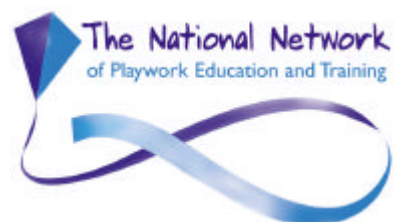


SkillsActive



Playwork People



Research Report 1 2004

SureStart



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Introduction

This report represents the first full results of the SkillsActive research programme to gather extensive data about the playwork workforce in England, conducted during 2003 and 2004

This project is part of the ongoing DfES/DCMs funded programme of research about the Playwork workforce that SkillsActive are conducting.

The Playworker Research project formed the first stages of a major programme of research into the nature and development of the playwork workforce. It aimed to find out where playworkers are, to investigate their working patterns, demographic characteristics, terms and conditions and to assess training history and need. Data was gathered using a self completion questionnaire, informed and supplemented by qualitative data collection.

Further data and research findings specific to your needs may be available on application to SkillsActive Research Unit.

1 Summary of Key Findings

Current findings, based on the results of the research programme to date, and existing workforce data are that:

- There are in excess of 70,000 people, working in full time, part time, paid and voluntary capacities in face to face playwork Playwork (i.e. working directly with children, from entry level to setting supervisor/manager level)
- There are around 30,000 people working in facilitating roles related to Playwork. These roles vary, and include managers of large scale services for children, play and childcare service managers who do not work directly in play settings, development workers, academics, trainers, assessors, operational staff (cleaners etc.).
- These estimates are reliably based on representative data collected from all regions of England during 2003 and 2004. Regionally split data will be available in 2005.
- 71% of the workforce work part time (25 hours or less) in their main playwork job, 49% work 16 hours or less.
- However, 41.3% work in more than one setting (e.g. in before and after school settings) or in other part time childcare related jobs such as in schools, nurseries or youth work.
- 75.9% of the workforce are paid, 13.2% worked voluntarily. 39% work in a voluntary capacity as well as being paid.

- The Playwork workforce is relatively well educated:
Almost 5% percent more than the English average held degrees (in any subject), whilst less than the national average have no qualifications at all (6%, compared to a figure for England of 15%).
- A quarter of the playwork workforce hold no playwork qualification, although 90% of those with no formal Playwork qualification – 25.8% of the workforce have another childcare related qualification.
- The highest **playwork** qualifications held by the workforce are:

Highest playwork qualification	% of workforce
Recognised entry level training	21.2
Level 2	29.7
Level 3	10.3
Level 4	6.2
Dip HE or above	3.9
No playwork qualification held	28.7
Total	100

- There are no fixed pay scales, and except where pay is determined by JNC (in London) or Local authority ranges, it is decided by each setting.
- Typical ranges of pay are:
 - £5-£7 per hour for someone starting with no experience
 - £6-£12.00 per hour for someone with some experience and training (e.g. L2/3 qualifications)
 - £8-£15 per hour for someone with experience and higher qualifications (L4/higher education) who is managing one setting
 - £13-£19 per hour from someone with experience (L4/higher education) managing more than one setting
- People working in other capacities, such as Development workers are usually paid according to Local Authority pay scales
- 95% of all face to face playworkers are female
- 19% of people in senior or “facilitating roles” are male
- 0.6 % of the workforce consider themselves to have a disability
- Nationally, 4% of the workforce have an ethnic origin other than white. There is considerable variability in this, with higher proportions of people of ethnic minority backgrounds working in areas where concentrations of ethnicity are highest.

- The age profile for all people working in Playwork is:

Age group	% of workforce
16-18	0.6
19-24	6.1
25-34	36.8
35-44	25.1
45-54	27.6
55-64	3.4
65 +	0.4
Total	100

- 61% of workers have had playwork jobs 5 years or less. 21% have been involved in playwork for 10 years or more.

2 Playwork People: The English Playworker Research Project

2.1 The context

The Playwork Unit at SkillsActive works to set and maintain standards in training and qualifications for Playworkers, and aims to increase the profile of play. To ensure that this remit is met there is a need for robust and reliable data about the characteristics of the Playwork Workforce.

The Playwork workforce is large and the structure, working patterns and skills needs of the workforce are complex. To date there has been no single reliable source of statistics and information about Playworker demographics and training. To fill this gap DfES and DCMS funded SkillsActive to run a comprehensive programme of research about the Playwork workforce.

The Playworker Research project, conducted in 2003 and 2004 and the focus of this report, was the first stage of this programme. It aimed to find out where playworkers are, to investigate their working patterns, demographic characteristics and training history and need.

This data is important for many reasons, among which are the better understanding of the Playwork workforce and the assessment of the uptake of, and need for training in the sector. This in turn has the potential to help improve training of those working in Playwork, to enhance the working life of Playworkers, to increase quality of Playwork provision, and to raise the profile of the Playwork sector as a whole.

2.2 Aims of the research

The aims of this first part of the research programme were to:

- Establish core demographic data for the playwork workforce
- Investigate training and qualification attainment and needs in the playwork workforce
- Investigate work patters and circumstances of the playwork workforce

2.3 Methodology

The Playworker Research Project was conducted in 2003 and 2004 using a self completion questionnaire which was distributed and returned by post, at Playwork events, via the internet and email, and by telephone interview. This methodology was particularly suitable for the first stages of the project, because although there is an element of self selection among those that respond, the first need was to reach as many people as possible, across the extensive spectrum of the Playworker population.

10,150 questionnaires were been distributed and 2032 responses were received from across England.

In depth interviews and group discussions were held across England with Playworkers, employers and playwork organisations. This provided additional data to inform the results of the self completion questionnaire.

