

## **A Guide to Making a Submission for Endorsement**

This booklet is for playwork training providers and employers who submit their courses for SkillsActive endorsement against nationally agreed criteria.

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### **I. Background**

In the past there were a great number of training courses and qualifications for people working with children and young people, but it was sometimes difficult to know at whom they were aimed or at what level they were pitched. There were very few that had been developed to meet a national standard and it was hard to judge whether they were appropriate and would meet the quality standards needed for working with children.

With the introduction of the National Childcare Strategy and new legislation, the regulatory authorities have been working with the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to establish frameworks for qualifications and training.

Training and qualifications provide valuable opportunities for playworkers to gain skills, knowledge and understanding.

**Training** is important at all stages of a playworker's career from early induction to later continuing professional development. Colleges, employers and training providers in the voluntary, statutory and private sectors may run training courses. Some playwork training is certificated, showing that the learner has attended the course and has demonstrated an understanding of its content.

Training courses can now be nationally endorsed through SkillsActive.

**Qualifications** have the distinction of being offered by either an Awarding Body recognised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) or a university/HE institution under the auspices of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and are subject to some form of external assessment.

This means that the qualification is awarded on the basis of the external assessment of a learner's work, for example through examinations or written assignments that are marked by an external examiner.

## **2. The Qualification Framework**

The QCA Framework for Qualifications has been created to make it easier for people involved in playwork and early years care and education to make informed choices about qualifications.

For example, it establishes:

- Qualification for job roles in different occupational areas
- The level of each qualification
- Progressions routes – to help workers add on to their existing qualifications and move into different areas, e.g. from early years work to playwork.

With national accredited qualifications on the framework, you can be sure that the Awarding Body itself is nationally accredited and that the qualification:

- Has been endorsed by the playwork sector
- Is at a clear level
- Will be eligible for public funding
- Will allow for progression both vertically onto a higher level and horizontally across sectors.

For more details about national qualifications accredited to date see QCA's website at [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)

### **3. The Training Framework**

In parallel with this development, SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning has a Playwork Unit with an endorsement process for training for the playwork sector.

The role of SkillsActive is to:

- Support the national endorsement process for playwork training
- Advise QCA on playwork qualifications
- Maintain the National Code of Practice for Training Providers
- Maintain the National Register for Playwork Trainers
- Inform and consult with the Playwork Sector

- Contribute to the development of quality standards in education training and qualifications for the playwork profession.

## **4. Endorsement**

### **4.1. What is an endorsed course?**

It is a training programme that has been approved by a National Endorsement Panel whose members include playworkers, play development workers, playwork employers and training providers who look at a submission and decide whether it meets national criteria.

### **4.2. How does the system work?**

The SkillsActive Playwork Unit, in conjunction with colleagues in the playwork sector, has a Playwork Education and Training Council (PETC). The PETC has playwork representative from each of the Regional Centres for Playwork Education and Training, as well as representation from national play organisations in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is at the PETC in Playwork that the criteria and processes of endorsement are agreed.

Training providers submit their courses to the National Endorsement Panel against the agreed criteria. Submissions to the Panel include a mixture of locally and regionally developed training programmes for local and regional and national application. Those which meet criteria receive endorsement from SkillsActive.

### **4.3. What kind of training can endorsed?**

Playwork training can come in lots of different forms, including short courses, which last for a few hours to programmes which require a regular weekly commitment over a year or two. The playwork Assumptions and Values will always be integral to the training programme.

The Assumptions and Values of playwork arise from an understanding for play a playwork. There is a body of knowledge which has informed them and your course should show you have drawn on this knowledge. Please see the list of Playwork Principles.

There is no maximum or minimum length of programme that can be endorsed.

Playwork training is for people who work or wish to work with children aged 4-15 years in their out-of-school hours in playwork settings.

Any level of playwork training can be endorsed, including introductory programmes, certificate course and modules within a Higher Education programme.

