



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy



SOCIAL RESEARCH NUMBER:

117/2023

PUBLICATION DATE:

14/12/2023

Evaluation of Progress for Success (Childcare and Play Workforce Development) 2019-2023

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

OGL © Crown Copyright Digital ISBN 978-1-83504-863-4

Title: Evaluation of Progress for Success (Childcare and Play Workforce Development) 2019-2023

Authors: Brett Duggan, Jennifer Lane, Sioned Lewis, Lois Roberts. Arad Research

Full Research Report: Duggan, B., et al (2023). Evaluation of Progress for Success (Childcare and Play Workforce Development) 2019-2023, GSR report number 117/2023.

Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/evaluation-progress-success>

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

For further information please contact:

Name: Kim Wigley

Department: Social Research and Information

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Tel: 0300 025 8099

Email: kasemployabilityandskillsresearch@gov.wales

Table of contents

List of figures and tables.....	2
1. Introduction and description of Progress for Success.....	4
2. Methodology	11
3. Overview of delivery	17
4. Findings: Delivery of Progress for Success	21
5. Findings: Outcomes of Progress for Success	36
6. Value for money	49
7. Case studies	54
8. Conclusions.....	63
Annex 1: Progress for Success Logic Model	69
Annex 2: Research Tools	70
Annex 3: Privacy Notices	87

List of figures and tables

Figure 1.1: Progress for Success Qualifications	8
Table 3.1: Progress for Success approved ESF costs and final spend, 2016-2023.....	19
Table 4.1: Participants per pathway for Progress for Success 2019-2023.....	25
Table 5.1: Targeted number and percentage of practitioners for Progress for Success (whole operation 2016-2023), in West Wales and the Valleys	46
Table 6.1: Approved and actual costs (West Wales and the Valleys).....	50

Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
CCT	Cross Cutting Theme
ESF	European Social Fund
EW	East Wales (region of European funding)
L2 APP	Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice
LLWR	Lifelong Learning Wales Record
NMS	National Minimum Standards (NMS) which outline the requirement for childcare and playwork staff to hold qualifications appropriate to their post.
P3	Playwork: Principles into Practice (P3) series of qualifications
PfS	Progress for Success
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office
WWV	West Wales and the Valleys (region of European funding)

1. Introduction and description of Progress for Success

- 1.1 The childcare and playwork workforces play a crucial role in providing quality early years, childcare, and play provision. Progress for Success (PfS) funded existing workers to undertake recognised childcare and play qualifications to increase their skills levels. This evaluation report examines the implementation of PfS and evaluates its impact on the childcare and playwork workforce's training and qualifications.
- 1.2 PfS was part-funded by European Social Fund (ESF) and administered by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) within Priority Axis 3 Youth Employment and Attainment, Specific Objective 4: To increase the skills of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce within the West Wales and Valleys (WWV) area. PfS was also available to workers in East Wales (EW), funded by the Welsh Government, so all training opportunities were available across Wales.¹
- 1.3 PfS initially ran from 2016 to 2019 and was extended to be delivered from 2019 to 2023. This report focuses on the 2019 to 2023 period but presents data across the entire 2016-2023 timeframe, where data sources do not enable a distinction to be drawn between the two phases of the operation. The report uses information and evidence relating to both the ESF-funded WWV area and the Welsh Government-funded EW area but highlights evidence specific to each region where relevant.

Progress for Success operation

Aim

- 1.4 PfS funded existing workers to undertake recognised childcare and play qualifications to increase their skill levels. The end goal, as set out in the original Business Plan for PfS 2016- 2019, was to 'raise the quality of provision offered to our youngest children, as evidence suggests that a highly skilled workforce leads to improved educational outcomes for children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds'.²

¹ The European Structural Fund Programme for West Wales and the Valleys (WWV) funded operations in the following local authorities: Isle of Anglesey; Gwynedd; Conwy; Denbighshire; Ceredigion; Pembrokeshire; Carmarthenshire; Swansea; Neath Port Talbot; Bridgend; Rhondda Cynon Taf; Merthyr Tydfil; Caerphilly; Blaenau Gwent; and Torfaen. More details in [West Wales and the Valleys: European Social Fund \(ESF\) operational programme 2014 to 2020 summary | GOV.WALES](#)

² Business Plan Progress for Success (PfS) 2014-2018, Version dated January 2017. Welsh Government, (Unpublished).

- 1.5 Drawing on the experiences of the PfS operation from 2016-2019, a second phase from 2019-2023 aimed to:
- build capacity and capability in the sector by broadening the suite of qualifications available to the workforce;
 - enable employers and settings to meet qualification requirements of the Childcare Offer for Wales and the requirements of the National Minimum Standards (NMS) by 2022;^{3,4}
 - contribute towards the vision of a highly regarded, high-quality childcare and play workforce supported by continuous professional development;
 - support the goals of Cymraeg 2050 by increasing practitioners' confidence to use Welsh in settings, ensuring more children are exposed to the language;⁵
 - increase the quality of childcare and play, with a view to improving child development and contribute to efforts to tackle poverty.
- 1.6 The intended outcomes and impact of PfS were set out in a logic model prepared by the Welsh Government for the operation, set out in Annex 1. A logic model illustrates how inputs (ESF and Welsh Government investment) and activities (procuring childcare and play qualifications) were to contribute to the desired outcomes. The short-term outcomes were an increase in practitioner knowledge and skills, upskilling the workforce in non-registered settings and encouraging them to seek CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales) registration; more practitioners confident to use the Welsh language when interacting with children; raised awareness of ESF; more disabled individuals and people from black and minority ethnic communities attracted to the sector and that the sector and stakeholders learn lessons.
- 1.7 The intended medium to long-term outcomes were an overall increase in the quality of childcare and play provided, that settings would be adequately prepared to meet the requirements of the NMS by 2022, that PfS supports sustainability and growth within the sector and that more parents can access Welsh-speaking settings.

³ [The Childcare Offer for Wales](#)

⁴ The National Minimum Standards (NMS) outline the requirement for childcare and playwork staff to hold qualifications appropriate to their post. By 30 September 2022 settings which offer out of school and holiday provision should ensure that an appropriate proportion of staff are suitably qualified with a playwork qualification, as set out in [National Minimum Standards for regulated childcare | GOV.WALES](#). Details at [Playwork qualifications deadline | GOV.WALES](#)

⁵ Cymraeg 2050 is the Welsh Government's Welsh language strategy with an ambition of creating a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Details at [Cymraeg 2050: Welsh language strategy | GOV.WALES](#)

- 1.8 The intended impacts were improved child development, contribution to tackling poverty, building capacity and capability within the sector, and supporting the Cymraeg 2050 targets.

Rationale

- 1.9 PfS was introduced in August 2016 with the aim of providing opportunities to upskill early years, childcare, and play practitioners aged 25 years and over across Wales. The initial round of the operation between 2016 and 2019 (not the focus of the current evaluation) enabled practitioners to upskill to levels 2 and 3 through an apprenticeship framework in both WWV and EW.⁶ It was initially designed to address a limitation of the mainstream apprenticeship programme, which was previously accessible only to individuals aged 16-24. While PfS was being designed and planned, there was a change to the Apprenticeship Programme (in August 2016), at which point it became an all-age programme in Wales.⁷ The evaluation of the first phase of the operation concluded that the policy announcement to implement an all-age apprenticeship programme ‘removed a key rationale for the operation and meant [PfS] was no longer filling a gap in funded provision’. Consequently, although PfS was delivered solely for those aged 25 and over, there was confusion across the childcare and play sector about how the operation differed from the wider apprenticeship offer.
- 1.10 To be eligible to benefit from the first phase of PfS, employees were also required to be employed for a minimum of 16 hours – in addition to being aged 25 or above. The evaluation found that this requirement prevented many part-time employees across the sector from accessing the funded qualifications. The evaluation found that eligibility criteria were restrictive and contributed to the operation falling short of the targets set for participant numbers over the period 2016-2019.⁸
- 1.11 During the 2016 to 2019 delivery period there were several notable developments in the childcare, early years, and play sectors, such as the expansion of the Childcare Offer for Wales and amendments to the NMS for regulated childcare. The Business Plan for the second phase of the operation noted that these developments created

⁶ *Evaluation of Progress for Success 2016 – 2019*, July 2020, Arad Research for the Welsh Government (Unpublished report).

⁷ [Statement: Apprenticeships in Wales](#) (Minister for Skills and Science), Senedd Record of Proceedings 14 June 2016

⁸ *Evaluation of Progress for Success 2016 – 2019*, July 2020, Arad Research for the Welsh Government (Unpublished report).

a continued need to upskill practitioners working within the childcare and play sectors. The revised Business Plan for the second phase of the operation reflected these developments and noted that they created a continued need for upskilling within the childcare and play sectors.⁹ The Business Plan noted:

‘In order to ensure that the quality of the care available to parents and their children is not compromised, and to support an expanding workforce to upskill, there is a need to widen the scope of the operation by broadening the suite of qualifications available and also extend the PfS Operation to March 2023. This will provide opportunities for the workforce to meet qualification requirements of the childcare offer and to also provide funding for settings to meet the requirements of the NMS.’¹⁰

- 1.12 Within the wider scope of the second phase, PfS aimed to remove the barriers faced during the initial phase by re-focusing the operation to support existing practitioners aged 18 and above, broadening the qualifications that are available, and providing opportunities to up-skill to those working less than 16 hours per week. Further information on the pathways and delivery model of PfS between 2019-2023 is set out in Chapter 3.

Delivering the second phase of PfS 2019-2023

- 1.13 A re-focused and redeveloped PfS operation that extended until 2023 was approved by WEFO. This re-focused operation, which began in 2019 and ran until 2023, is the focus of this evaluation report which assesses the effectiveness of the new operation in meeting the sector's upskilling needs and in supporting practitioners' professional development.
- 1.14 The re-focused Business Plan set a target of 2,849 participants engaging in PfS from WWV for the whole operation period of 2016-2023. A target was not set for EW. A revised delivery profile was approved in 2018 for the second phase of PfS for 2019-2023 with a target of 2,247 participants for WWV and 1,564 for EW.
- 1.15 PfS delivered three distinct pathways of qualifications for the workforce as set out in figure 1.1.

⁹ *Progress for Success Re-evaluation Business Plan*, October 2018 (Unpublished, Page 1)

¹⁰ *Progress for Success Re-evaluation Business Plan*, October 2018 (Unpublished, Page 2)

Figure 1.1: Progress for Success Qualifications

Qualification	Description and eligibility	Start date	Training providers¹¹
Pathway 1: Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development (CCPLD) apprenticeship	Work-based training at level 2 or 3 for existing practitioners working between 10 and 16 hours per week.	From September 2019	ACT Ltd Cambrian Training Company Coleg Cambria WBL Gower College Swansea Grŵp Llandrillo Menai ITEC Training Solutions Ltd Neath Port Talbot College Pembrokeshire College Educ8 Training
Pathway 2: Playwork apprenticeship	Work-based training for existing practitioners working between 10 and 16 hours per week	From September 2019	As above
Pathway 3: Pathway to Play Level 3 Transition to Playwork	A playwork qualification for individuals who already have childcare or early years qualifications. Can be delivered over 5 months with virtual (or in person) workshop sessions and assignments.	From February 2021	ACT Ltd Aspiration Training Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs
Pathway 3: Pathway to Play L2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2 APP)	A first step qualification intended to provide a good foundation of knowledge of play and playwork. Can be delivered over 12 half days/evenings.	From February 2022	Adult Learning Wales ¹²
Pathway 3: Pathway to Play Playwork Practice Principles (P3) at Level 2 & 3	A suite of qualifications developed by Play Wales, designed to provide an effective route to qualify as a playworker.	From February 2022 ¹³	Adult Learning Wales

¹¹ The training contacts were split into lots with training providers contracted to deliver in different parts of EW and WWV.

¹² A second supplier was awarded the contract for part of EW, but handed back the contract due to inability to meet delivery criteria.

¹³ Some four learners were enrolled onto a P3 course but after checks they were not deemed eligible under PfS and not included in the PfS monitoring data.

1.16 The apprenticeships in CCPLD and Playwork were the first time these qualifications were made available to individuals working part-time who would otherwise be unable to apply for an apprenticeship due to working fewer than 16 hours a week. The Business Plan for the operation noted that,

‘The refocused Operation intends to pilot the new CCPLD qualification (which is available for teaching from September 2019) and the Playwork Apprenticeship to practitioners who work less than 16 hours a week, and who cannot access the mainstream Apprenticeship Programme. This will be to determine if further flexibility could be built into the Welsh Government Policies for this sector. The Apprenticeship will provide opportunities for individuals to gain a sector specific vocational qualification as well as essential skills...’¹⁴

1.17 As such, in the case of both the CCPLD and Playwork qualifications, PfS provided the opportunity for an extended three-year delivery period for practitioners working less than 16 hours per week to gain their qualifications and meet the 80-credit qualification requirement. These arrangements were intended to provide greater flexibility and, according to the Business Plan, “to consider whether there can be more flexibility with this apprenticeship”, acknowledging that the “apprenticeship route has excluded some settings from being eligible for funding; and that the requirement to work 16 hours or more a week is a particular challenge for out-of-school play groups and Welsh-medium care/early years settings who usually operate between 10 and 12 hours per week”.

1.18 According to the Business Plan, and interviews with Welsh Government officials, the L2 APP and Transition to Playwork qualifications were made available to help the play sector with the relevant qualifications to meet registration requirements of revised NMS by September 2022.¹⁵

Context: The need for PfS

1.19 The Business Plan for PfS set out the importance of upskilling the childcare and playwork workforce, explaining that it is essential to equip all those responsible for caring for young children with the necessary skills and competencies to support

¹⁴ Progress for Success Re-evaluation Business Plan Final Version, October 2018. Welsh Government (Unpublished, pages 12-13)

¹⁵ See [Playwork qualifications deadline | GOV.WALES](#)

children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.¹⁶ Training and qualifications need to be easily accessible, and offer the best possible development for the workforce, enabling them to understand how children learn and develop. This, in turn, will help them structure activities, time, and environments to support all children to reach their full potential.

- 1.20 Furthermore, the Business Plan explains that childcare and early years education play a vital role in promoting economic growth and tackling poverty and that evidence shows that high-quality early years provision has positive societal effects. As such, it makes the case for increased public investment in the early years to ensure future economic prosperity, but notes that the benefits of high-quality childcare and play take time to become realised. According to the Business Plan, 'there is a clear link between childcare and economic growth. Childcare is an enabler, employer and educator, all of which support the growth and tackling poverty agendas.'
- 1.21 PfS was also designed to provide opportunities for practitioners to expand the provision and care that they offer, which was to support – at the time of its design – the potential expansion to the sector due the then newly established Childcare Offer. Further, it was to provide opportunities for the workforce to raise their standards and skills thus supporting the vision set out in the Welsh Government's Building a Brighter Future: Early Years and Childcare Plan (2013) to develop a well-qualified childcare and play workforce that is able to access continuous professional development opportunities.¹⁷

¹⁶ Business Plan Progress for Success (PfS) 2014-2018 and Progress for Success Re-evaluation Business Plan, October 2018. Welsh Government (Unpublished).

