

23 September 2004

Nick Garland
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Dear Nick

Re: Strategy Unit “Disability” Project – Publication of Analytical Report

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the Strategy Unit’s “Disability” Project – Publication of Analytical Report. The Heritage Lottery Fund welcomes the publication of the Interim Analytical Report on ‘Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People’ and is pleased to be asked to contribute its comments on the report.

The Report

The report’s approach of analysing the economic and social disadvantages experienced by disabled people and the key barriers which the project must then remove in order to improve the lives of disabled people, is to be commended. The report rightly prioritises those indicators to the primary needs in the lives of all people – health and social care, housing, education, employment and income. Disadvantage in one or more of these primary areas of life will, as the report concludes, result in exclusion of disabled people from the mainstream of life as experienced by most non-disabled people.

Context

However, social inclusion for disadvantaged groups of people does involve more than just addressing the primary needs of life, as many groups in society, including disabled people, are excluded from other aspects of life. All people have interests and further aspirations in life beyond survival and a basic

quality of life and disabled people are no exception to this. The spirit of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is one of inclusivity where disabled people have equal access to the full range of employment, services and other opportunities as non-disabled people. As the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) states in its Framework for Action for Disabled People – 'Beyond 2004' – "DCMS and its Public Bodies will aim to ensure that disabled people have increased physical, attitudinal, sensory and intellectual access to, and increased participation in activities, places, events, services and jobs within the cultural, heritage, sporting and leisure sectors." As a sponsored NDPB of the DCMS the Heritage Lottery Fund fully subscribes to the aims of 'Beyond 2004'

Heritage Lottery Fund's contribution to improving the life chances of disabled people

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is the organisation established to distribute money from the National Lottery to heritage projects across the UK. Since its inception HLF has funded 15,000 projects and awarded grants now totalling almost £3billion. In 'Broadening the Horizons of Heritage: The HLF Strategic Plan 2002 – 2007', two of its three strategic aims are:

- to encourage more people to be involved in and to make decisions about their heritage;
- to make sure everyone can learn about, have access to and enjoy their heritage.

In order to further these strategic aims HLF has staff in its Policy & Research Department dedicated to developing policy, advice and guidance for its staff and applicants on meeting the needs of disabled people.

A recent analysis of HLF's grant making has shown that 325 HLF funded projects have set out to directly benefit disabled people, the total amount of this funding being over £190million. Many of these projects, and hence much of this funding, have involved addressing the physical environment barriers which disabled people experience in accessing heritage sites: every capital project funded by HLF benefits disabled people by improving access to that building. For example the Discovery Museum in Newcastle has provided level access into, and ramped and lift access around the museum, plus fully

accessible toilets on all levels, and virtual reality tours of inaccessible areas of Anne Hathaway's Cottage have been funded.

Other projects have addressed the needs of people with sensory impairments such as Shape's 'Arts Signs' project to train deaf and hard of hearing volunteers as art gallery guides for hearing impaired people and the project to provide facilities for people with hearing and visual impairments at Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery. An increasing number of projects are researching the heritage of disabled people themselves and the disability movement. These include such archive and oral history projects as Mencap's 'Reclaiming the Past', Deafblind UK's 'Capturing the Deafblind Heritage' and RNIB's 'Talking Books Sound Archive'.

Last year to celebrate European Year of Disabled People HLF led on the production of a booklet to celebrate the many projects across the arts, heritage and sports which have benefited disabled people, to which nine out of the eleven Lottery Distributors across the UK contributed (copy enclosed).

Conclusion

In summary, therefore, while it is accepted that the primary needs in life for effective health and social care, housing, education, employment and income must be addressed first, if disabled people are to have access to all the life chances that the whole population have there are other aspects of life which need to be addressed. Disabled people experience exclusion from many other aspects of life including the arts, culture, heritage and sports. These aspects of life must also be taken into account and HLF funding of projects has and will continue to contribute to improving the life chances of disabled people so that the barriers to their access to our diverse heritage continue to be removed.

Yours sincerely

Tony Crosby, Policy Officer – Access & Disability

