



HAMPSHIRE CHILDREN'S FUND

1 Introduction and overview

The Children's Fund nationally is an important government initiative based within the Department of Health. Its intention is to ensure that all of Britain's children aged five to thirteen years get the best possible start in life, participate fully in all the statutory and voluntary opportunities open to them, and lay a firm foundation to live happy and fulfilled lives. In particular, the Children's Fund aims to minimise social exclusion however it arises, and to reduce youth crime and youth nuisance.

The amount awarded to each County Council or Unitary Authority was decided using a complex formula called the Standard Indices of Deprivation which takes into account a range of factors which may make individuals or communities more likely to become socially excluded or otherwise disadvantaged. On this basis Hampshire's allocation is £2.4 million per year for the three years 2003 to 2006.

Governmental control over the Children's Fund in Hampshire is exercised via the Children and Young Person's Unit (CYPU) and the Government office for the South East (GOSE).

Hampshire County Council acts as the accountable body for the fund.

Local decisions are made by the Hampshire Partnership Board and Executive Committees, which also manage the strategic direction of the local spending and are responsible for demonstrating value for money and effectiveness. The direct management of the Fund, its administration and links with Government are the role of the Programme Manager and Headquarters staff.

As far as possible decisions about how the money should be spent at a local level are devolved down to ten Local Partnership Groups across Hampshire, based upon City, Borough and District Council areas. They are made up of local people from a wide range of voluntary, statutory and charitable organisations, and are required to consult with local people in general, and children and young people in particular about what local communities view as priorities in their area. Money must be targeted at the most deprived wards although overlap with other areas is allowed.

At the time of writing there are 157 projects up and running across Hampshire, ranging in cost from £200 to more than £ 60,000 which provide services to more than 15,000 young people.

Projects themselves are very wide ranging, everything from capital grants for skate-parks, Healthy Living initiatives, Homework and Breakfast Clubs, Diversity and Anti-Bullying schemes through to projects to help young carers and prisoner's families.

Local democracy and the participation of service-users are very important elements of all Children's Fund schemes, and Local Partnership Groups must demonstrate how they have involved young people and other service users in the planning and review of services.

2 Strategic Direction and Monitoring

Children's Funds have a wide ranging discretion to configure services to provide the 'best fit' with local need. Hampshire's Strategic Plan was commended by GOSE. Funding is proportionally allocated to each Local Partnership Group at the start of each financial year. Following local consultation and discussion proposals are put forward for consideration by the Partnership Board. The seven sub-objectives of the Children's Fund have been condensed into five themes within our Strategic Plan. Therefore, proposals must fall within one of The Five Themes to be considered. They are:

- **ACCESS** : Broadly to provide safe, affordable services for children and young people in rural communities, or new build without sufficient infrastructure to support such services. Services need to be responsive to local need , flexible, and culturally sensitive.
- **HOME, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY**: Projects to address issues around lack of attachment to education, either for young people excluded or frequently absent, or who are not encouraged to value education and for those who from an early age may fail to engage with education, who have poor social skills, or are bullied. Services need to be welcoming, flexible and able to engage Hard to Reach Groups.
- **HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**: Projects which will address issues around drugs, alcohol, substance abuse and sex. Services will seek to reduce anxiety, fear of bullying, social isolation and low self esteem.
Other projects in this category will address the need for healthy eating and exercise.
- **CREATIVITY AND FUN**: Projects which allow children and young people to have good experiences and fun, whilst feeling safe and protected from harm. These projects are about creativity, working with others, building relationships with peers and families. They encourage taking responsibility for self and others.
- **COMMUNICATION AND INFLUENCE**: Projects that allow the voice of the child to be heard, and to influence others, especially adults in authority, and which allow them to contribute to decisions affecting young people, their families and local communities. These projects will help to allow young people to influence the way Children's Fund money is spent, and also to address any feelings of lack of confidence, low morale and exclusion.

The Children's Fund cannot be seen in isolation; it is a crucial part of the developing Local Preventative Strategy for all young people across Hampshire. Services are monitored and reviewed locally, and are subject to rigorous scrutiny from GOSE and CYPUP.

To contact the Children's Fund, please use the list below as seems most appropriate, staff will be happy to help.

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Programme Manager Oct. 2003