Any organisation can submit playwork training for endorsement. Training organisations and providers will have to meet the endorsement criteria explained in the guidance notes included with the Submission Form in this guide. Organisations will also have to sign up to the SkillsActive Code of Practice for the delivery of training in the playwork sector. Application forms are available from SkillsActive.

Playwork training can be submitted at any time for endorsement. To find out when panels are held and submission receipt cut off dates contact your regional centre or the SkillsActive playwork team. The National Endorsement Panel meets several times a year to consider submissions.

#### **4.4. What is the process for getting a course endorsed?**

##### **a. Registration**

The training organisation or provider should let the Regional Support Officer know that they intend to submit a programme for endorsement and ask for a submission form.

##### **b. Submission Forms/Guidance**

The Regional Supporting Officer will send out a Submission Form, a copy of this guide and the date of the next National Endorsement Panel meeting.

##### **c. Advice**

Advice and guidance about a submission can be given by the Regional Supporting Officer at any stage of the process.

#### **d. Submissions**

The training organisation/provider sends in 4 copies of the completed Submission Form plus all the relevant attachments for consideration.

Playwork organisations and training providers should initially submit their programme to their nearest Regional Centre. To make sure all the questions have been answered and all the necessary information has been attached, the Supporting Officer will check your submission and may contact you for additional material. Your submission will then be considered by the National Endorsement Panel.

#### **e. Considering your Submission**

The National Endorsement Panel will look for a submission which shows:

- A reflection of the Principles of Playwork throughout the submission
- A commitment to equal opportunities policy and practice
- A recognition of the value of training for all playworkers
- A demonstration that training will be delivered through negotiation and participation
- Acknowledgement of the value of playworkers' experience and existing skills

#### **4.5. Initial Endorsement**

Successful submission will receive initial endorsement approval, and full endorsement when participants have completed the first programme, an evaluation report is produced, and there is satisfactory feedback from all those involved.

#### **4.6. Evaluation Requirements – Moving to Full Endorsement**

You will be expected to inform your Supporting Officer when the initially endorsed programme has enrolled and provide the names, addresses and contact details of all participants. SkillsActive will contact them individually and ask them to complete a SkillsActive evaluation form at the end of their first course.

Training providers should keep full records of the development, design, recruitment, delivery, assessment, programme management, and evaluation processes to enable them to report back.

### **a. The Purpose of Evaluation**

The playwork endorsement committee for playwork use evaluation reports to measure the quality of the training programmes to which they have given initial endorsement and to make a decision about awarding full endorsement to these programmes.

The National Panel will use the evaluation report to:

- Check progress of the programme against any action points identified during initial endorsement
- Check the programme has met the original aims and learning outcomes and schemes of work in the submission and consider justification for variation
- Measure the success of the programme in terms of recruitment from target groups, retention, completion and progression
- Measure the quality of the programme in terms of programme management, quality assurance, and delivery
- Examine how training providers plan to implement the results of evaluation.

The evaluation forms from learners are used to gauge the quality of the learning experience.

### **b. The Process of Evaluation**

You will be asked to submit the evaluation report after the first initially endorsed course has run. It is expected that this process will be carried out within 12 months of receiving initial endorsement, with the first course that runs after initial endorsement has been given.

This report will be submitted to the Regional Supporting Officer who will arrange for a meeting to examine the evaluation report. If this information is satisfactory the programme will receive full endorsement, valid for three years.

You may at that time be invited to make a presentation regarding the report. (This is not obligatory.)

Full endorsement can be withheld until satisfactory evidence of the implementation of the action plan and receipt of satisfactory evaluation reports on the completion of the delivery of a second or further programme.

Endorsed programmes will be able to use the SkillsActive logo on all their promotional material and workbooks, etc.

Evaluations submitted, including those produced midway, might result in recommendations from the National Endorsement Panel for changes to the remainder of the programme, or in future delivery.

