

Communication and engagement strategy

2026 - 2030



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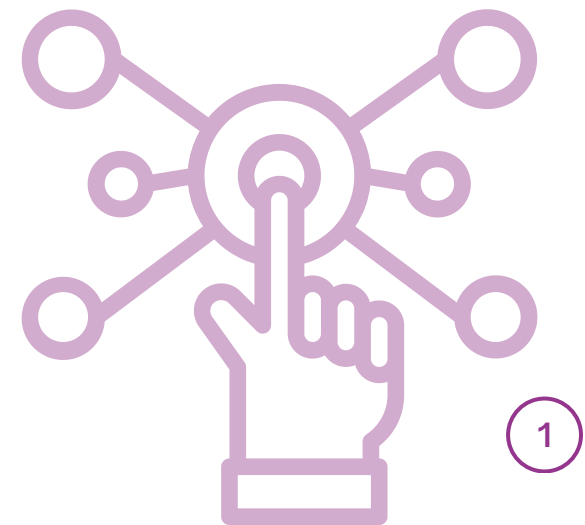


The communications landscape has undergone unprecedented transformation over the past five years, fundamentally reshaping how we engage with people.

This period has witnessed a dramatic acceleration in digital-first communication, the emergence of artificial intelligence as a powerful tool for content creation, and an increased emphasis on evidence-based, behavioural science-informed approaches to communication and engagement.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst for change, demonstrating both the critical importance of clear, accessible communication and the need for rapid adaptation to new channels and formats. For organisations like ours, this period highlighted the vital role that regulatory bodies play in maintaining public trust and providing assurance during times of crisis. People's expectations have evolved accordingly, with demands for more personalised and inclusive engagement becoming the norm rather than the exception.

The rise of misinformation has heightened the importance of trusted, authoritative communication from credible sources. This challenge has particular resonance for regulatory and oversight bodies, where establishing and maintaining trust is fundamental to effectiveness. People need to know not just that we exist, but what we do and how we can help them. This shift towards greater transparency and accountability aligns with growing public expectations that organisations should report openly on their findings, even when this means challenging established practices or systems.

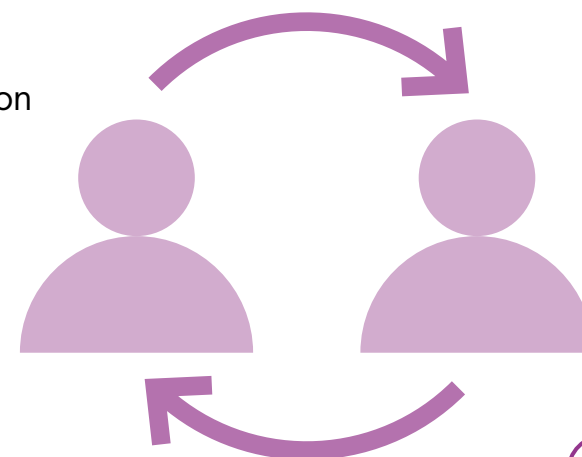




Simultaneously, there has been a fundamental evolution in how public bodies approach stakeholder engagement. The traditional model of one-way communication has given way to genuine co-production approaches, where the voices and experiences of people using services informs and shapes organisational priorities. This transformation reflects a broader recognition that meaningful influence comes not from authority alone, but from demonstrating real understanding of the challenges faced by those we serve.

The increasing complexity of care systems and the growing recognition of partnership working as essential to improving outcomes has also transformed the communications landscape. Organisations can no longer operate in isolation; effective influence requires collaborative approaches that leverage collective knowledge and expertise to drive improvements.

Our new communication and engagement strategy responds to these fundamental shifts by positioning us as a trusted, visible, and influential voice in Wales' care landscape. It recognises our unique insight and expertise only creates positive change when it is effectively communicated to the right audiences at the right time, in ways that inspire action and build confidence in our role as champions for those receiving care.