2.4 Representativity

The number of responses to this research, and the geographical spread of the response, which is from across all regions of England suggests that the results of the Playworker survey broadly and statistically representative sample of all Playworkers in England. However coverage of responses were higher in some regions than others which means that the data are representative at a national level, but that more detailed data collection is needed at a regional level to allow for accurate regional break down of results. Representative results at a regional level will be available following stage 2 of the Research Programme, the results of which will be published in spring 2005.

2.5 The research population: why Playworkers?

There is no single source of contacts for employers, and much of the core information that was needed could only be gathered from Playworkers in person. This is particularly true of information about demographics and training needs, and contact information and permission (within a strict data protection framework) for its use in continuing research. In addition, some issues that were being researched are personal to each Playworker: for instance it is possible that an employer may identify the training needs of their Playworkers differently to the individuals themselves, and in addition employers may not be aware of the personal histories, training patterns and circumstances of individual employees.

Phase two of the Playwork Research Programme, being conducted in 2004 and 2005 will consolidate phase one, by providing detailed data for employers as well as more information about Playworkers, and focused data on holiday playwork provision.

A core assumption of this phase of the research programme was that anyone (whether paid, or voluntary) who is working in a setting that directly involves the provision of play for children aged between 4 and 16 may consider themselves to be a Playworker, and could therefore respond to the survey. Anyone who considered themselves to be a Playworker was invited to complete a questionnaire, in part to discover how individuals in the sector define their role. This may include managers of settings, as well as face to face workers and some people who may not be considered to be Playworkers in some parts of the sector – such as leisure workers and uniformed group leaders.

This approach gave useful insight into the definition and identification of playwork roles and responsibilities and related training and development needs at different levels. This work is being consolidated in phase two of the programme.

2.6 Questionnaire and programme design

This first phase of the Playwork Research Programme was centred on a questionnaire designed to collect core quantitative information about individuals including employment details and status, training profiles and demographics. The questionnaire was designed to be comprehensive and detailed whilst still being accessible and easy to complete. It was available in print, via the Playwork Unit and SkillsActive websites and through email enquiry. There was also an option for completion by telephone interview.

The print questionnaire was distributed directly to all Playworkers that can be individually identified, using a variety of routes and especially making use of the national network of regional centres for education and training in Playwork, EYDCPs and other Playwork sector organisations (local agencies and support networks). In addition, snowballing techniques were used to begin to reach Playworkers who are not attached to these organisations and distribution routes. For example, people who responded to the survey were encouraged to ask others to reply, or to pass questionnaires around their workplace – particularly important method to reach playworkers who are not yet part of the training and qualifications “system”. Trainers were asked to help by distributing questionnaires to their students.

2.7 Consultation on design

To ensure that the project and questionnaire design best met the core information needs and distribution structures of the sector, as well as being most likely to elicit a high response rate organisations, practitioners and workers at all levels were consulted about the project, including questionnaire design, methods of data collection, database design and the dissemination of results. This consultation has been ongoing, as the project has developed.

The consultation was carried out using emails, telephone interviews, meetings, focus groups and design piloting with Playworkers.

2.8 Research Programme strategy and development

The results of the first Playworker survey gave a solid base for statistical analysis, and a representative sample of Playworkers in England.

Further to this the programme has developed throughout 2004 and into 2005 to continue to collect and refine data about the Playwork workforce and associated training and qualifications approaches, needs and developments. This has included:

- Playwork employer research across England
- Further research among playworkers
- A tranche of research focussing on employers, providers and employees (voluntary and paid) of school holiday play settings.
- Qualitative research into core issues, including:
 - Equality
 - Pay and conditions
 - Recruitment and retention
 - Employer attitudes and need in training and qualifications
 - Trainers and assessors

This is allowing an increasingly robust data set to be built, and will ensure a continually improving understanding of workforce development needs and of employers and people working in the sector.

The results of phase two of the research will be available in spring 2005.

3 Results

3.1 Response rate

10,150 questionnaires were been distributed, and the questionnaire was also available for download or direct completion via the internet and 2032 responses were received from across England.

This gave a response rate of almost 20%, based on the number of questionnaires distributed. The level, scale and coverage of response gives a set of data that can be reliably used as representative of playworkers across England.

3.2 Regional and setting based variation

A clear pattern of variation in results emerged both at regional and more local levels (i.e. urban versus rural locations). There appears to be a difference in results dependent on such factors as setting type, ages served and within demographic groups, (e.g. age and experience of Playworkers). However, whilst representative at a national level, the unevenness of response (differing proportions came from different regions or types of play provision) means that detailed breakdown will only be reliable following phase two of the research programme.

3.3 Definitions: what is a Playworker?

There is continued debate over the definition of who Playworkers are, and the playworker research has begun to explore this question, from the perspective of playworkers. A clearer definition of the nature and role of Playworkers at different levels in the sector, based on employer and strategic organisation opinion and self-definition of playworkers is being developed in phase two of the research programme and will be the subject of a separate report.

However, initial investigation shows that there are many facets to the definition of a Playworker; and that different people define their roles and responsibilities and professional position in different ways. This is a key finding as it underpins the need to clearly define the structures and training needs of the workforce as a whole, particularly in the drive to increase the status of Playwork as a recognised profession.

In terms of self definition as playworkers, a clear pattern emerged from the Playworker Survey. 84% of those who replied were involved in some way with direct , or face to face, provision of play opportunities. Where people are involved in play provision in other capacities (for instance as area coordinators, or as managers who have no direct contact with children) they comment to this effect within their response, and appear to consider themselves a step away from Playwork itself. They also tended to be direct playworkers in either an occasional or very part time basis,

having some level of contact or a position with a playwork setting, as well as their main job.

