

# Improving Care Services in Wales

A summary of our Annual Report for 2024 - 2025



## What we do ↓

### We register and check the quality of care services in Wales:

Care home  
services for adults  
and children

Home  
support  
services

Adult  
placement  
services

Secure  
accommodation  
services

Fostering  
and Adoption  
services

Residential  
family  
centres

Advocacy services  
(that help people  
be heard)

Child minders  
and day care  
providers

Special  
residential  
schools

### We also check the quality of:

Boarding schools and colleges  
for students under 18

Local authority fostering  
and adoption

## What we look for ↓

When we inspect services, we look at different themes to understand what's going well and what could be better. This includes things like:

- How well the service is run (leadership)
- How children and adults are kept safe (safeguarding)
- How well staff are trained and supported
- How people's rights, voices and wellbeing are respected

**If something's not right, we take action to help it improve.**

## Who we work with ↓

We work with others to make care better for everyone in Wales.

This includes:

- Estyn – who check education
- Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services.



**In this report, we'll tell you what we did with children and young people services during 2024–2025.**

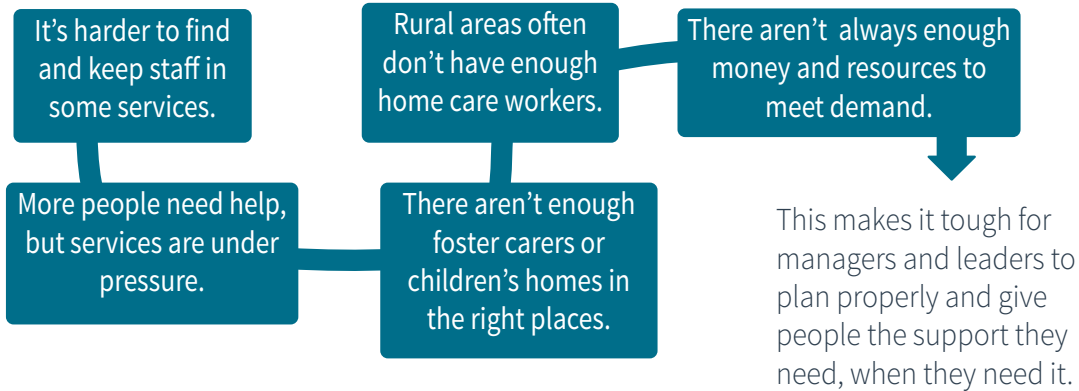
You can read the full report here:

[careinspectorate.wales/annual-report-2024-2025](https://careinspectorate.wales/annual-report-2024-2025)

# The big picture in Wales

Most people in Wales are getting good care and support – and that’s great news. But there are still some big challenges that care services are trying to deal with.

Here’s what’s going on:



## New this year: Ratings

We’ve been getting ready to introduce ratings for care homes and home support services. This means people will be able to see how well a service is doing in a clear and simple way.

Services will be rated as:

**Excellent**



**Good**



**Adequate**



**Poor**



This helps people choose the right care for themselves or their family. It also helps services know what they’re doing well – and what they need to work on. It will take time to rate every service, but we’ve already started.

## What we’ve been doing (2020-2025)

Over the past five years, we’ve made some important changes to the way we work.



