

Play for Wales

Play news and briefing from the national charity for play

Issue 38 Winter 2012



Play: Assessing Sufficiency



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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

Guest Editorial

The invite to write this guest editorial is timely – I'm waiting for my flight to Geneva where I'll join an international committee to finalise the drafting of a General Comment on Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*.

So, whilst this international work is ongoing, in Wales, new Regulations and Statutory Guidance regarding the Play Sufficiency Duty included in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 have been issued. I'm slightly disappointed at the delay in their publication but putting my frustrations aside, this is a significant development in implementing Article 31 of the UNCRC here in Wales.

In a period of financial constraint, play must not be seen as an added extra – it is every child's right. I would argue, that much can be done through the reallocation of existing resources to meet newly identified priorities. It is not just about spending new money but spending existing money more effectively and efficiently.

As the Children's Commissioner

I meet many children and young people and I am acutely aware of how important access to play, leisure and recreation is to them. The benefits of play, leisure and recreation are now well evidenced and ensuring that all children and young people can enjoy those benefits must be a priority for us all. This is why the statutory guidance is so important as a tool to promote the realisation of the right to play for all children and young people in Wales.

For this vision to become reality, a critical aspect for me moving forward is to raise awareness of these changes. We need to ensure local elected members have adequate resources and support so that they fully understand the nature of the duty. Local elected members are often contacted by adults who raise concerns about the use of public spaces by children and young people. As such, they should receive adequate support to allow them to understand the rationale for and intentions of the duty.

Raising awareness with other stakeholders will also be important. My Advice and Support service has been involved in a case where a group of children and young people have been the subject of police and Local Authority intervention in relation to anti-social behaviour as a result of

neighbours complaints about them playing in the street on which they live. A process of mediation is now being offered as a means of resolving the issue. Consultation with communities in relation to the play sufficiency assessment should include identification of adults' main concerns and work to address these in a way that supports the needs of all community members, including children and young people.

What will I be doing?

I will be calling on the Welsh Government to monitor the implementation of the Play Sufficiency Duty to ensure there will be no further delay from the timetable for full implementation of the duty; and

I will be calling on local elected members at Local Authority level to find out what children and young people have to say about realising their right to play in the areas where they live and to champion the right to play in the communities they represent.

Keith Towler,
Children's Commissioner for Wales

www.childcomwales.org.uk

Twitter: @childcomwales

*See General Comment update article on page 3.



News

General Comment on Article 31 – the latest

As we have previously reported the International Play Association (IPA) is taking a lead role in the development of the General Comment on Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – working with a group of international experts.

What is a General Comment?

A General Comment is an official statement that elaborates on the meaning of an aspect of the UNCRC that requires further interpretation or emphasis.

What will the General Comment do?

The General Comment will define all elements of Article 31 and explain their importance in the growth and development of children and their impact on children's overall wellbeing.

The General Comment will provide guidance to the governments of the 192 countries (States

Parties) that are signatories, on the provisions of the Convention in relation to play and recreation, rest and leisure, cultural life and the arts.

It will raise awareness of the importance of these in the everyday lives of children worldwide. The twenty-page statement will also address the challenges to addressing Article 31.

The General Comment on Article 31 will be a useful tool in harnessing worldwide energy to promote the children's right to play worldwide. Governments and authorities can play a key role in helping to ensure that children grow up in conditions where they can exercise their right to play.

What next?

The General Comment draft is currently being reviewed by six children's groups from around the world; an initiative of which the IPA is particularly proud.

The working group hopes that the United Nations Committee will approve, adopt and publish the General Comment on Article 31 in January 2013.

Once published the General Comment will be available at: www.playwales.org.uk/eng/generalcomment

Social Media



www.facebook.com/PlayWales



twitter.com/PlayWales

Rights in schools research

Rights in Schools: What has been the children's experience?

In recent years, due to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, human-rights-based approaches have been promoted in all aspects of work with children, including education and play. A variety of innovative approaches have been developed

for implementing children's rights in schools around the world. In the UK, UNICEF's 'Right Respecting School' award is one of the best-known. But what has been the children's experience? What has worked for them, and what hasn't? How do children's experiences in different countries, north and south, rich and poor, compare?

With a doctoral studentship from Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, Harry Shier has left his home in Nicaragua and over the next three years will be working in partnership with teams

of child researchers from around the world to try and find answers to these questions.

Harry says: 'I'm not focusing specifically on play in schools, but I already know from my experiences in Nicaragua that for children a rights-respecting school is one that recognises and respects their right to play, both in and out of the classroom.'

The findings of Harry's research will be shared in a future edition of *Play for Wales*.

Project Wild Thing



Project Wild Thing aims to re-connect one million children with nature. Running the UK-wide marketing campaign is filmmaker David Bond, who has appointed himself Marketing Director for Nature, in an attempt to advertise the benefits of nature.

The campaign is being filmed for a documentary and is supported by Arla, Britdoc, Good For Nothing, National Trust, NHS Sustainable Development Unit, Play Wales, PlayBoard Northern Ireland and Play England.

The feature-length documentary *Project Wild Thing*, produced by Green Lions, in conjunction with the BRITDOC Foundation is due to be released nationwide in cinemas in Summer 2013.

