



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



The Ministerial Review of Play:

**From Ambition to Action
Final Report**

February 2025 to May 2026

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Introduction

Since legislating in support of children’s play as part of the [Children and Families \(Wales\) Measure 2010](#), between 2019 and 2022, the Welsh Government undertook an in-depth and collaborative review of its play policy work and considered the progress made in achieving the Welsh Government’s vision for play.

The Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group Report made key recommendations and suggested milestones for the Welsh Government to consider in building on the progress made in being a play friendly country, giving children and young people sufficient opportunities to play.

The Welsh Government [responded to the report](#) and outlined the actions to be taken forward in order to achieve the Steering Group’s anticipated results. The response outlined 67 actions which had short, medium and long-term timeframes.

In February 2025, a [progress report was published](#), which demonstrated that all short-term actions had been completed and committed to reporting on progress for the medium and long-term actions remaining.

This report outlines the progress made in implementing the remaining 19 Ministerial Review of Play actions between February 2025 and May 2026 and actions to be progressed beyond May 2026.

This report provides an update and examples of the continuing activity associated with these actions, recognising that embedding play across government and a broad range of policy areas requires sustained commitment and collaboration. Creating and maintaining opportunities for play is an ongoing process rather than a discrete set of actions.

	Total number of actions completed and embedded in ongoing work	Actions to be taken forward
Short term actions	34	0
Medium term actions	14	1
Long term actions	10	8

The Play policy journey

To achieve the outcomes for children that play provides, the Welsh Assembly Government worked with stakeholder organisations to create the **Play Policy** in 2002.

In 2004, the Welsh Assembly Government formally adopted the **United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** as the basis for its policymaking relating to children and committed to making the principles of the UNCRC a reality for all children and young people. Article 31 establishes the child's right to rest, leisure, play and recreational activity, alongside full participation in cultural and artistic life.

In 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government launched **'Play in Wales', its Play Policy Implementation Plan**. The plan set out how the principles detailed in the Play Policy would be implemented.

The **Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010** received Royal Assent, making it a legal requirement for local authorities in Wales to assess and secure sufficient opportunities for children to play in their area.

In 2014, the Welsh Government set out the vision for play for children in Wales with the publication of **'Wales: a Play Friendly Country'** statutory guidance to local authorities.

Between 2019 and 2022, the Welsh Government undertook an in-depth and collaborative review of its play policy work and considered the progress made in achieving the Welsh Government's vision for play. The **Ministerial Review of Play: background paper and Ministerial review of play: final report** were submitted to the Welsh Government for consideration..

In October 2023, the Welsh Government responded to the recommendations from the review in the **Ministerial Review of Play: Response to the Steering Group recommendations (23 October 2023)**. In total 67 actions were identified across short, medium and long-term timeframes.

In the **progress report in February 2025**, 48 actions had been completed, with 19 medium and long-term actions remaining.

This report focuses on progress since February 2025 to May 2026, including evidence against the 19 remaining actions and updates for completed, ongoing actions.

We want to build on this progress and maintain Wales's status as a leading nation in championing children's right to play. We will take on board learning from the Ministerial Review of Play and implementation of actions.

Progress on 19 outstanding actions: February 2025 to May 2026

Key recommendation 6: Apply the Play Sufficiency Duty more widely to include a range of other bodies

Key milestones 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 are progressing to completion with formal research underway to review and gather evidence on the operation and impact of the current Play Sufficiency Assessment statutory duties and how they support children's play opportunities.

Assessing the impact of the current duties will assist in any exploration of widening the duties as recommended by the Ministerial Review of Play Report and will help identify the potential opportunities for the Play Sufficiency Duty to address other social policy agendas.

Welsh Government commissioned Play Wales to report on [What children say about play in Wales: 2025](#) and [State of Play 2025](#) which have been published with positive outcomes highlighted alongside work to consider in future play policy development.

We have continued to work with Play Wales and other partners to raise awareness of the Duty beyond local authorities and ensure children's right to play is acknowledged and embedded in national policies and practices. This has included engagement with health professionals, Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs), community and town councils supporting broader understanding of play sufficiency responsibilities across public services.

Regional play representatives are supported to participate in RPBs children's subgroups to ensure play advocacy is part of health, social care and education integration.

A good practice example has been published demonstrating the links between playwork and the whole system approach for mental health and wellbeing.

Ambition in Action, Recommendation 6: Working Strategically with Regional Partnership Board



Conwy County Council’s Senior Play Officer advocates for children’s play and represents the play sector across North Wales at the Regional Partnership Board, ensuring that children’s right to play is embedded within wider strategic decision making.