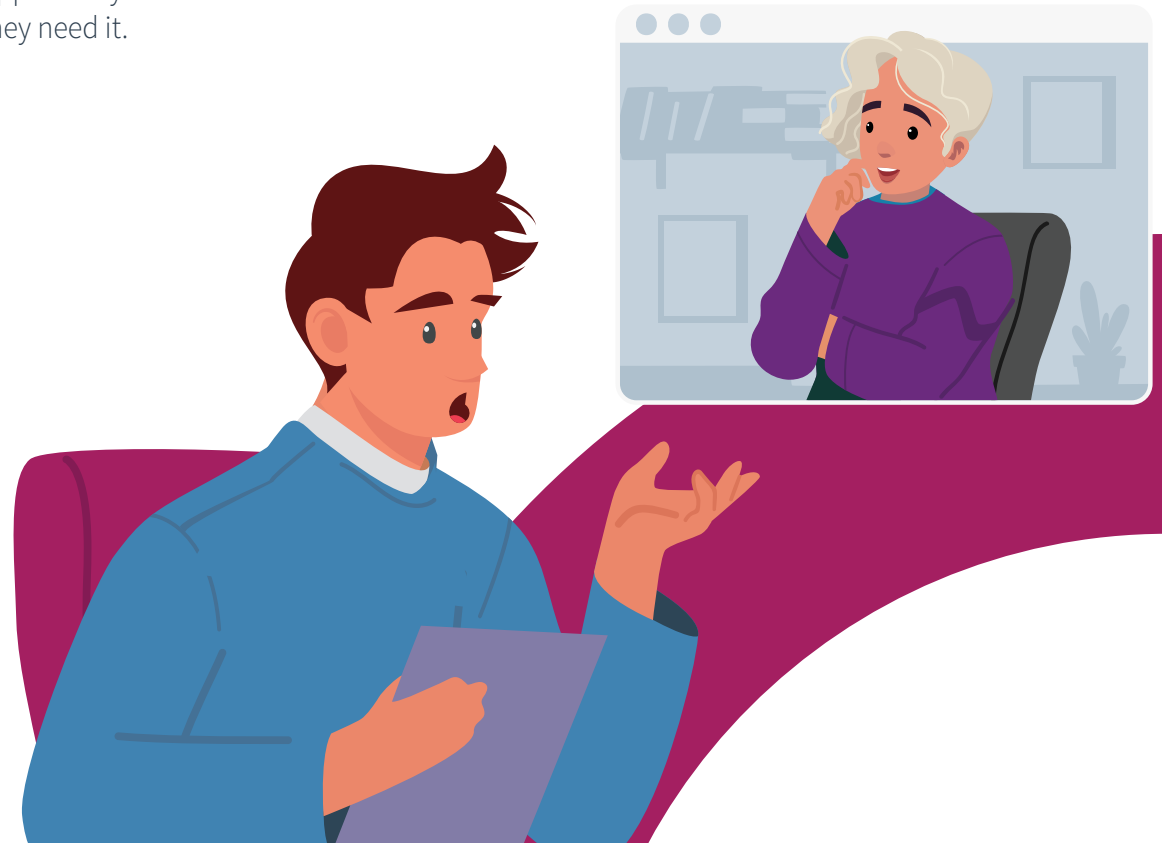
We’ve improved our online services.



We’ve improved our customer service – this year our team handled **10,000+** calls and **60,000+** emails.



We’ve promoted equality, diversity and inclusion so everyone gets support, is treated fairly and with respect.



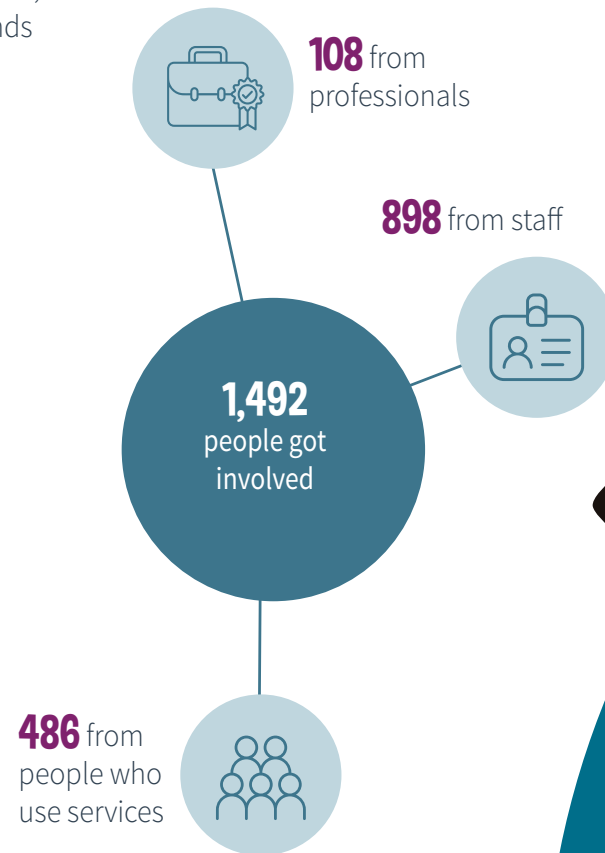
# Listening and involving people

We believe the best way to improve care is by listening to people who use services, their families, and the professionals and staff who give care.

## Talking about registered services:



## Talking about local authority services:



## Online event

We ran **15 online events** for people who run care services. Over **1,600 people** joined in to share their views and learn together.

