

Consultation Response Form

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable): Play Wales

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Development of a workforce register for the childcare and playwork workforce will take time. Legislative change is needed to introduce the requirement for a workforce register and the building of the register itself and development of a Code of Practice and Fitness to Practise processes would necessitate a timescale beyond this Senedd term. A register would need to be developed in collaboration with the childcare and playwork sector, specifically in partnership with key sector stakeholders such as Cwlwm partners, Play Wales and Local Authorities. There would be further opportunities to engage with the sector directly to shape a workforce register and a further consultation to seek feedback on the proposed detail of any future register, but this consultation seeks your views on some fundamental questions in order for us to determine the potential for a childcare and playwork workforce register in Wales.

About you:

Play Wales, the national charity for play in Wales, advocates for the right and need for all children to play. Our key areas:

- raising awareness
- promoting good practice
- providing advice and guidance across all sectors.

Our work includes:

- Policy: Working with others to inform the development of policy and other children's play issues
- Information service: Promoting the value of children's play by providing timely and current information
- Advice and support: Providing specialist knowledge about all issues that affect children's play
- Workforce development: Contributing to the professional development of the playwork and play workforces.

Which of the following statements describes you?

A) I am a member of a stakeholder organisation or work for a local authority.

B) I work in the childcare and playwork sector.

- C) I volunteer in the childcare and playwork sector.
- D) I am a parent or carer of a child under the age of 12.
- E) None of the above
- F) Prefer not to say.

Which of the following best describes your role?

- A) Setting manager
- B) Childminder
- C) Childcare practitioner
- D) Playwork practitioner**
- E) Nanny / Au pair
- F) Responsible individual / Registered person
- G) Other**
- H) Prefer not to say

1. A workforce register would offer benefits for:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Those working in the childcare and playwork sector			x			
Employers in the childcare and playwork sector			x			
Families accessing the childcare and playwork sector			x			

How do you think a register benefits these groups? Please explain your rationale?

Play Wales has undertaken a range of focus groups in the run up to this consultation. This includes:

- The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales (PETC Wales) – which includes playwork employers, training providers and national organisations.
- Open access playwork network – which includes playworkers, employers and managers across local authority and third sector playwork provision.
- Play sufficiency officers network – which includes those responsible for undertaking the statutory Play Sufficiency Assessments.

Our response is based primarily on the advantages and disadvantages of professional registration for playworkers in community based open access playwork provision. We have therefore answered 'not sure' in relation to the questions for childminding and childcare. A more detailed description of open access playwork is available on our website: https://play.wales/publications_category/focus-on-playwork/

registered holiday playschemes. It would also be another reason for holiday playschemes to use the Exceptions Order to run as unregulated provision.

3. The following SHOULD be included in a childcare and playwork workforce register	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
All Staff in registered childcare settings who are paid to work directly with children						x
All Staff in registered playwork settings who are paid to work directly with children			x			
All Staff in registered childminder settings who are paid to work directly with children						x
How do you think a register benefits these groups? Please explain your rationale?						
We have outlined potential benefits for the playwork sector above in terms of professionalisation of the workforce. If playworkers would be required to registered, then the concerns outlined in Q5 would need to be resolved.						
Due to the nature of our engagement activity (playwork) we have not commented on professional registration for childminding and childcare settings.						

4. The following SHOULD NOT be included in a childcare and playwork workforce register	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Staff working in unregistered childcare and playwork settings			x			
Volunteers		x				
Registered Persons/ Responsible Individuals who do not work directly with children		x				
Students working in a voluntary capacity at a registered childcare and playwork setting		x				
Staff, such as cleaners, who work in registered childcare and playwork		x				

settings but not in direct contact with children						
Nannies		x				
Please explain your rationale?						
<p>Through our engagement activity, the question has been raised about professionalisation of the workforce. If this is the case, why is the focus solely on registered settings? The Welsh Play Workforce Study (Play Wales, 2021) found that over half of playworkers work in unregistered provision which would leave a significant proportion of the workforce without professional registration.</p> <p>Play Wales believes that further consideration should be given to the rationale not to include those in unregistered settings, if professional registration is introduced for playworkers in registered settings. This may include voluntary registration for some parts of the workforce.</p> <p>The challenges outlined in Q5 would also be relevant to those working in unregistered provision, particularly in relation to seasonal and zero hours contracts.</p>						