The North Wales Regional **Emotional Health and Well being “one stop shop”** is an example of effective partnership work in action. The underpinning framework places significant emphasis on the importance of play, and the platform itself acts as a central hub for advocacy, information, and family support. It provides accessible guidance on a wide range of play opportunities, from formal play spaces to everyday doorstep play, and highlights accessibility and local facilities.

The resource strengthens public understanding of the essential role of play in children’s development. For professionals and community groups, the ‘one stop shop’ offers practical tools to support improved access to play and promote best practice across the region.

The partnerships demonstrate the Play Sufficiency Duty in action, reinforcing a shared commitment to a supportive, inclusive, and well connected play ecosystem ensuring all children in North Wales can access meaningful, high quality play experiences.

Key recommendation 8: Ensure that the principle of play as a matter of spatial justice is recognised and understood throughout Planning Policy Wales

Sustained strategic cross policy work is strengthening the recognition of play as a matter of spatial justice within the planning system. Play Wales has contributed to the review of Welsh Government [Technical advice note \(TAN\) 18](#), together with providing some case studies of how play and planning policy have worked well together at a local level.

Welsh Government has identified future key opportunities to update Planning Policy Wales guidance and relevant technical advice notes as part of the policy review cycle to strengthen guidance in respect of planning for sufficient opportunities to play when there are new developments. Milestones 8.1, 8.2, 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6 remain partially completed and will be explored as part of this Planning Policy review cycle.

There has been ongoing engagement between Welsh Government, Play Wales and stakeholders working within the planning and placemaking system to promote stronger recognition of children's opportunities to play within neighbourhood design. This has included attendance at the Placemaking Wales Charter meeting; discussions with Redrow Barratt in relation to their emerging Playmaking campaign; and the preparation of a briefing note for Transport for Wales to inform the review of Active Travel Guidance, with a particular focus on play and placemaking.

Play Wales delivered a keynote presentation to the Home Builders Federation Wales, raising awareness of the Play Sufficiency Duty and the relevance of Play Sufficiency Assessments (PSAs) to development planning.

Play Wales has engaged with Public Health Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit to discuss play sufficiency and planning policy.

The [School Streets: guidance for local authorities](#) was published on 27 March 2025.

The guidance includes practical steps for developing, implementing, and evaluating School Street schemes, alongside case studies from Wales including Fairfield Primary School, and beyond. Notably, it highlights how Play Streets can complement School Streets, supporting safer, more active environments around schools.

Eight play focussed projects have been supported by £5.8million of Transforming Towns funding, including youth centre refurbishments in Caldicot, a skatepark in Llandrindod Wells, learning and activity space within the Old College in Aberystwyth; and natural play opportunities as part of wider public realm projects.

Play Wales, Cwllwm and other key stakeholders have worked with the Welsh Government in the implementation of the [Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales delivery plan 2025 to 2027](#) via participation in working groups on promoting active and healthy lives, where play is a pivotal component.

At a local level, evidence from Play Sufficiency Assessments is being increasingly recognised as relevant to Local Development Plans, placemaking plans and transport guidance, reinforcing the role of play in shaping healthy, inclusive environments.

Ambition in Action, Recommendation 8: Spaces to play



Since 2022, Newport City Council has delivered a substantial programme of investment in play and recreational provision, improving 35 play areas and 13 Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and sports facility sites across the city. Alongside upgrading traditional play infrastructure, Newport Council has also taken a community-led approach to developing natural and playable spaces, demonstrating how a range of play environments can support children and young people's opportunities to play.

One example is the redevelopment of Mendalgief Recreation Ground in Pillgwenlly. Following a Play Wales play audit commissioned by Pobl Group, local children, families and community organisations identified the site as a priority for improvement. Although not originally included within plans for development, community feedback highlighted the importance of creating local spaces to play. The site was subsequently transformed through landscape- based design and natural play features,

complementing wider improvements to green spaces and active travel routes in the area.

Both the city-wide investment programme and the Mendalgief project share common principles: community engagement, inclusivity and sustainability. Through consultation with residents, schools and stakeholders, Newport Council has ensured that improvements reflect local needs while creating welcoming environments that support children of all ages and abilities. The incorporation of natural play features, accessible equipment and environmentally sustainable design demonstrates how play opportunities can be embedded within both formal and informal community spaces.

Together, these initiatives highlight Newport City Council's commitment to creating quality, inclusive and sustainable places where children and young people can play, socialise and connect with their communities.

Key recommendation 9: Ensure that the views and experiences of children inform the ways in which neighbourhoods are planned and managed

Children's views gathered through the 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessments continue to inform local and national policy development. [What children say about play in Wales 2025](#) and [State of play 2025](#) both analyse this evidence and provide insight into children's lived experiences of their neighbourhoods and including specific consideration of spatial justice and planning.