## Working with others

We worked closely with our National Advisory Board. They are a group of professionals who give advice and help make sure people's voices are heard.

We also worked with care providers and inspectors to co-design a new ratings system and write our next 5-year plan.



# Giving people more opportunities to get involved

Not everyone finds it easy to fill in a survey or speak up. That's why we've been looking for better ways to listen — especially to people who don't always get heard.

We've made it easier for people to tell us what they think — so we can learn from their experiences and keep improving.

## Listening sessions

This year, we tested a new idea in 10 local authorities. We set up sessions where people could talk to us face to face about the care they get. This helped us understand the issues people face and whether services are meeting their needs.

## Peer Inspectors: people with real experience

We have **4** peer inspectors – these are people who've had care themselves. They:

- help us understand things better
- join our inspection teams
- work with services to make things better.



# Welsh language and culture

The Welsh language is part of who we are in Wales. It should be celebrated and supported.

## In our work:

- we use Welsh during inspections
- we support our staff to learn and use Welsh
- we have Welsh language champions.

When we inspect services, we look at how well they:

- offer people the choice to use Welsh
- promote Welsh traditions and identity.

**Good news:** more and more services are doing this.

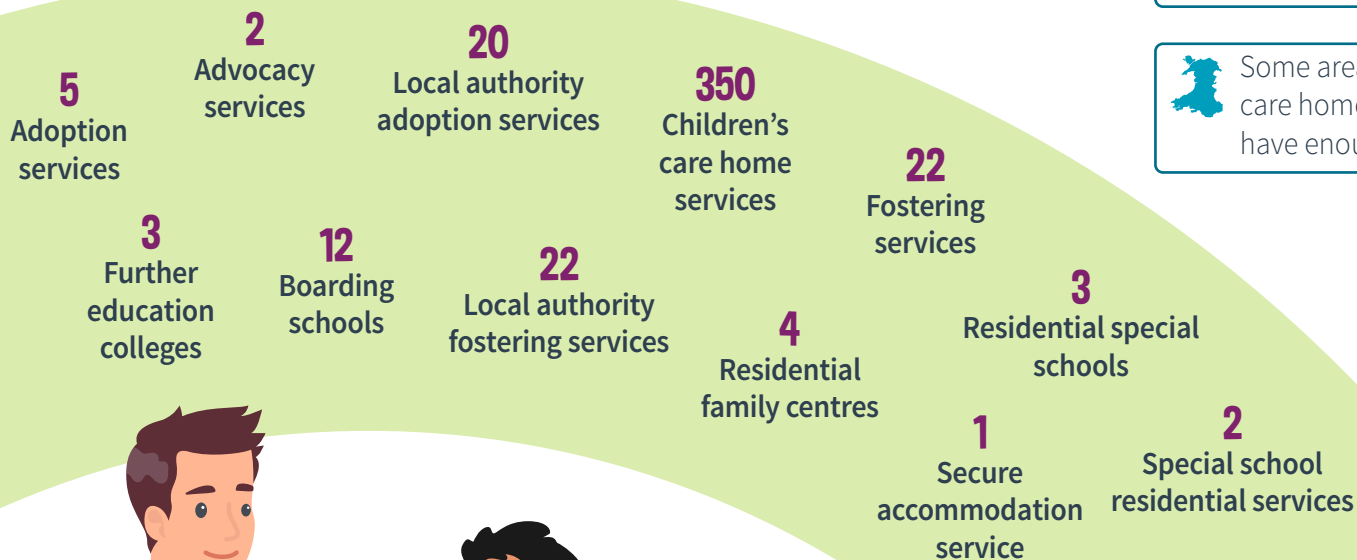


*“When I found out my grandson was going to a residential home. I was devastated but this is the best thing that could have happened for him. He’s calm, he’s happy and he loves the staff. I feel they really understand him. I feel involved and know he’s getting the best care. I cannot thank them enough - phenomenal team.”*

# Care for children and young people

## Registered services

There are now **446** registered services for children and young people.



## Care homes



We registered **48** new children's homes this year.



**8** care homes cancelled their registration and closed.



Some areas have plenty of care homes – others don't have enough.



**78%** of children's homes were rated good or excellent.



## Mike's Story (name changed)

Mike was rejected by his family and his community because of his sexuality and gender identity. With nowhere safe to turn, he came into care. At first, he was quiet and unsure how much of himself he could express and show.