¹⁷ [Written Statement - Publication of the Early Years and Childcare Plan \(17 July 2013\) | GOV.WALES](#)

2. Methodology

2.1 The focus of the evaluation was on exploring the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of PfS as an operation. The evaluation objectives, as set out in the research specification, were to:

- Assess the extent to which the overall aim, objectives, anticipated outputs and outcomes of PfS have been achieved.
- Assess the impact and effectiveness of PfS at increasing the skills of the early years, childcare and play workforces and any differences at a sector or sub-sector level.
- Assess the CCPLD and Playwork qualification pilots in terms of flexibility and extended delivery within an Apprenticeship framework.
- Investigate the effect of participation in PfS on employers' recruitment patterns and engagement in skills development and training.
- Assess the extent to which PfS aligns and integrates with other initiatives.
- Assess how PfS has performed against the delivery of the EU Cross Cutting Theme (CCT) aims, objectives and commitments, as well as CCT related indicators (see paragraph 5.31 for list).¹⁸ To include,
 - How successful has the operation been in reaching its target groups?
 - How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act?¹⁹
 - How has the equality, diversity and inclusion toolkit been used? Have any benefits been realised e.g. increased number of participants from black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities; increased number of disabled participants etc?
- Assess how the operation has contributed to the Welsh Government's strategic aims for the Welsh language.
- Assess the value for money of the programme.
- Identify the key strengths of the programme and any constraints/issues that may have impeded its effectiveness.
- Provide recommendations and gather lessons learnt to feed into future policies to support skills development.

¹⁸ See Annex 3

¹⁹ [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015: the essentials](#) (Welsh Government)

- 2.2 Another research objective was to evaluate the operation's impact, including an analysis of deadweight and displacement. This objective proved challenging to accomplish due to insufficient data availability and a lack of contact information (see also paragraph 2.13 for further information on the limitations of the methodology). A partial assessment is included in Chapter 6.
- 2.3 A mixed methods approach was adopted for the evaluation, which included desk research to review relevant programme documents, analysis of monitoring data and interviews with training providers, stakeholders, participants and employers. The report draws on evidence collected from these different sources.

Desk research and analysis of monitoring data

- 2.4 Relevant programme documentation was reviewed for the evaluation, including policy documents, grant letters and the PfS Business Plan. The purpose of this was to gain an in-depth understanding of the programme, its aims, rationale, design and delivery and to assess its strategic fit and alignment with other initiatives in Wales, including the following:
- Employability Plan²⁰
 - Economic Action Plan²¹
 - Tackling Poverty and Equality (including the Well-being of Future Generations Act)
 - Early Childhood Education and Care vision²².
- 2.5 Participant monitoring data as recorded on the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) were analysed to provide overall numbers of participants undertaking each qualification through PfS, and their demographic details. Programme delivery spend data was reviewed.

Interviews with training providers

- 2.6 A mix of telephone and virtual interviews were conducted with training providers contracted to deliver PfS in EW and WWV. Contact details were shared by Welsh Government for twelve training providers – nine contracted to deliver the

²⁰ [Employability Plan 2018](#)

²¹ [Economic Action Plan](#)

²² [Written Statement: Launch of Early Childhood Education and Care \(ECEC\) approach \(24 October 2019\) | GOV.WALES](#)

apprenticeship pathway, a further three providers contracted to deliver the Pathway to Play qualifications (see Figure 1.1 for a list of the training providers). All providers were invited to take part in an interview which resulted in interviews with individuals from seven training providers. Of the other five, one did not reply, and the others explained that they either did not deliver PfS-funded qualifications to any learners or that they had sub-contracted the training (to providers already interviewed). Interviews were held with training providers across all pathways and delivering in WWV and EW. These interviews focused on training providers' delivery, what they felt was working well, any challenges they faced, achievements against targets and any impacts of delivery on them as training providers (see interview guide in Annex 2).

Interviews with other stakeholders

- 2.7 Telephone and virtual interviews were carried out with stakeholders from the sector for whom the evaluation team were provided contact information by the Welsh Government due to their involvement in the design or promotion of PfS. The stakeholders were Early Years Wales, Mudiad Meithrin, PACEY, Play Wales and Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Club. These interviews were typically some 45 minutes long and focused on stakeholders' views on the strategic alignment of PfS and its design and delivery, including what had worked well and what could be improved. Topic guides for these interviews can be seen in Annex 2.

Interviews with participants

- 2.8 Telephone interviews were conducted with 28 participants. The participants were selected from the LLWR record snapshot as of November 2022. This spreadsheet included details of 840 unique participants from both WWV and EW who had enrolled on an apprenticeship or a Transition to Playwork award.²³ Working mobile numbers were available for 503 participants, as well as information on participants' course training provider, their local authority, whether they were a Welsh speaker and whether they had a disability. A random stratified sample approach was used based on these characteristics. An initial sample of 32 participants was drawn from

²³ The November 2022 spreadsheet was shared by Welsh Government for the purpose of sharing contact details of participants to conduct interviews. Participant numbers reported in section 4 and figure 4,1 are lower as they are drawn from claim forms submitted to WEFO in May 2023 once all checks (e.g. eligibility) had been carried out.

the database and text messages were sent to these participants inviting them to take part in a telephone interview. The text messages were personalised to include the participant's name and the qualification they had undertaken. This first round resulted in six interviews, so the process was repeated with further samples until every contact in the spreadsheet had received a text. This resulted in 28 responses overall, a response rate of just under six per cent. Of these, 20 were from WWV and eight were from EW. In terms of qualifications, 20 had started on the Transition to Playwork award and eight had started an apprenticeship. The participants interviewed had followed courses with one of six training providers (Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, Aspiration Training, ACT Training, Neath Port Talbot College, Educ8 Ltd, and Coleg Morgannwg).²⁴

- 2.9 Contact details for individuals who had undertaken the Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2 APP) qualification were not available, therefore no interviews took place with this group.
- 2.10 The interviews focused on participants' reasons for undertaking the qualification and their experiences of the overall qualification training. This included their views on course content and how it was delivered, support received from the training provider and their employer whilst completing the qualification, and the length of time they were given to complete it. The interviews focused on the impact that undertaking the qualification had on participants' knowledge and skills; what they would have done if they had not undertaken the qualification with PfS; and any further training participants had done or were planning to do. The interview guide used during these interviews is in Annex 2.

Interviews with employers

- 2.11 Telephone interviews were conducted with 18 employers whose employees had participated in PfS, with 13 based in WWV and five in EW (against a target of reaching 15 employers). Ten of these employers had also undertaken a PfS qualification themselves and are thus included in the number of participants interviewed (in paragraph 2.7). These interviews were conducted with employers whose staff had been supported by one of five training providers: ACT Training,

²⁴ In the November 2022 spreadsheet, a total of 13 training providers were listed. Note that this list does not match the 12 providers listed in figure 1.1. During the evaluation fieldwork period, some of the initial training providers were no longer in operation and their allocation of learners had been transferred to another provider. Also, some of the providers had very low numbers of learners – seven of the providers had enrolled ten or fewer participants.

Clybiau Plant Cymru, Coleg Morgannwg, Educ8 Ltd, and Aspiration Training. Contact details for employers were not collected as part of the PfS operation, and therefore two methods of contacting employers were used by the evaluators. Firstly, participants were asked during interviews if they would be willing to share a message from the evaluators with their employer. The message detailed information about the evaluation and requested that the employer get in touch with the evaluators if they would be willing to take part in a short interview. The message explained that the interview would focus on their views on the delivery of the PfS funded qualification their staff had undertaken and the impact of the qualification on skills and practice. Despite participants agreeing to pass messages on to their employer, the evaluators received no responses from any employers agreeing to take part.

- 2.12 As this first method did not elicit any responses, the second approach the evaluation team took was to use the employer names provided by the participant at application stage, as recorded in the LLWR summary details shared with the evaluation team. Where the name of the employer was clear, telephone numbers were obtained through publicly available sources – from employers’ websites and the Care Inspectorate Wales’s online directory – and calls were made to these employers requesting their participation.

Limitations

- 2.13 Contact details for the L2 APP participants were not available during the time in which fieldwork was carried out as part of the evaluation; this was due to an audit of the data to verify the eligibility of participants. This audit took place after the fieldwork period was completed. Therefore evaluation findings which draw on participant feedback do not include the experiences of learners who completed the L2 APP qualification.
- 2.14 The findings presented in this report draw on interviews with a relatively small sample of participants and employers. The decision was taken to adopt qualitative research methods instead of collecting data through a survey due to the nature of the contact information for PfS participants available to the research team. No email addresses were provided, which would have enabled a wider distribution of an online survey and therefore it was decided to attempt to contact participants directly using the telephone contacts available.

2.15 Information on PfS participants' employers was not recorded as part of operation monitoring arrangements. As a result, no contact details were available for employers and the overall profile of participating employers is not known. Therefore, in order to gather employer contact details, the evaluation team relied on the support of PfS participants in identifying relevant individuals, combined with obtaining setting telephone numbers via internet searches. The limited sample elicited through these methods meant that a survey of all employers was not possible. The scale of data collected from employers and participants placed limitations on the value for money assessment that was possible as part of the evaluation. The assessment of the operation's effectiveness and outcomes set out in this report is based on available datasets and monitoring information, and qualitative data collected through interviews with participants, employers, training providers and stakeholders.

3. Overview of delivery

3.1 This chapter summarises PfS, including details of training providers and the qualifications delivered. It sets out the outcomes in terms of participant numbers and highlights issues raised during the evaluation relating to delivering PfS.

Key features of PfS: Pathways and Qualifications

3.2 The PfS operation had three main pathways for existing practitioners, as outlined below.

3.3 The first pathway was Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development (CCPLD) apprenticeship. The CCPLD pathway aimed to pilot the new childcare and play qualification (Level 2 and 3) via an Apprenticeship framework to practitioners who work between 10 and 16 hours a week.

3.4 The second pathway was a Playwork apprenticeship. This pathway aimed to pilot the Playwork (Level 2 and 3) via an Apprenticeship framework to practitioners who work between 10 and 16 hours a week.

3.5 The third pathway was the Pathway from Early Years to Play, shortened to Pathway to Play in this report. This pathway set out to provide opportunities and funding for existing early years practitioners to broaden their knowledge and skills and provide them with the relevant qualifications to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards by September 2022. This element of the operation covered awards in Transition to Playwork (From Early Years) for learners who already have qualifications in working with children and also offered the L2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2 APP) across Wales from February 2022. Although a Playwork Practice Principles (P3) award and a level 3 award in Managing a Holiday Playscheme was planned under this pathway, they did not take place.

3.6 Originally the programme was planned to deliver another two pathways:

- Pathway to Welsh Language: this pathway would provide opportunities for practitioners to broaden their skills through the medium of Welsh and gain a qualification.
- Step up to Management Pathway: (Level 4) this would provide opportunities for practitioners to gain the necessary knowledge and understanding to transition to a

managerial role within an early years and childcare setting. Participants would achieve a level 4 qualification.

- 3.7 The Pathway to Welsh language was not ultimately provided under PfS. Instead, funding was provided to the National Centre for Learning Welsh (the Centre) to support its online self-study course tailored specifically for the childcare and early years workforce. The Centre has been running a variety of learning opportunities for workers in different sectors to improve their Welsh language skills since 2017 and the Childcare and Early Years sector was identified as a priority area. As a result, the National Centre developed the 'Camau' courses, tailored specifically to the needs of this workforce. Originally, these were tutor-led classroom sessions, however, due to the pandemic, the courses were restructured to be online self-study courses.
- 3.8 PfS funding was used to support the development of the Camau courses and to provide additional resources to learners in the childcare and play sectors. This includes up to 60 hours of self-study for learners as part of the Camau courses at levels 1, 2, and 3; Camau+ courses for practitioners who have good knowledge of Welsh but lack confidence in using it. The funding is also to cover the appointment of a language specialist, the Camau Coordinator, to support learners in using their new skills in the workplace.
- 3.9 The funding provided by the Welsh Government to the National Centre for Learning Welsh for the Camau courses was not sourced from the European Social Fund (ESF). Therefore, this funding does not form part of the evaluation research presented in this report, and its delivery and impact is not covered in the rest of the report.
- 3.10 The Step up to Management qualification was not ultimately provided under PfS.

Approved budgets and expenditure

- 3.11 The approved total costs of the re-profiled operation over the whole PfS period 2016-2023 were £6.9m for WWV. This consisted of just under £4.7m in ESF costs and £2.2m in match funding, providing a targeted intervention rate of 68 per cent.²⁵ Final expenditure across the whole operation 2016-2023 fell short of the approved

²⁵ In order to encourage involvement and investment by other partners (e.g. national, regional and local government, private sector, other stakeholders) European funding programmes contribute a certain percentage of overall project or operation costs. This percentage is referred to as the intervention rate.

figures. The final claim submitted to WEFO (in May 2023) indicated total final expenditure of £3.31m, which equates to 47.9 per cent of the total approved costs. ESF expenditure was £2.25m which was significantly lower than the approved figure and met the intervention rate of 68.03 per cent. In WWV, expenditure of the approved ESF costs totalled less than half of the approved funding resulting in a decommitment as part of the PfS operation. Table 3.1 summarises this data. The operation was impacted by a number of factors that contributed to lower expenditure and outcomes; these are explored in chapter 4.

3.12 Total expenditure in EW over the period 2016-2023 was £725k.

Table 3.1: Progress for Success approved ESF costs and final spend, 2016-2023

Gross Costs (GBP)	<i>Approved figures (GBP)</i>	<i>Final expenditure (GBP)</i>
Total Eligible ESF costs	4,695,088.06	2,252,806.59
Income: match funding (WG)	2,206,806.03	1,058,874.09
Gross Eligible Expenditure	6,901,894.09	3,311,680.68
Intervention Rate (%)	68.03%	68.03%

Training Delivery

3.13 The apprenticeships were procured under an existing work-based learning (WBL) framework agreement with separate procurement exercises to invite providers to tender for the Transition to Playwork and the L2 APP qualifications. The 12 training providers contracted to lead the delivery of qualifications under PfS were as follows:²⁶

- **For apprenticeships**, which include the Children’s Care, Play, Learning and Development (CCPLD) award and the Playwork diploma award via an Apprenticeship framework:
 - **In West Wales and the Valleys:**
 - ACT Ltd
 - Cambrian Training Company
 - Coleg Cambria

²⁶ Source: [Progress for Success providers | Business Wales Skills Gateway \(gov.wales\)](#)

- Gower College Swansea
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
- ITEC Training Solutions Ltd
- Neath Port Talbot College
- Pembrokeshire College
- Educ8 Training
- **In East Wales:**
 - ACT Ltd
 - Cambrian Training Company
 - Coleg Cambria WBL
 - Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
 - Neath Port Talbot College
 - Pembrokeshire College
 - Educ8 Training
- **For Pathway to Play qualifications**, the following training providers were commissioned to deliver:
 - For Transition to Playwork award across different areas of WWV and EW:
 - ACT Ltd
 - Aspiration Training
 - Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs across different areas of WWV and EW.
 - For L2 APP:
 - Adult Learning Wales in WWV and part of EW.
 - A second supplier was awarded the contract for part of EW but handed back the contract due to inability to meet delivery criteria (see 4.11).

4. Findings: Delivery of Progress for Success

4.1 This section includes PfS participant data and the views of participants, employers and training providers on the qualifications delivered. In presenting these findings we distinguish between evidence collected from learners who completed a Transition to Playwork award under the Pathway to Play and those who followed the apprenticeship pathway. The findings presented in this chapter relate to both WWV and EW. However, in cases where evidence is cited or referenced to a specific individual participant, their region (WWV or EW) is noted as well as the qualification followed.

Qualifications under PfS

- 4.2 Under the Pathway to Play strand of the programme, PfS funded a Level 3 Transition to Playwork award to enable practitioners to broaden their knowledge and skills and provide them with the relevant qualification to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards by September 2022. Awarding bodies specify a notional number of hours which are estimated to be required for learners to achieve the level of attainment necessary to complete the award. This is estimated to require 36 guided learning hours out of a total of 80 hours to complete the award.
- 4.3 Two qualifications were available via an Apprenticeship framework: Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development (CCPLD) at Level 2 and 3 and Playwork at Level 2 and 3. Apprenticeships were available in the first round of PfS to individuals working full-time but in this round of PfS the apprenticeships were for practitioners working fewer than 16 hours per week only. The objective was to explore the potential for greater flexibility in the 16 hours requirement for apprenticeships delivery and to test if there can be more flexibility within the sector around number of hours worked while undertaking the qualification.

