

Education, Health and the Environment

The New Opportunities Fund was set up following the Lottery Act 1998 to fund sustainable projects in the areas of education, health and the environment. The Fund consults widely and develops its initiatives in collaboration with a broad range of key stakeholders, taking full account of the different needs and circumstances in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Its initiatives are innovative, carefully targeted, time-limited and additional to core programmes funded from taxation. As initiatives are completed, new initiatives take their place. This ensures that Lottery money is used to benefit everyone in ways which command the support of the whole country.

- By September 2001 the New Opportunities Fund had committed funding worth over £980 million to projects throughout the United Kingdom.

The New Opportunities Fund aims to support projects that:

- improve the quality of life for people throughout the United Kingdom
- address the needs of those who are most disadvantaged in society
- encourage community involvement
- complement relevant local and national strategies and programmes.



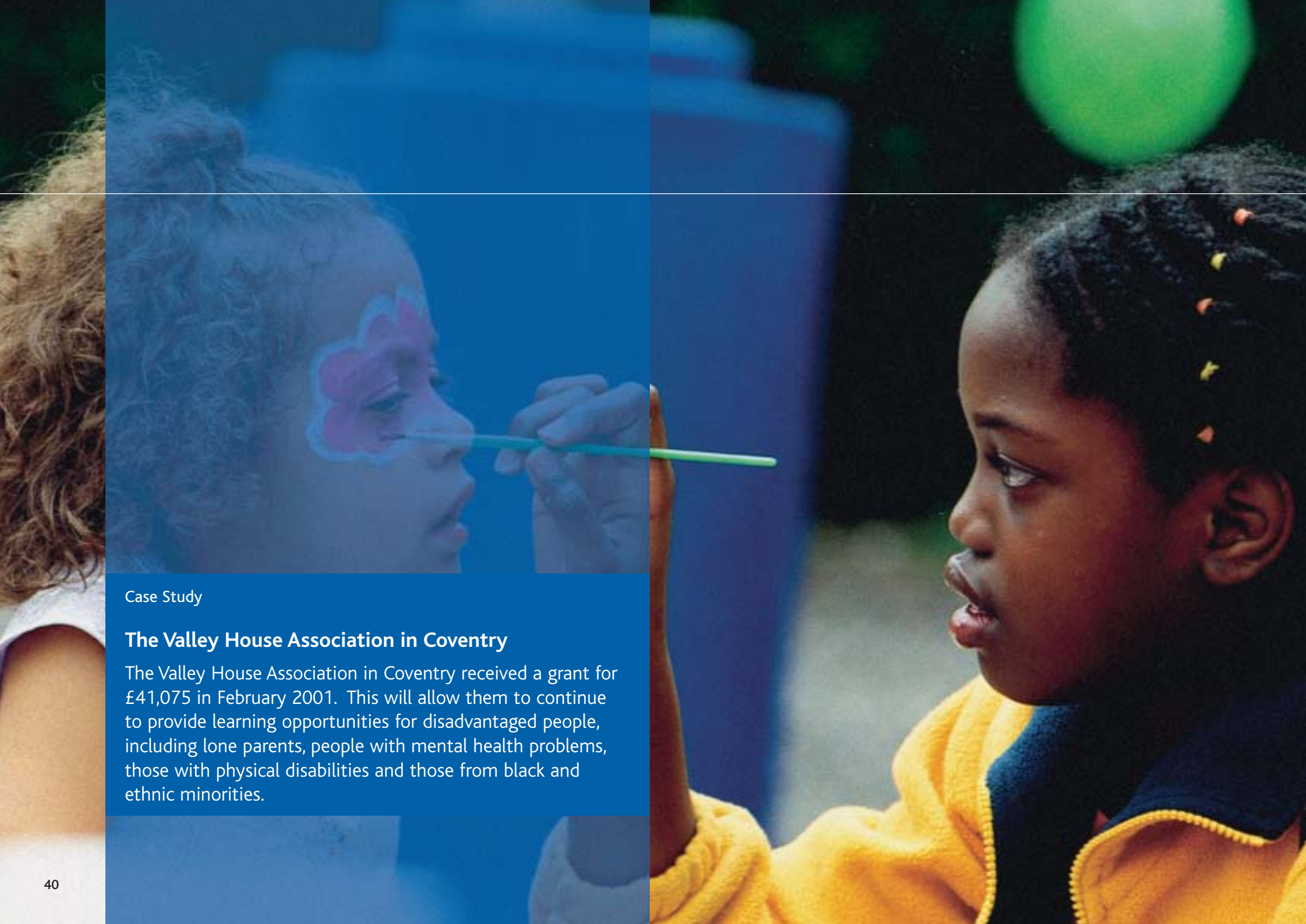
New Opportunities Fund
LOTTERY FUNDED



Case Study

Mary Clement and local councillor David Ford

Mary Clement and local councillor David Ford at the Family Caring Centre in the Rathenraw estate, Antrim. The Centre received a grant of £58,005 under the Fund's Community Access to Lifelong Learning grant programme to extend ICT training and upgrade computers for internet access.



Case Study

The Valley House Association in Coventry

The Valley House Association in Coventry received a grant for £41,075 in February 2001. This will allow them to continue to provide learning opportunities for disadvantaged people, including lone parents, people with mental health problems, those with physical disabilities and those from black and ethnic minorities.

The Fund's current initiatives, set out in policy directions issued by the Government, are:

- healthy living centres: £300 million
- out of school activities, education: £205 million, (including £25 million for summer schools) and childcare: £220 million
- ICT training for teachers and school librarians, ICT training for librarians and the digitisation of learning materials: £300 million
- cancer prevention, detection, treatment and care: £150 million
- community access to lifelong learning: £200 million
- green spaces and sustainable communities: £125 million.

In April 2001 the Government issued further policy directions giving the Fund a further seven initiatives, worth £1.5 billion over three to four years. Following consultation and development, the Fund will launch the majority of these new programmes by March 2002:

- PE and sport in schools: £750.75 million
- opportunities and activities for young people: £44.25 million
- reducing the burden of coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer: £213.5 million

- palliative care: £84 million
- childcare: £198.5 million
- transforming communities: £159 million
- small-scale grants schemes: £60 million.

Progress

