

SUTTON FREE PLAY PROJECTS 2008

With the drive to provide better and more accessible free play opportunities for children, London Borough of Sutton has been awarded £385,000 from the Big Lottery Fund's (BLF) £124 million National Play Programme, to provide free play opportunities for children across the Borough. Following a successful bid to the BLF, the Borough will be delivering five projects to local communities over the next three years. All of the five projects will be free at the point of entry, children will be able to come and go as they please and choose activities in which they wish to engage.

LBS will be working in partnership with London Borough of Sutton, Sutton Centre for the Voluntary Sector, Shanklin Junior Club, Clockhouse Youth Project and Riverside Community Association to deliver the five projects.

Starting in April this year, three of the projects will be based in and around the areas of Riverside, Shanklin and Clockhouse. Based in Community Centres, these will offer twice weekly term time play opportunities for children aged 5-12 years. Activities will be fun, stimulating, physically challenging and inclusive for all children. Children will benefit from accessing safe local facilities close to home as well as providing the opportunity to play with other children in their community.

The fourth project - Play On the Move (POM) starting in July 08 will offer exciting free play opportunities in Sutton's parks and open spaces where it's been identified that play provision is already limited. A variety of child centred fun activities are planned such as music, arts, crafts, sports and drama.

Executive Councillor for Children and Young People Councillor Tony Brett Young said, "Play promotes healthy minds and healthy bodies and can open the door to lifelong fitness and sporting interests. We already have some excellent children's play facilities in Sutton and this Big Lottery money will allow us to provide even more safe and fun play activities. I am sure parents across Sutton will be delighted."

The fifth project – The Saturday Integrated Project at Tweeddale Play centre will offer weekly play days on Saturdays during term time for local children aged 5-16 years. There will be a specific emphasis on supporting children with a range of disabilities such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Dr Ute Navidi, Director, London Play (whose mission is to work for a capital where all children can play) commented:

"It is wonderful to see that the five projects are to benefit children's play in Sutton in so many different ways. In play, children explore and test the edges of what they know, begin to understand what it feels like to reach for something new, and to do something original, even unimaginable. Children play everywhere, which is proof of their natural desire to play. Creating better and more accessible free play opportunities will provide children's spaces for the enjoyment for children whose environment provides limited play opportunities."

The London Borough of Sutton operates an Open Access Policy for over 8's in these Free Play Projects. This means children over 8 years will **not** be prevented from leaving the grounds or coming and going as they please. It is strongly recommended that parents/carers do supervise their child so that the child's wellbeing and safety is taken into account. Children can only be supervised whilst on site and engaged in activities. **These projects are not the same as out of school care clubs, where**

children over 8 years are kept until collected. . It is recommended that parents/carers bring and collect children including over 8's from the setting

For further information on how children can access these services please look out for posters, which will be shortly distributed, in and around Sutton. For more specific information on these projects please contact Suttons Children's Information Centre on 020 8770 6000 or email them on childcare@sutton.gov.uk.