Progress for Success participant data

4.4 The targeted number of participants to be supported by PfS in WWV was 2,849 for the whole operation period of 2016-2023.²⁷ A target was not set for EW. A revised delivery profile was approved in 2018 for the second phase of PfS for 2019-2023 with a target of 2,247 participants for WWV and 1,564 for EW.

²⁷ Source: Progress for Success Re-evaluation Business Plan, October 2018. Welsh Government

4.5 A considerably lower number of participants engaged with PfS compared to the targets set for the operation in both WWV and EW. That is true both when considering the entire 2016-2023 period and specifically the second phase of 2019-2023. The data below is based on information on participants provided by the Welsh Government and based on the final May 2023 claim forms. Further detail is provided in Table 4.1.

- **WWV:** Overall, 1,063 participants engaged in PfS from 2016 to 2023 (37 per cent of the 2,849 target achieved).²⁸
 - 507 participants took part in the first phase in WWV from 2016-2019.
 - Focusing only on the second phase in WWV, 556 participants engaged in PfS in 2019-2023 (25 per cent of the target of 2,247 for the period)
- **EW:** Focusing only on the *second* phase between 2019-2023 in EW, 359 participants engaged in PfS (23 per cent of target for the period).

4.6 Later sections of this report highlight the achievements of PfS in contributing to raising the qualification and upskilling the childcare and playwork workforce. However PfS fell short of its targets by the end of the 2019-2023 phase of the operation, continuing a similar pattern to that observed during the first phase of PfS from 2016-2019.

4.7 In examining the possible reasons for the under-achievement of operation targets, it is useful to briefly reflect on the experiences during the first phase of the operation between 2016-2019. The evaluation of that first phase concluded that the initial operation had been impacted by lifting age restrictions for the apprenticeship programme at the time PfS was being planned and launched, meaning that the original operation was 'no longer filling a gap in funded provision'. The eligibility criteria for PfS were also cited as a factor that impeded the ability to recruit the workforce to engage with the operation: to be eligible to benefit from free training under the first phase of PfS between 2016 and 2019, employees were required to be aged 25 or over and employed for 16 hours. This was a particular challenge for practitioners in out-of-school clubs, play settings and Welsh-medium early years settings which typically operate between 10 and 12 hours per week.

²⁸ Source: Final Welsh Government claim to WEFO, shared May 2023

“There was consensus among training providers that the eligibility criteria were restrictive, rendered it extremely challenging to meet targets set and [prevented] many (part-time) employees from accessing the funded qualifications. This led many stakeholders, including training providers, to question whether the estimated number of eligible participants was robust and realistic.” (Evaluation of PfS 2016-2019, unpublished)

- 4.8 The reprofiled operation recognised and sought to address these limitations through making provision available to practitioners who worked less than 16 hours a week, who were therefore unable to access the mainstream Apprenticeship Programme.
- 4.9 However, a raft of other factors conspired to present challenges to the achievement of the targets under the second phase of PfS. The first and most significant challenge was the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. With childcare and play settings closed, the operation was on hold for an extended period of time. This delayed Welsh Government procurement timelines significantly, meaning that contracts for training providers were not in place until much later than was originally planned. The impact of the pandemic meant that, even when settings did gradually begin to re-open, training providers reported that upskilling and workforce development was not always an immediate priority for setting owners and managers as they adapted to new working conditions.
- 4.10 Linked directly to the point above, the Transition to Playwork awards, which accounted for the majority of qualifications followed by PfS learners, began much later than originally planned and therefore the window to deliver qualifications was curtailed. The shorter delivery timeframe meant that fewer learners were recruited and supported by training providers.
- 4.11 Funding for L2 APP and P3 awards was not available until late in the operation’s timeline: contracts were not awarded until April 2022 and therefore this limited the time available to promote, recruit and deliver provision. Additionally, 2022 marked a busy time for playworkers, very many of whom were occupied supporting provision funded as part of the Winter of Well-being and Summer of Fun initiatives.²⁹ Consequently, sector representatives noted that this impacted on practitioners’ availability to pursue training.

²⁹ The Winter of Wellbeing and Summer of Fun initiatives funded by the Welsh Government aimed to support children and young people to recover from the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing opportunities for play and participation in leisure, recreational, sporting and cultural activities.

4.12 Other factors that were reported to have impacted on the recruitment of participants through PfS were:

- lower levels of demand for the part-time apprenticeship pathway: it was suggested that embarking on an apprenticeship that could take several years to complete was less attractive to practitioners than had been anticipated;
- the Step up to Management Pathway and the Pathway to Welsh language were not delivered;
- a training provider initially engaged to deliver L2 APP in EW withdrew due to their failure to meet the eligibility criteria. The allocation of learners was subsequently addressed at a later stage, separate from the PfS operation.
- Some providers reported having identified demand for the qualifications available among volunteers in play settings. ESF rules meant that volunteers, who are a key cohort across the play sector, were not able to participate in PfS.

4.13 Further detail on participants in the 2019-2023 period only is set out in Table 4.1. An additional 507 participants participated in apprenticeships in the 2016-2019 period.

Table 4.1: Participants per pathway for Progress for Success 2019-2023

	WWV target*	WWV participants starting PfS**	EW target	EW Participants starting PfS **
SQA Playwork Principles into Practice (P3) Level 2 or 3	48	0 ³⁰	29	0
Transition to Playwork from Early Years / L2 APP	1,674	477	1,026	285
Managing a Holiday Playscheme	186	0 ³¹	114	0
Pathway to Welsh Language	186	0 ³¹	114	0
Childcare Step up to Management	149	0 ³¹	91	0
CCPLD / PfS pilot part-time apprenticeship	310	79	190**	74
Total Participants	2,553	556	1,564	359
Total Participants (minus 12%)³²	2,247		-	

* Source: 'Potential delivery costs for PfS extension' spreadsheet shared by the Welsh Government

** Source: Monitoring data provided by Welsh Government

4.14 The following sections provide an overview of findings from interviews with 28 childcare and play practitioners who completed a qualification under either the Transition to Playwork award or the apprenticeship pathway. These interviews were carried out by telephone during January and February 2023. This section also draws on the views of a sample of 18 setting owners or managers, who were interviewed during March 2023.

³⁰ Note: Four participants started a qualification under this pathway but were found to not be eligible for PfS and were not then funded under this operation.

³¹ Not delivered as part of the operation. See paragraphs 3.5 -3.6.

³² Target reduced by 12 per cent for WWV to allow for participants who may follow more than one course, as a learner can only be counted once for ESF funding. The 12% was not applied to EW target as not funded by ESF.

How participants heard about the opportunity to complete the qualification

4.15 The majority of participants interviewed (across both the apprenticeship and Pathway to Play strands of the programme) were informed of the opportunity to pursue the award by their manager, who recommended that they take up the opportunity. In some cases, learners who were also setting managers reported that they had been contacted directly by training providers who were promoting the opportunities available. Additionally, some participants noted that colleagues in their setting had already completed the qualification and heard about the awards through word of mouth.

“My line manager suggested it. I was in an after-school club. I had worked there for a couple of months, and she said there there's a level two qualification for me ... and it looks way better on a CV with I can be like a back-up manager, and I'm classed as qualified where before I was unqualified.” – Participant, Level 2 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.

4.16 Training providers reported approaching settings to promote the opportunities. In many cases, training providers were able to contact settings with whom they had worked previously and therefore this was a continuation of existing partnerships. In promoting the qualifications, however, training providers were limited to geographical areas in which they had secured contracts. Training providers also reported that in some cases settings approached them to enquire about the qualifications. The evaluation of the first phase of PfS had found that some providers had resorted to ‘aggressive marketing campaigns’ to recruit learners to pursue qualifications that, in some cases, were not required or were not the most appropriate. Although training providers expressed some frustration about the challenges in recruiting participants at the scale they had anticipated, there was no evidence of this type of forceful recruitment during PfS in 2019-2023.

Reasons for completing the qualification.

4.17 Participants explained that they were encouraged – and, in some cases, instructed – to complete the Transition to Playwork award in response to the new NMS requirements for those working in registered setting caring for children up to age 12 to have a play and childcare qualification.³³ They noted that their settings needed qualified staff either to extend their hours or to run play schemes.

³³ [Circular Letter WGC 006/2017 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/circular-letter-wgc-006/2017)

4.18 Most interviewees reported that they had been informed that completing the qualification was a requirement for all practitioners.

“Based on what we were told about it being compulsory, I thought if I did it now it would be out of the way.” (Pathway to Play participant – Level 3 Transition to Playwork, EW)

“I was working with older learners – ages five to 11, so that’s why I was asked to do the course, along with 2 others from the nursery.” (Pathway to Play participant – Level 3 Transition to Playwork, EW)

4.19 Most learners who followed the apprenticeship pathway also noted that it had been recommended by their line manager. Other motivations mentioned by those interviewed included:

- an interest in learning more about playwork;
- improving their CV and enhancing career progression opportunities;
- having the ability to serve as a back-up manager where required;

“Being a teacher is quite different from being in a play setting. So, I wanted to learn more about that and then just help with potential career progression later on if I decide not to be a teacher, then it gives me a few more options. I think it's helpful for [the setting] as well, because if someone's not able to come in then at least I've got the qualification as well. And I was just interested in play.”

Participant – Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.

Experiences of following the qualifications supported through Progress for Success

4.20 This section presents the views of participants, employers and training providers on various aspects of the qualifications delivered through PfS. Specifically, it summarises evidence and findings relating to:

- The structure and associated workloads of the qualifications completed;
- Course content; and
- The support provided to participants by training providers, tutors and employers.

4.21 Where appropriate, we distinguish between findings in relation to the Pathway to Play and the apprenticeship strands of PfS.

Participants' views on course structure and workload under the Pathway to Play strand

- 4.22 Learners interviewed who had completed the Transition to Playwork awards were broadly supportive of the overall structure of the qualifications, and recognised the importance of guided instruction to provide an understanding of playwork principles and the theories that underpin effective practice.
- 4.23 However, interviews highlighted contrasting views on the workload of the qualifications. Around half of the participants interviewed reported being surprised by the volume of work involved, describing the workload as significant and more challenging than they had expected (see case study 4, 'Diana' in section 6). Several participants interviewed reported that they spent considerable time on weekends and during evenings completing tasks. A number of interviewees who also had management roles in their settings noted that some members of staff struggled, particularly those with less recent experience of formal learning.
- 4.24 These comments were in contrast with the views expressed by other participants, who reported that the workload was manageable. These individuals tended to be in more senior roles in their settings and were more likely to have completed other qualifications more recently. Others who worked part-time noted that they were able to manage the workload and complete assignments during their days off. Some of those working part-time noted that they would have found it more challenging had they needed to balance the demands of the course alongside full-time working hours.

Participants' views on structure and workload of the pilot apprenticeship

- 4.25 Participants' opinions on the duration of the courses delivered under the apprenticeship pathway were varied. Some suggested the need for a longer course and greater time to complete coursework, while others felt that their course was too long. Most participants noted that course tutors took a flexible approach, granting additional time to finish assignments when necessary.

“[I was] able to speak to course leaders if I ever felt too stressed. They were helpful, and reassuring. They did sometimes offer extensions which was good. A few people did have extensions. Course wise, it should be longer. There's not enough time to complete the course work. I was stressing trying to get it done.” – Participant, Level 2 CCPLD, WWV.

4.26 A few participants expressed dissatisfaction with the duration of the CCPLD or Playwork qualification, stating that they found the course too long and wished it could have been condensed or streamlined. However, many recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated setting closures may have contributed to prolonging the duration of qualifications.

“It was good, but it just went on for so long - because of COVID, I think it took me two and a half years maybe three coming up and it just seemed never ending. When I thought it was coming to an end, there was more work to do.” – Participant, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.

4.27 Although the apprenticeship pathway was targeted at individuals working less than 16 hours, some of the participants interviewed were also employed elsewhere, working full-time hours across different roles. These participants referred to the challenges associated with working full-time and undertaking the qualification, which caused issues when balancing various commitments.

“It was a bit crazy, between college, work, everything. I have to run around in between and balance everything and it is hard going.” – Participant, Level 2 CCPLD, WWV.

4.28 Most participants reported that they carried out coursework for the CCPLD or Playwork qualification outside of their regular work hours, and in their own time. This is not consistent with the expectation that an apprenticeship is a work-based learning programme with time to study.

Employer views on structure and workload

4.29 Employers echoed the views expressed by several former learners about the challenges of completing courses under both the apprenticeship and the transition to playwork strands of PfS. Setting owners and employers referred to the challenges faced by their staff. One employer explained that their play staff are contracted to work 15 hours per week, but there was not enough time to fit in the course work within their allocated hours. They said that an additional hour per week, would provide the staff with enough time to complete their work during their work hours. Employers reported that staff were struggling to balance coursework alongside their responsibilities in work.

4.30 Employers reported difficulties in releasing PFS learners from their work to spend time on coursework, due to the pressures on staffing teams.

“The only thing for the staff was that they couldn’t balance work and life very well while doing the course. We were too busy in the nursery to release staff, so they had to do the work in their own time after work, and the last thing they want to do is to open their laptops after a long day.” - Employer, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

4.31 Employers noted that the online delivery of aspects of the courses via Zoom and Teams worked effectively for staff. They went on to explain that this was a positive aspect of taking the course, as staff didn’t need to travel anywhere to attend, thus improving staff’s time management outside of work.

Participants’ views on course content under the Pathway to Play strand

4.32 A range of views were expressed by interviewees in relation to the content of the Transition to Playwork qualification. For a number of participants, course content reinforced existing knowledge and practice. Participants were able to draw on previous experience to complete assignments and some described the qualification as a ‘helpful refresh’ of knowledge.

“I viewed it as part of CPD – almost a refresher for me in terms of my practice. It’s always good to kind of learn new things and, keep up to speed.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

4.33 For others the course content provided new insights. It provided guidance on how to plan play activity, new insights into current legislation and practice. Participants noted that they had subsequently shared this information with other colleagues in their setting who had not completed the qualification.

4.34 Several participants noted issues regarding the content of the qualification. For these individuals, the main weaknesses of the course were:

- That course content was repetitive – it was noted that the amount of observation built into the qualification felt unnecessarily repetitive:

“There were lots and lots of observations – which were a mammoth task in themselves with the writing up. I think once you’re at a certain level – and are qualified enough to do a Level 3 qualification, you’ve already had to have done a lot of observation already.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, EW.

- The ideas and topics presented were explored in a superficial way without sufficient depth and without clear progression in learning built into the course. One participant who was also a deputy manager in their setting noted:

“There was no real exploration of issues and, compared with colleagues who had done the full Level 3 course, staff didn’t gain much in the way of knowledge or skills... If I’d known prior to the course, I would’ve put them on the full course, even though it’s longer.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, EW.

- Course content was described as being disjointed and uncoordinated. Participants noted that, as part of the online delivery, they were split into break-out rooms on Zoom. However, the tasks set to smaller groups did not always ‘match the previous session or the information provided’. As such, several interviewees felt that they didn’t get as much out of the break-out sessions and it *‘didn’t feel like the best use of time’*.

Participants’ views on course content under the pilot apprenticeship strand

- 4.35 Overall, participants provided positive feedback regarding the content of courses, and their learning experience. Course delivery was described as easy to understand and well-structured, and that the course encouraged independent learning, which was well-received by participants. Much of the course was delivered on MS Teams, with regular catch-up meetings with assessors, but the majority of learning was done independently using provided slides and resources accessible through Moodle (e-learning platform). Despite the emphasis on independent learning, participants noted that assessors were always readily available to provide support when needed.
- 4.36 The feedback provided by one participant pointed towards a need for training providers to manage expectations, particularly regarding communication with the tutor. Although the tutor had encouraged the participant to reach out whenever assistance was needed, the participant noted that they would have preferred more frequent check-ins. Specifically, when the participant wanted help with a question,
- “They’re always “get in touch whenever” but when you’re in the middle of tricky question in the evening and send a WhatsApp you don’t get an answer for a couple of days.” – Participant, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.
- 4.37 While some participants found the content useful and beneficial, it was not the case for all, as reported by one participant who encountered issues with the examples used in the course. She noted that the scenarios often revolved around holiday

clubs, and as someone who had only worked in after-school clubs with no experience in that area, they found it challenging to provide additional examples when prompted to do so while submitting work.

