



List of Required Qualifications

to work within the Playwork Sector in Wales

This list should be used in conjunction with the qualification list produced by Social Care Wales and any other sector skills council with responsibility for parts of the early years workforce working in different sectors (e.g. health, education). It should also be used in conjunction with service standards and regulations, where stipulated by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

This is the List referred to in the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years particularly with regard to Standard 13: Staffing.

Those working in Childcare settings extended to work with children up to the age of 12 years will require both a childcare and playwork qualification or award. Please see section 2 for the playwork qualifications or awards required.

Those working in other regulated settings with children up to the age of 12 including – junior youth groups, transitional youth work and forest school holiday clubs, will require a playwork qualification or award set out in section 2.

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- Playworker/ practitioner (Regulated non supervisory childcarer or playworker)
- Senior Playworker / person in charge (person in charge/ registered person, for a childcare setting for children up to the age of 12 years)
- Playwork manager (not required by NMS)

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Foreword

SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being, was established in 2003 by government licence as an independent, employer-led organisation whose role is to ensure that the skills system is driven by the needs of employers from the voluntary, public and private sectors in playwork, sport, fitness, the outdoors, caravans, hair and beauty. The organisation's vision is **more people, better skilled, better qualified** and our mission is to deliver the workforce for the nation's well-being. We do this by engaging employers, registering individuals and endorsing providers, ensuring the right skills and qualifications are available and that the workforce is equipped to deliver the highest quality of service.

This List of Required Qualifications to work within the Playwork Sector in Wales is fundamental to our work and supersedes all previous versions.

Qualifications that are recognised by employers, fit-for-purpose and support high quality professional development are crucial to raising the status and contributing to the professionalization of the play workforce in Wales.

SkillsActive would like to thank Play Wales, the Welsh Government and all those partners who have contributed to the development of this List of Required Qualifications to work within the Playwork Sector in Wales.

Section 1: Introduction and Guidance

The List of Required Qualifications to work within the Playwork Sector in Wales provides guidance for employers and practitioners, training providers, regulatory bodies and other organisations on the required occupational qualifications for those working in the regulated playwork sector with children up to the age of 12 years.

This list should be used in conjunction with the qualification list produced by Social Care Wales and any other sector skills council with responsibility for parts of the early years workforce working in different sectors (e.g. health, education). It should also be used in conjunction with service standards and regulations, where stipulated by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

In April 2016 Child Minding and Day Care Regulations were amended to include provision for children up to the age of 12 years. For those settings looking after children aged between 8 and 12, *not previously registered*, a lead in time of between 3 to 5 years was provided to enable the person in charge/practitioners to achieve any required qualifications to work with older children. (National Minimum Standards, April 2016, Standards 13.6(DC) and 13.7(DC))

The qualifications for those people working with children between the ages of 8 to 12 years are those included in this list **under section 2**. For those with existing qualifications working with children and young people it may be that a qualification or award with a lower credit value will be suitable. (see 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10)

1.1 Playwork service areas within the SkillsActive footprint

The SkillsActive 'footprint' for playwork covers the facilitation and provision of play opportunities outside of the educational curriculum for school age children, and encompasses provision in the voluntary, maintained and private sectors, in the following play settings: adventure playgrounds, holiday play schemes, out of school care (including breakfast clubs, lunch clubs, after school clubs, holiday clubs (3-16 years)), school and community play centres, mobile play projects, specialist play projects, indoor play centres and family activity centres, and play ranger provision. The required qualifications listed in this document have been designed to be suitable, at the appropriate level, for all those working in the playwork settings listed above. In addition, there are people working in play development and childcare business support roles and while it is recognised that these roles enhance the development and delivery of play provision, the scope of this document is specifically those staff working in settings listed in the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare and does not cover staff working outside of those settings in support and development roles.

See Appendix 1 for a list of the types of setting which fall under the Social Care Wales remit.

I.2 Definitions of job roles covered by the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare

I.2.1 Playworker

A playworker facilitates the provision of play opportunities as a member of a team in a non-supervisory role (although their job title may vary)

I.2.2 Senior Playworker / Playworker in Charge

A senior playworker or playworker in charge facilitates the provision of play opportunities and can often take an unsupervised or supervisory role leading the team (although their job title may vary)

I.2.3 Playwork Manager

A playwork manager usually facilitates the provision of play opportunities and has a supervisory role, sometimes working across multiple sites. They might also work as a Play Development Officer or Co-ordinator (although their job title may vary).

I.3 Status of the Qualifications List

Q: Is the Qualification List mandatory?

A: Practitioners included in the qualified staff ratios will need to hold one of the qualifications named on the Qualifications List to be able to practice within the service areas that sit within SkillsActive's playwork footprint, cited in I.1 above.

