

How we inspect Childcare and Play Services

Making sure services are safe



This document was written by **Care Inspectorate Wales**. It is an easy read version of 'Code of Practice for Inspection of Child Minding, Day Care and Open Access Play Services'.

October 2024

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



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Who we are



We are **Care Inspectorate Wales**.



We inspect childcare and play services. We want everyone to know about how we do it.



We are **independent**. This means we are not controlled by government. The decisions we make are based on what we think is best.

What we do and how we do it



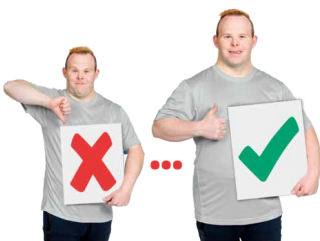
We check that children using services are safe, well and happy.



We check they can use the rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



We tell the public about services. We say how good each service is.



We help services do better.



We give advice to people in charge of social care and care services.



We decide who can run a service, and what service they can run.



We take action if services are not doing what the law says.



We go back to check any services we were concerned about.



We check all registered childcare and play services. The law says who needs to be registered.



Registering means signing up to follow our rules.



We check that children are learning, healthy, happy and safe.



We only let people run childcare or play services if we are sure they will follow all the rules.



We are clear what we will do if a service is not following all the rules.

Types of childcare we check

We check child minders and day care. This includes:



- nurseries
- sessional care like cylchoedd meithrin and play groups



- out-of-school childcare like day care in the holidays or before and after school



- creches
- play sessions.



We do not check nannies or groups that meet for under 2 hours.

Children's rights



We put children's rights first in our work.



We check that children:

- can speak up
- are safe and well cared for
- are treated with respect
- have help to learn new skills



We will do something about it if we do not think children are safe.



We will also tell the local authority.



We check the service obeys the law.



Welsh language is important.



We check children can get childcare and play services in Welsh if they want, without their parents having to ask.



We send Welsh-speaking inspectors to services that speak Welsh.

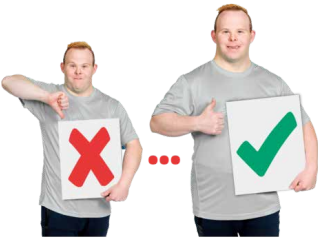
How we inspect services



When we inspect, we will:



- focus on the children using the service, their parents and staff



- help services get better at their job



- be open and honest about everything we do and say



- be fair when we write our report



- take action if something is wrong



- focus on children's health, happiness and safety



- treat all services in the same way.

There are 4 steps to an inspection



1. We find out information about the service.

We look at concerns or complaints and things that are going well.

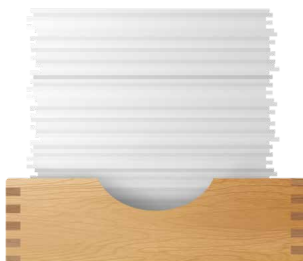


2. We visit the service.

We listen to children, parents, carers and staff. We watch what is going on. If children cannot talk to us, we look at how they are supported.



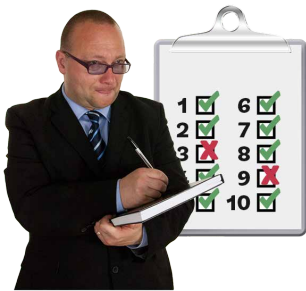
We check the play or areas used by children are safe and suitable for children.



We look at paperwork.



If we think children may be at risk, we tell the service. We may need to tell the local authority or police. Sometimes we tell both.



3. We tell the service what we think.

They can tell us if they think we have got it wrong.



4. We write a report and put it on our website.

It tells the service what it does well, what it needs to change or do better.



We do not usually tell services when we are coming, unless we are coming with Estyn.

What we check

We always check:



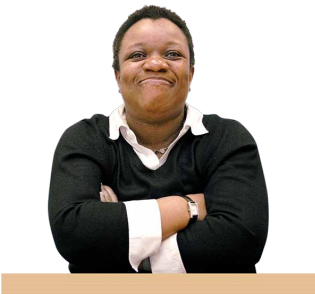
- Are the children healthy, happy and learning?



- Is the childcare and play good? Are there chances to learn new skills?



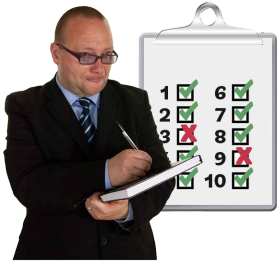
- Are the areas used by children safe, clean, well-kept and welcoming? Are there enough things to do?