The survey, and associated qualitative work, allowed three clear definitions of Playwork workforce to emerge:

- **Playworkers:** people currently working face to face in settings, and including managers of settings.

This group of people directly need to engage with the Playwork Training and Qualifications structures and provisions available.

- **Playwork facilitators:** people who facilitate the provision of play settings and opportunities, but are not directly providing it. For example, Playwork co-ordinators, trainers, EYDCP officers.

This group of people usually benefit from, and often need, some level (often an advanced level) of Playwork Training and Qualifications to understand and better work with the settings they are supporting and in the services they provide.

- **Play related workers:** volunteers and paid workers in settings or services where play is an element, but not the focus of the activity or services provided. For instance youth groups, leisure schemes that focus on sport, school assistants.

This group can benefit from training and qualifications in Play so that they understand and are more effective in the play elements of their work.

3.4 The size of the Playwork workforce

Apart from provision for under eight year olds, which must be registered, there has never been a set of data that shows how many Playworkers there are in England. Playworkers are not formally registered with any professional body, and this figure is not readily available. Current estimates range from tens to hundreds of thousands of Playworkers in England, and it is clear that, because of the drive to increased out of school childcare provision, the size of the playwork workforce is currently increasing.

In due course, the playwork research programme will be able to give the first definitive figure for the size of the playwork workforce. However, based on the results of the first phase and verified against current estimates and nationally available data the first indications are that there are in excess of 70,000 people, working in full time, part time, paid and voluntary capacities in face to face playwork Playwork (i.e. working directly with children, from entry level to setting supervisor/manager level).

There are also around 30,000 people working in facilitating roles related to Playwork. These roles vary, and include managers of large scale services for children, play and childcare service managers who do not work directly in play settings, development workers, academics, trainers, assessors, operational staff (cleaners etc.).

3.5 Workforce demographics

3.5.1 Gender

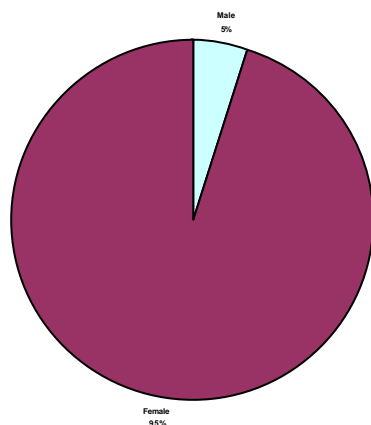
95.1% of respondents to date are female. 4.9 are male. This figure is consistent across England, although it varies a little by type of setting. For instance the proportion of female workers in after school settings (95.3%) is higher than that for adventure play settings, where the proportion of males workers is 8.3%.

Table 1: Gender in the playwork workforce

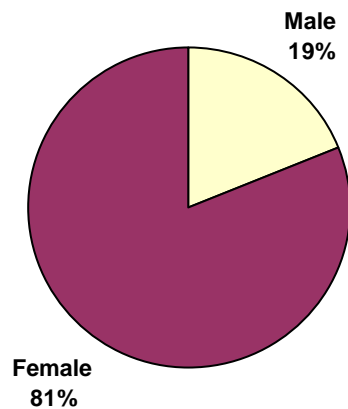
	Male	Female
All playworkers	4.9	95.1
Playworkers at supervisory level and above	18.8	81.2

Fig 1: Gender in the playwork workforce

**Gender in the playwork workforce:
All playworkers in England**



Gender in the playwork workforce at supervisory level and above



Male play workers appear to be more likely to reach higher positions or status in the playwork workforce, in comparison to their proportion as part of the workforce. They also appear to be more likely to move on to work as development workers or in playwork facilitatory positions. Of the 5% that are male, over three quarters are in supervisory positions.

Although assumptions can be made, it is not yet clear why men are proportionally more likely to reach higher positions in the playwork sector than are females, but it may be that traditional working patterns mean that there is a greater drive for full time work among male workers. It may also be that, because of the traditional status of playwork and childcare in general as a female orientated profession, those men that become involved may have a higher drive to succeed and progress than other people.

There are also sector wide concerns (expressed in qualitative interviews and group discussions) that whilst there is inequality in terms of male engagement in the traditionally female playwork and childcare workforce, those men that do become part of the workforce are more likely to succeed at a higher level because of traditional discriminatory approaches among employers. Further work with employers will clarify this situation.

Early analysis also shows that the proportion of male workers in the holiday playwork workforce is significantly higher than the workforce as a whole – over 20% of holiday playworkers are male.