A campaign to encourage children to spend more time in nature will accompany the film's release.

To support the first part of the campaign David Bond has produced a two-minute film clip to encourage children to 'forget the distractions of the modern world and wake up to the benefits of nature'.

In this clip we're pleased to see Bob Hughes modelling Play Wales' *Better a broken bone than a broken spirit* t-shirt! A limited number of the t-shirts are still available to purchase via our online shop: www.playwales.org.uk/eng/shop



Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill

The Scottish Government has launched a consultation on the proposed Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. One of the Bill's main proposals is to give a legal foundation to children and young people's rights. However, the Duty is restricted to Ministers and at the moment does not extend to other public bodies including Local Authorities. As part of this consultation Play Scotland presented a petition (PE1440) to the Public Petitions Committee (PPC) at the Scottish Parliament calling on the Scottish Government to include a Statutory Duty for Play in the new Bill. This could place a duty on Local Authorities to provide sufficient and satisfying play opportunities for children of all ages and abilities.

Play Scotland provided further evidence to the PPC in September and was delighted when it was unanimously agreed that this petition should be kept open; further research and information would be sought by the Committee.

www.playscotland.org

Natural Childhood Inquiry

As part of its Outdoor Nation campaign the National Trust has published the *Findings of the Natural Childhood Inquiry*. The inquiry follows Steven Moss' *Natural Childhood* report, published earlier this year, which documented children's declining connection with the outdoors and nature.

To accompany the inquiry findings the National Trust has published research that shows that stranger danger (37 per cent), lack of safe nearby outdoor places to play (25 per cent) and too much traffic (21 per cent) were the main barriers to allowing children the freedom to enjoy the outdoors amongst parents of children aged 12 or under.

45 per cent of parents cited 'more local safe places to play' as the main factor which would encourage them to let their children go outdoors and explore in their community.

<http://outdoornation.org.uk>

'The inquiry found that children's love of nature is best started in the home. Inquiry respondents said parents need more accessible child and family-friendly green and natural spaces and that opportunities for children to access and enjoy nature need to be promoted in a more joined-up fashion, and in ways that appeal more to families and children.'

Swansea Play Streets project

£5,000 of funding has been secured to pilot street closures to allow children the space and freedom to play outside their homes in parts of Swansea. As part of the Play Streets pilot three or four streets, selected from ones that have previously held jubilee or royal wedding parties, will be closed for a few hours at a time once a week.

Swansea Council is supporting the project during the pilot phase and will provide training to enable community members to run the scheme themselves.

Mitch Theaker, Swansea Council's cabinet member for opportunities for children and young people said:

'We want to create areas where children and teenagers can play safely without the danger of traffic, giving parents peace of mind and potentially creating a greater sense of community.'

If successful, Swansea Council may extend the project to other parts of the city where local people can recommend other Play Streets.

A similar project is already proving successful in Bristol:
<http://playingout.net>



Sufficiency and workforce

Simon Bazley, NEW Play's Executive Regional Play Development Officer shares his views on the impact the Welsh Government's Play Sufficiency Duty will have on the playwork workforce in Wales.

The new Play Sufficiency Duty presents all Local Authorities across Wales with a real opportunity to clearly identify the current situation with regards to children and their play in more depth than ever before. Assessing the sufficiency of the workforce will be central to this. Nothing has such a profound impact on the quality of staffed play provision, than the skills and knowledge of its staff team. Assessing the current levels of skills, knowledge, qualifications and also opportunities for continuous professional development afforded

to staff, will be central to the future planning of all services that support children's right to play.

The Duty will support Local Authorities to clearly identify their unique situation with regards to the play workforce operating within their county. Identifying the levels of qualifications, awareness, skills and knowledge of the workforce is the first step. Subsequently ensuring a realistic framework for securing them will be a new challenge for Local Authorities and their partners.

The funding available to support the realisation of this vision, particularly for workforce development, will need to be sufficient. Is this sufficient at the moment? The author has his own view on this matter. Individual opinion aside, one thing the assessments will provide for the first time in history, will be an evidence-based answer to this question, and many others besides!

For more workforce development news see pages 14 and 15

Assessing

Play

Sufficiency

To achieve the outcomes for children that play provides, the Welsh Government worked with stakeholder organisations to create a national Play Policy in 2002 and the Play Policy Implementation Plan in 2006. These documents set out the Welsh Government's vision for play for children in Wales and the actions it intended to take to realise this vision.

The Welsh Government recognises that to achieve the aim of creating a play friendly Wales and to provide excellent play opportunities for our children, it is necessary for Local Authorities, their partners and other stakeholders to also work towards this purpose. Therefore a section on 'Play Opportunities' was included in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure, which received royal assent in 2010. Chapter 2, Section 11 of the Measure sets out the duty on Local Authorities as regards Play Opportunities.

The Welsh Government Play Policy states that:

'Play is so critically important to all children in the development of their physical, social, mental, emotional and creative skills that society should seek every opportunity to support it and create an environment that fosters it. Decision making at all levels of government should include a consideration of the impact of those decisions, on children's opportunities to play.'