5. Should a childcare and playwork register be established in Wales?	Yes	No	Not sure
			x
Please explain your rationale?			
<p>As discussed above, there is some support for the principle of professional registration. However, at the current time, the concerns seem to outweigh the benefits. We would not want to see the playwork sector disadvantaged, so strongly advise that the concerns outlined below are addressed in future consultations to support a more informed decision for the sector.</p> <p>Three first order concerns have already been highlighted as part of the research undertaken by the Education Policy Institute (July 2021):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The cost of registration – a figure of £45-100 has been suggested. This would be prohibitive for many, especially those working on minimum wage, zero hours contracts and those in short-term seasonal roles. In some cases staff are also paying for their own DBS checks and training. 2. Dual registration – depending on who takes on registration of the playwork workforce, there are many playworkers who also work in youth work, childcare or education, which would require a separate registration. This would require people to register twice, for similar benefits at double the cost. 3. Timing – currently the sector is already stretched, with staff on low paid or zero hours contracts choosing to leave the sector for more reliable employment in retail or hospitality. Some of the issues of recruitment, retention and recognition of the sector must be resolved before introducing an additional requirement on the sector. <p>In addition, the following concerns have been raised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Exceptions Order and NMS reviews – if some of the loopholes are closed and registration is more straightforward, we may see an increase in open access playwork settings registering with CIW. This will impact on the number of playworkers needing to be professionally registered and the associated challenges of cost, dual registration and timing. • Mandatory registration – for people on zero hours or very short term seasonal contracts mandatory registration would be disproportionate and restrictive. 			

- Recruitment and retention – settings already report challenges in finding reliable, qualified staff. The requirement for them also to be registered is an additional burden.
- Code(s) of conduct – what will the links be between registers? For example, if someone is investigated under a code of conduct breach for youth work or teaching, what would the implications be for the childcare and playwork register?
- Understanding the scope/demographics of the workforce – whilst professional registration would help with understanding who is working in the sector and qualifications and training they have undertaken, this would only be for those working in registered settings. As a significant proportion of open access playwork is unregistered, this would not help in gaining a better understanding of the scope of the workforce.

6. If a childcare and playwork workforce register was to be developed, when do you think this should happen?	In the short term (register developed within 2-3 years)	In the medium term (register developed in 4-6 years)	In the long term (register developed in 7-10 years)	Not at all	Not sure
			x		

Please explain your rationale?

As explained above, there is support for the principle of professional registration. However, to resolve some of the other issues which may require legislative change, we believe it is pragmatic for this to be introduced over the longer term and further consultation undertaken on the detail, as has been proposed in the consultation document. This may also support introducing this initiative at a time when funding for playwork provision is on a more stable footing.

7. Do you have any other comments to make about developing a register for the childcare and playwork workforce?

N/A

Question 8: What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the proposal on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.

In relation to access to bilingual training opportunities and the ongoing development of a bilingual workforce. If professional registration has an impact on recruitment and retention of skilled workers as outlined, this will also impact on Welsh speaking playworkers. Settings often struggle to recruit skilled, bilingual staff and training providers have limited tutors who

are both occupationally competent in playwork and who speak Welsh fluently. To grow a bilingual workforce we need to make access to jobs and training easier, not harder.

Do you think that there are opportunities to promote any positive effects?

Do you think that there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

Question 9: In your opinion, could the proposal be formulated or changed so as to:

- have positive effects or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English; or
- mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

Question 10: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Please enter here:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: