

Play for Wales

Issue 58 Winter 2021

Play news and briefing
from the national charity
for play



Playing for wellbeing



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Thank you

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to this magazine – we couldn't do it without you.

This issue of *Play for Wales*, as well as previous issues, is available to download at www.playwales.org.uk

Editorial

In May 2021, Play Wales joined play and children's organisations from across the UK to co-ordinate the Summer of Play campaign.

Together, we called on everyone – organisations and families alike – to come together during the summer to enable all children, in all our communities, to have space and time for play. We wanted the summer to be a time when children could enjoy:

1. **Fun** – supporting children to have fun and express themselves through play
2. **Friends** – supporting children to have opportunities to play with friends and peers
3. **Freedom** – supporting children to have space, time, and opportunities for free play.

The campaign followed concerns from researchers, academics and advocates that at a time of increased stress and worry, children also faced reduced

access or significant change to play and the benefits it offers for coping, enjoyment of life and development.

We were keen to be involved in this campaign because we knew that children across Wales didn't always have it easy through the pandemic. As part of consultation for the Ministerial Review of Play, children reported long periods of being stuck indoors and unable to see their friends. They felt their social lives had suffered from the restrictions and was contributing to them feeling isolated and alone, having a negative impact on their wellbeing and mental health.

In the lead up to the Senedd election, which took place in May 2021, Play Wales called on the Welsh Government to put play at the heart of supporting children as part of coronavirus recovery. And so, we welcomed the Welsh Government's Summer of Fun programme, as it supported and complemented the UK wide Summer of Play campaign. Our welcome came with a cautionary note. We wanted to ensure that play and playing was valued for the crucial role it has in a healthy

and happy childhood, throughout the year, not just during the summer school holiday.

As we move through winter, the Welsh Government has built on the success of Summer of Fun, continuing to provide support for children of all ages through its Winter of Wellbeing programme, so continuing its commitment to children's play.

Playing provides opportunities for social interaction and physical activity. It can also reduce children's stress and promote wellbeing. It is vital that all children are given the time and safe space they need to enjoy a wide range of playful opportunities, everyday and all year round.

Everyone has a role to play in making this possible. Every setting counts – home, parks, streets, schools, playgrounds, public space, childcare, playwork and youth work provision and more. It is crucial adults listen to children and work together towards a positive legacy of lockdown for children.

Marianne Mannello
Assistant Director:
Policy, Support and Advocacy



News

Retirement – Kathy

After over 20 years at Play Wales, our Office Manager Kathy Muse has retired.

Kathy joined in the early days of Play Wales, as one of a team of three and has since been responsible for organising the annual Spirit conference, membership admin and the governance of the organisation amongst other duties.

As a team we'll miss her bright and friendly nature – and she always had a warm welcome for visitors.

Happy retirement Kathy from all the team and trustees.

IPA World Conference 2023

Save the dates:
6 - 9 June 2023



The next International Play Association (IPA) Triennial World Conference will be held in Glasgow. It will be a hybrid conference to enable delegates to take part in person or virtually.

The Glasgow 2023 conference will be hosted by IPA Scotland, Play Scotland, Early Years Scotland and Inspiring Scotland.

www.ipaworld.org/2023-ipa-world-conference

Care Stars



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**

Congratulations to Vale of Glamorgan Council's Joanne Jones and Julia Sky for both being awarded Care Stars.

The Social Care Wales initiative was created to shine a light on the early years and social care workers who made a truly positive difference to people's lives while the country struggled with the challenges of the pandemic.

In June 2021, employers, colleagues and the public were invited to nominate the paid care

workers they felt deserved to be recognised for their work over the previous 15 months. A panel of judges whittled down the 120 nominations to 12 Care Stars who deserved recognition for their inspirational work.

Senior Healthy Living Officer (Play), Joanne has been recognised for ensuring children had access to

some form of play activity during lockdown, including facilitating provision for disabled children and distributing activity packs to vulnerable families across the county.

Community Play Development Worker, Julia has been commended for creating the Vale Play Pavilion to support children from families linked to social services that needed help over the school holidays due to the pressures associated with the challenges of lockdown.

<https://socialcare.wales/generic-content/care-stars>

Value of well-being playworkers in schools



Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

Well-being playworkers were valued as important members of the team at primary schools during lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 according to a small-scale study undertaken by Swansea University. The research, carried out by Dr Pete King, is based on interviews with nine headteachers in Torfaen.

The Well-being playworkers in primary schools – a headteacher's perspective study explores how well-being playworkers in seven school hubs in the local authority supported children during lockdowns and their return to school. Findings show the strong relationship between playworkers and vulnerable children.

The playworkers met individual children's needs to support their health and wellbeing using an informal

approach. The study also shows that teaching staff gained greater respect for playworkers and their work following the first lockdown.

The study concludes that *'the presence of playworkers, or well-being playworkers in all aspects of a school, both within and outside of the school curriculum is a service other schools across the UK should consider when supporting children's well-being'*.

www.swansea.ac.uk

Advertise your jobs with WeCare Wales

WeCare Wales has launched a new jobs portal to help childcare, early years and social care employers advertise their vacancies for free.

Gofalwn
.cymru

WeCare
.wales

The portal enables organisations and settings to manage and post their job vacancies through the WeCare Wales website.

It also offers a range of materials to help with recruitment, including films to promote working in care and images to use in adverts.

www.wecare.wales/jobs



We have moved!

Play Wales has moved to a new office.

Our new address is:

Park House, Greyfriars Road, Cardiff CF10 3AF

Please update our details in your contacts and address any post to our new office.

To post or not to post?!

This is the first printed *Play for Wales* magazine we have circulated since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you would prefer not to receive future issues in the post, please let us know by emailing admin@playwales.org.uk or calling 029 2048 6050.

Also, let us know if you would like to update your postal address if you have moved or are working in a different location.

Wellbeing in the playwork workforce

Research commissioned by Social Care Wales reveals that childcare, playwork and early years workers felt undervalued and underappreciated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This was despite thank you campaigns and ministerial messages of thanks. The workers also felt they weren't always seen as professional workers, unlike others working with children, such as teachers.

The report, *National Conversations with the Childcare, Play and Early Years Sector in Wales*, aims to better understand the experiences of those working in the childcare, play and early years sector during the pandemic.

