

Changing the standards for registered childcare providers

What do you think



September 2025

How to use this document



This is an Easy Read version of:

“Proposed changes to the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Regulated Childcare for Children aged up to 12 years”



You might need help to read it. Ask someone you know to help you



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

Website: www.gov.wales/national-minimum-standards-nms-regulated-childcare-proposed-changes-2025

Email: childcareandplaymailbox@gov.wales



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About this consultation



We need to update the standards for registered childcare providers in Wales.



A registered childcare provider is:

- a person or organisation,
- registered with Care Inspectorate Wales,
- to look after children up to 12 years old.



The standards are called **National Minimum Standards**. We will call them standards for short.



A standard is a level of quality.



The standards help make sure children are safe and well cared for.



They also help providers follow the rules in the law called the [Child Minding and Day Care Regulations \(2010\)](#).



We want to know what you think about our ideas to update the standards.



Please read this booklet then answer the questions in the response form.



Please send us your answers by **Wednesday, 10 December 2025**.

Our ideas for updating the standards

New layout



We will put the standards online.



This will make it easier to find the different standards, and move between linked documents.



Parents will be able to see the standards for the service they use.



You will be able to view the standards on a phone, tablet, or laptop. And print them if you want to.

We want to know if you think we should also provide:



- A link to the rules each standard is linked to. This means the rules in the [Child Minding and Day Care Regulations \(2010\)](#).



- A link to guidance that helps providers go above the standards. We want all children to have excellent care.



This is an example of how the standards will be laid out: [Standard 12: Food and Drink](#).



We want to know if you think the layout in the example is clear.

High quality care



There is a chapter in the standards called, '**How to use the National Minimum Standards**'.



It says the standards are the lowest level of quality that providers must reach.



And that we expect providers to go above the standards. Going above means doing more than the minimum set out by the standards.



We have a plan for 0 to 5 year olds. It is called the **Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care Plan**. We call it the **ECPLC** for short.



It says how childcare providers can best support children this age.



We want to make sure childcare providers give the best support to children of all ages.



We want to follow the goals and values in the **ECPLC** for children of **all ages**.



We want to check and update the standards regularly. To make sure they are working well for children, and for providers.



As part of this, we plan to:

- Add more about babies and children's wellbeing to each standard
- Include children's views in the standards.



We also want to update the chapter called “**What do we mean by High Quality Provision**”.

We want to:



- Link the standards with the **ECPLC** better.



- Make it clear what good quality looks like.



- Recognise that care can be different for different age groups and settings.



We want to know if you think we should update this chapter.

Definition of open access play



Open access play is when trained staff provide safe play opportunities for children without their parents.



We have worked with people to write a new definition for open access play.

This is our suggestion for the new definition:



- Open access play with trained staff works for children of all ages.



- To register with Care Inspectorate Wales, providers must provide open access play for 5 to 12 year olds.



- It can be ongoing or short term.



- It can take place in different places. For example, a building, park or playground.

- There is no formal childcare agreement with parents or carers.



- Children do not need to be brought or collected by an adult.



- Children are free to play with what and who they want to. They are only limited if they are doing something unsafe.



We want to know if you agree with this new definition.

Open access play standards



Open access play is seen as a type of daycare. Providers must follow the standards, but not all of them apply.



We need to make standards clearer for open access play.

What we are doing:



- We are writing a new definition for open access play.



- We will work with Care Inspectorate Wales and others to make registration less complicated.



- We are making new standards for open access play. The standards will include:
 - How to support children's wellbeing.
 - Listening to children's views.
 - Clear rules to follow.
 - Links to important laws and rules.
 - Links to helpful guidance and advice.



We are looking into how many staff with First Aid training are needed.



We think there should always be at least 1 member of staff with first aid training.



We think providers should do assessments to check how many staff need first aid training.



The assessments would look at:

- the service,
- location,
- activities,
- and children's needs.



We want to know if you agree with this idea.



We are also looking at standards about staff qualifications.



Some play services only run for a few weeks. They use short term staff who may not have full qualifications.



This makes registration difficult.

New standard

First aid staff:



- There must always be at least 1 member of staff with first aid training.
- More first aid trained staff can be added if the risk assessment says it is needed.
- The risk assessment looks at the place and the activities.



Person in Charge (Manager):

- Must have 2 years' experience working in day care.
- Must have a Level 3 qualification in childcare or playwork.



Other Staff:

- Half of the staff must have a Level 2 playwork qualification.
- There should be more trained staff than untrained staff and volunteers.



Staff with no qualifications or volunteer staff:

- Must be able and responsible.
- Must be fully supervised.
- Must have all checks completed.
- Must complete training for their role.
- Must work alongside qualified staff.



We want to know if you agree with these ideas for staffing.

Giving medicines



We need clearer rules about registered childcare providers giving liquid paracetamol.



We sent a letter with new guidance to help childcare providers. We now want to include this guidance within the standards.



We also need to make the rules clearer around prescribed and non prescribed medicines.



