

Where are you?  Ble wyt ti?

The 2008 Play Wales Workforce Survey

November 2008

melyn
Consulting

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Playwork as a qualified and trained profession is relatively new as are many of the structures now in place to develop a quality workforce. Key policy drivers - including the Welsh Assembly Government's *Play Strategy* published in 2006, the *Children & Young Peoples Workforce Strategy for Wales* and local authority *Children & Young People's Single Plans*, - all put a focus on building a qualified and competent professional workforce that meets the needs of children and young people.
- 1.2 In May 2008, Melyn Consulting Ltd. was commissioned to undertake research into the play workforce in Wales, which took place over the period June to October 2008.

Research Aims

- 1.3 To enable workforce development to take place, it is crucial that there is a good understanding of those working in play across Wales. The overall aim of this research has been to gather labour market information that will help the development of workforce strategy at a national and local level and drive up skills in the profession. In addition, the information will enable *Play Wales* and the *National Centre for Playwork* to plan workforce strategy and develop programmes of work focused on the needs of the sector.

Objectives

- 1.4 This is the first time that an attempt has been made at a systematic examination of those working in play in Wales. In undertaking the research, we have aimed to meet the following objectives:
 - Conduct in depth research to support workforce development
 - Investigate the skills and knowledge shortages and gaps and make recommendations on ways to overcome these.
 - Determine the supply and demand for training provision by level and type in Wales
 - Determine the awareness of opportunities for people to become involved in training
 - Provide evidence that will encourage playwork employers to invest more in training.

Methodology

- 1.5 Within this project, a number of activities took place that were designed to meet the aims and objectives.

Research design:

- 1.6 The main method for gathering information about the play workforce in Wales was through a questionnaire. This was designed to gather the critical information required without being too lengthy so as to maximise responses. The survey was tested amongst a small sample of playworkers before being published bilingually in both paper-format and through an online form on a website constructed for the purpose.
- 1.7 7,000 paper copies of the survey were distributed during July 2008 to individuals and organisations known to *Play Wales*; and via a direct mailing of out of school clubs from a list supplied by *Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs*. A Freepost address was made available to encourage responses. In addition, the website was publicised via direct emails from *Play Wales*; in newsletters; and via links from other sites. The website remained open for responses until 31st October 2008.
- 1.8 As well as the paper-survey, in-depth telephone interviews were made with a sample of 30 playworkers. These were chosen to reflect opinions across Wales; from those working in different types of setting; and in differing roles in play.

Playworkers

- 1.9 The term playworker has been used throughout to denote a person who uses play as part of their work or volunteering activity; or they manage or coordinate play. Anyone who considered themselves to be a playworker was invited to respond to the survey, which in part is useful in identifying how people working in play actually define themselves.

Sample and Response Rate

- 1.10 Based on the 2006 Care Council for Wales research, it was estimated that there were likely to be over 5,000 playworkers in Wales. A statistically significant sample of this population would therefore require 357 survey responses from Playworkers to achieve a 95% confidence level with an interval of +/-5. In total, we received 453 unique responses¹. Of these, 107 (24%) came through the website with the remainder being returned by post representing a return-rate of 5% of all those paper surveys sent out. If the estimated population of playworkers is correct, the sample received represents 9.06% of the workforce. Statistically this is significant. The responses received mean that

¹ Survey responses were filtered for duplicates

we can be 95% sure that they would reflect the whole population of playworkers. In addition, the margin for error (the confidence interval) for the responses to any one question is less than 2.5. For example, the survey showed that 78% of playworkers in Wales are female. The sample size means that we can be 95% sure that this is true with a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$ that could make the figure as low as 75.5% or as high as 80.5%.

Research with Employers:

- 1.11 In addition to the playworker survey, a separate form was sent to each employer / organisation to gather specific information around recruitment, retention and training issues. In total, 53 responses were received.

Research with Training Providers

- 1.12 A small-scale telephone survey of training providers was undertaken to ascertain the availability of play training across Wales in both the maintained and non-maintained sectors.

Analysis

- 1.13 Responses to the survey were analysed by postcode using the 2007 National Statistics Postcode Directory and allocated to one of the 12 local authority areas. In addition, some analysis has been made by region split as follows:
- **South Wales** (Cardiff, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Vale of Glamorgan, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea)
 - **South East Wales** (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen)
 - **West Wales** (Carmarthen, Pembrokeshire)
 - **Mid Wales** (Ceredigion, Powys)
 - **North West Wales** (Conwy, Gwynedd, Ynys Mon)
 - **North East Wales** (Flintshire, Denbighshire, Wrexham)
- 1.14 The following charts show the number of responses received from each local authority and region in Wales:

Figure 1: Survey Responses by local authority of residence (n=447)

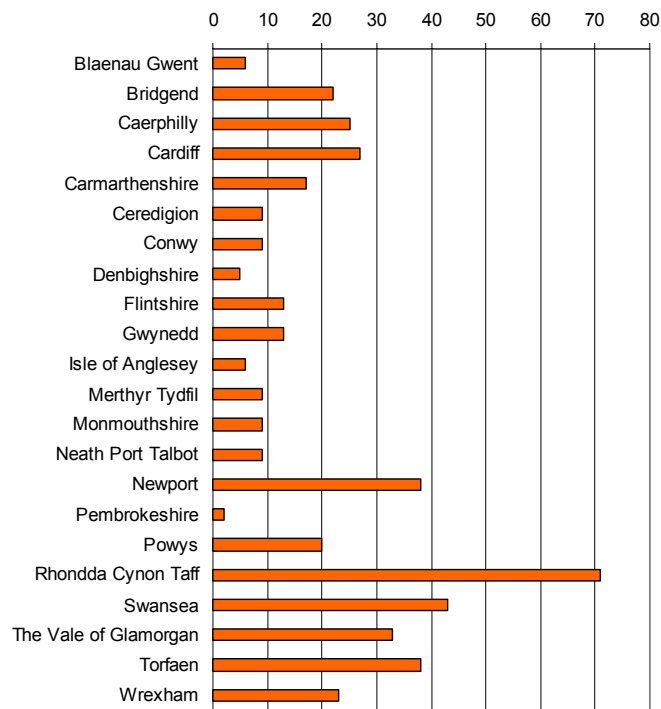
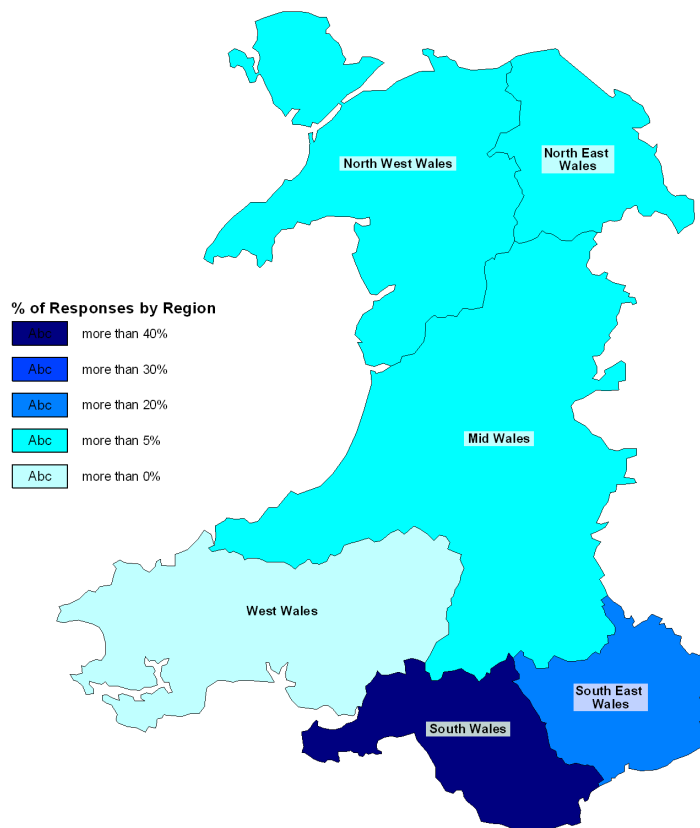


Figure 2: % Survey Responses by region of residence (n=447)



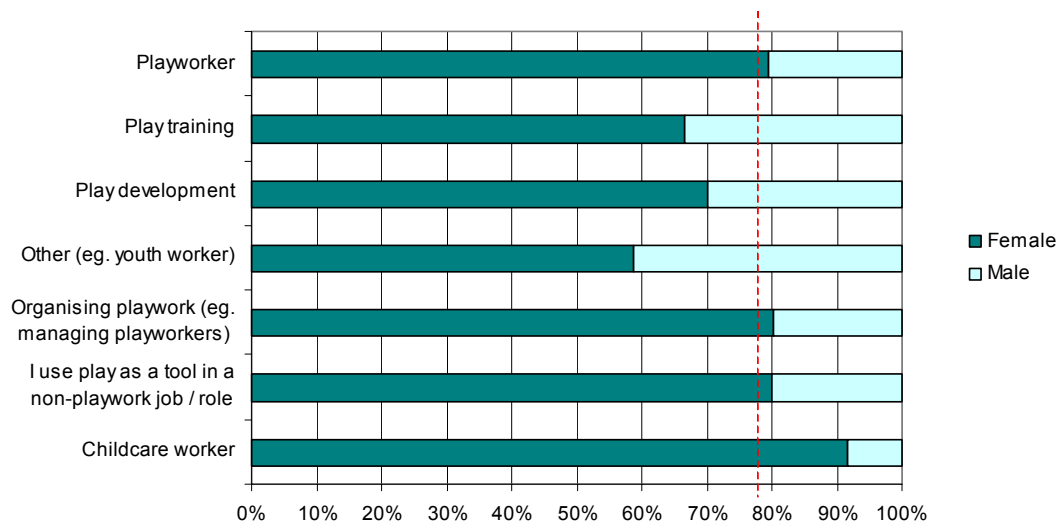
2. People who do Playwork

2.1 The 2008 survey asked those involved in play in Wales a range of questions about themselves. Information regarding the demographic profile of the workforce is important in examining issues of balance and representation across the sector and in the long-term study of recruitment to the workforce.

Gender

2.3 People working in play are predominantly female making up 78% of those responding to the survey. Unsurprisingly, there are a greater proportion of men working in play outside of childcare, and particularly in play training and play development

Figure 3: Gender balance according to role (n=453)



2.5 The proportion of men working in play in the private sector was lower (17%) than for those working in the voluntary sector (23%) or for local authorities (21%). Men (64%) were more likely than women (54%) to be working full-time in the play sector while more men (57%) had jobs all-year-round as opposed to the majority of women who worked either term-time-only or just in school holidays.