To achieve this purpose the Welsh Government commenced the first part of the duty on 2 November 2012. The duty requires Local Authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities for children in their areas.

Wales is the first country in the world to establish such a duty within its legislative framework, so there are no precedents for this work. It is important that all stakeholders work to make this legislation fit for the purpose of creating a play friendly Wales. Local Authority endorsement of, and compliance with, the Statutory Guidance and their ongoing commitment to the play agenda will contribute to the creation of a play friendly Wales.

Children's right to play is enshrined in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Welsh Government formally adopted the UNCRC in 2004, and it is committed to making the principles of the Convention a reality for all children. There are three articles which particularly relate to this duty:

- **Article 31** (Leisure, play and culture): Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.
- **Article 15** (Freedom of association): Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations.
- **Article 12** (Respect for the views of the child): When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

In Wales play is established as one of children's rights under Core Aim 4 – Play, Sport, Leisure and Culture, of the Welsh Government's 7 Core Aims for Children, set out in *Children & Young People: Rights to Action*.

The Welsh Government also believes that high quality play opportunities for all children may contribute to mitigating the negative effects of poverty on children's lives and help to build their resilience.

Play can also be a means of reducing inequalities between children living in families that can afford costly recreational provision and those that cannot so reducing poverty of experience for all children.

The Welsh Government wishes to create an environment in Wales where children have excellent opportunities to play and enjoy their recreation time.

Statutory Guidance has been produced to support Local Authorities in completing their Play Sufficiency Assessments. It also explains the purpose of the duty and the matters to be taken into account when assessing sufficiency, as set out under section 10. To ensure partnership working, maximization of resources, consultation and participation, the Play Sufficiency Assessment Guidance is underpinned by a policy framework.

Partnership working

To achieve a play friendly society that offers a wide range of play and recreational opportunities it is necessary for all partners within the community to work together for this purpose.

The Welsh Government encourages Local Authorities to acknowledge the importance of play in children's lives and make a firm commitment to work strenuously within their own structures, with partner organisations, children and their families and communities to ensure that children have access to the play opportunities that they want and have a right to expect.

The relevant partnerships are likely to include:

- Town and Community Councils
- Third sector organisations, particularly regional play associations
- The private sector if appropriate
- Community groups
- Communities First partnerships

As well as working with relevant organisations within its area, the planning and delivery of play provision can take place on a regional and cross Local Authority basis where appropriate, and with national organisations that support the development of play. Each area should be proactive in developing play opportunities for children in its own area, as well as being supportive and

sharing good practice with other Local Authorities/organisations to promote play for all children in Wales. The Assessments should take account of provision that may be used by children beyond Local Authority boundaries.

Providing and maximising resources

Play covers a wide range of provision, facilities, services and community organisation, therefore it is essential that budgets that cover all these areas contribute towards the purpose of achieving sufficient play opportunities. It is anticipated that with a slight shift in emphasis in how a budget is utilised a significant improvement in the availability of play opportunities can be achieved.

Local partners should identify and consider use of these budgets in developing the Action Plans for improving play opportunities, including reprioritisation if necessary. A review of budgets of relevant policy areas that affect children's play opportunities will be necessary.

Consultation and Participation

For play opportunities to meet the requirements of children it is essential they are consulted on what they want from play and recreational activities. The Local Authority should consult with children as to what play opportunities, play provision,

activities and events they want in their area. The participation and consultation methods should comply with the Welsh Government's Children and Young People's Participation Standards and Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 on Participation.

The Guidance stipulates that the Local Authority should consult with parents, the local community and any other interested stakeholders on the development of play opportunities and developing child and play friendly communities.

The assessment should take into account:

- The views of children, obtained through consultations, on what play and recreation provision they want in their areas; how they would like their neighbourhood to be organised to provide the play opportunities they want; and what barriers stop them from playing. The consultation should include the views of children who do and do not use existing play opportunities.
- An analysis of the consultations results and how these have or will be used to inform future plans.
- The views of parents, families and other stakeholders, obtained through consultation, on play provision/opportunities and how this has or will inform future plans.

www.playwales.org.uk/en/sufficiency

Play Sufficiency Assessments: Matters that need to be taken into account:

- **Matter A:** Population
- **Matter B:** Providing for diverse needs
- **Matter C:** Space available for children to play
 - Open spaces
 - Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces
 - Playing fields
- **Matter D:** Supervised provision
 - Playwork provision
 - Structured recreational activities
- **Matter E:** Charges for play provision
- **Matter F:** Access to space/provision
 - information
 - publicity
 - events
- **Matter G:** Securing and developing the play workforce
- **Matter H:** Community engagement and participation
- **Matter I:** Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit

To support Local Authorities to undertake Play Sufficiency Assessments, a toolkit has been prepared by Play Wales and the Welsh Government in conjunction with play providers across Wales. It provides support to all Local Authorities in fulfilling their duties, as set out in the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012.



The development of the Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit was approved by Gwenda Thomas AM, the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services, as a means of supporting the implementation of the duty to assess play sufficiency.

The toolkit should be used with reference to the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012 and associated Statutory Guidance. These set out the details of the assessment that each Local Authority needs to undertake, following the commencement of Sections 11(1) 11(2), 11(5) and 11(6) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure (2010).

