

Children's Minister announces £1.7m funding boost for play in Wales

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 secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas.

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 announced today will go to projects across Wales, which include:

- New facilities and equipment, such as a proposal by Blaenau Gwent Council to develop a splash park at Parc Brynbach in Tredegar;
- New technology, such as geocaching tracking equipment which will allow children and young people with additional needs and impairments to participate in treasure hunts and other games with support from their families, carers and support staff;
- Improvements to open space play areas, including improvements to park areas, woodland areas to ensure the best use of open space, including disabled access;
- Play initiatives and schemes delivered by the third sector for children and young people, including provision where families of disabled children can drop in at any time and offer support to each other whilst their children play;
- Play libraries which give children with disabilities access to therapeutic and specialist toys on loan;
- Free access to leisure provision for disabled children and young people, including free swim sessions;
- Art workshops to encourage team building and increase the participation of children with learning difficulties, gypsy traveller children and children from an armed forces background;

Funding will also go towards training on recognising the signs of autism and specialist activity training to enable play workers to engage with disabled children and young people.

In addition, the Minister has announced £30,000 funding for Play Wales to develop and deliver a social campaign aimed at parents and communities to help make their communities more playful.

Announcing the funding, the Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“I want Wales to be a country where all children and young people have a wide range of challenging and interesting opportunities to play and to enjoy their leisure time.

“There is increasing concern about the mental and physical health of children and young people. At the same time, there is growing evidence that playing makes a significant contribution to the fitness and well-being of children and improving perceptions of well-being amongst children and their families.

“The £1.7m funding boost will help local authorities across Wales to improve play opportunities for children across Wales - helping us to work towards creating a play friendly country.”