



Our impact report

April 2024 to March 2025

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Play Wales is the national organisation for children's play, an independent charity supported by the Welsh Government to uphold children's right to play and to provide advice and guidance on play-related matters.

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Chairperson's report

I was at a local park the other day looking at the playground equipment and talking through with members of the town council what might need to be replaced or updated. There was a feeling that the playground was looking a little tired and needed an uplift.

A few days later, I chatted to some children about the playground and asked what they thought about it. They loved it, and interestingly, were very keen on the half pipe which they climbed up, slid down and used with skateboards and rollerblades. Generally, they were very positive about the whole space. It was very much their patch and if any changes are to be made, they wanted an opportunity to have a say. I know the town council, who have responsibility for the park, are keen to include children as any work proceeds. As ever though, there was the inevitable concern about resources and what could be afforded.

As I reflect on our work at Play Wales over the past year, I can see there is a direct connection between our work at a national level and how that supports those who deliver at a local level. Everything we do is geared towards promoting children's play acting as an advocate for children and their right to play.

As a Board of Trustees for Play Wales, we are responsible for the governance of the charity, ensuring we fulfil our purposes and operate effectively and legally. Having oversight of all our work means we are also here to offer the staff team advice, scrutiny and support.

I'm grateful to all my fellow Trustees, and of course to the staff team who continue to deliver to a high standard with dedication and professional integrity.

It has been a year where we have continued to enjoy a positive relationship with the Welsh Government, who not only continue to be our major funder but whose dedication to children's rights and children's play needs remain as strong as ever.

This impact report stands as a record of the team's achievements and outputs. At Board level, we think we are performing well but as ever there is no room for complacency. Do get in touch if you have any questions or comments.

Looking ahead, there is no shortage of challenges to navigate. Play Wales exists to advocate for children's play and maintaining a focus on what best supports its delivery. We will look at ourselves and look at what we need to deliver and build from the solid base we have secured.

Keith Towler

Chairperson, Play Wales

Director's report

This year has been a period of continuing progress and positive impact for Play Wales. We continued to 'do what it says on our tin' – championing the right to play and influencing policy, striving to ensure that children's right to play remains at the heart of policy and practice in Wales.

We have continued to support the Welsh Government in implementing the recommendations of the Ministerial Review of Play, with practical assistance, responding to national consultations and if need be, acting as a critical friend. Our engagement with national and international policy groups, including the UK Children's Play Policy Forum, UK Play Safety Forum and the International Play Association (IPA), has ensured that Welsh perspectives are represented and inform development.

We have engaged with, and responded to requests to provide support, information and guidance to local organisations and individuals, community and town councils, local authorities, agencies and the Welsh Government. Particularly, we have provided support, advice and guidance to local authorities in the preparation of their triannual Play Sufficiency Assessments.

Our websites continued to attract a significant number of visitors and we produced and distributed a broad range of bilingual resources, including the *Play for Wales* magazine and new information sheets and toolkits to support the sector. We have continued to develop *Playful Childhoods*, our website designed to provide accessible information and guidance to parents and caregivers, as well as practitioners working with children and families.

Our organic social media engagement remains strong, and we continued to raise awareness through media appearances throughout the year.

After considerably more work than originally anticipated, we published *Playing and being well*, the most comprehensive literature review of research and development on play for more than a decade. The review was the main topic of our annual conference and we anticipate we will see its influence in the understanding of play and how we, as a society, might even more effectively provide for children's right to play.

We have continued to play a key role in workforce development, supporting the delivery and quality assurance of playwork qualifications across Wales, the UK and internationally. Our collaboration with training centres, universities and the Welsh Government has strengthened the infrastructure for professional development.

Notably, Play Wales has drawn together the UK's four national play organisations and the Playwork Foundation to form a consortium to undertake the review of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for playwork.

Efforts to improve our engagement with other Welsh organisations, particularly in respect of education and public health initiatives, have paid dividends with our increased involvement in a range of initiatives. All have variously benefitted our broad constituency which includes parents, carers, playworkers, local authorities and voluntary organisations, and contributes to the wellbeing of children and the vibrancy of communities across Wales.

Mike Greenaway
Director, Play Wales



'A big thank you for your support ... It was a real pleasure to feature Play Wales' fantastic work... The insights you provided and resources you shared will undoubtedly inspire practice, add value and support local and regional areas in effectively implementing [work]'.

Public Health Wales

About Play Wales

The national charity for children's play in Wales

Our vision

A future where play is valued in Wales for being crucial to a healthy and happy childhood. A country where children can freely explore, discover, develop and grow through play.

Our mission

Campaign for a play-friendly Wales by leading with intention, collaborating with inclusivity, educating with enthusiasm, and supporting with sensitivity.

In our work, we focus on three key areas:

- **Raising awareness:** we work to raise awareness about the need and right of children and teenagers to play.
- **Promoting good practice:** we promote good practice at all levels of decision making. We also promote good practice wherever children might play.
- **Providing advice and guidance across all sectors:** we provide advice and guidance to support everyone who has an interest in, or responsibility for, providing what is needed for children's play.

Our work includes:

- **Policy:** working with individuals, organisations and networks 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 to everyone who is interested in, or has a responsibility for, children's play.
- **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.

From October 2014 (to March 2025) the Welsh Government has funded Play Wales through the Play Wales Strategic Policy Grant to provide a range of strategic support to the Welsh Government, local authorities and other stakeholders.



Summary of achievements 2024-2025

Supporting national priorities

We work closely with local authorities and their partners to support the implementation of their statutory Play Sufficiency Duties.

