

Play for Wales

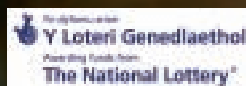
Play news & briefing from the national organisation for play

Winter 2006



BIG Child's Play Programme – £13m for Wales

See the full story on pages 6-8



www.playwales.org.uk



Editorial

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This has been a fantastic year for play providers in Wales. In our last issue we celebrated the launch of the Welsh Assembly Government Play Policy Implementation Plan, and in this issue we elaborate on the new £13m BIG Lottery Child's Play funding programme.

Many of the ambitions we have been working towards over the last decade are beginning to become a reality. As a result of a great deal of forward thinking, hard work and lobbying by so many people involved in children's play, the funding and political support for play and play provision at a national level are settling into place. Our challenge now is to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the Child's Play programme to ensure that children have access to quality play provision across our country. We hope that with our help, the BIG funding for infrastructure development will ensure that every region of Wales will have a meaningful and sustainable cross-sector partnership that will plan and deliver play projects as part of a strategic approach.

We have been aware for a while that some play providers responsible for developing and maintaining local play areas may feel that the current developments do not reflect their priorities. For example we have been advised that applications for Child's Play funding for wide scale refurbishment of fixed equipment play areas are unlikely to be successful, if only because it would be difficult to demonstrate that the money was being spent to provide something over and above existing commitments. However, BIG has indicated that proposals for creative, play orientated landscaping and community build play areas, planned, built and cared for by local people, may be successful as part of a bigger strategic play project application. We are encouraged by conversations at the recent BIG Child's Play briefing events that indicated that some of those responsible for fixed equipment play areas would welcome a new and innovative approach.

This is a very significant time for children's play in Wales. £13 m is a decent lottery prize for our children, but spread over four years, over the whole of Wales, it is clear that very careful thought must be given as to how to use the money wisely and not waste it. The Child's Play programme and the Assembly Play Implementation Plan offers us an opportunity, to move away from the idea that children can only play in playgrounds with fixed equipment and impact absorbent surfacing with a fence, and consider a country where children's play is widely valued in a range of environments, rural and urban.

With the new requirement of the Children Act that local authorities cooperate in the delivery of play provision, there is a real opportunity for developments that benefit from the expertise and knowledge of both local authorities and the voluntary sector. The Children Act also begins to set the scene for longer term funding for children's play, to ensure that the infrastructure and projects we develop over the next few years will be sustained and will not disappear after the Child's Play programme closes.

The Editor

This is only the second issue of Play for Wales this year, but next year we will publish four issues. If you would like to contribute, air your views, ask for extra copies, add yourself to the list for an electronic version of this newsletter, or advertise an event please contact our national office.



Play in the Streets – Playday 2007



The Playday campaign will start early next year and end in a celebration of playing in the streets on Wednesday 1 August 2007. The idea is that all those involved will work over several months to draw attention to today's lack of safe street space for children to play, and to highlight good practice in play-friendly street design.

Play Wales is working with Play England to produce a bumper bilingual information pack for those wishing to hold a street play event. This will also give advice as to how to use local media to draw attention to the campaign, and how to work towards long-term changes. We hope this will be available from February, but if you wish to close a street to hold a play event it is worth making early enquiries of your local authority Highways Department so that you can apply for a Road Closure Order. You may need a license if you wish to have music or entertainment as part of the day.

Research in Monmouthshire suggests that rural children face similar problems to those who live in cities – fast traffic, congested village streets, dog mess, and fear of predatory adults and bullies. We have requested that there be further research into rural streets and children's play as part of the Playday project.

The Playday website is soon to be redesigned, and there will be a new logo – in Welsh too!

For more information please visit www.playday.org.uk

Local Government Consultation

The Local Government Data Unit is set up to "improve the quality and availability of data relating to Local Authorities and their communities". The Data Unit is currently undertaking a consultation on 2007/08 Performance Indicators. Amongst those proposed under 'Leisure and Culture - Sport and Recreation' is a new indicator relating to children's play:

"The number of community play areas, designed for 0 – 11 year olds, that conform to a standard, per 1,000 population aged 0 – 11 years".