3.5.2 Age of Playworkers

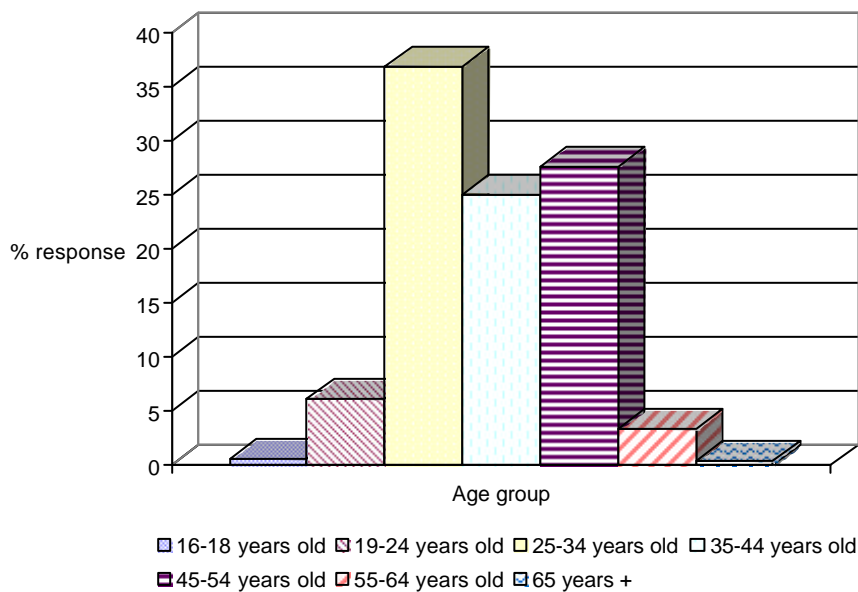
Playworkers are predominantly from the aged from 25 to 54 years old, but with a dip at 35-44 years old. This may reflect the way that people appear to use Playwork as part of the pattern of their family and working life, in conjunction with other jobs or as an addition to other professional interests.

Qualitative research evidence shows that it is very common for Playworkers to enter the workforce when they have school aged children of their own (41 out of 52 asked stated that this was the case for them).

Table 2: Age profile of the Playwork workforce

Age group	% Response
16-18 years old	0.6
19-24 years old	6.1
25-34 years old	36.8
35-44 years old	25.1
45-54 years old	27.6
55-64 years old	3.4
65 years +	0.4
	100

Figure 2: Age profile of the Playwork workforce



3.5.3 Ethnic origin

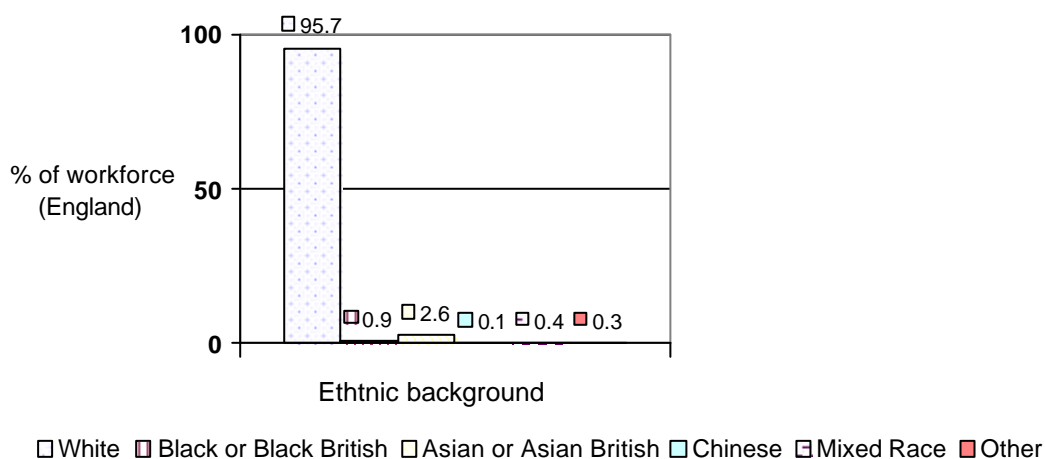
Using a simple classification, playworkers defined their ethnic origin.

Nationally, the Playwork workforce is predominantly white: 4% of the workforce have an ethnic origin other than white. There is considerable variability in this, with higher proportions of people of ethnic minority backgrounds working in areas where concentrations of ethnicity are highest. For instance, particularly in some inner city areas with a diverse ethnic mix of population, and in the West Midlands the proportion of Playworkers from ethnic minority backgrounds appears to be higher than in other areas. This pattern is being investigated in greater depth in phase two of the research programme.

Table 3: Ethnic background of the Playwork workforce

Ethnic background	% response
White	95.7
Black or Black British	0.9
Asian or Asian British	2.6
Chinese	0.1
Mixed Race	0.4
Other	0.3
	100

Figure 3: Ethnic background of the playwork workforce



3.4.4 Disabled Playworkers

0.6% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability. This is lower than the prevalence of disability in the working population as a whole and appears to reflect a perception among disabled people that playwork is not a profession that is accessible to those with disability, particularly a physical disability.

3.5.5 Socio economic classification and income classification of Playworker households

Playworkers come from across the spectrum of classification of households by socio economic status. They are as likely to come from households where the main wage earner is occupied in a 'routine occupation' as those where the main wage earner is employed in a 'higher managerial or professional' occupation.

Using current National Statistical Office definitions¹ there is no clear pattern of Playworkers coming from any particular household type, whether based on occupational or income definitions.

Likewise, there is no clear pattern of Playworkers living in particular categories of households according to income type. Playworkers are as likely to come from household with incomes considerably above the national average, as those with incomes below the national average.

A more significant factor appears to be working structures and practices, and the stage of life that people are at. Playwork is clearly a part time occupation for the majority of the workforce, although 61% have more than one part time job (51% in other child care jobs), and in 34% of case the portfolio of work done is creates a full time equivalent of working hours. (see section 4.5)

3.6 Training and Qualifications

3.6.1 Highest qualification held (Playwork and non-Playwork qualifications)

In general terms the playwork workforce is relatively highly qualified, compared to the national average for the population of England. Four percent more than the English average held degrees (in any subject), whilst less than the national average had no qualifications at all (6%, compared to a figure for England of 15%)²

This is significant as those with higher general levels of education may be more likely to engage with further vocational training for Playwork. However, it is important to note

¹Source: National Statistical Office, 2001

² Source: Department for Education and Skills, from the Labour Force Survey, 2003

