



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Ministerial Review of Play: From Ambition to Action

Final Report – February 2025 to May 2026

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'



You have the right to rest, relax and play!

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

Since the last report



► We worked with schools to give children more chances to play. This includes after-school play, outdoor sessions and other projects.

► We've helped make play spaces easier for everyone to use, including wheelchair-friendly routes, better surfaces and covered outdoor areas.

► We've made sure there's funding to support play in Wales.

► We listened to more children and young people about what play is really like where they live. What they told us is now helping shape communities and play opportunities.

► We worked with partners who made play safer by working with clubs to keep children safe.

► We helped make sure school grounds are used for play outside school hours.

► We've raised awareness and made sure more organisations and services think about children's right to play when they make decisions.

► We supported projects to make towns and communities more playful. This includes youth spaces, skateparks and natural places to play.

► We helped improve play spaces across Wales.

► We invested in better play spaces in schools and communities with play pods, outdoor play packs, natural play spaces and better playgrounds.

► Inspectors have championed good quality play.



Good examples from across Wales

1. Play influencing bigger decisions

North Wales

Conwy County Council's Senior Play Officer represents play on the North Wales Regional Partnership Board. Across North Wales, play is now being discussed alongside health, social care and education, rather than separately. There's also a new "one-stop shop" where families and professionals can find play opportunities near them.

★ **Simple message:** People who understand play are involved in decisions that affect children and families.

2. Creating better places to play

Newport

Newport has improved 35 play areas and 13 games and sports sites.

In Pillgwenlly, children and families looked at Mendalgief Recreation Ground and said: this could be much better. So, it changed — into a green, natural space made for playing.

★ **Simple message:** Children and communities know how to turn spaces into better places to play.

3. Listening to children about where they live

Carmarthenshire

Children aged 9 to 14 were asked what it's like to play outdoors in their area. They talked about fewer opportunities to play and worries about safety when they're outside.

Adults listened. And it's already changing their community: new trees, wildflowers and natural play in the green spaces nearby.

★ **Simple message:** When children are involved and adults listen, communities can become safer and better for everyone.



Good examples from across Wales

4. Making play settings safer

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs

Clybiau Plant Cymru created a Safeguarding Health Check. It's a simple way for clubs to see how well they're keeping children safe, and where they could do better.

More than 1,871 children are already benefiting from it.

★ **Simple message:** More clubs have practical help to keep children safer.

5. Play Champions

Care Inspectorate Wales

The report includes the story of a Play Champion working within Care Inspectorate Wales. They got specialist play training and now help other inspectors understand what good play looks like.

★ **Simple message:** The people who inspect play settings know about children's right to play and what good play should look like.

6. Play Friendly Schools

Vale of Glamorgan

In the Vale of Glamorgan, 5 schools — 4 primary, 1 secondary — are trying something new. Staff have had training, families are joining in play sessions, and lunchtimes now mean loose-parts play and time outdoors.

Some schools have gone further, with “play cubes” — boxes packed with things to build and play with, ready whenever children want them, in school hours and out.

★ **Simple message:** Schools have practical ways to give children more time, space and freedom to play.

Denbighshire, Anglesey and Gwynedd

These counties have invested in play pods to create more play in their schools and communities. Play pods are filled with loose parts that children can move, build with and use in their own way.

★ **Simple message:** Children have more chances to choose how they play.



What happens now

Things we will continue to look at:

- how more organisations like health services and community councils can improve play
- making sure play is part of how places and communities are planned, designed and built
- making sure clubs and services have the right checks in place to help keep children safe
- making sure children and young people are part of the decisions about where, when and how they play.

We will keep working to make...

‘Wales – a Play Friendly Country’

Thank you to everyone who took part in this review and helped improve play across Wales!