If a satisfactory standard is agreed, Play Wales will respond to the consultation welcoming the proposal.

The consultation can be found at www.lgdu-wales.gov.uk and is open until 22 December 2006.

Praise for the State of Play in Wales

In a presentation at 'The Value of Play: a Forum on Risk, Recreation and Children's Health' conference held in Washington D. C., Roger Hart, world renowned author and researcher on children's participation, praised achievements made in Wales. He said: "The Welsh are particularly enlightened about playwork. They are defending a profession which we have lost".

For an electronic copy of the conference papers please contact Angharad at Play Wales' national office (029 2048 6050 or email angharad@playwales.org.uk)

Tony Retires

Tony Chilton, our Senior Development Officer based in North Wales, retired on 19 October 2006.

Tony has given a life-time contribution to play provision and playwork – from the hands-on development of adventure playgrounds, to writing playwork training, to his involvement in the drafting of a national play policy – his work has been wide-ranging and driven by his appreciation of children and his passionate commitment to children's rights. Knowing Tony as we do, we think it unlikely that he will hang up his hat and take a well earned rest.



We wish him well in his retirement – good health and happiness!

Membership

Play Wales annual membership is due to be renewed in January, when a dedicated area for members on our new website will also be launched. Please see the enclosed leaflet for further details or ring us on 029 2048 6050 for more information or a membership pack. or go to www.playwales.org.uk

Changing Regulations

CRB Checks

The new Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act changes the way Criminal Records Bureau Checks are applied and managed. Find out more at http://findoutmore.dfes.gov.uk/2006/03/safeguarding_vu.html and in the news section at www.wcva.org.uk

Fire Regulations

Changes to the fire safety law came into place in October. Find out more about the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order at www.communities.gov.uk



Progress on the Plan

In our last issue we celebrated the launch of Play in Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government Play Policy Implementation Plan (WAGPPIP). Here is a brief update on progress so far:

Action 1 – Planning guidance and the Children Act

Beginning in 2008 there will be Strategic Children and Young People's Plans and statutory planning guidance will include the need to address the play needs of children and young people. Draft guidance will be issued for consultation in early 2007, final guidance will be published in the summer of 2007.

Action 3 – BIG Lottery and WAG will work on a funding programme

The Child's Play Programme was launched this November – see more on page 6 and below.

Action 6 – Guidance on play provision within Community Focussed Schools

Play Wales has been commissioned to undertake this work and is working together with Marc Armitage researcher, trainer and consultant on play in schools, to write clear and accessible guidance that can be adapted for use in any school. A report on the findings will be made early in 2007.

Action 7 – Planning Technical Advice Notes relating to open space, play and recreation

A consultation on this closed at the end of October.

Action 10 – appropriate training for playworkers

Negotiations on a National Playwork Centre are ongoing between WAG, Play Wales and SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council for Playwork.

Action 12 – addressing recruitment issues

A Sector Skills Agreement is being negotiated between WAG and Skills Active.

Action 13 – the impact of 'blame and claim' on children's play

Jane Davidson, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, has written to the Department of Constitutional Affairs.

Action 16 – play and parenting programmes

Two Assembly sponsored leaflets for parents were distributed during 2006. 'From Breakfast to Bedtime' and 'Over the Top Behaviour in the Under 10's,' draw attention to the value of play. The next distribution will be in 2007.

The BIG Lottery on Child's Play in Wales



Ask children how they would spend a lottery win, and it is guaranteed that a place to play will come high up on the list. The Big Lottery Fund intends to give children in Wales exactly what they want. Through our partnership with Play Wales, BIG will roll out £13 million in lottery cash to develop new play opportunities for children across the country.

As part of BIG's Healthy Families Initiative, Child's Play will contribute towards developing a holistic approach to addressing the health needs of children and will help to combat childhood obesity and being overweight.