Pathway to Play participants' views on support

4.38 Participants interviewed who had completed a Transition to Playwork award reported that they had received support and encouragement from their employers or managers to complete the qualification. Interviewees provided comments on the support provided by tutors and assessors. In most cases, participants expressed satisfaction with the support from the training provider and the flexibility shown by employers (see case study 3, 'Emma' in section 6). However, a minority of interviewees felt that the quality of support from their training provider fell short of their expectations.

“The assessor was slow in providing feedback, which was demotivating for me at times.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, EW.

4.39 Others pointed to inconsistencies in guidance and in feedback provided, depending on which assessor was supporting them. In one example a participant explained that they kept having work sent back repeatedly, with feedback suggesting that more information needed to be added. This individual contrasted this with a colleague's experience of the same assignment (a colleague from the same setting).

“My deputy did more basic presentations and assignments with less detail, which wasn't scrutinised anywhere near as much as mine. So, our experience was that different assessors were more picky – it was inconsistent.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

4.40 In a small number of instances, participants with additional learning needs noted that they found the online course delivery challenging. One participant who explained that they had dyspraxia explained,

“The course would be better in real life. I struggle with comprehension and instructions... a face-to-face course would have been more helpful, and I would have felt better supported.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

Pilot apprenticeship participants' views on support

- 4.41 Feedback collected from participants indicated that the majority of employers and tutors were supportive throughout the course. Participants reported that their employers were accommodating of their study commitments, offering an opportunity to work on assignments during any quiet periods, where possible. Tutors were mostly described as approachable and providing timely feedback on assignments. There were however some exceptions, with reports of delays in answering emails or marking work.
- 4.42 Some participants reported inconsistencies and shortcomings in their learning experience, echoing comments by learners who completed a Transition to Playwork award. These included a lack of sufficient visits from the tutor, differences in marking styles compared to their peers, and having to redo written work multiple times.

“One of my friends was also doing the same course and they were doing it with a different assessor, and they didn't do half as much work as I did.” – Participant, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.

Employer views on support for learners

- 4.43 Overall, employers were pleased with the support provided by training providers and tutors to learners who completed a Transition to Playwork award. One employer shared how the training providers carried out workshops in their nursery which positively impacted the staff's experience of undertaking the qualification.

“Great support from [training provider], they even did workshops in the nursery which helped the staff relate what they learnt to their jobs.” – Employer, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

- 4.44 Employers also noted that they received regular feedback from the tutors, and this helped both them and their staff to feel a sense of progression throughout.

“Tutors [were] very helpful and provided constant feedback to us. This helped us be able to support our staff in the best way possible. My staff also spoke highly about the support they got during the course.” – Employer, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

- 4.45 Although a few participants interviewed offered negative experiences from the switch to online learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (as outlined

previously), most employers interviewed did not report any adverse impacts for learners and employers; some employers noted the benefits of working remotely, as the quality of learning from the tutors remained the same.

“[Content] was delivered over Zoom, I think this suited everyone better as it didn’t mean they had to travel anywhere, they could all just do it on their laptops. This happened due to COVID, but I don’t think the pandemic affected the course at all. There was still plenty of support from the providers.” - Employer, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

4.46 Among employers whose staff had completed a course under the apprenticeship pathway, views on the support provided to learners were more mixed. It is a requirement for employers to be involved in discussions about learners’ progress, and some employers reported that there was regular contact, and that communication was consistent. In these cases, employers noted that they were able to get in touch with the tutor without any issues.

“Regular contact between the trainers and the manager, it was mandatory that the manager was involved and kept up to date with everything. If I wanted to check on progress, it was easy to get in touch with the trainer.” - Employer, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.

4.47 However, some employers reported that there were differences in how tutors communicated with employers. This appeared to vary between training providers but also between different tutors working for the same provider. Some managers received reviews from the course tutors, which provided information on how the participants were doing in terms of progress. This ensured that the managers were able to follow the participants learning journey, and understand where to provide additional support, if needed.

“The manager [receives a] review from the tutor [summarising a learner’s progress], which is great, this didn’t happen in previous years with tutors from the same provider. So, it feels it’s down to luck if the tutor will be supportive or not” - Employer, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, EW.

4.48 In contrast to views expressed by employers in relation to the Transition to Playwork awards, some apprenticeship pathway employers reported that the support and communication they received from the tutors were significantly impacted by the pandemic. They reported that their experience with the training provider during this

time led them to find alternative trainer providers. They noted that poor communication contributed to the course taking longer to complete than expected.

“During the pandemic communication from [training provider] was awful, tutors didn’t do any effort to work with the pandemic and it took ages. I wouldn’t recommend them due to the provider. It took two and a half years to finish due to pandemic and lack of support from tutors throughout. We complained to the local authority, we had no further support but it felt good to have a say” - Employer, CCPLD Level 3, EW.

5. Findings: Outcomes of Progress for Success

- 5.1 This section presents participants' and employers' views on the impact of PfS on participants' knowledge and skills, job prospects and likelihood of taking further training.

Impact: Improved knowledge, understanding and skills

- 5.2 Overall, participants interviewed provided positive feedback in relation to the impact undertaking a PfS funded qualification has had on their knowledge, understanding and skills as a childcare/playwork practitioner.

Pathway to Play: Transition to Playwork

- 5.3 Some participants interviewed who had undertaken the Transition to Playwork qualification noted that the course had increased their knowledge of the principles of playwork and made them more aware of the different styles of play. See case studies 3, 'Emma' and 4, 'Diana' in section 6 for examples. Participants also reported that the course had given them insight into the different stages of children's development and different methods of supporting play at different ages. Having this increased knowledge has proven beneficial in enabling participants to support/facilitate the delivery of early years and after school provision.

"We're currently looking after children up to 4 years and 9 months. But if we were to do an afterschool club, we can go up to the age of 12 years. So it's then about understanding how to plan for that age group. Although a lot of it would be what you'd automatically do anyway, the course was about understanding why you do it and how to implement it further. Obviously a 12 year old is not going to want to do what my 3 year olds do." – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

- 5.4 Furthermore, Transition to Playwork participants interviewed reported sharing their new knowledge gained from the course with colleagues. This indicates the wider impact of PfS on childcare/play settings and their staff.
- 5.5 For many interviewees the Transition to Playwork qualification had increased their confidence as a practitioner. In particular, participants felt more confident to manage play and to think about provision from a playwork perspective as a result of undertaking the course. Moreover, many Transition to Playwork participants reported differences in how they facilitated children's play and how they assessed

risk differently. As a result of their enhanced understanding of play, many participants felt that the experiences for the children in their setting had improved. One example cited by interviewees was allowing greater scope for children to take the lead in directing their own play.

“It’s about giving [children] the freedom to play, to explore the world – observing them and responding, being there when they need us. Looking out for any children who are not as involved and facilitating them to interact and engage – if they need that extra support.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

“It’s made a huge difference to my practice and how I work with children. I used to question the children far more – looking back, I used to direct their play more, probably too much and probably more ‘interfering’ than was necessary. Now I see myself as more of a resource for them – to be there for when they need me. It’s really opened my eyes to how we can support the children to be more independent. We encourage them to take risks (obviously in a safe and supported way). Everything we do is now more learner centred.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

- 5.6 During interviews for the evaluation, employers whose staff undertook the Transition to Playwork qualification confirmed that the course has had a positive impact on their employees, explaining that their employees had become more skilled and better practitioners. One employer, who also undertook the qualification, noted how they were more knowledgeable in relation to their setting’s policies and to the law on health and safety and on children’s welfare which they did not know prior to doing the course and was able to share the information with employees once promoted to a manager role.

“It was good to find out bits of new info with regards to legislation. It was good to find out this side, as I didn’t know any of this. It’s helped me in my practice to be able to share playwork principles with other staff and I feel this has really helped me improve at my job.” Employer, Pathway to Play, EW.

Pilot Apprenticeships

- 5.7 Some pilot apprentices explained that as a result of following the course, they had a better understanding of their company’s policies and procedures and had explored them in more detail than they would have done otherwise. Some participants

reported they had found this useful. For example, one participant explained that they were progressing onto a manager role which requires an in-depth understanding of the company's policies and procedures. Further discussion of the impact of PFS on learners' job prospects is presented later in this section.

- 5.8 Some apprentices interviewed noted that, as a result of undertaking their qualification, they had gained practical knowledge to enable them to improve their childcare/playwork practice. For example, apprentices interviewed who had undertaken a CCPLD qualification reflected on their increased knowledge of children's development milestones. One participant explained how they found this improved knowledge useful in enabling them to better observe children's development progress, identify when children have reached the different milestones and to confidently speak to parents about their child's development.

"We can speak to the parents if we see children are not hitting their milestone. Or if the parents are worried, we can just have a chat to them and explain that not everybody's the same. So, it's a lot of knowledge that I've learned to be able to express to parents who are worried." - Participant - Level 2 CCPLD, WWV.

- 5.9 Apprentices who had undertaken the Playwork qualification explained how they had gained a better understanding of the procedures associated with playwork, including the importance of play, particularly child-led play, in supporting children's learning and development. For example, one participant interviewed reflected on how they had learned about the 'different types of play and how children initiate play'.

"Just learning about how much children can learn through play...and just knowing the difference between adult-led and child-led play and all the different play types. All those things were the things I found most interesting."- Participant, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.

- 5.10 In addition to improved knowledge and understanding, evidence collected from interviews with pilot apprentices suggested the CCPLD or Playwork qualifications had a positive impact on participants' skills. Those interviewed mentioned that, following completion of their CCPLD or Playwork qualification, they were able to improve their skills in designing and implementing activities that were better tailored to the needs and interests of the children under their care:

"Better activity planning – [the qualification] gave me more of an insight into play and children's skills that they need from three to 10 years old." – Participant, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.

- 5.11 The knowledge and skills participants gained from undertaking their apprenticeship qualification has had an impact on participants confidence in their own practice.
- “I’m much more confident now in being a playworker. Before I was not really sure if I was doing the right thing. Sometimes I felt if I was just watching the children, I wasn't doing enough. But doing the course made me realised that just being there is what I'm supposed to be doing and intervening isn't always necessary.” - Participant - Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.
- 5.12 Furthermore, apprentices interviewed provided examples of how they have utilised their improved knowledge and understanding gained from taking their qualification within their practice as a childcare/playwork practitioner.
- “I’ve used it in my job...I don't go in and try and help as much. Which is better for the children and better for their development...It's about knowing when adult intervention is needed and when it would be more of a hindrance.” – Participant, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.
- 5.13 Conversely, some participants felt that, although the course increased their knowledge and understanding of procedures associated with playwork, they felt it was difficult to apply these in practice in their setting at times. They also requested that more of the course be focused on explaining play to others such as parents or setting trustees, and how to advocate for play,
- “The thing I found tricky, and this is a thing that they taught us on the course as well, was getting other people on board [with playwork principles]. Because people, still, when the children are playing like freely with loose parts and maybe taking risks, this has been questioned, asking ‘why?, they shouldn't be playing like that.’ So it's the advocacy that I'm struggling with” - Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, EW.
- 5.14 Increased confidence because of apprentices’ improved skills since completing the qualification was a common theme noted by employers whose staff undertook a pilot apprenticeship. Employers reported that these members of staff are now more confident in allowing children to be independent in their play with a child-led approach, which they believed provides a better learning and play experience for the children.
- “The care has improved... the practice has changed. For example, with snack time, before the qualification the staff used to do this all for the children, now they leave a blank canvas for them and allow them to do it all themselves. Putting

bread in the toaster, getting the rice cakes themselves. The kids are allowed more independence which is a huge positive and the staff are more confident in allowing that which is better for me as an employer as staff are more skilled now.”

- Employer, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.

- 5.15 Furthermore, one employer spoke about how learning specific skills during the course has increased their staff’s confidence as practitioners, thus improving the care that’s given in their nursery. The new skills include being able to plan sessions with accurate risk assessments.

“Staff are way more confident in themselves, and this helps them to provide the children with the best care. They can give the children more freedom and are better at planning play sessions now as well as risk assessing. The course helped with this as they wouldn’t have been able to do this before, it’s a new skill and it’s helped to improve their skills in the workplace for sure.” - Employer, Level 3 CCPLD, WWV.

Impact: Improved job prospects

- 5.16 For some participants interviewed, undertaking a PfS funded qualification has had a positive impact on their job prospects and career progression. Most interviewees who had undertaken the Transition to Playwork qualification or a pilot apprenticeship reported that they were still working at the same setting after completing the qualification. Some noted that the course had strengthened their resolve to remain in the childcare/play sector.

“I want to continue to work in this sector – the course reiterated the point of why I do this.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, WWV.

“Doing the course has made me want to stay in the childcare sector more than I did before. It’s reminded me why I do this.”- Participant, Level 3 CCPLD, EW.

- 5.17 In some cases, Transition to Playwork participants interviewed had taken on additional roles since completing the qualification. Completing the Transition to Playwork qualification was reported to have been a factor for some in taking on these additional roles. For example, one participant interviewed explain that gaining the qualification meant they were able to secure a playworker job at an afterschool club.

5.18 In other cases, Transition to Playwork participants had taken on a more senior role or more responsibilities and completing their qualification was a factor in enabling them to do this.

5.19 Similarly, some pilot apprenticeship participants mentioned that they had received a promotion in their respective workplaces after completing the CCPLD or Playwork qualification. This demonstrates the value that their employers placed on participants' newly acquired skills and expertise as a result of completing their qualification.

“After I'd got this level three, they [setting owner] put me forward [for manager role] with the qualifications that I've got and the experience I've gathered”. – Participant, Level 3 Diploma in Playwork, WWV.

5.20 For around half of participants who were interviewed, there were no reported changes in their role or responsibility. Instead, they reported that taking part in the course had strengthened their interest in the sector and increased their likelihood of staying in the role and sector. (See case study 1, 'Gemma' in section 6)

5.21 When asked if their employees have increased their knowledge and skill since doing the qualification, one employer noted how it's helped one member of staff gain a promotion due to their increased level of competency. They reported that the course has helped them to recognise the subjectivity of their work and learn to tailor their care to each individual child.

“[Staff member] went on to be supervisor- the course helped with planning and organisation skills. And knowing how to adapt their care depending on needs of the child and what they are going through, I feel like knowing this has improved the care in my nursery and also individually as practitioners.” - Employer, Pathway to Play Transition to Playwork Award, WWV.

Impact: Going on to further training

Pathway to Play: Transition to Playwork

5.22 Interviewees who took part in the Transition to Playwork award referred to further training they were exploring since completing their qualification. Some noted their aspiration to complete a Level 5 in Playwork:

“I'm thinking about Level 4 or 5 in childcare or playwork. I'm more interested in the next qualification because when you get into it, you want to learn more and

keep developing – so would consider a play qualification at a higher level if the opportunity arose.” – Participant, Level 3 Transition to Playwork, EW.

- 5.23 One participant noted that although they were not looking to undertake other qualifications currently, as a result of completing the Transition to Playwork award, staff at their setting had become interested in implementing the method of ‘in the moment’ planning which involves taking the lead from the children and links to the playwork principles covered in the Transition to Playwork qualification. As a result, this participant explained that they were looking into opportunities for support and training to embed ‘in the moment’ planning into their practice.
- 5.24 Some Transition to Playwork participants interviewed reported that they were concentrating currently on mentoring colleagues in the methods and practices they had learnt on the course as these interviewees were starting to introduce them into the setting with the support from their setting manager since completing the course. Therefore, this suggests that these participants were focusing on cascading their learning to other practitioners rather than seeking further training opportunities for themselves.