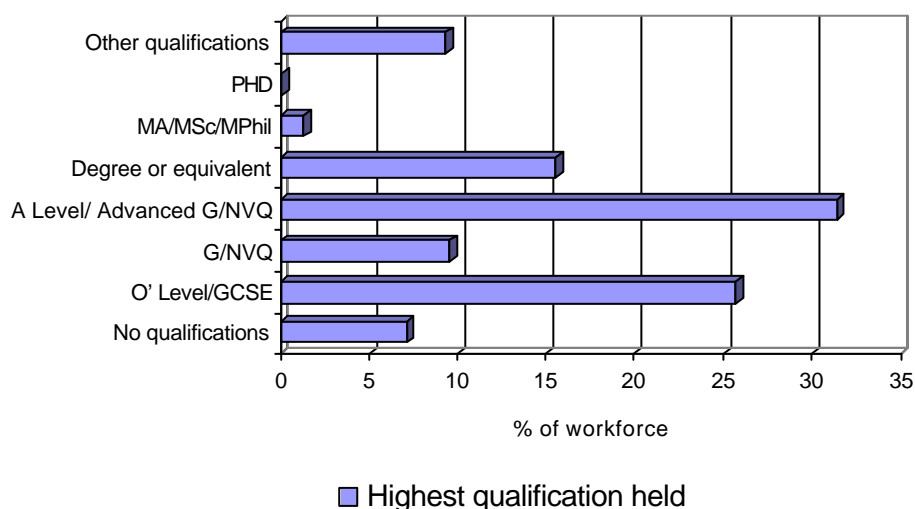
that over 40% of the Playwork workforce has education to level 2 or below, and may have their own specific needs when engaging in adult based learning.

These figures are an accurate reflection of the highest level of qualification that replied to the survey. However, there may be some element of skew in these results: it is possible that people educated to higher levels are more likely to participate in this kind of research, particularly if they have engaged in the playwork education and training process.. Further work with employers and playworkers in phase two of the research programme will clarify these data. In addition, early results show that holiday playworkers, who tend to be younger than the wider playwork workforce, have a lower level of education, when judged in terms of highest qualification held.

Table 4: Highest level of qualification held

Qualification level	% response
No qualifications	7.1
O' Level/GCSE	25.7
G/NVQ	9.5
A Level/ Advanced G/NVQ	31.4
Degree or equivalent	15.6
MA/MSc/MPhil	1.3
PHD	0.1
Other qualifications	9.3

Figure 4: Highest qualification held



3.6.2 Qualifications in Playwork that have been completed

Thirty six percent of Playworkers had received recognised entry level training and 58.1% of respondents had a Level 2 qualification.

A further 19.2% of Playworkers that responded were qualified to Level 3; 6.2 % were qualified to Level 4, and 3.9% to Dip HE level or above. 31% of respondents were involved in courses to obtain Playwork qualifications at the time of completing the questionnaire.

Although it is not yet possible to give a definitive regional mapping of qualification and training availability it is clear that that training is more readily available and/or accessible in some areas than in others.

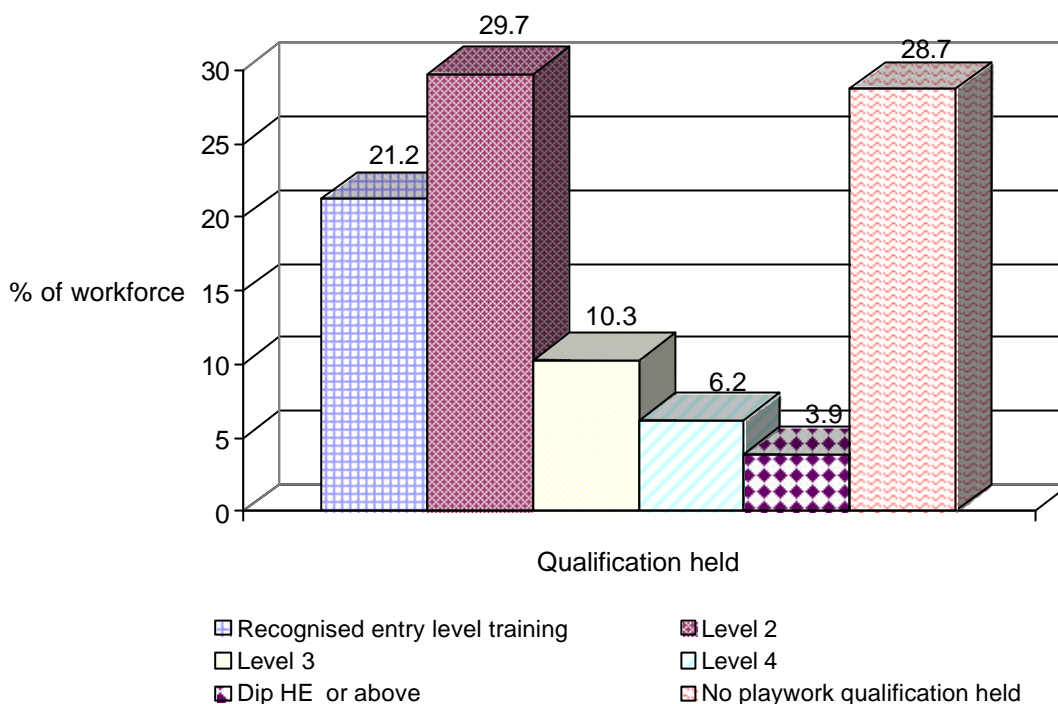
3.6.4 Highest qualification held (Playwork qualifications)

For almost a third of playworkers, the highest qualification held is at Level 2 or its equivalent.

29% have no playwork qualification, although the majority of these (90% of those with no formal playwork qualification – 25.8% of the workforce) have another childcare related qualification..