Play Wales:

- gathered data and began the pan-Wales analysis of almost 8,000 children's Play Satisfaction Surveys
- researched and carried out projects which implemented after school play opportunities and supported the play needs of children living in temporary accommodation
- began work to report on the Active Healthy Kids (Wales) Report card which will contribute to a Global Matrix
- responded to five relevant national consultations
- contributed to various academic publications and external publications
- undertook fundraising activity in line with our Fundraising Strategy, contributing to three academic-led research proposals to the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)
- planned and delivered presentations at local (online and in person) play events and conferences throughout Wales
- planned and delivered a range of workshops to support local authorities with their statutory Play Sufficiency Assessments
- delivered four Playwork Education and Training Council Wales (PETC) meetings – supporting a dialogue between playwork employers, national organisations, Welsh Government, Social Care Wales and Qualifications Wales
- developed the infrastructure for the national delivery of playwork qualifications by supporting the development and continued operation of six Training Centres – this includes the quality assurance of L2APP, MAHPS and P³ qualifications and supporting trainers and assessors, through ongoing standardisation activity
- continued to work to actions within *A play friendly workforce for Wales*, Play Wales' plan for the ongoing development of the play and playwork workforces
- developed the delivery model and piloted *Chwarae o Safon*, a new quality assurance framework for playwork
- delivered a national conference, a regional conference in north Wales and a two-day outdoor event, as well as a range of presentations and workshops to support the play and playwork workforces
- continued to develop the *Playful Childhoods* campaign and website – as well as helping parents the website is aimed at professionals working with families to provide practical ideas for giving children plenty of good opportunities to play
- developed a range of resources to support practitioners, including playworkers and teachers.

Ministerial Review of Play

We supported the Welsh Government to implement recommendations from the Ministerial Review of Play Steering Group report and achieve milestones set out in the review by:

- contributing to reviewing the Play Sufficiency Assessment template and toolkit, with local authority play sufficiency officers
- providing guidance on the review of *Wales – a Play Friendly Country*, the play sufficiency statutory guidance
- sharing specific advice and guidance in relation to workforce issues to inform the Welsh Government's Ministerial Review of Play Action Plan.

Well informed professionals

The Welsh Government defines the play workforce as ‘anyone employed whose role has an impact on children playing – those who may either directly facilitate their play, design for playing, or those with the power to give permission for children to play, or not’ (*Wales – a Play Friendly Country*, 2025). The play workforce includes playworkers, but also a huge range of other professionals from schools, planning departments, highways and transport, health and safety and childcare, as well as voluntary and community groups, town and community councils and elected members.

Play Wales has undertaken a range of activity to ensure that the play workforce has the opportunity to deepen their understanding of their role in ensuring children have increased opportunities for playing.

Delivering playwork qualifications

During the last year, we:

- delivered the Level 3 Award in Delivering Dynamic Playwork Training (ADDaPT) to 10 learners to build the infrastructure of occupationally competent playwork tutors in Wales.
- developed the infrastructure for the national delivery of playwork qualifications by supporting the development and continued operation of six training centres. This includes the quality assurance of L2APP, MAHPS and P³ qualifications, as well as supporting trainers and assessors, reviewing assessment methods and advising on delivery.
- worked with PETC Wales and other partners to identify funding for the sustainable delivery of playwork qualifications and build the infrastructure of trainers, using a range of funding models, including the Welsh Government Training Support Programme.
- delivered the International Playwork: Senior Practitioner course to six learners in the Netherlands through Jantje Beton and delivered the International Playwork: Foundation Practitioner course to 56 learners in Australia. Also, we are developing mechanisms for the delivery of Play Wales’ training under a licensing agreement with Play Australia.
- worked with the Cardiff Metropolitan University Early Childhood Studies degree programme team to develop a module based on L2APP for delivery in the 2025/2026 academic year.

Chwarae o Safon

We continued to develop the delivery model of *Chwarae o Safon*, our new playwork quality mark, with support from Cardiff Business School students. Titled using the Cymraeg, *Chwarae o Safon* (Play of Quality), this is our new quality assurance framework for playwork settings in Wales.

The framework will be suitable for both registered and unregistered playwork settings as well as settings where playwork is not the prime function, such as

schools that want to evidence quality playwork practice. It will be available as a self-assessment tool.



Settings will be encouraged to go through a process of external assessment to receive a quality badge to demonstrate they have met the requirements of the quality framework.

Events

Throughout the year, we supported the development, organised and hosted a number of events and Continuing Professional Development opportunities for the wider play and playwork sector, including planning and delivering:

National conference

Our national conference returned to Cardiff and attracted 127 delegates. The theme was playing and being well: research into practice. Keynote speakers included Dr Wendy Russell, Mike Barclay and Ben Tawil, as well as Robyn Monro Miller. The day also included a range of workshops, on various topics such as children's rights, playwork and youth work, and dynamic risk-benefit assessment.

Playworkers Forum

A two-day outdoor CPD event for 50 delegates. The focus for the 2024 event was micro keynotes on the value of playwork in a range of contexts, and practical skills. The Playworkers Forum gives playworkers the opportunity to learn from each other and experienced playwork trainers.

North Wales conference

The Play sufficiency: understanding your role in the statutory duty one-day conference was delivered to 37 delegates from local authorities across north Wales.

To raise awareness about the importance of play and playwork, our team has delivered a variety of presentations, webinars, workshops and market place stalls for a range of events and organisations:

- Centre for Alternative Technology (for trainee architects)
- Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs online conference (presented an award)
- Denbighshire Childcare and Play Conference
- Design Commission for Wales' Placemaking for Town Centres Conference
- Early Years Wales (webinar on risk)
- Green Space Wales network
- National Playwork Conference (workshop on National Occupational Standards)
- NHS Wales (Lunch and Learn Session)
- Social Care Wales (two webinars on play and wellbeing)
- Social Care Wales Early Years Conference (facilitator and stall holder)
- Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) Cymru
- Torfaen Play Priority Conference
- Welsh Government's Foundations for the Future: Enhancing Lives of Babies, Children, Young People and their Families Conference (workshop)
- Ynys Môn's Fostering Community (workshop)
- National Education Shows (market place stall).