'Most of our staff just tend to have worried more about our most vulnerable children.'

Open Access Playworker

The report looks at a number of areas that affected the sector, including staff wellbeing and morale, the support available to businesses, staffing, and training

and qualifications. It also considers the sector's needs going forward.

One of the main recommendations is the need to support the Welsh Government's ambition to develop a skilled childcare and playwork workforce that is highly regarded as a profession and recognised for the vital role it plays in supporting children's development.

The report also strongly recommends that the sector receives more visible and clearer communication and guidance going forward.

The research, which was commissioned by Social Care Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government, was carried out by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) during February and March 2021.

www.socialcare.wales

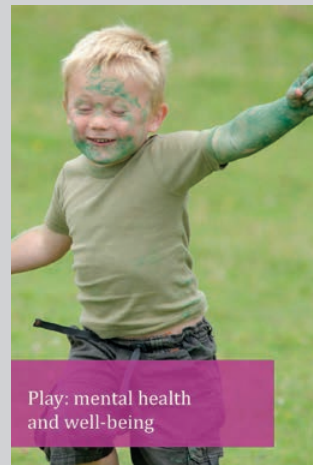


Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru
Social Care Wales

Play and wellbeing resources

Playing is crucial to children's physical, mental and social wellbeing.

The following resources, published by Play Wales in 2021, explore how playing supports children's health, wellbeing and happiness as well as building resilience, particularly in times of uncertainty.



Play: mental health and well-being – explains the importance of playing for brain development and mental health. It also looks at how playing contributes to children's emotional wellbeing and how it relates to the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing'.

Play: health and well-being – looks at why playing is crucial to children's health and wellbeing and explores ways to support good quality play. It also provides information about play and physical activity as well as play and emotional wellbeing.

Accessing the therapeutic powers of play – explores what playworkers can do if a child cannot play because they are feeling anxious, worried or afraid of the future. Written by Maggie Fearn, it has been designed to support playworkers in community settings to understand some therapeutic play skills and ideas. It also provides information about how playworkers can use the therapeutic benefits of play to support children in their setting.

Available at: www.playwales.org.uk/eng/publications/information sheets

Summer of

The Summer of Play campaign was a UK-wide call for play to be prioritised during the summer of 2021 to support children's health and wellbeing and recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The campaign urged everyone – governments, organisations, councils, businesses and families – to work together to make sure that children were given the time and space needed to reconnect and play with friends and enjoy a wide range of playful opportunities.

In Wales, following a call from the Children's Commissioner and others, the Welsh Government provided £5m funding via the Summer of Fun programme to support children and young people recover from the pandemic. This programme was one element of the Welsh Government's commitment to supporting children and young people's recovery. The three main objectives of Summer of Fun were:

- Supporting fun and the opportunity for children and young people to express themselves through play
- Offering community based interactive, creative and play-based initiatives for all ages
- Providing opportunities to play with friends and peers.

Using the Summer of Fun funding provided by the Welsh Government, local authorities provided an array of opportunities across the country, working in partnership with a broad range of organisations. We invited local authorities to tell us more about some of the opportunities provided to children during the summer.



In **Torfaen**, the funding provided further opportunities for children and young people requiring additional support to attend provision by increasing the number of allocated spaces on Play and Respite sessions for disabled children and those with complex needs. Further sessions and spaces for children who require 1-1 support were also provided through playschemes, youth, early years and sports provision.

Increasing access to outdoor play featured across Wales.

In **Carmarthenshire**, free play sessions for children and families from the rural areas around Pumsaint were held in Dolau Cothi Woods. The sessions introduced families to local open outdoor public spaces, provided simple play ideas for families and gave children and their parents an opportunity to meet and socialise with others.

'Can we come here everyday?'



'I just love being outside even when it's raining.'

In **Gwynedd**, the youth service worked with Wild Elements, a local, not-for-profit social enterprise dedicated to getting people in north Wales outdoors and connecting them to nature. Sessions were arranged in a variety of outdoor settings and encouraged children to connect with each other and the outdoors.

In **Pembrokeshire**, sailing activities were offered to children aged eight and over, enabling them to achieve a nationally recognised sailing certificate. This opportunity aimed to develop confidence, communication skills and promote interaction. It provided a platform for learning new skills and taking part in an activity they would not usually have had the opportunity to do.

Small grant schemes featured in many areas. In **Powys**, the county council's small grant scheme received over 80 applications and provided funding for a range of activities including playschemes, woodland play, arts and crafts, sports, creative writing, outdoor pursuits and STEM activities.

More children in **Conwy, Denbighshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham** were able to experience outreach playwork sessions in neighbourhood settings, such as parks and public open spaces, which are underused by children and families.

'We walk through this space everyday on the way to school, but we never thought of playing here. I don't think we know we were allowed to. It's good to see it being used like this!'

In **Newport**, twilight play sessions were delivered to offer flexibility for families during the summer holidays and to provide outdoor play opportunities. The sessions were held across the four hub areas of Newport in open spaces, school playing fields and community centres.

In **Cardiff**, sustaining activity beyond the summer featured in the plans. Re-create, a charity that runs a scrapstore where waste and surplus materials (usually headed for landfill) are repurposed, was commissioned to provide and stock play shacks full of loose parts play materials and other equipment. Placed in community spaces, childcare clubs and schools, the shacks offer a sustainable approach that supports community-based provision to offer low-cost materials for play.

Cardiff Children's Play Services, in partnership with Re-create, is looking to expand the number of play shacks further this year with additional funding support. The expansion will include a further 12 play shacks along with additional training for schools and community members, as well as an artist who will work with children and young people to make the play shacks more visually appealing.



Announcing the funding, the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS, said:

'The impacts of the last year have been felt by all of us, and particularly so by our children and young people who have missed many opportunities to socialise, to be active and to play ... Activities funded through the Summer of Fun will provide opportunities to support the social, emotional and physical health and wellbeing of our young people. Supporting these needs can also help them build confidence, re-engage with learning and education, and strive to reach their full potential.'

Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales:

'Children and young people have missed out on so many opportunities to play and socialise during the pandemic. I'm so pleased that the Government has responded so positively to the calls I made with the Urdd and Sport Wales for a Summer of Fun.'