A well-conducted Play Sufficiency Assessment will provide the evidence needed to identify gaps in provision and support the development of action plans to address these shortcomings.

Conducting the Play Sufficiency Assessments against the criteria of the Statutory Guidance will require skills and a partnership approach.

Many Local Authorities in Wales have developed play policies and strategies that are based on the national Play Policy and the Play Policy Implementation Plan respectively. As a result, many areas already have the foundation for creating local policy and strategy which develops cross-departmental working practices, policy development and implementation procedures to enhance children's opportunities to play.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment will need to demonstrate consideration of the range of factors that affect children's opportunities to play. It will include:

- Demographic profiles of the area
- An assessment of:
 - open space and existing and potential play space
 - dedicated play provision
 - recreational provision
- Other factors that promote play opportunities including planning, traffic, transport, information and publicity, as well as workforce development.

The tools provided in the toolkit are tried and tested templates based on the matters that need to be taken into account within the Statutory Guidance. The templates provided may be used as they are or as a guide to inform the development of more specific resources.

A *pro forma* has also been provided for the Play Sufficiency Assessment and the Play Sufficiency Action Plan, which needs to be submitted to the Welsh Government by 1 March 2013. The other tools provided are to support Local Authorities in completing the assessment and action plan and should be used according to local requirements.

Time, space and permission to play

The duty to assess play sufficiency forms part of the Welsh Government's commitment to promote play opportunities for all children in Wales. It also forms part of the tackling poverty agenda, which recognises that children can have a poverty of experience, opportunity and aspiration, and that this kind of poverty can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds across

Wales. The duty has the potential to make real and meaningful changes that support children's right to play as well as providing them with a wealth of opportunity and experience.

The Welsh Government wants Wales to be a country where children are increasingly seen outside enjoying the benefits of play. It wants to create a play friendly environment that provides time, space and permission for children to play. This will require parents, families and everyone in the community to recognise that play is of great importance in children's present lives and for their future development. The Welsh Government wishes to promote positive attitudes towards children's right to play freely in their communities. This will require all these groups, together with Local Authority elected members and officers, other decision makers and providers across many policy areas, to work together to remove barriers to children's play and make a real

difference for children in their own streets and communities.

It is important that Local Authority elected members understand the broad range of policy areas that affect play and the matters that need to be taken into account in the assessment. They need to be fully engaged from the start of the assessment process and take ownership of the results.

The Children Act 2004 guidance for Wales requires Local Authorities and their partners to have regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Local Authorities and key partner agencies are required in law to co-operate to improve the wellbeing of children and young people in the local area. The Children Act 2004 placed a duty on every Local Authority in Wales to appoint a lead director and lead member for children and young people's services. These lead directors and members are well placed to be responsible for the completion of the assessment.

A good flow of communication to the Local Service Board will also be important. This will help to ensure that the Play Sufficiency Assessment contributes to the overall local needs assessment for Single Integrated Plans and that the Play Sufficiency Action Plan is incorporated into the Single Integrated Plan, as indicated in the Statutory Guidance.

The toolkit has been developed to provide practical approaches that might help to assess and address barriers and create a better Wales where children can live and play. In order to grasp the opportunity this legislation gives us, and make it work for children, it is clear we need to use our existing resources either more effectively or differently.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012, associated Statutory Guidance and toolkit are available at:
www.playwales.org.uk/eng/sufficiency

Play Sufficiency Assessment Stages

Stage 1: Preparation

- Liaise with the Lead Member for Children and Young People/Cabinet
- Agree the Assessment methodology
- Decide who will lead the Assessment
- Identify contributors
- Identify membership and establish a Play Sufficiency Working Group
- Establish partnership roles and responsibilities and timeline
- Identify and recruit key partners
- Agree principles
- Identify financial resources/support

Stage 2: Conducting the Play Sufficiency Assessment

- Undertake the Assessment and identify options of actions, using the Play Sufficiency Assessment Form
- Audit and map existing spaces and provision for playing
- Survey children and parents
- Identify and agree strengths and shortfalls in provision

Stage 3: Producing the Play Sufficiency Assessment

- Write the Assessment
- Review and sign-off of the Play Sufficiency Assessment Form by the Play Sufficiency Working Group
- Play Sufficiency Assessment agreed by elected members

Stage 4: Producing the Action Plan

- Analyse and prioritise future actions
- Review and sign-off of the Play Sufficiency Action Plan Form by the Play Sufficiency Working Group
- Play Sufficiency Action Plan agreed by elected Members

Stage 5: Submit the Play Sufficiency Assessment Form and the Play Sufficiency Action Plan Form to the Welsh Government

Stage 6: Submit the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Play Sufficiency Action Plan to the Local Service Board for inclusion in the Single Integrated Plan

Stage 7: Publish the Play Sufficiency summary on the Local Authority website

National play organisations welcome Play Sufficiency Duty

International Play Association



A phrase associated with human rights is that they are realised 'in small places, close to home', the places that make up the world of individuals. The Welsh Government's Play Sufficiency Duty reminds me of that phrase when stating 'we want to create an environment where children's presence playing outside in our communities is welcomed and celebrated'. I agree that barriers to play come both in the form of attitudes and environments.