Highest playwork qualification	% of workforce
Recognised entry level training	21.2
Level 2	29.7
Level 3	10.3
Level 4	6.2
Dip HE or above	3.9
No playwork qualification held	28.7
Total	100

Figure 5: Highest playwork qualifications held



3.6.3 Playwork training and qualification needs

Fifty seven percent of respondents wanted further training in Playwork. Among those that had gained a qualification already there appears to be strong motivation to go on to the next level. This became particularly clear in individual interviews and group discussions. There was a high level of enthusiasm and commitment to engage in Playwork education and training once the first steps had been taken, even among those who reported that they had at first been reluctant to do so.

There is some variation by region and geographical area, but in terms of volume, the greatest need for training expressed by Playworkers in England is at level 2 and 3.

30% of the workforce were seeking training at level 3, and further 25% at level 3.

There were considerable difficulties in obtaining access to training needed by the workforce, particularly because of a lack of courses available, the difficulty of access to courses – geographically, but also because of difficulties of funding and the time available to do courses.

18% of respondents reported difficulty in accessing training or qualifications because employers found it hard to release staff during work hours.

At a higher level, 14% of those who responded wanted to access training or qualifications at level 4 or above. Qualifications at Level 4 were a particular need –

principally among setting managers and supervisors, and over three quarters that wanted this level of qualification stated that it was or would be difficult to achieve this, for some reason – frequently because of practicalities of finding a course, or work shadowing.

Although the proportion of the workforce seeking training and qualifications at level level was less than for other levels, the unmet need as a percentage of those ready to access training at this level was higher than for the rest of the workforce. Thus, whilst level 4 qualifications were being sought by a relatively lower proportion (14%) of the total workforce than level 2 or 3 qualifications (60%), it was harder for those working at a higher level to find and access training opportunities than for those at a lower level.

Long established Playworkers tend to have received a number of training courses over the years, but these are often not recognised as current Playwork qualifications. There was considerable spontaneous comment (by more than 20% of respondents) that current requirements for Playwork training and qualifications should allow recognition of past experience and training to be taken into account.

3.6.4 Other training in Playwork

A broad range of other training considered relevant to Playwork was listed by respondents. This varied from first aid and minibus driving to short courses focussing on creativity and play opportunities, outdoor activities and relating to children and young people with specific needs. One respondent had been on a course on reptile handling as part of their Playwork training: Playwork is obviously a profession of many talents!

3.6.5 Other qualifications related to Playwork

Likewise, a variety of other qualifications were quoted as being relevant to Playwork. Of those that had other qualifications that they considered relevant to Playwork, 45% had early years qualifications. However, teaching and youth work qualifications were also given as relevant, as were some in child development and childcare.

3.7 Pay and conditions

3.7.1 Pay

Respondents were asked how much they were paid for their main Playwork job. This varied from £2.50 an hour (for an owner/worker of a new setting that was not yet making a profit) to £21.25 for a manager of a large scheme in London.

Nationally, and with weighting to make sure that the extremes of pay level did not skew the average, the mean hourly pay was £4.70 per hour for a non-supervisory Playworker, and £6.80 per hour for a supervisor. There is considerable regional and local variation in these figures, which will be analysed in more detail following phase two of the research programme.

Key features of playwork pay and conditions are that:

- There are no fixed pay scales, and except where pay is determined by JNC (in London) or Local authority ranges, it is decided by each setting.
- Typical ranges of pay are:
 - £5-£7 per hour for someone starting with no experience
 - £6-£12.00 per hour for someone with some experience and training (e.g. L2/3 qualifications)
 - £8-£15 per hour for someone with experience and higher qualifications (L4/higher education) who is managing one setting
 - £13-£19 per hour from someone with experience (L4/higher education) managing more than one setting
- People working in other capacities, such as Development workers are usually paid according to Local Authority pay scales

3.7.2 Conditions and retention issues

Whilst conditions, in terms of working environment and job satisfaction, are generally considered to be high, other elements of being a Playworker cause a high turnover and problems with retention. This was reported both by Playworkers in spontaneous comment on questionnaire returns, and by Playworkers and Employers in qualitative research.

Low pay, poor hours and a lack of stability in the funds available to Playwork provision, plus a greater attractiveness and status of other childcare related work all contribute to a high proportion of people moving on from Playwork within the first five years of employment.

3.8 Employers, work patterns and employment data

Respondents were asked to give details of their main Playwork employer. They were asked to judge this on the hours worked for their main employer, rather than on the income received, thus the main playwork job could be for paid or voluntary work. Asking about the main job recognised that some Playworkers may have jobs in more than one role, setting or type of work.

3.8.1 Hours worked and employment patterns

The hours worked by Playworkers varied from 1 hour a week, to 40 (typically where the Playworker was running a setting that provided before and after school activities, and often weekend facilities as well).

71% of the workforce work part time (25 hours or less) in their main playwork job, 49% work 16 hours or less. However, 42.8% worked in more than one setting (for instance, in a breakfast club and then in an after school club, or in an after school club as well as in holiday schemes) meaning that their overall hours worked as a Playworker were increased.

61% of the workforce have more than one part time job (51% of these work in other child care jobs), and in 34% of case the portfolio of work done is creates a full time equivalent of working hours.