Opening streets for play, health and wellbeing

There was a time when it was accepted that children, once they were old enough and confident enough to negotiate the outside world independently or with friends and siblings, played outside and ranged within their neighbourhood freely.



For most children, there has been a decrease over the past thirty years in children's access to the streets and outdoor areas near their homes. Children's mobility is restricted by traffic and fear, which leads them to spend more time indoors or at organised activities. Parents tell us that they are fearful of the combination of more vehicles on the roads and the speed of traffic which means that they stop their children playing out. The lack of opportunity to play out and range has an impact on children's health and wellbeing – both mentally and physically – and their resourcefulness and resilience.

The adoption of a 20mph speed limit in all residential and built-up areas might have the most wide-reaching and positive effect, as recommended by Royal

College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) Wales. The Welsh Government's plans to reduce the national default speed limit in Wales from 30mph to 20mph on residential roads is welcome.

But this change is widely an environmental one. It will slow traffic down, so reducing the risk of serious injury and improving the quality of air that children are exposed to. But, in addition to environmental improvements, there is a need to address the attitudinal issues which have led to children's ability to access play in their own neighbourhoods diminishing over time. Some areas have addressed this by reclaiming streets for play through resident-led play street projects where streets are closed off for short times to allow children to play.

Research suggests that play streets:

- make a meaningful contribution to children's physical activity levels¹
- allow more people to play out more of the time in more places, which can improve community cohesion and strengthen intergenerational relationships²
- help children learn about road safety, and learn or improve skills such as riding a bike, scooting, roller skating and skipping³
- lowers the rate of air pollution⁴.

Play Wales supports initiatives that reclaim streets and neighbourhoods for children to be able to play. During the summer of 2021, as part of our contribution to the Summer of Play campaign, we worked with three Welsh local authorities – Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr Tydfil and Newport – to pilot play streets in their areas.

Giving children permission to play out close to their home and those of their friends helps them to gain an understanding of the world they live in, without being too far away from adults. This is an important step to gaining self-reliance and greater independence for going to the park, the local shop or walking to school, and other local places on their own.

Children's access to outdoor space for play, exercise and enjoyment differs greatly across Wales and this was heightened in the pandemic. The pandemic has 'reinforced the need for well-designed, people orientated streets', as noted in the planning policy document, *Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures Placemaking and the Covid-19 recovery*. Other planning documents, such as the *Placemaking Wales Charter* and *Planning and Enabling Healthy Environments* produced by Public Health Wales, discuss how organising play streets can bring people together and revive existing public spaces.

During lockdowns, fewer cars on most roads shifted the function of streets from one of 'moving' to one of 'place'. We saw children using streets and other public spaces, such as small local parks, for playing, exercising and interacting with other people. As we emerge from some of the stricter restrictions, play streets projects are a good fit to support community-based play.

¹ University of Bristol, Centre for Exercise, Nutrition & Health Sciences (2017) *Why temporary street closures for play make sense for public health*. London: Play England.

² Tawil, B. (2018) Play sufficiency as an organising principle of community development, *Radical Community Work Journal*, 3/2.

³ Playing Out (2017) *Survey of 'playing out' streets: Summary and Report*. Bristol: Playing Out.

⁴ Playing Out (2017) *Air Pollution and Street Play*.

'There are two reasons why we wanted to bring a play street to our neighbourhood. First is how dangerous the road is outside our house, as a parent it's easy to have a low level of anxiety most of the time about how we risk our lives when we step out of the house, on the way to the park or nursery – in fact just in our day to day lives. Having a moment to breathe easy and know our local children are safe to be out in the place where they live is a step towards the future we'd like to see. That's a future with less cars and more space for people.

The other thing is building community, feeling a sense of belonging to the place where we live and the people who we live nearest to. We are coming together across differences in our lives, what we share are the streets around us. Let's build on that for a more local and connected future.

At our play street event our little one played with lots of other local children who he wouldn't have got the chance to meet otherwise – he was so happy to be free to run and ride his bike. I heard later that one child had tried skipping for the first time. We also conjured a little playfulness from the couple of local teenagers who enjoyed the massive bubbles. It was a thoroughly intergenerational time – we were aged from under 1 to 70+. We really did bring people together – it was brilliant!

Sally Hughes,
Vale of Glamorgan resident and mother

'We must learn from the past and ensure that a post Covid world has people's wellbeing at its heart. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for us to reset the clock and think again about the places we want to live, work and play in.'

Julie James, MS,
Minister for Housing and Local Government

Further information

Placemaking Wales Charter:

www.dcfw.org/placemaking/placemaking-charter/

Building Better Places The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures Placemaking and the Covid-19 recovery:

www.gov.wales

Planning and Enabling Healthy Environments:

www.phw.nhs.wales/news/

Play Wales' street play resources:

www.playwales.org.uk/eng/publications/streetplayresources

Playing in an adventurous way: for wellbeing and as an antidote to anxiety

Playing is central to children's emotional wellbeing. Uncertainty and challenge are key characteristics of play, as noted in the United Nations General Comment No. 17 on the right to play. Creating and encountering risky or uncertain play opportunities develops children's resilience and adaptability – and can contribute to their confidence and self-esteem.

Helen Dodd is a Professor of Child Psychology at the University of Exeter. Her research concentrates on the development of anxiety disorders in children, with a focus on understanding factors that might help to prevent anxiety, and broader mental health problems, in preschool and primary school aged children. She holds a UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Future Leaders Fellowship which funds a seven-year programme of research focusing on children's adventurous play as a mechanism to decrease risk of anxiety.

As part of her research, Helen conducted The British Children's Play Survey, which received over 1900 responses from parents of 5 to 11 year-olds – making it the largest study of its kind. The findings suggest that although children are spending a reasonable amount of time outside, they may be missing out on many of the freedoms, particularly exploring and playing in an adventurous way, that previous generations enjoyed.

The study found a significant difference between the age that children are now allowed out alone in comparison to the previous generation, with children now almost two years older than their parents were when granted independent mobility.



When parents and caregivers had more positive attitudes around children's risk-taking in play, children spent more time playing and were able to be out of the house independently at a younger age.

