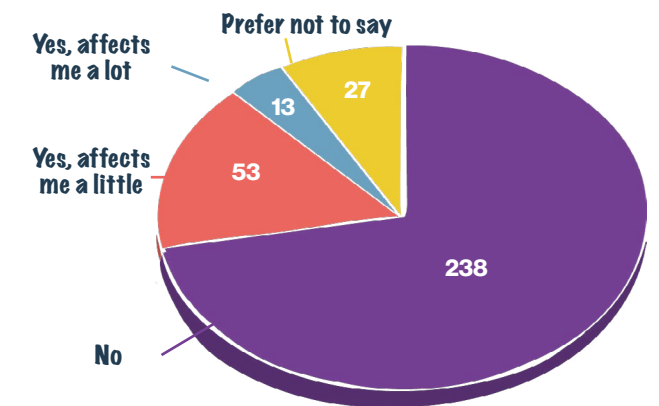
Every young person in St Paul's High School was given the opportunity to take part in the survey. In total 339 pupils across all six year groups took part: a third of the young people attending St Paul's High School.

Our approach ensured it was voluntary engagement, giving each young person equal opportunity to take part.

#### Young people who answered the survey



Young people who consider themselves to have a health condition or disability affecting their day-to-day life



66 pupils (19%) said that their day-to-day lives are affected by a health condition. Those with health conditions will have different needs

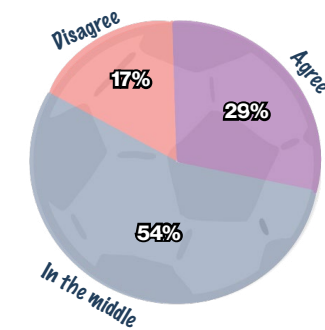
### What is play

Each young person interprets the word 'play' differently. Understanding the different ways young people understand play is important in making sure play is of good quality, is provided in enough places and is safe and accessible.

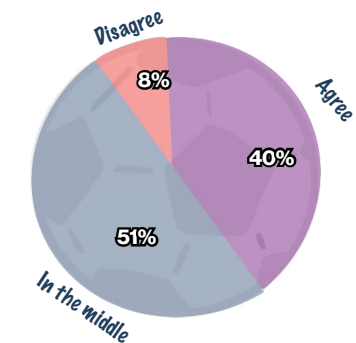
There is a clear preference for spending free time with others. In S1-S3 this is even more noticeable. It's also true that many young people in every year enjoy spending time alone.

This shows that wanting to spend time with others and wanting to spend time alone are not mutually exclusive. Providing spaces for group activities and spaces to spend time alone are both important. This underlines the need for a diverse set of environments and places: there is not a one-size-fits-all approach.

#### How many young people would like to spend their free-time alone



#### How many young people would like to spend their free-time with others:



## Why is play important to young people?

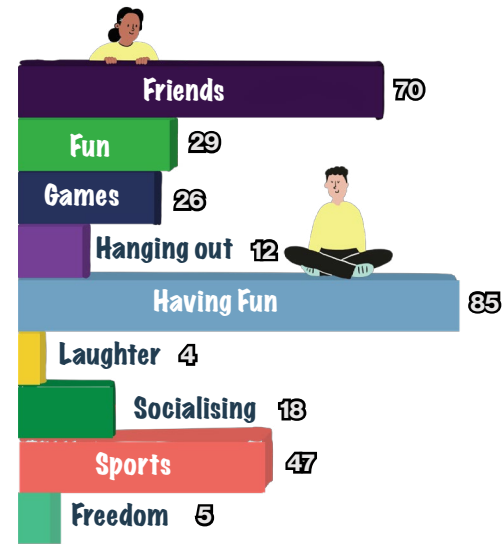
Based on the young people's responses, it's clear that **activities they enjoy have a positive impact on their wellbeing.**

When playing, young people mention **feeling calm, relaxed and being able to escape from school stress.** Recognising this as a top priority for young people is crucial in improving wellbeing and development.