2.6 Women in play tended to have achieved lower levels of education than men. For 57% of women, level 3 was the highest qualification they had achieved. For men, 57% had achieved level 4 or above, with 46% of men having a level 6 qualification as opposed to only 24% of women.

Figure 4: Highest educational qualification held by female playworkers (n=379)

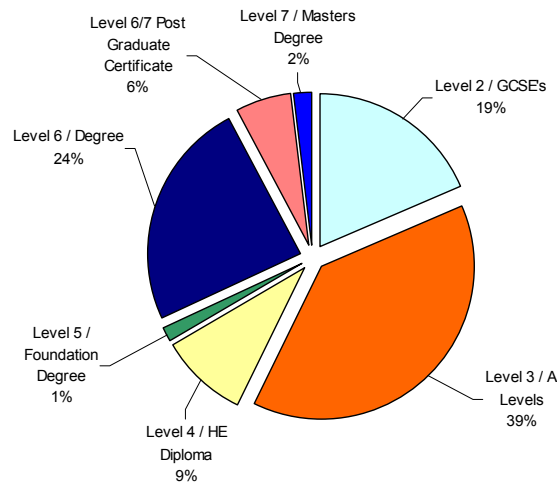
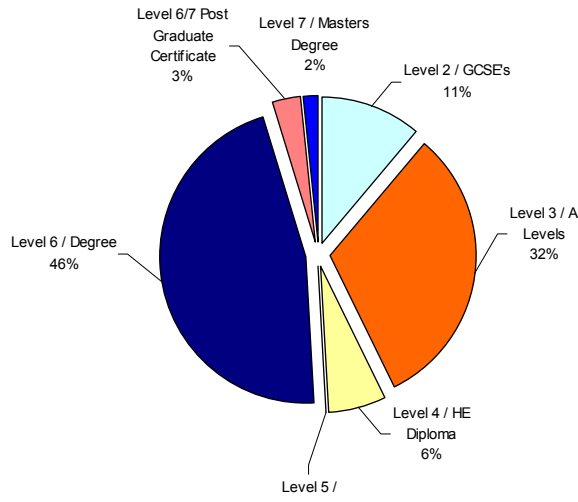


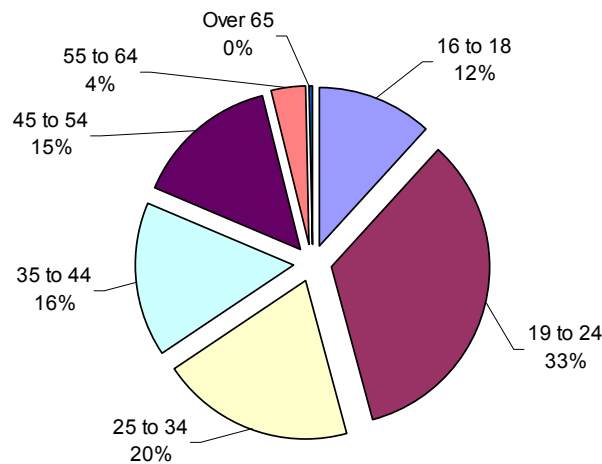
Figure 5: Highest educational qualification held by male playworkers (n=106)



Age

2.7 Playworkers were asked to identify which broad age bracket they belonged within. The workforce is a fairly youthful one with over half aged between 19 and 34 years. Less than 20% are over 44 years of age with only one playworker responding to the survey that was over 65 years.

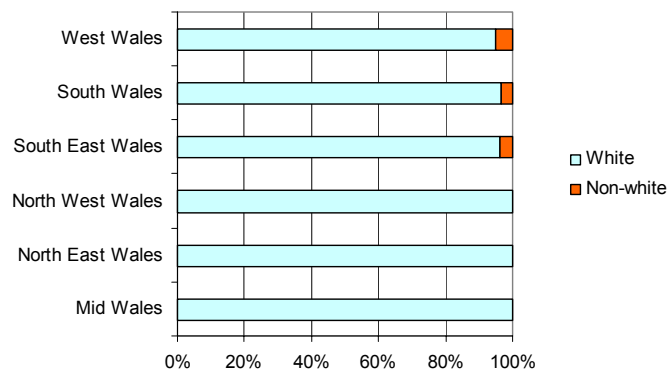
Figure 6: Age profile of playworkers (n=449)



Ethnicity

2.8 Survey respondents were asked to describe their ethnic origins. Results found that the play workforce in Wales is 97% white with black and Asian workers making up 3% of the workforce. This is broadly in line with the population of Wales as a whole. People categorising themselves as ‘White British’ made up 94% of the cohort leaving 3% being ‘White Irish’ or ‘White Other’. By region, non-white playworkers were recorded only in West, South East and South Wales.

Figure 7: Proportion of white and minority ethnic playworkers (n=440)



Disability

2.9 Out of the 453 people responding to the survey, only 7 considered themselves to be disabled, representing 1.5% of the workforce. Of these, six were working directly with children as playworkers and were living in areas across Wales.

3. Play Work

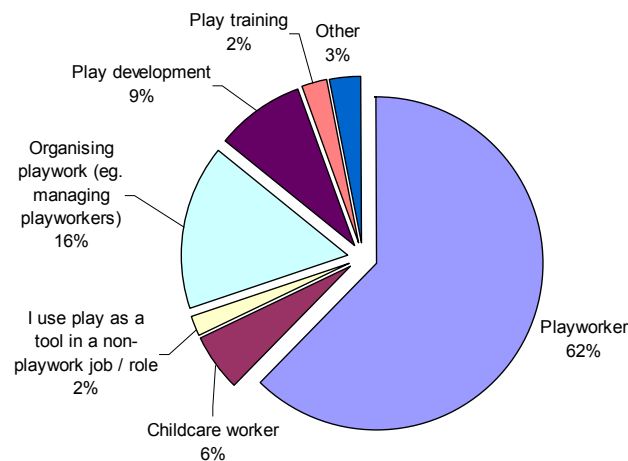
3.1 Play as an emerging profession contains people working in a wide variety of roles, in differing positions of responsibility and in a range of settings. The aim of the 2008 Survey was to capture this diversity so as to develop a clearer picture of the workforce.

Playwork Roles

3.2 To provide a comparative analysis of the general roles undertaken by those involved in play, respondents to the survey were asked to describe their job or volunteering under a number of broad headings.

3.3 Of the 451 people who responded to this issue, the majority (62%) described themselves as Playworkers. Of the remainder, nearly a quarter were managers of other playworkers or were involved in play development.

Figure 8: Playwork roles (n=451)



3.4 Within the 3% of people who categorised themselves as ‘Other’ were those involved in the administration of play settings, strategic management, youth work and information services. While some of these people would not usually be included within a definition of playwork, their willingness to participate in the survey suggests that they have a sense of belonging to the play sector.

Job Titles

3.5 People responding to the survey listed a total of 168 different job titles. By far the most common job was ‘Playworker’ followed by ‘Senior Playworker’ and ‘Playleader’. The range of jobs that people involved in play have, reflects the diversity of play provision and the range of ways in which play is used in other non-play-specific fields. This includes community development, therapeutic services, education, libraries, sports, arts and childcare. A full list of the job titles given by respondents is included in *Appendix 1*.

Employment

- 3.6 Almost half of all those working in play in Wales are employed within the public sector. Most of these people work for local authorities (42%) and around half of those working for Councils are employed only during the school holidays. A quarter of local authority play staff are full-time employees and are more likely to be involved in management and play development.
- 3.7 The voluntary sector employs over a third of playworkers in Wales. Those working in this sector are more likely to be employed on a full-time basis and are most likely to be involved in direct delivery of play.

Figure 9: Types of organisations that employ playworkers (n=451)

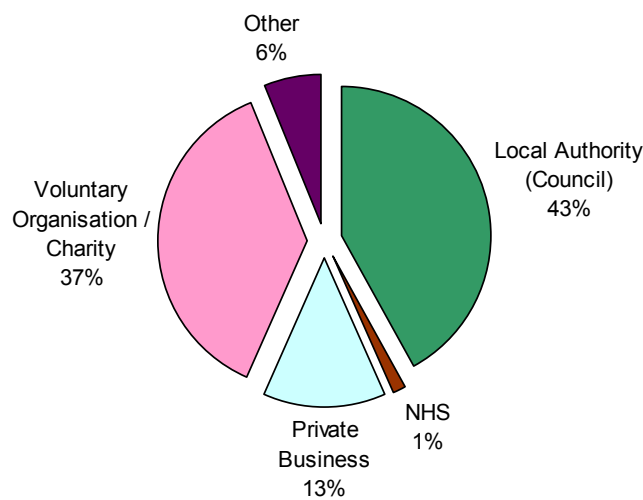


Figure 10: Types of organisations that employ playworkers by region (n=451)

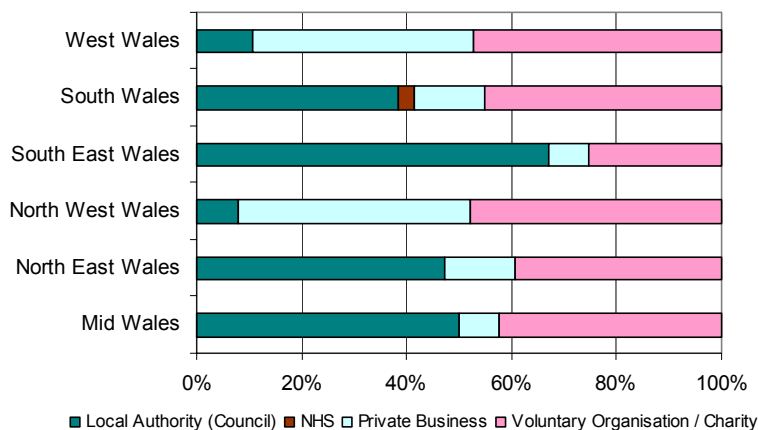
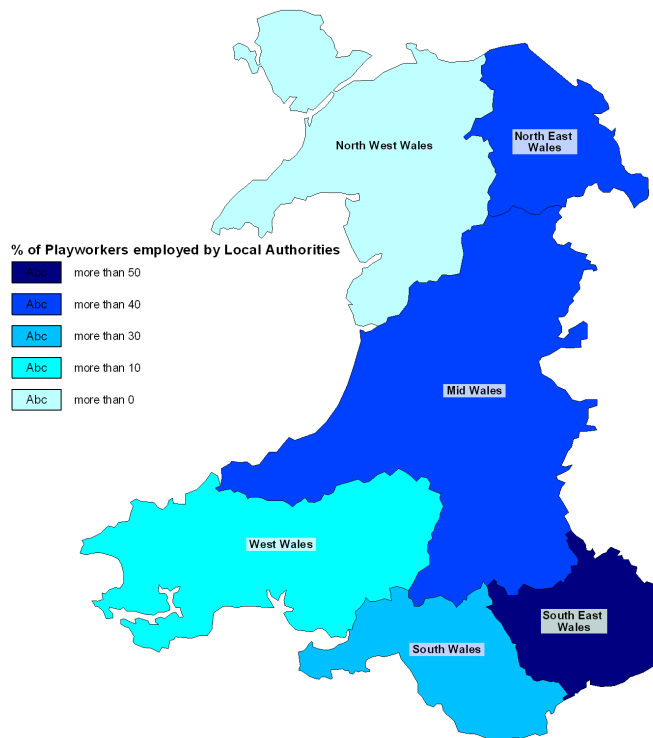