'The concerns we have from this report are twofold. First, we are seeing children getting towards the end of their primary school years without having had enough opportunities to develop their ability to assess and manage risk independently. Second, if children are getting less time to play outdoors in an adventurous way, this may have an impact on their mental health and overall wellbeing.'

Professor Helen Dodd

Here we share a blog post where Helen discusses the relationship between risk-taking in play and the benefits for children's mental health. She proposes a novel theory of how children's risk of anxiety might be reduced by providing children with ample opportunity to play in an adventurous way.



When children play in an adventurous way, climbing trees, riding their bikes fast downhill, jumping from rocks, they experience feelings of fear and excitement, thrill and adrenaline. In our recently published conceptual paper, Dr Kathryn Lester and I argue that these experiences, as well as the feelings of fear that accompany them, may provide vital learning opportunities that help prevent the development of problematic anxiety in children.

Over the past few decades, a lot of research has been done on anxiety disorders in children, to better understand who is at risk, why they're at risk and what we can do about it.

Although there is still a lot of work to be done, we have a reasonable idea now about the kinds of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that affect children's likelihood of experiencing anxiety (for example intolerance of uncertainty, avoidance, anxiety sensitivity, maladaptive coping). We are confident enough about these mechanisms that researchers have started to develop and evaluate programmes that target them to try to prevent anxiety in children. Many of these programmes take a cognitive behavioural approach, for example see the Cool Little Kids programme.

In our conceptual paper, we draw on our knowledge of cognitive and behavioural factors associated with children's anxiety to propose that a number of these factors could be targeted by what we call adventurous play. In the paper we state that adventurous play is '*child-led play where children experience subjective feelings of excitement, thrill and fear; often this occurs in the context of age appropriate risk-taking*'.

Other researchers, like Professor Ellen Sandseter, refer to this type of play as risky play. In our opinion these are different names for the same type of play, we simply chose adventurous play because we found that some parents, at least in the UK, misinterpreted the meaning of risky play.

The main argument of our conceptual paper is that adventurous play provides exposure to uncertainty, fear, arousal and coping and therefore an opportunity for children to learn about each of these. In order for children to learn to tolerate uncertainty, they need the opportunity to feel uncertain. Similarly, to learn about physiological arousal (racing heart, sweaty palms and butterflies in their stomachs) they need the opportunity to experience these sensations. Adventurous play provides a non-threatening way for children to experiment with these feelings by exploring age-appropriate risks in their play. In turn, these experiences may allow children to learn about uncertainty, fear, risk-judgement and coping; learning that may later help to protect them from becoming overwhelmed by anxiety when they are faced with a situation that is scary or uncertain.

Unfortunately, many children today do not have the same opportunities to play in an adventurous way that children did in the past. Over the past few decades, there has been a substantial decline in the amount of time Western children spend playing outdoors. There are many reasons for this decline, but one important reason is the increased emphasis on keeping children safe from physical harm. Of course, we all want to keep our children safe but there is concern that we may be keeping children too safe. By overly protecting children from physical harm, we may increase their risk for emotional problems by denying them opportunities to learn through adventurous play.

Our programme of research over the coming years will build on this conceptual paper and explore whether we may decrease the likelihood of children experiencing problematic anxiety by increasing their opportunities for adventurous play, both in and out of school.

This blog post was first published by Outdoor Play Canada. Thank you for letting us share the post.

More information

Dodd, H.F., Lester, K.J. Adventurous Play as a Mechanism for Reducing Risk for Childhood Anxiety: A Conceptual Model. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 24, 164–181 (2021).

Dodd, H.F., FitzGibbon, L., Watson, B.E. and Nesbit, R.J. Children's Play and Independent Mobility in 2020: Results from the British Children's Play Survey. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 2021, 18, 4334.

Protecting playtime in school for wellbeing

A recent review of international empirical evidence¹ suggests that school playtime initiatives aimed at enriching play opportunities are linked to a range of improvements in academic skills, attitudes, attention and behaviour, as well as to improved social skills, improved social relations between different groups of children, and better enjoyment of and adjustment to school life.



Welsh education policy and guidance acknowledges that education and mental wellbeing are closely linked and is a crucial element of the work of schools and education settings. It is recognised that promoting the health and wellbeing of learners can positively impact on cooperation, learning and engagement. Wellbeing is also strongly reflected within the regulatory inspection areas which Estyn evaluates in schools and settings.

Estyn's *Healthy and happy – school impact on pupils' health and wellbeing* report evaluates how well primary and secondary schools in Wales support the health and wellbeing of their pupils. The report notes that schools that have an inclusive whole-school approach to supporting pupils' health and wellbeing aim to make sure that the everyday school experience

of pupils is consistent with messages given about health and wellbeing in lessons, assemblies and in school policies. If there is a discrepancy between the messages given and the lived experience of pupils, then schools are less successful in supporting pupils' health and wellbeing.

The report makes several references to school play and break times. It highlights that schools that apply a whole school approach to supporting health and wellbeing provide an environment, facilities and space to play, socialise and relax at break times. It also notes that:

- access to outdoor play space across many schools is often compromised during inclement weather
- some schools have limited outdoor space and have to restrict access to some groups of pupils.

¹ Russell, W. (ed), Ardelean, A. and Smith, K. (2021) *Playtimes in primary schools: a review of the literature*. OPAL CIC.

It raises concerns that when a school can't or doesn't provide these, pupils are less physically active and can find it difficult to relax during playtimes, which affects their wellbeing. Concerns about insufficient breaks for play are shared by parents, practitioners, and decision makers, too.

All adult employees have breaks built into their daily work pattern to promote socialisation, alertness, rest and physical activity. Children require breaks for the same reasons. However, despite local efforts to improve playtime, the practice of withdrawing playtime as a punishment for bad behaviour, slow progress or forgetting equipment (such as PE kit) is still common across many schools.

When playtime is withdrawn or parts of it withheld, children are publicly humiliated, and for many that experience creates a negative situation. Excluding children from playtime can make them vulnerable to name calling, isolation or bullying. Removing this playtime exclusion from behaviour regulation strategies will encourage collaboration and co-operation, which helps children to be happy and healthy.

The Welsh Government's *Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being* makes this explicit. In the framework's section that discusses the importance of play, it specifically states that play should not be removed from children at school as a form of punishment.