In a survey of feelings around leisure activities, the most common response was they make us feel happy, with relaxed coming in second. When asked what play means, most young people said that play means having fun.

**Fun is seen as a positive form of connection, reduces stress and contributes to a positive outlook.** From the survey, play is highly associated with friends, evidencing the importance of spaces accommodating people spending time with others.

What 'play' means to young people



87 said **Happy**  
59 said **Relaxed**  
45 said **Active**

“Play makes my whole day better and makes me feel happy and productive”

“Play makes me feel happy and gives me a break from exams and stress. It also gives me a chance to catch up with my friends”

## Statements on quantity

The young people from St Paul's High School often seek spaces for recreation, but feel that there are **not enough places and they are often overcrowded.**

Young people prefer going into the city centre for fun, with only a few mentioning their homes or friends' houses as favourite places. This shows how important it is to have outdoor spaces that are of a good quality, in enough places and are accessible to all young people.

Young people say **the most common reasons for feeling unsafe or uncomfortable are too much noise, large crowds or bad smells.** This suggests young people can feel overstimulated and shows that there is a need for more relaxed spaces to socialise for young people.

Addressing these needs requires a mix of different types of places. To meet young peoples' needs, there should be a variety of activities and places to socialise in a relaxed environment.

The top priority is **more things to do locally**, followed by a desire for more sporting facilities. Some say they'd like more warm places, suggesting a need for affordable, comfortable spaces, especially in colder seasons.

Are there are lots of places for young people to go in Pollok?



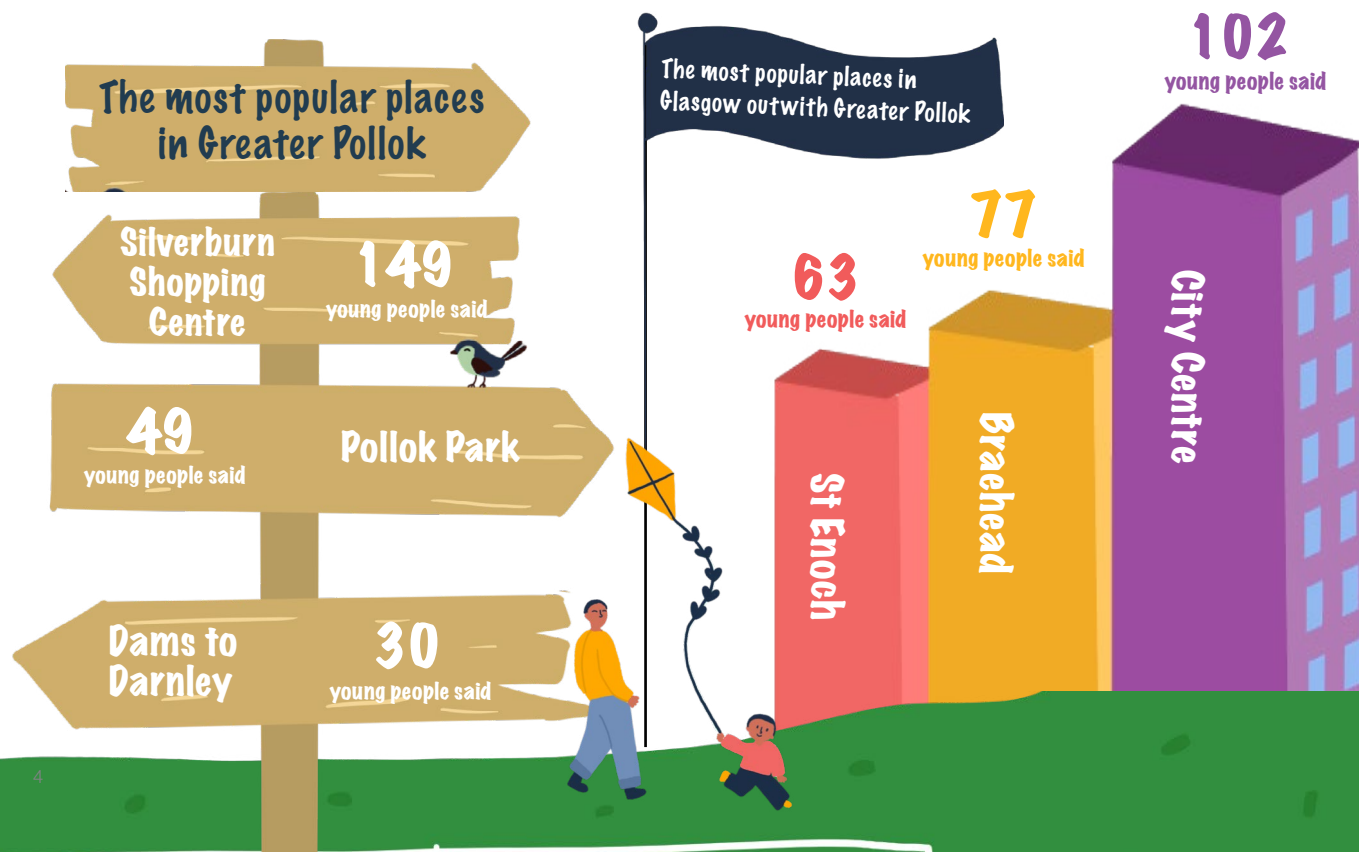
“I want more places to play and more places to hang-out”

