

To: «Title» «ForenameInitial» «Surname»
«Job_Title»
«LA»
«Address_1»
«Address_2»
«Address_3»
«Address_4»
«Address_5» «Postcode»

22 November 2005

Dear «Title» «ForenameInitial» «Surname»,

The Big Lottery Fund¹ is pleased to announce details of our new £155 million Children's Play initiative that we will launch in March 2006. **The amount of funding available to the «LA» area will be «Allocation».**

We want to tell you how much funding we will make available to your local authority area, and ask you to give us local authority contact details for further correspondence about the application process. We also ask you to indicate which of four application deadlines your local authority plans to apply to. **To ensure consideration for a grant, please complete and return the enclosed form by Friday 13 January 2006. (Form sent to Chief Executives only).**

Developing Play Provision

Of the £155 million available, we shall commit £124 million to develop play provision enabling all local authorities to create, improve and develop their local play spaces. To receive a share of this money, as a local authority you would be required to take the lead role in applying for funds, working with your local partners in the play sector. We would require you and your partners to develop a portfolio of projects that focus on areas of greatest need and form part of your local play strategy.

We shall be inviting your local authority to submit an application for funding of up to 3 years. We have calculated your allocation (as shown above) and those for all other local authority areas in England, based on your child population weighted by the level of poverty in your area. In calculating all the allocations we have taken into account relatively affluent areas that have pockets of deprivation, for example rural areas.

¹ the operating name of the New Opportunities Fund

Consultation and Working in Partnership

BIG grants will support activities that are self-directed, creative and fun in the areas of greatest need. We shall expect you to consult with local stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector, to draw up a local play strategy around a local play partnership. Through this process a range of projects can be identified that address the needs highlighted in the strategy, some to be delivered by the local authority and others that may be contracted to voluntary and community organisations. These will form the basis of your application to us.

Your application will need to include a summary of all the projects proposed, how they will be managed, and the estimates of costs. They must also show clear evidence that they fit the local play strategy and are a response to the needs and wishes of local children and young people up to age 16 and their communities. We shall expect your portfolio to fully take into account the needs of disabled children and other young people that have significantly worse access to good play opportunities.

Please note that Lottery funding must be additional and must not be used to replace funding from national or local taxation.

Encouraging Good Practice

To tie in with the launch of this programme BIG will publish guidance about establishing play partnerships and producing play strategies. We have commissioned the Children's Play Council to research and write this. Under the programme we will not meet the costs for the preparation of play strategies.

Different Ways of Working

You might want to develop your local play strategy at District level or between District Councils and a County Council, or you may want to work together with neighbouring unitary authorities. Your application to BIG can reflect these different ways of working and using the funding available from us.

Funding Innovation in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector

In addition to the £124 million for the Children's Play programme, a further £31 million of funding is available under the initiative. This will be used to fund a regional support and development infrastructure, and also to fund projects under a programme for innovation in children's play. This innovation programme will invite applications from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, and applications will be accepted at any time up to 2008. We will publish more details about the innovation programme and the regional support and development infrastructure in the new year.

When to Apply

Grants under the £124 million Children's Play programme will be awarded in four rounds, with application deadlines in July 2006, November 2006, March 2007 and September 2007. To help us plan ahead and communicate effectively with you, please tell us on the attached form in which round you are likely to apply. If you need to change this, you can simply contact us by phone to tell us.

What You Need to Do Now

Please complete the enclosed form and return it to our Outline Proposal Team by Friday 13 January 2006. This form tells us who to send more information about the programme and to whom we could forward enquiries we receive from organisations in your area. If you also have a Senior Officer or Elected Member who champions Children's Play within your authority, please include their details too, so that we can keep them up to date with developments.

I hope that you share our excitement about this new programme, which will make a major contribution to the transformation of children's play.

If you have any questions about this letter, please call our information line on 0845 4 10 20 30 or textphone 0845 6 02 16 59. Please also visit our website www.biglotteryfund.org.uk. You will find it regularly updated with information about this initiative.



Stephen Dunmore

C.c.

Note 1: BIG supported the findings of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport report 'Getting Serious About Play', which recommended investing Lottery money to improve children's play opportunities. We are keen to build on the legacy of the New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund, both of which gave considerable support to children's play initiatives. In addition, children's play features prominently in the framework agreed between the Government and the Big Lottery Fund, and it received considerable support in the public consultation on our priorities. In March 2006, our Board committed up to £155 million towards children's play in England. Since then, we have been developing the programme and consulting with experts in the field.