'The removal of break time as a punishment for bad behaviour and its inclusion within behavioural management policies can cause stigmatisation and can constitute bullying. It is also in conflict with children's right to play.'

Welsh Government, *Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being*

Concerns about diminished opportunities for play, especially for vulnerable groups such as disabled children and children living in poverty, have been highlighted by the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Division of Educational Child Psychologists in its *Right to play* Position Paper.

BPS advocates that school playtime offers significant benefits to children's wellbeing and is essential for their social development. It is concerned, that despite the wealth of psychologically-informed evidence which demonstrates the value of play for school children, time assigned for play in the school day has been eroded in recent years.

Prioritising play not only aligns with the psychological evidence, it also has the support of the vast majority of parents. A survey commissioned by the BPS has

revealed that 96% of parents said playtime in the school day was very important, and 79% said play was more important than or equally as important as academic catch-up for their children post-pandemic.

The desire to reverse the negative impact on children's wellbeing and development brought on by diminished time for play and the results of the survey have prompted BPS to launch its *Time to Play Campaign*, which calls for an additional 10 minutes of play at school every day.

Dr Dan O'Hare, Co-Chair of the BPS Division of Educational and Child Psychology, said:

'It's clear from the survey findings that play is valued highly by parents. We now need the government to take bold action and prioritise school playtime for our children's development.'

'This isn't an "ask" for more playtime, it's about reclaiming what has been lost. There needs to be adequate support, funding and resources for teachers who are already under increasing pressure to deliver the curriculum.'

The campaign urges the government to put back 10 minutes each day onto school playtime, effectively reversing the years of decline by restoring 50 minutes spread over a week.

The BPS is calling for a focus on unstructured, child-led play in school, highlighting its benefits including aiding social development, problem solving and physical development as vital priorities alongside academic catch-up.

Dan added:

'We know that pre-pandemic children's playtime has been eroded and now, against the landscape of "academic catch up" after lockdowns, closures and pressure on children and schools, this issue is even more urgent.'

'Reduced opportunities to play will likely have a negative impact on the wellbeing and development of children, and it is vital that we don't forget that children have also missed out on play with their friends, physical activity and fun.'

'It's important to understand the role play has in children's development to really understand why we are campaigning to get more play in the school day. Play is fundamental to children's health and wellbeing. It can develop children's skills in coping with challenge, facing uncertainty and how to be flexible and adaptable to different circumstances.'



Wellbeing research with children in Wales



Being able to go outside and play has been shown to have health benefits, including improvements in mood and self-esteem. The Outdoor Access, Mental Health and Wellbeing study looked at experiences of children aged 8 to 11 during the first COVID-19 UK national lockdown (April to June 2020) and the impact this had on their mental health and wellbeing.

Being confined to their homes, school closures and having limited contact with close friends and family caused disruption and uncertainty – causing feelings of worry and anxiety in some children.

The research was carried out by Mustafa Rasheed, Professor Sinead Brophy and Dr Michaela James, child health researchers at Swansea University. Mustafa tells us more about the research and what they found out.

The findings of our study show that children with increased emotional and behavioural difficulties were less likely to feel safe in their local area and spent less time playing and being active. The survey data was collected through the HAPPEN (Health and Attainment of Pupils in a Primary Education Network) project.

HAPPEN and Me and My Feelings

HAPPEN is a network of primary schools in Wales that was developed by Swansea University to facilitate the cooperation of departments of health and education.

The aim is to improve wellbeing and educational outcomes of young people in Wales.

Through HAPPEN, 1104 children included in this study responded to a survey which included the *Me and My Feelings* questionnaire. This is a 16-item school-based measure of child mental health that assesses symptoms of emotional and behavioural difficulties in children. The HAPPEN survey also included further questions about the general experience of respondents and their perception of their own health.

Local area

Our findings show that children living in areas with larger private gardens presented a greater degree of emotional and behavioural difficulty. Additionally, those who lived closer to local parks and outdoor play areas also showed more symptoms of emotional and behavioural difficulty during lockdown. It could be that children in these areas may have previously played in these nearby parks but felt they were unable to as these spaces were not open at the time of this survey.

These findings suggest that using designated spaces for meaningful play are more important to children than spending time in a private garden. Not having access to a range of outdoor play spaces may have also encouraged replacing physical activity with friends for screen time at home due to feeling disconnected.

Children often request better access to play facilities in their local areas. Findings from HAPPEN highlight this. Children often suggest that there are a lack of parks and outdoor play areas within their locality even outside of pandemic restrictions:

'I would like to go out and play in a park but I can't because I live quite far away from them.'

'The park is too small.'

'I want to play basketball but there's no basketball court.'

Many of those that did have parks nearby commented that they were inadequate or had not been properly maintained:

'The climbing frame in the park is rusty.'

Having an attractive, well-maintained local park can be the most convenient way for children to enjoy playing outdoors and socialising with peers outside school hours. This should have been a priority in lockdown, protecting play and access to play facilities.

Home and local environment

Children who did not have sufficient space to relax and play at home consistently showed greater likelihood of emotional and behavioural difficulties during lockdown. Building on the above, this highlights the importance of having access to and protecting



spaces that children enjoy spending time in. Early in the pandemic, local play spaces were locked away making them inaccessible. This could have contributed to greater feelings of unhappiness and anxiety.

Some children also commented on feelings of safety in their local environment. Many children reported feeling unsafe playing in their local areas due to a range of factors. Some children commented that their local areas were unsuitable for play even prior to lockdown.

'Too many gangs and gangsters.'

'Lots of crime near my area.'

Additionally, some children reported that they were unable to play outside due to their area being unsafe and unhygienic.

'We need to do more litter picks because there is too much litter.'

'Make people pick up dog mess because it is everywhere, we could put more bins and signs to prevent it.'

The most common safety related concerns reported by the children were related to road users making their local area feel unsafe for play.

'The cars drive really fast.'

'I feel too scared to cross the road because of the cars.'

'I can't go on my bike because of the cars.'

These requests and reports from children on how to make their area feel cleaner and safer are reasonable and would also benefit the wider community.