Tell us what you think...

This is what delegates from our 2024 annual national conference had to say about the day:

'Excellent facilitation, seamless handovers, content excellent and highly appropriate and relevant. A great success.'

'Good, interesting workshops which I can directly take into my own work.'

'Good engaging workshops, being able to network with different services and share practice was great.'

'As always Play Wales conferences are first class.'

And this is how attendees at the 2024 Playworkers Forum summed up their experiences:

'The absolute highlight of our working year, much more preferable to any other gathering of playworkers that we have experienced so far.'

'I love it, I relax, I catch up with people, I update myself, I get challenged, it's amazing.'

'This was my first time attending and I felt so comfortable and at home, it was a great experience networking and learning in a relaxed and playful environment!'

Collaborating locally and nationally

On a local level, we:

- supported Isle of Anglesey County Council to develop a Strategic Framework for Play
- worked with several local authorities to develop projects which source and supply loose parts materials for play
- supported Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to implement findings from its commissioned Play in Hospital Service evaluation
- developed and piloted our *Playing outdoors in early years settings* toolkit with Cardiff and Vale Local Public Health Team, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
- hosted three student placements from Cardiff University to assist with data collection and analysis for the all-Wales Play Satisfaction Surveys with children
- engaged with various local public health teams to promote the importance of play.

And, nationally we worked with:

- the Welsh Government to update the Play Sufficiency Assessment template and toolkit, following engagement with local authority play sufficiency officers
- Starlight Children's Foundation to advocate for a strategic response to the play needs of children as part of their healthcare journey
- Public Health Wales and others on the development of its Early Years Framework for Action.

UK and International collaboration

As part of our wider international centre of excellence work, we:

- planned and delivered a series of Understanding Play Sufficiency webinars with Dr Wendy Russell and Ludicology (funded by the University of Gloucestershire)
- continued to provide support for IPA World to adhere to requirements as an international charity registered in England and Wales

- provided secretariat support for International Play Association (IPA) Cymru Wales branch
- collaborated with Starlight Children's Foundation to support Hospital Play Specialists in Wales.

'I attended a presentation by Play Wales. You totally blew me away with your fantastic ideas and case studies.'

Newport City Homes

Academic collaboration

We continued research partnerships with Swansea University and Cardiff University advising on a range of research topics, including: play in schools, play and humour, play in the early years and family engagement, play, physical activity and wellbeing, play and displaced children, and play and planning.

We undertook fundraising activity in line with our Fundraising Strategy, contributing to three academic-led research proposals to the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR):

- researching the impact of local authority responses to the Play Sufficiency Duty in Wales on children's play and health and wellbeing outcomes
- examining the provision of afternoon play in schools
- reviewing the impact of and contextualising the Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids initiative.

UK Playwork NOS Consortium

Play Wales provides secretariat to the UK Playwork NOS Consortium. Membership includes Play Wales, Play Scotland, Play England, PlayBoard Northern Ireland and the Playwork Foundation.

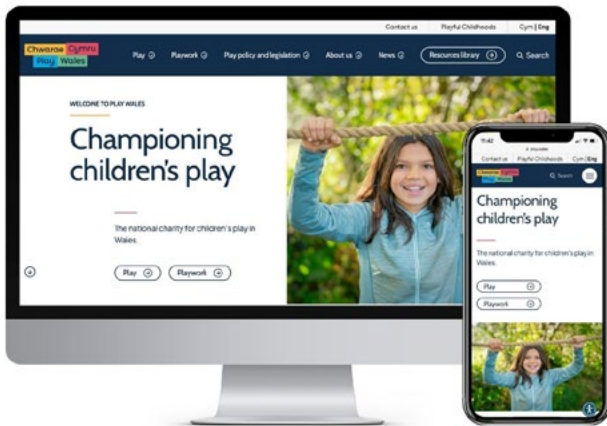
During the year, we continued to lead on the review of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Playwork on behalf of the consortium. This review is due to be completed in 2026.

For more information about the consortium and the NOS review, visit:

www.play.wales/playwork/workforce

Engagement and publications

Our resources are freely available on our website:
www.play.wales/resources-library



Website

We continued to improve our website and updated it regularly with timely, current and helpful information. During the year the Play Wales website attracted 125,000 page views from 48,000 users.

Every month, we distribute an e-bulletin to 2,600 recipients. It offers a round-up of everything that's new on the website, from news and funding opportunities, to job vacancies in the sector, to events and training opportunities.

Social following

We have over 17,000 followers on the Play Wales Facebook and X (Twitter) accounts. Combined with the 6,500 followers on our *Playful Childhoods* Facebook and Instagram accounts, this means we regularly share information with, and engage with, over 23,500 interested people.

Resources

Through the year, we produced and distributed a range of resources to help inform our audiences:

Play for Wales magazine

We published two issues and distributed to 4,000 recipients across print and digital. Each issue features examples from across Wales.

This year's issues focused on:

- **Playing in the early years** – the articles highlight how early interactions, experiences and environments can lay the foundation for children to make the most of their opportunities to play as they grow and develop.
- **Planning for play** – the articles highlight how encouraging children to participate, to make decisions about their play environment, and collaborating with children of all ages to meet their play needs is of great benefit to everyone involved.