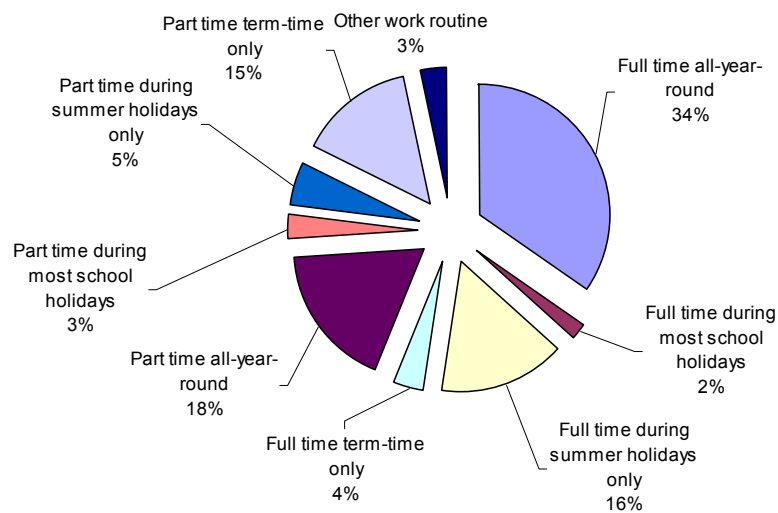
Figure 11: Proportion of Playworkers employed by Local Authorities



Employment Terms

3.8 Because play is generally delivered at the times when children are not in school, the employment terms of most playworkers fit around this imperative. Respondents to the survey were asked to choose from a range of common working permutations that accounted for full-time and part-time working as well as those employed only or mainly during school holidays.

Figure 12: Usual work routines of playworkers (n=453)



- 3.9 While full-time working represented the most common working pattern amongst playworkers, only a third work all-year-round on a full time basis. A quarter of playworkers only work during school holidays, while a further 18% work only during term-time.
- 3.10 Asking similar questions of employers we found that over a quarter of people working in play were employed for less than 12 weeks each year.

Working week

- 3.11 On average, people working in play spend 24 hours per week on play or play-related activities. Those involved in play development work the highest number of hours at an average of 31 hours per week. People who manage playworkers, play trainers and childcare workers all spend on average around 27 hours working on play each week. Those describing themselves as playworkers spent on average 22 hours working each week. Unsurprisingly, people who use play as a tool in a non-playwork role spend the least amount of time, at an average of 20 hours per week.
- 3.12 NHS playworkers work the longest hours – averaging 35 hours per week. Local authority employees work on play for 26 hours; private sector workers for 24 hours; and voluntary sector workers for 22 hours each week.
- 3.13 People working on holiday schemes generally work longer hours (on average 27 hours each week) than those working either all-year round (23 hours) or term-time only (16 hours per week).

Other Employment

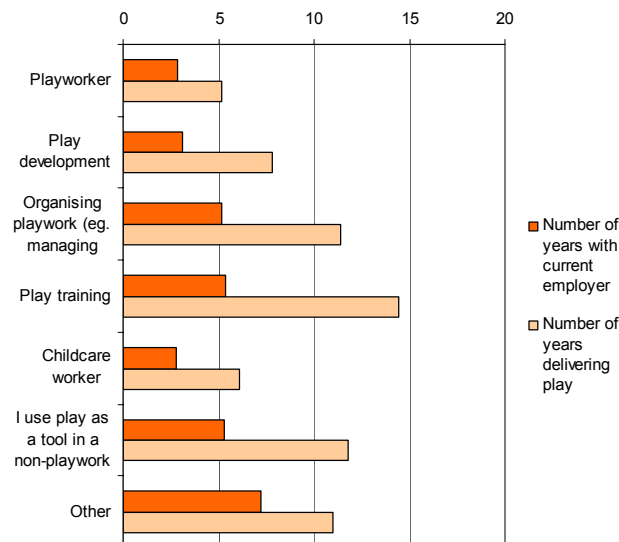
- 3.14 Because of the seasonal and part-time nature of many playwork jobs, those working in play often have other employment. 42% of those responding to the survey said that they had another job besides their playwork role. Most commonly, those who described themselves as playworkers were those most likely to have another job (49%), followed by those who organise or manage playwork (43%). Those least likely to have additional employment were those working in play development (15%) and childcare (20%).
- 3.15 The range of alternative employment that playworkers have is incredibly diverse. While many alternative roles are related – such as student, youth worker or teacher – play in Wales is also delivered by farmers, waiters, shopkeepers, cooks, cleaners, barmaids and librarians. A full list of employment is included as *Appendix 2*.
- 3.16 Given that the workforce; is mainly female; that nearly half of those involved in play have another job; and many work part-time or seasonally; it is not surprising to discover that playwork provides the main household income for only 37% of workers. People working in play development are most likely (75%

of workers) to gain their main income from playwork alongside play trainers (70%). For those who described themselves primarily as playworkers, the figure is only 27%. Childcare workers are more likely to make a living from play with 42% saying that it was their main income.

Length of Service

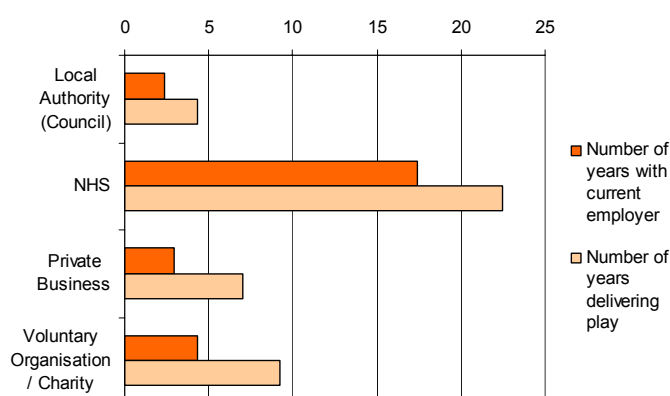
3.17 People working in play were asked both how long they had been working with their current employer and how long they had been involved in delivering play. The average length of service with current employers was 4 years six months. However, this disguises both the large number of people with very short periods of service (31% had been employed for less than 1 year) and those with some very long service periods (22% had been in post for more than 5 years).

Figure 13: Average length of service and experience by role in play (n=407)



3.18 The average length of time that people had been involved in delivering or facilitating play was just over 9 ½ years. Less than 15% of people were completely new to play (ie. having less than 1 year’s experience) while 43% had over 5 years experience. Of all those responding to the survey, 19% had been involved in play for over 10 years and two people had over 40 years experience. While those with greater experience were more likely to be managing others, a third of people with over 20 years experience were still working as playworkers.

3.19 Placing aside the small number of people working in the NHS (where the average length of service was 17 years!) those working in the voluntary sector had the longest lengths of service and greatest experience of working in play.

Figure 14: Average length of service and experience by employer (n=408)

Pay Rates

3.20 The average hourly pay rate for all roles in the sector was found to be £6.85 per hour. This was 34% below the average hourly wage for workers in Wales² of £10.40 per hour and only 24% above the national minimum wage.

3.21 Taking account of the kinds of roles people had, those working as *playworkers* received the lowest wages while *play development workers* were most likely to be on relatively high annual salaries. By type of employer, people working for private businesses were paid least while those working in the maintained sector had the highest rates of pay.

Figure 15: Average pay rates by role (n=139)

Organisation Type	Average Pay	Non-playwork job / role	Organising playwork	Play development	Playworker
Charity/Voluntary Organisation	£6.89	£7.32	£7.51	£13.91	£6.60
Local Authority	£8.09	n/a	£8.06	£11.64	£7.04
Private Business	£6.25	£6.20	£6.55	n/a	£6.14
All Types	£6.85	£7.04	£7.23	£12.21	£6.51

Staff Turnover

3.22 Information from employers responding to the survey showed that turnover of workers in the sector was 25% in 2007-2008. Due to a large number of staff working seasonally, local authorities had the highest turnover rate, with nearly 60% of play staff being recruited each year. Private businesses (mainly out of school clubs and some daycare providers) turned over 27% of their staff while voluntary sector employers had the lowest turnover at 18%.

3.23 Taking into account the number of play staff who had left employers, alongside the number being employed, the workforce grew by an estimated 12% in 2008.

² ONS annual survey of hours and earnings - resident analysis 2007

Local authorities said that they had seen the largest growth with 33% more staff being employed in 2008 than in 2007. The private sector saw the lowest rate of growth at just 4% and voluntary organisations said that their numbers had increased by 10%.

Recruitment

3.24 Of the 53 employers responding to the survey 85% had recruited at least one member of staff in the 12 months to July 2008. The majority of those responding (58%) said that they found it difficult to recruit the play staff that they needed and a further 23% said that it was hard. Private sector employers found it most difficult to recruit. This is perhaps due to the lower wages that are offered to workers in this sector.

3.25 Many employers said that the working hours and conditions often associated with playwork jobs made recruitment of staff difficult.

Very difficult to recruit suitably experienced or qualified play workers. Staff turnover is high as sessions are held after school which limits who is able to apply. Many are young people either in f/t education or working in schools who see the jobs as a 'stop-gap' or 'stepping stone'.