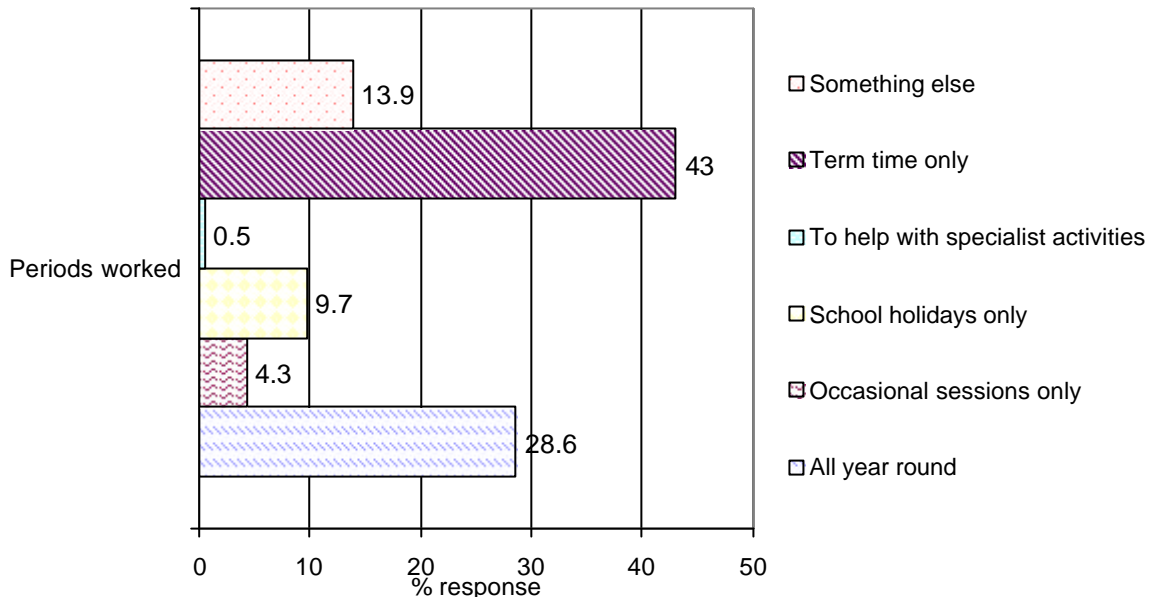
3.8.2 Working periods of main Playwork job

The majority of respondents were employed for specific times, depending on their setting. Many people working, for instance, in term times only in their main job, also worked during holidays for other settings. Of those who worked all year round, the majority were in senior roles, or were employed for 25 hours or more in one setting.

Table 6: Work periods for Playworkers

When worked	% response
All year round	28.6
Occasional sessions only	4.3
School holidays only	9.7
To help with specialist activities	0.5
Term time only	43.0
Something else	13.9

Figure 6: Work periods for Playworkers



3.8.3 Paid and voluntary work

75.9% of the workforce are paid, 13.2% worked voluntarily. 39% work in a voluntary capacity as well as being paid.

44.9% of those that replied said that they work in a voluntary capacity as well as a paid Playworker for their main employer. The majority of these (91%) were employed in voluntary, charitable or statutory settings.

However, 41.3% work in more than one setting (e.g. in before and after school settings) or in other part time childcare related jobs such as in schools, nurseries or youth work.

3.8.4 Job title and duties

There is considerable variation in job title and the duties that people in with different titles perform, especially as Playworkers increase in seniority in their setting. For instance, some people working at supervisory level appear to be almost exclusively managerial, others are primarily working face to face with children, whilst taking a managerial role with other staff.

There is also significant variation and disparity of earnings and qualification among Playworkers who on the evidence of job title are working at the same level as one another. This appears to be partly a function of different types of play setting, and different working practices between settings, but it has also been the cause of significant spontaneous comment on questionnaire forms. This perhaps points to a

need for greater standardisation of Playwork as a profession, whilst recognising too the need to allow different settings to retain their individuality.

However, playwork is characterised by a spirit of individuality and creativity. In group discussions and individual interviews playworkers and employers expressed a clear desire for standardisation and professionalisation of the working structures in the profession of Playwork, but they were clear that this should be done in a manner that does not stifle the individuality and character of different play settings.