“I think it would be good if there were some quiet spaces”

“I would like more places to socialise and places to go with friends to have fun or spend time with them”

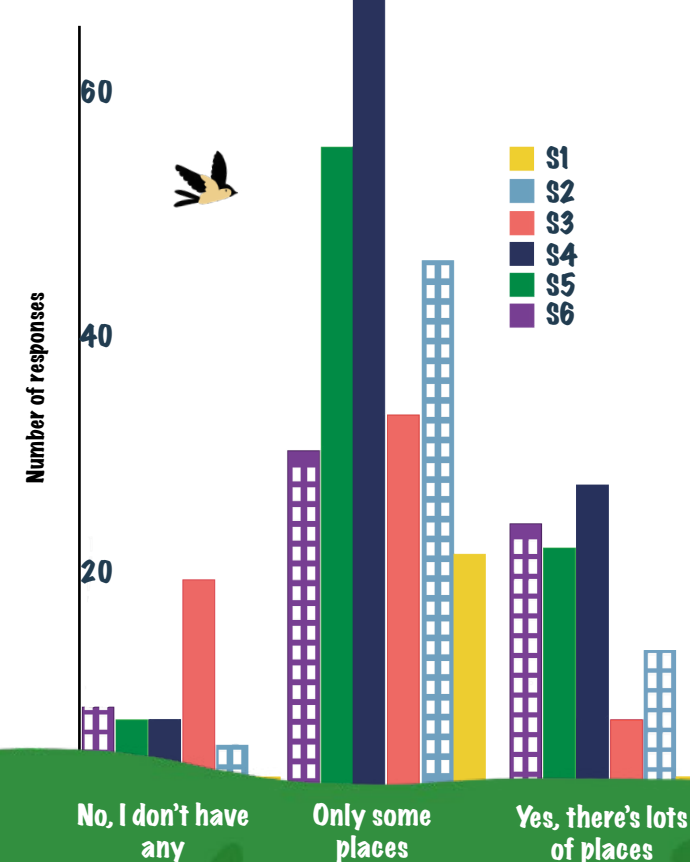
## Where do young people go?

With over two thirds of responses, **young people's favourite place to go is Silverburn Shopping Centre.**



## How it differs between ages

In your local area, are there enough places to spend your time?



The majority of young people at St Paul's High School feel like they have limited places to spend their time.

The view that there are not enough spaces increases as young people get older. S1-S3 tend to say there are many places, while S5-S6 are more likely to say there are few or no places to spend their time.