I.4 Qualifications required to meet the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare

The National Minimum Standards describe the minimum requirements for regulated childcare settings and aim to ensure safe and quality services. They are published by the Welsh Government and are used by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) when they undertake registration and inspections. There may be additional qualifications that are not required by the National Minimum Standards but are a requirement of Welsh Government policies.

I.5 Past qualifications accepted for practice

These are qualifications which are no longer available but which continue to meet the qualification requirements for the National Minimum Standards or Welsh Government policies. It is important to engage in regular professional development to keep up to date with best practice.

I.6 Criteria for qualifications to appear on the Qualifications List

For a qualification to be accepted and placed on the list, it will have needed to meet a set of criteria known as 'design principles'. The design principles require qualifications to:

- Be based on the core national occupational standards for a given role which are developed in partnership with the sector and deemed fit for purpose by the sector
- Be externally verifiable
- Contain an element of assessment of performance in addition to assessment of knowledge and understanding
- Promote the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, skills and competence for the given role
- Be easily aligned to qualifications frameworks across the UK and EU to support cross-border transferability (i.e. Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, Qualifications and Credit Framework, Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, and European Qualifications Framework)

1.7 Qualifications that do not meet the design criteria

There are a number of qualifications which do not appear on the list. This is because they do not meet the design principles for full qualifications. The qualifications which are not on the list are:

- 1.7.1 At level 2 and 3, the Diplomas in Children’s Care, Learning and Development (Wales and Northern Ireland) QCF, the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People’s Workforce (QCF), the level 2 and 3 NVQs in Children’s Care, Learning and Development, and NVQs in Child Care and Education do not cover the core national occupational standards for playwork and are therefore not deemed to be fit for purpose for work in a playwork setting.
- 1.7.2 At level 2, the QCF Awards and Certificates offered by CACHE (500/9066/5 & 500/9044/6) , City and Guilds (500/8744/7 & 500/8659/5), Pearson Edexcel / EDI (500/9269/8 & 500/9270/4) and SQA (500/4733/4 & 500/4731/0; 600/6932/6 & 600/6933/8) do not cover the core national occupational standards or contain assessment of practice and are not therefore full qualifications
- 1.7.3 At level 3, the QCF Awards and Certificates offered by CACHE (501/0992/3 & 501/0993/5), City and Guilds (501/1484/0 & 501/1486/4), Pearson Edexcel / EDI (501/1311/2 & 501/1312/4) and SQA (600/4292/8 & 600/4312/X) do not cover the core national occupational standards or contain assessment of practice and are not therefore full qualifications
- 1.7.4 City and Guilds level 2 Certificate in Playwork (500/4301/8) is not a full qualification
- 1.7.5 City and Guilds level 3 Certificate in Playwork (500/1204/6) is not a full qualification
- 1.7.6 At level 4, the QCF Awards and Certificates in Playwork offered by CACHE (600/4052/X & 600/4042/7) and City and Guilds (600/4888/8 & 600/4889/X) are not full qualifications.

1.8 The Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice

The Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP) has been designed to meet requirements for registration for non-supervisory staff working in a range of settings:

Holiday play scheme staff – For staff working in provision that runs during the school holidays there is a registration requirement that 50 per cent of the non-supervisory staff hold a relevant level 2 qualification. L2APP is suitable as a standalone qualification for non-supervisory staff.

In this situation, the registration requirement is that the supervisor/person in charge will hold a relevant level 3 qualification (see Section 2) and have at least two year's experience.

Childcare staff – For staff working year-round in childcare settings, there is a registration requirement that in sessional day care 50%, and for full day care 80%, of the non-supervisory staff hold a relevant level 2 qualification for working with children under eight which is included in the Social Care Wales *List of Required Qualifications to work within early years and childcare in Wales*: <https://socialcare.wales/learning-and-development/early-years-and-childcare-qualifications>

When held alongside a level 2 or 3 childcare qualification from the Social Care Wales list, L2APP will meet registration requirements for those also working with children up to the age of twelve in a non-supervisory role.

Youth work staff – For staff working year-round in youth work settings with children aged 8-11 in a transitional youth work or junior youth club setting, L2APP will meet registration requirements that 50 per cent of the non-supervisory staff hold a level 2 playwork qualification when held alongside a relevant youth work qualification.

1.9 The Award in Transition to Playwork from Early years

At level 3, the QCF Award in Transition to Playwork (from Early Years) offered by CACHE (600/0500/2), City and Guilds (600/1229/8), Pearson EDI (600/3253/4) and Pearson BTEC (601/1139/2) and the Award in Playwork for Early years and Childcare Workers offered by CACHE (100/6071/6) which, along with the entry requirement to hold a level 3 early years qualification, cover the knowledge and understanding for playwork.