Playing outdoors in early years settings

This toolkit is aimed at practitioners and agencies working in early years settings, and organisations that seek to engage families. It highlights the importance of play for children of all ages and of creating a rich play environment. The toolkit was developed in collaboration with researchers from the University of Exeter and University of Stirling – Professor Helen Dodd, Dr. Lily FitzGibbon and Gill Hearnshaw.

Opening school grounds for play

This toolkit has been developed to support schools to offer opportunities for children to play at school outside of school hours. It is designed to help head teachers, governors and local organisations to work together, and it aims to dispel some worries.

We also reviewed, updated and republished another two resources aimed at supporting opportunities to play in schools: *A play friendly school* and the *Right to play workshop* pack.

Briefings

We published two issues of *Focus on play*, which aim to inform a specific audience or focus on a particular topic. One issue focused on how playing supports mental health and the other was to support county councillors.

Top tips and information sheets

We developed a new set of top tips to celebrate International Day of Play. During the year, we also reviewed, updated and relaunched two information sheets: *Playwork – what’s so special?* and *The Play Sufficiency Duty and the roles of playworkers*.

Storybooks

We continued to distribute printed copies of our three storybooks – *Fun in the dungeon*, *Fun in the garden* and *Fun in the playground*.

Short films

To showcase playwork as a profession and to highlight what open access playwork provision can offer children and its benefits, we developed two short films. Both feature children, parents and playworkers from across Wales:

- What does it take to be a playworker?
- What is open access playwork provision?

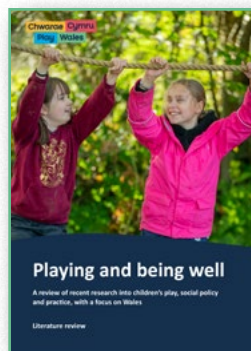
Research

Playing and being well

This literature review is a review of recent research into children’s play, social policy and practice, with a focus on Wales. The researchers – Dr Wendy Russell, with Mike Barclay and Ben Tawil from Ludicology – investigated the connections between play sufficiency and children’s wellbeing. The comprehensive literature review focuses on the role of play in children’s wellbeing, children’s play patterns, and adult support for children’s play.

This review was carried out 10 years after the commencement of the Play Sufficiency Duty and while the Welsh Government was undertaking its Ministerial Review of Play. The evidence gathered in the literature review will inform this ongoing work.

Playing and being well, the literature review, was published in October 2024, and launched in print at our national conference.



Playday

The annual UK celebration of children’s right to play. It is co-ordinated by Play Wales, Play England, Play Scotland and PlayBoard Northern Ireland. Play Wales represents Wales on the Playday Steering Group which co-ordinates the annual campaign.

The 2024 theme, Play – the culture of childhood: Supporting play, fun and friendships, focused on the rich and lively culture of children’s play. As part of the campaign we highlighted how playing generates a culture of childhood.

On behalf of all children in Wales we sent a letter to each Member of the Senedd to invite them to get involved in Playday 2024 events in their constituency.

International Day of Play

On 25 March 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution for an annual International Day of Play. The first ever International Day of Play was celebrated on 11 June 2024.

The United Nations International Day of Play recognises children’s right to play and its importance for their wellbeing. The day is an opportunity to raise global awareness about the importance of play and to campaign for play to be considered in every aspect of children’s lives.

We collaborated with IPA Cymru Wales on a joint national call to protect playtime in schools. Together, we asked schools to give all children additional time to play, for example, by making the lunch break longer or providing an extra playtime.

To celebrate, we also published a new edition of *A play friendly school*, our guidance for a whole school approach to supporting children’s right to play, and made our *Fun in the playground* storybook available online for a short time.

New audiences and projects

Playful Childhoods

As part of our expanding work to engage with parents and carers, we launched the *Playful Childhoods* campaign in 2018 and we continue to develop useful and practical content for the website and social media channels.

Our mission for the *Playful Childhoods* campaign is to help adults give children a happy, healthy childhood through play. Every day.

It aims to help parents, carers, and community groups give children plenty of good opportunities to play. The website is also useful for local groups and town and community councils to provide play friendly neighbourhoods in their areas. The resources can also be used by professionals in their work with children and families.

The website provides:

- practical ideas about providing time, space, freedom and stuff to play with
- top tips, 'how to' guides and ideas for children's play
- information about raising awareness about the importance of play, advice about planning play areas and campaigning for play
- a selection of inspiring examples of projects and groups across Wales that are making sure children have opportunities to play.

Activity during the year includes:

- attracting 38,000 page views to the website, by 23,000 users.
- continuing to engage with our 6,500 social media followers on a regular basis.
- engaging with the Welsh Government to share timely messaging as part of its Teulu Cymru campaign.
- continuing to use findings from an external evaluation of the website and social media, which included an online survey and focus groups, to inform our work and explore future developments. Positive and constructive feedback has resulted in us commissioning new written content, mainly blog posts.
- using short evergreen video clips to help support parents give their children time, space and freedom to play at home and in their neighbourhood – all low-cost play ideas to take into account the cost of living crisis – throughout the year and on specific awareness days.



Let's talk about play

In May 2024, we launched our new endorsed course. The Let's talk about play course has been designed as an introduction to play and playwork. The course includes a comprehensive package of teaching and learning resources which are available for delivery by any tutor who has successfully completed the Level 3 Award in Delivering Dynamic Playwork Training (ADDaPT).

The course consists of three sessions:

- **Why play?** focuses on developing an understanding of what play is and why it is important. This session is aimed at the play workforce – those in roles which might impact on the child's right to play.
- **What is play and playwork?** and **Why playwork?** introduce play and playing and develop an understanding of the role of playworkers. These sessions are aimed at volunteers, those new to the profession as an entry level course, or seasonal playworkers as a refresher.

