

£2m funding boost to help make Wales a play friendly country

Wales was the first country in the world to legislate for play. Under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, local authorities have a duty to assess for and then secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas. This aims to ensure every child has a wide range of challenging and interesting opportunities to play and enjoy their leisure time.

The legislation also directs local authorities to consider the diverse needs of all children and young people in their area, including those with disabilities.

The funding, for the 2018-19 financial year, will help local authorities implement the actions identified in their 2018-19 play action plans, and deliver their 2019 play sufficiency assessments.

Projects awarded funding include:

- Small grants to community councils to enable them to provide play provision which meets the needs of the local community;
- Equipment for street play and road closure – high visibility jackets, cones, whistles, balls, etc;
- Inclusive after-school and holiday provision for children with complex needs;
- Pilot projects involving children aged 11-14 years, enabling them to access Welsh medium play provision during school holidays;
- Saturday play sessions for young carers aged 7 to 17;
- The renewal of playgroup surfaces to enable better access for all and the inclusion of sensory rooms in childcare and play settings;
- Outdoor and indoor play equipment for local schools, encouraging them to make the equipment available out of school hours.

Funding will also be available to provide play workers with bespoke training on how to recognise and support children and young people with substance misuse issues, child criminal exploitation, self-harm and suicide, and to support transgender young people.

Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“In Wales, we’re proud that we lead the world on ensuring our children have the legal right to play. I am firmly committed to ensuring we continue to improve opportunities for all children and young people to play in safety and, in particular, to support improved access to play for children with disabilities.

“There’s increasing concern about the mental and physical health of children and young people. At the same time, we know playing makes a significant contribution to the fitness and well-being of

children and improving perceptions of well-being amongst children and their families.

“I am therefore really pleased to make £2m of funding available to help our local authorities deliver sufficient play opportunities for children and young people in their areas. This will help ensure Wales truly is a play friendly country that meets the needs and rights of all our children.”

The Welsh Government recently hosted the 2018 Four Nations Play Symposium, which provided an opportunity for government ministers, officials, national play organisations and partners from across the four UK nations to share their learning and experiences of strategically providing for children’s play.

Huw Irranca-Davies added:

“I’m delighted Wales hosted this year’s Symposium. It was a productive and thought-provoking event that will inform our work to continue to make Wales a play friendly country.”