“I probably would say I go to Silverburn the most, but it's so boring. There is nothing to do for teens anywhere”

“I feel like there should be more childish things to do”

“People judge you by your age group”



## What makes a good place for young people?

Over half of the responses indicate that **places where young people spend time are safe and comfortable**. However, this is not the case for all young people.

Other people were most likely to make young people feel **unsafe or uncomfortable** in a space. Knowing this reveals an opportunity to understand what steps authorities could take to make young people feel safe and more comfortable in spaces in their area.

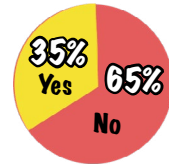
Antisocial behaviour limits young people's sense of autonomy in their community. **Mixing age groups coupled with visible substance consumption makes young people feel unsafe**.

Young people also want more affordable activities. They ask for **more things to do and options that are cheaper**.

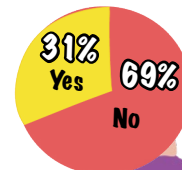
At night it feels unsafe and there are not enough comfortable places. It was also mentioned that **if sporting facilities had better lighting, it would encourage the use of outdoor spaces during darker hours**, especially in winter.



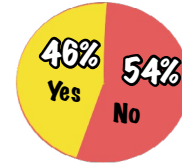
The places I go feel clean



The places I go are in good condition



There are lots to do in the places I go



"The time of day has a big impact, like at night when there's broken street lamps and it's dark"

"Areas around here are not very secure and there's no maintenance, it's all very run down and rusty, broken glass everywhere"

"The people make the places uncomfortable"

### Scoring how safe they felt out of 10

1= feel very unsafe 10= feel very safe



Scored on average less than 5

### Scoring how comfortable they felt out of 10

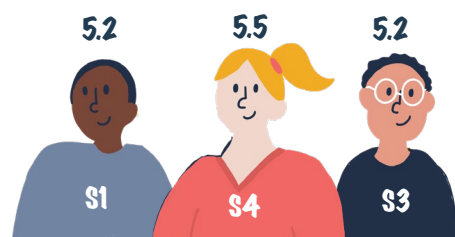
1= feel very uncomfortable 10= feel very comfortable



Scored on average less than 5



Scored on more than 5



Scored on average more than 5

## What makes a place feel unsafe?

Feeling overwhelmed is the most common response when describing young people's least favourite places, especially when they're crowded.

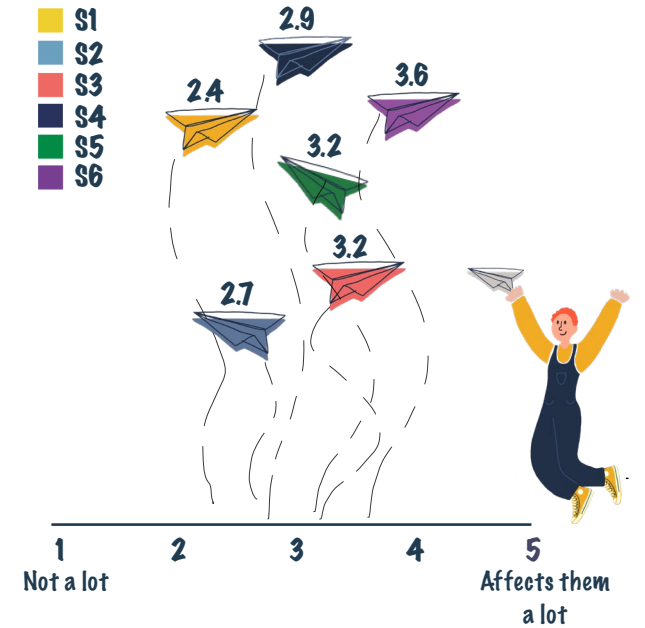
Silverburn Shopping Centre was young people's favourite place to go but there were many who also said that Silverburn Shopping Centre was their least favourite place to spend time. **Common themes included feeling judged, discomfort and people creating an unsafe environment**. Bus stops and other services stood out as places where these feelings are most common.

