

How West Sussex's Play Strategy will incorporate the needs of children with disabilities

The following is based on information from Carl Burton, who is currently providing project support to work on the Play Strategy and is coordinating a process to allocate the Play Builder funding.

1. Bids for Play Builder Grant 2009

Play Builder is a Government scheme that aims to create and develop Play Spaces for children and young people for the benefit of the whole community.

There is a requirement from DCSF that Play Spaces must be accessible to children and young people with disabilities *as a right*.

There has to be full consultation with all members of the community. West Sussex will be looking for this in all bids that are submitted and bids that do not incorporate plans to engage disabled children will fail the criteria.

There is a need for bidders to show how they have linked with the Third Sector. They also need to talk to young people through schools. West Sussex envisages there will be consultation with parents as part of constructing the bid, which could be conducted through, for example, a series of open days with parents. This should include seeking feedback and input from parents of disabled children.

West Sussex is currently pulling together an assessment process for bids.

2. The Play Strategy

A more complex approach is envisaged to ensure disabled children's needs are incorporated into the Strategy. There is a piece of work being undertaken to fully assess all strategies currently in place.

The Strategy could be a generic one, in which case disabled children's needs will need to be addressed and clearly incorporated in the overall Strategy. Alternatively it might be useful to take a single strand approach, where the needs of disabled children represent the single strand. It is not clear which model will be chosen but there is some suggestion the single strand approach may be favoured.

The development of the Play Strategy will occur over the coming year.