

National Advisory Board Meeting Minutes – 4 June 2025

The minutes from the National Advisory Board Meeting on 4 June 2025

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Welcome, attendees and apologies

Attendees

- Valerie Billingham (Office of the OPC)
- Orlaith Brennan (Provider Domiciliary Support Service)
- Natalie Fletcher (Provider)
- Rachel Harris (Provider Full Day Care)
- Ruth Hussey (Chair)
- Peter Max (Provider Residential Care)
- Melanie Minty (Care Forum Wales)
- Claire Protheroe (PACEY)
- Alyson Thomas (Llais)
- Jenny Williams (ADSS Cymru)
- Gillian Baranski (Chief Inspector)
- Julie Heal (CIW)
- Annette Hennessey (CIW)
- Richard Payne (CIW)
- Laura Pritchard (CIW)
- Margaret Rooney (CIW)
- Nev Thomas (CIW)
- Elizabeth Wallwork (CIW)
- Meg Williams (CIW)

Apologies

- Kate Cubbage (Carers Trust)
- Stuart Davies (Provider Domiciliary Support Service)

Approval of previous minutes

Decision: Board members approved the minutes from the meeting of 5 February, 2025.

Actions from previous minutes

Members reviewed the action log:

Follow-up on concerns process: Review and consider the communication process with providers at the end of the concerns process to ensure clarity and completeness.

- Update: We will be taking forward a specific piece of work on concerns in the second

quarter to include a review of our response to concerns, how this is captured and our follow up communications with those raising concerns.

New CIW Heads of Team - introduction: Create and distribute a document with photos and brief histories of the new team members to stakeholders.

- Update: We have updated all our pen portraits and will share these before the next meeting.

Strategic plan feedback: Incorporate feedback on the strategic plan, specifically ensuring safeguarding is a golden thread throughout the document. Expand the description of digitalisation in the strategic plan to include the exploration and use of artificial intelligence.

- Update: All NAB recommendations were taken forward and added to the strategic plan

Ratings publication request: Send a copy of the letter to Welsh Government requesting a delay in the publication of ratings for another 12 months – Mel Minty

- Update: This action has been completed – we will be doing an update on ratings to date at this meeting where there will be an opportunity to ask questions and share thoughts.

Annual review of conflicts of interest: Implement an annual review process for conflicts of interest for all members.

- Update: We are developing the forms and will share when complete.

Survey results sharing: Share the results of the Member survey from a Welsh perspective with CIW.

- Update: These have been shared and will be attached with next meeting agenda.

1. CIW round-up

Gillian Baranski provided the following CIW updates:

1.1 Inspector recruitment campaign

CIW had a successful inspector recruitment, attracting 292 applications across Welsh essential and desirable posts. New inspectors are expected to be operational by autumn, once all relevant CRB and other checks have taken place.

1.2 Practice worth sharing

Gillian highlighted the 'Practice Worth Sharing' initiative, which collects examples of high-quality practice observed during inspections of childcare and play services. The intention is to extend this to adult and children's services. The board was encouraged to review these case studies on the [CIW website \(https://www.careinspectorate.wales/practice-worth-sharing\)](https://www.careinspectorate.wales/practice-worth-sharing).

1.3 Performance updates

Gillian asked the board whether CIW performance updates should be provided at every meeting, twice per year, or annually. Board members agreed performance updates would be helpful twice a year, with the option of including exceptions when necessary.

2. RISCA ratings – post go live update

Nev Thomas and Annette Hennessey gave an update on the implementation of ratings for adult and children's services. [Here is a link to their presentation. \(https://www.careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2026-01/260109-Ratings-update.pptx\)](https://www.careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2026-01/260109-Ratings-update.pptx)

2.1 Guidance available on our website

Annette signposted members to the variety of ratings guidance available on the [CIW website \(https://www.careinspectorate.wales/ratings-care-home-and-domiciliary-support-services\)](https://www.careinspectorate.wales/ratings-care-home-and-domiciliary-support-services).

2.2 Ratings to date

From 1 April to 19 May 2025, CIW inspected 139 services using the new framework, with 35 reports published. Initial results showed strong outcomes: 19 services rated 'Excellent' in well-being and 18 in leadership and management. Only one service required significant improvement.

