

Playwork National Occupational Standards Functional Analysis

The UK Playwork NOS Consortium has been approved to take forward a self-funded review of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for playwork during 2024 and 2025. The UK Playwork NOS Consortium comprises Play Wales, Play Scotland, PlayBoard Northern Ireland, Play England and the Playwork Foundation. The consortium has been meeting since October 2021 and was established to plan strategically across the four nations for the future of workforce development and sector skills initiatives, including a future review of the NOS. There are strong links between the UK Playwork NOS Consortium and the four Playwork Education and Training Councils (PETCs) whose role is to discuss issues of strategic importance on all aspects of playwork education, training and qualifications in their respective nation.

The formal process of reviewing the national occupational standards (NOS) for playwork began at the beginning of 2025.

We have RAG rated all the existing NOS in the suite and established ones we want to focus on reviewing and where we will need to develop new NOS. The process of developing the NOS themselves took place throughout 2025 and will conclude in June 2026.

From research, the scoping exercise and conversations with playworkers and playwork organisations there are some key themes that will inform the development of the standards going forwards:

- Focus on playwork as an approach – playworking
- That playwork can occur in a wide range of places and spaces
- NOS need to be streamlined
- Playwork Principles or any future version of them is intrinsic to the Standards

The NOS Writing Group is made up of committed sector experts who will take forward the work of writing the new NOS for playwork.

Membership of the writing group as at March 2025:

Name	Location
Caroline Kerr	Northern Ireland
Martin King-Sheard	Wales
Dianne Larrington	England
Kay Maxwell	Scotland
Karen Sharp (Chair)	Scotland
Sarah Bird	Wales
Meynell Walter	England
Mike Wragg	England

Playwork: NOS Functional map

Key purpose:

1. Playwork is a unique approach to working with children of all ages in a range of settings. The key purpose of the playworker is to support and facilitate play as described by the Playwork Principles.

*Compliance with legislative requirements will run across all NOS

* Understanding play and playwork will run across all NOS

* Equality, diversity and inclusion will run across all NOS

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Job role	Code	NOS titles
Support playworker	PWNC201	Facilitate play using a playwork approach
	PWNC202	Support the development of relationships using a playwork approach
	PWNC203	Reflect on playwork practice
	HSCCLD24	Support the safeguarding of individuals and others
Playworker	PWNC301	Prepare for, plan and support play using a playwork approach
	PWNC302	Develop relationships with children that support their play, health and wellbeing using a playwork approach
	PWNC303	Build relationships with adults to develop play and playwork practice
	PWNC304	Engage in reflective practice to inform and improve practice
	HSCCLD34	Promote the safeguarding of individuals and others
Playwork manager	PWNC401	Lead and support staff using a playwork approach
	PWNC402	Lead and manage the playwork setting
	PWNC403	Promote reflective practice and professional development in playwork
	PWNC404	Manage and enhance internal and external relationships specific to playwork
	PWNC405	Investigate and implement contemporary frameworks within a playwork context
	HSCCLD44	Lead the safeguarding of individuals and others
Optional units	PWNC204	Contribute to building relationships with adults to develop and improve playwork practice
	PWNC205	Contribute to providing food and drink in a playwork setting
	PWNC206	Contribute to preparing for and undertaking travel outside of the playwork setting
	PWNC207	Contribute to supporting the creation of playwork constructions
	PWNC208	Support a playwork approach for children with additional support needs
	PWNC305	Provide food and drink in a playwork setting
	PWNC306	Prepare for and undertake travel outside of the playwork setting

Job role	Code	NOS titles
	PWN307	Support the creation of playwork constructions
	PWNC308	Implement a playwork approach for children with additional support needs
	PWNC309	Preparing for leadership and management in a playwork setting
	PWNC406	Using a playwork approach to community development
	PWNC407	Make decisions in the playwork setting
	PWNC408	Lead and manage a playwork approach for children with additional support needs
	PWNC409	Manage compliance with external playwork quality assurance frameworks
	PWNC410	Manage financial resources in a playwork setting
	PWNC411	Provide values-based leadership in a playwork setting
	PWNC412	Recruit and select people for working in a playwork setting

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