Pilot Apprenticeships

- 5.25 Some pilot apprenticeship interviewees referred to further training opportunities they had undertaken or were exploring since completing the CCPLD or Playwork qualification. For example, one interviewee who completed their Level 2 CCPLD through PfS explained how this enabled them to then progress on to doing their level 3.
- “The Level 2 was a steppingstone for me, it allowed me to go on to do the Level 3. It just gave me that extra boost knowing that I have that Level 2. So, I thought ‘right, let’s crack on with my level 3 straight away.’ Because everything’s fresh in my mind. Then I could get that extra qualification and better myself.” – Participant, Level 3 CCPLD, WWV.
- 5.26 Additionally, one pilot apprenticeship interviewee reflected on how doing their Level 3 had provided them with the desire and motivation to then progress on to doing their Level 5 Leadership, the next step after an apprenticeship.
- 5.27 However, most of those interviewed were still reflecting on what they had learnt and had no immediate plans for further training.

Alignment with Welsh Government priorities

- 5.28 The Business Plan for the operation set out how PfS was designed to align with other Welsh Government initiatives and priorities. In particular it detailed how PfS aimed to contribute to the Employability Plan³⁴ by encouraging employers to up-skill and support their staff and providing opportunities and support for existing childcare and play practitioners to broaden and raise their skills levels. Similarly, the Business Plan outlines how PfS aimed to support the commitments within the Prosperity for All economic action plan³⁵ by ‘providing opportunities to support an expanding workforce to broaden and raise their skills’ and by doing so to ‘actively contribute towards all children from all backgrounds having the best start in life’.
- 5.29 The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 underpins Welsh Government policy, which outlines seven well-being goals.³⁶ The goal associated with ‘A prosperous Wales’ seeks for Wales to be ‘an innovative, productive and low carbon society which develops a skilled and well-educated population”. PfS was designed to align with this goal, whilst also contributing to a more equal Wales, and a Wales of thriving Welsh language.
- 5.30 Findings discussed throughout this section indicate that the operation was broadly successful in contributing to these goals with most participants reporting an increase in their skills as a result of undertaking their qualification. Consequently, these participants noted improvements in their practice and their ability to support children's development. These findings were supported by employers who, during interviews, recognised improvements in their employee’s skills and their practice. As discussed earlier in this section, a few participants reported that undertaking a PfS qualification has helped to improve their career prospects and progression. These findings suggest that the operation has made a contribution to the Welsh Government’s wider aims and priorities, albeit on a more limited scale than intended due to fewer participants taking part,

³⁴ The Business Plan refers to [Employability plan 2018 | GOV.WALES](#)

³⁵ The Business Plan refers to [Prosperity for All: economic action plan | GOV.WALES](#)

³⁶ [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015: the essentials \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

Outcomes related to Cross-cutting themes

Background to cross-cutting themes

- 5.31 All ESF-funded programmes in Wales were required to incorporate cross cutting themes (CCTs) into their design, implementation and monitoring. The Structural Funds Programmes, guided and supported by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO), incorporated three key cross-cutting themes (CCTs):
- equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming, including Welsh language;
 - sustainable development;
 - tackling poverty and social exclusion.
- 5.32 The PfS operation had an objective of contributing to the CCTs and The PfS Business Plan set out how PfS operation intended to contribute towards the CCTs
- 5.33 With agreement with WEFO the PfS operation was to contribute towards the following CCT measures;
- Positive action measures supporting disabled people;
 - Resource efficiency measures;
 - Develop and engage with CCT Champions;
 - Mentoring / Advocacy activity;
 - Peer support activity;
 - Improving the local supply chain;
 - Identify and support opportunities to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language and support speakers of the language.
- 5.34 The evidence for this section on CCTs is drawn primarily from interviews with Welsh Government officials, training providers and stakeholders. Additionally, desk research was conducted to analyse monitoring data and examine case studies submitted by training providers to the Welsh Government.

Incorporating Cross-Cutting Themes in the programme's design

- 5.35 The delivery of the PfS apprenticeships was procured under the existing work-based learning framework and the contract between Welsh Government and each successful provider set out the obligations under the CCTs, which included written policies and procedures. As part of the procurement exercise for the Transition to Playwork and the L2 APP awards, training providers were informed from the invitation to tender of the requirement to address and report on cross-cutting

themes. They were told that were they to be successful they were to nominate a member of staff to lead on Cross Cutting Themes. They will be required to meet on a regular basis with Assessors/Trainers or any Sub-Contractors to review what actions/procedures have been implemented to meet the CCT's targets.

Evidence of contribution towards CCTs

- 5.36 The design of the operation, in its upskilling of childcare and playworkers contributes to the CCTs. Specifically, the focus on childcare and playworkers contributes to towards improving access to higher quality childcare, which in turn can improve the life chances of children linked to both equal opportunities and tackling poverty.
- 5.37 The programme in the period 2019-2023 aimed to provide equal opportunities for eligible existing practitioners aged 18 and above, regardless of gender, health, disability and ethnicity, to upskill. The original Business Plan set targets for participants completing the qualification fully through the medium of Welsh. The programme encouraged contracted training providers to integrate sustainable development into their provision.
- 5.38 The Business Plan for PfS set out the target of practitioners in different categories, over the whole operation period 2016-2023 in the WWV region, as set out in figure 5.1.³⁷ The participant profile data for those participants taking part in that period is also set out in that table.

³⁷ Progress for Success Re-evaluation Business Plan, October 2018. Welsh Government (Unpublished) Welsh Government, October 2018 (Unpublished)

Table 5.1: Targeted number and percentage of practitioners for Progress for Success (whole operation 2016-2023), in West Wales and the Valleys

	Target Percentage	Actual No. of Participants Supported	Percentage of Participants Supported
Total	100%	1,063	100%
Male	5%	36	3.4%
Disability	10%	51	4.8%
Welsh Language (complete learning in Welsh or bilingually)	15%	408	38.4%
Ethnic Minority	2%	16	1.5%

Source: Welsh Government spreadsheet, dated May 2023.

- 5.39 The proportion of male participants, disabled participants, and the proportion of ethnic minority participants is below the targeted figures outlined in the Business Plan. Training providers indicated that they did not target any specific segments of the workforce but rather promoted and marketed qualifications to employers, who made them available to all suitable employees. Nevertheless, some training providers reported that as part of their involvement in the broader apprenticeship framework, they had reviewed general marketing materials and course content to ensure their suitability for all individuals. As the training providers did not specifically focus on any particular groups, it is likely that the participants involved share a similar profile to the overall workforce, however there is no data regarding the composition of the childcare and play workforces in Wales available for comparison.
- 5.40 The Business Plan proposed that during the lifetime of the PfS operation 15 per cent of the participants would complete their learning via the medium of Welsh or bilingually and notes that “we believe by counting any Welsh medium or bilingual learning activity towards the targets then this will be achievable”. The number of participants who received some form of provision in Welsh surpassed the target, reaching 38.4 per cent. However, out of all the participants, only 24 individuals have been recorded as having enrolled in Welsh medium provision with the rest recorded as having completed ‘partially’ in Welsh. Furthermore, for the participants who were interviewed, although they reported being given the opportunity to participate in

Welsh language activities, they did not describe their learning experience as bilingual or Welsh-medium. This suggests those who received partial Welsh language instruction may have had a limited exposure to materials and learning in Welsh and is therefore unlikely to have much impact on their use of Welsh in settings. As a result, we can assume that this aspect of the operation did not make a substantial contribution to Cymraeg 2050 targets. According to the trainer providers interviewed, there were no particular issues with delivering qualifications in Welsh as they had trainers and assessors with Welsh skills, however, they did note that there was a reluctance among some participants when it came to written assessments in Welsh.

Evidence from Training Providers

- 5.41 Training providers were asked to share case studies to demonstrate meeting the CCTs with Welsh Government. Seven anonymous case studies received from training providers were shared with the evaluation team. These were in the form of up to one page setting out the background to PfS, the engagement with learners and any examples of good practice, lessons learned and outcomes. Extracts from case studies were also shared directly by some training providers.
- 5.42 The case studies set out points related to CCT progress and outcomes, namely, local supply chain development, peer support activity to support the Welsh language, resource efficiency measures, mentoring, and positive action for disabled people:
- Local Supply Chain Development:
 - The operation supported providers in gaining necessary accreditations through partnership working and sub-contracting arrangements.
 - Providers were able to increase their staff count to meet contract requirements, contributing to local supply chain development.
 - Opening up competition and expanding the market through fair procurement exercises aligned with Welsh Government policy initiatives.
 - Peer Support Activity:
 - Engaging learners in group discussions and workshops encouraged ideas and behaviours to support children's rights and play. Discussions highlighted differences in access to play opportunities based on community characteristics. Learners recognised the

negative impact of the pandemic on children's mental health and the need for free play opportunities. Training helped learners implement playwork principles and increase their understanding of the importance of play.

- Resource Efficiency Measures:
 - Flexible delivery methods, including e-learning, reduced the carbon footprint and costs associated with traveling and printing.
 - Online learning ensured inclusivity and adaptability to participants' schedules and other commitments.
 - Engagement with flexible delivery methods and online learning reduced course times while maintaining effectiveness.
- Supporting the Welsh Language:
 - Qualifications were all available to be delivered in English/Welsh or bilingually. One case study set out how there was collaboration between stakeholders to adapt a Level 3 Transition Award to Playwork to be delivered in English/Welsh or bilingually.
 - Learners were assigned Welsh-speaking trainers and received additional support for Welsh language development.
 - Providing qualifications in Welsh supports Cymraeg 2050.
- Mentoring / Positive Action for Disabled People. One case study was received under this theme, demonstrating the support provided to an individual who was described as struggling with emotional health issues.
 - Additional support, including emotional and practical assistance, helped a learner with personal and emotional health issues complete the qualification successfully.
 - The learner continued to develop their playwork approach and make positive changes in their personal life and the play environment.
 - The training contributed to the learner's improved confidence, self-esteem, emotional health, and ability to create inclusive play spaces.
- Mentoring and Overcoming Barriers to Learning:
 - Learners initially unsure about the course found it interesting and useful after implementation.
 - Implementing playwork theories led to better play opportunities for children and aligned with upcoming changes in the curriculum.
 - Learners reported positive impacts on their practice and increased understanding of the importance of play.

6. Value for money

6.1 This section of the report considers the value for money of the PfS operation, based on data and evidence collected as part of the evaluation. It provides commentary on the overall cost per participant associated with the operation, comparing this with the targeted costs set out in the reprofiled Business Plan. It also sets this in the context of the wider benefits and perceived value reported by contributors to the evaluation. Finally, it sets out the limitations associated with assessing the value for money of PfS, including in relation to estimating deadweight and displacement.

Cost per participant

6.2 The Business Plan for the re-focussed operation set out information on the value for money of PfS based on average cost per participant. The intention under the re-focussed operation was to up-skill 2,849 practitioners over the course of the entire programme of activity between August 2016 and March 2023. The re-profiled approved expenditure for the operation amounted to £6,901,894. Using these figures, the Business Plan referred to a projected average participant cost of £2,423. The Business Plan also noted: *“taking an intervention rate sought at 68.03%, this equates to a participant cost of £1,648 from European Structural Funds”*.

6.3 The lower number of practitioners who were ultimately supported through the operation (1,063 during the period 2016-2023) combined with the lower total expenditure, resulted in a higher average cost per participant of £3,115.

6.4 If only expenditure from ESF is included in the calculation, then the average participant cost totals £1,056, which is lower than the projected cost per participants from European funding as noted in the Business Plan for the re-focussed operation (£1,648). This is due to significantly lower ESF costs incurred during the operation. Table 6.1 summarises the project and actual average costs per participant through PfS.

6.5 It is important to note briefly the limitations associated with this high-level analysis. In short:

- The projected and actual costs per participant do not distinguish between participants who were supported through the apprenticeships and the Pathway to Play pathways. The costs per participant will inevitably be higher for those who completed an

apprenticeship under the operation compared with those who completed shorter courses. The overall estimated costs therefore conceal what are likely to be large variations in costs per participant across the different pathways.

- The calculations apply to PfS over the period August 2016 to March 2023 and therefore do not distinguish between the original PfS operation (2016-2019) and the re-focused operation from 2019 onwards.³⁸

Table 6.1: Approved and actual costs (West Wales and the Valleys)

	Total approved operation costs	Targeted practitioners	Projected average participant cost	Projected average participant cost from European Structural Funds³⁹
Projected	£6,901,894	2,849	£2,422.57	£1,647.97
	Total Eligible Expenditure	Total practitioners supported	Average participant cost (actual)	Actual participant cost from European Structural Funds⁴⁰
Actual	£3,311,680.68	1,063	£3,115.41	£1,056.44
% of targeted expenditure / participants	47.9%	37.3%		

Source: Welsh Government Final Claim submitted to WEFO, May 2023

6.6 The Business Plan noted that the revised delivery model for the second iteration of the operation was designed to deliver improved value for money. The inclusion of shorter transition to playwork awards from 2019 onwards as part of the operation provided an efficient way of meeting the needs of the sector.

³⁸ Only expenditure figures over the period 2016-2023 were available to the evaluation team and not expenditure per annum. Therefore the calculations in this section are based on expenditure and PfS participants over the period 2016-2023.

³⁹ Based on a projected operation intervention rate of 68.03%, with total approved ESF costs of £4,695,088.06.

⁴⁰ Based on actual operation intervention rate of 33.91%, with total ESF costs of £1,123,002.83

- 6.7 Given the nature of the operation (and the multiple pathways included), benchmarking the average participant cost of PfS with comparator initiatives is problematic. Other studies have examined the overall costs of delivering apprenticeships: a study carried out on behalf of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education⁴¹ calculated the costs of 54 apprenticeships and estimated that the mean total cost was £7,101 (across all standards and all levels). These costs varied by route (sector), with the mean cost of an apprenticeship in education or childcare (the route most closely matched to the apprenticeship pathway under PfS) calculated as being £5,761. The costs also vary extensively by level of apprenticeship, with the mean cost of a level 2 apprenticeship of £5,371 and a corresponding estimated cost of £6,815 at level 3 (although these are based on the average across all routes and do not reflect the costs of an apprenticeship in education and childcare specifically).
- 6.8 This would appear to indicate that PfS represented sound value for money in terms of the cost per participant, particularly when considering the costs drawn down from European Structural Funds. The approach taken of commissioning delivery through competitive tendering exercises also meant that costs and risks were shared across commercial training providers, who were reimbursed based on the total participants who followed and completed qualifications under the operation.

Perceived value of the operation

- 6.9 Qualitative data collected and presented in early sections of this chapter during the evaluation indicated the range of perceived benefits of the operation to employers, to practitioners and in terms of the profile of the childcare and playwork workforce. These include:

- For employers:
 - A more qualified workforce with greater knowledge of how to plan and deliver appropriate childcare and play sessions;
 - Opportunities to expand and diversify their childcare and play offer;
 - A workforce that meets the National Minimum Standards requirements;
 - Engagement between settings and training providers.

⁴¹ [Cost of delivering apprenticeship standards \(instituteforapprenticeships.org\)](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org)

- For childcare and playwork workers:
 - Increase in knowledge and skills;
 - Higher level qualifications;
 - Opportunities to take on additional responsibilities or roles;
 - Greater awareness of principles and effective practice relating to planning and delivering playwork.

- For the childcare and playwork sector
 - Investment in upskilling the workforce, enhancing the professionalisation of the sector and supporting retention and career pathways.

