

Tool for Open Access Play to self assess the staffing ratios for children between ages 8 to 12

Introduction

To help you in setting safe ratios, we have developed a self assessment tool. The tool enables registered providers of open access play to assess the staffing ratios for children between the ages of 8 to 12 as required in standard 15.14 of the National Minimum Standards.

Self-evaluation is important in helping us to consider how best to maintain and improve services so that it meets the highest standards and offers the best experience for young children.

Standard 15.14 of National Minimum Standards for children aged 8-12

This requires:

‘Staffing ratios should be sufficient and proportionate, contributing to a positive environment for all children attending. Staffing ratios should reflect the circumstances of the setting, including the site and level of activities undertaken, how risks are managed, the experience and qualifications of staff, community context, age and abilities of the children attending and allow for contingency in case of emergencies. The ratio of persons with current first aid qualifications will need to reflect these circumstances’.

‘The responsibility for setting ratios in the new standard will rest with the service and will depend on the diverse circumstances that may apply in the provision of open access play you operate’.

Definition:

The National Minimum Standards define Open Access Play as:

Open access play provision - Staffed Open Access play provision operating for over 2 hours a day for children up to the age of 12 years can be permanent or temporary provision, located in a variety of settings with or without premises and can include holiday play schemes. This provision usually caters for a wide age range of children, normally aged 5 years old and over. The purpose is to provide staffed play opportunities for children usually in the absence of their parents. Children are not restricted in their movements, other than where related to safety matters and they are not prevented from

coming and going as and when they wish.

Some NMS will not apply to open access play provision due to the nature of the provision, however, where this is indicated the standards should still be considered desirable as good practice.

The National Minimum Standard 15.14 for children under 8 requires:

The minimum staffing ratio in open access play provision of 1:13 for children aged under 8 remains. Children under 5 do not generally attend such provision and ratios may need to be higher for schemes which operate in public parks.

The nature of Open Access and different types of play

Below sets out the diverse nature and the different types of play that may be regulated.

Open Access play provision can be permanent or short-term provision, located in a variety of environments with or without premises including play centres, adventure playgrounds, holiday playschemes and parks.

Whilst the term Open Access applies to registered provision for children under twelve years, such provision usually caters for a wide age range of children, including those over twelve years.

The purpose of the provision is to provide staffed play opportunities for children, usually in the absence of their parents.

Children have the freedom of choice as to what range of play activity they wish to undertake and with whom they play

Children are not restricted in their movements, other than where related to safety matters and unless special arrangements have been put in place, are not prevented from coming and going as and when they wish.

Holiday Play schemes

The majority of registered open access play provision in Wales is seasonal provision that operates during summer holidays and occasionally other school holidays. Most holiday playschemes are free to attend although some will charge a small fee either as a compulsory or voluntary donation. Holiday Playschemes may be run by Community Councils, County Voluntary Councils (CVC's), Voluntary play associations or Local Authorities.

Where Local Authorities and some larger voluntary sector providers take responsibility for Holiday Playschemes, they may be operated on a number of sites with equipment transported in cars or vans between sites and, policies, management structures and working practice is consistent across all sites.

Some playschemes have an indoor space such as a leisure centre gym, school building or a community centre others operate from public parks, school grounds or other open spaces.

Peripatetic or Play Ranger Provision

Peripatetic or Play Ranger Provision refers to open access play provision that has no specific location. The operation will be based on a number of factors including community audits, where children choose to play, advice from local people. This type of provision allows playworkers to be *more dynamic* in how they operate. The aspiration for this type of provision is that playworkers can set up almost anywhere in a community where children play and adapt where they operate based on experience and local circumstances.

Staff will use a risk-benefit assessment approach to establishing when and where provision takes place but it would usually run in; parks, green spaces, woodlands, beaches or designated play areas. There are examples in some parts of the UK where streets are restricted to traffic in order for playworkers to operate in residential streets.

Due to the nature of this type of provision, facilities such as toilets, food prep areas, washing facilities etc may not be available. In keeping with the open access nature, children are generally expected to go home to use the toilet.

Holiday playschemes sometimes operate using a similar model of provision but this type of provision can also operate year-round after school and at weekends.

