The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales (PETC Wales) –

List of Required Qualifications

to work within the Playwork Sector in Wales

Prepared by Play Wales on behalf of PETC Wales

This list should be used in conjunction with the qualification framework produced by Social Care Wales and any other sector skills council with responsibility for parts of the early years workforce working in different sectors (e.g. health, education). It should also be used in conjunction with service standards and regulations, where stipulated by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

This is the List referred to in the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years particularly with regard to Standard 13: Staffing.

Those working in registered Out of School Childcare or Open Access Playwork settings require a playwork qualification. Please see section 2 for the playwork qualifications or awards required.

Those working in Full Day Care settings extended to work with children up to the age of 12 years will require both a childcare and playwork qualification or award. Please see section 2 for the playwork qualifications or awards required.

Those working in other regulated settings with children up to the age of 12 including – junior youth groups, transitional youth work and forest school holiday clubs, may require a playwork qualification or award set out in section 2.

Please also see the PETC Wales qualifications flow chart which has been produced to help decide which qualifications are most suitable -

https://play.wales/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Playwork-qualifications-flowchart-V7.pdf

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- Playworker/ practitioner (Regulated non supervisory playworker)
- Senior Playworker / person in charge (person in charge/ registered person, for a childcare setting for children up to the age of 12 years)
- Playwork manager (not required by NMS)

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Foreword

The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales (PETC Wales) exists to provide a forum for the sector to discuss issues of strategic importance on all aspects of playwork education, training and qualifications in Wales and make recommendations to Welsh Government, Social Care Wales and PETC UK. Part of its remit is to approve playwork qualifications to appear on the List of Required Qualifications referred to in Standard 13 of the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare.

Play Wales is the national charity for children's play and provides secretariat to PETC Wales which includes undertaking periodic amendments, translation and web hosting of this list.

This List of Required Qualifications to work within the Playwork Sector in Wales supersedes all previous versions.

Qualifications that are recognised by employers, fit-for-purpose and support high quality professional development are crucial to raising the status and contributing to the professionalization of the play workforce in Wales.

The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales would like to thank the Welsh Government, Play Wales and all those partners who have contributed to the development of this List of Required Qualifications.

Section 1: Introduction and Guidance

The List of Required Qualifications to work within the Playwork Sector in Wales provides guidance for employers and practitioners, training providers, regulatory bodies and other organisations on the required occupational qualifications for those working in the regulated playwork sector with children up to the age of 12 years.

This list should be used in conjunction with the qualification list produced by Social Care Wales and any other sector skills council with responsibility for parts of the early years workforce working in different sectors (e.g. health, education). It should also be used in conjunction with service standards and regulations, where stipulated by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

In April 2016 Child Minding and Day Care Regulations were amended to include provision for children up to the age of 12 years.

The qualifications for those people working with children up to the age of 12 in playwork settings (see 1.1) are those included in this list **under section 2**. For those with existing qualifications working with children and young people it may be that a qualification or award with a lower credit value will be suitable. (see 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10)

1.1 Where playwork happens

Playwork covers the facilitation and provision of play opportunities outside of the educational curriculum for school age children, and encompasses provision in the voluntary, maintained and private sectors, in the following play settings: adventure playgrounds, holiday play schemes, out of school care (including breakfast clubs, lunch clubs, after school clubs, holiday clubs (3-16 years)), school and community play centres, mobile play projects, specialist play projects, indoor play centres and family activity centres, and play ranger provision. The required qualifications listed in this document have been designed to be suitable, at the appropriate level, for all those working in the playwork settings listed above. In addition, there are people working in play development and childcare business support roles and while it is recognised that these roles enhance the development and delivery of play provision, the scope of this document is specifically those staff working in settings listed in the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare and does not cover staff working outside of those settings in support and development roles.

1.2 Types of regulated playwork settings

Out of school childcare – refers to childcare outside of the child's full time school day and includes care provided before school, after school and during the school holidays for children up to the age of 12.

Open access playwork - can be permanent or temporary provision, located in a variety of settings with or without premises and can include holiday play schemes. This provision usually caters for a wide age range of children, normally aged 5 years and over. The purpose is to provide staffed play opportunities for children usually in the absence of their parents. Children are not restricted in their movements, other than where related to safety matters and they are not prevented from coming and going as and when they wish.

Holiday playschemes – are set up specifically to provide opportunities for play during the school holidays. They may operate as open access playwork or out of school childcare depending on their chosen delivery model.

Where other types of provision exist that do not fall into the current exceptions order, such as junior youth groups or forest school holiday clubs, running for more than two hours, they will be regulated as one of the above and the corresponding qualifications apply.

See Appendix 1 for a list of the types of setting which fall under the Social Care Wales remit.