IPAs recent consultations on children's right to play in eight countries internationally (2010) found formidable barriers to play including unsafe and inhospitable environments. Non-existent or inadequate policy and legislation was topped off by widespread lack of awareness of the importance of play amongst adults. In 2012 we spoke directly with children in six countries. They emphasised the importance of ensuring that children's perspective was well understood:

'Responsible persons and officials should know what's happening and must monitor Article 31 implementation about children's right to play.'
(Children in Lebanon)

'To help children living healthily with this modern society, adults should find ways to understand this circumstance together with children.' (Children in Thailand)

The upcoming UN General Comment on Article 31 can be expected to elaborate on State Parties' (national governments) obligations associated with Article 31 and the measures necessary to ensure its implementation equally for all children without discrimination.

Accepting perhaps some concern that coupling free play and recreational opportunities in the Duty creates a danger of freely chosen, child-led play becoming lost. Wales may however find itself happily a little ahead of the game.

Theresa Casey, President:
International Play Association

Play England



Making space for play

Play England fully supports the commitment of our colleagues in Play Wales to make communities more play friendly by valuing and increasing the opportunities for

play throughout the community. The Welsh Government is again taking the lead in implementing the UNCRC. The Play Sufficiency Duty is an important step for Local Authorities to recognise their responsibilities for creating opportunities for play; and outlines the positive role all council departments have in ensuring children are able to play freely within their own community – on their own doorstep, in the street, in the local park, green spaces and in designated play areas.

The Play Sufficiency Duty is welcome in that due weight is given to the importance of freely chosen play not just structured activities facilitated by adults. The Duty makes it clear this is everybody's responsibility. This includes planners, transport and highways officers and others who do not traditionally see themselves as having direct responsibility for the welfare of children and young people.

The Duty means that play – so central to the lives of children – is part of a wider debate between Local Authorities and the wider community about children and childhood. Where Wales leads, hopefully others will follow.

Steven Chown, Programme
Development Manager

We have asked the national play organisations in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as the International Play Association (IPA) to share their views on the Welsh Government's Play Sufficiency Duty.

PlayBoard Northern Ireland



PlayBoard welcomes the Welsh Government's commitment to placing great value on play and its importance in the lives of children. We celebrate with Play Wales the success of their advocacy work and vision to incorporate play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas.

As Wales is the first country in the world to establish such a Duty within its legislative framework, we in Northern Ireland are very interested in the development of this work. We will be paying close attention to how stakeholders make this legislation fit for purpose to create a play friendly Wales – a shared vision we have across all nations. We can learn and compare the different approaches across all nations to progress the play agenda for children.

The Play Sufficiency Duty will provide a much needed evidence informed approach, to identify both strengths and limitations in provision. This will enable Local Authorities to better develop action plans to address gaps in provision where they are identified. We would anticipate that

the Duty will provide the foundation for creating local policy and strategy, incorporating cross-departmental working practices, policy development and implementation procedures to enhance children's opportunities and access to play freely within their own communities.

We fully support the collaborative working between the Welsh Government and Play Wales to develop a toolkit that will support Local Authorities to conduct Play Sufficiency Assessments. We look forward to the insight provided from the process to progress the play agenda further in Northern Ireland.

Roisin McCooey, Senior Research and Policy Officer

Play Scotland



'Investing in children's play is one of the most important things we can do to improve children's health and wellbeing,'
Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer, Scotland

Play is crucial for the wellbeing of all children and the right to play reflects the right to be a child here and now. The new Play Sufficiency Duty in Wales will help develop local

physical and social environments that are supportive of play and will ensure that play is not dismissed as frivolous or marginalised. We know that play underpins the four principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – non-discrimination, survival and development, the best interest of the child and participation. This new Duty will assist in the design and delivery of child-friendly communities in Wales supported by play-friendly neighbourhoods where children can meet friends and play; walk safely in the streets on their own; have green spaces for plants and animals; participate in family, community and social life (taken from Child Friendly City Indicators).

Play Scotland believes that, wherever they live, children and young people of all ages, abilities and interests should be able to play, in a variety of ways, in high quality spaces, within sight of their homes, or within easy walking distance, where they feel safe – whether or not they are accompanied by adults. The new Play Sufficiency Duty is a fantastic opportunity to make this happen for all children in Wales.

Marguerite Hunter Blair, Chief Executive

International Play Association
<http://ipaworld.org>

Play England
www.playengland.org.uk

PlayBoard Northern Ireland
www.playboard.org

Play Scotland
www.playscotland.org

A balanced approach to risk

The Play Safety Forum (PSF) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have published a joint high level statement to promote a balanced approach to managing risk in children's play.

The statement emphasises that when planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and the benefits – no child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool. The PSF and HSE urge all organisations to embrace the recommendations and principles in the *Children's Play and Leisure: promoting a balanced approach* statement.

This statement makes clear that:

- Play is important for children's wellbeing and development
- When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits
- Those providing play opportunities should focus on controlling the real risks, while securing or increasing the benefits – not on the paperwork
- Accidents and mistakes happen during play – but fear of litigation and prosecution has been blown out of proportion.