Adventure Playgrounds and play centres

Adventure playgrounds provide outdoor space and playworkers - they do not necessarily have buildings or permanent structures. Children can play and socialize with others on their own terms and build dens or treehouses, make campfires, dig gardens, stage water fights, play in the mud and rain. It is a place that children should be able to call their own - where they can direct their own play, be spontaneous, loud, dirty, messy, silly, and where they can test themselves out against their environment and other people.

Adventure playgrounds operate all year round and, given their need for recurrent funding, tend to have a strong purpose and history in the local community.

Because of the history and year round nature of adventure playgrounds, staff are usually experienced and well qualified compared to more temporary and seasonal play schemes.

Open Access Play Assessment

The self assessment tool (annex 1) is a resource to support you to ensure your service has the appropriate staff (supervisors and play workers) with the skills and experience to provide a safe service to the total number of children your are registered for.

Registration and Inspection of Open Access Play

For Open Access play that provider a service for 8 and 12 years we may request you to submit a copy of your completed self assessment tool along with other key document as part of your application to register or to vary the condition of your registration. In addition, the staffing assessment tool will be considered by inspector's along with a number of other key documents that are listed in the *CSSIW Inspection Guide for Childcare, Child minding and Play* as part of the inspection visit.

The inspector will use your completed self assessment tool to inform inspection. We will use the tool to determine if your staffing ratios are safe and appropriate to circumstances. It will provide evidence of the quality of your service, detailing any strengths, short falls and actions you will take to improve the service and to ensure that appropriate staff ratios reflect the open access play provision you provide.



Annex 1

Tool for Open Access Play providers to self assess the staffing ratios for Children between ages 8 to 12

Please can providers:

- Ensure that the information provided is an accurate and true account
- Ensure that all the required fields/tables are completed
- Make the tool available (and any other key documents such as statement of purpose and child protection procedure documents) to CSSIW on request
- Ensure that once completed **the form is signed and dated by a registered person. If the form is completed by the person in charge of the setting, confirmation is required that the registered person or responsible individual has reviewed and agrees with the information provided**

You must always complete this section

<i>Maximum numbers of children you intend to provide play for / or are registered to provide play for</i>	
<i>Age range of children</i>	
<i>Number of staff (specify numbers of supervisors and play workers)</i>	
<i>Number of staff with first aid certificates (for the maximum</i>	

<i>number of children you care for)</i>	
<i>Maximum staff ratios for a normal session</i>	
<i>Maximum staff ratios in exception circumstances</i>	
<i>Contingency arrangements if normal ratios are exceeded</i>	

Use this section to help you reach a decision for your staff ratios. Complete only relevant sections for your service

Issues to be considered	How is this managed? Strengths and Evidence	How is this managed? Strengths, shortfalls & actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of playwork qualifications within the team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the qualifications that staff undertake</i> <i>how progression is supported.</i> 	Action plan to evidence how staff will be supported to gain qualifications and monitor whilst undertaking training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of other related qualifications including youth work, teaching, community development, childcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The setting demonstrates how other qualifications contribute to staff experience.</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How experienced is the staff team as a whole? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Direct playwork experience and other experience</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there structures in place for less experienced staff to shadow, be mentored or learn from more experienced staff? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Induction plans</i> <i>Supervisions/ Appraisal</i> <i>Reflective practice</i> <i>Team meetings</i> 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do they access training and qualifications? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is a clear route through qualifications if this is in the control of the setting.</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an agreed approach to continuing professional development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Peer support networks</i> • <i>Conferences and training events</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have staff been working in the specific setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Staff CVs</i> • <i>Qualitative evidence from staff</i> 	