1.3 Definitions of job roles covered by the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare

1.3.1 Playworker
A playworker facilitates the provision of play opportunities as a member of a team in a non-supervisory role (although their job title may vary)

1.3.2 Senior Playworker / Playworker in Charge
A senior playworker or playworker in charge facilitates the provision of play opportunities and can often take an unsupervised or supervisory role leading the team (although their job title may vary)

1.3.3 Playwork Manager
A playwork manager usually facilitates the provision of play opportunities and has a supervisory role, sometimes working across multiple sites. They might also work as a Play Development Officer or Co-ordinator (although their job title may vary).

1.4 Status of the Qualifications List
Q: Is the Qualification List mandatory?
A: Practitioners included in the qualified staff ratios will need to hold one of the qualifications named on the Qualifications List to be able to practice within the service areas cited in 1.1 above.

1.5 Qualifications required to meet the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare
The National Minimum Standards describe the minimum requirements for regulated childcare settings and aim to ensure safe and quality services. They are published by the Welsh Government and are used by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) when they undertake registration and inspections.

There may be additional qualifications that are not required by the National Minimum Standards but are a requirement of Welsh Government policies.

1.6 Past qualifications accepted for practice

These are qualifications which are no longer available but which continue to meet the qualification requirements for the National Minimum Standards or Welsh Government policies. It is important to engage in regular professional development to keep up to date with best practice.

1.7 Criteria for qualifications to appear on the Qualifications List

For a qualification to be accepted and placed on the list, it will have needed to meet a set of criteria known as 'design principles'. The design principles require qualifications to:

- Be based on the core national occupational standards for a given role which are developed in partnership with the sector and deemed fit for purpose by the sector
- Be externally verifiable
- Contain an element of assessment of performance in addition to assessment of knowledge and understanding
- Promote the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, skills and competence for the given role
- Be aligned to qualifications frameworks across the UK and EU to support cross-border transferability (i.e. Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, Qualifications and Credit Framework, Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, and European Qualifications Framework)
- Be designated by Qualifications Wales

1.8 Qualifications that do not meet the design criteria

There are a number of qualifications which do not appear on the list. This is because they do not meet the design principles for full qualifications. The qualifications which are not on the list are:

1.8.1 At level 2 and 3, the Diplomas in Children's Care, Learning and Development (Wales and Northern Ireland) QCF, the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce (QCF), the level 2 and 3 NVQs in Children's Care, Learning and Development, and NVQs in Child Care and Education do not cover the core national occupational standards for playwork and are therefore not deemed to be fit for purpose for work in a playwork setting.

1.8.2 At level 2, the QCF Awards and Certificates offered by CACHE (500/9066/5 & 500/9044/6) , City and Guilds (500/8744/7 & 500/8659/5), Pearson Edexcel / EDI (500/9269/8 & 500/9270/4) and SQA (500/4733/4 & 500/4731/0; 600/6932/6 & 600/6933/8) do not cover the core national occupational standards or contain assessment of practice and are not therefore full qualifications

1.8.3 At level 3, the QCF Awards and Certificates offered by CACHE (501/0992/3 & 501/0993/5), City and Guilds (501/1484/0 & 501/1486/4), Pearson Edexcel / EDI (501/1311/2 & 501/1312/4) and SQA (600/4292/8 & 600/4312/X) do not cover the core national occupational standards or contain assessment of practice and are not therefore full qualifications

1.8.4 City and Guilds level 2 Certificate in Playwork (500/4301/8) is not a full qualification

1.8.5 City and Guilds level 3 Certificate in Playwork (500/1204/6) is not a full qualification

1.8.6 At level 4, the QCF Awards and Certificates in Playwork offered by CACHE (600/4052/X & 600/4042/7) and City and Guilds (600/4888/8 & 600/4889/X) are not full qualifications.

1.9 The Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice

The Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP) has been designed to meet requirements for registration for non-supervisory staff working in a range of settings:

Holiday play scheme staff – For staff working in provision that runs during the school holidays there is a registration requirement that 50 per cent of the non-supervisory staff hold a relevant level 2 qualification. L2APP is suitable as a standalone qualification for non-supervisory staff.

In this situation, the registration requirement is that the supervisor/person in charge will hold a relevant level 3 qualification (see Section 2) and have at least two year's experience.

Out of School Childcare/Open Access Playwork staff – When held alongside a level 2 or 3 childcare qualification from the Social Care Wales Qualification Framework, L2APP will meet registration requirements for those Out of School Childcare/Open Access Playwork Staff working with children up to the age of 12 in a non-supervisory role.

Childcare staff – For staff working year-round in childcare settings, there is a registration requirement that in sessional day care 50%, and for full day care 80%, of the non-supervisory staff hold a relevant level 2 qualification for working with children under eight which is included in the Social Care Wales Qualification Framework: https://socialcare.wales/qualifications-funding/qualification-framework
When held alongside a level 2 or 3 childcare qualification from the Social Care Wales list, L2APP will meet registration requirements for those also working with children up to the age of 12 in a non-supervisory role.

