

By hardcopy to the Chief Executives of those local authorities not currently participating in the Government's Free Swimming Programme, including:

Metropolitan District Councils (England)
Non-metropolitan District Councils (England)
Unitary Authorities (England)
London Borough Councils

8 April 2009

Dear Colleague

FREE SWIMMING PROGRAMME - UPDATE

Reserve Funds

1. As you may be aware, around 80 per cent of eligible local authorities (England) are now participating in the Government's Free Swimming Programme, which officially launched on 1 April this year.
2. Because a number of local authorities withdrew from the programme at various points before its launch, there are now reserve funds. Ministers are keen that we give to those local authorities who chose not to participate in the programme, or who subsequently withdrew from the programme, the opportunity to join the programme.
3. Any local authority that wishes to join must join both elements of the scheme, i.e. to offer free swimming to those aged 60 or over and to those aged 16 or under.
4. Any local authority joining the scheme will receive their original Pot 1 allocation, i.e. grant funding to offer free swimming to those aged 60 or over, as set out in our letter of 29 July, reduced by 1/12 for each month that the authority has not participated in the programme.
5. Any local authority joining the scheme will also receive a Pot 2 allocation, i.e. grant funding to offer free swimming to those aged 16 or under, also reduced by 1/12 for each month that the authority has not participated in the programme. The amount of this grant will be as set out in our letter of 7 October, plus the 20 per cent uplift already awarded to current Pot 2 participants. In the case of those local authorities who withdrew from the programme before a Pot 2 offer was made, they will receive an allocation calculated on equivalent terms, i.e. based on local population of those aged 16 or under, plus the 20 per cent uplift already awarded to current Pot 2 participants.
6. There is a cap on the total funds available of £1m and, if we are in a position where there are insufficient funds to meet demand on this basis, the fund would need to be allocated on a reduced pro rata basis.

7. The remaining reserve funds will be allocated over the duration of the programme to support participating local authorities. Details of this will follow in due course to participating local authorities.
8. Local authorities wanting to join the Free Swimming Programme should contact DCMS at enquiries@culture.gsi.gov.uk no later than 28 April 2009. In the event that there are insufficient funds to meet demand on the basis outlined above, DCMS will aim to respond to those local authorities that have asked to join by 30 April 2009. DCMS will aim to make grant payments to new joiners as soon as possible after confirmation of participation.

PAUL BOLT

Director, Sport and Leisure
Department for Culture, Media and Sport

8 April 2009