The course aims to:

- develop a common understanding of what is meant by play and how it benefits children
- understand how adults working with children, or in roles where decisions are made about children's opportunities to play, can have a positive or negative impact on children's play experience
- foster an awareness of why children need to play and how adults promote the right to play and cultivate an environment where the child's right to play is upheld.

The course, as well as the teaching and learning materials, are a legacy of the Play Ambassadors Project, funded by the Healthy Active Fund.

Play in healthcare

Playing is essential to the health and happiness of children, and it should be given priority when children are ill. All children staying in hospital or receiving long term healthcare should have daily access to health play services. The emphasis must be on safe practice and enhanced patient experience that considers

children's immediate and long-term health and wellbeing alongside their healthcare needs.

We collaborated with Starlight, the charity working to put play at the heart of child healthcare, to progress work on highlighting the importance of play in healthcare. Work included:

- establishing a network of Health Play Managers
- developing and delivering a series of professional learning webinars
- surveying the existing health play workforce in Wales
- promoting the importance of play with key policy colleagues.

IPA Cymru Wales

The International Play Association (IPA) is an international non-governmental organisation founded in 1961 to protect, preserve and promote children's right to play. IPA has a wide and diverse membership with active branches around the world. IPA branches are the basis of a worldwide network and support IPA's international activities and programmes of work.

After helping to establish a Welsh branch of IPA, Play Wales acts as a secretariat for IPA Wales Cymru. Work includes:

- actively promoting membership to an audience including academics, practitioners and policy makers
- co-ordinating membership activity, including production of resources, to mark the UN International Day of Play 2024
- early liaison and planning for International Day of Play 2025.



Enquiries from the public

In addition to the considerable information provided through our website, we received and responded to a broad range of telephone, social media and email queries from parents, elected members, learners, schools and small organisations during the last year.

The queries we have responded to, by providing information, advice and signposting include:

- appropriate qualifications for Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registered play and childcare settings
- funding advice for play equipment and developing play areas in communities
- relevant qualifications required for running a playscheme
- learners wanting to undertake playwork training, in particular level 3 qualifications
- research queries from playwork and childhood studies students
- funding advice for play provision
- support for saving school playing fields and playtime
- advice on piece of land or play space design
- job advertising, in particular summer playschemes
- letters of support to communities campaigning for play areas and for funding applications.

These queries are regularly reviewed and used to inform the addition of new information on our website.



Play Wales Supporters

Become a Play Wales Supporter:
[www.play.wales/about-us/
support-us](http://www.play.wales/about-us/support-us)

Play Wales is a membership organisation. Become a Play Wales Supporter for free and join the movement to make Wales a play-friendly country, championing children's play across the nation.

At Play Wales, we always strive to make Wales a play-friendly country. That's why we need you to join us. Our free Play Wales Supporter membership is open to all organisations and individuals living or working in Wales. If you live outside Wales, you can become an International Play Wales Supporter – it's free, too.

Becoming a Play Wales Supporter gives you a range of benefits – from reduced rates at our events, exclusive early access to new resources to opportunities to help develop our campaigns.

Supporter benefits

- **Reduced rates to our events** – we organise regular events, both online and in person. As a Supporter, you'll receive discounted rates, making it even easier to be actively involved and to connect with likeminded people.
 - **First-look at new resources** – Play Wales Supporters have early access to the latest publications, research and reports, keeping you informed about the latest play and playwork developments.
 - **Contribute to campaign ideas and activities** – as a Play Wales Supporter, you will get the opportunity to have your say. You'll be able to join focus groups, take part in questionnaires, and answer research questions to help improve children's play opportunities locally and nationally.
 - **Monthly e-bulletins** – our monthly e-bulletins will help you keep on top of all the latest news in the play and playwork field. Becoming a Supporter means you'll receive the latest news on children's play, all in one place.
- **Be notified about key consultations** – you'll be the first to know about upcoming consultations and be able to tell us what you think. These consultations are a great way of contributing to the development of a play-friendly Wales.
 - **Lobby for change** – by joining us as a Play Wales Supporter, you'll be able to help us lobby for change wherever it's needed. Our work with the Welsh Government, local authorities and other organisations helps ensure that our work is factual, accessible and changemaking.

International Supporter benefits

Our International Supporter membership benefits are restricted because Wales is our registered area of charitable benefit.

International Supporter benefits include:

- First look at new resources
- Monthly e-bulletins
- Notifications about key consultations
- Opportunities to lobby for change.

Support and advocacy

‘Thank you for your support. You’ve been generous with your experience, knowledge, resources, and advocated for our work with your networks.’

Civil Servant

Wales

Play Wales was involved in a variety of Wales-wide working groups to ensure that children’s play gets the status it deserves:

- Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group
- Early Years Action Group
- Children’s Rights in Early Years Network
- Children in Wales Policy Council
- Active Healthy Kids Wales Expert Group
- Welsh Government Anti-Racist Wales Childcare and Play Governance Group and associated sub-groups
- Welsh Government Childcare and Play Stakeholder Group
- Welsh Government Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Action Plan Stakeholder Group
- Senedd Cross Party Group for Children and Families
- Care Inspectorate Wales Childcare and Play Working Group.

UK and international

We were also involved in a range of UK and worldwide policy groups, and attended meetings of relevant organisations to ensure UK-wide initiatives reflect development and best practice in Wales:

- UK Play Safety Forum
- UK Children’s Play Policy Forum
- National Playday Steering Group
- UK Playwork NOS Consortium
- International Play Association (IPA) Cymru Wales and IPA World
- Learning through Landscapes Board.