Self-assessed health scores

Children who scored their health low spent less time being physically active and felt tired more often. There was a striking resemblance between the children's perceived health and their emotional and behavioural difficulty scores. This supports the notion that children can accurately and reliably report on their own health but also the importance of protecting activity and play time.

Life for children during periods of pandemic restriction measures comes with unique challenges, and there are important lessons to be learned for the future. Our research shows that having a safe and engaging environment to play in is crucial in the maintenance of positive mental health and wellbeing in children.

Looking forward

Our research conducted during the first COVID-19 lockdown shows that children that cannot access meaningful outdoor play are more likely to experience ill mental health and wellbeing. It is vital that their concerns are noted and actionable changes are made where possible to improve their environments and facilitate play. At a time of much uncertainty and anxiety, play is an important outlet for children's feelings and can help them navigate the world.

Winter of Wellbeing

for children in Wales

A Welsh Government update

To support the wellbeing of our children and families, the Welsh Government has provided £36.6m of funding as part of its commitment to support the people of Wales recover from the pandemic.

The wellbeing support has been divided between:

- £20m revenue funding for a Winter of Wellbeing for children and young people aged 0 to 25, from 1 of October 2021 to 31 March 2022
- £11.6m capital funding to increase capacity in childcare, play and Flying Start settings
- £5m capital funding to help local authorities respond to the priorities in their play sufficiency action plans (allocated via local authorities).

COVID-19, and the associated restrictions put in place to restrict the spread of the virus, has greatly impacted on children and young people's happiness and wellbeing. It has been detrimental to children and young people's socialisation, emotional and mental health, and physical activity levels. Supporting children and young people's recovery requires a variety of interventions.

The Summer of Fun project reached over 67,500 children and young people across Wales and providers benefited from much-needed financial investment following restrictions on their operations due to the pandemic.

Building on the success of the £5m Summer of Fun project and supporting the commitments set out in Renew and Reform, the £20m Winter of Wellbeing project will provide more opportunities for children and young people to develop their social, emotional and physical wellbeing. The Welsh Government is asking local authorities, education settings and national organisations in Wales to support children and young people's wellbeing over the winter months by:

- Providing space and time for play, supporting their fun and the opportunity to express themselves through play
- Offering community based interactive, creative and play-based initiatives for all ages



- Providing opportunities to develop and build social skills through opportunities to engage with friends and peers
- Creating space and opportunity for free play and physical activity.

For the latest Winter of Wellbeing information and activities follow [@WG_Communities](https://twitter.com/WG_Communities) on twitter.

Announcing the funding, the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS said:

'I want to build on the success of the Summer of Fun, and continue to provide support for our young people, their families and also to the local economy around them that deliver these types of activities and services. Play has become increasingly important as a vehicle to help our young people to re-engage as it provides many opportunities to develop a range of different skills at all different ages.'

The Winter of Wellbeing funding is in addition to the £5.1m awarded to the childcare and playwork sector in September 2021.

www.gov.wales

See pages 7 to 8 for examples of activities provided using the Welsh Government's Summer of Fun funding.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Children have their say on Ministerial Review of Play

To involve children in the Ministerial Review of Play, the Welsh Government asked Children in Wales, through its Young Wales initiative, to consult with children and teenagers to ask for their views on the review and associated recommendations.

Young Wales, in partnership with providers, conducted a series of online and face to face consultations, engaging with 201 children and teenagers across Wales with 21 sessions delivered to 2 to 18 year-olds.



Tegan Waites and Anna Westall from Children in Wales discuss some of the views children presented through this engagement.

Children had the opportunity to explore, discuss, consider and make recommendations from their perspective on:

- Settings registration, regulation and exceptions
- The Play Sufficiency Duty and funding
- Workforce and qualifications
- Working across policy areas
- Spatial justice and societal involvement
- The impact of COVID-19 on play.

The consultation questions were developed and underpinned by the themes above and structured to be age appropriate to consider time, space and permission to play.

Consultation activities with the youngest children identified how important child-led play is for their immediate enjoyment and this type of play featured strongly in their play preferences. The findings indicate that adults who understand play are a particular benefit to young children, providing support at the right time and in the right way.

Teenagers recommend that support is required to change adults' perception of older children. They highlight that there is a need for adults and services working with older children to understand play, and training on how to improve engagement with older children should be offered.

Children held strong views about where responsibility for play lies, highlighting that the Welsh Government, local authorities and their staff, schools and the education sector are responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient play opportunities for children of all ages. They were clear that children and young people, as well as parents or carers, should have an opportunity to contribute and be listened to in all development of play opportunities within their local authority areas.

Through the consultation, our focus was on enabling children's voices to be heard and listened to. Children shared a range of ideas and recommendations that can influence future play policy developments in Wales. Some of these include:

- Allocate more time and more opportunities for children to play during the school day
- Review playtime and social time for young people aged 12 to 18 in schools and colleges
- Prioritise investment in places for children and young people to hang out safely
- More playworkers
- More detached youth workers
- More open access youth and play clubs
- Playworkers should be registered with a body that checks their qualifications and development
- All clubs and provision, including those that offer coaching and mentoring or sessions for less than two hours, should be required to undertake registration
- Develop a greater understanding within the police of children and young people and their play needs.

Playing into the future

Save the Children asked children aged 4 to 11 to share their views on what childhood should look like in the future¹. Children want those who grow up in 2040 to have 'a fun future with opportunities for play and relaxing', so demonstrating how important playing is to children.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) places a requirement on public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to take a more joined-up approach. The act established a Public Services Board (PSB) for each local authority area in Wales.

PSBs are required to analyse and assess the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of their areas and plan together to improve and deliver on the wellbeing of those areas. Considering play in local wellbeing assessments can help public bodies to identify and reach wellbeing goals for children and communities.

The act puts in place five ways of working and seven connected wellbeing goals for Wales – here's how play makes a valid contribution.



