

API Members deliver more than 2,000 play spaces a year and have developed a contract method that works best for local authority customers. Association manager at the API, Deborah Holt, takes a look at play procurement and supply and a 'liability line' that shows who has to do what.

The buck stops **where?**

KEEP IT SIMPLE! That is what API Members do every day for local authorities, other public sector and private sector clients. The key is a contract with short, direct and clear lines of responsibility (see diagram 1 – API Members Free-Design & Build Contract).

The client, most likely a local authority, is at the top of the flow chart and has a clear, short, direct and continuous line of responsibility and liability from the API member. This is used for single play areas as small as a few thousand pounds to very large destination park play areas and for multi-site projects.

With API Members, there are no separate design fees and in the event of the project not proceeding, there is usually no risk, commitment or financial exposure for the local authority before contracts are signed at the 'Contract Management' stage. Of course design and project management do have a cost to API Members who absorb it within in their total

activity. Compare the API solution with a possible alternative (see diagram 2).

The API members are specialists in the field of play space design and delivery. There are engineering projects where qualified project management is essential, but typically play spaces are delivered on limited budgets which cannot justify separate costs for the design and project management.

API Members are concerned that a significant proportion could be paid out in fees. These could be some 2-5 percent for 'procurement' with and additional 10-30 percent for design and project management. The message from API Members is clear, "To deliver the best value to the DCSF and to children, keep contract liability lines simple and use an API member's play space free-design and build services." ■

limited budgets cannot justify separate costs for design and project management



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Diagram 1
API Members Free-Design & Build Contract

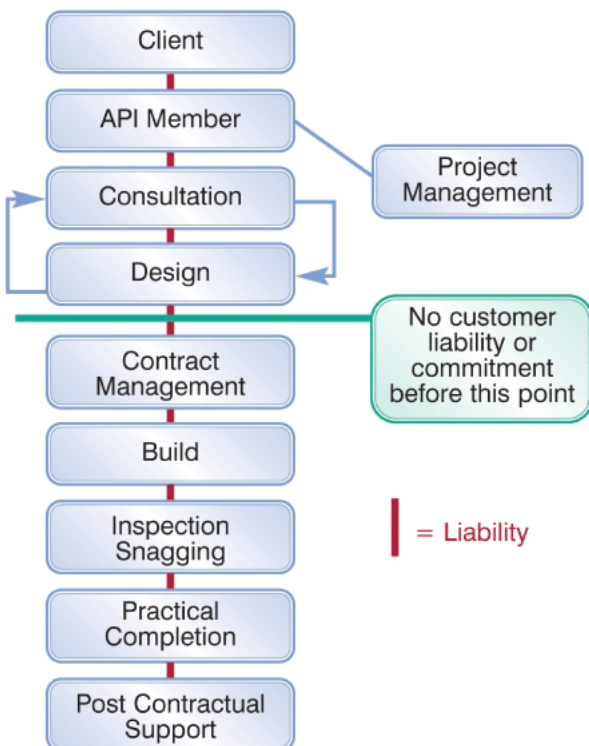


Diagram 2