The Welsh Government has supported the development of 36 new Placemaking Plans across Wales since 2022, and young people are consulted as part of the development process. In Caerphilly Council, targeted workshops have been held to capture the unique perspectives of young people, in addition to face to face and digital engagement mechanisms. A local school was also involved in designing a large public realm scheme to ensure opportunities for play were incorporated effectively into the designs.

Work has been undertaken to develop a potential youth led governance model for youth work, created with representatives from across the sector and informed by young people who attended a residential forum in summer 2024. The model outlines how youth voice can shape youth work locally, regionally and nationally.

The development of wider governance arrangements for the national body for youth work, currently in development, will draw directly on the views of these young people and consider how those principles can be applied in the context of that body's governance and accountability arrangements.

Together with One Voice Wales we are keen to explore further opportunities to develop youth representation on community and town councils. One Voice Wales has engaged with Play Wales to support members to encourage this work further and to develop a consistent approach.

At a local level, Play Sufficiency Assessment evidence is increasingly informing regeneration activity, placemaking plans and engagement with community and town councils.

The Welsh Government are working collaboratively with partners to strengthen child friendly consultation approaches, including the use of consistent survey questions and creative engagement methods. This will develop more meaningful inclusion of children's views, needs and preferences in decisions about neighbourhood planning and management.

Ambition in Action, Recommendation 9: Listening to Children



Carmarthenshire County Council participated in a research project led by the University of Gloucestershire and [Ludicology](#) to explore how local authorities can develop a neighbourhood-level approach to the Welsh Play Sufficiency Duty. Focusing on a community experiencing high levels of deprivation, the study placed children's voices at the centre of understanding local play experiences and barriers to outdoor play.

Using surveys, observations, focus groups and workshops with children aged 9 to 14, researchers found that children living within the research area had significantly fewer opportunities to play outdoors, less freedom to move independently, and lower satisfaction with local play spaces than their peers living outside the area. Concerns about antisocial behaviour, drug use, environmental hazards and community safety contributed to parental anxieties and restrictions on children's independent play.

The research identified 3 key recommendations: establishing a trusted community presence to build confidence and support play, improving and beautifying neighbourhood spaces, and creating a network of accessible, playable spaces across the community.

Importantly, the research has already led to several projects being developed. Through Welsh Government Local Places for Nature funding, local greenspaces have been enhanced with tree planting, fenced hedgerows, bat and bird boxes, wildflower areas, berms and natural play features. This work was delivered collaboratively by the Local Places for Nature Officer, housing colleagues, the Transforming Tyisha Team, grounds maintenance services and the Early Years and Play Team. In addition, Pobl Housing Association is exploring opportunities to transform housing lanes into more playful community spaces, with early community engagement showing strong resident interest. Plans are also being discussed for the development of a small community green space within the research area, with residents helping to shape its future design.

A multi-agency workstream now oversees implementation of the three recommendations, while a smaller working group focuses on delivering practical actions on the ground and increasing resident involvement in decision-making.

The research demonstrates the importance of listening to children when developing local policy and environments. By valuing children's perspectives, Carmarthenshire Council can create safer, more inclusive communities that support children's rights, wellbeing and opportunities to play.

Key recommendation 10: Ensure there are adequate safeguarding arrangements in playwork settings

The Welsh Government has engaged with the childcare and play sector as part of its review of the Code of Safeguarding practice.

The feedback has been helpful in developing the guidance further which will support childcare and playwork practitioners in their role and maintain safeguarding as a key focus.

Following the withdrawal of mandated reporting from the Social Care Bill, the Welsh Government committed to further engagement with the sector to assess the implications of imposing a mandatory duty to report child sexual abuse, acknowledging existing responsibilities under Part 7. Extensive consultations have revealed a clear consensus on the proposed path forward. This work is being taken forward alongside implementation of wider safeguarding policy developments, including the [National strategy for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in Wales 2026 to 2036](#).

Ambition in Action, Recommendation 10: Supporting Providers with Safeguarding arrangements



In 2025, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs took action to strengthen safeguarding across the Out of School Childcare sector. A Safeguarding Health Check (SHC) was created as a practical, guided self-evaluation tool, helping settings spot risks, build on strengths and take clear steps to improve.

Analysis in August 2025 showed that settings needed a clearer, more manageable route to improvement. In response, the SHC was redesigned into a part model focused on policies, procedures and good practice.

This was supported by a wider Safeguarding Strategy and an expanded social media campaign to build confidence, strengthen understanding and support continuous professional development. The work was funded through various projects, enabling the development of targeted support and practical resources for settings. New practical resources were also created, including reflection cards, child-friendly prompts and a safeguarding promise poster for children and parents.