1.10 Managing a Holiday Play Scheme

The Level 3 Managing a Holiday Play Scheme Award has been designed to meet requirements for registration for the registered person/person in charge of a holiday play scheme. If the person in charge of a holiday play scheme does not hold a level 3 playwork diploma qualification as is required, they can hold a teaching, youth work, or other relevant qualifications at level 3 or above, alongside the Level 3 Managing a Holiday Play Scheme Award. The post holder should also have the relevant managerial skills and experience to effectively manage a holiday play scheme.

1.11 Equivalence and prior learning

There may be some circumstances where a qualification can be deemed equivalent to one of those specified on the list. In such cases, this should be discussed with CSSIW in the first instance. CSSIW may contact SkillsActive for advice, if required. In the specific case of the Level 4 NVQ in Playwork, it has been agreed that, as a significant number of the units are at a higher level, this qualification will be accepted as the equivalent of a Level 5 Playwork NVQ for registration and inspection purposes. Awarding bodies are also able to recognise prior learning and, where appropriate, accept this towards the achievement of a different qualification. The awarding body should be approached directly for further information.

1.12 Qualifications gained outside of Wales

The Qualifications List only specifies those playwork qualifications which are available in Wales, although many of these are also available in England and Northern Ireland. In addition, because recognised qualifications are based on national occupational standards, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) at the appropriate level are also acceptable as they meet the design principles listed above.

1.13 Induction for playwork and out of school childcare practitioners

We recommend that all playwork practitioners should receive induction training which includes health and safety, and child protection policies and procedures during their first week of employment. In addition, should employers wish to enhance this with an induction to the sector, the unit contents of the QCF Award in Playwork at the appropriate level can be used to support the staff member in gaining the relevant knowledge and understanding for their role.

1.14 Continuing professional development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a process through which individuals improve their performance in practice by undertaking learning in a broad range of activities that maintain, develop, and enhance their skills and knowledge. Continuing Professional Development can be achieved in a number of ways.

A programme can include:

- Attendance at key meetings, seminars and conferences.
- Undertaking short courses or larger qualifications.
- Private study, reading.
- Observation, mentoring and feedback on working practice.

1.15 Work-based qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development

In addition to the full, playwork qualifications which provide opportunities to support career progression, there are a number of optional units at levels 2 and 3 (and at level 4 and 5, a number of stand-alone CPD units) which are suitable for those working in a variety of settings and can be undertaken as continuing professional development.

1.16 Higher education qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development

SkillsActive recognises the value that study in higher education can bring to a playworker's knowledge and practice, and provides an endorsement service for those higher education institutions offering playwork at level 4 and above.

1.17 Delivery and assessment of qualifications

The quality and reputation of qualifications rely on the knowledge, skills and competence, both occupational and subject, of trainers and assessors delivering them. Working with employers, trainers and awarding organisations, SkillsActive has developed a statement of occupational competence which provides guidance on the criteria which those people who are involved in the delivery and assessment of qualifications and training are expected to meet.

1.18 Welsh language and culture

SkillsActive encourages the promotion of Welsh language awareness and cultural sensitivity. The importance of understanding language development and bilingual development within the Welsh context should not be undervalued. Some of the qualifications listed in this document are available through the medium of Welsh and, where these are required, advice should be sought from the appropriate awarding organisation. Alternatively, advice on delivery in Welsh can be gained from Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs or from Play Wales.

1.19 Summary of Changes

- Agored Cymru Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice added to the list
- Reference to specific awarding bodies and qualification codes removed from Section 2
- Reference to specific awarding bodies included in Appendix 2
- Additional context added in Section 2 in relation to the amended status of the list for those working with children up to the age of 12 in childcare settings, year round open access playwork provision, holiday playschemes and other regulated settings
- Removal of the statement referring to the end date and review of the transitional award from early years to playwork

Section 2: Qualifications required by National Minimum Standards to work in playwork provision, and childcare provision with children under the age of 12 years

Non-Supervisory staff (Playworker/ Practitioner)

2.1 For Holiday Playschemes - specific arrangements apply where the Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice is sufficient on it's own for non-supervisory staff in holiday playschemes (see section 1.8).

2.2 For Childcare Settings - Following the extension of regulation to include childcare and play provision for children up to the age of 12 years, childcare practitioners with Level 2 childcare qualifications (eg Childrens Care Learning and Development - CCLD) will need to top up their qualification with the Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice OR a Level 2 Diploma in playwork. The required qualifications or awards must be attained by September 2021.

2.3 For Year-round open access playwork settings – Practitioners working in registered open access playwork provision with children up to the age of 12 will require a playwork diploma as per the list below. Currently 50% of non-supervisory staff should hold a full qualification to allow for new staff to train on the job.

2.4 For other regulated settings – For practitioners looking after children up to the age of 12 for more than two hours per day in a range of settings including – junior youth groups, transitional youth work and forest school holiday clubs and are registered with CSSIW, the qualifications listed below apply for non-supervisory staff.