Over time, staff helped Mike feel safe, respected, and free to be who he really is. They linked him with local LGBTQA+ groups and invited an LGBTQA+ Champion to visit. Having those spaces to talk openly and explore his identity helped Mike build confidence and start seeing himself in a more positive light.



## Inspecting registered services

We did **219** inspections – **31** more than the year before.

Most services are doing well and making a big difference to children's lives.

## Inspecting local authority services

We inspected children's services in Carmarthenshire local authority.

We also carried out a follow-up check on Denbighshire.

We listened to professionals, families and children, and found:

- strong leadership
- caring, skilled staff
- children felt like they were part of their foster family
- children got help to understand their story and keep important relationships.

We also spotted new ways to improve services. For example: ↪

In one service, staff were supported to learn Welsh so they could speak Welsh to people and help celebrate Welsh culture.

Children in foster care were supported to understand their story and helped them keep important relationships.

## Inspecting mental health support

We found that mental health support had improved. But there is a big demand on these services and reduced funding is challenging. Children and young people still need to get help and support quicker.



*"I feel that CIW encourage a culture of improvement. Spotting the things we do well whilst also giving good feedback on things that can be improved."*

## Dealing with concerns

We received **205** reports of concerns about children's services.

In 5% we inspected them sooner than usual.

**5%**

In 58% we referred them for investigation.

**58%**

In 9% we shared information with other services.

**9%**

In 36% we investigated but decided not to take further action.

**36%**

## Keeping children safe

We work with care providers, councils, and the police to help keep children safe.

This year:

There were **2,902** reports of children going missing. That's more than the year before.

We looked into **598** reports of abuse.

We carried out **854** investigations around children's safety.

We looked into **142** possible child exploitation cases.

Worked with the police on **1,480** incidents.