Deadweight

- 6.10 Only a partial analysis of deadweight effects is possible based on data collected during the evaluation. The basis for this analysis is qualitative data collected during interviews with practitioners and employers. The evaluation can offer some tentative answers to the question of whether the outcomes and effects achieved by PfS would have been realised in the absence of the operation.
- 6.11 Had PfS not been available as a means of supporting childcare and play settings to upskill the workforce, the need for settings to comply with National Minimum Standards qualification requirements would have driven settings to make arrangements for practitioners to pursue playwork qualifications. When asked about their motivation for engaging with PfS, a majority of practitioners answered that they followed a course because their employer had suggested or instructed them do so, in order to meet the minimum qualification requirements. It is therefore reasonable to assume that many of those who pursued and completed qualifications would have followed the same or similar qualifications through other routes if available
- 6.12 Without the funding available through PfS to cover the costs of the support and qualifications this is likely to have taken longer, to have fewer taking part and met with greater reluctance from settings/employers to release staff to pursue qualifications. Nonetheless, we can assume that there is considerable deadweight

associated with the outcomes achieved through PfS in terms of qualifications gained.

- 6.13 In most cases practitioners interviewed noted that their role had not changed as a result of following or gaining a new qualification through the operation (albeit that some noted they had been given opportunities to take on additional management or supervisory roles). This suggests that there was no notable impact on earnings as a direct outcome of the operation. Survey data on earnings pre- and post-completion of qualifications would have enabled an assessment of the impact on earnings of the operation, against which deadweight effects could be analysed. Any future evaluations of similar programmes that aim to upskill practitioners in the childcare and playwork workforce should incorporate the collection of contact details for employers – including their consent to be contacted – as conditions of their involvement in the programme as part of the initial design.

Displacement

- 6.14 Analysing the displacement effects of PfS involves examining whether the outcomes and impacts achieved were offset by a reduction in activity in other areas, e.g. did pursuing a qualification supported through PfS mean that practitioners did not pursue other qualifications delivered through alternative routes? The evaluation found little evidence that pursuing PfS-funded qualifications prevented practitioners from completing other planned courses or professional development opportunities. PfS was main vehicle for the delivery of the qualifications it funded. As such, employers and employees had few opportunities to access fully funded equivalent courses.

7. Case studies

7.1 This chapter presents a series of case studies that offer a closer look into the experiences of participants and employers involved in PfS. Drawing from in-depth interviews, these case studies provide their views on the qualifications followed and their perceptions of what difference PfS made to them and their settings. All case study participants have been given pseudonyms.

7.2 Two case studies from the apprenticeship strand are presented:

‘Gemma’ - Gemma completed the level 2 CCPLD course while working at a children’s centre on a zero-hour contract. She was offered a 27 hour per week contract once she completed the course.

‘Sophie’ - Sophie completed the level 3 CCPLD while working part-time at a nursery. Sophie had concerns that the course would repeat information she already learned in her degree, but she found that it served as a helpful refresher. Sophie also felt that the course length should be made longer to allow enough time to complete the coursework.

7.3 A further two example case studies are presented from participants in the Pathway to Play strand:

‘Emma’ – Emma completed the Pathway to Play at level 3 and continued to work at a nursery throughout the duration of the course. Emma’s experiences of undertaking the qualification were positive and she felt that her confidence as a practitioner has increased.

‘Diana’ – Diana completed Pathway to Play level 3 and explained that her experiences of working as a teaching assistant was useful for undertaking the qualification. Diana shared her concerns over the course length as she felt there wasn’t enough time to complete the work. She also felt that the course content was repetitive.

7.4 There are also two case studies presented from employers’ perspectives one who supervised staff undertaking the apprenticeship strand, and another who supervised staff undertaking the Pathway to Play qualification.

‘Joanna’ – Joanna is an experienced manager of a nursery that she has worked in for nearly 10 years. Four of Joanna’s staff members completed the apprenticeship strand. She feels that the course was beneficial and gave her employees a new sense of confidence as practitioners.

‘Caryl’ – Caryl is also a manager of a nursery, and five of her staff members completed the Pathway to Play qualification. She states that the course has taught her staff new skills, and that they’re now able to adapt their care on a child-by-child basis. Thus, improving the overall care provided in her nursery.

Apprenticeship Strand: Case Studies

Case study 1: ‘Gemma’

Pathway: Level 2 CCPLD

Achieved: Yes

Introduction:

Gemma works at a children’s centre. Prior to securing this employment, she volunteered at the centre, during which time she undertook her level 1 in childcare. She was then offered a zero-hour contract before being offered a permanent, 27 hours a week contract.

She heard about the course through the training provider. The assessor was working with a few of her colleagues at the children’s centre and she spoke to her manager about doing the qualification who then discussed and arranged this with the assessor. ‘It was something that I wanted to do to better myself’.

Views on CCPLD Qualification:

Gemma found the content of the course ‘really interesting’. She felt she had enough time to do the coursework but did note that she had to carry out coursework at home in her own time. Due to Covid-19 her assessor couldn’t come to visit her setting, so she was communicating with her assessor via Zoom, which she noted ‘wasn’t ideal’.

Support received while undertaking the qualification:

She was happy with the support she received from her work colleagues and assessor. ‘I only had to give my assessor a quick e-mail if I was struggling on part of the coursework. There was always someone there at the other end of the phone or there for me to have a chat to.’

Impact of undertaking the qualification:

The Level 2 has improved Gemma's knowledge in relation to child development and milestones. She explained that this has improved her confidence, particularly when speaking with parents about their child's development. Doing the Level 2 enabled Gemma to then progress onto the Level 3. Then, having the Level 3 qualification will mean that she will be able to work without supervision, for example, run sessions and change babies' nappies.

'The Level 2 was a steppingstone for me, it allowed me to go on to do the Level 3. It just gave me that extra boost knowing that I have that Level 2. So, I thought 'right, let's crack on with my level 3 straight away.' Because everything's fresh in my mind. Then I could get that extra qualification and better myself.' **Course Participant**

Case study 2: 'Sophie'

Pathway: Level 3 CCPLD

Achieved: Yes

Introduction:

While undertaking the CCPLD course, Sophie worked part-time at a nursery alongside studying for her early childhood degree. Since finishing the course and her studies she has since moved to England, where she has continued to work within the childcare sector. She heard about the course through her manager at the time, who advised her that the CCPLD course was compulsory to continue to work in Wales. If it wasn't for this reason, Sophie states that she wouldn't have signed up for the course as she had already gained a level 6 qualification as part of her degree.

Views on CCPLD Qualification:

Sophie was worried that the course would be a 'step back', after completing her level 6, however she really enjoyed the course content and felt it was useful refresher to go over things again. She also enjoyed that elements of the course were bilingual and provided an opportunity for her to improve her Welsh.

Sophie stated that she felt the course was 'too rushed' at times and felt it could have been made longer.

Support received while undertaking the qualification:

Sophie struggled with the amount of time she had to learn the course content and felt it was too rushed at times. However, she felt fully supported by the assessor who granted extensions on some of the assignments, she states that the course was manageable with this extra help.

Impact of undertaking the qualification:

She felt that the course re-iterated the reason she wants to stay in the childcare sector, and that her confidence has grown since completing the qualification. She described being able to allow children to play independently and knowing when to intervene and when to leave them alone, putting the child at the centre of the play.

'Doing the qualification has improved my knowledge in childcare and reminded me why I wanted to go into childcare in the first place. It's made me want to stay in the sector more.'

Course participant

Pathway to Play: Case Studies

Case study 3: 'Emma'

Pathway: Pathway to Play

Achieved: Yes

Introduction:

Emma works as an assistant at a nursery, which is the same role as she was in while undertaking the qualification. She works full-time hours, and therefore worked on the qualification during evenings and weekends.

Emma wanted to do the course as some of her colleagues had already done it. Her manager also encouraged her to enrol.

Views on P2P Qualification:

Very positive experience, and happy with the way it was delivered. Due to Covid-19, the course was delivered on Zoom, but Emma didn't mind this as it was less time to travel. However, she does think that future courses will be better led face to face, as she missed out on the social aspect of doing the course.

Emma enjoyed the course content and described it as 'fascinating'. She was happy with the way it was taught, and felt it was easy to grasp and remember the information.

Impact of undertaking the qualification:

Emma feels like the course has made her more confident as a practitioner and had provided more insight into her role as a nursery assistant. She describes being able to give children more freedom while they play, as before she felt overprotective. The course has given her the confidence to let the children be more independent.

'I can now just stand back and allow the children to more things without stepping in all the time, so I let them climb trees a bit higher or let them get muddy when they play outside. My confidence has grown since doing the course.' **Course participant**

Case Study 4: 'Diana'

Pathway: Pathway to Play

Achieved: Yes

Introduction:

Diana is a play leader at an after-school club who took a Level 3 Transition to Playwork course to register the club with CIW – she had been working at the club for five years, but it was not registered so were restricted in the hours they were able to offer.

She heard about the course through the course provider and found it straightforward to sign up. However, the volume of work was more than expected, with an average of 10 hours of work per week for four months, which was repetitive, involving many observations and writing.

Her background as a teaching assistant influenced her previous approach to risk and she learnt a lot about play during the course, but sometimes found it hard to persuade trustees to accept play principles.

Views on P2P Qualification:

Diana suggested that the course could be longer or less repetitive, however she was able to complete the course in time to meet the September deadline.

She also highlights advocacy for play methods and the confidence gained from the qualification in discussing it with others. However, there were limitations to how much they could push for play without upsetting the balance. She mentioned that the workload was significant and suggested that it would be better if it were longer to accommodate those with full-time jobs. The observations required were time-consuming, particularly in writing up, and it was “challenging to turn around a couple of thousand words a week”. Although she enjoyed learning, the workload was still ‘a lot to handle’.

Support received while undertaking the qualification:

Diana felt there was a lack of support from the training provider and felt infuriated when assignments needed changing due to ‘niggly’ issues and having to re-submit. However, she did feel fully supported by her employers at the school in which she worked in.

Impact of undertaking the qualification:

Diana feels that the course has provided her with skills to be able to put the child at the centre of play and intervene only when necessary. She feels that the course has increased her confidence in allowing the children to be more independent and lead their own play, and therefore feels that she is a better practitioner.

Diana considered pursuing level 5, however wants to prioritise her commitments at work and will complete level 5 once time constraints are less demanding.

‘I have noticed my practice is now different. I do a lot more where they (the child) are the ones who are directing the play, not me. It’s fun, they have a better experience than’.

Course Participant

Employer, Apprenticeship Case Study

Case Study 5: 'Joanna'

Role: Employer

Introduction:

Joanna works as a manager in a nursery and her responsibilities include overlooking policies and staff appraisals and has worked in the nursery for nearly 10 years. Four of Joanna's staff members undertook the CCPLD course, all working part time hours. Since completing the course, staff members have stayed in the same roles. Joanna explains that due to them being a small nursery, there is no scope to change roles or offer promotions.

Reasons for asking staff members to take the qualification:

Joanna first heard about the course after reported changes to National Minimum Standards (NMS), which prompted her to do her own research on qualifications. She states that meeting NMS requirements for numbers of qualified staff were her main reasons for asking her staff to take the qualification. She also felt that due to them being a small team in a rural area, it would be beneficial for them all to be qualified in case of absences. Joanna adds that she can confidently leave any of her staff members in charge in her absence due to them all being qualified.

Has taking the qualification increased staff's knowledge and skills:

Joanna thinks that since doing the qualification, her staff members have become more confident in their practice and are able to share their opinions within the work setting. She explains that prior to the course, staff didn't feel like they were useful members of the team compares to their colleagues who had completed the apprenticeship. However, since completing the course, they now feel more confident in themselves and as part of the team.

"Course made them think a little more and think outside the box. I don't think they would have been able to do this before doing the qualification. But I do teach a lot on the job, so I think a combination of the course and what they learn from me, yes, they did improve their knowledge and skills". **Employer**

Employer, Pathway to Play Case Study

Case Study 6: 'Caryl'

Role: Employer

Introduction:

Caryl is a nursery manager who oversees day-to-day activities and also works alongside the nursery staff taking care of the children. Five of Caryl's staff members undertook the Transition to Playwork qualification, all working full-time hours. Since completing the qualification, 4 of the employees remained in the same role they were in before doing the course, while 1 gained a promotion to become a supervisor. Regarding the promotion, Caryl clarifies that while the course didn't directly lead to it, it was still a valuable contribution.

Reasons for asking staff members to take the qualification:

Tutors who had worked with the nursery on previous courses shared information about the Pathway to Play qualifications to Caryl and the nursery staff. If they hadn't previously worked with the training provider, Caryl notes that she doesn't think that she would have heard about the P2P qualification.

Caryl wanted her staff to do the qualification so that they can gain knowledge on specific age groups, as other courses don't teach about older age groups of children. Additionally, some staff hadn't done a course in a while, so Caryl thought it would be beneficial to provide them with an opportunity to refresh their memory and skills. She also felt that the course will teach new skills, so that her staff became more efficient workers who can handle any situation.

Has taking the qualification increased staff's knowledge and skills?

Caryl states that the course has helped her staff members to become more organised in their practice, a skill that has been developed as a result of the qualification. They can also adapt their care depending on the circumstances of the child, and what the child is going through. Caryl explains that this has improved the care in her nursery.

*“Lots of full-time workers feel intimidated when they learn about the course, and they are worried that they won’t be able to do all the coursework and balance their daytime job with their personal life. But it is possible, and it can be done.” **Employer***

8. Conclusions

Overview

- 8.1 The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the PfS operation, delivered between 2019 and 2023. Overall, the operation made progress towards achieving a number of the key intended outcomes; the qualifications gained by practitioners were reported to have supported an increase in knowledge and skills, supporting the quality of childcare and play provision and enabling settings to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards.
- 8.2 However, due to a range of factors, PfS was ultimately delivered on a significantly smaller scale than was anticipated and fell well short of its overall targets in terms of the number of participants who engaged with the operation and were upskilled. While the targeted number of participants for WWV was 2,849 between 2016-2023, a total of 1,063 participated. The lower participant numbers impacted on the amount of ESF funding that was drawn down to support activity. The final expenditure through ESF and match funding was £3.32m, compared with eligible expenditure of £6.9m.
- 8.3 The lower levels of engagement in both WWV and EW can be attributed to various factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic which played a significant role, delaying the operation and impacting the priority given to upskilling in childcare and play settings. The delivery of qualifications was affected by other delays which limited the time available to deliver qualifications. The Transition to Playwork awards, which constituted the majority of qualifications, began later than planned, resulting in fewer learners being recruited. Funding for certain awards was also awarded late, coinciding with a busy period for playworkers, impacting on their availability to engage with training. Other challenges included lower demand for part-time apprenticeships and the non-delivery of certain pathways.
- 8.4 Taking into account this overview of the operation's delivery, the overall aim, objectives and anticipated outcomes of PfS were partially achieved, due in large measure to external factors that could not have been foreseen or mitigated.

Upskilling the workforce

- 8.5 Evidence collected from participants, employers and training providers indicated that the operation succeeded in increasing the knowledge and skills of the early years, childcare and playwork workforce. Most of the participants took part in playwork-related qualifications and reported feeling more confident in managing play and facilitating children's play. Employers confirmed that the Transition to Playwork qualification had a positive impact on their employees, making them more skilled and better practitioners. Apprentices interviewed (both CCPLD and Playwork) noted improved knowledge and understanding of their setting's policies and procedures, which had already proved useful for some participants. They gained practical knowledge enabling them to improve their childcare/playwork practice, and to design and implement activities better tailored to the needs and interests of the children under their care. Additionally, they felt that their increased confidence and skills have had a positive impact on their job prospects.
- 8.6 Contributions during the evaluation from practitioners and employers suggested that engagement with the operation had supported the longer-term outcome of increasing the quality of childcare and play. Practitioners felt they were more knowledgeable and informed and that their practice was more child-led than had previously been the case. PfS was reported to have underlined the value to practitioners of engaging in professional learning and of refreshing their knowledge, something that has the potential to deliver longer-term benefits for settings and the sector more widely.
- 8.7 Compliance with the National Minimum Standards was an important driver for many settings and practitioners who participated in PfS. The qualifications gained ensured that many settings were able to meet the requirements. The additional playwork qualifications, in particular, also meant that some settings could explore opportunities to diversify their offer, enabling some to expand their provision. Although it is not possible to quantify the effects of PfS in this regard, it is reasonable to conclude that the operation contributed towards building capacity and capability in the sector, albeit on a more modest scale than had been hoped.

