

## The team



**Nellie Maan**  
Project Manager

I'm Nellie. I have been working for Barnardo's for 6 years and have been involved with Better Play since its inception – it is an exciting and rewarding piece of work. In my spare time I like nothing better than to trudge up mountains – the higher the better!!!



**Julia Levy**  
Project Administrator

I'm Julia. I have been working for Barnardo's for just over three years now and came on board Better Play just as it opened last April. In my spare time I enjoy reading, line dancing, playing the piano, surfing the net and walking in the local forests.



**Sarah Dobbing**  
Project Officer

I'm Sarah and I've been working for Better Play and Barnardo's for just 6 months. Last year I graduated from University with a degree in English and moved down to London from Yorkshire. When not working I spend my time playing or watching cricket, reading and exploring London.



**Tilewa Obi**  
Project Officer

Hi I'm Tilewa. Working at Better Play has proved to be an insightful experience, I have learnt a lot about play and its benefits for children. I look forward to visiting the different types of projects. When I am not working I can be found facilitating chaos in Sunday School.

For further information about the partner organisations please visit:

[www.nof.org.uk](http://www.nof.org.uk)

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

[www.ncb.org.uk/cpc.htm](http://www.ncb.org.uk/cpc.htm)

For further information about Better Play please call 020 8498 7589

# Putting play on the map



Consultation session with young people

Durham Groundwork Trust is finding that places where parents used to play, such as in local woods or on pit heaps, have been replaced by streets and back gardens but there are very few communal play spaces.

The Project Officer of the Trust, Glen Duckett, is helping to draft a local strategy for play spaces in the three villages which form Lower Deerness Valley, a former coal mining area. 'Although it's only a five minute drive from Durham, the villages are quite isolated. We have found that the parents are worried about traffic and 'stranger danger' so we want to come up with a strategy that gives the children suitable local places to play and addresses these fears.'

He has begun in the village of Bear Park where parents and children have been contacted through the local school and community centre. They have been using a large map to plot where the children currently play and play areas from the past. The parents and children have also been asked about games and activities. 'Kerby', 'knock-a-door-run' and 'elastics' were popular among parents, and football and 'chasey' are firm favourites with both generations.

The next step was to look at the equipment the children needed, ranging from the very simple such as a piece of tarmac or netball hoop, to goal posts and play structures. Children have also been producing their own designs and finding ideal locations for them on the map of the village.

'We are trying to keep things simple and not raise expectations too much,' says Glen. 'We will have to raise the money to buy the equipment and it must be easy to maintain. Once we have ideas from everyone in the three villages we will draw up plans and costings and take them back to the communities to see what we have all created.'

