



**Taking a Chance Outdoors**  
**Is fear of risk damaging our children?**  
**1st July 2009**  
**The Birmingham and Midland Institute**

**Taking a chance outdoors -**  
**Is fear of risk damaging our children?**

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- Please tick** if you **do not** want us to hold your details on file. This information will not be passed to third parties.
- Please tick this box** if you **do not** want to receive information on future CRN events
- Please tick this box** if you **would like to subscribe to 'Countryside Recreation' journal, published 3 times a year (subscription is free)**

**Cost: £150 (£125 for CRN sponsoring members (on confirmation of membership))**

- £150 GBP
- £125 GBP (Membership price)

An invoice will be sent to you once we receive your booking.

Please include details of invoice address (if different than above) and booking reference if any. Payment options to be found on the reverse of the invoice. (Please quote invoice number when paying)

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Please tick your workshop choice:

- What other research is necessary?
- How can we make a difference?
- Is risk aversion the real reason for declining use of outdoors/ countryside?

Second preferred workshop: .....

*A copy of the conference proceedings publication is also included in the price*

More information about the event/ venue will be sent to you prior to the event.

**Cancellations:** Refunds (less 25% cancellation fee) will only be made for written cancellations received before **17th June 2009**

Please complete and return the form by post, fax or alternatively email your details to the address below. **Please make cheques payable to Sheffield Hallam University.**

Network Assistant, Countryside Recreation Network,  
Sheffield Hallam University, Unit 1 Science Park,  
Sheffield S1 2LX.

Email: [crn@shu.ac.uk](mailto:crn@shu.ac.uk) Tel: 0114 225 4494 or Fax: 0114 225 6319

**Many of us recall our childhood outdoor play as a time of free expression, wonder at the natural world and making exciting discoveries.**  
But nowadays children don't seem to have the same opportunities to freely explore and play in the outdoors particularly in unsupervised greenspace and this may be affecting levels of physical activity. We know that inactivity especially in young people is leading to record levels of obesity with one in three children now rated clinically obese or overweight. We know that patterns of inactivity in childhood are often carried into adulthood with implications for long-term health. But what is driving these changes?  
This seminar aims to explore whether the fears of parents, teachers and youth leaders for the safety of children is affecting their use of outdoors for play. Or are there other reasons such as lack of suitable green outdoor play sites or because of landowner fears about the burden of health and safety responsibility and potential litigation?

**Target Audience**

If you feel the need to try and find answers to these questions then register your place on the CRN seminar on the subject. Interest is likely to come from countryside and greenspace policy makers and providers including government, local authorities and organisations involved in outdoor recreation and play provision.

There are 75 places available on this seminar

**1 July 2009**  
**The Birmingham and Midland Institute**  
**Delegate Fee: £150**

**A Countryside Recreation Network Event**  
For CMA members this event attracts 10 Continued Professional Development (CPD) points

## **Background**

Are the fears of parents, teachers and youth leaders for the safety of children affecting the use of outdoors for play? Is our assumption about the risk faced by young people justified? Is the fear of risk by parents, teachers and landowners affecting the use of the outdoors in general, and greenspace in particular, by children? Could it be that fears that the further children are allowed to stray from home for unsupervised play the greater the risk that they may come to some sort of harm such as physical injury, abuse or even abduction. But are these fears founded and why should we be concerned?

We know that inactivity especially in the young is leading to record levels of obesity with one in three children now rated clinically obese or overweight. We know that patterns of inactivity in childhood are often carried into adulthood with longer term health implications. Other effects of an increasingly sedentary and often solitary pattern of behaviour by children in substituting outdoor physical play with other uses of free time games may also be affecting their development. There is also evidence that children that interact with the countryside carry care and appreciation for the environment into later life. But what is driving these changes and what interventions could we make that would make a difference?

### **Aims of the event**

- To provide evidence of real and perceived risks faced by children and others when using greenspace.
- To look at other factors that may be leading to a decline in the use of the outdoors.
- To explore interventions and good practice that may change patterns of outdoor use.

### **Workshop Structure**

- 3 workshop themes.
- Attendees will only be able to attend one workshop.
- Places on workshops are allocated on a first come first served basis.
- Each workshop to have a rapporteur (nominated beforehand) to report at the Feedback session in the afternoon.

Chair to summarise any overall issues/conclusions arising from the day in terms of (1) examples of innovative good practice; (2) issues/challenges/opportunities to be taken forward by outdoor recreation providers over the coming years.

**Chair: Chris Marsh, Environment Agency**

## **Taking a Chance Outdoors 1st July 2009 DRAFT PROGRAMME**

- 9.30 Registration, Coffees and Tea
- 10.00 Introduction - Chris Marsh
- 10.15 Keynote Speech - Prof. David Ball - Middlesex University on the actual and perceived risk to children in the outdoors.
- 11.00 Jonathon Pearce - Natural England - present their recent survey results about places where children played in the past compared with today.
- 11.30 Break
- 11.45 Luke Bennett - Sheffield Hallam University on whether fears of litigation reduces play opportunity or inhibits use of the countryside.
- 12.15 Paddy Harrop - Forestry Commission - organising play schemes that offer reassurance to parents of reduced risk of outdoor play for children.
- 12.45. Q&A Session
- 13.00 Lunch
- 13.45 – **Workshop Sessions**  
**Theme 1** - What other research is necessary? - led by William Crookshank. Have we got enough facts to compare actual and perceived risk. What other information would help us change minds.  
**Theme 2** - How can we make a difference? - led by Fiona Groves. Are there any existing innovative schemes or intervention ideas that can make a difference.  
**Theme 3** - What aren't kids using greenspace? - led by Ruth Nicholson. Is risk aversion a major reason for declining use of outdoors / countryside or are other factors we should look at.
- 15.00 Feedback from workshops
- 15.45 Summary - Chris Marsh
- 16.00 Close