

Inclusive play pathfinder adventure playgrounds – findings by KIDS



Introduction

In 2008 the government launched England's first ever national Play Strategy that aspired to ensure all children would have access to high quality, inclusive, play experiences in their local community. This strategy described a largely capital programme and the intention to announce 30 local authorities as play pathfinders given the task of creating at least 28 new or improved play spaces alongside an adventure playground or park. The remaining authorities were given playbuilder status and capital funding to develop 22 play spaces.

In the same year, the government announced a largely revenue programme, Aiming High for Disabled Children to support local authorities in transforming short break services for disabled children through Aiming High pathfinders. KIDS played a pivotal role in bringing together local authorities with joint pathfinder status, to explore and develop effective ways of link these two funding streams together to develop playful short breaks for disabled children¹.

This summary report has been compiled from questionnaire responses given by the play pathfinder authorities, to find out the extent to which they are using Aiming High for Disabled Children funding to extend inclusive play within their newly developed adventure playgrounds. This report also highlights the various practical ways in which short breaks are being developed within the new adventure playgrounds.

Number of surveys sent out:	30
Number of surveys returned:	19
Number of responding authorities using some Aiming High funding in the play pathfinder adventure playground	14
Number of authorities using capital Aiming High funding:	12
Amount range:	£18k - £250k
Number of authorities using revenue Aiming High funding:	6
Amount range:	£10k - £65k

For more information or advice about inclusive play or about how to link Aiming High and play funding together please contact KIDS on 0207 3593073 or email pip@kids.org.uk.

¹ for more information visit www.kids.org.uk

Examples of how capital funding is being used to extend inclusion in new adventure playgrounds

- Mezzanine area, lift & external viewing platform
- Accessible pathways around site
- Accessible gardening area
- Changing Places toilets
- Specialist play equipment and hygiene facilities
- A range of enhancements that extended the inclusive elements already included in the design, e.g. incorporating a full hygiene room and adaptations that will facilitate the use of the site for Aiming High overnight sites
- Sensory Room and outdoor trampoline
- Architects consulted with specialist schools and the Parents advisory group and worked closely with occupational therapists to develop accessible designs for the building, adventure playground space and the wider play park. The Aiming High funding contributed to the accessible elements of the design which include elements such as accessible slides, swings, net structures and hammocks, sand and water play and accessible playable pathways, mounds and slopes
- Long ramp to enable children using wheelchairs to experience height. Other accessible play elements include sensory and sound elements, sand and water play and the ability to manipulate these elements using moving parts via pathways and raised sand tables
- sensory pod/fixed equipment/changing space
- Changing Places Toilet:, mobile sensory equipment and accessible play equipment/adaptations to play equipment
- Improved access to roof of building via footpath

Examples of how revenue funding is being used to extend inclusion in new adventure playgrounds

- Staff to operate targeted sessions on Sunday's 1 day per week throughout all school holidays and inclusive sessions at the adventure playground
- Training for the adventure playground staff
- A contribution to the general running costs and specialist equipment
- Sensory room & portable sensory items
- Adaptive sports and games equipment
- Accessible landscape facilities
- Extra worker time
- Initially for overnight stays, but also looking at short breaks (these are being commissioned significantly at other play sites, so this will be followed up once the site is operational)
- Two staff and associated revenue to support disabled children and their families to access mainstream activities including, play centres, leisure activities, youth clubs etc
- specialist providers will be developed who are able to work with around 15 disabled children and young people ensuring full access to the

adventure playground and

- offer specialist groups for children and young people with ASD and those with 'multiple impairments'
- offer outreach support to staff in these play areas to ensure that families with disabled children and young people are able to access the provision when the groups are not running
- In addition, as part of the bid by the School Sports Partnership, funded through the Aiming High for Disabled Children revenue grant, we are hoping to roll-out after schools sports activities for disabled children at the adventure playground

Reasons for not using Aiming High capital funding:

- already committed to other projects
- we used the play pathfinder funding to improve facilities at 5 of our existing adventure playgrounds. No Aiming High funding was used for these improvements.
- No additional capital funding needed.
- We considered that it was inappropriate to use Aiming High funding for a facility that should, according to the play pathfinder guidance (as defined in LAC 2502100003), be fully accessible and inclusive anyway.
- Not for 2009 due to money being allocated elsewhere but current discussions for 2010 are taking place

Reasons for not using Aiming High revenue funding:

