



Education Network

22 January 2003

02/03

Lottery Funding for Children's Play

Summary

This briefing summarises the consultation launched by the DfES with the Department of Culture and Media Studies (DCMS) about a proposed UK-wide programme, funded by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), to create and improve play opportunities for children and young people aged 0-16.

Responses should be made to the DfES on the form provided by 7 March 2003. Copies of the consultation documents are available on the DfES website: www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/

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The information in this policy briefing applies to England only but the issues raised may be of a wider interest to our subscribers

You are encouraged to circulate this policy briefing to anyone in your authority who may find it useful, including headteachers and school governors.

Background

In June 2001 the Government announced that £200million of National Lottery funding from NOF would be directed to children's play. In October 2002 a play review was launched jointly by the DCMS and DfES, of which this consultation paper forms a part. The results of the review will inform the priorities of the NOF programme. The funding is likely to be available to spend after 2005. The consultation paper seeks views on the proposed funding programme for children's play and is part of a wider series of consultations which will allow the Government to gather views, including those of parents and children.

The NOF programme will cover the whole of the UK and will look at children aged from birth to 16. The consultation recognises that the programme may well be delivered differently in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and different parts of England. The review therefore aims to work with devolved administrations to ensure that arrangements are appropriate in each country. The Welsh Assembly is due to issue its own consultation at the end of this month and details are available from Elinor Jones, Children and Families Division, email: elinor.jones@wales.gsi.gov.uk or tel: 02920 801119. The contents of the document are expected to be broadly similar to those in the DCMS paper.

There is an emphasis on linking play provision to other investment, such as housing and regeneration schemes, partly to augment the NOF funding and partly to make sure that all future planning takes account of the need to provide children with somewhere safe to play.

The play review includes the following types of public provision:

- Adventure playgrounds, holiday play schemes and mobile play provision
- Forms of childcare which aim to provide play opportunities for children in their care
- Schools, nurseries and other educational establishments
- Public playgrounds
- Informal leisure facilities like skate parks, BMX tracks and multi-use games areas.

Disadvantaged areas and groups of children with limited play opportunities are a priority for the review.

Aims of the programme

The programme aims to create and improve play opportunities for children across the UK, and to show the value and importance of good play opportunities to children, families and the wider community. The programme intends to do this by:

- Funding play provision and initiatives that meet local needs
- Ensuring that all funded provision is accessible to disabled children, children from minority ethnic backgrounds and other disadvantaged groups of children
- Funding provision that is sustainable beyond the programme's lifetime
- Demonstrating the benefits of providing good play opportunities.

Key issues for the programme

The consultation paper identifies some key issues that the NOF programme will need to address. These include the allocation of funding, safety, community involvement, location, accessibility, design, staffing and supervision and sustainability. The programme will also promote strategic planning and partnership working and will examine the longer-term benefits of providing good play opportunities and the consultation seeks views on these issues.

In order to ensure that disadvantaged areas receive proportionately more funding, the Government proposes to provisionally allocate NOF funding to local agencies in specific areas to deliver the programme (as opposed to inviting applications for funding). Views are invited on whether this is the right approach, which local agencies would be appropriate, and how the funding should be allocated.

Consultation events

In addition to the written consultation the Government will be holding consultation events across the UK in February and March. Details of these are available at www.culture.gov.uk/role/index.html (forms and documents).

Conclusion

The play review and NOF programme highlight the importance of good quality, safe play opportunities for all children and young people and this is welcome. LEAs may wish to respond with their local partners to the consultation document. They can help to ensure that play provision is considered in the appropriate strategic planning forums within their local authority.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.