Additionally, there is a collective desire for more vibrancy and natural features such as colourful places, trees and nature to alleviate boredom in places around St Paul's High School.

Some places feel unsafe as they're used by everyone. Creating safe places that are specifically designed for young people creates a feeling of ownership and empowerment.

Scoring how other people in the spaces affect them out of 5

Average scoring per year



"Pollok Park at night makes me feel exposed and endangered"

"I like going to St Enoch only if it is less busy"

"There isn't really many places except Silverburn, all other places are not in great condition"

## Travelling to places for young people

In terms of getting to the spaces that young people use, **93% of responses agreed that they are easy to get to**.

Many of the young people said that even if places weren't good places to go, they were still easy to get to. In many cases, young people know the places they go to aren't nice but they do feel like they are easy to reach.



"There is a lot of transport to get to other places from Silverburn"

"Please make spaces more accessible and clean with supervision"

"We love to go to skate parks but the skate parks around here are either quite far away, in the middle of nowhere, and are all made of metal which is very unsafe and slippery"

## Barriers towards play

Understanding the barriers that stop young people from having time to play is crucial for a holistic view of their mental and physical development.

Notably, homework is the primary barrier to having free time to play. The second barrier is the feeling that there's not enough time. Time as a barrier varies between age-groups but understanding this barrier might reveal the complex reasons that young people feel like they lack time to play.

As young people get older, other people in shared spaces becomes more of a barrier. Sharing spaces with people of mixed ages feels less safe which highlights a need for dedicated spaces tailored to specific age-groups and activities.

The younger pupils within St Paul's High School are more likely to acknowledge the importance of play on personal and physical development. To cater to all ages, we have to understand what 'places to play' mean for different age-groups and what other complex factors in school and at home may appear as barriers.

### Top 3 barriers to enjoying free time



“Unfortunately spending my teenage years on school work so I have no time”

“I don't have time to do these activities with all the school and studying going on and everything these days requires lots of money”

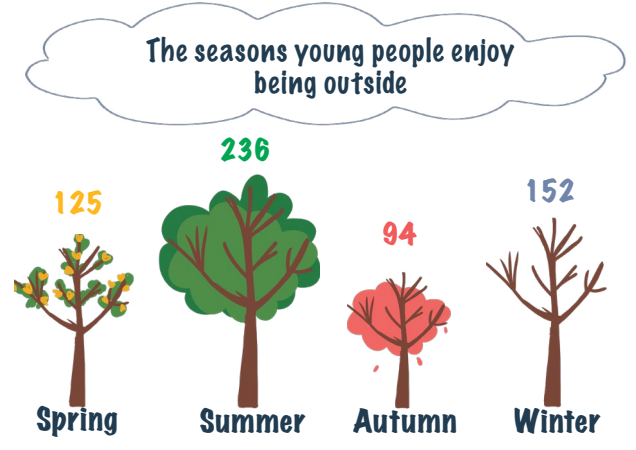
“More places to go and funner things for teens”



## Seasons

Weather can physically transform places for young people and the seasons will often affect young people's relationship with a place. We asked some questions to understand: how behaviour changes with the time of year; nature in young people's spaces; and how they think about their connection to nature.

Young people at St Paul's High School enjoy being outside in the summer more than any other time. Winter is the second preference for time spent outdoors. Temperature has a big impact on spending time outside so spaces for young people should provide sheltered or warm places to play during colder seasons.



“Affordable places that are not cold with shelter and are not boring”

“Cheaper gyms and warm places to sit”

“I feel uncomfortable in places at night because teenagers go and just ruin things”

### The elements that impact this



## What do they need from their spaces

Young people shared their opinion on where the council could improve their spaces. Cleanliness is the biggest concern.

Young people suggest the council bears a responsibility to contribute by expanding activities, building on existing facilities and providing information and resources in a way that's understandable and accessible.