Delighted to welcome Play Wales on board, Ceri Doyle, Director of BIG Lottery in Wales, said: "On behalf of everyone at the Big Lottery Fund, I would like to congratulate Play Wales on their success and I'm sure their specialist knowledge will help us identify specific areas that need to be addressed within children's play. Together, we will develop priorities and identify and support projects that could rollout the programme. We must take action to preserve the health of the next generation and we are looking forward to working with Play Wales to deliver opportunities that will encourage children to lead healthier and more active lives."

Read more later in this newsletter, and find out more from BIG Lottery Fund about the Healthy Families Initiative, the Child's Play Programme and other funding programmes at www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Play Wales has been contracted to help deliver the Programme. We will support the establishment of local, regional and national networks and the development of partnerships between statutory and voluntary organisations. We are not involved in awarding funds, but applicants are strongly advised by BIG to develop applications with our help.

Further details on pages 6-8.



Benefits for Play Wales Members who are Employers

SkillsActive

We can now offer free SkillsActive membership to all Play Wales members who employ playworkers. SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council for Playwork, and here are the benefits of being signed up:

SkillsActive will keep you up to date...

You will receive a daily email update service with key industry headlines, and a monthly ezine and quarterly bulletins with details on new legislation, government policy changes, consultations, industry events and new funding opportunities.

SkillsActive will support you...

You'll have access to our employers' helpline, with expert advice just a phone call away, as well as the national occupational standards database. We provide research reports giving you

in-depth knowledge of current issues, and we run networking events and workshops to put you in touch with your community.

SkillsActive is available 24/7...

We have a comprehensive website loaded with useful information, and members have dedicated access through a unique login system.

SkillsActive will save you money...

Exclusively for our members, we have negotiated discounts to a number of services, such as industry events,

recruitment websites, and even credit card transaction processing (in partnership with Lloyds TSB), saving you time and money.

SkillsActive are planning for the future...

This is just the beginning; at SkillsActive we are striving to develop products and services to meet your needs and strengthen our sector.

Visit www.playwork.org.uk for more information about SkillsActive

Changes to Day Care Regulations

There are key changes to The Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations. Subject to approval by the National Assembly for Wales, they will come into force on 1 January 2007.

The four new Regulations cover the Review of the Quality of Care, Assessment of Service, Compliance Notification and Complaints.

Care Standards Inspectorate Wales (CSIW) is responsible for the regulation of the services that fall under these Regulations. They advise that providers consider any implications for their current systems for monitoring, reviewing and improving the quality of care given to service users, and the new requirements about handling complaints.

If you have operational queries about the Regulations please contact your regional CSIW office.

If you have any policy queries about the regulations please email your query to csiwregulations@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Children have their say on Play

The Children's Commissioner's Office recently held two all-Wales events on Play and Leisure for 150 children and young people from diverse and representative groups. Play and Leisure was one of the issues of concern identified by children and young people themselves at last year's events, and the object of the exercise was to find out what they think the Children's Commissioner should do next. Our next issue will feature an interview with one of the children involved.



Find out more at <http://www.childcom.org.uk>

One million for play facilities for disabled children

In early December, Sue Essex, Finance Minister, announced a £14.4m top up of funds for public services that will include £1m for play facilities for disabled children. In the announcement Sue Essex said that she had "listened to calls from the public", and the extra money is being taken from Assembly reserves.

Find out more at new.wales.gov.uk/news/presreleasearchive/budget?lang=en



The BIG Child's Play Programme



Under the BIG Child's Play Programme applicants can apply for grants for projects to develop local play infrastructure. Applications for the first round of funding must be submitted by May 2007.



The Programme guidance notes define infrastructure as 'networks and the development staff required to develop and deliver children's play'.

What is infrastructure?

BIG is looking for applications from meaningful and sustainable partnerships that include both the voluntary sector and local authorities. It will not consider applications for infrastructure funding that exclude either. It is essential that partnerships include members that have playwork and play development experience, and where this is not possible, that they take advice from Play Wales' Development Team.