**The rise in concerns doesn't mean things are worse.**

**Services are improving.** Staff are spotting and reporting concerns more often, which helps protect children.

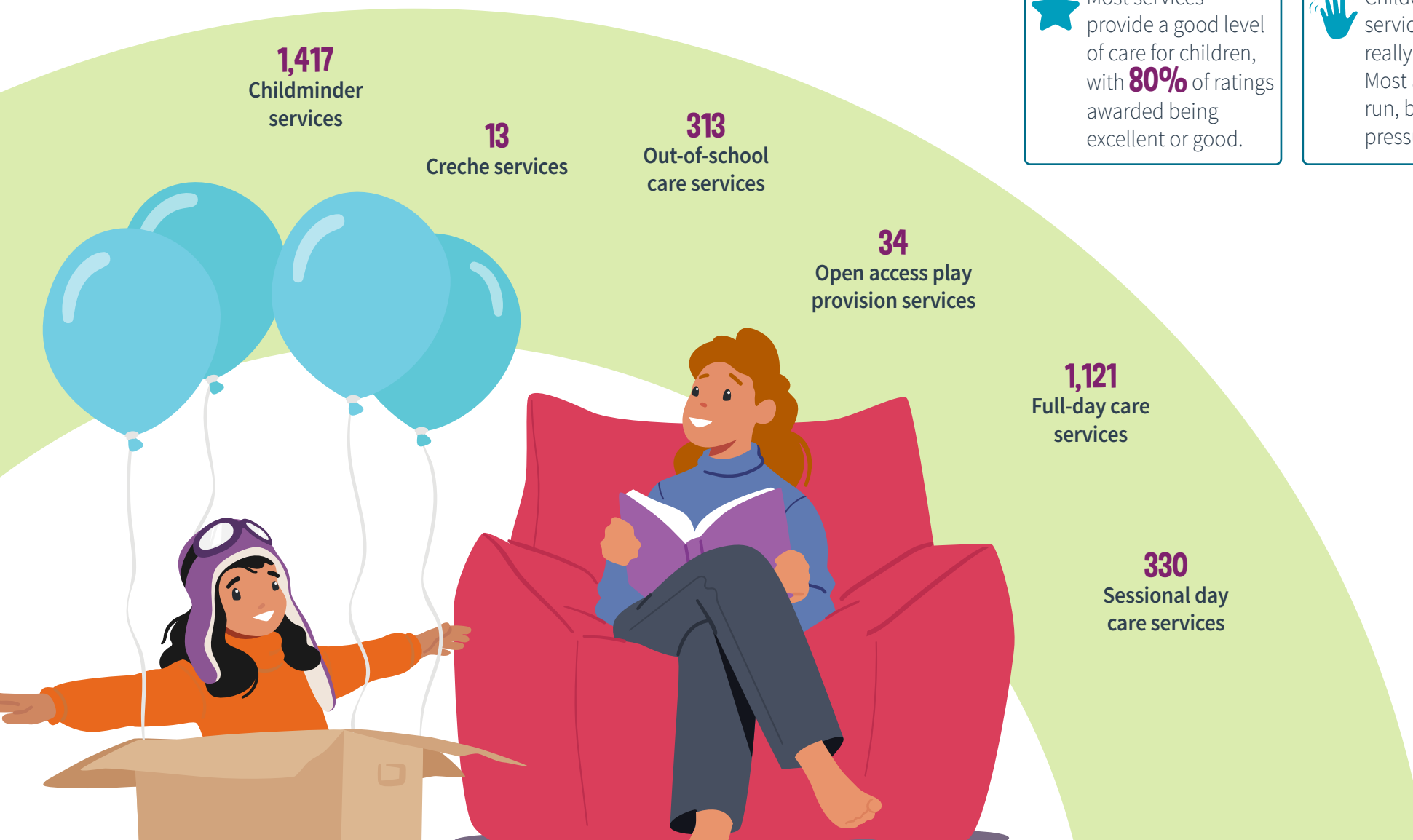




# Childcare and play

This year there were **3,228** different childcare and play services across Wales.

Together they offered over **79,000** places for children.



## Inspecting childcare and play services

We carried out more inspections and meetings than the year before — **946** in total. We worked with Estyn and inspected **89** services together this year.



Most services provide a good level of care for children, with **80%** of ratings awarded being excellent or good.



Childcare and play services are doing a really important job. Most are safe and well-run, but they are under pressure.

## Dealing with concerns

We received **481** concerns about childcare and play services.

In 25% we inspected them sooner than usual.

**25%**

In 30% we referred them for investigation.

**30%**

In 7% we shared information with other services.

**7%**

In 39% we investigated but decided not to take further action.

**39%**



*"All of the children are happy and safe at the nursery. My child has developed excellent relationships with the girls who care for her and really enjoys going to nursery."*



## Tiny Robins meet Wise Owls

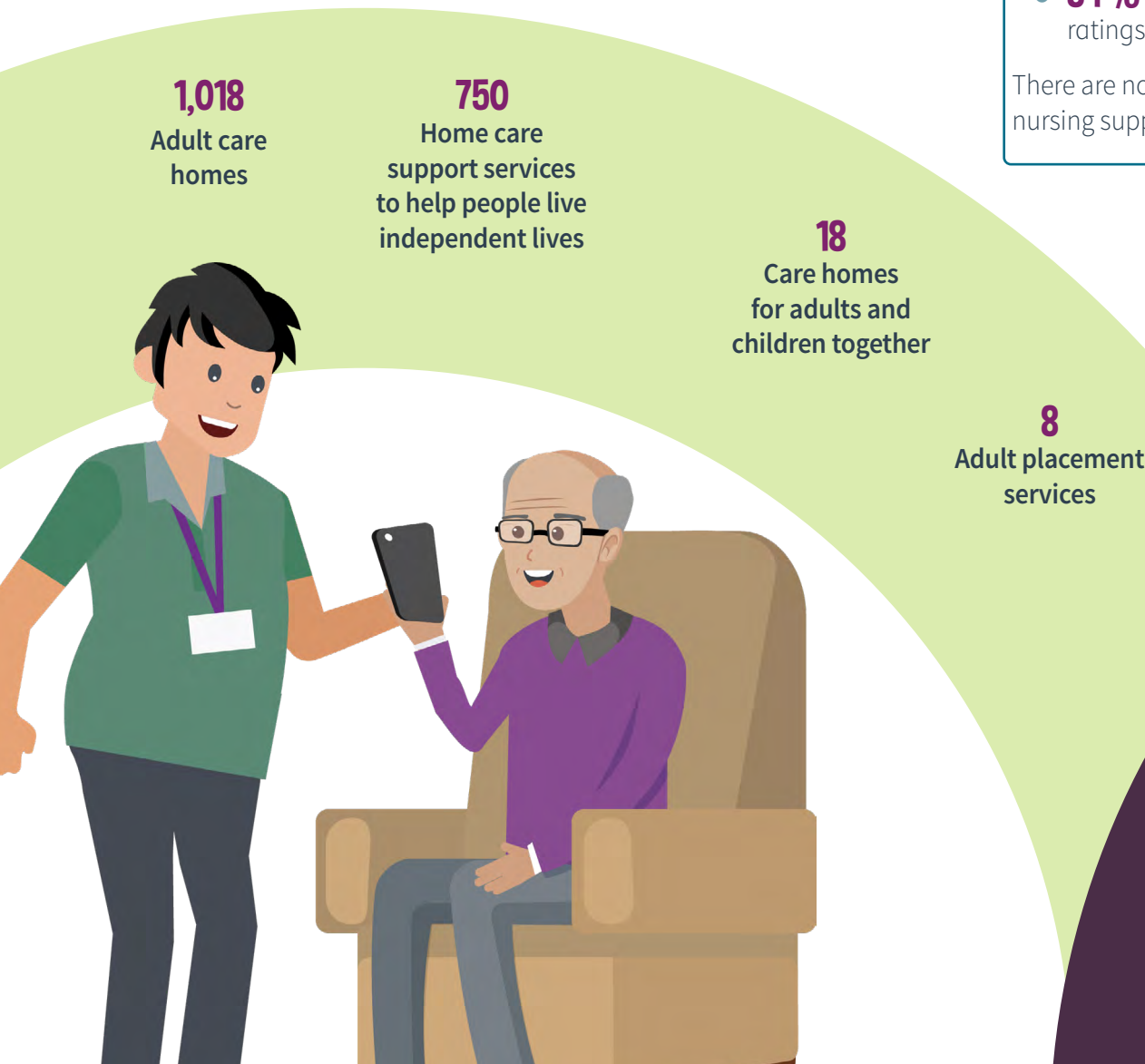
A nursery in Caldicot now takes young children to visit a local dementia group every week.