Judith Hackitt, Chair of the Health and Safety Executive:

'Health and safety laws are often wrongly cited as a reason to deny children opportunities, contributing to a cotton wool culture. I welcome this statement which brings clarity and focus to what really matters when managing the risks associated with children's play.'

Whilst HSE's main focus is on health and safety in the workplace, it is clear that attitudes to risk are formed long before young people enter the world of work.

Play outdoors teaches young people how to deal with risk and without this they are ill equipped to deal with working life.'

Robin Sutcliffe, Chair of the Play Safety Forum:

'I believe that this will be a landmark statement, helping councils, schools, charities and others to give children and young people greater freedom to experience challenging and adventurous play and leisure opportunities. The implications for society will be far reaching.'

Play Wales:

'We should not underestimate how important this statement is. It marks a change in direction in the Government's view of play with an explicit recognition of the developmental need for children to take risks. Growing risk aversion fuelled by a fear of being sued means that as a society we've stopped looking at the quality of provision for play and focused just on its safety. This statement will enable us to give children more freedom to play and to experience the joy of taking risks, like we did when we were children.'

The statement: *Children's Play and Leisure: promoting a balanced approach* is available to download at: www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childs-play-statement.htm

We have included a copy of the statement as an insert in this magazine



'We should not deny children the opportunity to learn by taking risks'



The Association of Play Industries (API) interviews Judith Hackitt from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Hi Judith, what do you do?

I'm the Chair of the Health and Safety Executive.

What is the HSE?

We're a national independent watchdog acting in the public interest to reduce work-related death, serious injury and ill health across Great Britain's workplaces.

We do this through inspection, investigation, enforcement, research, providing information and advice, promoting training, new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners.

What is the current HSE guidance for play?

HSE's main focus is on health and safety in the workplace so issues of play safety are generally outside of our day-to-day work in terms of offering guidance. However, we do have an interest particularly in setting the record straight when health and safety laws are wrongly cited as a reason to deny children opportunities, contributing to a cotton wool culture.

We've recently worked with the Play Safety Forum in developing a High Level Statement on play – agreeing an approach to managing risk to give play providers the confidence to offer exciting and challenging play environments without unnecessary safety concerns and paperwork.

What is the value of risk in play?

It is clear that attitudes to risk are formed long before young people enter the world of work, so play outdoors teaches young people how to deal with risk. Without this they are ill equipped to deal with work or life in general.

Playing outside was something my generation did, and we were better for it. Certainly there were times when we came home with cuts and bruises – or even broken bones – but when we did we brought something else back with us: a lesson about the world.

If you fell out of a tree, it hurt. But it taught you either what not to do next time or that tree climbing was not for you. It gave you a healthy respect for the physical world around you, what risks you could reasonably take and what to do differently next time.

What was your favourite play activity as a child?

I loved riding my bike and I was also a great fan of building dams in streams with logs and stones and things.

Why is play important?

When I speak to employers they often tell me that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find young people to take up apprenticeships who have the physical or mechanical aptitude of people they would have interviewed 10 or 15 years earlier. They haven't built a

go-kart to race down a local hill, or repaired a puncture on their bike.

Young people are curious, and they learn quickly. We should not deny them the opportunity to learn by taking risks. Seeking to protect them from every conceivable hazard, rather than sensibly managing the genuine risks they face, ultimately leaves them in harm's way, not to mention robbing them of memories that last a lifetime.

What do you think is the future for play?

Subsequent generations to my own have, it seems, gradually been deprived of that connection with the outdoors and the education that it afforded them. With the advancement of technology, virtual play experiences on games consoles in bedrooms have replaced many real adventures in the outdoors. However, trends and experiences do tend to come around full circle and by continuing to take a strong line against those who use health and safety as an excuse to stop children playing and experiencing, then we can perhaps all do our bit to regain the value of outdoor play.

This interview is reproduced with the permission of the Association of Play Industries (API):
www.api-play.org

P³ level 3 developments

In 2011, the Sector Priorities Fund Pilot awarded SkillsActive funding to develop the Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³) project. This was a seven month project to develop playwork qualifications at level 3 and to write draft learner and trainer materials for the Award (the first of three sections that comprise the qualification).

Funded through ESF Convergence programmes and the Welsh Government a second Sector Priorities Fund has awarded SkillsActive a follow on project to develop further learner and trainer materials for P³ at level 3 and ensure that the materials are designed and printed, as well as fully translated into Welsh.

SkillsActive is anticipating that the contract for the work will be awarded by January 2013 with the project being completed by the end of 2014.

This is excellent news for the playwork sector in Wales – particularly for learners who

have already started the P³ Level 3 qualification who can now anticipate the same standard of materials becoming available to support their progression. It is also welcomed by employers who have found these qualifications invaluable and have witnessed the impact on provision after supporting their staff to become qualified through this route.

'As an employer of playwork staff I have found the P³ level 3 Award training they recently attended instrumental to their development and work practice. Not only has the learning strengthened their theoretical knowledge it has also enhanced their leadership skills and confidence in dealing with the challenges that can occur within our profession. I am very much looking forward to seeing their further development through the Certificate and Diploma stages of the qualification.'

