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**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

## **PLAY SECTOR WELCOMES CONCILIATORY MOVES ON LOTTERY FUNDING**

**SkillsActive and The Children's Play Council today welcomed moves by the Government to heal the rift over the promised £200m of Lottery funding for play.**

The row emerged when it appeared that the Government had reneged on a promise to deliver £200m of ring fenced Lottery funds to play projects in the community. Now it is feared play providers will have to compete with other projects for the much needed Big Lottery Funds.

In an adjournment debate on Wednesday, Lottery Minister Estelle Morris, who also leads for the Government on play policy, accepted that the current offer for play is "different from what was pledged originally".

However the Minister indicated willingness to meet with the play sector and the Big Lottery Fund to find a solution to the problem and rebuild some of the lost trust.

Ms Morris also gave a clear commitment to allocate Lottery funding in a planned and strategic manner and guaranteed the future development of cross-departmental work already taking place to develop a "Government agenda for play".

Paddy Tipping MP (Lab, Sherwood), who initiated the debate, is a long standing supporter of the sector and champion for children's play. He said: "I am disappointed that the original pledge has not been upheld, but whatever has happened is now in the past. We need to try to move forward, as they say, and to work in a positive and constructive way."

Adrian Voce, director of the Children's Play Council added; "We have worked hard to represent the views of the play sector to Government on this issue and we will continue to do so. We look forward to working with Government and the BLF to ensure that the money reaches the play areas and communities that need it most."

A Play Review led by Frank Dobson and published in January 2004 made recommendations as to how the Lottery money should be spent. In particular it highlighted how it could benefit children at risk of exclusion, such as those with disabilities, and those living in poverty. The report was warmly welcomed by Government.

"Play is one of the most important things in children's lives and can have profound benefits for their physical, social and emotional development," explained Voce. "In fighting for this money we are fighting for an essential part of childhood as well as the future health and well-being of millions of young people across the UK."

**-ENDS-**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **SkillsActive**

1. SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Sport and Recreation, Health and Fitness, Playwork, The Outdoors and the Caravan industries.
2. SkillsActive's mission statement is: "To ensure best quality, best business and best value within the Sector to achieve its economic and social potential."
3. SSCs are employer-led organisations that aim to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector throughout the UK. SSCs provide employers with the opportunity to provide leadership to meet their sector's skills and business needs. In return they receive substantial public investment and greater dialogue with government departments across the UK.
4. For more information about SkillsActive, please visit our website @ [www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com)

### **The Children's Play Council**

1. The Children's Play Council is a strategic alliance of organisations working to promote the importance of play and to stimulate better play opportunities. The Council is based at the National Children's Bureau. For further information on the Children's Play Council and its work contact Mena Wright on 020 7843 6016 or visit [www.ncb.org.uk/cpc](http://www.ncb.org.uk/cpc)
2. Tessa Jowell's response to the Play Review, in which she confirmed £200million of lottery money will no longer be ring-fenced for play, is available here:  
[http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/press\\_notices/archive\\_2005/dcms003\\_05.htm?properties=archive%5F2005%2C%2Feducation%5Fand%5Fsocial%5Fpolicy%2FQuickLinks%2Fpress%5Fnotices%2Fdefault%2C&month=](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/dcms003_05.htm?properties=archive%5F2005%2C%2Feducation%5Fand%5Fsocial%5Fpolicy%2FQuickLinks%2Fpress%5Fnotices%2Fdefault%2C&month=)
3. The Play Review, published in 2004, is available here:  
[http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2004/children\\_play\\_review\\_report.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2004/children_play_review_report.htm)

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