BIG expects to fund a limited number of infrastructure projects. This means that counties that may have historical links, geographical similarities and those at a similar state of progress in terms of play strategy and play development, are encouraged to work together. There are existing networks, or play associations, in some areas of Wales – these may need to review their constitution to allow for cross-county partnership so that they can make the most of this funding opportunity.

A play network or association acts as a hub for both local authority and voluntary sector play providers; hosting a forum, agreeing local priorities, ensuring that services are co-ordinated to meet local children's needs,

disseminating information and supporting grass roots play providers. BIG will only release funds when it is confident that a local infrastructure has been created to provide and plan for children's play opportunities.

Where there are no existing networks Play Wales will work with existing bodies, for instance Community Voluntary Councils, so that they can host a partnership and eventually, a development officer.

Development officers funded by the BIG Lottery infrastructure grants will support their local play network to provide for children's play and deliver sustainable projects.



How local projects can make the most of Child's Play

The best way to take advantage of this funding opportunity is to get actively involved in a local play network or play association. Local authority and voluntary sector play development officers will know who to contact. We published a list of play development contacts in our last issue. If in doubt please contact Kate at our national office (kate@playwales.org.uk) or Annette at our North Wales office (northoffice@playwales.org.uk).

What is Play Wales role?

BIG strongly advises all applicants to develop their application with Play Wales' help.

It is our role to: develop a strategic overview of children's play in Wales; work with local organisations to help identify gaps in provision and agree priorities for investment; provide expert advice to applicants and help them to develop projects that meet agreed local priorities and fit national strategies.

The Context

The history of funding for children's play provision in Wales can be seen as one of missed opportunities and a piecemeal response. Although in recent years there has been a dedicated funding stream for staffed play provision through Cymorth, as well as NOF grants for the Integrated Children's Centre initiative, different local authorities have chosen to interpret the guidance in different ways and it is fair to say that children's access to quality staffed play provision varies greatly from one area to the next.

The Child's Play Programme recognises that funding for play provision needs to be linked to agreed priorities and strategic aims – it is informed by the Welsh Assembly Government Play Policy and Implementation Plan and the recommendations of the WAG Play Policy Implementation Group.

While we recognise that a blanket approach will not work across Wales – different areas have different geographical and demographic challenges – this is an opportunity to create a 'level playing field', to fill gaps

and develop exciting new projects. The BIG lottery is clear that it will support projects that provide 'additionality'. This means that it will not support projects that already exist to continue the same work they already carry out, and that they will not support projects that ought to be funded by existing funding streams.

Partnership Working

This is a real opportunity to plan and encourage a meaningful and sustainable partnership approach. BIG will not accept applications from partnerships that exclude either the voluntary or statutory sector.

The recent Welsh Assembly Government Beecham Review encourages cross-county working and cross-sector working. Addressing the WLGA conference in Llandudno, Cllr Derek Vaughan WLGA Leader said: "Every public service provider must change. Everyone must be prepared to get involved in joint working, pooled resources and joint appointments. We need to think as one public service."



Potential Play Projects

The other aspect of this funding stream is for strategically appropriate play projects that offer freely chosen independent play for children aged 0 – 12 years, and particularly for those aged 8 – 12. It is expected that all play provision will be free of charge to the children who use it.

Applicants must consult with stakeholders and service providers including people who will benefit from the project and involve them in its development. Play Wales will work with regional organisations and partnerships to help identify gaps in provision and priorities for development.