Education/ school staff – When held alongside a teaching or other relevant education qualification at Level 2 or above (including Forest School or Teaching Assistant), L2APP will meet registration requirements for those Out of School Childcare/Open Access Playwork Staff working with children up to the age of 12 in a non-supervisory role.

Youth work staff – For staff working year-round in youth work settings with children aged 8-11 in a transitional youth work or junior youth club setting, L2APP will meet registration requirements that 50 per cent of the non-supervisory staff hold a level 2 playwork qualification when held alongside a relevant youth work qualification.

1.10 The Award in Transition to Playwork

At level 3, the Award in Transition to Playwork offered by NCFE CACHE, City & Guilds and Agored Cymru along with the entry requirement to hold a level 3 qualification in education (including youth work), childcare or children's care, cover the knowledge and understanding for playwork.

1.11 Managing a Holiday Play Scheme

The Level 3 Managing a Holiday Play Scheme Award has been designed to meet requirements for registration for the registered person/ person in charge of a holiday play scheme. If the person in charge of a holiday play scheme does not hold a level 3 playwork diploma qualification as is required, they can hold a teaching, youth work, or other relevant qualifications at level 3 or above, alongside the Level 3 Managing a Holiday Play Scheme Award. The post holder should also have the relevant managerial skills and experience to effectively manage a holiday play scheme.

1.12 Equivalence and prior learning

There may be some circumstances where a qualification can be deemed equivalent to one of those specified on the list. In such cases, this should be discussed with CIW in the first instance. CIW may contact the PETC Wales secretariat c/o Play Wales for advice, if required. Awarding bodies are also able to recognise prior learning and, where appropriate, accept this towards the achievement of a different qualification. The awarding body should be approached directly for further information.

1.13 Qualifications gained outside of Wales

The Qualifications List only specifies those playwork qualifications which are available in Wales, although many of these are also available in England and Northern Ireland. In addition, because recognised qualifications are based on national occupational standards, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) at the appropriate level are also acceptable as they meet the design principles listed above.

1.14 Induction for playwork and out of school childcare practitioners

We recommend that all playwork practitioners should receive induction training which includes health and safety, and safeguarding policies and procedures during their first week of employment.

1.15 Continuing professional development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a process through which individuals improve their performance in practice by undertaking learning in a broad range of activities that maintain, develop, and enhance their skills and knowledge. Continuing Professional Development can be achieved in a number of ways.

A programme can include:

- Attendance at key meetings, seminars and conferences.
- Undertaking short courses or larger qualifications.
- Private study, reading.
- Observation, mentoring and feedback on working practice.

1.16 Work-based qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development

In addition to the full, playwork qualifications which provide opportunities to support career progression, there are a number of optional units at levels 2 and 3 (and at level 4 and 5, a number of stand-alone CPD units) which are suitable for those working in a variety of settings and can be undertaken as continuing professional development.

1.17 Higher education qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development

There is value in study at higher education level that can bring benefits to a playworker's knowledge and practice. For advice on suitable higher education opportunities contact PETC Wales secretariat c/o Play Wales.

1.18 Delivery and assessment of qualifications

The quality and reputation of qualifications rely on the knowledge, skills and competence, both occupational and subject, of trainers and assessors delivering them. Working with employers, trainers and awarding organisations, PETC Wales has developed a statement of occupational competence which provides guidance on the criteria which those people who are involved in the delivery and assessment of qualifications and training are expected to meet.

1.19 Welsh language and culture

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 states that the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language. All qualifications listed in this document should be available through the medium of Welsh, advice should be sought from the appropriate awarding organisation. Alternatively, advice on delivery in Welsh can be gained from Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs or from Play Wales.

1.20 Summary of Changes since May 2025 publication

- Updating expired qualifications in section 2 and moving to past qualifications accepted
- Updating currently designated qualifications in Appendix 2

Section 2: Qualifications required by National Minimum Standards to work in playwork provision, and childcare provision with children under the age of 12 years

Non-Supervisory staff (Playworker/ Practitioner)

2.1 For Holiday Playschemes - specific arrangements apply where the Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice is sufficient on it's own for non-supervisory staff in holiday playschemes (see section 1.9).

2.2 For Full Day Care Settings - Following the extension of regulation to include childcare and play provision for children up to the age of 12 years, childcare practitioners with Level 2 childcare qualifications (e.g. Children's Care, Play Learning and Development – CCPLD) will need to top up their qualification with a suitable level 2 qualification in playwork.

2.3 For Playwork settings (Registered as Open Access Playwork or Out of School Childcare) – Practitioners working in registered playwork settings with children up to the age of 12 will require a playwork qualification as per the list below. Currently 50% of non-supervisory staff should hold a full qualification to allow for new staff to train on the job.