Community Context/ History

Issues to be considered	How is this managed? Strengths and Evidence	How is this managed? Strengths, shortfalls & actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do staff manage the setting to ensure they can respond to incidents or dealing with visitors to the setting? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information to parents</i> • <i>Information to children</i> • <i>Adult visitor procedures/ sign in</i> • <i>Contingency arrangements</i> • <i>Emergency contact information</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do staff know the community, parents and children attending? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How long the provision has been operating</i> • <i>Staff turnover</i> • <i>Community audits</i> • <i>Quality care review</i> 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the relationship like between children and play workers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attendance figures</i> • <i>How behaviour that adults find challenging is managed</i> • <i>Qualitative evidence from staff and children</i> • <i>Quality care review</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do local people know about, value or support the provision? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Qualitative evidence from staff, parents, children and stakeholders</i> • <i>Community Audits</i> • <i>Community fundraising</i> • <i>Local people advocate for the provision</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do parents understand the nature of the provision? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information and communication to parents</i> • <i>Statement of purpose</i> • <i>Qualitative evidence from parents</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of parents and adults not employed by the setting is well managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information for parents accompanying underage children</i> • <i>Statement of purpose</i> • <i>Safeguarding policy</i> • <i>Qualitative evidence from staff, parents and children</i> • <i>Risk management procedures</i> 	

Ages and Abilities of children

Issues to be considered	How is this managed? Strengths and Evidence	How is this managed? Strengths, shortfalls & actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the setting deals with unforeseen changes in numbers or play behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Attendance numbers</i> <i>Diary/ reflective logs</i> <i>Team meetings</i> <i>Reflective Practice</i> <i>Risk management procedures including dynamic risk-benefit assessment</i> <i>Activities offered</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the pattern of attendance of children? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Attendance figures</i> <i>How external factors influence numbers; eg weather, community events; and how this is used to plan for staffing</i> <i>Ages of children attending</i> <i>The role of older siblings or family members</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the children familiar with the provision and the range of play opportunities available? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Attendance figures</i> <i>Length of time the provision has been running</i> <i>Qualitative evidence from staff and children</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are children who require more support identified and how does the team manage their needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Experience of the staff team</i> <i>Demonstrable understanding of support needs and how to respond</i> <i>Buddy/ support worker scheme</i> <i>Child registration forms</i> <i>Communication with parents</i> 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How children support each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Qualitative evidence from children and staff</i> • <i>Qualitative evidence of positive interactions between children across age ranges</i> • <i>Buddy schemes</i> 	
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Risk Management

Issues to be considered	How is this managed? Strengths and Evidence	How is this managed? Strengths, shortfalls & actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a risk-benefit assessment (written or verbal and understood by staff) that covers how the provision should be supervised? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Risk management procedures including dynamic risk-benefit assessment</i> • <i>Team meetings</i> • <i>Reflective practice</i> • <i>Information to parents</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are staff ratios planned and decided upon? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Risk management procedures including dynamic risk-benefit assessment</i> • <i>Staff planning</i> • <i>Attendance figures</i> 	

The Site and level of activities undertaken

Issues to be considered	How is this managed? Strengths and Evidence	How is this managed? Strengths, shortfalls & actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a clear decision making process for the siting of provision to ensure it is well located for the community and any hazards are managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community audits Risk management procedures including dynamic risk-benefit assessment Play space audits Community consultations Qualitative evidence from staff, children and stakeholders 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the area accessible to the general public? If so, how is this managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management procedures including dynamic risk-benefit assessment Register of visitors Reflective practice Team meetings Incident log Observation of playworker Safeguarding policy Discussions with children 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is an indoor play space, how are maximum numbers and staffing ratios managed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split site – indoors and outdoors Specific resources/ activities inside Maintaining supervision levels Restricting access 	

Contingency

Issues to be considered	How is this managed? Strengths and Evidence	How is this managed? Strengths, shortfalls & actions
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the person in charge ensure that there is sufficient staff to facilitate the session in the case of accidents or incidents and unexpected changes in attendance and play behaviour? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Moving staff from one site to another</i> • <i>Risk management procedures including dynamic risk-benefit assessment</i> • <i>Accident and incident reports</i> • <i>Reflective practice</i> • <i>Review of proposed/planned activities</i> 	
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DECLARATION

Please complete the following declaration:

I confirm that I have taken reasonable steps to ensure that the information supplied in this document is not misleading or inaccurate.

Title	Signature
Registered Person/Child Minder	
Responsible individual on behalf of a company or organisation	
Person in Charge (if responsible for completing the form)	
NB: If this document has been completed by the person in charge of a service, confirmation is required that the registered person or responsible individual has reviewed and agrees with the information provided by providing their signature below.	
Registered Person(s)	

Responsible individual on behalf of a company or organisation	
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