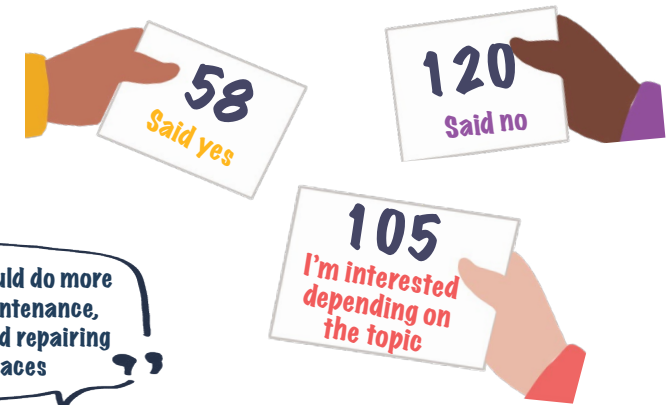
They consider the council to have an important role in facilitating youth engagement. Specifically, they express a desire for the council to actively seek their opinion and involve them in the decision-making processes.

For the Play Sufficiency Assessment, we took a voluntary engagement approach, meaning every young person at St Paul's High School was given an equal chance to be involved. We made sure this was an opt-in process and the option not to participate was clear and available.

Over half of the young people who took part said that they want to be involved in discussions in the future. Some said it would depend on the topic.

This reinforces that public bodies should embed a flexible approach when considering engaging with young people. They may not always wish to participate but when they do they should have a right to shape decisions about their spaces and their future.

### Young people were asked if they'd like to be involved in the future



“The council should ask for advice, care about the community and make things better”

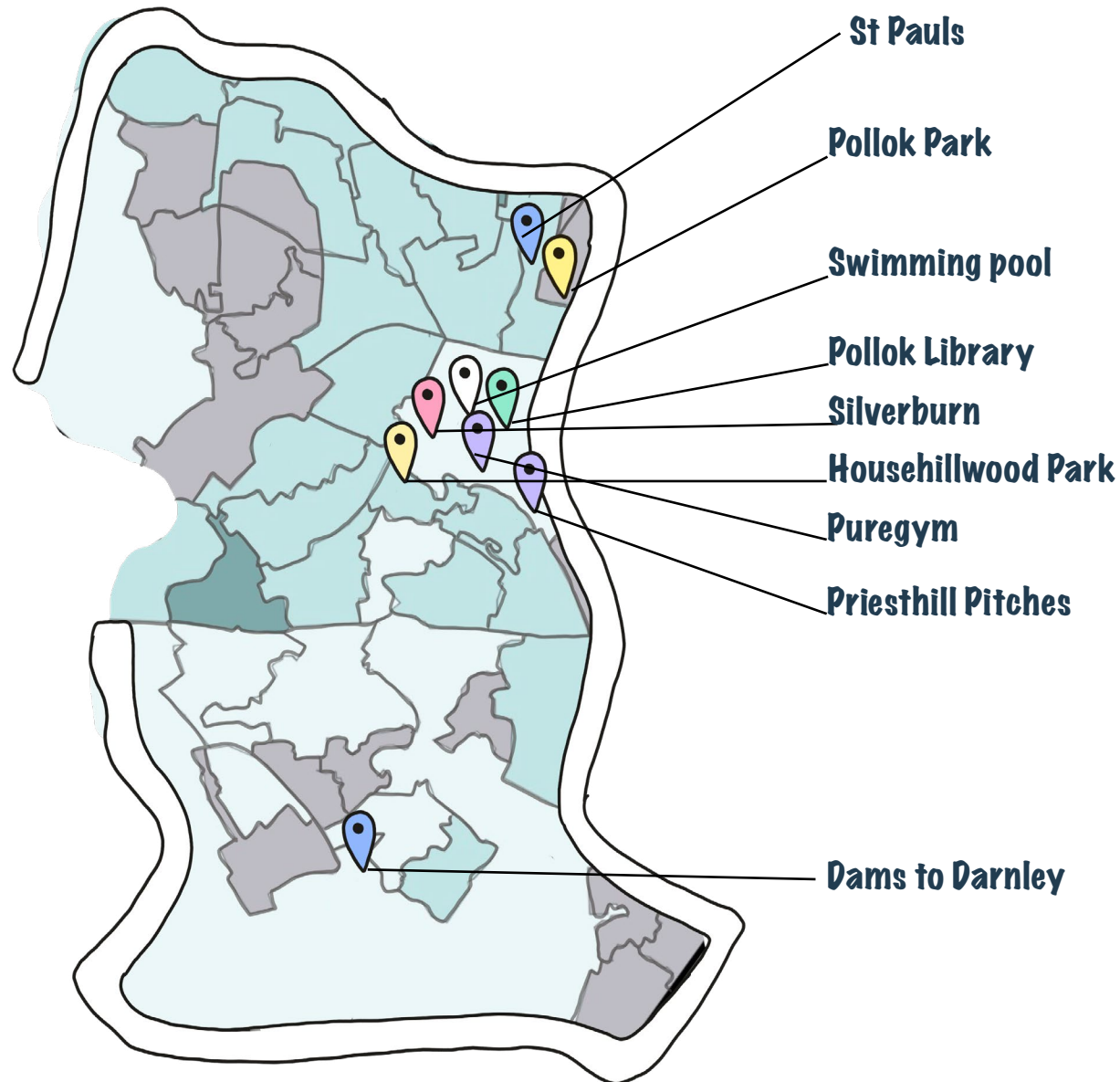
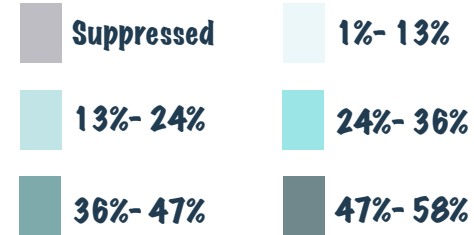
“The council could do more cleaning, maintenance, supervising and repairing in our spaces”