Here are some examples of provision that may be planned as part of a bigger strategic project:

adventure playgrounds ...

are staffed by trained playworkers, they are open the year round and children can take part free of charge. Here, children can find materials and support so that they can create and recreate their own play space to suit their own needs. They provide a rich play environment where children can experience autonomy and choice. They compensate for today's lack of accessible natural space where children can play independently of adults.

are places where children can build dens or treehouses, make campfires, dig gardens, have water fights, play in the mud and rain. They are places that children should be able to call their own - where they can direct their own play, be spontaneous, loud, dirty, messy, silly, and where they can test themselves out against their environment and other people.

are inclusive places where children can play and socialise with others on their own terms and follow their own agenda. There is an ethos of participation and self-help; children are involved in decision making and planning and are supported to follow their own initiative.

are places where children can confront and learn to manage risk. Children can experiment, push boundaries, innovate, build and demolish in the knowledge that there are trained playworkers on hand to support them if necessary.

and the ethos of the adventure playground can be applied to many other types of play provision.

community build play areas ...

are developed, built and maintained by local people – children, young people and adults – to meet the needs of a specific community. Local people learn new skills and have ownership of the play space.

doorstep play projects ...

are developed and run by local people for the benefit of younger children who are unable to range far from home. They can provide equipment, possibly from a shed or container, and a safe space where children can play.



mobile play provision ...

is staffed by trained playworkers, and can address the play needs of children in rural communities and other areas where there are limited play opportunities.

includes playbuses that can provide both indoor and outdoor play, and mobile play units where playworkers can transport equipment and materials from one place to another using a van or lorry.

peripatetic playwork projects ...

are the provision of a playworker service in any area where children might be expected to play naturally – for example: on a street, in woodland, in public open spaces, or in disused car parks.

the playworker protects and enhances the space for the children – providing them with a sense of security in their local environment.

play centres ...

operate in a similar way to adventure playgrounds. They are open access and have trained playworkers. They are located in a building.

play schemes ...

are temporary provision staffed by playworkers, often taking place within school holidays. They can be based in a building or in an open space

resource centres, scrapstores and toy libraries ...

provide materials, information and equipment that support the work of all the above.

It is highly unlikely that applications to fund projects to refurbish or to establish new fixed equipment play areas will be successful.

Play Wales' Development Team

Our development team is responsible for supporting applicants to the Child's Play Programme. We have recruited new team members with expertise in developing local authority and voluntary sector play provision, and in developing and monitoring play strategy at a local level. The Play Wales team has considerable experience in policy and strategy development at a local and county level and has assisted the Welsh Assembly Government in developing national policy and strategy on play and play provision.

We are committed to working across Wales – our Development Team will cover all regions. The Development Officers are based in our North Wales Office and our National Office in Cardiff. Some of the team may take a cross regional role in supporting the development of specific types of project, for instance, adventure playgrounds.

Contact us at development-team@playwales.org.uk

National Office: 029 2048 6050
North Wales Office: 01745 851816

For your own copy of the Child's Play Programme guidance notes please telephone 029 2067 8200, email enquiries.wales@biglotteryfund.org.uk or go to www.biglotteryfund.org.uk



New Staff



Sarah Southern



Michelle Jones



Martin King-Sheard

We have three new Development Officers:

Sarah Southern has been involved with children's play for thirteen years, working in a range of settings, mostly voluntary and unpaid, in West Wales. After returning to South Wales Sarah worked as a Play Development Officer in Blaenau Gwent.

Before joining Play Wales **Michelle Jones** was a Play Development Officer for Caerphilly based with Gwent Association Voluntary Organisations (GAVO). During the twelve years that she has been working in children's play, her roles have varied from childminding, to childcare, to youth work and teaching, before finally being involved with playwork and play development.

Our third new Development Officer is **Martin King-Sheard**, who is eager to return to play after a year of working as an Extended Schools Development Officer in Derby City. Prior to this post his roles have included play development, inclusion support, play for disabled children and running his own business as a juggler and entertainer.

We are sad to say goodbye to **Phil Macleod**, our wonderful admin assistant, who has left us to pursue a career in medicine. She is much missed. But ... we have three new Admin Assistants based at the Cardiff Office:

Having previously worked as an assistant for an event production company **Kate Barron** will be helping to organise Play Wales events. She has spent time travelling in Australia, Thailand and Vietnam. **Helen Jones**, who is a Welsh speaker, will be assisting our Finance Officer. Previously, she worked as a receptionist, and as an assistant for a record management company. **Mel Welch**, who recently graduated in law, will be helping our Workforce Development Team. During vacations Mel has been involved in playwork in England.

