

Association of Play Industries

What is the Association of Play Industries (API)?

The Association of Play Industries is the lead trade body within the play sector, representing the interests of the manufacturers, installers, designers and distributors of both outdoor and indoor play equipment and safer surfacing. Founded in 1984 it represents approximately 80% of the market with more than 60 members. The API forms part of The Sports Industries Federation (TSIF) which consists of 26 associations representing the sports and play industries. TSIF's mission statement is "to be the voice of the UK sports and play industries, representing and promoting members interests".

The API'S main aims and objectives To increase the level of play provision

We maintain a strong government lobby directed through the Department of Culture Media and Sport, the Children's Play Policy Forum and the Children's Play Safety Forum.

We believe the Government needs to further increase expenditure on free play provision through the local authority structure and the allocation of lottery funding. Statistics maintained by the API shows real expenditure, after taking into consideration inflation, has increased by almost 50% over the past 10 years. Nevertheless, the annual spend per child is still minimal and represents only £2.40 per head of population. Clearly, we are not placing a sufficiently high priority on our children's development and health while this position is allowed to continue.

Promote safer play

The API seeks to:

- Improve playground safety
- Improve product quality
- Improve the quality of play provision

A strict criterion for membership has been adopted; all members are required to provide either third party or self-certification of their products to EN1176. Test certificates for surfacing and/or suppliers' declarations of compliance with BS7188 have to be deposited with the secretariat. Additionally, regular post installation

Initially an association was formed out of the need to develop product standards. However, the aims were soon extended from merely focusing upon standards and technical aspects to encompass improving play provision and play quality.



John Simmons, API chief executive

inspections by Register of Play Inspectors commissioned by many local authorities ensure compliance of both products and the application of correct installation standards.

Member companies are expected to provide a minimum of two years audited accounts and supply proof of public liability cover to a minimum of £2million.

In achieving membership of the Association, they have to meet the required standards of experience, proficiency and commercial experience. Thereafter, as members they are bound by The Sports Industries Federation Articles of Association and this Code of Practice, all intended to maintain a high and improving standard of service to customers.

A mediation panel operates ensuring that the expectations of all API's customers are met and to mediate between the occasional dissatisfied customer and the relevant member.

This provides peace of mind to the specifier and/or client which are further underwritten by both financial checks and project related references we maintain through the mediation service. Thus increasing numbers of local authorities and

private sector clients now insist that membership of the API is a pre-requisite to tender supply and/or installation.

We are also heavily involved in the standards process and are represented on both the BSI and CEN committees. The API has funded the cost of the UK CEN delegation for the last 10 years. Additionally, for the foreseeable future we will continue to ensure strong representation be maintained in the monitoring and review processes of EN1176, EN1177 and BS7188.

In accordance with its aims the API works closely with all agencies involved in the play sector including The Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM), National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), British Standards (BSI).

Useful API Publications

The API has produced three useful and practical guides to assist both local authorities and private individuals with play area installation

- **API guide to the provision of loose fill and impact absorbing surfaces**
- **API guide to outdoor play area installation**
- **API standard form of contract**

Copies can be obtained from us at the API or downloaded from the website www.playindustries.org

API provides a focus through which all concerned with the industry can have the opportunity to work together to build creative playgrounds that will enhance the growth of the future generations – and be fun to play. ■



For a copy of the current API Directory of members or further information contact:

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