All of the 13 programmes of the Fund's current initiatives are now well under way, and in some cases, for example, Living with Cancer, the funding has been fully committed. New Opportunities Fund awards are reaching all parts of the United Kingdom and are enabling projects to expand or set up new and exciting activities in local communities.

For example, the £300 million Healthy Living Centre initiative aims to fund schemes which provide a range of services designed to improve the health of disadvantaged groups. The Fund has made over 80 awards totalling nearly £63 million. These projects are already making a difference to services on the ground by offering high-quality innovative approaches to health, particularly targeting disadvantaged and less well served communities.

Under the £220 million out of school hours learning programme, the Fund has made over 880 awards totalling £156 million, benefiting pupils from 155 schools. This programme aims to encourage and motivate pupils, build their self-esteem and promote school achievement.

Over the coming months, communities will start participating in activities from the Fund's first environment initiative, £125 million for green spaces and sustainable communities. These grants will be designed to help communities understand, improve and care for their natural and living environment. This initiative will also support the Scottish Land Fund, which funds sustainable development across rural Scotland.

Grants from the New Opportunities Fund are touching the lives of people in many different ways. The Fund has provided over 422 items of cancer machinery for NHS hospitals. As a result thousands of people across the country are directly benefiting from improved screening, diagnosis and treatment. Many more now have the chance to improve their health and wellbeing through participating in their local healthy living programmes.

Nearly 200,000 teachers across the United Kingdom have benefited from the Information, Communication and Technology training and are now applying these skills in the classroom. The New Opportunities Fund has made over 730 awards through its Community Access to Lifelong Learning programme. One such scheme is Ethnic Business Development in Lewisham, London, which has received a grant worth nearly £74,000 from the Fund. This scheme offers a range of activities including information, learning activities, employment and enterprise development resources for lone parents, the unemployed, and other groups unable to benefit from training opportunities.

The New Opportunities Fund is keen to build on the achievements of its programmes and to learn more about the factors that influence success. It has already commissioned independent evaluations for several programmes. Early findings from its out of school hours learning and childcare programmes confirm popular demand for these schemes. Notably, 50% of parents with children using places funded by the out of school hours childcare scheme have been able to take up work or study. Future findings will assess the impact of the programmes in more detail and provide valuable lessons for projects and communities.