In April 2025 we launched our strategic plan which outlines our priorities for the next five years. One of the three key themes in our strategic plan is to:

Influence - Be well known and trusted, sharing our unique insight and expertise to make a positive difference. We will:



Increase our visibility to ensure people know what we do and what we can help with.



Ensure our work is informed by people accessing and working in care services.



Report openly, and without favour on what we learn about care in Wales, not being afraid to challenge where we see opportunities to intervene on behalf of those receiving care.



Work together across CIW and with our partners, sharing what we know to improve outcomes for people.

This communications and engagement strategy outlines in more detail how we will achieve these ambitions.

A large teal circular callout bubble with a white arrow pointing from the right towards the 'Ensure our work is informed...' text block.



Policy and regulatory environment

The care sector in Wales continues to face unprecedented pressures, from demographic changes and increasing complexity of need to ongoing workforce challenges. These pressures have intensified public and political focus on the quality, safety, and sustainability of care services, creating both opportunities and responsibilities for regulatory bodies to provide clear, evidence-based insight that can inform policy development and service improvement.

Professional communications landscape

Government communications has undergone significant transformation, moving towards evidence-based, behavioural science-informed approaches that prioritise genuine engagement over traditional broadcast models. The Government Communication Service's emphasis on campaigns that 'make a difference' through the OASIS framework (Objectives, Audience/insight, Strategy/Ideas, Implementation, Scoring/Evaluation) provides a robust foundation for developing communications that achieve measurable outcomes rather than simply generating awareness.

This shift towards outcome-focused communication aligns with our strategic priority to influence positive change in care services. By adopting behavioural science principles, particularly the COM-B model (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation, Behaviour), we can better understand and address the barriers that prevent different stakeholders from engaging effectively with our work or acting on our findings.





Technological and digital transformation

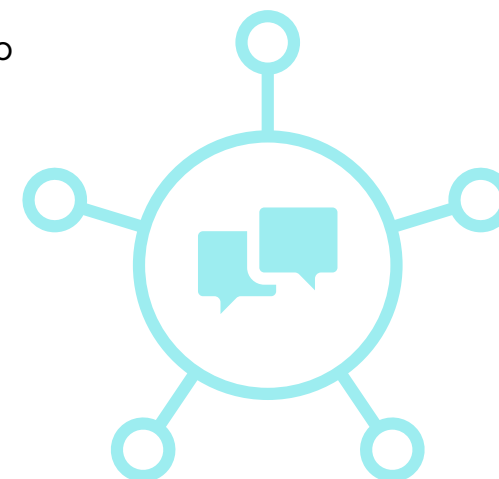
The rapid advancement of digital communication tools, including the emergence of generative artificial intelligence, presents both opportunities and challenges for regulatory communications. These technologies offer new possibilities for creating accessible, personalised content and engaging with diverse audiences through their preferred channels.

The increased expectation for multi-channel, accessible communication means we must consider not only what we communicate, but how different audiences, including those with disabilities, those who use British Sign Language, and those with varying levels of digital literacy, can access and engage with our content.

Legal obligations for inclusive communication

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to make reasonable adjustments ensuring equal access to information for all. We must consider the nine protected characteristics alongside socioeconomic and geographic factors that can create barriers to accessing information.

We must also ensure all our work meets Welsh language standards.





Where are we now?



Social media followers are steadily increasing



Average click rate on our provider e-bulletins is improving



Average rating across all our provider events

“Loved every minute. Great to build relations with CIW as professional partners. Keep up the good work.”