These visits help build friendships between young children and older people, showing that learning and connection can happen at any age.

# Care for adults

## Registered services

There are **1,794** registered adult services in Wales.



## Care homes

In 2024–2025:

- **63** care homes closed or changed providers
- **84%** of care home and home support ratings were 'good' or 'excellent'.

There are now more care homes that offer nursing support than ones that don't.

## Home care services

**55** new services started across Wales. More and more people want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

Some rural areas don't have enough services, but local councils are trying new ideas to fill the gap.



*"I would be more than happy to recommend this service to a friend or relative because I feel like we care for service users who are not our family and friends exactly how we would want family and friends to be cared for."*

## Inspecting registered services

We inspected **1,087** adult services.

Most of them are doing well. Where things weren't working, we gave advice or took action to help them improve.

### Mental health and joined-up care

We checked how well adult mental health and learning disability teams work together. There was strong commitment from staff, but we found some areas that need work – like making sure carers are supported and people's voices are included in care plans.

## Dealing with concerns

We had **1,587** concerns from people about adult care. These were mainly about:

- Leadership and how services are managed
- How people are cared for day to day
- Staff raising issues in their workplace

We looked into all concerns. Sometimes we spoke to the provider or other organisations. In **90** services, we carried out inspections earlier because of what we were told.

We also got over **26,000** messages about issues. All of these help us know where to focus our inspections.

## Improving services

This year:

- We found **300** services needed to improve.
- We gave out **195** Priority Action Notices. These mean something needs fixed urgently.
- Most services made improvements quickly.
- **9** services needed more serious action, including four care homes being closed.



## What's going well

- Some services are tackling loneliness with group activities and creative support.
- Local councils are using new ideas like “community connectors” and “wellbeing networks” to give people the support they need sooner.
- Some care homes are learning Welsh and celebrating local culture with residents.

# Improving the quality of our work

Improving how we work is important to us, so this year we:

- worked on making inspections easier to understand
- gave better, clearer feedback to services after inspections
- checked that our written reports were helpful and easy to read
- supported our inspectors to develop their skills and treat everyone with respect.

## Thanks for reading this

You can find out more about who we are and what we do here:

 [careinspectorate.wales](https://careinspectorate.wales)

## Looking ahead

Now we're getting ready for a new 5-year **strategic plan**. It builds on what we've done well and it keeps people at the centre of everything we do.

**We'll keep working to make care services in Wales safe, kind, and better for everyone.**

