

Our approach to assurance

It is essential we continue to provide assurance about the safety and well-being of people receiving social care and childcare services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The well-being of people who work in social care and childcare services, including our own staff is also a key priority. Across Wales we have learned so much from our experience of the last six months and we are using this to inform our approach during this second wave.

Our approach is kept under weekly review. All action we take is in line with Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidance to help limit the spread of COVID-19.

Our work is underpinned by a set of principles and we have adapted the way we work in line with these

- **Putting people first:** the voice and well-being of people remains at the heart of our work underpinned by a rights based approach. This includes people using social care and childcare services, those working in regulated services and our staff.
- **Being risk based and responsive:** we will take a risk based, proportionate and timely approach to our work. We will monitor services and local authorities, respond to concerns and take action to reduce risks to people's safety and well-being and secure improvement.
- **Being intelligence led:** our work will be informed by data and intelligence. This includes intelligence from:
 - people who use services
 - people working in services
 - people commissioning services
 - people working in wider social care, health and childcare networks
 - our findings from inspections
- **Working collaboratively:** we will continue to listen, share information and work collaboratively across social care and childcare sectors and the Welsh Government to drive improvement.
- **Reflecting and learning:** we will learn from new approaches to inform our next phase (renewal) and continue to benefit from the new ways of working.

Our focus is on the quality and safety of social care and childcare services. Where risks are identified, we are responding and we are actively listening and seeking feedback from a wide range of sources about the quality of care and support people are receiving. We are trialling new ways of working, including making effective use of technology available to us, and learning from this to inform how we will operate in the future.

Putting our principles into practice

We recognise the significant pressure social care and child care services are experiencing and do not wish to unnecessarily add to this. Nevertheless providing assurance about people's safety and well-being is essential.

CIW Connect, our first point of contact service, continues to be fully operational and receives feedback and concerns.

It is important we hear about the experience of people using social care or childcare services, and from staff working in them. We encourage people to give us feedback by contacting our Connect team or completing our new online surveys

<https://careinspectorate.wales/feedback-surveys>

We are taking an intelligence led and risk based approach to our work. We continue to work closely with local authority and health board commissioners and childcare leads to share information and intelligence about services to inform our intelligence led and risk based decision making.

Registration

We continue to prioritise new applications and variations for registration to help create additional capacity in adults and children's social care and childcare provision. Liaising with local authorities, health boards and providers to maintain oversight of services providing 'surge capacity' in response to COVID-19.

We have adapted our registration processes to ensure our work can continue in a safe and effective way.

Monitoring

Our routine inspection and performance review schedule means we have varied frequencies for conducting activity across all regulated services and local authorities.

We are monitoring services and local authorities by:

- considering feedback, information, notifications and concerns
- seeking feedback from people
- close working with local authority and health board commissioners
- having regular direct contact with as many services as possible to seek assurance that the service is promoting the safety and well-being of people and is compliant with regulations and standards

The frequency and way in which we do this will vary for different types of service.

Where our monitoring identifies potential risks to people's well-being we are seeking further assurance. This may include:

- more frequent contact with the service/local authority
- requests for specific information to be provided

- virtual tour of premises (where appropriate)
- virtual interviews with staff
- contact with families / parents
- discussions with commissioning bodies
- feedback from professionals who have had recent contact with the service
- meeting with the responsible individual

The intelligence gained may lead to inspection.

Inspection

We are now visiting services to carry out inspections but we are minimising the amount of time we spend on site. Our inspections always consider the 'well-being' theme from our methodology and result in a published report. For childcare and play services we have suspended publishing ratings for the time being.

In some circumstances, we are able to gather the evidence we need without visiting the service premises. Where we have been able to speak to people who use the service without a visit, an inspection report will still be published.

Risk assessments and risk management plans will be used to ensure the safety of people using the service, staff and inspectors. We ensure our staff are protected and minimise risks of infection transmission. We achieve this by:

- providing training to all inspection staff on key areas relating to the pandemic including infection control and prevention
- all staff attending undertake risk assessment
- using personal protective equipment (PPE) to the standards set out by Public Health Wales

We continue to work closely with other inspectorates to consider opportunities for joint work and reduce duplication.

Enforcement

We continue to work in line with our Securing Improvement and Enforcement guidance, taking enforcement action as required.

Local authority performance review

We are carrying our risk based inspection of local authority social services where we have concerns about people's safety and well-being. In addition we have developed a programme of assurance checks of all local authorities in Wales.

Other activity

We are coordinating communication across a range of organisations with the aim of providing clear information and guidance for providers. This includes sharing communication on behalf of Welsh Government.

We continue to share data and intelligence with the Welsh Government and other partners to inform COVID-19 planning and response. We also share issues raised with us by providers to ensure they are supported to deliver high quality services that promote positive outcomes for people.