Consultations

We responded to several relevant national consultations:

- Prevention of ill health-obesity consultation (Senedd Health and Social Care Committee)
- Draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Draft Priorities for Culture
- The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards Wales (SASW)
- Youth work in Wales: delivering for young people.

During the year, our services were used by:

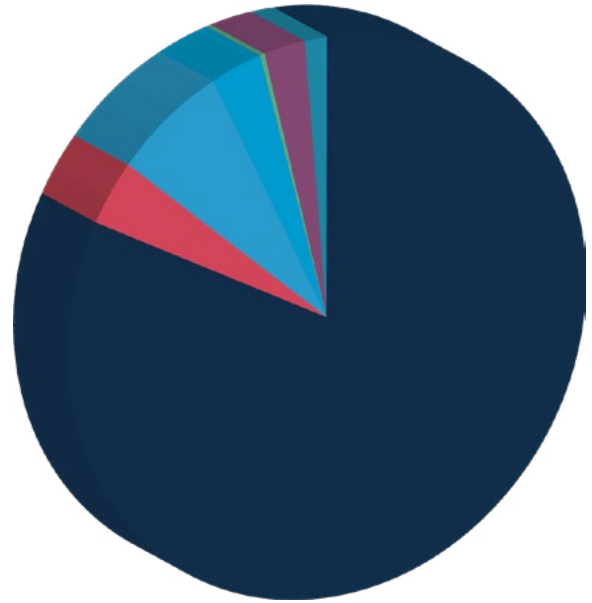
- academics and university institutions
- government officials
- members of the public campaigning to establish or preserve play provision
- organisations providing children’s play services – local authority and voluntary sector, as well as community councils
- organisations providing or supporting children’s services – local authority and voluntary sector
- parents and carers
- playwork trainers and managers of playworkers
- playworkers, play development workers and play development officers
- professionals in sectors such as childcare and youthwork, early years, education policy, further education, health and social care, public health, town and country planning
- teachers, head teachers, governors and educational psychologists.

Financial review – summary

Play Wales income and expenditure reports for the financial year ending March 2025.

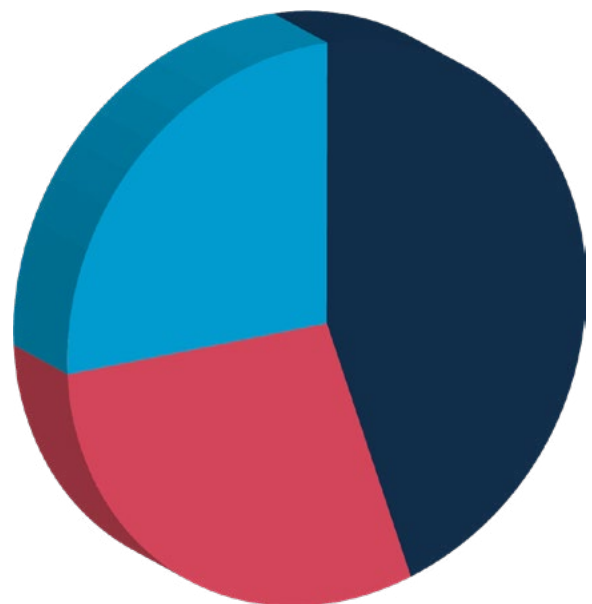
Total income: £606,983

Welsh Government grant	£501,000	
Other income	£22,264	
Other grants	£41,000	
Investments	£18,642	
Donations	£1,448	
Publications	£14,923	
Events	£7,706	



Total expenditure: £650,115

Play policy, support and advocacy	£290,806	
Workforce development	£193,115	
Information Service	£166,194	



Achievements: 1998-2024

Since 1998, Play Wales has successfully campaigned and advocated for play, and encouraged and supported the Welsh Government to make some internationally ground-breaking commitments on behalf of children.

Increased funding for children's play

- In 2000, following lobbying by Play Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government distributed a £1m Play Grant to create staffed open access play provision. The grant has continued as part of other grant funds in subsequent years.
- In 2006, Play Wales was contracted for three years to help deliver the Big Lottery Fund £13m Child's Play programme to support capacity building and strategic play projects in Wales.
- Play Wales supports local authorities to make best use of funding made available through the Welsh Government All Wales Play Opportunities Grant.
- In 2019, following lobbying from Play Wales and others, the Welsh Government established the Holiday hunger: playworks pilot to test the feasibility of tackling holiday hunger through play and community-based settings. Using learning from the pilot, the Welsh Government has allocated £1m to this scheme to be distributed to local authorities annually.
- In 2019, Play Wales was awarded Healthy Active Fund (HAF) funding to establish the Community Play Ambassadors four-year project across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. It included working with local people to establish Neighbourhood Play Forums that would identify ways of encouraging regular opportunities for children to play. The project also supported young people aged 14 to 19 in becoming volunteer Community Play Ambassadors. It did this by offering training, qualifications and placements in playwork settings.
- In 2020, as part of the COVID-19 Reconstruction – Challenges and Priorities funding package, the Welsh Government allocated £500,000 revenue funding for a Playworks Project and £3m capital funding for local authorities to improve outdoor playing opportunities for children.
- Through small grants and external commissions, Play Wales has piloted and researched projects which consider: play in healthcare (particularly acute paediatric wards), play in temporary accommodation, resident-led play streets, and the use of school grounds for play out of school.



