

From Response to Recovery:

Our approach to assurance in the recovery phase

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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Response phase

On 16 March, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) suspended routine inspections to reduce the risks of spreading COVID-19. Our approach was set out in our document 'Providing assurance on the quality and safety of services during the COVID-19 pandemic' (<https://careinspectorate.wales/200513-how-we-ensure-quality-and-safety-services-during-covid-19-pandemic>).

During this phase our first point of contact and concerns functions remained fully operational. Our activity included:

- supporting providers through regular check-in calls
- close monitoring of concerns and notifications (including of COVID-19 outbreaks and deaths in care homes)
- analysing and sharing data and intelligence to support responses to the pandemic
- providing a communications channel to childcare and social care sectors including development of a dedicated COVID-19 area of our website with FAQs and useful resources

The intelligence gained from our check-in calls with services enabled us to advocate on behalf of people using services and staff working in them. We identified key issues and discussed these with local authorities, health boards, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), Welsh Government and Public Health Wales to inform and shape responses to the pandemic.

During this response phase our relationship with providers moved to being a more supportive one and we do not want to lose this rapport. It is important that as a regulator and inspectorate we are able to provide public assurance and secure improvement so we want to build on these relationships to enable us to do this in the next phase of recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recovery

From 31 July, we are moving to our recovery phase. It is difficult to be exact about how long this phase will last and we will keep it under weekly review, but we anticipate we may be operating in the ways set out here until the autumn.

This recovery approach is in the context of continued community transmission of COVID-19. Any action we take will be in line with Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidance to help limit the spread of COVID-19. As the prevalence of COVID-19 diminishes, we will increase our inspection activity; equally if there is a second wave or emergence of local hot spots, we will amend our approach.

The recovery phase is underpinned by key principles:

- **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
- **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.

In our recovery phase, we will adapt the way we work in line with our principles. Our focus will be on the quality and safety of social care and childcare services. We will work as far as possible in a remote way, making effective use of technology available to us and providers. Our assurance is that where risks are identified, we will respond and we will actively listen and seek feedback from a wide range of sources about the quality of care and support people are receiving. We will use the recovery phase to test new ways of working and learn from these to inform how we will operate in the future.

Putting our principles in to practice

CIW Connect, our first point of contact service, will continue to be fully operational and will receive feedback and concerns.

We recognise the significant pressure social care and child care services have experienced over the last four months and do not wish to unnecessarily add to this with regulatory burden at this time. While we will not be returning to our full inspection programme during the recovery period, we will adopt an increased focus on monitoring to gain further assurance about the quality and safety of services. We will take a risk based approach, responding to all concerns we receive and will carry out inspections where this is necessary and other means of gaining assurance and evidence have been exhausted.

Where we determine there to be a serious level of risk within a local authority we will increase our performance review activity and where necessary this may include inspection.

We will continue to take part in safeguarding discussions with local authorities and partners on a virtual basis as required.

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

During this recovery phase we will also pro-actively seek feedback from people about their experiences of social care and childcare services through targeted social media campaigns.

Registration

We will 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. We will only revise these where it is safe to do so and in a way that will not affect the ability of applicants to progress applications.

Monitoring

Our routine inspection and performance review schedule means we have varied frequencies for conducting activity across all regulated services and local authorities. During this recovery phase we will monitor services and local authorities by:

- considering feedback, information, notifications and concerns
- seeking feedback from people
- close working with local authority and health board commissioners
- regular direct contact with as many services as possible. The core purpose of these calls is to seek assurance from providers 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.

Over the coming months we will increase our engagement activity to seek feedback from a wide range of sources.

Where our monitoring identifies potential risks to people's well-being we will seek 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
- enhanced assurance reviews with local authorities
- meeting with directors of social services and other relevant stakeholders
- performance and review activity in local authorities which may lead to inspection activity

The intelligence gained may lead to inspection.

We will use the opportunity of this recovery phase to develop and test approaches to identifying early indicators of concern in services.

Inspection

In some circumstances, we can gather the evidence needed for an inspection 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 be published, in line with our usual processes.

We will inspect regulated services where one or more of the features applies:

- off-site assurance activity has raised serious concerns about actual or possible harm, abuse, or breaches of human rights and the provider has been unable to provide sufficient evidence that allows us to decide that people are safe
- we have received information that has raised concerns we can only fully consider through an on-site visit
- we must visit to be able to decide whether to take, or to stop taking enforcement action
- the service is already on the securing improvement and enforcement pathway with non-compliance notices issued or enforcement action underway

This may be a virtual and/or onsite inspection tailored to the circumstances in each case. Most will be focused inspections in order to reduce the amount of time spent on site. We will always consider the 'well-being' theme from our methodology. Focused inspections will result in a published report. Risk assessments and risk management plans will be used to ensure the safety of people using the service, staff and inspectors.

Where inspection visits are required, we will ensure our staff are protected and do not pose a risk of infection transmission. This will be achieved in the following way:

- providing training to all inspection staff on key areas relating to the pandemic including infection control and prevention
- all staff attending will undertake a questionnaire and declaration, relating to their health and isolation status. This is to ensure staff who are self-isolating or displaying symptoms do not enter healthcare environments
- personal protective equipment (PPE) to the standards set out by Public Health Wales will be supplied to our inspectors undertaking the visit. They will also

have received training in how to don (put on) and doff (take off) this equipment

During this recovery period we may also trial virtual inspection as part of routine assurance activity.

All inspections will result in a published report.

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

Enforcement

We will continue to respond to and investigate services operating without registration. Where a premises visit cannot be avoided we will ensure our staff are protected and do not pose a risk of infection transmission. We will do this by taking the steps as set out above.

We will continue criminal investigation already underway and instigate other enforcement activity as required to ensure the safety and well-being of people.

Other activity

We will continue to provide a communication route and keep our website updated. During the summer we begin targeted social media campaigns to seek feedback from people about services.

Whilst employing new ways of working, we will evaluate these to inform our renewal planning.

During July and August we will publish all inspection reports we paused publication of in March. This will include annual performance review letters to local authorities and national overview reports on deprivation of liberty safeguards, dementia and older adults.

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