

## **Our approach to assurance**

### **March 2021**

We have continued 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 has also been a key priority. Across Wales we have learned so much from our experience over the last year and this is informing our approach for the coming months.

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 planned, risk based, proportionate and timely approach to our work. We will review and inspect regulated 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, with other inspectorates and the Welsh Government to drive improvement.
- **Reflecting and learning:** we will learn from new approaches to inform our new ways of working.

Our focus remains on the quality and safety of social care and childcare services. We have continued to inspect throughout the pandemic. We are prioritising the services we inspect, responding to concerns and actively seeking feedback from a wide range of sources about the quality of care and support people are receiving. We want to learn about exemplary practice as well areas for improvement. We will continue to test new ways of working, including making effective use of technology available to us, and learn from this to inform how we will operate in future.

## **Putting our principles into practice**

We recognise the continued pressure on social care and childcare services caused by COVID-19 and do not wish to unnecessarily add to this. Nevertheless providing assurance about people's safety and well-being is essential.

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](#).

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

We have adapted our registration processes to ensure our work can continue in a safe and effective way. We will keep our processes under review and adapt them as appropriate.

## **Monitoring, Inspection and Review**

We are monitoring, inspecting and reviewing services and local authorities by:

- considering feedback, information, notifications and concerns
- actively seeking feedback from:
  - people receiving services
  - local authority and health board commissioners
  - professionals who have had recent contact with the service
- seeking information from providers
- carrying out physical inspection of regulated services
- continuing assurance checks of local authority social services

We are using this intelligence to prioritise our activities.

Our inspections always consider the 'well-being' theme of our frameworks and result in a published report. For childcare and play services we have suspended publishing ratings and are considering resuming these from September 2021.

Risk assessments and risk management plans in relation to COVID-19 will be used to ensure the safety of people using the service, staff and inspectors

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 out 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 continue to coordinate 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 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.

Over the coming months we will be reviewing our ways of working to ensure we continue to develop and improve in line with the actions set out in our [strategic plan](#) and will be engaging with our staff and key stakeholders in this.