Lisa Williams, Play Development Officer, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)

Training the Trainer course

During October and November 2012 Play Wales is running its P³ Training the Trainer course.

This is a comprehensive six-day induction to delivering Play Wales' Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³) qualifications.

It provides an intensive and challenging programme that provides trainers with the tools to deliver playwork training with confidence and inspire learners.

13 learners from across Wales will be learning a range of topics from how learners' learn and remember information to key playwork theory.

The course has been commissioned by Cardiff Council.

More information about P³ trainers: www.playwales.org.uk/eng/trainers

P³ level 2 revised

The Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³) level 2 qualification has recently been revised. After four very successful years the old units that made up the qualification were due to expire. Working with our awarding body, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), new units have been developed and are now accredited until August 2017.

The changes are very much evolutionary rather than revolutionary and the new qualification retains its focus

on an understanding of play in children's lives and how it might be facilitated. The vision and philosophy of the qualification remain firmly rooted around the Playwork Principles. Structurally the qualification still consists of Award, Certificate and Diploma sections, and qualification delivery remains the same.

As for content the new qualification has enlarged sections on safeguarding, professional development, travel and several other smaller areas. The biggest

changes are in the assessment requirements, which are more integrated and focused while retaining their previous emphasis on reflection and observation.

The new qualification fully meets the playwork national occupational standards and is now available for learners.

For more information on the new units and the revised P³ level 2 contact our Workforce Development team: workforce@playwales.org.uk

P³

interview with a trainer

We recently interviewed Alex Neill, Chwarae Plant's Playwork Training Development Officer about her experiences of delivering the new level 3 Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³) qualification.

How are you finding the course delivery?

I really enjoy the delivery of P³ level 3 because it gives me the freedom to facilitate learning in exciting and interesting ways. This, in turn allows the learners to become immersed in playwork and share their practice and experience with others.

It hasn't been easy to find the right level and pitch for certain topics because some learners have not covered theory we tackle in P³ level 2. It has definitely been a steep learning curve for me, but one I have found both challenging and enjoyable.

How does it compare to other level 3 courses in terms of delivery?

I would use the same approach with any group of students for any level 3 course, but I think the main difference is that I am teaching something I believe in and is relevant to playworkers. The assessment is also both relevant and comprehensive, which is not the case for other available level 3s. The course content is quite intensive, but most learners have said that they are enjoying practical group tasks because they help them to 'take it all in'.

How useful are the course handbooks?

The handbooks are an invaluable resource for the learners as they provide a comprehensive overview of the topics being covered. The learners still need to research and read around each topic, but

they are a very clear and easily digestible starting point.

Are you seeing a difference between learners who have completed P³ at level 2 and those who haven't undertaken the qualification?

There is a very big difference because the P³ learners already have experience of reflecting at a lower level, so they slip into the deeper reflection required. I have found that the other learners are at a disadvantage because so much of the level 3 is based on reflection.

What feedback are you receiving from learners?

One of my learners has told me that by the end of the course she is going to be ready to manage really effectively because she has to live and breathe best practice to complete the assessment. Others, particularly those that have not undertaken P³ level 2, have commented that the course is a real eye opener on what they really should be doing but haven't because they thought they only had to comply with CSSIW Minimum Standards.

Have you received any feedback from employers or children at settings where the staff are undertaking the level 3 qualification?

One employer has seen a marked difference in the practice of the learner, who has started to re-write the setting's policies and procedures in line with what she is learning.

Another employer (of two learners) has said that he would now happily let them run with ideas because they had really taken ownership of their setting and were moving it forward.

Whilst observing a learner in their setting, a child asked what I was doing. When I told her, she said that the playworker had started bringing lots of new things and they had fires. When I asked her what her favourite new thing was, she said climbing on the pool table and tying ropes to the beams to swing on.

Are you seeing changes in the settings you visit when assessing learners?

At one particular setting I have seen one of the learners rallying the other staff and passing on good practice. The team is working more coherently and looking at ways they can change long-standing ineffective routines to revitalise the setting and take on new ways of working.

Any other comments?

I see P³ level 3 as a long awaited revolution in playwork training. The learners are gaining a qualification that is fit for purpose at last, and hopefully that learning and the resulting improvements in practice will directly impact on our children. I feel very honoured to be involved in the start of that process, and it will be interesting to watch it bloom.

More information about P³:
www.playwales.org.uk/eng/p3

Wales

A Play Friendly Place

Wales – A Play Friendly Place is a Play Wales campaign to help build a network of support for play across Wales. It can also be used to establish local campaigns for children’s play and be part of a national movement at the same time. Share what’s happening locally which is either protecting or prohibiting children’s right to play on the Facebook campaign page. Here is an example of a project contributing to making Wales a friendly place for playing children.

Funding for the project, which has resulted in the development of two new natural playable spaces, was awarded under the Heads of the Valley Programme Grant. It is a specific investment for regeneration in this region of Wales.