Exposure to Welsh language and supporting Cymraeg 2050

- 8.8 Just over a third of the participants in WWV are recorded as having received some form of provision in Welsh, surpassing the target set by the Business Plan. However, some of these individuals interviewed reported that their learning was English-medium and that the questions on Welsh provision was not relevant to them, suggesting that their exposure to any bilingual learning activity is unlikely to have much impact on their use of Welsh in settings or Cymraeg 2050 targets. Of all participants, only 24 individuals were recorded as having enrolled in Welsh medium provision.
- 8.9 The Pathway to Welsh language originally planned was not ultimately provided under PfS, which would have potentially provided more opportunities for practitioners to broaden their skills through the medium of Welsh. However, some of this funding was allocated to the National Centre for Learning Welsh which provided additional resources to learners in the childcare and play sectors, further contributing to the outcome of more children being exposed to the Welsh language.

Attracting individuals from diverse backgrounds

- 8.10 The participation of individuals from ethnic minority communities and disabled individuals fell below the targeted figures outlined in the Business Plan. Training providers did not specifically target particular segments of the workforce but instead promoted qualifications to employers, who made them accessible to all eligible employees. However, some providers took measures to review their marketing materials and course content within the broader apprenticeship framework. No comparative data on the composition of the childcare and play workforces in Wales is available.

Supporting sector sustainability

- 8.11 There was limited evidence available regarding the impact of PfS on the sustainability of the childcare and play sector, as no quantitative data could be gathered from employers regarding their business sustainability. However, it is important to note that the sectors faced significant challenges during the operation's delivery period, particularly with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic which affected many settings' sustainability. However, the evaluation found that the provision of play qualifications played a crucial role in supporting settings to open new play provision or remain operational following the change in National Minimum

Standards (NMS) regulations in September 2022. Without these qualifications there was a risk that settings would have been compelled to close or de-register due to a shortage of qualified staff.

Value for money

- 8.12 The assessment of the value for money of the operation was limited to estimating the cost per participant over the duration of the operation, comparing this with the projected cost, set out in the Business Plan. The lower number of practitioners who were supported through the operation combined with the lower total expenditure, resulted in a higher average cost per participant of £3,074. This is around 27 per cent higher than the anticipated average cost per participant. This figure does not distinguish between participants who were supported through the apprenticeship and transition to play pathways.
- 8.13 Despite the higher cost per participant across the operation, the inclusion of shorter transition to playwork awards from 2019 onwards as part of the operation provided an efficient way of meeting the needs of the sector. Compared with the costs of delivering apprenticeships, the more blended approach taken by the operation meant that PfS represented reasonable for money in terms of the cost per participant.
- 8.14 As noted in early sections of the report, the operation was perceived to have delivered multiple benefits for employers and participants and contributed to increased quality of provision in childcare and play settings.
- 8.15 Had PfS not been available as a mechanism to support upskilling the workforce, the need for settings to comply with National Minimum Standards qualification requirements would likely have driven very many to make arrangements for practitioners to pursue playwork qualifications. It is therefore reasonable to assume that many of those who pursued and completed qualifications would have followed the same or similar qualifications through other routes if available, suggesting that there is considerable deadweight associated with the outcomes achieved through PfS in terms of qualifications gained.
- 8.16 The evaluation found little evidence of impact on participant earnings as a result of having completed a qualification under PfS.
- 8.17 In terms of displacement, pursuing PfS-funded qualifications did not appear to have prevented practitioners from completing any other planned courses or adversely

impacted settings' professional learning activity. However, this partial commentary on displacement (and indeed, deadweight) effects is limited by the qualitative data collected during the evaluation.

- 8.18 Despite facing challenges, the evaluation highlights a continued demand for funded qualifications within the childcare and play sectors. Given these findings a number of recommendations for the future have been identified, which would enhance the effectiveness and impact of any similar initiatives delivered.

Recommendation 1: Continued support for upskilling

The Welsh Government should continue to support the upskilling of the childcare and play workforce, promoting progression opportunities and supporting retention.

Recommendation 2: Support the upskilling of volunteers

The Welsh Government should explore ways to engage volunteers from play and childcare settings as part of future initiatives to upskill workers in these sectors. Recognising the key role of volunteers, this could offer a route from volunteering to employment which could help address workforce shortages and provide additional support for settings.

Recommendation 3: Continue to explore ways of providing flexibility in learning

The Welsh Government should continue to explore ways to build more flexibility into childcare and play training programmes, ensuring that any future operation can cater to different types of learners, settings, and situations.

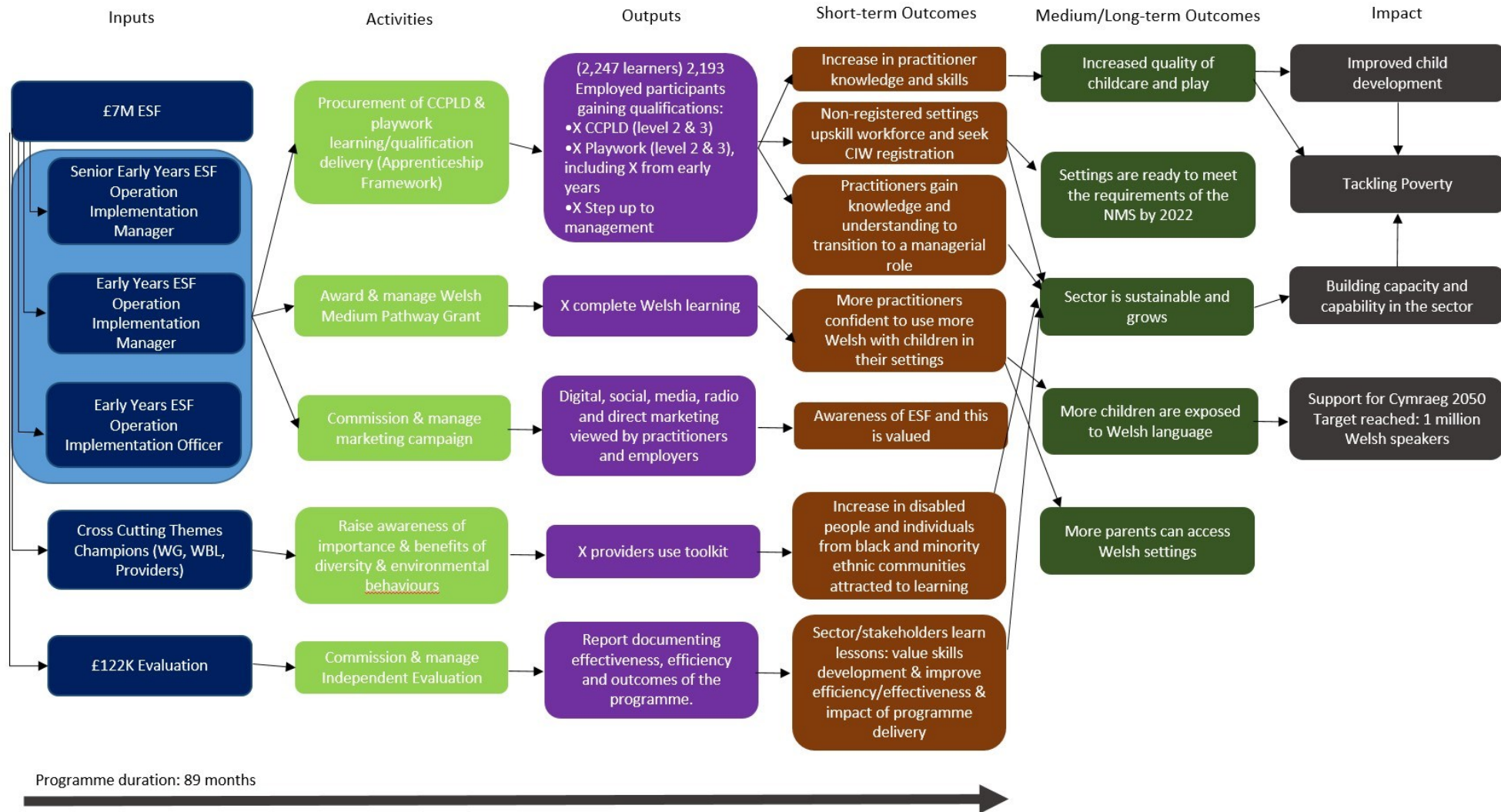
Recommendation 4: Improve data collection

As part of any future training programmes, the Welsh Government should collect employer contact details and consent to take part in evaluation activity in order to support an understanding of the impact of the programme on their setting.

Recommendation 5: Ensuring learners and employers are clear about the time commitment associated with qualifications

The Welsh Government should work with training providers to ensure that learners are made aware of the time commitments involved in completing various childcare and play qualifications, including sessions and coursework completed outside usual working hours, where applicable. This would enable participants and employers to better understand and plan their time and schedules.

Annex 1: Progress for Success Logic Model



Source: Invitation to tender documents

Annex 2: Research Tools

Topic guides for interviews with

- Participants
- Employers
- Training Provides
- Stakeholders

Privacy Notices for

- Participants Interviews
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Employer Interviews
- Training Provider Interviews

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS: EVALUATION OF PROGRESS FOR SUCCESS (PFS)

Purpose of interviews – note for interviewer

Progress for Success (PFS) funds existing workers to undertake recognised childcare and play qualifications to increase their skills levels, so the interviews will ask about participants perceptions of increased skills. The interviews will also address the following items in the evaluation aims and objectives

- *Assess the impact and effectiveness of PFS at increasing the skills of the early years, childcare and play workforces and any differences at a sector or sub-sector level.*
- *Assess the CCPLD and Playwork qualification pilots in terms of flexibility and extended delivery within an Apprenticeship framework.*
- *Identify the key strengths of the programme and any constraints/issues that may have impeded its effectiveness.*
- *Provide recommendations and gather lessons learnt to feed into future policies to support skills development.*

Who will be interviewed

These questions will be asked of two main groups of participants

Qualification via Apprenticeship Framework

Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development (CCPLD Level 2 and 3) or Playwork (Level 2 and 3) via the Apprenticeship framework to practitioners who work less than 16 hours a week.

(Shorter course) Pathway to Play (Level 2 and 3 awards) for existing early years practitioners to provide them with the relevant qualifications to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards by September 2022.

Background and employment

1. Profile information: Please explain a little about your qualification

Ensure that all the following items are covered [Confirm details from the database]:

- Which course
- Which training provider (if known)
- Which employer you were working for when you undertook the qualification.
- [For apprenticeship framework route] What were your working hours when you followed the course?

2. Current employment: What is your current role and has there been any change in your employment since starting the qualification?

Prompts if needed:

- Are you still working for the same employer?
 - [If yes] What is your current role?
 - Are you carrying out the same role for the same number of hours as you were when you started the qualification or has your role changed?]
 - [If role has changed] To what extent did completing the qualification lead to your change in role? Did gaining the qualification directly lead / indirectly lead /did not lead to change in role?
- [If not] Are you currently still working in the childcare or play sector?
 - If yes, prompts:
 - Reasons for changing your employment.
 - How did changing jobs affect the qualification?
 - How easy or difficult was it for you and your employers to carry on with the qualification while you changed jobs?
 - [If no longer in the childcare or play sector] Which sector do you now work in? What were your reasons for leaving the childcare or play sector?

Reasons for taking part

3. How did you hear about PfS / the qualification opportunity?

- Prompts: Though employer / Colleague / word of mouth / sector organisation (who?)

4. What were your reasons for following the qualification?

- Prompts:
- Did you want to learn more / gain promotion / etc?
- Did your employer recommend that you complete the qualification?

Views of the course

5. What was your experience of taking the qualification?

Make sure the following are covered: Views on

- How the qualification was delivered
- Support needs health or disability; changes in circumstances etc).
- Support and contact from the assessor / training provider
- Support and contact from your employer
- Course content and what you learnt.

6. Did you have any extra support needs in relation to health or disability; or due to changes in circumstances etc?

- How did this affect **your experience of taking the qualification**
- Did you receive the support you needed? Please explain
- Do you have any additional learning needs? Were you given any support in relation to these needs as part of the course?

7. [For the apprenticeship route]. Your qualification was over an extended period compared to other apprenticeships because you worked part time, and you would not have been able to access the mainstream apprenticeships because you were not working enough hours. With that in mind, what was your experience of taking the qualification?

- Prompts: Ask for views on

- Amount of time to learn skills to undertake the job.
- Amount of time to learn the theory and knowledge for the job.
- Work-life balance
- Whether the qualification was delivered in a way which was suitable for you.

Language choice

8. Were you offered the opportunity to undertake the qualification in English or Welsh?

9. Did you undertake the qualification through the medium of Welsh, English or both languages?

- Would you have liked to have been offered the opportunity to undertake the qualification, or some elements of the qualification, through the medium of Welsh?
- If relevant, how were you supported to carry out your qualification or part of your qualification in Welsh?

Making a difference

10. Has taking the qualification increased your knowledge and skills? How? Ask for examples.

- Prompts:
 - Has the qualification made you more likely to stay in the childcare/play sector? If yes, how?
 - Has the qualification increased your knowledge and skills in childcare/play? If yes, how?
 - Has the qualification improved the quality of the childcare/playwork you deliver? If yes, how?
 - Has the qualification increased your confidence as a practitioner? If yes, how?

Further / Other training

11. If you had not done a qualification with PfS, would you have sought to access training in some other way?

12. Have you already completed, or are you currently undertaking, further training?

Further comments

13. Any further comments on the qualification you undertook through PfS, or on qualifications and skills more generally.

QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS: EVALUATION OF PROGRESS FOR SUCCESS (PFS)

Purpose of interviews – note for interviewer

Progress for Success (PFS) funds existing workers to undertake recognised childcare and play qualifications to increase their skills levels, so the interviews will ask about employers' perception of participants' increased skills. The interviews will also address the following items in the evaluation aims and objectives:

- *Assess the impact and effectiveness of PFS at increasing the skills of the early years, childcare and play workforces and any differences at a sector or sub-sector level.*
- *Assess the CCPLD and Playwork qualification pilots in terms of flexibility and extended delivery within an Apprenticeship framework.*
- *Identify the key strengths of the programme and any constraints/issues that may have impeded its effectiveness.*
- *Provide recommendations and gather lessons learnt to feed into future policies to support skills development.*
- *Investigate the effect of participation in PFS on employers' recruitment patterns and engagement in skills development and training.*
- *(Some) Assess how PFS has performed against the delivery of the CCT aims, objectives and commitments, as well as CCT related indicators*
- *(Some) Assess the impact of the programme, including an analysis of deadweight and displacement.*

Who will be interviewed:

Employers of participants in the Qualification via Apprenticeship Framework and / or the Pathway to Play (Level 2 and 3 awards) for existing early years practitioners.

Background and employment

14. Profile information: Please explain a little about your setting and the workers who took the qualifications

Prompts if needed:

- [Confirm details from the database]:
 - What is your role and responsibilities?

- Which qualification(s) did your employees follow?
- Which training provider(s) (if known)
- How many individuals took part and what were their roles and hours?

15. Current employment of the participants: Has there been any change in the individual's/ individuals' employment since starting the qualification?

Prompts if needed:

- Are they still working for you? In what role?
- [If role has changed] To what extent did completing the qualification lead to the change in role? Did gaining the qualification directly lead / indirectly lead / did not lead to change in role?
- [If role has not changed] Did the learner wish to remain in the same role. Any barriers to changing roles?
- [If not still working for employer] Reasons for changing their employment (if known).