Angharad Wyn Jones, our new Information Assistant, has recently completed a Welsh MPhil thesis. Over the last few years she has spent some time travelling in Australia and America.





Commissioning Play Consultants

With the BIG Lottery Child's Play Programme, and Cymorth funding guidance regarding the adoption of county-wide play strategies, some play providers are looking to commission consultants to help them provide and plan the best play opportunities for their area. As a matter of policy Play Wales does not recommend or endorse any play consultant, but we are happy to give advice as to how to identify appropriate help, and to support in writing a brief or interviewing consultants.

The best way to avoid wasting money is to be clear about whether or not you need a consultant in the first place. Genuine consultants dislike taking on a commission when they know they can't help.

We suggest that anyone involved in making an appointment asks for a comprehensive job history. Take up references from the potential

Records Bureau check. Even if he or she is not directly in contact with children as part of the commission, it is better to check than find out about someone's past in an exposé in the local paper.

It is vital that potential consultants offer considerable playwork and play development expertise and experience. When there is money on offer all kinds of

knowledge of play theory, and have a track record of successful involvement in play provision and play strategy, are the experts in this field.

It is also crucial that any potential consultant has a deep knowledge and understanding of the aims and intentions behind the Welsh Assembly Government Play Policy, the Play Policy Implementation Plan and the Recommendations of the W.A.G. Play Policy Implementation Group. BIG expects applications that draw inspiration from all these documents. Knowledge, experience and an appreciation of both local authority and voluntary sector working is also important.

The ultimate aim of the piece of work being commissioned is to improve play opportunities for children within their community. It is therefore extremely important that any potential consultant has proven evidence of successful and meaningful consultation with children and their communities. Working in this way can sometimes throw up conflicts of interest and any potential consultant will need to demonstrate objectivity, a child-centred approach and experience of the successful management of differences of opinion.



consultant's most recent posts or projects – not only in writing but also in conversation with previous employers – they may be more candid off the record. It is very important that potential consultants are sensitive to the level of knowledge, experience and confidence of those who commission them. On a practical level they need to demonstrate that they can deliver well-presented, well-written work on time.

The potential consultant should also have undergone an enhanced Criminal

people suddenly set themselves up as experts. But just as it would be foolish to call the hairdresser to mend a leak in a pipe because he works with water, so it is inadvisable to ask a school teacher or a childcare manager to draft a play strategy or advise on its implementation because they work with children. Playworkers are trained to facilitate children's play. Well-trained, experienced Playworkers who can give evidence of continual professional development and an up to date

The Children's Play Information Service at the National Children's Bureau in London provides a list of play consultants – contact Anna Kassmann on 020 7843 6303 or visit www.ncb.org.uk

Russell House publish an accessible guide: 'Commissioning Consultancy, managing outside expertise to improve your services,' Kara and Muir, 2003. This is available in our library or can be purchased at good bookshops.



Straining the Trainer

Thirteen playworkers recently attended the Training the Trainers course for our playwork training project – they are already delivering the new training we have developed to new and existing playworkers across Wales.

The thirteen were put under strain by Pete Duncan, Jess Milne and Ali Wood, who are all seasoned and experienced playworkers and trainers, and who have also been involved in developing the new course materials. Their challenge was to inspire delegates with a passion that can be transferred to others – and of course to provide insights into how to deliver the course in an exciting and accessible fashion.

Our next issue will feature an interview with one of the new trainers, but in the meantime here are quotes from those who survived:

"Refreshing new approach – about time!"

"It took me out of my comfort zone and made me reflect."

"Great to be with inspired and inspiring people."

"Brilliant – lot's of new, easily transferable ideas – and it also aided my own learning."