Tri-County Play Association applied for the funding on behalf of a team consisting of themselves and Chwarae Plant. Each play association works in their area within the region but decided to work in partnership on this project. Play Wales, in association with PLAYLINK, was commissioned to co-ordinate and take responsibility

for elements of the project, in particular, making the design and build of the playable spaces happen. PLAYLINK employed one of its landscape architects to design and oversee elements of the building phase, working closely with a local landscape contractor.

Dormant outdoor space within Maerdy Community Primary School grounds has been invigorated by a sensitive design to meet the needs of the school as well as the local community. The local community is able to use the area after school hours, on weekends and during holidays, promoting a real sense of community usage. The area is central to both ends of the valley settlement, and was identified as the best place to develop new play facilities by local community members.

A local housing association, RCT Homes, granted additional money to Maerdy Regeneration (a local community group) to fund an area within the space, which the budget would not have allowed otherwise. This funding has seen the inclusion of a ball play area within a derelict yard, bringing in facilities for older children. By undertaking training

the school has been supported to become more comfortable in maintaining and managing the play space beyond the life of the project.

The project also enabled investment in Sirhowy Woodlands. This is a nature reserve situated between two deprived communities within Tredegar. This space has been enhanced by playable elements such as sandpits, rope trails and a woodland bike track that will attract families into the area, increasing its usage by providing a focus of playable ‘attractors’.

The Playable Space Project was co-ordinated by one of our Project Officers, Sarah Southern. She has recently taken up a post as Early Years and Parenting Officer for Learning through Landscapes Cymru. We wish Sarah the best of luck in her new post.



<http://on.fb.me/playfriendlyplace>



Why join Play Wales?

Playing is important to all children and important to all our communities. As the national charity for children's play, Play Wales promotes all children and young people's right to play and participate in their local community as part of their everyday lives - we work hard to make Wales a better place for playing. Find out more about our work at www.playwales.org.uk



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The more voices that call together with us to uphold children's right to play, the louder we will be. By becoming a member of Play Wales you can add your voice and strengthen the call.

In 2011 Play Wales secured the International Play Association Right to Play Award on behalf of all those who are working towards Wales becoming a play-friendly place. When Carwyn Jones, First Minister for Wales, accepted the Award he said:

The fact that this is the first time the prestigious international award has been made to a whole country is a great honour. I'd like to thank all the organisations and people whose energy and commitment has contributed to Wales winning this award.

As a member you can:

- join the movement to make Wales more play friendly
- help inform our position and influence our work with government and other agencies
- strengthen our position when we are lobbying for change
- help us evaluate our effectiveness
- nominate and be nominated to the Play Wales Board of Trustees

We will:

- alert you to key consultations and seek your input to our responses
- keep you informed of developments and new research
- discount delegate places at Play Wales events and give you a special deal on Play Wales publications
- give you access to free Criminal Records Bureau checks for staff working in regulated play provision

Associate membership is open to all organisations and individuals living or working in Wales.

International Associate membership is open to any organisation or individual living or working outside Wales - membership benefits are restricted because Wales is our registered area of charitable benefit.

All members are asked to endorse:

- the Playwork Principles, and
- the Welsh Government Play Policy (both can be found on our website)

Join us by completing and returning the enclosed registration form or visit:

www.playwales.org.uk/eng/membership

Already a member?

Renewal invoices will automatically be sent out in December.

EVENTS

Third Sector Conference - Stronger Together

Children in Wales
 5 December 2012
 Future Inn, Cardiff Bay
www.childreninwales.org.uk

National Playwork Conference 2013

Including the 4th Annual Playwork Awards
 5 – 6 March 2013
 Eastbourne
www.playworkconferences.org.uk

Philosophy at Play 2

9 – 10 April 2013
 University of Gloucestershire
www.facebook.com/Play.and.Playwork.at.UoG

Have you seen Play Wales' new website?

Take a look at:
www.playwales.org.uk

We welcome constructive feedback regarding the new website.

Please email your comments to:
info@playwales.org.uk

The IPA 2011 conference website has now been taken down. All relevant and current content including the keynote speeches film clips is available at: www.playwales.org.uk/eng/ipa2011

Spirit 2013

This year we are holding our conference rates AND offering an early bird rate for those that can book and pay for a place before 31 December 2012.

	Members (in Wales)	Non-members
Before 31 December 2012	£210	£230
1 January – 31 March 2013	£230	£250
1 April 2013 onwards	£250	£270

Now in its twelfth year Spirit is a two day conference filled with inspiring keynote speeches, lively discussions, practical workshops, great food and networking opportunities for playworkers, play professionals and anyone interested in children's play.

Topics will include: negative stereotyping, inclusion, political developments, play characteristics, key developments and community projects.

A great social evening after the first conference day is included in the delegate fee.

The conference venue is situated in the heart of Cardiff's bustling city centre between the Millennium Stadium and Cardiff Castle which provides an ideal base if you wish to explore the city's attractions further.

Participants from previous Spirit conferences have said:

'Thank you for yet another awesome play conference – one not to be missed'

'My first time – I have really loved it – supported my passion for playwork'

'Enjoyed all workshops immensely – all very different in delivery and format – food for thought and reflection'

'A varied and thought provoking event'

'Warm and friendly atmosphere'

Book your place at:
www.playwales.org.uk/eng/spirit2013