**c. Evaluation Reports**

- For programmes of 1 – 40 hours an end of programme evaluation portfolio is required.
- For those programmes/courses over 40 hours midway report will also be expected.

An end of programme portfolio will evaluate how well the programme met its aims and how well the participants were able to achieve the learning outcomes. Portfolios will be expected to include evaluation of all parts of the programme including the aims, the structure, the content, the delivery, practice and placements, and assessment. There should also be evaluations from learners and a report of what actions should be taken in any re-delivery of the programme.

**d. Guidance on your Evaluation Report**

We are aware that training providers may report to several bodies. We do not want to create and extra reporting burden and do not therefore require a particular format for evaluations reports. Looking at question 16 of the Submission Form should help with this process. We suggest you reference your report to the following headings:

- Aims and Learning Outcomes
- Programme Management
- Programme Structure
- Programme Content
- Programme Delivery
- Practice and Placements
- Assessment
- Quality Assurance
- Evaluations from Learners and Tutors

## **5. Appeals and Complaints**

If you have concerns about any aspect of the playwork training endorsement process, please ask for a copy of the Appeals and Complaints Procedure from the SkillsActive Playwork Team.

## **6. Additional Information**

The following pages provide some additional information to help you with questions 3 and 5 in the Submission Form.

### **Question 3**

**How does your programme reflect:**

- The Playwork Principles in the National Occupational Standards?
- How you introduce the Playwork Principles to learners and help them to use these to underpin their practice?
- A commitment to equal opportunities policy and practice?

**The following definitions may be helpful:**

### **Definition of Playwork**

Playwork is the provision by adults of an environment and opportunities that enable children and young people to engage in play. These opportunities can support and enhance social, physical, intellectual, cultural, creative and emotional development. The values underpinning playwork derive from a clear understanding of, and commitment to, equality of opportunity, the child's right to play, and the importance of choice, freedom, empowerment, safety and social justice.

The playworker's task is to facilitate, enable, encourage, empower and, where necessary, intervene to ensure that the play environment and the play opportunities always start with the child and/or young person's needs first.

## **Playwork Principles**

These Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork and as such must be regarded as a whole.

They describe what is unique about play and playwork, and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people.

They are based on the recognition that children and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities.

2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.

3. The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.

4. For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.

5. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.

6. The Playworkers response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.

7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.

8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well being of children.

### **The Learning Process**

There are parallel principles between playwork and playwork training relating to choice, ownership, empowerment and the recognition of the right of the individual to be at the centre of the process.

To be effective the learning process for programme participants should acknowledge that:

- Playwork should be an ongoing process of creative learning and development for workers and they should be involved in a process of observation, listening, negotiation, action, reflection and improvement
- The learning process adopted by the programme should reflect the values underlying the playwork
- Learners need to be involved and engaged in the learning tasks – contributing their ideas and experiences
- The learning methods are devised to encourage choices from the learner – they can take “ownership” of the situations and adapt it to their needs and experiences
- There needs to be an element of flexibility and creativity
- Learners are supported in making connections between what is “new” and previous frameworks of understanding.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

When considering how a programme fulfils its commitment to equal opportunities then National Endorsement Panel will have in mind the following statement on equal opportunities:

There is widespread, unjust, direct and indirect discrimination against many groups of people. Many individuals and groups experience this discrimination as oppression – a systematic process whereby individuals, groups and institutions with ascribed or achieved power unjustly limit lives, experiences, opportunities, choices and material well-being of those with less power.

Addressing these issues requires a commitment to confronting and countering oppression, eradicating unjust discrimination and to ensuring equality of opportunity in playwork training for all groups. Our diverse and multicultural society should aim to ensure equality of opportunity for people, protected or not by legislation, against discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexuality, religion, age, culture, class, educational background and appearance.

There is a responsibility to be vigilant in relation to standards and practices in the training of playworkers; and clearly this vigilance extends to positive action in matters of equal opportunities.