## Child Poverty Data

This map is taken from Glasgow City Council's child poverty dashboard, and contains levels of relative child poverty across the city. It shows that a lot of the more popular places young people go are in areas where there is a lower rate of child poverty in Pollok.

Percentage of child poverty



## Conclusion

Overall, we got responses from a third of the young people at St Paul's High School. It is clear that young people have a **wide range of valuable contributions that could help us improve spaces for young people and the communities which they help build.**

Access to safe, warm places with a mix of activities has been clearly identified as a major contributor to young people's wellbeing and physical health.

Many of the places identified as good places to spend time are informal spaces like shopping centres, the City Centre or open spaces. It's also true that young people often feel unsafe in places that are overcrowded suggesting that young people seek a variety of spaces and activities.

And for different age groups, younger pupils were more likely to say they have places to go, while older pupils tend to spend their time differently and have fewer places to go.



Many of the responses raised issues around safety but it wasn't usually the spaces that made young people feel unsafe. Unfamiliar people or people of different age-groups were much more likely to make young people feel unsafe than the physical aspects of a space.

The **biggest barrier to play was a lack of time** but many young people also said they wanted more affordable activities in their area suggesting that a lack of time could be driven by other factors like having to travel too far for certain activities.



As for the places that are available, poorly maintained places were highlighted as a common issue for young people and maintenance from the council was suggested as a way to improve those spaces.

For most, travelling to places is not an issue and there are plenty of places to spend time despite some places not always being of the highest quality.



With this rich, wide-ranging input, we now have a much clearer picture of what young people look for in a place that is safe, accessible and of a good quality. We've also learned how much **we can learn from talking to young people, learning from their ideas and building a nuanced picture of our neighbourhoods** and how they're used.

From this, we now have a range of clear recommendations and St Paul's High School has developed a mature dialogue and set of ideas that can help inform better play areas in Pollok.

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