Increased national recognition of play

- In 2000, Play Wales was commissioned by the Welsh Government to produce a *State of play* report, which was subsequently updated in 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2011. Since the commencement of the Play Sufficiency Duty, Play Wales has reviewed the Play Sufficiency Assessments submitted in 2013, 2016, 2019 and 2022, and reviewed various Progress Reports in interim years.
- Play Wales supported the Welsh Assembly Government to develop the 2002 *Play Policy* – the first in the world. We also supported the work of developing the Welsh Assembly Government *Play Policy Implementation Plan* (2006).
- In 2012, the Welsh Government legislated for children’s play. Play opportunities are included in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. By responding to consultations our members helped to ensure that the importance of play features strongly in this ground-breaking Welsh legislation. Another world first – this is probably the most important development to happen for children’s play in Wales.
- In 2014, the Welsh Government published *Wales – a Play Friendly Country*, statutory guidance on assessing and securing sufficient play opportunities. Play Wales has continued to provide support and advice to all stakeholders in relation to implementing the guidance.
- In 2017, Play Wales worked closely with Public Health Wales on the *Every Child Wales* programme which recognises the crucial importance of playing to children’s physical and emotional health.
- In 2019 and 2023, Play Wales commissioned a researcher to analyse data from thousands of Play Satisfaction Surveys completed by children across Wales as part of local authority Play Sufficiency Assessments. The findings, showing what’s good and not so good about children’s opportunities to play, have been published in our *What children say about play* reports.
- Between 2019 and 2022, the Welsh Government undertook a Ministerial Review of Play. The aim of the review was to assess what the Welsh

Government has achieved with respect to play policy and to inform how it progresses the play agenda in future years. Play Wales was tasked with coordinating the writing of the final report and background paper on behalf of the steering group. Play Wales was also commissioned to produce the children and young people’s version of the report.

A dynamic workforce

- Play Wales developed *The First Claim ... a framework for playwork quality assessment* (2001) and *The First Claim – desirable processes* (2002). These publications aim to support those working with children to analyse play environments and provide a framework to assess the quality of what is being provided for, and experienced by children.
- In 2004, Play Wales led the UK review of the Playwork Values and Assumptions. Following consultation, the Playwork Principles were adopted by the sector in 2005. The Playwork Principles now underpin the national occupational standards for playwork in the UK.
- In 2005, to develop contemporary playwork practice, Play Wales worked with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to offer Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³) qualifications at level 2 and 3. To support this innovative training, we produced inspiring learning materials.
- Between Play Wales, the Welsh Government and European funding we have invested over £1.5m in the development, piloting and delivery of Playwork: Principles into Practice (P³).
- Play Wales has continued to collaborate with the Welsh Government to ensure that playwork training and qualifications meet the needs of the workforce. This work has included the development of two qualifications aimed at those working in holiday play schemes: the Level 3 Managing a Holiday Play Scheme Award (MAHPS) (Agored Cymru) in 2015 and the Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP) in 2016. At the same time, there was a review, update and roll out of the new P³ Level 2 Certificate and Level 3 Diploma, working with Agored Cymru and Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales.

- Since 2017 Play Wales has provided the Secretariat to the Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales (PETC Wales) which approves qualifications that form a licence to practice; to appear on the *Required List of Qualifications to work in the Playwork Sector in Wales*. This list is used by employers and Care Inspectorate Wales to ensure regulated settings have suitably qualified staff.
- In 2021, Play Wales began to develop a quality assurance scheme. In 2024, we piloted *Chwarae o Safon*, a playwork quality mark. This quality assurance scheme, which involves both self-assessment and external assessment, is intended to be used in all playwork settings, whether unregulated or settings regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales. It also applies to those involved in playwork in non-dedicated playwork settings.
- In 2024, Play Wales convened the UK Playwork NOS Consortium which commenced a self-funded review of the National Occupational Standards for Playwork. Play Wales provides secretariat to the consortium.
- In 2024, Play Wales launched an endorsed course – Let’s talk about play – designed as an introduction to play and playwork. It is aimed at both the play workforce (those in roles which might impact on the child’s right to play), and volunteers, those new to the profession as an entry level course, or seasonal playworkers as a refresher. The course can be delivered by any tutor who has successfully completed the Level 3 Award in Delivering Dynamic Playwork Training (ADDaPT) and comes with a comprehensive package of teaching and learning resources. The course is a legacy of our Community Play Ambassador Project.
- Play Wales provides training, seminars and conferences for all those who provide and support children’s play – including the International Play Association (IPA) 2011 World Conference.
- In 2011, the then First Minister, Carwyn Jones, accepted the IPA Right to Play Award on behalf of all those in Wales who strive to make Wales a play friendly place. Wales is the first country to receive this prestigious award.
- In 2012, Play Wales supported IPA’s work with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to draft and adopt a General Comment that clarifies for governments worldwide the meaning and importance of Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2013, Play Wales worked with children in Wales to develop resources to promote the rights set out in Article 31 of the UNCRC for IPA to coincide with the launch of General Comment no. 17.
- Members of the Play Wales team wrote the IPA *Access to Play for Children in Situations of Crisis* (2017) toolkit.
- Since 2013, Play Wales has commissioned three reports that present the findings of small-scale research projects, the first exploring how local authorities responded to the introduction of the duty to assess sufficient play opportunities for children and the second a follow-up looking forward to the commencement of the second part of the Duty, to secure sufficient play opportunities for children. The third explores the perceptions of what has changed for children’s play opportunities since the Play Sufficiency Duty was commenced in 2012.
- In 2018, Play Wales launched the *Playful Childhoods* campaign and website to help parents, carers and community groups give children plenty of good opportunities to play – at home and out in the community. The website also features useful resources for people working with children and families.

