

Press Release

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For immediate release

New All-Weather Children's Garden for Redhill Children's Centre

Councillor Roger Newstead, Mayor of Reigate & Banstead, officially opened a new all-weather play area at Welcare's Redhill Children's Centre on Wednesday 12 July. Over 400 people have used the new children's garden in the last month. The garden will meet the needs of the many local families who do not have access to either a garden or a safe outdoor play space. It will also offer outside multi-sensory play specially designed to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

Outside play helps to prevent childhood obesity and vitamin D deficiency, as recently highlighted in the British Medical Journal (16 February 2017.) This is particularly important locally, as Year 6 children in Reigate and Banstead have obesity levels which are nearly 2% higher than the Surrey average.

As well as its importance for physical development, playing outdoors also helps to build language and communication skills, which in turn promote social and emotional development.

Play equipment includes outside chimes, drum panels, a Mud Kitchen, Fairy Dinosaur Land, two "make your own den" areas and a 2 metre by 2 metre sand pit, so children can dig deep "all the way to Australia. . ." Using recycled materials, including tyres, logs, planks of wood and old CDs, helped to keep costs down, with much of the construction work done by volunteers, including young people on the National Citizenship Scheme and a team from Employability. Funding for the garden

was raised through individual donations, Raven Housing's Brighter Communities Scheme, and local councillors.

Editor's note: Welcare is a registered charity that has been working with children and families across South London and East Surrey since 1894. Welcare provides practical and emotional support to families empowering them to overcome challenges and access opportunities to ensure their children have a happy, confident childhood and future.

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