- Is the service well run?



If the service provides food, we check how many food hygiene stars they have.



We do not give services an overall score. We give ratings for what we found during different parts of the inspection.

The rating could be:



Excellent



Good



OK



Poor



If a service gets 1 or more ratings of **Poor**, we tell them what they must do.

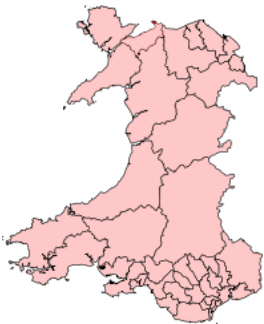
Types of inspection



- At most of our inspections, we check everything at the service. We do this about 6 months after the service starts to run and then regularly every few years. We go back sooner if we think things are not good enough.



- Sometimes we do extra inspections if we need to check just a few things we are concerned about. These inspections are shorter than our main inspections.



- We sometimes check across Wales about 1 area or topic, like day care for disabled children. This helps us understand what is working well and tell Welsh Government about any problems.



- Estyn is in charge of checking education. If a childcare service gets money to provide education, we check the service alongside Estyn.



Some inspections take longer than others. It depends on each service, such as how many children use the service and how old they are.



We normally send 1 inspector, but we may send more.



We also have meetings in between inspections with the people who run childcare and play services. At these meetings we talk about how they have made things better since the last inspection and what they plan to do next.

When we do our checks



We check a new service about 6 months after it opens.



The longest time wait between checks is 5 years.



We will check a service sooner if:

- we found problems at the last inspection
- a lot of people complain about it
- we are told that children are not safe



We may also check if just 1 person complains.

What inspectors and services should do



Our inspectors must always act professionally.



They must follow our rules for doing inspections.



They must always put the children using services first.



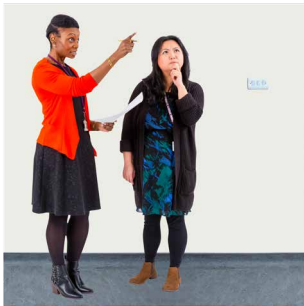
Service providers and staff can help by being honest when we talk to them.



They need to tell us if they think we may upset anyone.



They need to get on with their work as usual when we are there.



They need to let us look around, as long as this is safe.



They must find a private area for us to meet people.



They must speak up if they have concerns about how we are doing the inspection.



We will be polite to childcare and play services. We expect them to be polite to us.



We will do something if staff make us feel unsafe.

What happens after an inspection



We will tell the service provider what we think. We usually do this before we leave.



They can say if they think we have got it wrong.



We will tell the service provider if we think we need to take action against them.



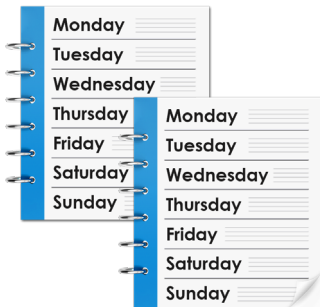
We write our reports so the public can read them. The reports give facts not just what we think. We hope they help parents and carers who need to choose a service.



We aim to send a written report to the service 5 weeks after we inspect them.



The service has 2 weeks to say if they think we got facts wrong.



If they say we did, we have 1 week to make changes to the report or say why we are not changing it. They have another week to say if they are happy now.



If they are, we put the report on our website.



If they are not, we have 1 more week to tell the service provider what we think.



We aim to put the report on our website 10 weeks after we inspect the service.



We have a complaints policy. Anyone can use it to complain if they are not happy about our service or an inspector.

What we do if a service is not good



We want children to be healthy, happy and to learn.



This is the most important thing for services to get right.



We will check that the service is doing what we told them.

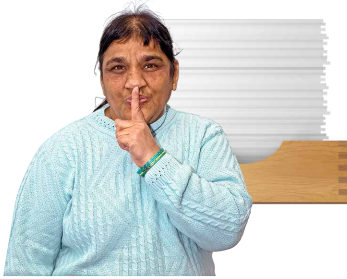


If we think children are not safe, we can close the service.



Some services give poor care. We make sure they do better, or we close them. We can even take the service provider to court.

How we keep information safe



We need to collect a lot of information. Some of it is personal or private.



There are laws and rules about keeping information safe.



There are laws and rules about what we must keep private and what we can share with other people.



There are rules for sharing information with organisations like the Police.



We will always follow those laws and rules.