Increased awareness of play locally, nationally and internationally

- Through the website and by producing regular e-bulletins, magazines, information sheets, toolkits, books and posters, Play Wales widely promotes children’s play. Our website is internationally regarded as one of the most effective for conveying timely information about children’s play.
- Since 2018, we have run short powerful campaigns – informed by children and teenagers across Wales – under the *Playful Childhoods* brand, on a range of timely topics, in support of children’s play. Examples include challenging assumptions around teenage behaviour in public spaces, and promoting the benefits of low-cost or



no-cost opportunities to play for children of all ages, acknowledging the profound impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on families.

- Play Wales continues to collaborate with the Welsh Government Teulu Cymru long-term campaign (and its predecessor, Parenting. Give it Time) to share information and campaign messaging to reach a broader, but aligned, audience.
- Since 2019, Play Wales has published three illustrated children's storybooks that celebrate children's right to play. All three books – *Fun in the dungeon*, *Fun in the garden*, and *Fun in the playground* – have been developed in partnership with an established community-based publisher. Story writing groups were formed – made up of children, parents and staff working with children – and supported by an author and poet to help develop each of the storybooks. The storybooks capture how important supportive and tolerant adults and environments are in helping children enjoy their right to play.
- In 2021, Play Wales commissioned researchers to undertake a literature review of recent research into children's play, social policy and practice, with a focus on Wales. Investigating the connections between play sufficiency and children's wellbeing, the review was carried out 10 years after the commencement of the Play Sufficiency Duty and while the Welsh Government was undertaking its Ministerial Review of Play. The evidence gathered in the literature review will inform this ongoing work.
- In 2023, we launched a new short film, *This is why play is so important*, which celebrates play and highlights its importance for every child. Featuring children across Wales, the film has a strong focus on children and teenagers' voices. Filmed over two years across Wales, the documentary portrays why play is vital to children's development, health, wellbeing and happiness.
- In 2023, IPA Cymru Wales – a branch of the International Play Association – was launched. Play Wales provides secretariat support for the branch.
- Play Wales works collaboratively with other national organisations across the UK on campaigns and awareness days, such as Playday and the United Nations International Day of Play, to raise the profile of play and to promote children's right to play.

All this has contributed to more children having time, freedom and permission to play. There is still work to be done to make Wales a place where play is respected for its critical importance to childhood – add your voice to help us do more.

For more information about the history of play policy in Wales, see our [Play in Wales timeline poster: www.play.wales/play-policy-legislation/history-of-play-policy](http://www.play.wales/play-policy-legislation/history-of-play-policy)

Plans for the future 2025-2026

Play Wales will continue to work to promote children's play and act as an advocate for children and their play needs. Particularly, we anticipate that we will undertake the following:

- Continue to support providers of play opportunities to respond to changes in the social, political and financial landscape in a play friendly way.
- Support the Welsh Government to achieve the milestones set out in the Ministerial Review of Play.
- Continue to deliver a communication service aimed at our broad constituency through the provision of focused publications, direct mailing, up to date websites and social media engagement.
- Contribute to and inform local, national and international advocacy through project work and membership of committees and groups.
- Support local authorities and third sector organisations to engage and respond to national policy through events, network facilitation and advice.
- Continue to work with research institutions to identify what children say about access to play.
- Review and implement *A play friendly workforce for Wales*, our workforce development plan.
- Launch and promote the *Chwarae o Safon* playwork quality assurance framework.
- Work with approved centres to ensure that the delivery of Agored Cymru playwork qualifications, and other training, continues to be of quality and responds to the needs of the workforce.
- Work with local Public Health Teams to agree and share messages regarding children's play.
- Undertake and publish a pan-Wales report of surveys completed by children across local authority areas in Wales as part of their Play Sufficiency Assessments in 2025.
- Deliver *Playful Childhoods* campaigns to support parents and carers to provide sufficient opportunities for children to play at home and in their communities.
- Develop and deliver a national conference and a range of events and training opportunities for playworkers and others whose work impacts on children.
- Review, update and implement our Fundraising Strategy to enable delivery of additional projects.
- To continue to highlight and raise the importance of the provision of play in healthcare.
- Lead the review of the National Occupational Standards for Playwork, on behalf of the UK Playwork NOS Consortium.
- Work with international partners to support them to deliver endorsed playwork training.
- Develop and publish a manifesto to inform the Senedd Cymru election in 2026.

To ensure these services are developed and delivered as effectively as possible, we will continually review and develop Play Wales' operational plan.

Play Wales Board of Trustees – governance

We have a Board of Trustees that oversees the running of Play Wales to ensure that we meet our objectives effectively and efficiently within the law. There are also a number of Observers to the Board who support the Trustees but who cannot vote.

Our Trustees are appointed by the Board. Trustees contribute a range of expertise, skills and experiences and are chosen to provide the Board with a variety of knowledge and understanding of children’s development, their play, and how Play Wales can best contribute to creating a nation where children have time, space and permission to play.

(as at March 2025)

Dr Rhian Barrance

Cardiff University

Dr Anne Crowley

Matluba Khan

Cardiff University

Malcolm King OBE

Professor Ronan Lyons

Swansea University

Keith Towler (Chairperson)

Dr Jacky Tyrie

Swansea University

Elsbeth Webb

Hana Hersi

Observer organisations

Catherine Davies

Welsh Local Government Association

Hugh Russell

Children in Wales

Play Wales team

(as at March 2025)

Danielle Beattie

Operations Manager

Mike Greenaway

Director

Martin King-Sheard

Workforce Development Officer

Marianne Mannello

Assistant Director: Policy, Support and Advocacy

Ruth O’Donoghue

Finance Officer

Joanne Williams

Administration and Events Assistant

Angharad Wyn Jones

Communications Manager

www.play.wales

Play Wales is the national organisation for children's play, an independent charity supported by the Welsh Government to uphold children's right to play and to provide advice and guidance on play-related matters.