# BETTER PLAY

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## All to Play For

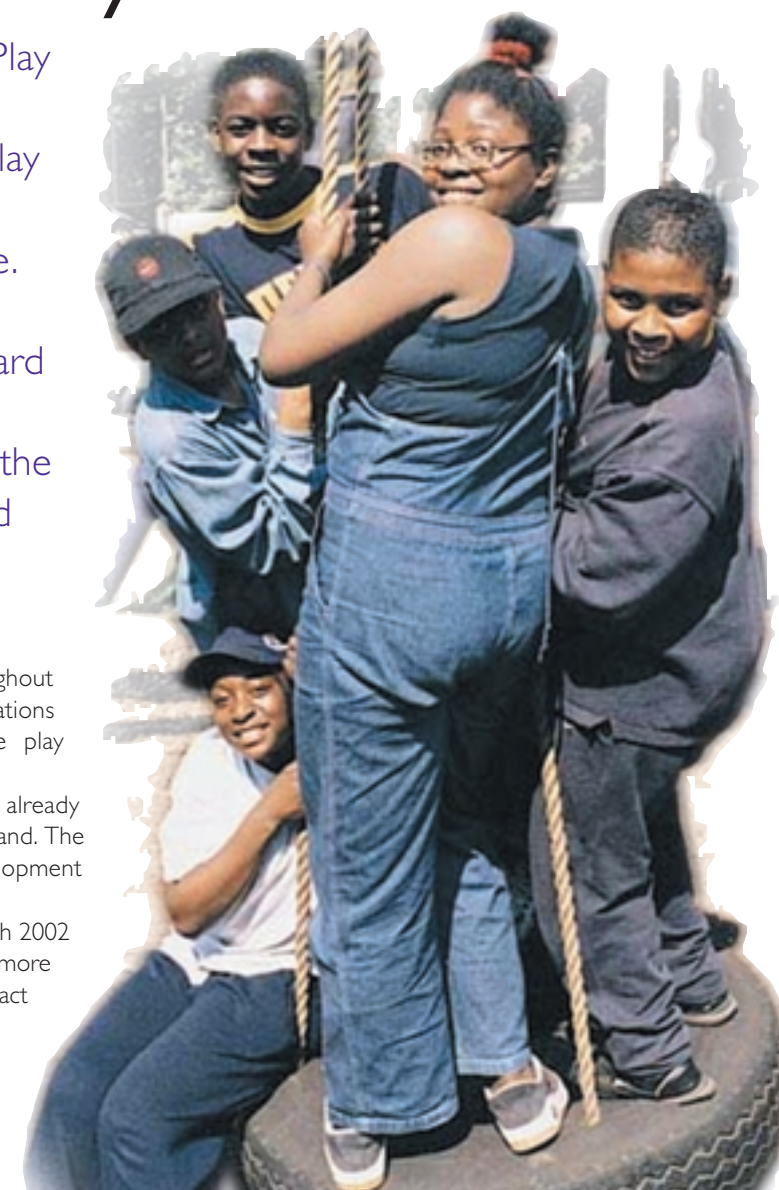
Barnardo's and the Children's Play Council are working in partnership to deliver Better Play – a four year £9.28 million England-wide grant programme. Barnardo's and the Children's Play Council are one of 11 award partners chosen by the New Opportunities Fund to deliver the £125 million 'Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities' Environment Initiative.

The Better Play Programme offers grants throughout England to community organisations or organisations acting on behalf of communities, to improve play opportunities for children aged 5-16 years.

Launched in April 2001, Better Play has already awarded £3 million to 50 projects across England. The funding is supporting service provision, the development of play strategies and practice development.

The second round opened on Monday April 8th 2002 and will close on **Friday September 6th 2002**. For more information and an application pack please contact the Call Centre on 0845 0000 121.

This newsletter aims to share the work of the projects that have received Better Play funding. We hope you find them as inspirational as we do.



children's  
playcouncil

  
New Opportunities Fund  
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GIVING CHILDREN BACK THEIR FUTURE

# Play in the Parks in Plymouth

Living on a peninsula surrounded by rivers and the sea has its disadvantages, as the children growing up in Stonehouse, South West Plymouth, know. According to most indicators, they live in one of the most deprived areas of the country. Play space is at a premium and open access play facilities are even rarer, according to Adrian Kemp, a trustee of Stonehouse Playspace Association.

'Over the last four years all the open access services have gone, largely because of having to be registered. One has become a play/care service with New Opportunities Funding but only caters for half of the children,' he explains.

Last summer, an unused block of toilets was the unlikely place where a potential solution began. 'By basing activities in a park and using a building, we found we had contact with a lot more young people than with play/care services – and they wanted contact with us,' says Adrian. The idea became 'Play in the Parks' and received £79,870 from Better Play.

Four very different open spaces were found – a school field, a car park with grass round the edges, a community pocket park which was being vandalised by young people and an actual park. 'Although it was difficult to find suitable space we wanted to find sites with which children from different housing areas would identify instead of taking them to the one large park in the area,' explains Adrian. A mobile team of play and youth work specialists with equipment will be spending one day a week at each site offering arts and crafts, games and sports. For the more adventurous, (some of whom have been seen climbing buildings due to the lack of trees) there will be trips out to local authority facilities with canoeing, sailing and coastering – a combination of swimming and cliff climbing.

The Stonehouse Playspace Association is also hoping to equip a mobile library van with computers and have recently been inspired by a similar project by the Avon Youth Association. They are hopeful that BroadBand technology in the future will enable them to offer Internet access with the help of a local college.

The project kicks off at Easter with two weeks of playschemes, followed by a quick but thorough evaluation according to Adrian Kemp. 'If the project works we will build on it for summer. If it doesn't then we will sit down with the young people and find out why.'