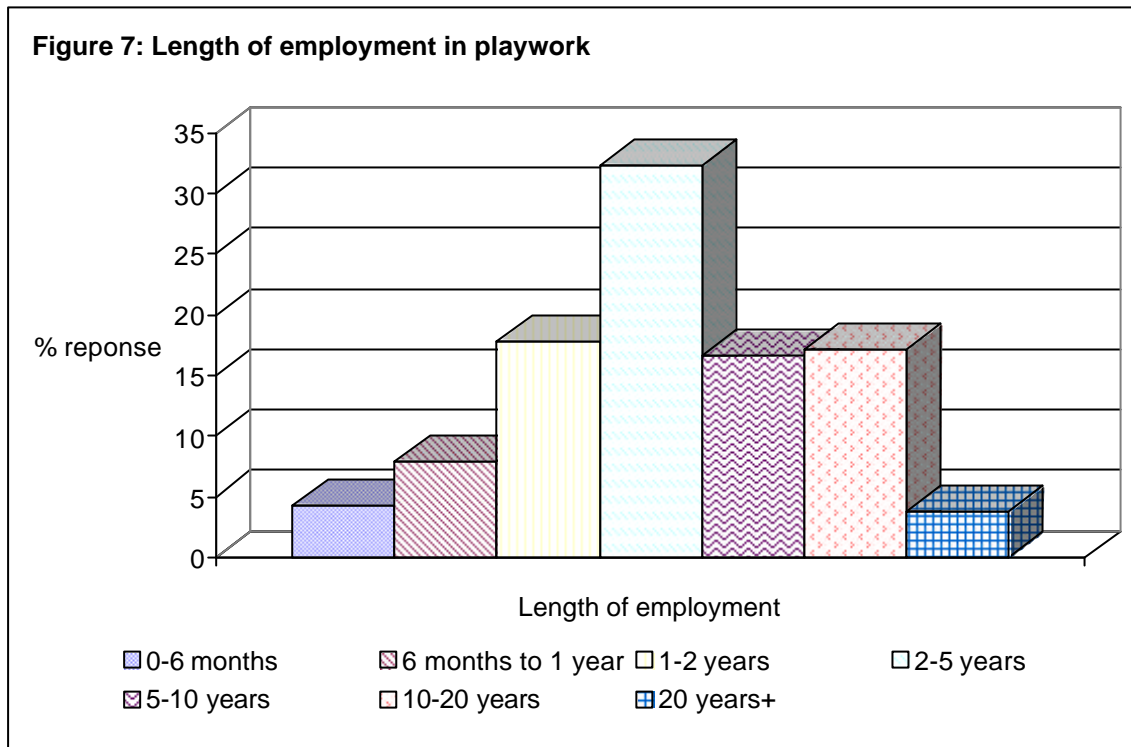
3.8.5 Length of employment in Playwork

Two thirds of people had been involved in Playwork for 5 years or less, however over 20% had been involved for 10 years or more.

These figures show that whilst there are retention problems for those new to the profession, there is a sizeable cohort that remain in the profession for the long term.

Table 7: Length of employment in Playwork

Length of employment in Playwork	% response
0-6 months	4.3
6 months to 1 year	7.9
1-2 years	17.8
2-5 years	32.4
5-10 years	16.6
10-20 years	17.2
20 years+	3.8



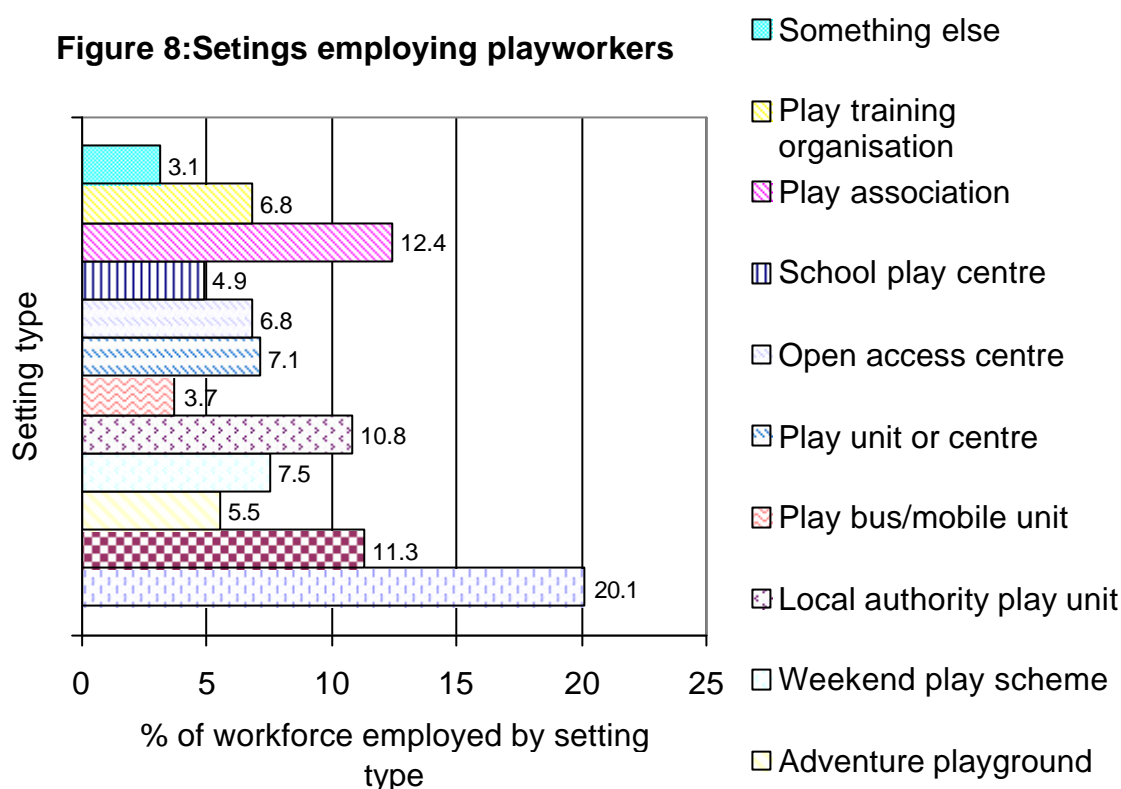
3.8.6 Setting type

Respondent were employed in a broad range of settings, for their main Playwork job:

Table 8: Type of setting employing Playworkers

Setting type	% response
After school club	20.1
Holiday play scheme	11.3
Adventure playground	5.5
Weekend play scheme	7.5
Local authority play unit	10.8
Play bus/mobile unit	3.7
Play unit or centre	7.1
Open access centre	6.8
School play centre	4.9
Play association	12.4
Play training organisation	6.8
Something else	3.1

Figure 8: Settings employing playworkers



3.8.9 Status of main employer

The majority of Playworkers who responded were employed by voluntary or charitable organisations.

Table 9 Status of Playwork employers

Employer status	% response
Private business	12.8
Voluntary organisation or charity	63.4
Organisation run by a local authority	18.3
Something else	5.5

3.8.10 Age groups served by settings

68.7% of Playworkers were working in settings that catered for 8-12 year olds, 45.3% in settings providing for 4-7 year olds. 5.1% were working with 13-16 year olds. 48% of those that responded were working with more than one age group.

Figure 9: Age groups served by settings

