

Review of the National Occupational Standards for Playwork 2025

Information sheet #3

As Chair of the UK Playwork National Occupational Standards Consortium, I am pleased to provide this interim update on the review of the National Occupational Standards.

The national organisations are overseeing the process of the NOS review and continue to scrutinise the work of the NOS Writing Group. We are pleased to see the intense debate and consideration being given to the process by the Writing Group.

I would also like to acknowledge all those who have volunteered to be part of the NOS Advisory Group whose expertise will help to shape the draft NOS.

This information sheet provides an update on the review process so far.

Jane Hawkshaw

Overview

The UK Playwork NOS Consortium has made significant progress in its self-funded review of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for playwork. This collaborative effort spans all four nations – Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England – and is supported by sector experts, Playwork Education and Training Councils (PETC England, PETC Northern Ireland, Playwork Scotland and PETC Wales) and stakeholders across the UK.

Key achievements

1. Establishment of expert groups

As part of the review process, we have established two key groups who will shape the NOS review process.

- **NOS Writing Group:** comprises sector experts from all four nations, responsible for drafting the new NOS. This group has been meeting regularly since January 2025.
- **NOS Advisory Group:** acts as a critical friend to the Writing Group and the consortium, providing sector feedback and scrutiny. This group met in March 2025 to review the functional map and will meet again in the autumn to review the draft NOS and changes to the functional map.

2. Development of the functional map

A functional map was drafted to outline the key purpose and the main functions of playwork. This is part of the NOS development process as outlined by the Standards and Frameworks Panel. The draft functional map has been shared with the Advisory Group and other stakeholder groups for feedback. The functional map is continuing to evolve as the NOS themselves take shape.

There are some key principles behind the development of the functional map, including:

- a focus on playwork as an approach
- a recognition of the range of settings where playwork happens
- streamlining standards to ensure they are more holistic and fit for purpose to shape future qualifications, especially the Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ's)
- integration of the Playwork Principles.



3. Review and drafting of NOS

The Writing Group undertook a review of the existing NOS to inform the development of the new and updated NOS for playwork. Throughout the process, terminology is being refined and a glossary is being developed to ensure clear use of language, that reflects differences in language across the four nations.

The NOS Writing Group is also working with the Scottish Social Services to ensure that links are made between the NOS for playwork and the NOS for social services and childcare. This may include importing some NOS from social services and childcare to strengthen the NOS for playwork.

4. Governance

The consortium approved its terms of reference and Memorandum of Understanding. These documents represent a clear commitment from members for the consortium to remain in place following the NOS review to offer strategic leadership and expertise in relation to NOS and sector skills.

5. Sector engagement and feedback

In addition to Advisory Group meetings, we have facilitated information sessions on the functional map at the National Playwork Conference and the Playworkers Forum.

Further engagement with the Advisory Group will be held later in the year before a series of regional online meetings to consult on the draft standards.

Due to the level of detail involved in the review to date, we now anticipate consultation events happening in late 2025/early 2026.

For more information on the purpose of NOS, approval process and the UK Playwork NOS Consortium read **information sheet #1, information sheet #2** or email: nosreview@play.wales