The impact was clear. In just over seven months after the new modular SHC was launched, 70 settings started the process, which led to 121 new

or improved policies across Wales and 67% taking affirmative actions to improve, benefiting more than 1,871 children.

Member testimonial:

"The Safeguarding Health Check is a very valuable tool. Safeguarding is at the forefront of everything we do... Where actions were needed, we had access to policy templates and support to adapt them for our settings. I would highly recommend any club completes the Safeguarding Health Check."

The SHC is making a difference with 66% of clubs who engaged with part one, now having no outstanding actions. Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs will continue supporting settings to reflect and develop. Ongoing analysis of trends will ensure the resources and guidance are responsive to the needs of the sector. Targeted support for our unregistered members is a key priority. This proactive approach will support more children to benefit from safer provision, strengthened by robust policies and procedures.

Key recommendation 11: Review child minding and day care regulations and orders relating to playwork

The consultation on the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Regulated Childcare concluded on 10 December 2025, with a Summary of Responses report published in March 2026 and [updated NMS statutory guidance for regulated childcare](#) and [NMS statutory guidance for regulated open access play](#) published on 18 June 2026.

The Welsh Government, in partnership with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Play Wales and the Open Access Play network co-produced proportionate and tailored NMS standards specifically for regulated open access play services as agreed under this key recommendation. As part of this update, standards were strengthened by providing advice on achieving high quality and links to further supportive guidance, along with the child's voice and expected wellbeing outcomes being integrated.

The Welsh Government undertook a comprehensive review of the exceptions into childcare registration. The work was supported by an advisory group and extensive engagement with over 400 stakeholders. A public consultation was held between August and November 2025. This engagement and consultation directly informed the development of The Child Minding and Day Care Exceptions (Revocation and Transitional Provision) (Wales) Order 2026. The order was made on 25 March 2026 and will come into force on 1 April 2027, with a year transitional period, and will be fully enforceable from 1 April 2028. The Order revokes and replaces the Child Minding and Day Care Exceptions (Wales) Order 2010 ("the 2010 Order") aiming to modernise and clarify the existing exceptions.

The 2026 Order ensures that oversight of childcare, playwork and activity providers is proportionate and appropriate, while supporting families to continue accessing a wide range of provision that meets their needs.

Working closely with stakeholders, implementation planning is now underway, with a strong focus on developing clear and accessible guidance, ensuring the changes are well communicated and understood across the sector.

The Voluntary Approval Scheme for Childcare, Playwork and Activity Providers (VAS) was developed in response to stakeholders identifying a gap between full registration and no formal oversight. The scheme would provide a voluntary route for providers not required to register as childminders or day care providers, but who wish to gain approval by meeting defined criteria. Approved providers would gain formal 'approved' status through a scheme administered by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). A public consultation (August to November 2025) indicated support, although views differed on scope and purpose. The scheme has since been refined in light of this feedback. The current target date for implementation is April 2027.

CIW has worked with Play Wales and Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs to provide further training for their Play Champions to support them with inspection of playwork settings.

The Welsh Government has considered potential changes to support a proportionate approach to registration and inspection of peripatetic open access play services, with open access play providers being able to register once with a risk-benefit approach to adding additional locations. As a result, Care Inspectorate Wales are working towards reviewing the changes required to the registration and inspection processes to enable peripatetic open access play providers to complete one registration application which will include the locations they will deliver the service from within a defined area. This work links to milestone 11.4 which at the date of this report is partially completed.

Ambition in Action, Recommendation 11: My role as a CIW Play Champion



I became a Play Champion for the Childcare and Play Inspection team within CIW because I am passionate about ensuring children have rich opportunities to play and that inspectors understand its vital role in supporting development, wellbeing and rights.

Training delivered by Play Wales and Clybiau Plant Cymru has deepened my understanding of the Playwork Principles and strengthened my knowledge of how adults can effectively facilitate, rather than direct, play.

In my role, I promote the Playwork Principles among inspectors and support colleagues to recognise and evaluate high-quality play practice across a range of settings. I contribute to the Play Champions network by attending regional meetings, raising awareness of our role and acting as a source of advice and support.

I have also engaged with open access play providers on self-assessment approaches and worked with colleagues to develop learning sessions to build knowledge, confidence and consistency across the inspectorate.

Through this role, I aim to continue championing the value of play and ensuring children's play experiences remain central to inspection practice.

Key recommendation 14: Promote the importance of play and the use of school grounds as a community asset for play through community focused school policy

On 1 September 2025, a new professional learning and leadership body, Dysgu was launched. By April 2027, responsibility for online professional learning resources, currently hosted on Hwb, will transition to Dysgu.

The Welsh Government have worked with the Hwb team to review of all material related to play, identifying some gaps in content. In response, initial actions have included the addition of seven resources for school practitioners from Play Wales.

Welsh Government guidance has been published on Community Focused Schools (CFS), Family engagement and community engagement. The guidance recognises the importance of enrichment opportunities as part of a Community Focused Schools approach, including through play in supporting the well-being of children. The Welsh Government work with CFS networks to promote importance of play in schools and share contacts to build collaboration at a local level.

Through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (SCfL), we have embedded the importance of making our schools more community focused so that facilities can be accessible for all. Specific Community Focused Schools capital funding has also been made available for delivery partners, with £58m provided since financial year 2022 to 23, to support our schools to adapt and effectively open their premises outside traditional hours. This funding has supported small to medium scale capital works in existing schools to promote and support co-location of support services and community use of the existing facilities, including the provision of play.

The former Cabinet Secretary for Education had considered the non-statutory guidance and consultation on setting school session times (prompted from the asymmetric weeks work), it was paused due to pre-election period and will be reconsidered under the new Cabinet Minister for Education and Welsh Language.

Play Wales have continued engagement with school leaders, teachers and support staff facilitating the Education Symposium held on 26 February 2026. Professor Peter Gray shared his work and offered his insights and solutions to support children's play in education.

A presentation was delivered to the Welsh Government Behaviour and Exclusions Forum by Play Wales to support consideration of play as a positive preventative intervention.

The [State of play 2025](#) report includes a Play in education and schools appendix. Particular examples of success reported across Wales include:

- play friendly schools (or similar) projects implemented by play development teams
- play development teams facilitating Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions for staff
- local authority, and in some instances, voluntary sector play team facilitation of playtime
- local authority play team facilitating 'playful' sessions linked to curriculum delivery
- after school play sessions delivered as part of Community Focused Schools
- development of school play policies.

However, the report also highlights:

The biggest challenge facing local authorities in assessing opportunities to play in schools and implementing actions to address shortfalls is that there is not a standardised approach or play in schools' strategy within each local authority. Any successes are variable — school-based responses are, in many cases, reliant on a particular individual within the school community.

Welsh Government will continue to work with partners to embed opportunities to play in schools, across age groups and local authorities.

Ambition in Action, Recommendation 14: Play Friendly Schools



The Vale of Glamorgan Council Play Development Team delivers a Play Friendly Schools programme designed to expand and enhance play opportunities across the local area. It supports children's access to high quality play through staff training, family engagement, loose parts play, and curriculum linked outdoor sessions.

The programme currently works with four primary schools and one secondary school, with each project tailored to the specific needs and priorities of the individual school community.

Support has been provided across several key areas, including:

- Let's Talk About Play training for school staff, play ambassadors, parents, and carers
- after school family play sessions supporting family engagement and offering time, space, and opportunities for shared play
- lunchtime loose parts play sessions to enrich daily play experiences
- outdoor play sessions delivered as part of curriculum learning, supporting mental health and wellbeing in secondary schools.

To further embed play within school environments, play cubes stocked with loose parts have been installed in 4 schools. These resources are accessible throughout the school day, during out of school hours, and for use by the play team.

The impact varies across settings and has been consistently positive. Strong, meaningful relationships have been established between the play team and each school community.

Staff confidence has increased, and school grounds are increasingly recognised as play-enabling environments. Pupils have benefited from improved access to high quality play, and families now feel more confident engaging with wider play team provision, as well as supporting an increased range of their own play opportunities.

In areas experiencing socio economic deprivation, the after school family play sessions have had an immediate and noticeable effect. Families have been able to enjoy safe, familiar, and supportive play environments, with school kitchens used to provide healthy snacks and refreshments, helping to ease after school pressures.

The programme also supports the use of school grounds as community assets, aligning with the principles of the Community Focused Schools policy and strengthening understanding of the role of schools as hubs for local play and wellbeing. There is a shared understanding between the Vale of Glamorgan Council play team and the Community Focused Schools Manager regarding the benefits of collaborative working.

Overall, the Play Friendly Schools programme demonstrates a practical, scalable approach to embedding play in education settings while extending opportunities into the wider community.

Key recommendation 15: Increase and improve play and break times in schools

Investment programmes and enrichment funding continue to provide opportunities for schools to enhance play and break time provision, including outdoor and inclusive play spaces. Engagement across government policy areas with inspectors and governors is supporting greater awareness of the value of play and the importance of protecting time and space for children to play during the school day.

Progress continues in supporting play within school settings through policy, inspection and investment activity. Care Inspectorate Wales have strengthened their understanding of play, risk benefit approaches and the Health and Safety Executive's high level statement on play by undertaking training with Play Wales and Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs and have an established Play Champions network within the inspectorate while Estyn has committed to ensuring inspectors understand the role of play and risk-benefit assessment in informing their work. This supports more consistent consideration of play within inspection activity and reinforces the importance of play across educational and childcare settings.

In 2025 to 2026, £2 million was provided to schools in Wales, with a further £3 million allocated in 2026 to 2027, to support provision of additional, enhanced enrichment activity in and around the school day and holidays. The terms and conditions make clear play opportunities should be considered in activity development and delivery.

Since the start of the 2025 to 2028 Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme, £24 million has been awarded to support thirty major capital projects for new and refurbished childcare and play settings. This sits alongside a further £10 million in small grants funding which is distributed to settings via all twenty-two local authorities.

Across the thirty approved projects, they will deliver a combined total of over 3,050m² of outdoor and play space. These developments include a range of improvements to outdoor provision, with a strong emphasis on accessibility and inclusive design. Enhancements include accessible hard and soft play surfaces, wheelchair-friendly access routes, and covered outdoor areas to support year-round use.

In addition, a number of settings have benefitted from small grants funding to undertake improvement and refurbishment works. In many cases, this has supported the replacement or upgrade of outdoor play surfaces, contributing to safer and more inclusive play environments overall.

Welsh Government officials attended The Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) Governors Support Officers Meeting on 6 March 2025 to present an update on actions relating to education from the Ministerial Review of Play and to share resources. Officials also contributed to the School Governors in Wales Bulletin in April 2025.

Ambition in Action, Recommendation 15: Enhancing Play Opportunities in Schools



In 2025 to 26, the Welsh Government invested £5 million to improve the quality of play spaces and playgrounds. Working with local authorities and in line with local Play Sufficiency Assessments, a number of local authorities identified schools as key assets for enhancing children's access to play, both during the school day and within the wider community.

Across Wales, funding has been used to develop a range of school-based initiatives aimed at improving breaktime experiences, increasing access to outdoor space, and strengthening links between schools and communities.

A common approach has been the introduction of play pods, outdoor play packs and loose parts, enabling schools to provide more varied, child-led play opportunities. For example, Denbighshire Council expanded its investment in play pods and equipment. Similarly, Anglesey Council provided eight play pods across school and community settings, while Torfaen Council distributed outdoor play packs directly to schools to enhance everyday play opportunities.

Some authorities have focused on developing outdoor learning and natural play environments. In Cynfor Gwynedd, collaboration with schools and childcare providers supported the development of forest school approaches and play pod provision, helping children engage with more natural, open-ended play experiences.

Improving the quality of play during the school day has also been a key priority. Within Cardiff Council, the introduction of Playground Leaders has supported more inclusive, community-based play at breaktimes. This approach has contributed to creating more positive and engaging school environments, recognising the role of play in supporting wellbeing.

Beyond the school day, several local authorities have taken steps to increase community access to school grounds. Within Conwy Council, work is underway to develop mechanisms to enable school sites to be opened for use after school hours, helping to address local gaps in accessible play space and strengthening the role of schools as community assets.

Other projects, such as Pembrokeshire Council's programme to extend outdoor play opportunities across schools and Swansea Council's school-based play initiatives, demonstrate how relatively modest investments can deliver improvements in both the quality and availability of play.

Overall, these projects highlight the flexibility of play capital funding in responding to locally identified needs. By utilising schools as part of the wider play infrastructure, local authorities have been able to deliver low-cost, high-impact improvements that benefit both children's play opportunities and the wider school environment.

Update on ongoing actions: February 2025 to May 2026

The following recommendations were reported as completed in the February 2025 progress report; however, we have continued to work strategically across policy areas to champion Wales as a play friendly country.

Key recommendation 1: Take a strategic approach to play sufficiency across all Welsh Government policy areas

All core milestones under this recommendation were met in February 2025 with the establishment of the Play Review Implementation Board (PRIB) and the internal Play Champions network. Both these mechanisms are now embedded and continue to provide strategic oversight, challenge and collaboration across policy areas.

Since February 2025, this work has matured into sustained cross-policy engagement. Play policy has contributed to and influenced a wide range of national strategies and guidance, including Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales, Families First, Flying Start, Child Poverty Strategy actions, Sustainable Communities for Learning guidance, and Active Travel reporting. Live policy and legislative mapping continue to support scrutiny of emerging policy areas such as climate and nature recovery, regeneration, planning, and youth policy.

Professional development has strengthened shared understanding across Welsh Government, with Understanding Play Sufficiency training delivered to PRIB members and Play Champions, supporting more consistent consideration of play at both national and local levels. These links are improving alignment between national policy intent and local authority implementation, helping to create more coherent conditions for children's play across Wales.