This was the last chance to undertake the Training the Trainers course in its current format. If you would like to find out more about the courses that the new trainers are now delivering please contact Richard Trew, Project Manager, at our national office (029 2048 6050 or richard@playwales.org.uk)





Interview with a Playwork Trainee



Richard Trew, Project Manager for our CWLWM playwork training project interviews Will, a Swansea playworker, who attended one of the pilot courses last summer.

How did you come to attend one of the early Play Wales pilot training courses?

I was lucky enough to get a job as team leader with PlayRight's mobile play project in Swansea. PlayRight were one of the first organisations to do the pilot course.

Had you done any playwork before?

Yes. This was very different to the old training – this course is far more thought provoking – you have to think about your practice a lot more. It's not about providing games and activities for children – it's about children doing it for themselves.

The training lasted three days and that can be pretty intense. Was it fun?

Yes, and it gives you a good basis of how to work with children. You learn the theory and then try to apply it to your practice working with the children. One thing that I found interesting is that situations got quite heated with co-workers – our beliefs and values were being challenged.

What sort of things did you learn on the course?

I learnt a great deal, the most important was I got to reflect on what I was learning.

It was interesting to see how the littlest thing you do can affect play without you realising it.

It gives you opportunity to understand how and when to intervene with children. You realise that some things that children do, you may not actually agree with, but it's important not to intervene and allow them to try things for themselves.

Whilst working on the mobile project as the work practice part of the course, I learnt a lot about risk – how important it is for children to take risks while making sure that the level of risk is appropriate to the child. One example was when a



Will, Playworker

boat was available for the children to play on, they were able to jump off the back and climb the mast. It was interesting to visit different communities and see how their attitudes differed. For example, on the Gower, the children were more ambivalent and some were too scared to jump off. These children were more interested in designing things for the boat and putting their stamp on it. In other communities we had to provide loads of mats – the children's level of risk was much higher and they would enjoy jumping off and climbing the mast.

The course shows you the power of a child's imagination; their own world and ideas – the little things that may be insignificant to an adult but could be something very deep and meaningful to them. Sometimes children don't perceive play as play; it's more of a job, task or mission.

The Playwork Principles are very useful to refer to: having an understanding of why children play and your role is really important.

What about the delivery of the course – what were the tutors like?

It is good to have tutors that were playworkers. I can talk more openly with them and they understand the situation that you are in. Sometimes, the situations you learn don't always work as

well in practice, and it is good to discuss this with other playworkers who have probably been in similar situations.

Have there been any benefits for the children that you work with?

My approach has changed – I no longer jump in head first – children should work it out for themselves. It's good for children to have arguments and to shout at one another calling each other names and to develop communication skills. Everyone has problems in life and it's important to understand from a young age that you can't always get what you want. This course is all about giving children the tools and opportunities to explore and develop values and different beliefs. It's so important for kids to do this, if they don't have this opportunity it can be hugely detrimental.

Would you recommend this course to others?

Yes – definitely.

What are your plans for the future?

I'd like to continue the playwork course – it has given me a deeper understanding of playwork and has definitely made me a better playworker.

Find out more about playwork education, training and qualifications on our website in the Learning Playwork section – where you will soon be able to listen to an edited version of this interview.

If you want to know more about our Playwork Training Project please contact Richard Trew on 029 2048 6050 or email richard@playwales.org.uk

To find out more about PlayRight the voluntary sector play association for Swansea and Neath Port Talbot please ring 01 792 794885 or visit www.playright.org.uk



Pushing Eddie in the Nettles with Connor

How do you illustrate the awe-inspiring breadth and diversity of children's play to decision makers and potential playworkers? and what do you call it?

Our answer was to apply for funds from the European Social Fund EQUAL programme to make a 'fly on the wall' film. We are using the same material for another film that will allow analysis of children's play as part of our CWLWM playwork training project.

Over the summer and through the autumn a small posse of professional film-makers have recorded children playing. From the chilliness of the Horseshoe Falls in North Wales, to the sandy beaches of the Gower peninsula, a shady back garden, summer play schemes, busy adventure playgrounds and a muddy forest, the crew have captured hours and hours of footage of children at play.