3.26 A lack of training was a further factor that made it difficult for employers to find suitably qualified staff. This seemed to be particularly difficult amongst out of school childcare employers where regulatory requirements mean that half of all staff must be qualified to level 3.

3.27 Other issues included problems recruiting Welsh speaking staff and difficulty in recruiting because of low wages. A full list of comments is included in *Appendix 3*.

Perceptions of Playwork

3.28 A small sample of people working in play were asked in detail about their roles and their views of playwork as a profession. All those interviewed had positive things to say with the rewarding nature of the work clearly being the most attractive element.

The best thing about working in play is....

"It's great interacting with kids."

"Taking children out of their normal environment and allowing them to build dens & tools, make fires etc."

"Very committed individuals involved."

"Easy to get enthusiastic – can see the value."

"The response from children – especially those with special needs. A lot of children don't know how to play these days."

“Children’s ideas – they can decide what they want to do themselves”

“It’s fun – outdoors and messy.”

“Seeing the development and progress of young people”

“Seeing the enjoyment of children and the interaction with their parents” (scheme to place volunteers with families)

“I can relate [playwork activities] to my own childhood – and to experiences denied to children these days”

3.29 Many people said that it was especially rewarding seeing the positive impact that play has on the lives of children.

3.30 Comments regarding the negative aspects of playwork fell under a number of general headings. Firstly, a lack of awareness and understanding of play from other professionals means that it is difficult to advocate the benefits of play. It was felt that low pay puts off some people from becoming playworkers as do the unsociable hours – particularly for those with children. The demanding nature of the work was the issue that most people commented on with many saying that the best bit of playwork – making an impact on children’s lives – was also the hardest in terms of having to deal with challenging behaviour, social deprivation and children’s personal issues.

3.31 In general, people felt that lottery funding would make a difference to future of playwork as a profession with more people being recruited and more career prospects. Some people had some very strong feelings about how playwork should move forwards.

“There needs to be better promotion for playwork. Need to focus on training up those with childcare qualifications.”

“Out of school clubs are not necessarily relevant environments for playwork – need natural open environment.”

“Need to make people more aware of the importance of play.”

“We need to highlight the difference between play and destructive behaviour – eg with lighting fires etc.”

I would like to see research results looking into the impact of playwork and I would like to see men to be encouraged to go into early years playwork – female dominated area of work.

“Playwork is not seen to be as important as early years work. CSSIW will accept early years as qual for playwork (which is not adequate), so these employees need to do an additional qualification in playwork. There is no stick, so there has to be a carrot to entice people to undertake this training - suggests that this should be heavily subsidised for the next 5 years, and preferably become a requirement.”

“There is a lack of understanding as to the importance of providing good quality play. I hope that lottery funding success will make the council understand the importance of this area of work.”

“Need to develop adventure play – not many roles out there.”

- 3.32 Promoting play amongst other people in the children and young people's workforce was seen as important. Playworkers recognised that many in related fields –such as youth work, sports, uniformed groups, and church groups - were using play in their work but without clear links to playwork principles and without access to play training.

“They [sports development officers] are not really aware of what playwork is and how they could use it.”

Sports Development Manager

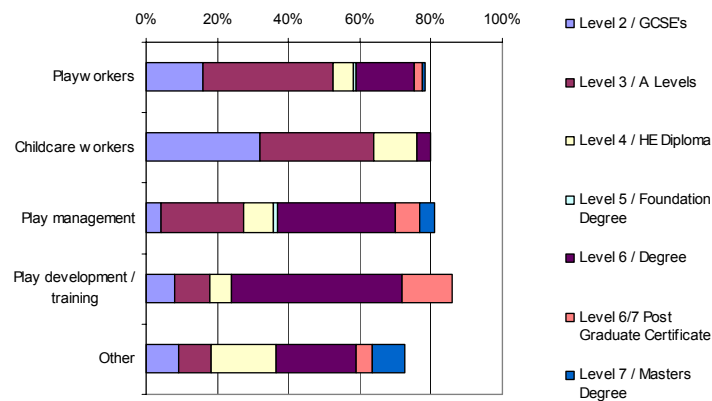
4. Qualifications

4.1 Information about the existing qualifications held by practitioners is important in both assessing the current and future development needs of the workforce.

Levels of Education

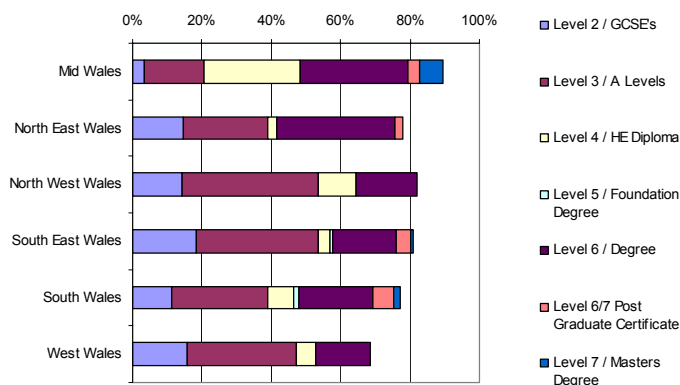
4.2 People surveyed were asked to identify the highest level of education that they had achieved in life. This was set out using the *Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales* levels. Relative to the population as a whole, people working in play are more highly educated with; 86% being qualified at Level 2 or above (65% in Wales as a whole³); 71% educated to Level 3 or above (47% in Wales); and 39% with a Level 4 qualification or higher (27% in Wales).

Figure 16: General qualification levels by role (n=415)



4.3 There were differences in educational attainment by the roles that people had in play with a trend towards people having a higher educational level in development or management roles. By region, there were some differences in educational attainment but differences in sample sizes and workforce profiles limit the validity of these findings.

Figure 17: General qualification levels by region (n=447)

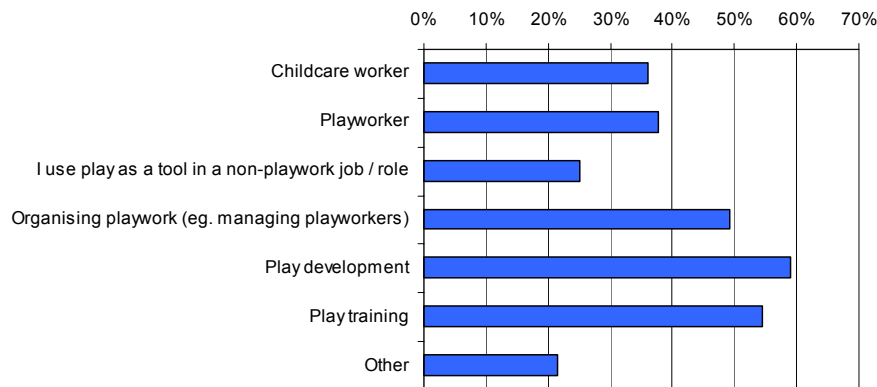


³ Office for National Statistics December 2007 Qualification levels of working age adults by UK country and region

Play Qualifications

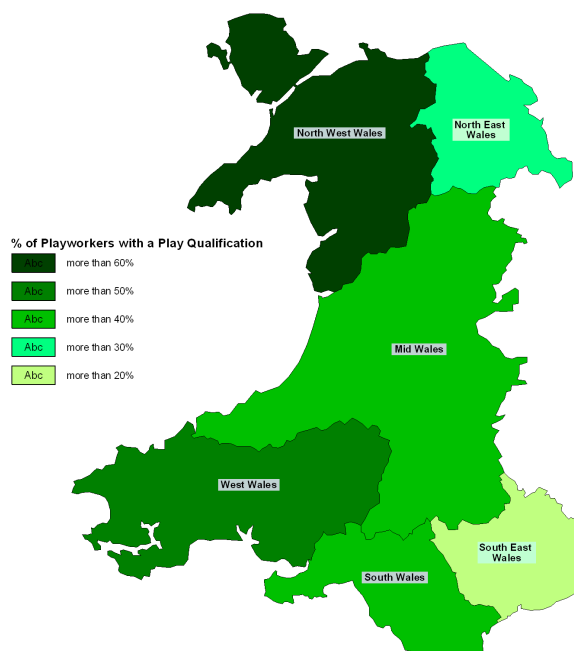
4.4 People working in play were also asked whether or not they held a playwork qualification. In total, 41% of respondents said that they held a recognised playwork qualification⁴. Those working in play development and play training were most likely to hold a qualification while those who worked in other roles but used play were least likely to be qualified in play.

Figure 18: Proportion of people holding a playwork qualification by role (n=447)



4.5 Taking only those who defined themselves as ‘playworkers’ (to ensure a like-for-like comparison across the Welsh regions) the North West stands out as having the highest proportion of qualified playworkers, while South East Wales has the lowest rate of qualified practitioners.

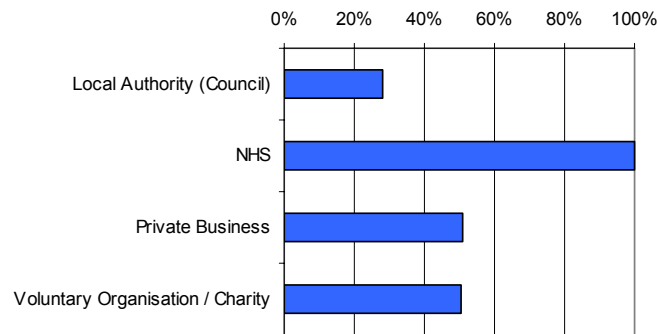
Figure 19: Proportion of playworkers holding a playwork qualification by region (n=276)



⁴ Of these, a proportion held qualifications that enabled them (for regulatory purposes) to work in a play setting (eg. NNEB) but from the information provided it was clear that they did not hold a specific play qualification.

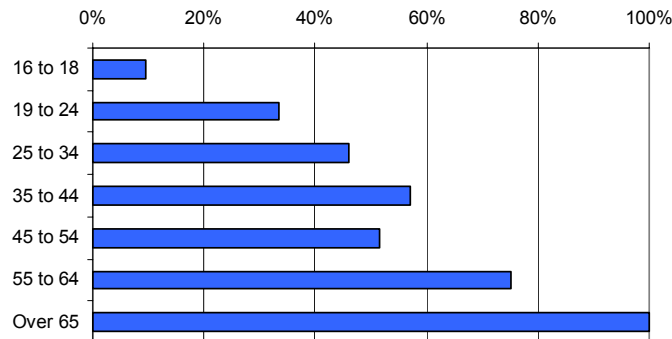
4.6 Set against the type of employer, the NHS has a highly qualified workforce (although numbers are small) compared with local authorities where only a quarter of people responding to the survey held a playwork qualification.

