Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Wales - a Play Friendly Country

Ministerial Review of Play Actions

Progress Report – February 2025

A version for young people

Hello

Play is powerful. It doesn't matter what age you are, play helps you learn, build new skills, and grow in confidence.

It lets you be creative, curious, and adventurous.

Play is about problem solving, connecting ideas, and handling challenges. So you get to understand that mistakes... are part of learning.

Plus, you make friends, learn to understand people, and build trust.

Play gives you space to process emotions, make sense of the world, and develop resilience.

But most of all... it's **FUN!**

The Welsh Government wants all children and young people to have lots of opportunities to play.

Our vision: "Wales – a Play Friendly Country"

2019

Between 2019 and 2022, we set up a group to see what play opportunities there are across Wales.

2022

The group talked to children, young people and even some adults to find out what matters to them.

2023

Then they wrote a report full of recommendations for how we as the Welsh Government can make more play opportunities.

2024

From that, we set out **67 actions** to improve play in Wales.

2025

Now — This Progress Report tells you about the recommendations, what we've done so far and our next steps.

If you live in Wales... you have the right to rest, relax and play!

Article 31. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

1: We must...

make sure everyone understands how important play is and make it part of our plans and policies.

"It's important people understand that play is good for us in lots of ways."

What we've done...

We have a new Minister for Children and Social Care.

We set up a new group called the Ministerial Review of Play Implementation Board. They check that all our plans and policies support children's right to play.

We set up a Play Champions group to improve play opportunities.

We worked with other professionals to make sure all new policies consider children's right to play.

We also:

- worked with play providers to see how we can help them keep children safe
- helped adults to think about keeping children safe when they play
- supported an action plan so that play providers can make sure they take an Anti-Racist approach.

2: We must...

make sure our plans and policies support opportunities to play.

"Getting to play spaces is important to us."

What we've done...

We raised awareness of children's right to play across the Welsh Government.

We supported local authorities to provide more play opportunities.

> **The Play Sufficiency Duty** — Local authorities must make sure there are enough play opportunities in their area.

We updated assessment forms, guidance and toolkits to help local authorities meet the Play Sufficiency Duty.

We go to the Play Sufficiency National Network meetings.

3: We must...

think about children's right to play when making other plans to help people cope with issues like the cost of living.

"We'd like to be involved in planning play services."

What we've done...

We looked at reports and assessments to find out more about play in Wales.

We funded research by Play Wales and other organisations into children's play, social policy and practice - Playing and being well.

Play Wales is a charity we fund who champion and promote children's right to play.

We have a board of professionals that check how our work impacts children's play and makes sure we protect their right to play.

4: We must...

support local authorities to have funding and resources for the Play Sufficiency Duty.

"Play is important- please make sure there's money for it."

What we've done...

We supported each local authority to give enough play opportunities in their area.

We've given £10,000 to each local authority to help them do their Play Sufficiency Assessments.

We fund Play Wales and other organisations to support bilingual play opportunities.

We support and fund the Playworks Holiday Project — play, and healthy food during school holidays.

5: We must...

support projects that promote information about children's right to play.

"Everyone should understand why play is so important."

What we've done...

We raised awareness of children's rights and how play can make a difference in children's lives.

We worked with organisations to promote the Play Wales Playful Childhoods Wales campaign.

We promoted the first UN International Day of Play and the UK Playday.

We have new Play Leaders across Wales to champion children's right to play. Play Wales will support and train these professionals.

Play Wales has also raised awareness of play to lots of people through:

- the Children in Wales magazine
- the Smalltalk magazine for Early Years Wales
- the Public Health Network Cymru
- newsletters and websites
- school governor bulletins.

6: We must...

encourage other organisations and services to meet the Play Sufficiency Duty.

"We want more places to play."

What we've done...

We raised awareness of the Play Sufficiency Duty.

We took part in online webinars talking about the Play Sufficiency Duty and play in Wales.

7: We must...

make sure the right to play is part of more policies, plans and decision making.

"When people make decisions, they need to think about how it affects our play."

What we've done...

We put children's rights at the centre of all our work.

We included the right to play in policies and plans. This includes our child poverty plans, health and well-being plans and others.

We checked our work supports children's rights.

8: We must...

make sure Planning Policies in Wales include children's right to play and places to play.

"We need good places to play built into our communities."

What we've done...

We raised awareness of children's right to play with professionals in planning.

We are talking about updates that may be needed to Planning Policy Wales.

9: We must...

make sure children and young people can get involved in community planning.

"We love playing outside and hope people keep those spaces and make more spaces we can use."

What we've done...

We support local authorities to make sure children have opportunities to play where they live.

We renewed the Play Sufficiency Assessment toolkit to help local authorities involve children and young people.

We have new guidance that sets out how to use streets around schools for play.

10: We must...

make sure all play settings are safe and have the right safeguarding policies.

"Play should be fun, but it should be safe too."

What we've done...

We are checking the Code of Safeguarding Practice and asking service providers, professionals and others how it can be improved.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs did a Safeguarding Health Checklist to help make sure their clubs are safe.

We promoted the Foundations Framework Wales so sports organisations have all the information they need to keep children safe.

11: We must...

review child minding and day care regulations (rules) and laws about playwork.

"We want any new rules to make play better, not be used to have less play."

What we've done...

We have started to review the National Minimum Standards for regulated childcare for under 12s.

We engaged with organisations and charities to hear their views as part of reviewing the Child Minding and Day Care Exceptions Order.

We have new guidance 'Registering as a childcare provider: exceptions' to explain when a childcare or play provider cannot register or doesn't need to register with Care Inspectorate Wales.

12: We must...

develop a plan to support the workforce and help them grow their skills.

"The people helping us play should be good at playing."

What we've done...

We have reviewed and updated the Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan.

Play Wales developed a quality assurance framework for playworkers called 'Chwarae o Safon'.

We have worked with the Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales to make sure people who train playworkers have good qualifications.

13: We must...

support funding for play and playwork workforce development.

"We need more playworkers."

What we've done...

We supported the workforce.

We worked with others to run playwork qualifications.

We asked Play Wales to use some of our funding for workforce training and development.

We asked Social Care Wales to provide recruitment advice for the workforce.

We reviewed and refreshed the Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs continue to deliver training for playwork qualifications under the Training and Support programme.

14: We must...

promote the importance of play and find ways to use school grounds as places for the community to play.

"Our school grounds could be a great place to play after school too."

What we've done...

We promoted the importance of play within schools.

Play Wales shared resources about children's right to play with schools.

15: We must...

make sure there are more opportunities to play, improve play and break times in schools.

"We should get more time to play and better break times at school."

What we've done...

Play Wales developed resources for schools promoting the benefits of play and learning.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs had a 'Playground Takeover' event to highlight the importance of the right to play.

Next steps

From February 2025 to May 2026, we will focus on:

- working with local authorities to find out what matters most to children, young people and families
- supporting local authorities to plan more play opportunities in their areas
- making sure children and young people have their right to play
- checking our laws and policies support children's right to play
- checking the Play Sufficiency Duty and its funding
- checking planning policies include places to play
- checking funding options to see if we can make more play opportunities
- developing workforce training
- exploring the possibility of a new Play Charter for Wales.

We will also:

- pay for research into the 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessments to see where things have improved and what we need to do next
- work with others to find more ways to enjoy play like exploring available Toy Libraries in Wales.

We'll keep working to make...

"Wales – a Play Friendly Country"

Thanks for reading this

You can read more here:

gov.wales/ministerial-review-play-progress-report-february-2025-html