There was no script – the children were simply recorded doing what they do best and then afterwards they were interviewed. Here are some of their comments:

"Playing is the best thing I've ever done."

"My favourite kind of play is Shakespeare ... ha ha."

"Girls do girly stuff ... and scream lots ... and boys do good stuff – like make dens, play games on the street and the beach."

"Running around the woods and chucking water at each other ... and making mud pies and rolling down the hills."

"Why play? Because it's fun ... because it's part of your life ... "

"You get some kids who don't even get a chance to play. It's good for 'em, to play."

"With playgrounds it's already built for you, towers and swings and things like that. Here you get to make all that yourself and feel proud and use it because it's your own."

The film reveals children building their own play structures, playing with the four elements and using natural materials, taking and evaluating risk, resolving conflict and much, much more.

Quirine Robbins, Assistant Producer at Green Bay Media, tells us of her experience:

It's been a real eye-opener making this film for Play Wales. It has been an adventure – we've been caught in the crossfire of waterfights and mudfights, we've climbed sand dunes and peeked into dens. And we've met some great children and playworkers. Play will never be the same to me again.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the funding for this film, we are unable to sell it, but it will be made available to bodies in Wales and the UK who have an influence on the quality of children's play opportunities in our country. It will also be used as part of the Play Wales Playwork training. There will be a chance to view it at our Spirit of Adventure Play conference in May and at other Play Wales events, and a short clip will be added to our website in January once the film editing process is complete.



All the photographs of children playing throughout this issue, were taken during filming.



Events

31 January 2007

Sustainable & Accessible Play

The Centennial Centre, Birmingham

Speakers include: Marguerite Hunter Blair and Adrian Voce

Book at www.playconference.com

9 and 10 May 2007

The Spirit of Adventure Play

Play Wales' annual conference for all those involved in adventure play. Speakers include: Brian Sutton Smith, Wendy Russell and Hitoshi Shimamura. Booking starts in the New Year, check out our website Events page. or contact our national office to be added to the mailing list 029 2048 6050

17 – 20 May 2007

CYWU National Conference – Edinburgh

The Conference is open to all members of the Union. For more details please visit www.cywu.org.uk

14 June 2007

International Play Safety Conference

Please register your interest by emailing: events@rospa.com with your contact details.

New Publication

'PlayTypes – Speculations and Possibilities'

by Bob Hughes, published by the London Centre for Playwork Education and Training.

To purchase the book contact John Fitzpatrick:
020 7527 5824

Funding

If you are looking for funding for your organisation or project, WCVA can carry out a funding search for its members on Grantfinder. Contact the Helpdesk on 0870 607 1666, help@wcva.org.uk

The **Funding Programme** – training workshops to provide assistance to the voluntary sector to help identify, bid for, and secure funding:

Wednesday 17 January 2007; Thursday 15 February 2007; Tuesday 20 March 2007 at Pembroke House, Canton, Cardiff.

For further information email fp@healthcarealliances.co.uk

Community Focused Schools Early views of the draft WAG budget for 2007-8 have included a continuation of the budget (at the same level) for Community Focused Schools up to 2010.



Go to www.playwales.org.uk

Check out our exciting and user friendly new website. It is updated as regularly as news comes into our office, and we plan to expand it with more illustrations, photo essays, information, downloadable briefings and fact sheets as time goes by.

One of our plans is to publish play and playwork stories from play providers, playworkers and children, and we welcome contributions from anyone living or working in Wales (we will vet or may edit before they are uploaded and we can't guarantee to publish everything).



Poster

We're about to publish a new poster showing children at play in a Welsh community – in the park, in school, at an adventure playground and in the street. Once again it shows off the cartooning prowess of Les Evans.

The poster will be provided free as part of our membership welcome pack for 2007, but if you are not a member you can either buy it in our online shop at www.playwales.org.uk or call us on 029 2048 6050 to order a copy. The cost is £4 plus £1 postage and packing.