



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

---

## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

---

**TITLE**            **Update on the Ministerial Play Review**

**DATE**            **09 January 2020**

**BY**                **Julie Morgan AM, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services**

The Welsh Government places great value on play and its importance in the lives of children in our society. Children have a fundamental right to be able to play and it is central to their enjoyment of life and contributes to their health, well-being and development.

In November, we marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which first set out the right to play in Article 31. Wales is rightly proud that it is the first country in the World to have enshrined that right into law. On this anniversary, it is important we continue to recognise both that unique right, and the contribution it can make to many of our wider services. That is why I have decided to take forward a Ministerial Play Review.

There have been a number of key legislative changes since we last reviewed play policy in 2014 with the publication of *Wales: A Play Friendly Country*. We are also all aware how the pace of life is increasing for children as well as adults. Pressures around education and formal activities mean children are busier than ever. The draw of digital recreation is high with the availability of laptops, tablets and smart phones. It is therefore more important than ever that we make sure children have the time and space to be children – to create, imagine, and to play.

The aim of the review is therefore to assess where we are now with respect to play policy and to inform how we develop and progress the play agenda in future years. The review will consider the progress made in achieving our vision for play and whether our vision remains relevant. It will set out the steps that need to be taken to progress the play agenda in order to achieve the vision.

A Steering Group has been set up to support the review involving key organisations from across the playwork sector and policy officials from across the Welsh Government. The Steering Group met in October 2019 to start setting out the issues relating to play and initial options.

We have also identified the following areas we need to consider further:

### **Settings Registration / Regulation / Exceptions**

We need to look at the registration and regulation of playwork settings, including the exceptions. We will look at models from across the UK and further afield to see what we can learn.

### **Play Sufficiency Duty, Funding and Cross Policy Working**

The 2019 Local Authority Play Sufficiency Assessments show good progress is being made despite funding and staff capacity issues. There continues to be partnership working and collaboration across departments and policy areas, but there is more to do at a local and central level. That is why we have representatives from health, planning, education, transport, housing, sports and recreation involved in this work.

I have also agreed to look again at funding arrangements as a part of this review, though given the wider financial position, I am not able to make commitments or promises ahead of the review's findings.

### **The Workforce**

With time for impromptu play decreasing, staffed play provision is becoming even more important. We need to support this valuable workforce to meet its full potential. We will look at options around training and qualifications, as well as professionalising the workforce.

### **Spatial Justice and Societal Involvement**

We need to make sure our environment and our society encourages and welcomes play. We need to look at how we can build on the wonderful play campaigns already running in Wales, like Playful Childhoods, to make sure all adults understand and value the importance of play.

While these are all very important areas to achieving a national approach to play, we cannot forget the views of children and young people themselves. We are working with Young Wales to involve children and young people in the review, and their role will be vital in ensuring our future vision, aims and actions truly deliver play opportunities for all.

I plan to consult on any changes to play policy recommended by the review in 2020.