Incorporating the Five Ways of Working

- **Long term** – Thinking strategically about play develops positive attitudes of decision makers and communities towards play and improving access to play in neighbourhoods. Providing opportunities to play contributes to the long-term safeguarding of children's right to play.
- **Prevention** – Having opportunities to play supports children to be active, to socialise and to feel part of their communities, all of which have health and wellbeing outcomes. Children being able to play can contribute to the prevention of many contemporary concerns, such as obesity, mental health and loneliness. Making sure that children can and do play in their neighbourhoods will potentially prevent problems (such as childhood obesity, poor mental health and isolation) occurring or getting worse.
- **Integration** – Playing impacts on the wellbeing goals and thinking strategically about play encourages and supports strong partnership working. Addressing barriers to play responds to a range of other policy drivers, including safer roads, active travel, connected communities and community assets. Environmental sustainability initiatives, such as reducing private car use and ownership and greening of school playgrounds and town centres also support playing.

¹ Save the Children (2021) *The Future of Childhood*. London: The Save the Children Fund.

² The Means (2016) *An analysis of the economic impact of Playwork in Wrexham – May 2016*. Cardiff: Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

³ Masten, A. and Obradovic, J. (2006) 'Competence and resilience in Development', *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, 1094: 13-27. Cited in Lester, S. and Russell, W. (2008) *Play for a Change: Play, Policy and Practice: A review of contemporary perspectives*. London: Play England.

- **Collaboration** – The implementation of actions which address opportunities to play encourage collaboration between an array of sectors, government departments and organisations. Supporting play is attractive to a range of local authority departments and officers, such as those involved in planning, outdoor space, transport policy, as it potentially helps them to meet their wellbeing objectives.
- **Involvement** – Planning for play engages local organisations, communities and children from the outset. Local engagement can ensure that the diversity of local neighbourhoods and their play needs is reflected in assessments and action plans.

Meeting the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)

A prosperous Wales

Access to opportunities to play contributes to the development of resilience, an openness to learning and longer-term skill development. Research² which considered immediate and deferred benefits of having access to regular and sustained playwork provision concluded that every £1 invested in playwork returned £4.60 in immediate and long term social benefits.

A resilient Wales

Evidence³ suggests that play contributes to developing resilience through interrelated systems:

- emotional regulation
- pleasure and enjoyment
- the stress response system and the ability to respond to uncertainty
- creativity and the ability to make new and different connections
- openness to learning
- attachment to people and place.

These basic systems are essential for the creativity and adaptiveness needed for dealing with the uncertainties of the future.

A healthier Wales

Playing allows for peer interactions that are important components of social and emotional wellbeing. Through play, children experience a range of emotions, including frustration, determination, disappointment and confidence, and through practice, can learn how to manage these feelings.

Spending more time playing out in neighbourhoods will improve physical activity levels and have wider health and environmental benefits. Unstructured play is one of the easiest, most natural and cost-effective ways that children of any age can engage in the necessary levels

of physical activity. It is also the most common type of physical activity that children take part in outside school.

A more equal Wales

Play is established as a child's right, internationally and by the Welsh Government. Access to good quality play provision can be a way of reducing inequalities between children and so reducing poverty of experience for all children. Neighbourhood playwork provision is often available when families need it most (afterschool, during school holidays, evenings and weekends) filling gaps when other services are not available. It provides a 'melting pot' where children who might not normally meet and socialise can mix. This provides experience of other people and opportunities for wide social networks. Being able to play in their neighbourhoods is an issue of equality for children as a group. Looking at and addressing the barriers for those who have difficulties accessing outdoor play provides a more equitable experience for children.

A Wales of cohesive communities

When children have access to places and spaces to play and gather with their friends, the community becomes more tolerant of play.

The presence of playing children supports parents and other community members to become advocates for play and childhood. Children gain a better sense of belonging to the community and the role they play within it. Local play provision contributes to community cohesion, peer and place attachments and social inclusion because it is specific to the community.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Recreational activities (which include cultural activities) form part of the section on play opportunities within the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. When communities support children's play, there follows a sharing of stories and histories. Community folklore is passed down through generations at play. Local authority Play Sufficiency Assessments include understanding and providing for the play requirements of Welsh language speaking children.

A globally responsible Wales

Wales is the first country in the world to legislate for children's play and this approach is signposted in General Comment No. 17 on Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Welsh Government's innovative legislation marks a bold experiment in planning and accounting for play for which there is no pre-existing template to follow. This has led to international interest in Article 31 and Wales' approach.

More information about the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015): www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/

Workforce development

Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³)

Level 2 pilot

Through our partnership with Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales, we have now started delivering the brand new Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³) qualifications.

The first cohort of learners are an experienced group of playworkers from Wrexham and our Workforce Development Officer, Martin King-Sheard is teaching on this course alongside Mel Kearsley from the Wrexham Play Development Team, at Ruabon Youth Centre.

The Agored Cymru Level 2 Certificate Playwork: Principles into Practice (Level 2 P³) is suitable for all those wanting to work in playwork in a non-supervisory role and is recognised by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in regulated playwork settings.

History of P³

The origins of P³ go back to 2005 when the Playwork Principles were originally adopted and there was an identified need to develop playwork training that reflected the new professional and ethical framework for playwork. Through a combination of European and Welsh Government funding, Play Wales was able to develop a new suite of level 2 and 3 qualifications for playwork.

Updating P³

In 2018, Play Wales undertook a review of P³ qualifications, involving stakeholders in Wales and beyond, and decided to streamline the qualifications to ensure they continued to meet the needs of the sector. The new coherent route is accredited by the awarding body, Agored Cymru, and consists of three qualifications:

- Agored Cymru Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)
- Agored Cymru Level 2 Certificate Playwork: Principles in Practice (Level 2 P³)
- Agored Cymru Level 3 Diploma Playwork: Principles into Practice (Level 3 P³).

Learners who have completed the Level 2 qualifications will be able to progress onto the Level 3 Diploma which is intended for those in senior or supervisory roles.

Qualification content

P³ is a blend of theory and practice. Learners will be able to explain what they do and why they do it and are expected to put into practice what they have learnt.

Unique to the new P³ is a practical element which includes skills around building fires and erecting simple structures. This was felt to be a key skill for many playworkers but to date has never been part of an assessed qualification. Learners on the Wrexham course have got to grips with setting up tension lines, building tripods, tying figure of eight knots as well as building and cooking on fires.

Playwork is about working together with others within the team but also in the community so these topics are explored on this course. Also, because playwork is a profession where we are continually learning, we look at how reflective practice supports our ongoing learning and links to our professional development.

