

# Introduce a network of Toy Libraries around Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 18 Tachwedd 2024  
Petitions Committee | 18 November 2024

Reference: SR24/10008

**Petition Number:** P-06-1485

**Petition title:** Introduce a network of Toy Libraries around Wales

**Text of petition:** Children's toys can be expensive, are often used only for a short time, can add to the clutter in homes and often end up thrown away, even if they aren't broken.

Toy libraries are an established way of helping provide access to lots of toys that children might otherwise not encounter due to cost or even space limitations at home. They offer cost-effective alternatives to buying new toys, can act as community hubs to bring parents and carers together and can help reduce our use of resources.

Parents and carers spend on average around £300 on toys every year. Lots of these are made from plastic. With most plastic being made from oil, it is estimated that unless we do something about it, by 2050, plastic could account for around 20% of all global oil consumption.

Toy libraries have their part to play in reducing waste, reducing plastic use, reducing climate emissions and also saving parents, carers and families money. They would help deliver on Welsh Government's focus on a child's 'right to play' and the 'circular economy'.

We ask that Welsh Government work with all relevant groups in Wales to introduce a nationwide network of toy libraries.



## 1. Background

The first toy libraries opened in the 1960s and 1970s to support families of children with special educational needs. Since then, they have expanded to serve broader communities.

Research in 2007 by the National Foundation for Educational Research, [a treasure chest of service: The role of toy libraries within Play Policy in Wales](#) found that as well as toy and resource loaning to children, families and childcare providers, toy libraries can provide family support services and specialist support to families with children with special educational needs. These included:

- providing and encouraging creative play opportunities for all children, regardless of ability;
- supporting families and providers; and
- overcoming disadvantage caused by poverty and lack of opportunity.

## 2. Welsh Government action

Under the provisions of the [Children and Families \(Wales\) Measure 2010](#), local authorities have a duty to provide sufficient play opportunities for children living in their areas and to provide local people with information about what is available.

In July 2014, the Welsh Government published [Wales: A Play Friendly Country](#). This statutory guidance to local authorities sets out how they should assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas. The Minister for Children and Social Care's letter to the Committee states that this guidance is currently being 'refreshed'. Local authorities must undertake a Play Sufficiency Assessment every three years, the next of which is due to be submitted to the Welsh Government in June 2025. Local authorities determine their own priorities for securing sufficient play opportunities within a Play Action Plan in line with their sufficiency assessment.

The Minister's letter sets out the sources of funding available to local authorities through the Children and Communities Grant. This funding can be used for local authorities to work with partners to provide play resources.

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