

# Play in Hospital Across CTM 'My rights, give me a voice'

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## 1 Background

Play in healthcare has many benefits for children and families. Including:

Improves wellbeing

Eases anxiety, fear, stress

Reduces pain

Builds resilience

Restores sense of control

Helps family wellbeing

## 2 Aim

To improve understanding of the current play provision for child inpatients to CTMUHB district general hospitals.

## 3 Methodology

**1. Plan**  
To understand the role of play in the paediatric inpatient setting from the perspectives of staff, families, and children, identifying opportunities for improvement

**2. Do**  
Commission Play Wales to design and conduct the service evaluation using the COM-B Model. Collect data: observations, questionnaires, discussions

**3. Study**  
Analyse data to highlight strengths, challenges, and alignment with Play Wales principles, generating key service recommendations

**4. Act**  
Use findings to guide phased improvements to play services in CTMUHB

## 5 Conclusion

The service evaluation identified several recommendations, shown below, to strengthen play provision across CTM. Despite limited specialist play staff, a 'permission to play' culture exists across the sites, with motivated staff in various roles providing opportunities for children to play and ensuring access to space and resources.

- Establish a Play Community of Practice within CTMUHB
- Advance key initiatives aligned with play using a phased approach, embedding a "One CTM" ethos in all actions
- Promote organisation wide the importance of a child's right to play, in every setting
- Upskill professionals, regardless of role, to actively engage in play with children

## 4 Results

87

People engaged with (29 parents, 33 staff, 25 children)

### People

All children valued having staff who supported their play.

Parents ranked 'staff to help' as very important to help children to play and relax in hospital.

"We got to play hide and seek when it was quiet"

"My son was limited as he was on oxygen. There was a lot of effort from staff to make sure he wasn't bored"

### Spaces

Staff view hospital playrooms as important, with all noting they were missed when closed due to Covid-19 restrictions

"We spent as much time as we could in the playroom—it was good to have space to play"

### Stuff

All children surveyed reported that they enjoy having access to a range of equipment both in the playroom and at bedside.

"I liked playing with messy paints"

"The distraction toys helped my child relax"