Reasons for taking part

16. How did you hear about PfS / the qualification opportunity?

- Prompts: Approach by training provider / previous relationship with training provider / sector organisation (who?)
- confirm whether they had worked with the training provider previously on PfS.

17. What were your reasons for asking workers to take the qualification?

- Prompts:
- National minimum standards
- Upskilling

18. What information did you receive about the opportunity at the start?

19. What are your views on the amount and clarity of information you received?

Views of the course(s)/qualification(s)

20. How was the experience of having worker(s) take the qualification(s)?

- Prompts: Ask for views on
 - How the qualification was delivered
 - How did you support the worker(s)
 - What support and contact did you receive from the assessor / training provider
 - Course content and what you learnt.

21. [For the apprenticeship route]. The qualification was over an extended period compared to other apprenticeships because the employee(s) worked part time. What was your experience of supporting a part-time worker over an extended period of time? (PFS)

- Prompts: Ask for views on
 - How it compared to having an employee follow the usual (no part-time worker) apprenticeship route?
 - Is there anything that could be changed to improve your experience as an employer, or to improve your worker's experience of following the apprenticeship?

22. Were there any challenges for you as an employer in supporting your worker(s) take the qualification(s)?

23. Are you (or your employee) likely to access further training in the future? Please explain.

Language choice

24. Were you offered the opportunity for your worker to undertake the qualification in English or Welsh?

25. Did they undertake the qualification through the medium of Welsh, English or both languages?

- Would they have liked to have been offered the opportunity to undertake the qualification, or some elements of the qualification, through the medium of Welsh?

Making a difference

26. Has taking the qualification increased your worker's knowledge and skills? How? Ask for examples.

27. Are there any other benefits to you / your workers from having taken the qualification?

28. Has the care given in your setting improved as a result of your worker's qualification?

29. More generally, do you have any views on whether PfS and the qualifications available under PfS has improved the image of the childcare sector?

30. Do you have any views on whether PfS and the qualifications available under PfS has made the childcare sector a more attractive career?

Further comments

31. Any further comments on the qualifications and the PfS scheme, or on qualifications and skills more generally.

QUESTIONS FOR TRAINING PROVIDERS: EVALUATION OF PROGRESS FOR SUCCESS (PfS)

Purpose of interviews

Interview with the training provider main contact to gather initial background information about how PfS is being delivered – more detailed interviews may take place to explore the answers in more detail with individuals who lead on marketing; equality and diversity lead, tutors etc.

Background information & Involvement in PfS

1. What is your role in [*provider name*]?

- Role and responsibilities;
- Can you outline your involvement with the PfS?
- Confirm which pathway and geographical locations.

2. Where does PfS sit within the wider structure of your organisation?

- What other related courses / programmes are currently delivered. How are they linked?

Prompt (i) other programmes in childcare and play (ii) apprenticeships

Recruitment/Marketing

3. Talk me through the process of engaging with employers and childcare/playworkers and recruiting to the programme.

- When did you begin recruiting to the programme? Was there a formal launch?
- What marketing materials do you use and how?
- Are the employers new to you or does PfS build on existing relationships with the sector?
- What feedback has there been from the sector to the opportunities?
- Is the process of engaging with PfS participants as you had expected?
- Do you target certain types of employers / participants?
- Are there particular challenges in recruiting in certain areas / parts of the sector?

4. Confirm numbers: How many have started on PfS to date, how many have completed (per pathway if relevant)?

- How does this compare with (i) WG targets and (ii) your internal targets?

Delivery

5. Please explain how PfS (or specific pathway) is being delivered.

- How are the qualifications planned and delivered –schedule of visits to/assessments at the workplace; e-learning, workshops etc.

6. How has Covid-19 affected PfS delivery?

7. What are other challenges faced in delivering the PfS?

8. What Welsh language provision is offered under PfS.

- How do you identify language preference e.g. English or Welsh.
- Are there any challenges in meeting language preferences?

9. Have you appointed any subcontractors to help deliver the programme? – if yes please provide details.

10. What changes have there been to programme design since its launch?

- Why were these changes made?
- What have been the impact of those changes?

Planning for other interviews at the training provider

The evaluation will assess the achievements of PfS, the programme's outputs and outcomes and its impact on increasing the skills of the childcare and play workforces. It will also cover the effect of PfS on employers' engagement in skills development, the CCPLD and Playworks pilot in terms of flexibility, and PfS' alignment with other initiatives

11. Who else would be the most suitable individuals to interview at your organisation?

12. The evaluation will assess how PfS has performed against the ESF cross-cutting themes. Who leads on equality, diversity and inclusion in the organisation? Who leads on the Welsh language?

13. Do you gather case studies of PfS participants for internal, marketing or any other purpose? *Check details (to explore possible use as evidence and to reduce duplication/over-burdening).*

Views on the PfS project more generally / Future considerations

14. Any other comments on PfS, or the skills development of the childcare and play workforces more generally?

15. What early lessons can be learnt; any recommendations for further development or review?

QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS: EVALUATION OF PROGRESS FOR SUCCESS (PfS)

Purpose of interviews – note for interviewer.

Progress for Success (PfS) funds existing workers to undertake recognised childcare and play qualifications to increase their skills levels, so the interviews will ask about stakeholders' perceptions of increased skills and the sector's skill requirements. The interviews will also address the following items in the evaluation aims and objectives

- *Assess the impact and effectiveness of PfS at increasing the skills of the early years, childcare and play workforces and any differences at a sector or sub-sector level.*
- *Assess the CCPLD and Playwork qualification pilots in terms of flexibility and extended delivery within an Apprenticeship framework.*
- *Identify the key strengths of the programme and any constraints/issues that may have impeded its effectiveness.*

- *Provide recommendations and gather lessons learnt to feed into future policies to support skills development.*

Introduction and background

1. Please introduce your role and your organisation.
2. Interest in / link with PfS.
 - a. Were you / your organisation involved in the planning and design stage for Progress Success (who; over what period of time).
 - b. Were you / your organisation involved in raising awareness of the PfS qualifications?

Overall programme design and rationale

Rationale

3. What do you understand to be the overall aim of PfS?
 - a. Was the original aim appropriate?
 - b. Recap through the aims and objectives:

Progress for Success (PfS) funds existing workers to undertake recognised childcare and play qualifications to increase their skills levels. The end goal is to raise the quality of provision offered to our youngest children

PfS has distinct pathways for existing practitioners:

- *Children’s Care, Play, Learning and Development (CCPLD): to pilot the new childcare and play qualification (Level 2 and 3) via an Apprenticeship framework to a number of practitioners who work less than 16 hours a week, to consider whether there can be more flexibility with this Apprenticeship and delivery can be over an extended period.*
- *Playwork: to pilot the Playwork (Level 2 and 3) via an Apprenticeship framework again to a number of practitioners who work less than 16 hours a week.*

- *Pathway to Play: (Level 2 and 3 awards) this provides opportunities and funding for existing early years practitioners to broaden their knowledge and skills and provide them with the relevant qualifications to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards by September 2022.*
4. Was the focus on (i) piloting the apprenticeships over a longer period of time to practitioners who work less than 16 hours and (ii) funding existing practitioners to transition to playwork to meet NMS requirements appropriate?
 5. From the perspective of [your organisation] what is / was the evidence base underpinning the need for PfS?
 - a. Specifically, what evidence was there of demand for upskilling the existing part-time workforce?
 - b. and of support needed to provide practitioners with the relevant qualifications to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards by September 2022.

Design of the PfS model

6. Are the methods to deliver PfS the best ones to realise the outcomes of increasing the skills levels of the workforce and to improve early childhood experiences for children?

Prompts:

- *Delivered in the right areas – it's delivered nationally in West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales;*
 - *the right qualifications (L2 and L3 CCPLD and Playwork via Apprenticeship; Transition to Playwork)?*
 - *The right workers – so with PfS, those working less than 16 hours*
 - *the right providers (training providers contracted to deliver)*
 - *Comments on any other aspects of the delivery model?*
7. What progress is PfS likely to have made?
 - To what extent will PfS have increased the skills of participants? How?

- To what extent will PfS have contributed to improvements in quality of childcare or career progression for the workforce?
- What factors may impact the delivery and effectiveness of PfS?

Perspectives on delivering PfS

8. How was PfS publicised/communicated to your sector/ members?

- How was your sector / members made aware of the opportunity to take the PfS qualifications? What role did you play?
- What feedback did you receive from your members / your sector when information about PfS was first shared?
- How was [your organisation] kept informed of PfS? Any observations on how that could be improved?

9. Have you observed any differences in delivery and take-up between regions, parts of the sector or between providers?

10. Any observation on how Covid-19 affected PfS delivery?

11. Any observations on how PfS has integrated Cross cutting themes (Equal opportunities, gender mainstreaming and Welsh language; Sustainable development; Tackling poverty and social exclusion) into delivery and outcomes?

- Any particular examples of good practice observed?
- Any challenges?
- With regards the Welsh language, does PfS, as it is designed and delivered, contribute to the Welsh Government's strategic aims for the Welsh language and Cymraeg 2050?

Early impacts and lessons

12. What would have happened in the absence of PfS? What other alternative approaches could have been used? How are employers not involved in PfS investing in skills?

13. What are the key strengths of PfS that should be further developed, and key challenges to address, to improve delivery and outcomes?

14. What should be taken into account when planning future policies and programmes to meet the skills needs of the childcare and play sectors.

15. Any other comments on PfS, or the skills development of the childcare and play workforces more generally?

Annex 3: Privacy Notices

4a. Participation Interviews

Evaluation of Progress for Success: Participant Interviews

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad to undertake an evaluation of PfS. The main aims of this evaluation are to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, value for money, outcomes, and impact of PfS. The wider objective of the evaluation is to provide Welsh Government with robust information on the implementation of PfS and lessons learned for improvement of the programme.

As part of this evaluation Arad will be gathering information through in-depth telephone or video interviews with PfS participants. These interviews will focus on your views and experience of participating in PfS, including your reasons for starting and the outcomes of your participation.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Arad will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, and anonymise the raw data, before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website.

Your Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Arad is Sioned Lewis.

E-mail address: []

Telephone number: []

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as ‘any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier’.

Your contact details (name and email address) were provided to Arad, by the PfS team in Welsh Government, who hold your details because of your involvement in the PfS programme. Arad will only use your contact details for the purposes of this evaluation.

This research does not require the collection of additional personal data from you, except for your image if you agree to the interview being video recorded, or telephone number if you wish to be interviewed on the phone.

Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email and your details will be removed.

We wish to record interviews for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If interviews are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to understand how well the programme is working and why, and to help WG officials make decisions about potential changes to the PfS programme.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Arad is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Arad will only use this data for research purposes. Arad has cyber essentials certification.

Arad has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Arad will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Arad will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Arad will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed during transcription will be deleted by Arad three months after the end of the contract. This includes

your contact details. Arad will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this research, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further Information

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Kimberley Wigley

E-mail address: []

Telephone number: []

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

4b. Stakeholder Interviews

Evaluation of Progress for Success: Stakeholder Interviews

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad to undertake an evaluation of PfS. The main aims of this evaluation are to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, value for money, outcomes, and impact of PfS. The wider objective of the evaluation is to provide Welsh Government with robust information on the implementation of PfS and lessons learned for improvement of the programme.

As part of this evaluation Arad will be gathering information through individual and small group video interviews with stakeholder organisations who were involved with PfS. These interviews will focus on

your views on the design of PfS and rationale, your observations on outcomes and impacts, and lessons learnt.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Arad will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, and anonymise the raw data, before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website.

Your Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Arad is Sioned Lewis.

E-mail address: []

Telephone number: []

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'.

Your contact details (name and email address) were provided to Arad, by the PfS team in Welsh Government, who hold your details because of your involvement in the PfS programme. Arad will only use your contact details for the purposes of this evaluation.

This research does not require the collection of additional personal data from you, except for your image if you agree to the interview being video recorded.

Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email and your details will be removed.

We wish to record interviews for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If interviews are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to understand how well the programme is working and why, and to help WG officials make decisions about potential changes to the PfS programme.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Arad is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Arad will only use this data for research purposes. Arad has cyber essentials certification.

Arad has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Arad will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Arad will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Arad will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed during transcription will be deleted by Arad three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details. Arad will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this research you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further Information

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Kimberley Wigley

E-mail address: []

Telephone number: []

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

4c. Employer Interviews

Evaluation of Progress for Success: Employer Interviews

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad to undertake an evaluation of PfS. The main aims of this evaluation are to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, value for money, outcomes, and impact of PfS. The wider objective of the evaluation is to provide Welsh Government with robust information on the implementation of PfS and lessons learned for improvement of the programme.

As part of this evaluation Arad will be gathering information through MS Teams interviews with employers who have been involved with PfS. These interviews will focus on your experience of being involved in PfS, your reasons for engagement, and the impact your involvement has had on your staff and organisation as a whole.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Arad will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, and anonymise the raw data, before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website.

Your Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Arad is Sioned Lewis.

E-mail address: []

Telephone number: []

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as ‘any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier’.

Your contact details (name and email address) were provided to Arad, by either an employee of yours who is taking part in PfS, or by a PfS training provider who holds your details because of your involvement in the PfS programme. Arad will only use your contact details for the purposes of this evaluation.

This research does not require the collection of additional personal data from you, except for your image if you agree to the interview being video recorded.

Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email and your details will be removed. Arad will only use email address and telephone number for the purposes of this evaluation.

If you choose to provide additional personal data as part of the research we will try not to identify you from, or link your identity to, the responses you provide. If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

We wish to record interviews for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If interviews are recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared following the interviews.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to understand how well the programme is working and why, and to help WG officials make decisions about potential changes to the PfS programme.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Arad is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Arad will only use this data for research purposes. Arad has cyber essentials certification.

Arad has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Arad will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Arad will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Arad will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed during transcription will be deleted by Arad three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details. Arad will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this [project], you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further Information

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Kimberley Wigley

E-mail address: []

Telephone number: []

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

4d. Training Provider Interviews

Evaluation of Progress for Success: Interviews

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research to undertake an evaluation of the ESF funded PfS programme. The main aims of this evaluation are to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, value for money, outcomes, and impact of PfS. The wider objective of the evaluation is to provide Welsh Government with robust information on the implementation of PfS and lessons learned for improvement of the programme.

As part of this project, you are invited to take part in a qualitative in-depth interview which further explores your views and experiences of PfS. In particular, these interviews will contribute to assessing the impact and effectiveness of PfS at increasing the skills of the early years, childcare and play workforce; Identifying the key strengths of the programme and any /issues that may have impeded its effectiveness and gather lessons learnt to feed into future policies to support skills development.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Arad will delete any personal data provided through the interviews, and anonymise the raw data, before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Arad is Sioned Lewis.

E-mail address: []

Telephone number: []

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as ‘any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier’.

Your contact details (email address) were provided to Arad, by the PfS team in Welsh Government, who hold your details because of your involvement in the PfS programme. Arad will only use your email address for the purposes of this evaluation.

This research does not require the collection of additional personal data from you except your image if you agree to the interview being video recorded. We may wish to record interviews for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the recording begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If the interview is recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If the interview is not recorded, the interviewer will take notes on your responses. Personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews.

Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email and your details will be removed.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to understand how well the programme is working and why, and to help WG officials make decisions about potential changes to the PfS programme.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Arad is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Arad will only use this data for research purposes. Arad has cyber essentials certification.

Arad has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Arad will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

All data gathered through this research will be reported in an anonymised format. It will not contain your contact details and any identifiable information in open-ended answers will be removed. Arad will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Arad will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed during transcription will be deleted by Arad three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details. Arad will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this [project], you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be ‘erased’ (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner’s Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further Information

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Kimberley Wigley

E-mail address: []

Telephone number: []

The Welsh Government’s Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.