

# Play Dates at Urban&Civic

2025 has seen two significant play dates in the U&C calendar showcasing the expertise, design and innovation in play spaces right across the portfolio and as well as children flocking to our play spaces, it has been our stakeholders this year!

With a high proportion of families within our communities, we have been looking at how to create activation for and inspire the minds of the next generation and co-designing the next MUGA at Houlton, hosting a study day at PHP and the culmination of 3-year long Phd study into play design are just three of the significant ways in which 2025 has been the year of play!

Working with Dr Amy Stringer at Coventry University we wanted to understand how good design could promote active play and fundamental movement skills. Having tested three different playgrounds, with nearly 30 accelerometer wearing kids as well as a multitude of cameras, Amy's findings were recently reported at our Playful Places conference in September.

For the public and private sector stakeholders in attendance, it was clear that by going the extra mile and working in elements such as uneven terrain, trees, landscaping, throwing and catching options, as well as bigger and more robust play equipment, these spaces can become both social aggregators and levellers.

Earlier in the summer, the PHP team had also hosted a practical study day on site, again inviting the play sector to see the way play is dispersed across the three Zones of PHP, quality and partnership in delivery and why the site was chosen as a case study for the recent Fields in Trust standards guidance.

The MUGA project at Houlton, and Waterbeach's continued support for the Make Space for Girls movement, will ensure we lead the way in the challenge of youth engagement and how we create more hang out spaces for our teens. Significant play commissions coming forward in 2026 at Alconbury Weald's Grange Farm provide us with the opportunity to integrate our RnD findings and continue to innovate in the sector, and keep firmly in mind that we should be planning play infrastructure with the same long-term lens we apply to roads, schools and utilities. This means thinking strategically about location, access, durability and value for communities, not just for today, but for the decades ahead.



Values



Capitals