At a local level the [State of play 2025](#) report shows an improvement in partnership working since 2022 stating that:

'The refreshed PSA form seems to have provided an opportunity to collaborate across local authority departments for both the assessment and action planning processes. Many PSAs report holding face to face workshops and meetings. Where these have taken place, there are examples of good collaboration interdepartmentally within local authorities. In addition, in these areas, there is an increased mention of the establishment of Play Sufficiency Groups, or similar, across PSAs and the Play Action Plans.'

Key recommendation 2: Ensure that Welsh Government policy instruments include measures to support children's ability to make the most of opportunities to play

Significant progress has been made through the refreshed Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit and the 2025 submissions of local authority Play Sufficiency Assessments. Play Wales was funded to analyse submissions and produce two national reports: What children say about play in Wales: 2025 and State of Play 2025. These reports confirm the positive impact of the statutory duty while highlighting persistent challenges for local authorities, including inclusion, workforce capacity, insurance, and access to space. Findings are being used to shape future policy direction, inform feedback to local authorities, and guide targeted interventions.

Key recommendation 3: Ensure that any plans for recovery from the pandemic and cost of living crisis consider children's right to play

Children's views gathered through Play Sufficiency Assessments and associated surveys continue to inform policy considerations. Work is taken forward to consider findings from Play Sufficiency and Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, ensuring that recovery-focused funding and guidance recognises play and playwork provision.

Engagement work has been undertaken with stakeholders and across government policy areas to explore the benefits of toy libraries and play resource sites with options to be considered further.

The importance of access to play was recognised in the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024, including understanding that there may be barriers caused by poverty, for some children taking part in the range of play opportunities in their area.

Key recommendation 4: Ensure that the implementation of the full breadth of the statutory Play Sufficiency Duty is adequately resourced and funded

Progress has been achieved in reaching the anticipated outcome of local authorities being better supported to implement the Play Sufficiency Duty through more strategic allocation of funding and resources.

Revenue funding of £220,000 (£10,000 per local authority) was awarded in July 2024 to support local authorities with the development of their Play Sufficiency Assessments, which were submitted to the Welsh Government in June 2025. A further £220,000 was awarded to the local authorities for 2025-26, to support them to progress actions within their Play Action Plans. For 2026-27 and 2027-28 annual allocations of £220,000 is awarded amongst local authorities to support Play Sufficiency via the Children and Communities Grant.

The provision and maintenance of playgrounds forms part of the statutory duty on local authorities in assessing and securing sufficient play opportunities, with £5 million capital funding provided in 2025-2026 to support accessible play spaces.

Welsh Government has continued to core fund Play Wales, the national charity for children's play, and the Cwlwm childcare consortium made up of 5 organisations, delivering a bilingual integrated service which aims to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and families across Wales. The core funding support has continued for both Play Wales and Cwlwm in 2025-2026 and 2026-2027, along with the award of additional funding for specific activity.

Welsh Government has continued to support the Playworks Holiday Project which aims to support access to increased play opportunities for children and young people during the school holidays and provide healthy food / snacks. Grant funding for this project is awarded to local authorities via the Children and Communities Grant flexible funding programme to provide children with access to staffed play work provision during school holidays. An annual award of £1 million has been awarded since 2021.

We will continue to review funding options and consider opportunities to support children's access to play opportunities.

Key recommendation 5: Support the delivery of a public information programme about the right to play

Public awareness activity, on social media, has continued in partnership with Play Wales and Teulu Cymru, including promotion of Playday, the UN International Day of Play, and Playful Childhoods, a Play Wales campaign. The [Children and young people's versions of the MRoP progress report](#) and supporting animations were published in June 2025.

Key recommendation 7: Ensure the right to play is sufficiently incorporated in strategic policy instruments and decisions

Progress continues in embedding play within wider Welsh Government strategic policy frameworks. Play is increasingly considered across cross cutting agendas including regeneration, transport, health, climate and community development, supported by PRIB oversight and cross policy engagement. This is strengthening policy coherence and ensuring the right to play is recognised as a contributing factor to wider wellbeing and prevention objectives.

Our Children's Rights Impact Assessment ensures the UNCRC in its entirety is considered in policy development. This ensures Article 31, the right to relax and play, is considered in the wider context of the rights provided by the Convention.

Key recommendation 12: Develop a strategic infrastructure for playwork workforce development

Progress continues to support the development of a skilled and sustainable playwork workforce. Qualifications reform, quality assurance initiatives such as Chwarae o Safon, and sector led professional development activity are strengthening workforce capability while aligning with wider childcare and playwork reform.

The UK Playwork National Occupational Standards (NOS) Consortium comprises Play Wales, Play Scotland, PlayBoard Northern Ireland, Play England and the Playwork Foundation.