2.4 For other regulated settings – For practitioners looking after children up to the age of 12 for more than two hours per day in a range of settings including – junior youth groups, transitional youth work and forest school holiday clubs and are registered with CIW, the qualifications listed below apply for non-supervisory staff.

Proportion of the workforce required by National Minimum Standards (April 2016): 'at least 50% of the non-supervisory staff holds a level 2 qualification which is appropriate to the post.'		
Required qualifications for National Minimum Standards	**Past qualifications accepted**	**Suggested work-based qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development**
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice * (for holiday playscheme staff and those with relevant Level 2 qualifications)	Level 2 NVQ in Playwork	Level 3 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ) (QCF)
Level 2 Certificate in Playwork: Principles into Practice	Award in Playwork for Early Years and Childcare Workers	
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	Optional units from Level 2 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ) (QCF) suite
	Level 2 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P^3) – comprises award, certificate and diploma	

*See Section 1.9 for more information

Person in charge/ registered person (senior playworker/ senior practitioner)

2.4 For Holiday Playschemes – Specific arrangements apply where the Level 3 Managing a Holiday Playscheme Award is sufficient when held alongside a relevant level 3 qualification for persons in charge of holiday playschemes (see section 1.11)

2.5 For Full Day Care Settings – Following the extension of regulation to include childcare and play provision for children up to the age of 12 years, childcare practitioners with Level 3 childcare qualifications (eg Children's Care, Play Learning and Development – CCPLD) will need to top up their qualification with a suitable Level 3 qualification in playwork.

2.6 For Playwork settings (Registered as Open Access Playwork or Out of School Childcare – Practitioners working in registered playwork settings with children up to the age of 12 will require a playwork qualification from the list below.

2.7 For other regulated settings – If you are looking after children up to the age of 12 for more than two hours per day in a range of settings including – junior youth groups, transitional youth work and forest school holiday clubs and are registered with CIW the Diploma in Playwork listed below applies for supervisory staff. This does not apply to youth work settings working ONLY with children 11 years old and over.

Proportion of the workforce required by National Minimum Standards (April 2016): 'the person in charge has at least a level 3 qualification which is appropriate to the post'.		
Required qualifications for National Minimum Standards	**Past qualifications accepted**	**Suggested work-based qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development**
Level 3 Award in Managing a Holiday Play Scheme *	Level 3 NVQ in Playwork	Level 5 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ) (QCF)
Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	Level 3 NVQ in Playwork	Additional optional units taken from the Level 3 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ)

Level 3 Award in transition to playwork	Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	Level 4 Award in Obtaining Additional Finance for the Organisation
	Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	Level 4 Award in Working with other Organisations, Agencies and Professionals in a Playwork Context
	Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork	Level 5 Diploma in Advanced Playwork (Wales) (QCF)
	Level 3 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice. (P^3) – comprises award, certificate and diploma	

*See Section 1.11 for more information

Playwork Manager (not included in the National Minimum Standards)		
There is no requirement for managerial staff to hold these qualifications under the NMS. However, to support professional progression and quality improvement, PETC Wales recommends the following:		
Current qualifications recommended	**Past qualifications which are equivalent**	**Suggested work-based qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development**
Level 5 Diploma in Advanced Playwork (Wales)	Level 4 NVQ in Playwork	Level 4 Award in Working with Other Organisations, Agencies and Professionals in a Playwork Context (QCF)
	Level 5 Diploma in Playwork	Level 4 Award in Supporting Others in Accessing the Resources they need to provide play environments
		Level 4 Award in Providing Information to Inform Decision Making
		Level 4 Award in Obtaining Additional Finance for the Organisation
		Level 5 Award in Providing Leadership in own area of responsibility
		Level 5 Award in Managing Finance in Own Area of Responsibility
		Level 5 Award in Developing and Implementing Procedures to Safeguard Children and Young People
		Level 5 Diploma in Advanced Playwork (Wales) (QCF)

Appendix 1

Childcare settings which fall under the remit of Social Care Wales:

- Full daycare – day nurseries
- Sessional Care – playgroups and Cylch Meithrin
- Crèches
- Childminding – home-based childcare

Appendix 2 – Awarding bodies currently offering playwork qualifications designated by Qualifications Wales

Qualifications title	Level	Awarding Body
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)	2	Agored Cymru
Level 2 Certificate in Playwork: Principles into Practice	2	Agored Cymru
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	2	NCFE
Managing a Holiday Playscheme Award (MAHPS)	3	Agored Cymru
Level 3 Diploma in Playwork: Principles into Practice	3	Agored Cymru
Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	3	NCFE
Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork	3	NCFE
Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork	3	Agored Cymru
Level 5 Diploma in Advanced Playwork (Wales)	5	NCFE
Level 5 Diploma in playwork	5	NCFE