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Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

RAY Ceredigion Petition We need Welsh Government Funding for Play!!

Thank you for your correspondence indicating that this will be discussed again at the meeting on 11th June 2019, we greatly appreciate the committees continued discussion on this matter.

Thank you also for a copy of the correspondence from AM Julie Morgan, I would draw attention to the final phrase in AM Julie Morgan's response which is at the heart of the issue this petition seeks to highlight:

'... should further resources for play become available in the future'

Welsh Government initiated a duty on local authorities to audit for a sufficiency of play provision for all children in Wales, but this duty was not matched by any designated funding. Play is identified as a right children should be able to access by the UNCRC in particular Article 31 and General Comment 17 makes clear the importance of this right to child welfare and the imperative on governments to ensure this right is accessed.

The point of the petition is to bring to the attention of the government in Wales that despite a play sufficiency duty little progress can be made on developing the provision of play with NO designated funding, and as the letter from Julie Morgan makes clear there is a question mark over whether funds will be available in the future.

The amounts of funding provided for play referred to in correspondence from Huw Irranca-Davies is mainly that provided to local authorities at the end of the financial year, which has always been made available at very short notice, the amount available has been variable and unpredictable, and the timescale for spending this funding has been incredibly short. This does not help to fund or sustain play provision or play providers, and this lack of financial

support for a sufficiency of play has particularly decimated the voluntary sector in Wales. Of 10 strong and vibrant third sector providers of play in Wales, created by the 6 year lottery funded Child's Play programme nearly all are lost. One of the main reasons for this loss is that no funding coming into local authorities is for play, despite the play sufficiency duty.

Our argument is that this situation is at odds with the duties placed on local authorities and has a detrimental effect on third sector organisations that have worked in partnership with the local authority to develop expertise in the delivery of play provision.

We are requesting Welsh Government provide designated funding for play to achieve 3 outcomes:

- Enable children in Wales to access their right to play
- To enable the play sufficiency duty to be enacted by local authorities in a planned way throughout 12 months, rather than reliant on unpredictable last minute funding at the end of each financial year
- To support the continuation of organisations across Wales with expertise in the delivery of play provision such as RAY Ceredigion who currently cannot identify any funding to sustain play

So far we have not seen that these points have been adequately addressed by previous correspondence from Welsh Government Ministers and the proposed outcomes arising from the Play Sufficiency Duty continue to be unsupported by funding and consequently largely unmet.

This is a disappointing outcome for children in Wales.

Yours sincerely

Gill Byrne
Executive officer, RAY Ceredigion