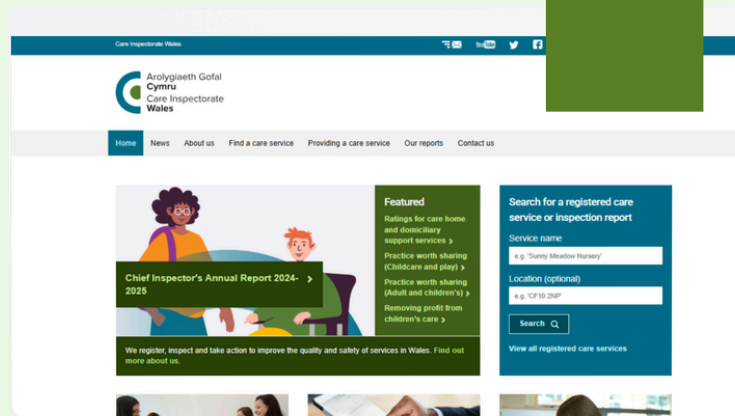


Engagement on our social media channels is decreasing



A third of providers are engaging with the e-bulletin content

CIW website users increased 20% year on year



1492

people gave us feedback during local authority inspections in 2024/25



Theme 1: Build awareness and understanding

What we want to achieve:

People in Wales understand what CIW does, how we can help them make informed care decisions, and how to share their experiences with us.

Strategic objectives:

- Increase public understanding of how CIW ratings and the service directory support care decisions
- Ensure people know how to provide feedback on care services
- Proactively manage our reputation through strategic media engagement





Theme 2: Enable meaningful engagement

What we want to achieve:

People using services and care providers can easily engage with us, share their experiences, and see how their feedback shapes our work.

Strategic objectives:

- Create accessible opportunities for service users to share experiences and influence improvement
- Close the feedback loop – showing how we use what people tell us and communicating outcomes back to participants
- Embed best practice engagement standards, including government communication principles and national engagement standards for Wales





Theme 3: Strengthen digital and inclusive communication

What we want to achieve:

Our communication channels are accessible, user-friendly, and effective, while ensuring we reach all communities through appropriate methods.

Strategic objectives:

- Develop user-centred digital tools that meet the diverse needs of service users and providers
- Reach diverse audiences through both digital and non-digital channels, ensuring no one is excluded
- Continuously audit and improve accessibility across all our communication channels
- Use technology, including AI where appropriate, to enhance (not replace) human engagement





Theme 4: Develop strategic partnerships and communication capability

What we want to achieve:

We engage systematically with key stakeholders and empower colleagues across CIW to plan and deliver effective communications.

Strategic objectives:

- Build and maintain strategic stakeholder relationships through systematic planning and engagement
- Develop a central stakeholder database to ensure consistent, coordinated engagement
- Upskill colleagues across CIW in communication planning, reducing reliance on the central team and fostering proactive communication culture



Annex A: Delivery plan map

2026 / 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/2029	2029/ 2030
<p>Audit of current provider e-bulletins and improvements delivered</p> 	<p>Develop a 3 year event delivery plan</p> 	<p>Deliver 3 year event plan</p> 	<p>Deliver 3 year event plan</p> 
<p>Audit of current social media channels and improvements delivered</p> 	<p>Develop a communication planning toolkit</p> 	<p>Embed communication planning toolkit / staff training</p> 	<p>Social media 3 year review</p> 
<p>Media training for relevant CIW colleagues</p> 	<p>Develop an engagement planning toolkit</p> 	<p>Embed engagement planning toolkit / staff training</p> 	<p>Refresher media training and evaluate impact of toolkit</p> 
<p>Media handling toolkit developed and rolled out</p> 	<p>Start website improvement project</p> 	<p>Website improvement project ends</p> 	<p>Evaluate impact of 3 year event plan</p> 
<p>Website options appraisal completed</p> 	<p>Accessibility improvement programme begins</p> 	<p>Accessibility improvement programme ends</p> 	<p>Evaluate impact of accessibility improvement programme</p> 

2026 / 2027

Ratings campaign planning begins



Project start - listening to people using services - RISCA services



Update all style guides



2027/ 2028

Ratings campaign to go live



Deliver outputs for listening to people using services project



Choosing care campaign planning begins



Website improvement work begins



Social media training for staff



2028/2029

Continuation of ratings campaign



Ongoing evaluation of 'listening' project



Choosing care campaign to go live



Website improvement work user testing



2029/ 2030

Evaluation of ratings campaign



Embed learning for other inspection teams



Choosing care campaign evaluation



Website improvement ends