2.3 Positive feedback received

Non urgent inspections were halted in March 2025 in order for inspectors to finalise their training. This proved to be very successful:

- 87% of inspectors rated the training as excellent or good
- 96% of inspectors felt they had received enough support to implement the framework.

This positive feedback was also mirrored by providers:

784 providers attended the ratings online sessions with 97% participants rating these excellent or good.

2.4 Media coverage

Significant media coverage followed the launch, including BBC and ITV News features. The Welsh Government issued a joint press release with CIW, and the Minister for Children and Social Care visited a nursing home to publicise the new system.

3. Voices from members

3.1 Announced inspections

Peter Max raised the question of balancing unannounced and announced inspections.

CIW reaffirmed its commitment to unannounced visits as the best way to assess everyday service quality. There was strong agreement that unannounced visits provide a more authentic snapshot.

Members supported exploring better ways of gathering service user feedback ahead of and during inspections.

3.2 Practice worth sharing

The board discussed the 'Practice Worth Sharing' case studies that are now being published on the CIW website for childcare and play services. Members expressed enthusiasm for extending this approach to adult and children's services.

3.3 Annual returns

The discussion also addressed annual returns. Several providers expressed frustration with the complexity of the system. Margaret Rooney confirmed CIW is working with Social Care Wales to streamline the process and consolidate data collection from 2026.

3.4 Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Valerie Billingham shared the Commissioner's newly published strategy and work plan. A future focus includes research into older people's lived experiences of social care in Wales.

4. Early sight of patterns and trends for 2024-25

Margaret Rooney gave an overview of the patterns and trends across the sector in 2024 – 2025.

4.1 Four key pressures across the sector:

- recruitment and retention
- financial sustainability
- rising demand across services
- maintaining good leadership and management

4.2 Trends and concerns:

- Overseas workers are increasingly vital to care services, especially in urban areas, though concerns about exploitation and immigration policy remain.
- Childcare is shifting toward full daycare, with fewer childminders.
- Domiciliary support shows urban oversupply and rural gaps, raising questions about market and commissioning. Poor-quality registration applications are common.
- From April 2026, new for-profit providers for children's care homes can't be registered.

4.3 Positives:

- Most care rated good or excellent
- Government support for workforce and stability
- Growth in local authority-led services
- Strong leadership driving impact
- New framework to support positive cultures

5. Strategic Plan 2025–2030 – next steps

Annette Hennessey presented on the 'influence' element of the Strategic Plan. **Download the presentation slides here** (https://www.careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2026-01/260109-Influence-slides_0.pptx).

5.1 Communications and engagement

One of the three main themes in [CIW's strategic plan for 2025 to 2030](https://www.careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2025-05/250530-Strategic-Plan-2025-2030-en.pdf) (<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2025-05/250530-Strategic-Plan-2025-2030-en.pdf>) is to:

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

In response to this, CIW are developing a new communication and engagement strategy.

NAB members were asked for their feedback on how this work should be taken forward and what our priorities should be.

Annette Hennessey led a session on how CIW could improve its public profile and engagement activity. Suggestions included targeting younger audiences via social media (TikTok and Instagram), improving accessibility, and using storytelling techniques to celebrate good practice. Members supported the development of a communications strategy and offered to assist in promoting CIW's work.

5.2 Polls

Interactive polls relating to communication and engagement were facilitated during the meeting and the results were as follows:

What one word comes to mind when you think about CIW's current public profile?

- Mixed, corporate, weak, formal, limited, low (x3), caring, low profile

Do you follow CIW on our social media channels?

- No: 2
- Yes: 10

Which of our social media channels do you follow?

- LinkedIn: 2
- Facebook: 1
- Facebook & LinkedIn: 5
- Facebook, LinkedIn & X: 1

Do you subscribe to our CIW bulletin?

- Yes: 7

Actions and next meeting

Actions

- Circulate slides and web links shared during the meeting. Continue to share positive practice case studies.
- Review how to enhance service user and stakeholder feedback in inspections.
- Engage stakeholders in simplifying the annual return process.
- Track implications of website publication requirements for small providers.

Next meeting

Tuesday, 23 September 2025, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm



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