Figure 20: Proportion of people holding a playwork qualification by employer (n=425)



4.7 By age, it is unsurprising that as people get older, they gain qualifications - as shown below. This data also correlates with the information on length of service showing that people are often recruited into play at a young age and retained in the workforce, gaining qualifications as they develop.

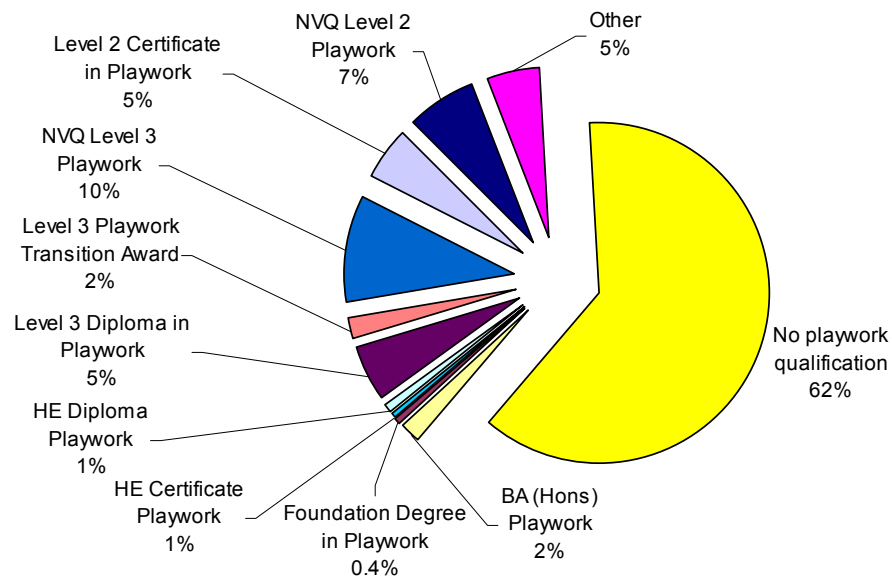
Figure 21: Proportion of people holding a playwork qualification by age (n=447)



4.8 People working in play were asked to identify the highest specific playwork qualification that they held.

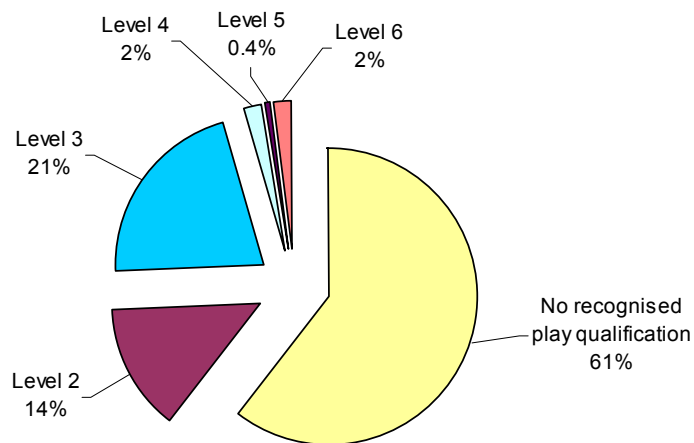
4.9 Overall, around 40% of those responding to the survey identified a recognised play qualification that they held. The most common qualification held was found to be the NVQ Level 3 Playwork held by 10% of those involved in play in Wales.

Figure 22: Playwork qualifications held by people involved in play (n=453)



4.10 Categorising play qualifications by the 8 levels set out in the *Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales*, it can be seen that the largest proportion (21% of all those responding to the survey) held a Level 3 qualification such as the NVQ Level 3 Playwork or Level 3 Transition Award.

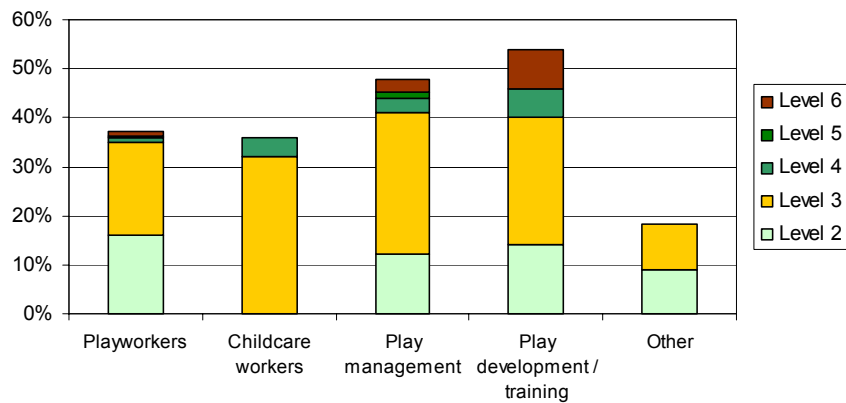
Figure 23: Playwork qualification levels held by people involved in play (n=453)⁵



4.11 Relating play qualifications to the roles held by survey respondents clearly shows the proportion of qualified practitioners in each role and the level of qualifications held with senior practitioners having a higher portion and higher level of qualifications.

⁵ A small number of those responding had attended a play training course such as 'Take 5 for Play' and assumed a qualification. Others with higher qualifications – such as a teaching degree – also made the assumption that they held a playwork qualification. These have not been included in the data resulting in a small disparity between figures in 4.2 and Figures 18 and 19.

Figure 24: Playwork qualifications by practitioner role and level (n=451)



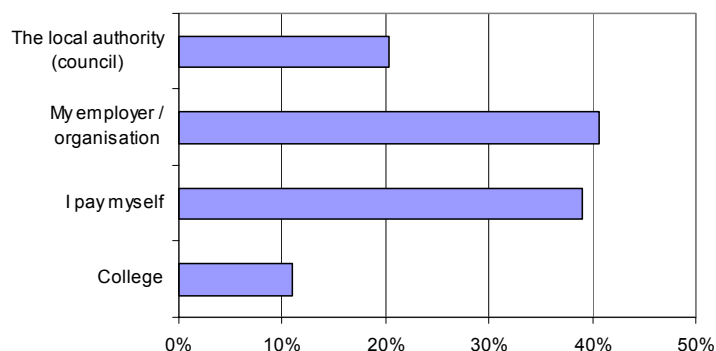
4.12 People with play qualifications have generally gained them recently. 71% had gained their most recent qualification within the past 5 years and only 14% had studied more than 10 years ago.

Working towards

4.13 17% of those surveyed said that they were currently working towards a playwork qualification. Of these, half were studying towards a level 2 qualification such as the NVQ Level 2 Playwork or the Level 2 Certificate in Playwork. 30% were working towards a level 3 qualification – primarily NVQ Level 3 Playwork – and a small proportion were studying for higher level qualifications up to degree and masters level.

4.14 Less than half of qualifications being taken by those working in play were being funded by employers with over a third of people paying for training themselves.

Figure 25: Funding for playwork qualifications



Related Qualifications

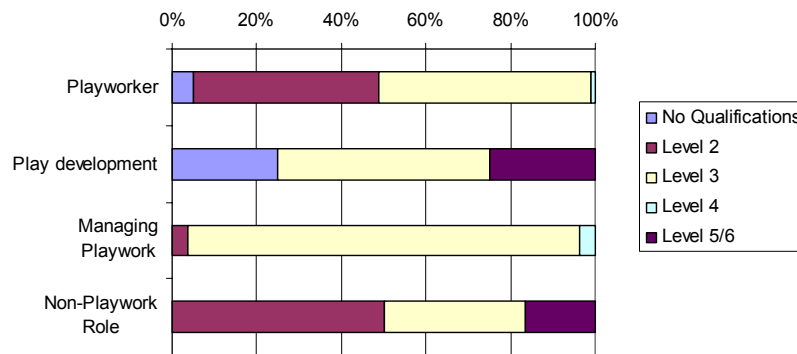
4.15 While only around 40% of people working in play had a playwork qualification, of those who did not, 25% said that they had a related qualification. These included qualifications in sports development; youth & community work; early

childhood education, primary education; early years childcare and education; and arts.

Qualification Requirements

4.16 Employers who responded to the survey were asked to identify the roles in which they employed staff and the qualifications that they required for each role. Out of the 139 playwork or related roles described, over half required a Level 3 qualification – mainly in Playwork. For people engaged in playwork, 42% of employers were looking for a Level 3 qualification and 48% for a Level 3. For senior playwork roles and for managers, most employers were still looking for a Level 3 qualification.

Figure 26: Qualifications required by employers by job role



5. Training

5.1 Training provides the basis for continuing professional development (CPD) but to ensure that CPD is able to meet the need of the workforce it is important to understand the current situation in regards to the quantity, quality and accessibility of training and development opportunities.

Playwork Training

5.2 Out of 363 people involved in play who responded, 58% had undertaken some specific playwork training over the previous 2 years. Those involved directly in delivering, organising or supporting play were most likely to have undertaken training, while those who only use play as a part of a wider role were least likely. By region, those in South-East, South and North-East Wales were those most likely to have received play training.