'In the long term we want to build it into a community facility that is more tangible than sports and

games in the park. We would like volunteers including parents and young people from the local community colleges. In the past we have had users of services becoming volunteers, then staff members and eventually they have a real investment in their local area.' The three-year funding from Better Play is crucial to allow this process to develop, according to Adrian who is also the Community Learning Manager for Plymouth City Council in the Stonehouse area and is taking a long term view of community regeneration. He is hoping that once 'Play in the Parks' is established with community support it will receive more funding from the local Early Years Partnership and will also be able to apply for the Children's Fund when it is available in 2004. But right now with Easter ahead of them, with lots of planning and hard work, the staff are geared up and ready to go.



The Runcorn Saturday Club which received £8,685 Launched in April

## Newsflash

"Children deserve a safe place to play, that is why we are delighted to lend our support to the Better Play programme"

**Victoria and David Beckham**

# Children redesign at Balloon Woods

Changes are afoot at Balloon Woods adventure playground in Wollaton, near Derby. When Celina Adams began work as the Senior Playworker fourteen months ago, she was faced with the problem of falling numbers of children. 'Many of the children grew up with the playground and were bored with the same equipment', she explains. 'We are offering them a chance to redesign it themselves and gain a sense of ownership using Better Play funding. Two professional play designers have been recruited by Technical Aid for Nottingham Communities (TANC) on our behalf and will be putting the children's ideas into action.'

Clutching disposable cameras and sketchbooks the children went to the visitors' centre in the National Forest to look at ideas on nature art, walkways and seating areas. They were also asked to give their own suggestions about what they liked while they were at the playground. The site was divided into zones monitoring how areas are used so that it can be used to its maximum. Once these ideas have been gathered the designers will produce a blueprint.

'Work will begin in the summer holidays', explains Celina, 'with the children picking up the tools as much as possible. We want to get the spirit of adventure play back into the playground. We built a tree house last year to see how the children managed and it went very well.'

'Some of the children can't quite believe it. They have been waiting a long time and I don't think it has sunk in. There's already an air of excitement in the place and numbers are beginning to rise especially among the older ones who are coming back to see what is going to happen.'



Children involved in a range of play at the Phoenix project in Hartlepool which received £77,000

# Day camps in Epping

In the heart of the beautiful and ancient Epping Forest, children from Redbridge, Newham and Walthamstow will be able to run wild without anyone telling them to mind the cars this Easter and summer holiday time. This is thanks to Forest Camps run by the Waltham Forest YMCA.

The camps offer five days on a scout camp and a range of activities suitable for 5-14 year olds. Funding from Better Play this year has meant that some children will be offered free places instead of the usual £88 or £110 fees. They will receive transport to the forest (singing along during the ride of course), cooking, parachute games, hugging trees, grass sledging, canoeing, rafting, pioneering, horse riding and much more.

# London-wide plans for play

The umbrella group London Play plans to put children's play needs further up the list of priorities for London government by developing a new play strategy for the capital.

Adrian Voce, Director of London Play explains: 'The Greater London Authority is responsible for documents such as the Spatial Development Strategy, the Cultural Strategy and the Children and Young People's Strategy. Our aim is to make sure play is included in these. For example, in the Spatial Development Strategy it will identify a minimum standard for the amount of play space in new developments.'

'We will also build on current national policy guidelines to produce a specific strategy for play as an integral part of the Children and Young People's Strategy. It will draw on the Best Value Performance Indicators for play which are being adopted by the Audit Commission, the Play as Culture document produced by PLAYLINK for the Children's Play Policy Forum and the policy and research report produced by the Children's Play Council for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.'

'As part of the process, play organisers in London will be consulted along with children and young people. Local authorities will be able to draw on this strategy when they are planning their services for children's play, and considering children's play needs in their overall strategic plans.'

Part of the project is to work directly with the boroughs to help them develop their own play strategies. 'We are already working closely with a third of the boroughs supporting local play through our Community Fund Play Together Project and this will help us to add value to the Better Play Funding. We will also consult closely with organisations like PLAYLINK and Kidsactive which are working locally, or have experience in the policy area,' explains Adrian.

'It is a good time to be working with the new government structure in London and we want to make the most of that. Children's play needs can be politically attractive and we hope this work will have long term benefits for London's children.'