So, we need to update the standard about medicine and provide more guidance about giving liquid paracetamol.

New standard



New: This standard must be read alongside standard 10 – **Healthcare and infections.**



Providers must have a clear medicine policy. This should be read and understood by all staff. The policy should cover how to store and give any medicine, prescribed or not.



New: The medicine policy is shared with parents. It explains how to give medicine safely and handle emergencies.



Parents must give written permission before any medicine is given.



If medicine is given to a child, staff need to understand the possible side effects. If a child takes their own medicine, this is agreed with the parents, and they are aware of side effects.



Staff will ask the person dropping the child off when medicine was last taken.



Staff should only give prescription medicines if a doctor or health professional prescribed them.



If staff need special knowledge to give prescribed medicine, they will get training from a qualified health professional.



Medicines must not be out of date.



All medicines must stay in their original container. Prescription medicines must have the child's name on the label.



All medicines are kept locked and out of children's reach. Follow the instructions on the medicine.



Providers will record when they give children medicines. Parents will sign the record book each time.



We want to know if the standards are clear about prescribed and non prescribed medicine.



Providers can keep and give liquid paracetamol if a child gets sick. They must follow the standards and the [extra guidance](#).



The extra guidance says:

- Providers should not take children who are already unwell.
- If a child becomes very unwell whilst at daycare, providers should ask parents or carers to come collect their child.
- If parents cannot collect their child straight away, providers must get verbal consent from them to give liquid paracetamol.
- If they cannot contact parents to get verbal consent, providers must contact NHS 111 for advice from a healthcare professional.
- In both cases, the provider must ask parents or carers to collect their child as soon as possible.



We want your views on the extra guidance we have provided and if it helps you when you need to give children liquid paracetamol.

Numbers of qualified and unqualified staff



We need clearer rules about how many qualified and unqualified staff providers must have.



Some providers are unsure if the rules apply per room, or across all rooms used.



Providers are also unsure if extra unqualified staff or volunteers impact the number of qualified staff they should have.

New standard



Staff should be counted for the whole setting, not for each room.



Staff must be placed carefully in each room to keep children safe and well.



This includes caring for children with additional needs and disabled children.



Some children may need extra help.



Childcare providers may need to add more staff to give this support.



There must always be enough staff for the number of children.



Extra staff who only support certain children do not count as normal staff. They do not impact the number of qualified staff a provider needs.



We want to know if you agree with our ideas for this standard.

Child minder assistants



In 2023 we said child minding assistants must gain their qualification by November 2024.



It is now hard to find new qualified assistants when an assistant leaves.



And it is hard to offer more spaces for children.



Giving more flexibility could help child minders keep their service open.



New assistants could start work without a qualification if they are working towards it.



They must finish the qualification within a set time.



They must always be supervised until they are qualified.



We want to know if you agree with this.



Child minders want clear rules about when assistants can be left in charge alone.



Right now, there is no time limit. This can cause confusion.

New standard



Child minder assistants must complete a course recognised by Social Care Wales. They must get this qualification within 6 months of starting the job.



Until they are qualified, they cannot be left alone with children.



A qualified assistant can be left alone in charge of children for up to 2 hours a day.



They must follow all the rules in the standards and guidance.



We want to know if you agree with this.

Having enough staff for child minding



We need more flexible rules for child minding.



This would help at busy times:

- Before and after school
- In school holidays



There are fewer child minders now.



Parents need spaces for their children. Current rules make this hard.



The change could:

- Keep brothers and sisters together.
- Help child minders keep their service open.

New standard



How many children a child minder can care for:

- Up to 10 children under the age of 12 years.
- Out of those 10, no more than 6 can be under the age of 8 years.
- Out of those 6, no more than 4 can be under the age of 5 years.
- Out of those 4, no more than 3 can be under the age of 2 years.
- Out of those 3, usually no more than 2 can be under the age of 18 months.



The rules may be different if a child has a twin or triplet with the same child minder.



We want to know if you agree with this.



Children who will start reception class in September:

- They could be counted as over 5 years old in the summer before they start school.



We want to know if you agree with this.



Children aged 3 to 5 who are in school or other care for 5 or more hours a day:

- They could be counted as over 5 years old.



We want to know if you agree with this.

Other changes



We want to make sure the standards are up to date and work well.

As part of this review, we also plan to:



- Make small changes to day care definitions.



- Update safeguarding guidance.



We are also thinking about adding links to:

- [Children's rights](#) – making sure children are treated fairly
- [NYTH/NEST](#) – supporting children's feelings and wellbeing
- [Lullaby Trust advice](#) – how to help babies sleep safely
- [Trauma-informed practice](#) – understanding and supporting children who have had difficult experiences
- [Anti-racism tools](#) – helping settings be fair to everyone
- [Baby pledge](#) – supporting babies to have the best start
- [RoSPA safety guidance](#) – keeping children safe from accidents



These plans might change after we get your views.
Or if new policies are developed.