Figure 27: Proportion of people that had undertaken playwork training over last 2 years by role (n=363)

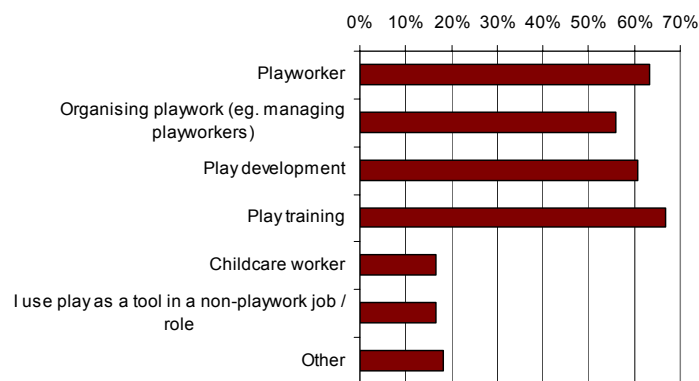
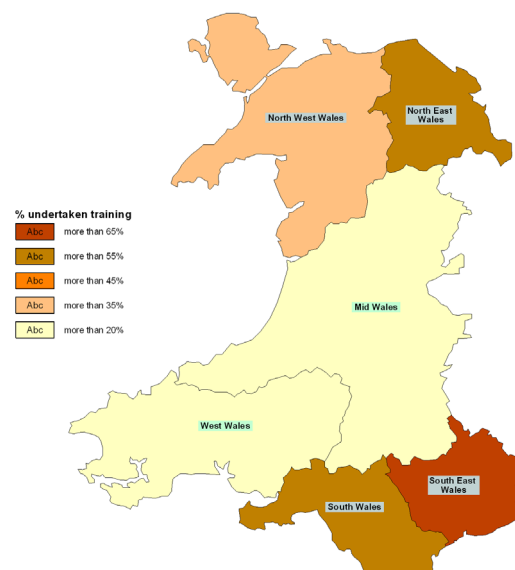
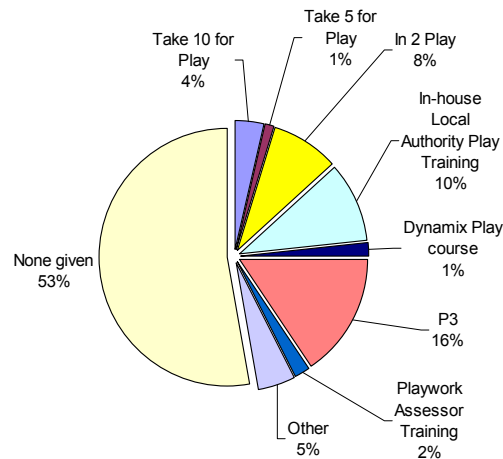


Figure 28: Proportion of people that undertook playwork training over last 2 years by region (n=363)



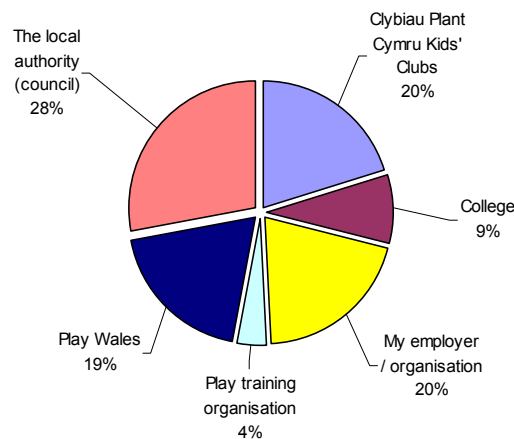
- 5.3 People working for local authorities were most likely to have undertaken play training (65%) followed by those working in the voluntary sector (55%) and the private sector (40%). None of the respondents working in the NHS had undertaken any play training recently.
- 5.4 When asked about the type of play training that had been undertaken, of the 414 people that responded, the largest proportion (16%) had been involved in the Play Wales P3 training. Other training is set out below.

Figure 29: Training undertaken over last 2 years by course (n=414)



- 5.5 Other training mentioned but uncategorised included training towards qualifications as well as; play ranger training; out of school club training; and a small number of special interest courses. Local authorities would seem to be the largest providers of play training, although much of the training was delivered to their own employees. Those working for private businesses⁶ were most likely to have received training with Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs or in local colleges while training provided by Play Wales was mainly used by those working in the voluntary sector and local authorities.

Figure 30: Providers of recent play training by volume (n=252)



⁶ Most people working for private enterprises were in out of school clubs.

5.6 Other providers of training included local play associations and higher education settings.

Training Plans

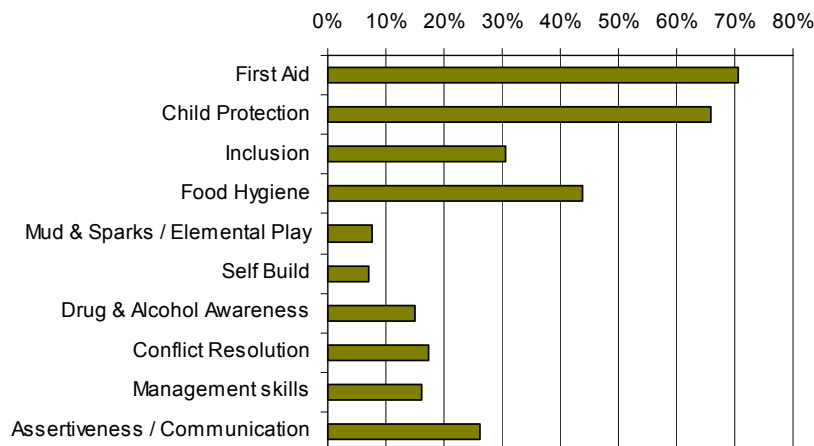
5.7 Of the 53 employers who took part in the survey, 65% had a training plan for their service that included individual training plans for all staff. A further 23% had partial plans in place but 13% had no plans at all. These were a mixture of settings including local authorities, voluntary groups and private businesses.

Issue Based Training

5.8 While playwork training is an important part of CPD for those involved in play, there is generic or issue-based training which often cuts across defined workforce sectors (such as playwork) within the children & young people's workforce.

5.9 Given that they are regulatory requirements in some settings, it was not surprising that the most common training of this type to be undertaken was first aid, followed by child protection and food hygiene training. Other play-practice focused training was less common.

Figure 31: Take-up of issue-based training (% of all respondents)



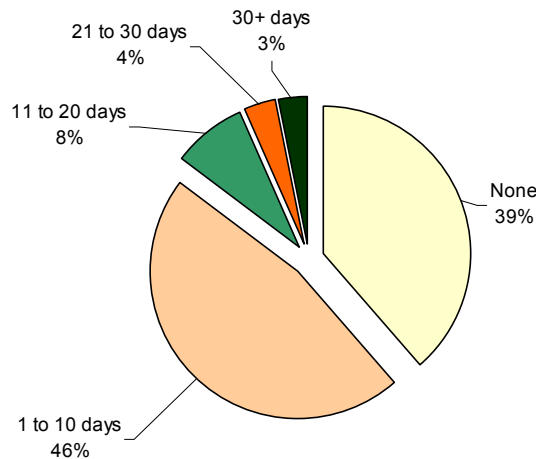
5.10 Other training listed by respondents that did not fit into the categories above included:

- Makaton
- Training the Trainers
- Sign Language
- Mentoring / Counselling
- Manual Handling
- Health & Safety / Playground Risk Assessment
- Fire Safety
- Eco Art

Training Time

5.11 Respondents to the survey were asked either the number of days that they had spent training over the past year. On average, people involved in play who responded to the survey had spent 5.7 days each training in the previous year. However, nearly 40% of people working in play had spent no time at all.

Figure 32: Number of days spent training in past year (n=301)



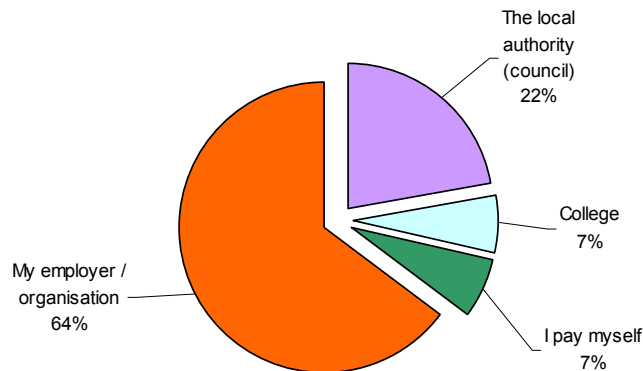
5.12 Employers were asked similarly, how many days training each employee had year. On average, employers said that each employee received 4.3 days training each year. This is lower than the figure provided by employees, as it will usually not include training undertaken during peoples' own time.

5.13 The amount of training varied by sector, with local authorities providing on average 5.2 days training each year; voluntary organisations 4.8 days; and private businesses 3.3 days.

5.14 People who described themselves as Playworkers spent on average 5 days training each year. This compares with 1 day for childcare workers, 7 days for playwork coordinators and 8 days for play development staff. Interestingly, people working in related areas but using play (eg. youth workers) spent the most time training (10 days).

Funding for Training

5.15 The profile of funding for general training is slightly different than for specific qualifications training with employers being by far, the main source of funding (65%). Local authorities fund around a fifth of training while only 7% of individuals said that they funded their training themselves. This compares with nearly 40% of people who fund their qualifications themselves.

Figure 33: Who pays for training (n=323)

5.16 While employers mainly pay for the cost of training, not all employees are paid to attend training. 18% of playwork employers did not pay their staff to attend training with a further 17% only paying expenses. 80% of local authorities paid staff to attend training although 20% paid only expenses. Amongst private businesses less than half of the employers surveyed paid their staff to attend. In the voluntary sector, while 68% paid staff to attend training, 19% paid their staff nothing.

5.17 Taking into account annual training budgets and the number of employees in organisations, the average amount spent on training by employers of playworkers in 2008 was £109.24 per person. Local authorities spent the most with a budget of £313 per head; private businesses spent £158; and voluntary sector organisations spent just £27 per person. 27% of private businesses and 15% of voluntary organisations said that they did not spend anything on training their staff.

Access to Training

5.18 In many parts of Wales, the distances that people are prepared to travel to access training has often been considered a barrier. Respondents to the survey were asked how far they would be prepared to travel to attend playwork training. Around half of those responding said that they would travel 5 miles or less, although almost a fifth said they would travel for more than 20 miles. By region, the distances reflect the rural nature of Wales with those living in the less densely population areas being prepared to travel further. There is also a clear correlation between the seniority of workers and the distances that they would be prepared to travel.