Proportion of the workforce required by National Minimum Standards (April 2016): 'at least 50% of the non-supervisory staff holds a level 2 qualification which is appropriate to the post.'		
Required qualifications for National Minimum Standards	Past qualifications accepted	Suggested work-based qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (for holiday playscheme staff and those with existing level 2 childcare qualifications – see section 1.8)	Level 2 NVQ in Playwork	Level 3 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ) (QCF)
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	Award in Playwork for Early Years and Childcare Workers*	Optional units from Level 2 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ) (QCF) suite

*See Section 1.9 for more information

Person in charge/ registered person/ (senior playworker/ senior practitioner)

2.4 For Holiday Playschemes - specific arrangements apply where the Level 3 Managing a Holiday Playscheme Award is sufficient when held alongside a relevant level 3 qualification for persons in charge of holiday playschemes (see section 1.10)

2.5 For Childcare Settings - Following the extension of regulation to include childcare and play provision for children up to the age of 12 years, childcare practitioners with Level 3 childcare qualifications (eg Childrens Care Learning and Development - CCLD) will need to top up their qualification with the Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years OR a Level 3 Diploma in playwork. The required qualifications or awards must be attained by September 2021.

2.6 For year round open access playwork settings - Practitioners working in registered open access playwork provision with children up to the age of 12 will require a playwork diploma from the list below.

2.7 For other regulated settings - If you are looking after children up to the age of 12 for more than two hours per day in a range of settings including – junior youth groups, transitional youth work and forest school holiday clubs and are registered with CSSIW the Diploma in Playwork listed below applies for supervisory staff. This does not apply to youth work settings working ONLY with children 11 years old and over.

Proportion of the workforce required by National Minimum Standards (April 2016): ‘the person in charge has at least a level 3 qualification which is appropriate to the post’.		
Required qualifications for National Minimum Standards	Past qualifications accepted	Suggested work-based qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development
Level 3 Award in Managing a Holiday Play Scheme	Level 3 NVQ in Playwork	Level 5 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ) (QCF)
Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	Level 3 NVQ in Playwork	Additional optional units taken from the Level 3 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ)
Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork		Level 4 Award in Obtaining Additional

from Early Years		Finance for the Organisation
		Level 4 Award in Working with other Organisations, Agencies and Professionals in a Playwork Context
		Level 5 Diploma in Advanced Playwork (Wales) (QCF)

*See Section 1.10 for more information

Playwork Manager (not included in the National Minimum Standards)

There is no requirement for managerial staff to hold these qualifications under the NMS. However, to support professional progression and quality improvement, SkillsActive recommends the following

Current qualifications recommended	Past qualifications which are equivalent	Suggested work-based qualifications for career progression and continuing professional development
Level 5 Diploma in Playwork (NVQ) (QCF)	Level 4 NVQ in Playwork	Level 4 Award in Working with Other Organisations, Agencies and Professionals in a Playwork Context (QCF)
		Level 4 Award in Supporting Others in Accessing the Resources they need to provide play environments
		Level 4 Award in Providing Information to Inform Decision Making
		Level 4 Award in Obtaining Additional Finance for the Organisation
		Level 5 Award in Providing Leadership in own area of responsibility
		Level 5 Award in Managing Finance in Own Area of Responsibility
		Level 5 Award in Developing and Implementing Procedures to Safeguard Children and Young People
		SkillsActive Endorsed Higher Education Qualifications
		Level 5 Diploma in Advanced Playwork (Wales) (QCF)

Appendix 1

Childcare settings which fall under the remit of Social Care Wales:

- Full daycare – day nurseries
- Sessional Care – playgroups and Cylch Meithrin
- Crèches
- Childminding – home-based childcare
- Out of school Care – wrap-around care, care around nursery education for 3 and 4 year olds and Integrated Children’s Centres

Appendix 2 – Awarding bodies currently offering playwork qualifications designated by Qualifications Wales

Qualifications title	Level	Awarding Body
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)	2	Agored Cymru
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	2	Cache
Level 2 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P ³) - comprises award, certificate and diploma	2	SQA
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	2	City and Guilds
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	2	Pearson EDI
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	2	Pearson EdExcel
Managing a Holiday Playscheme Award (MAHPS)	2	Agored Cymru

Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	3	Cache
Level 3 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice. (P ³) – comprises award, certificate and diploma	3	SQA
Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	3	City and Guilds
Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	3	Pearson EDI
Level 3 Diploma	3	Pearson EdExcel
Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	3	Cache
Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	3	City and Guilds
Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	3	Pearson BTEC
Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	3	Pearson EDI
Level 5 Diploma in playwork	5	Cache
Level 5 Diploma in playwork	5	City and Guilds

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