## **Question 5**

### **What is the level of your programme?**

The charts on the next few pages show a comparison of existing system of “level descriptors” that are in use. These include:

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Framework (QCA)

Scottish and National Vocational Qualification (S/NVQ)

Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfers Systems (NICATS)

The QCA and S/NVQ examples are included since it is essential that any framework for level descriptors agreed for playwork training must bear a relationship to these existing frameworks. NICATS show descriptors at the higher levels.

**Table of Comparison of Different Level Descriptors**

<b>Level</b>	<b>QCA NQF</b>	<b>S/NVQ</b>	<b>NICATS</b>
<b>Orientation</b>	A programme specific to the early years and playwork sector, introductory “survival pack”, linked with New Deal Gateway (10 – 20 hours)		
<b>Entry</b>	Attainment which can provide the starting point for profession to higher levels.		Employ recall and demonstrate elementary comprehension in a narrow range of areas, exercise basic skills within highly structured contexts, and carry out directed activity under close supervision.
<b>1</b>	Attainment in a limited range of contexts, involving mainly routine activities and relatively limited autonomy.	Competencies, which involve the application of knowledge and skills in the performance of a range of varied work activities, most of which may be routine or predictable	Employ a narrow range of applied knowledge, skills and basic comprehension within a limited range of predictable and structured contexts, including working with others under direct supervision, but with a very limited degree of discretion and judgement about possible action.
<b>2</b>	Attainment in a variety of contexts, showing some ability to synthesise and evaluate.	Competencies, which involve the application of knowledge and skills in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. At this level there must be activities that are complex or non-routine and some individual responsibility and autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team, may often be a requirement.	Apply knowledge with underpinning comprehension in a number of areas and employ a range of skills within a number of contexts, some of which may be non-routine; and undertake directed activities, with a degree of autonomy, within time constraints.

<b>Level</b>	<b>QCA NQF</b>	<b>S/NVQ</b>	<b>NICATS</b>
<b>3</b>	Attainment in a variety of non-routine contexts, showing ability to see abstract concepts and theory, to think analytically and critically, and to see relationships between aspects of the area.	Competencies, which involve the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of varied work activities performed in a wide variety of contexts, most of which are complex and non-routine. There is considerable responsibility and autonomy and control or guidance of others is often required.	Apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories; access and analyse information independently and make reasoned judgements, selecting from a considerable choice of procedures, in familiar and unfamiliar contexts; and direct own activities; with some responsibility for the output of others.
<b>4</b>	Attainment in a broad range of complex contexts, showing strong analytical and critical skills, the ability to think creatively, see relationships, and apply abstract concepts and theory to new situations.		Develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base. Employ a range of specialised skills; evaluate information using it to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems; and operate in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs.
<b>5</b>	Attainment in a wide and often unpredictable variety of complex contexts, showing substantial autonomy in analysis, diagnosis, design, planning, execution and evaluation.		Generate ideas through the analysis of concepts at an abstract level, with a command of specialised skills and the formulations of responses to well defines and abstract problems. Analyse and evaluate information. Exercise significant judgement across a broad range of functions; and accept responsibility for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.

<b>Level</b>	<b>QCA NQF</b>	<b>S/NVQ</b>	<b>NICATS</b>
<b>6</b>			Critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, utilising specialised skills across an area of study. Critically evaluate new concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations and accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
<b>7</b>			Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, employing advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for related decision making including use of supervision.
<b>8</b>			Make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry demonstrating a command of methodological issues and engaging in critical dialogue with peers; accepting full responsibility for outcomes.

**Key:**

**QCA NQF**  
**S/NVQ**  
**NICATS**

Qualifications & Curriculum Authority National Qualifications Framework  
Scottish and National Vocational Qualifications  
Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System

## 7. Help and Support

For further information and help contact:

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