Figure 34: Distances that playworkers are prepared to travel to access training by Region (n=453)

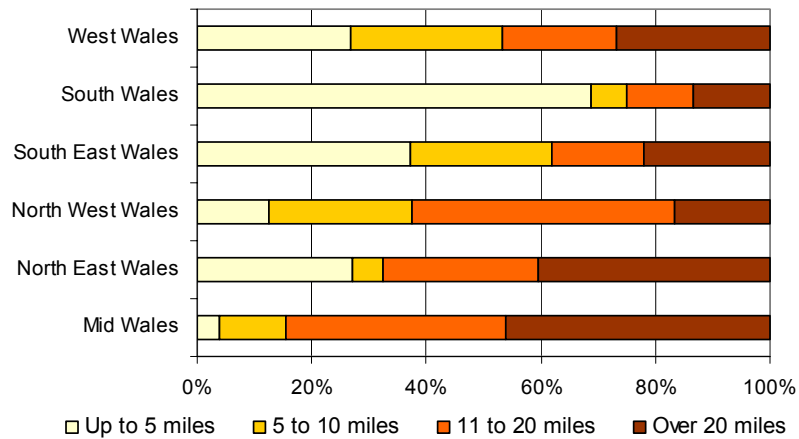
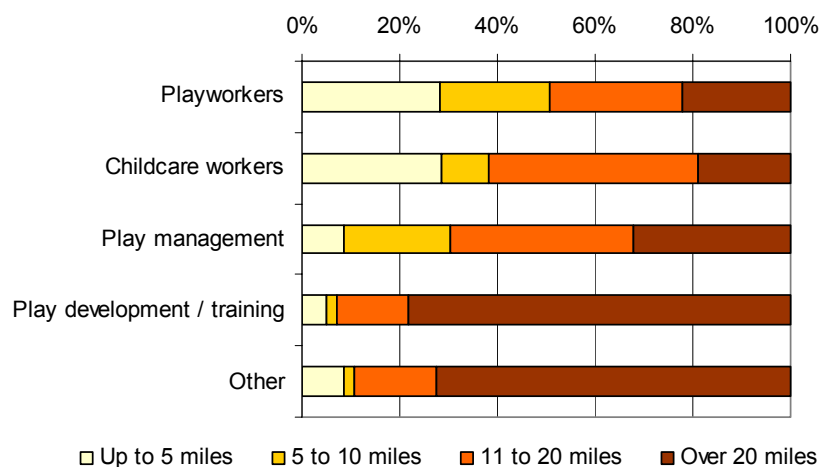


Figure 35: Distances that playworkers are prepared to travel to access training by Role (n=453)



Employers views

5.19 A significant minority of employers (42%) said that they find it easy to access the training that their employees need. Only 11% said that it was hard to find suitable training while 32% said it was just difficult. Private businesses find it most difficult while local authorities find it least problematic.

5.20 Employers were asked to identify any training that playworkers would benefit from but was not readily available. In total, 32 employers responded identifying a range of qualification and issue-based training. Although some employers did say that playwork qualification training was difficult to access in some areas (mainly at Level 3), the majority of responses were around specific training needs that could be met through short courses – such as behaviour management, activity ideas, listening skills etc. Many employers said that they find it difficult to access what can be termed ‘statutory’ training such as first aid, health & safety or food hygiene. A full list of responses is set out in *Appendix 3*.

6. Conclusions

People who do Playwork

- 6.1 People involved in playwork in Wales are predominantly female. Men in play tend to be more likely to be in jobs with greater responsibility and pay. Men in play also tend to have higher levels of general education and are more likely to hold playwork qualifications. The reasons for the gender disparity are likely to be due to the links between play and childcare (which struggles to shake off the gender stereotypes); related to societies view of children's work being women's work; low pay across the sector; and a lack of full-time jobs.
- 6.2 By age, the workforce is generally youthful due to the large number of seasonal workers - often being drawn from the student population. Those working full-time in play tend to be slightly older than the average.
- 6.3 The ethnic mix of the workforce, while reflective of the general population in Wales, may not reflect the client group of children which data has shown to be more ethnically diverse, especially in the major urban areas of Wales. Likewise, the number of disabled people in play does not reflect the proportion of disabled children in the population.

Play Work

- 6.4 People involved in play have a wide variety of roles in a range of settings, working with an assortment of specific groups. This diversity of roles is something to be celebrated in that play should be delivered and promoted across the range of services that children have contact with. However, it also poses a challenge in meeting their needs.
- 6.5 Around a half of all people involved in play work in the public sector where they are likely to be paid more; have better terms and conditions of employment; have better access to training and professional development; and better career opportunities with a greater number of senior posts. People working in private businesses and the voluntary sector would seem to be those with the greatest need for support.
- 6.6 Only around a third of people working in play are employed on a full-time basis; a quarter of people work in play for less than 12 weeks each year and over 40% of people in play have another job. While training and development opportunities are needed all-year-round, the structure and delivery of professional development needs to cater for those for whom play is not their primary activity. However, the diversity of the workforce – in terms of the other things that people working in playwork do – should be acknowledged and celebrated.

- 6.7 Despite the amorphous nature of the workforce, there are a lot of very committed people working in play with a huge amount of experience. Although playwork is often categorised by the many seasonal playworkers who move in and out of the sector rapidly, there is a proportion of the workforce who have significant lengths of service with their current employers and many years of playwork experience.
- 6.8 Pay rates in the sector are below average and pay is likely to be a significant factor in recruitment and retention of playworkers. Most people working in play are paid only a small amount above the minimum wage.
- 6.9 The play workforce in Wales would seem to be expanding with an estimated 12% more people working in play in 2008 than in 2007. This may be in response to new funding.
- 6.10 Once recruited, people working in play find it very rewarding, but poor pay, challenging work and limited career opportunities are a problem. Attracting people into play needs to focus on the positive aspects and there needs to be a general campaign to raise the profile of play and playwork both publicly and across the wider children and young people's sector.

Qualifications

- 6.11 Relative to the general population, people working in play are more highly educated, but only 40% hold a playwork qualification. People working in training, management and development were most likely to be qualified in play as were men and older people.
- 6.12 Level 3 playwork is the most commonly held qualification across the sector and is also the qualification required for the majority of playwork posts. The proportion of people with higher-level playwork qualifications was found to be very low and similarly, the number of employers asking for any qualification higher than Level 3 – even for play development posts – was very small. There is likely to be a cycle of low aspiration that results in a lack of demand for higher qualifications and consequently little supply of training.
- 6.13 While most training towards qualifications is employer-funded, a third of people fund themselves. Almost a fifth of people also have to fund their own professional development training.

Training

- 6.14 Over half of all people working in play had undertaken some play-related training over the previous two years. Those involved directly in delivering, organising or supporting play were most likely to have undertaken training, while those who only use play as a part of a wider role were least likely. People working for local authorities generally received the most training and local

authorities were the largest providers of play training to all sectors, underlying the critical role that they have in supporting playwork across Wales. Play Wales is a significant provider of play training in Wales with P3 being the most prolific course being delivered.

- 6.15 The amount of time that people spend on play training is limited with an average of only 5.7 days undertaken by each person. People in play development and management roles undertake more training than, for example, playworkers.
- 6.16 Accessing training can be difficult, especially in more rural areas. Accessibility is more of an issue for playworkers than for senior staff as they are less prepared (or able) to travel long distances to access training. Employers said that they often find it difficult to access the training they need for their staff locally. In some cases, this is for qualification training, but often employers would like to access specific issue-based training that is not available.

**David Dallimore
Melyn Consulting
November 2008**

Appendix 1: List of Job Titles

Activity Days Leader	Deputy Supervisor	Play Co-Ordinator/Hospital	Senior Play Organiser
Activity Worker	Development Officer	Play Specialist	Senior Play Worker/Project Worker
Administrative Manager	Development Officer & Volunteer	Play Development Officer	Senior Playleader
Adventure Play Development Officer	Development Worker - Director	Play Development Worker	Senior Supervisor (Playwork)
Adventure Play Team Leader	Director	Play Leader	Senior Youth & Play Development Worker
Adventure Playground Worker	Director/Chairperson	Play Leader Manager	Senior Youth Officer
After School Club Assistant	Director/Company Secretary	Play Officer	Senior Youth Worker & Play Development Worker
After School Club Leader	Early Years Practice Manager	Play Organiser	Service Development Manager
After School Club Worker	Ethnic Minority Play Development Worker	Play Ranger	Sessional Playworker
After School/Holiday Club Coordinator	Executive Officer	Play Specialist	Site Supervisor
Area Youth Worker	Executive Regional Play Development Officer	Play Supervisor	Sports Development Manager
Assistant Information Officer	Gweithwraig Chwarae	Play Training Development Worker	Supervisor
Assistant Play Development Officer	Hospital Play Assistant	Play Worker	Supervisor/Nursery Nurse
Assistant Playleader	Hospital Play Specialist	Play/Youth Worker	Support Worker
Assistant Playworker	Icc Playworker	Play assistant	Swyddog Maes
Assistant Playworker (Voluntary)	Inclusive Play Officer	Playcare Worker	Teaching Assistant
Assistant Supervisor	Inclusive Playworker	Playgroup (Senior)	Teaching Assistant. Mid Day Supervisor
Breakfast Club Coordinator	Info Assistant	Playgroup And After School Club Manager	Team Leader
Care Scheme Officer	Information Assistant (Play Wales)	Playgroup/Wraparound/Asc Leader	Team Leader, Swansea Summer Mobile Project
Cf Development Worker	Information Officer	Playleader	Therapeutic Services Manager
Chair	Lead Playworker Leader	Playleader/Manager	Trainee Teacher
Child Carer	M.D. Manager	Playscheme And Inclusion Co-ordinator	Trainer
Childcare Worker	Manager - Playcare Leader	Playscheme Co-ordinator	Training Officer
Children And Youth Participation Officer	Manager Of Nursery	Playscheme Leader/Youth Activity Leader	Training Project Co-Ordinator
Children's Activity Development Worker	Mobile Toy Librarian/Lang&Play	Playscheme Supervisor	Treasurer
Children's Development Worker	Non Teaching Assistant, Playleader And Play Assistant	Playscheme Worker	Unqualified Playworker
Children's Partnership Officer	Nursery Assistant	Playspace Development Officer	Voluntary Sector Support Co-Ordinator
Children's Play Officer	Nursery Leader	Playwork Assistant	Volunteer
Child's Play Project Coordinator	Nursery Nurse	Playwork Supervisor	Volunteer Development Officer.
Club Manager	Nursery Owner	Playwork Trainer	For Role - See Above.
Community Development Worker	Nursery Proprietor	Playworker	Volunteer Playworker
Community Playworker	Operations And Finance Manager	Playworker Buddie	Youth And Community Arts Co-Ordinator
Cook / Playworker	Out Of School Club Supervisor	Prif Swyddog	Youth And Play Development Worker
Creative Trainer	Outreach Play Practitioner	Programme Leader	Youth Development Co-Ordinator
Cydlynnydd	Outreach Playworker	In Play And Playwork Project Co-Ordinator	Youth Worker
Gwasaethau Plant	Partner/ Playleader	Project Leader	Youth Worker In Schools
Deputy Manager	Play Assisstant	Project Manager	Ysgri Fennydd Cwmni
Deputy Play Assistant	Play Assistant	Registered Person	
Deputy Play Leader	Play Club Leader	S.S.N.	
Deputy Playleader	Play Club Leader & Genesis Co-Ordinator	Senior Area Youth Worker	
Deputy Playscheme Manager	Play Co-Ordinator	Senior Childworker	
Deputy Playworker		Senior Hospital Play Specialist	
		Senior Partnership Manager	