The Consortium has been meeting since October 2021 and was established to plan strategically across the four nations for the future of workforce development and sector skills initiatives, including a future review of the NOS. The NOS development process formally began at the start of 2025 following approval from the UK Standards and Frameworks Panel. Play Wales took the lead development role on behalf of the UK Playwork NOS Consortium. Upon finalising the draft NOS, a consultation process took place with the sector across the UK during March and April 2026.

The final NOS will be proofed and translated during the summer ready for publication in September 2026.

Work is underway with Play Wales and Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs to develop resources for playwork qualifications to link the NYTH/NEST framework to playwork practice.

Key recommendation 13: Ensure sufficient funding is available for play and playwork workforce development

Investment continues to support training and professional development for the playwork workforce through Welsh Government commissioned delivery of qualifications and funding delivered by sector partners. This activity is helping to stabilise provision, improve quality, and maintain capacity while longer term workforce arrangements continue to be considered.

Conclusion

Wales has a long-standing and internationally recognised commitment to children's right to play. Collaboration and partnership working are key elements to achieving successful outcomes, advocating for and supporting children's play opportunities.

The range of work completed to achieve the ambitions set by the Ministerial Review of Play provides a strong foundation for us to build upon, securing playful opportunities for children across Wales. Thank you to all who contributed to the implementation of actions and work in continuing to champion children's play.

Appendix: Progress against all recommendations and milestones

Full information for all milestones and corresponding actions agreed by the Welsh Government can be found in the – [Ministerial review of play: response to the Steering Group recommendations](#) report.

Sections below highlighted in blue show the 19 recommendations remaining for action following Progress report published in 2025. [Ministerial review of play progress report: February 2025](#)

Recommendation 1 – Take a strategic approach to play sufficiency across all Welsh Government policy areas.	
Milestone 1.1	Already in place – no action required.
Milestone 1.2	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 1.3	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 1.4	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 1.5	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 1.6	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Recommendation 2 – Ensure that Welsh Government policy instruments include measures to support children’s ability to make the most of opportunities to play.	
Milestone 2.1	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 2.2	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 2.3	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 2.4	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 2.5	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.

Recommendation 3 – Ensure that any plans for recovery from the pandemic and cost of living crisis consider children’s right to play.

Milestone 3.1	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 3.2	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 3.3	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 3.4	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.

Recommendation 4 – Ensure that the implementation of the full breadth of the statutory Play Sufficiency Duty is adequately resourced and funded.

Milestone 4.1	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 4.2	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 4.3	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 4.4	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 4.5	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 4.6	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 4.7	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.

Recommendation 5 – Support the delivery of a public information programme about the right to play.

Milestone 5.1	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 5.2	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.

Recommendation 6 – Apply the Play Sufficiency Duty more widely to include a range of other bodies.

Milestone 6.1	Partially completed – to take final actions forward.
Milestone 6.2	Partially completed – to take final actions forward.
Milestone 6.3	Partially completed – to take final actions forward.

Recommendation 7 – Ensure the right to play is sufficiently incorporated in strategic policy instruments and decisions.

Milestone 7.1	Completed – no further action.
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Recommendation 8 – Ensure that the principle of play as a matter of spatial justice is recognised and understood throughout Planning Wales.

Milestone 8.1	Partially completed – to take final actions forward.
Milestone 8.2	Partially completed – to take final actions forward.
Milestone 8.3	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 8.4	Partially completed – to take final actions forward.
Milestone 8.5	Partially completed – to take final actions forward.
Milestone 8.6	Partially completed – to take final actions forward.

Recommendation 9 – Ensure that the views and experiences of children inform the ways in which neighbourhoods are planned and managed.

Milestone 9.1	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 9.2	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 9.3	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.

Recommendation 10 – Ensure there are adequate safeguarding arrangements in playwork settings.

Milestone 10.1	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 10.2	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.

Recommendation 11 – Ensure that the principle of play as a matter of spatial justice is recognised and understood throughout Planning Wales.

Milestone 11.1	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 11.2	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 11.3	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 11.4	Partially completed – to take final actions forward.

Recommendation 12 – Apply the Play Sufficiency Duty more widely to include a range of other bodies.

Milestone 12.1	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 12.2	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 12.3	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 12.4	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 12.5	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 12.6	Completed – no further action.

Recommendation 13

Milestone 13.1	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 13.2	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 13.3	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 13.4	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 13.5	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 13.6	Completed – no further action.

Recommendation 14

Milestone 14.1	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 14.2	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 14.3	Completed – no further actions.
Milestone 14.4	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 14.5	Completed – no further action.

Recommendation 15

Milestone 15.1	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 15.2	Completed – no further action.
Milestone 15.3	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 15.4	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 15.5	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 15.6	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.
Milestone 15.7	Completed – embedded as ongoing work.