The course looks at the critical importance of play for children's social, emotional and mental development and how it can help

children understand changes that are happening in their lives. The learners are also covering the role that playworkers have in safeguarding children and how play is a crucial part of children expressing, and learning to cope with difficult things that may have happened in their lives.

Blended learning

The pandemic has enabled us to explore the use of online technology for learning so a blended approach is now being used for qualification delivery with Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales. This means that some sessions can be delivered online through Zoom or MS Teams and some sessions are delivered face to face. Each learner gets an online account for Moodle which is used by learners to upload assessment evidence so it can be viewed and marked by an assessor. Although this technology is new to many, it is rapidly becoming the future for learners on a range of courses and not just for playwork.

Skilled and experienced tutors

P³ can only be delivered by tutors who have demonstrated that they have expertise in playwork. Tutors will have a minimum of two years practical playwork experience and undergo a special qualification that we have designed. The Award in Delivering Dynamic Playwork Training (ADDaPT) qualification ensures that the learning is playful and participative and that playwork knowledge and skills are taught in ways that suit a range of preferred learning styles.

Looking forward

The challenges of the 2020-2021 lockdowns have meant that the new P³ was delayed in getting started but we are now really excited it is underway. Other courses are already planned and we are working with our partners to ensure that funding for playwork qualifications is put to good use to get P³ to those who need it. The first P³ Level 3 Diploma will be delivered early in 2022.

If you would like to know more about registering to undertake playwork qualifications visit our website: www.playwales.org.uk/eng/qualifications

Feedback

'We are really excited to be supporting the development and delivery of P: Certificate in Playwork Principles into Practice. Play Wales have listened to the sector and made sure the qualification supports knowledge and theory in play and playwork, specific to the job in hand. The impact of this qualification is that we will be supporting staff to continue their learning journey, continuing to reflect on their practice improving play opportunities for children and young people in Wales.'

Jane Hawkshaw, Curriculum Delivery Officer, Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales

'I am excited to be completing the final part of the P³ qualification. I find it to be a very interesting and informative course that I enjoy taking part in due to the combination of practical and written elements.'

Kez Harston, Learner

Spotlight on ... Playscheme and Inclusion Project Co-ordinator

In each issue we talk to a professional in the world of play and playwork to provide an insight into the diversity of the workforce and the job roles available.

For this issue, we spoke to Karianne (Kez) Harston, Playscheme and Inclusion Project Coordinator with Wrexham County Borough Council's (WCBC) Play Development Team.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and how you got into playwork?

As a teenager, I volunteered as a junior youth worker at my local youth club. This influenced my decision to undertake a Youth & Community degree at Glyndŵr University when I was 18. I was lucky enough to secure a job as a playworker at Gwenfro Valley and was offered a place on the P³ course in 2012, which really helped me to gain an understanding of playwork and the Playwork Principles. I continued to work as a playworker for eight years, as I fell in love with the profession.

What is your job title and what does your role involve?

Since 2019, I now work for WCBC as the Playscheme and Inclusion Project Coordinator. It is my responsibility to organise staffing and resources for our term-time and holiday play sessions. In conjunction with this, I work with families to provide 1-1 support at play sessions for those who need it.

What's the best bit about your job?

It's hard to choose just one! I get to work with a fantastic group of like-minded people. There are lots of opportunities for training. It's great to be able to provide a service to children that is free and supports their growth and wellbeing by giving them opportunities to do what they want in their own community. Play sparks

joy in people which is a little bit like magic and being able to be a part of that feels very special to me.

Is there anything you find challenging about your job?

Currently, staffing is an issue. Ideally, we need more staff to maximise the potential of our sessions. It can be hard to find staff due to unsociable hours, with sessions running after school and during holidays so people struggle for childcare.

How has your role changed as a result of COVID-19?

I had only been in my role for six months when we went into lockdown. We had been building up momentum and then everything stopped so it felt a bit like the rug was pulled from under us. My role seemed to morph into a family support worker for our inclusion families.

We developed weekly themed walks for families to do on their daily exercise and weekly news bulletins that contained playful ideas and suggestions they could do at home. When some of the restrictions lifted, I delivered playful resource bags to the families, so that they had a variety of materials they could use for play, arts and crafts. We were able to run some closed-access sessions for disabled children to offer respite for families during this time too. As restrictions have eased, it has been really nice to restart community play provision and support children to play and socialise again after such a strange year.

Celebrating Playday with a Summer of Play



Playday is the national day for play in the UK – celebrated on the first Wednesday in August for over 30 years. But, in recognition of the challenges and uncertainty children and teenagers have faced throughout the pandemic, the 2021 Playday campaign called for all children across the UK to have a Summer of Play.

Recognising the importance of children’s play and supporting children’s right to play, on Playday and every day, is more important than ever:

- Playing is essential for children’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Playing helps children cope with stress and anxiety and fosters resilience, enabling children to better deal with challenges.
- Playing gives children the opportunity to have fun, laugh, take time out, relax, and build friendships.
- Playing outside allows children to appreciate nature, the environment, and feel part of their community.
- Playing is fundamental to children’s happiness, and happy children lead to happier communities.

www.playday.org.uk



In the lead up, our partners were busy hiding the storybook packs in their communities ready for children and their families to find on Playday!

Throughout the day, Playday organisers shared treasure hunt clues locally and on their social media pages. We were delighted to see so many families outside having fun – the photos of happy smiley children after they found the treasure are testament to their enjoyment!



Storybook Treasure Hunt

At Play Wales, we started our Summer of Play on Playday with a national Storybook Treasure Hunt. As well as our two children’s storybooks about children’s right to play, the packs included some playful resources like chalk to help give children a Summer of Play.

‘My 6 year old found ours in Aberystwyth area. Lovely surprise on a walk back from our kids’ christening. Thank you.’

‘We were lucky to find one of your storybook treasure hunt today at Colwyn Bay Promenade, taken back to Holyhead.’

‘We found some treasure. My boys loved it and had great fun playing hopscotch with the chalk.’

‘We found one in Penrhyncoch on a rainy walk today, my little one can’t wait to colour in the picture and read the books.’

Thank you

A big thank you to all our partners across Wales who helped make the Storybook Treasure Hunt happen – we really couldn’t have done it without you.