Appendix 2: Other jobs done by Playworkers

Active Schools Assistant	Farmer	Nursery Nurse within school	Shop Manager Gift Shop
Activity instructor youth worker, etc.	Flying Start Coordinator	Other bits of training, development work, forest school work, forest school training and assessing	Shopkeeper
Assistant in Welsh Meithrin	full time special needs teacher	forest school training and assessing	Special needs support assistant
Assitant at Cwmbran Stadium	General assistant at farm	P.A.	staff nurse
Athrawes Addysg Grefydd (uwchradd)	Genesis co-ordinator	Paper round	Student Support Worker
Bar assistant	Genesis mobile creche worker	Part time receptionist and full time medical student	supervisor in a breakfast club
Bar attendant	Gweithio gyda pobl ifanc	Part time shop assistant	Supply teacher
Barmaid; student	I COOK PART TIME	Playgroup	Support Voluntary Groups 0-25 years
Breakfast Club	I run a hostel for young vulnerable people	Playwork tutor	Support Worker , Forest School Leader
Carer	Just part of my strategic role and I am also a youth worker	Playworker in a holiday club part-time	Support Worker for Communities First
caterer & cleaner	Labouring	Primary School Teacher	Swimming Teacher
Checkout operator	Learning Resources	Primary Supply Teacher	Teacher
Childcare Assistant	Assistant Library	project worker 5.15 team barnardos	Teacher, bar work
Childminder/St john youth worker	Learning Support - Visually Impaired	Reception In Community Centre	Teaching (Term-time)
Classroom Assistant and sessional support worker	Learning Support Assistant	registered childminder, school cleaner and clerk	teaching assistant
Cleaner	Learning Support Assistant in a Primary School	Retail advisor	Teaching Asst, Breakfast Club Asst
Clerical Assistant	Learning Support Assistant; Youthworker	Retired NNEB	Technician
Community Development, Youth Work	Lecturer in Sport	Rheoli Staff, Gwaith Ieuenctid, Datblygu Cymunedol ayb	Tesco
Co-op	Librarian / LSA	Roofing and builder's merchants	Trainee Youthworker
creche assistant	Lifeguard	Sainsburys cashier	Trainer
Creche worker	Lunchtime Supervisor	Sales advisor (New Look)	University Student
creche worker, foster carer	Main role as CYP Officer	Sales Assistant	Volunteer in after school club; cashier in shop
Customer Sales Assistant	manager pre-school	School Secretary	Waiter
Cymhorthudd Dosbarth	Mentoring Trainer	School Support, administrator, lunch supervisor	Waitress
Detached Youthworker	Mid-day supervisor; cleaner	Senior Youth Worker	Work at a primary school
Development worker	Music workshop leader for adults with learning difficulties.	sessional childrens advocate, and arts/play consultant	Work at garden centre
Dinner Lady	NNEB in school	Sessional worker in a hostel for young homeless people	work in a playgroup
director, property renovation	Nursery Class Teacher	shop assistant and student	work in B&Q customer service
Duty Manager @ leisure centre	Nursery Manager		Work in night club
Early Years	Nursery Nurse		Work with Down to Earth
early years participation officer			Working in a shop
Education, Training and employability skills for young people and adults			Youth Development
			Youth facilitator; Playwork trainer
			Youth work / community work
			Youth worker

Appendix 3: Comments made by employers

Recruitment issues:

Job adverts expensive. Finding playleaders/workers with relevant qualifications. Finding bilingual playworkers/leaders - desirable but not essential.

Would love to have access to relief. Staff and a register of experienced CRB supply workers to cover holidays, maternity, sick and busy periods.

We find recruitment for afterschool club difficult as the hours of work are not convenient - summer playscheme is easier but we don't get many qualified workers.

Because I only offer holiday work it is a problem.

Playworkers working with out of school or holiday club children are permanent full time staff. More workers used through holiday period.

Need to increase hourly rate to attract workers into the profession. Have to give posts minimum of 25 hours.

Difficulty in recruiting staff to Senior Social Worker position because of the requirement for a level 3 NVQ, the part-time nature of the work, and because of low wages.

We mainly employ students who can work for 1yr to 3/4 yrs depending on what course they do. Some return to help if don't have a full time job. Some also do relief, part of the summer.

All staff are part time, this is most of the time students at university, where they have work and assignments to do. However, it is expected of them to do assignments cache level 2 as well for part time work.

We find recruitment expensive and time consuming - both the advertising process and training once started.

We are in a rural area and it is hard to find people able to travel to us for just 2 or 3 hours work. We rely on volunteers to cover time gaps between end of school and arrival of staff.

It's easy to recruit play workers, but I find it hard to recruit temp staff for the occasional night work.

Because of the hours employed are few and sometimes unsocial hours are required, the positions offered are unsuitable for those who wish to work full time or those with young children. Generally applicants who have 'grown up' children wish to work more hours than we offer.

We cannot pay a decent wage as we have to have 2 people on duty to satisfy CS/W requirements. Also we are a small rural setting so our numbers are small and don't always cover costs. Therefore we have not been able to recruit anybody, despite advertising for several years.

Very difficult!

Very few applicants for jobs. Hours, particularly for out of school care are not convenient for people with families.

Difficult to find qualified staff for part-time.

Have experienced difficulties in potential employees meeting strict criteria and having relevant qualifications.

Suitability of hours hinders recruitment.

We ideally need staff with level 2/3 playwork qualification. It is very hard in our area to access level 2 and impossible to access level 3. The people that do apply are usually students i.e. under 21 yrs.

We have experienced difficulty recruiting staff, trained or prepared to undertake training, although we were lucky enough to find 5 new staff members this year. It would help if we could afford to pay them better, but cannot consider raising the cost of childcare.

Mainly lack of playworkers willing to go on shortlist to provide cover in emergencies.

Shortage of playworkers who possess the skills to work alongside children, lacking in motivation and creative skills.

Very difficult to recruit suitably experienced or qualified play workers. Staff turnover is high as sessions are held after school which limits who is able to apply. Many are young people either in f/t education or working in schools who see the jobs as a 'stop-gap' or 'stepping stone'.

There are not enough L3 playwork courses available. This has proved extremely inconvenient especially when trying to recruit club managers. This has become a real concern, particularly since the new regulations from CSSIQ were brought into force in April of this year.

Very few people out there with the necessary qualifications already. Many people need to work more hours than out of school clubs offer to earn enough and we can't afford to pay wages because parents aren't prepared to pay more for childcare. Also, few grants available to subsidize wages.

Finding the right person to fit in with existing team.

Have found that playwork qualified staff cannot offer same level of core skills that is sometimes required - confusion between CSSIW standards and what is accepted.

Employees use the nursery as a training centre and leave when qualified, other employees do not want to work, they'd rather be unemployed and receive state benefits.

Very difficult to find Welsh speaking staff members, also people who are qualified and reliable. I employ 1 girl from Corwen 1hrs drive away and 4 from Rhuthin 40mins away.

Difficult to find playleaders with relevant qualifications (NVQ3) and who are willing to work for few hours a week at the after school club (i.e. 17 hrs) can also be expensive and time consuming to put job adverts up everywhere.

As an after school club (3.00-6.00pm Mon-Fri) I find it very hard to recruit qualified staff due to the lack of hours I can offer. Many mothers would be interested but care standards dictate that the staff need to be qualified to a level 2/3 NVQ. After 16 years in business, staffing has always been my biggest problem. In my opinion, experience & common sense should play a big part when recruiting staff.

We tend to recruit through the local colleges as opposed to externally as we get to know students on placement - staff retention is very high here though.

Very difficult to recruit because of the hours needed.

Funding restricts the number of hours we can offer.

The main problem is finding experienced and qualified playworkers to lead on new play projects we're running. We want to encourage members of local communities to train up to becoming playworkers but we need some experienced workers to start this process off. Not being able to offer guaranteed full time hours is a problem.

Because we are open for only two hours each day and are situated in an isolated, rural area, it is not economically viable for workers to travel to us. Therefore we have to rely on people from the village or who live within a couple of miles of the village.

It is difficult to get trained staff to work after school club hours. Two staff are highly specialised care staff needed to work 2-1 key worker roles and this can be hard to maintain.

Unmet demand for Training

First aid and any form of play training. There may be courses but they are not advertised or accessible.

Health and Safety in the workplace. Child Protection

Causes of stress for children. Managing anger, listening skills

Currently there is a real need for level 3 NVQ in playwork

I have run courses after work for the staff to attend, which seems easier for them.

Sessions providing ideas for activities to entertain the children to provide variety and ideas for running a club on a day to day basis.

Clybiau Plant Cymru used to offer free training courses which have now ceased.

Level 2 CACHE in playwork

It's not training that's the issue, although previous staff have often not wanted training due to family commitments. We just need more people willing to come and do the job. Recruitment is really hard, pay doesn't cover petrol now.

Foundation phase.

Asperger's

Cheaper, more in depth first aid.

Clybiau Plant Cymru seems to cover trainings that are needed.

Training staff who work casual.

Playworker courses not readily available in area.

More training for under 2s - clear guidelines on planning assessing evaluating developmental stages.

We have organised 'Dragon Sports' training in the past for our Playworkers, this proved popular with both staff and children.

Child protection, food hygiene, first aid, behaviour management

Becoming easier to identify level 2/3 training. More difficult to identify training for development staff who do not carry out face to face playwork.

Again level 3 training in playwork is needed across all local authority areas.

Level 3 courses in all areas - we have staff living and working in Bridgend area desperate for L 3b... nearest available is Barry. Similarly, in Cardiff - no courses available.

Practical manual handling related to children not boxes! Autistic spectrum disorder.

First Aid and Food Hygiene - always hard to get training offered by providers - always over subscribed. Supporting children with behaviour problems (that really help).

Paediatric first aid, manual handling.

All carers seem to be down south or at times that are not practical to the employer.

Using the fire fighting equipment.

I think some playworkers need ideas on activities with the children.

Yes - funding issues in all outside agencies. Essential training - child protection even, first aid, special needs, behavioural issues, etc.

Behaviour management of children

We have two P3 trainers within our team but the number of courses they can deliver and the number of students they can assess is limited. We need to be able to deliver the more advanced parts of P3 to ensure continued professional development of playworkers.

Courses in Ruthin or Corwen.

CACHE Level 3 not sponsored in our area