- Other money received from Aiming High to facilitate holiday playschemes. Potential to use money on playground once established
- Still being discussed x 4
- Not at point to develop additional uses for revenue as site is still in capital build phase

Other sources of funding being used alongside play and Aiming High:

- Local Authority revenue funding has contributed to the development of a changing space facility within the playcentre and paid for acoustic dampening throughout the building
- Early Years Funding
- Extended Services Funding
- PCT monies
- Additional DCSF funding
- Marks and Spencer
- Big Lottery Fund
- Leisure Services budgets
- Building schools for the future
- Section 106
- PVI funds

- Children's Centre funds
- Cultural Services (Parks- Section 106)
- Community Action Fund
- Let's All Play Project (£55,000 pro rata), is an Aiming High inclusive play project which will see additional staffing (x3) available for 1 to 2 weekend sessions per month term time and one weekday session per week during school holidays at the Adventure Playground

Other ways in which disabled children and young people will be included into play at the new adventure playgrounds:

- Additional disability awareness training for all playworkers and practical training such as moving and handling etc.
- The play equipment has been specifically designed to be inclusive and challenging for all children & young people e.g the ramps for the platforms have 1 –12 gradients allowing children & young people to use them, bridges and slides are also accessible
- Promoted to these families through targeted promotion
- Staff receive specific inclusion training to ensure appropriate support is available
- Centre being booked by groups who work with disabled children
- Closed Access sessions to support children with multiple impairments
- Inclusive playschemes operating throughout the year
- Offer a variety of ways that disabled children can be supported on site by staff, parents or external organisations
- Work with the larger development project to ensure the whole park is accessible from the point of entry
- Provide accessible changing facilities within the Adventure Playground
- Include user groups and stake holders in the development of the Adventure Playground
- Promote the Adventure Playground as venue for disabled children, families and organisations working with disabled children
- Accompanying staff to the outdoor education centre and the centres own staff will facilitate play opportunities on their visit. They will be encouraged to come back to open access play sessions where playworkers will support their involvement. Some training will be required to assist this process
- Aiming High represented on the Play Pathfinder Project Team
- Key staff involved in awarding grants to both Aiming High and Playbuilder Capital Grant schemes (the Playbuilder Capital Grant Scheme is how we are funding the 28 smaller play spaces)
- Expertise on play space design from Pathfinder team made available to Aiming High team
- Playbuilder Capital and Aiming High Capital awards timetabled to run in parallel
- Playbuilder grant recipients encouraged to apply to Aiming High where their community consultation showed that provision of additional facilities would benefit disabled users
- They will be supported throughout the APG as the design has been

focused on being inclusive. A range of different materials are being used (water, sand etc) and open equipment. A pathway will be crossing the playable route for those using wheelchairs. Professional and trained playworkers will be assisting and we are currently in discussions over further support from disability co-ordinators and additional schemes for disabled children

- Exclusive sessions to encourage attendance of disabled children, young people and their families to attend open access provision
- Working closely with the local schools and groups working with disabled children
- Trained experienced staff
- Observation to see if needs and play needs are being met
- Site has been promoted through networks and forums for parents with disabled children and disabled children have been actively involved in the design consultation and in elements of the construction. Work is being undertaken to invite inclusive playschemes to visit the site in order to introduce the service to potential users. The staff team are trained and use procedures that foster inclusive play. If children or young people require additional support, then Aiming High Short Breaks funding to the Play Service will be allocated to support access
- The physical enhancements to the space will mean that the Play Park will be accessible to disabled children and young people with a range of impairments. Links will be made with existing services for disabled children to support access to the Play Park
- As part of the Play Pathfinder revenue we have commissioned a play disability awareness seminar, training and support programme to support play staff to be better equipped to provide services for disabled children in play settings
- Commissioned a play inclusion and outreach project which will support disabled children to access the provision and increase participation in universal play provision, with a particular focus on the adventure playground
- Let's all Play sessions will ensure that at specific open access sessions the APG has 3 additional playworkers to ensure the setting is able to meet disabled children's specific requirements and to promote inclusive play development
- The APG will carry out an Inclusion audit during the course of this year and develop a plan to improve inclusive practice. As part of this process the APG is liaising with other Aiming High projects such as the Inclusive Play Bridging Workers and Short Break Health Service to identify training, resources advice and information
- Playworkers are visiting local 'special' schools and encouraging school visits to the APG during school time, to enable disabled children to experience the play opportunities APG's can provide.

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