

The Dudley Play Strategy

Policy Review Summary

June 2008

The following review sets out the progress, analysis and status of the key policy outcomes of the Dudley Play Strategy which was approved by the Council in December 2006. Although good progress has been made overall, there is still much work to do to ensure that the play outcomes for all children and young people across the borough are improved, particularly for children and young people with disabilities.

Play Outcomes

- Promote the importance of play in relation to children and young people's health, safety, physical, emotional and economic well-being and their personal, social, and intellectual development, to all those that have a responsibility and influence over their upbringing, education, safety and well-being.**

Status: Green

Comment:

Good progress has been made by the Dudley Play Partnership to promote the value of children's play over the last twelve months. The Dudley Play Strategy has been praised by the government and the Big Lottery Fund as a national exemplar and was scored highly by the DCSF in the national play pathfinder assessment programme. The Dudley Play Partnership has made good progress with the Big Lottery Fund - Children's Play Initiative – Just Enjoy, and all milestones have been achieved for the first year.

- To make appropriate public spaces as child friendly as possible, ensuring that parks, thoroughfares, nurseries, children's centres, schools, youth settings, housing estates and other public spaces within the Borough, are as safe and conducive as possible to children's play and outdoor activities.**

Status: Amber

Comment:

More work needs to be done to improve this outcome. The Dudley Play Partnership's success at achieving DCSF Play Pathfinder status will make a significant difference towards this outcome but too many children's play areas and public spaces across Dudley are not child friendly or conducive to children playing safely.

- Develop a strategic and interdependent approach to the management and allocation of available play resources and funding, striking a balance based on need between supervised and unsupervised provision.**

Status: Amber

Comment:

A good start has been made through the Big Lottery Fund Just Enjoy programme. However, progress has been slow in some areas, particularly in getting Council wide involvement in the Dudley Play Partnership. Innovative play ranger programmes in public parks and open spaces has provided new play opportunities for increasing numbers of children and young people and should be expanded further across the borough.

- 4. Work towards ensuring that a wider range of play opportunities are available for disabled children and young people, and that all provision aims towards becoming fully inclusive and accessible.**

Status: Red

Comment:

Poor progress has been made with this outcome. Those providers funded through the Big Lottery Fund have found it hard to increase the play outcomes for more children and young people with disabilities, particularly for those children between the ages of 8 to 13. This is of major concern and it is recommended a working group is established to widen the scope of the programme to include more agencies, including the Council, the PCT and the community and voluntary sector.

- 5. Work to ensure that all play providers actively seek to address the views, needs, rights, and interests of children and young people, particularly from hard-to-reach communities and those at risk from social exclusion including those children and young people looked after by the local authority.**

Status: Green

Comment:

Very good progress has been made with this outcome. All providers have effective strategies for engaging with children and young people. Kids Orchard, Me2 and other providers have nationally recognised structures that involve disabled children and young people at the highest levels of strategic decision making. The ten week 'Walk in the Park' consultation programme has engaged with many hundreds of children and young people and the new Participation Plus service within the Children's Trust is now leading participation and engagement across the partnership.

- 6. Aim to offer all children and young people the chance to encounter acceptable risks in stimulating, exciting and challenging play environments.**

Status: Amber

Comment:

Children and young people through the Ofsted Tellus survey and the Just Enjoy website, have told us that they are apprehensive to play outside and use public parks and open spaces. Parents and carers also express anxieties at letting their children out to play. The Dudley Children's Trust has commissioned a new policy and action plan entitled 'Safe to Play' which will be funded through the new DCSF Play Pathfinder. The success of this new policy will be monitored through a Tellus survey and the National Indicator set (NI) from April 2009.

Presented to the Dudley Play Partnership 26th June 2008