

# Healthcare Inspectorate Wales Annual Report 2021-2022



# Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) is the independent inspectorate of the NHS and regulator of independent healthcare in Wales.

## Our purpose

To check that people in Wales receive good quality healthcare.

## Our values

We place patients at the heart of what we do.

## We are:

- Independent
- Objective
- Caring
- Collaborative
- Authoritative



## Goal

To encourage improvement in healthcare by doing the right work at the right time in the right place; ensuring what we do is communicated well and makes a difference.

Through our work we aim to:

### Provide assurance

Provide an independent view on the quality of care.

### Promote improvement

Encourage improvement through reporting and sharing of good practice.

### Influence policy and standards

Use what we find to influence policy, standards and practice.

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## Page 4 Foreword

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2021-2022, a year which continued to be unpredictable and with significant ongoing challenges in both healthcare, and daily life



## Page 7-12 Priority 1

To maximise the impact of our work to support improvement in healthcare

## Page 15-62 Priority 2

To take action when standards are not met

NHS Health Boards and NHS Trusts



## Page 64-65 Priority 3

To be more visible

Collaboration and joint working with other organisations is an integral part of the way in which we work

## Page 66 Priority 4

To develop our people and our organisation to do the best job possible

Although the last year has been one of significant change, we have continued to invest in the development of HIW



# Foreword



Alun Jones  
Chief Executive

**“I once again commend the strength and resilience shown by staff working at all levels within healthcare services, who continue to deliver care and treatment in the best way they can, despite the many challenges they face daily.”**

**Welcome to our Annual Report for 2021-2022, a year which continued to be unpredictable and with significant ongoing challenges in both healthcare, and daily life.**

Healthcare services continued to be under intense pressure from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and our role has been crucial in supporting the delivery of safe healthcare for the people of Wales. Our core purpose of checking the quality and safety of healthcare services did not change, and we continued to adapt our processes and approach to work in response to the ongoing unprecedented situation.

The report sets out our key findings from the regulation, inspection and review of healthcare services in Wales. It outlines how we carried out our functions and the number of inspections and quality checks we undertook across Wales.

Change and flexibility have been key features of life since March 2020 and as an organisation we have learned much about how and where our work can add value to the healthcare

improvement agenda. Through this report we will offer an insight into our work over the 12-month period, outlining how we adapted and used our resources most effectively to deliver our work and support improvement. This involved continuing with quality checks which we introduced earlier in the pandemic and enabled us to gain assurance remotely. We worked collaboratively with others to harness insight and understanding, building on lessons learnt. We also used new styles of reporting which enabled us to share our findings quickly to enable healthcare services to take improvement action more quickly.

In a year which has seen healthcare services work hard on recovery from the early days of the pandemic, to restore services which had been paused, whilst continuing to deal with emerging variants, outbreaks and further peaks of COVID-19, we have seen significant turbulence. I once again commend the strength and resilience shown by staff working at all levels within healthcare services, who continue to deliver care and treatment in the best way they can, despite the many challenges they face daily.

Senior managers leading services have demonstrated tenacity and ability to continue innovating and supporting their organisations. Staff working on the front line have continued to demonstrate their compassion and resilience, as once again, patients have told us of their positive experiences of staff despite highly challenging circumstances.

It is clear that there remain many challenges ahead, for services, for the staff who work within them and for the people of Wales whilst the gargantuan task of service recovery continues. For healthcare organisations, it will be staff who will be the key to the success of this recovery. Supporting staff wellbeing, continuing to invest in training and support services for them and continuing to innovate within existing service delivery will be key to the effective recovery of staff and services from the fatigue brought on by the pandemic.

The year in question reflects a time when we worked on the commitments we made in our one year Strategy and Operational plan. We made good progress in meeting the achievements we set out to deliver. I am proud to have continued leading the organisation through this time,

working daily alongside a team of professional and committed staff who work hard to support the organisation as we deliver our vision of improving healthcare for the people of Wales.

In March 2022, we published our new and ambitious **strategy**, and we are fully committed over the next three years, to implementing and delivering our new priorities which further our aim to drive improvement in healthcare. We will continue to use our role to encourage improvement in healthcare, building on the best of what we have done to date to deliver the greatest impact.

If you have any questions, comments, ideas or feedback on our work, please do get in touch with us - we would love to hear from you.

**Alun Jones**

Chief Executive, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales



# Overview



## Our 2021-2022 Strategic Priorities:

1. To maximise the impact of our work to support improvement in healthcare
2. To take action when standards are not met
3. To be more visible
4. To develop our people and our organisation to do the best job possible

For HIW, as for many healthcare services and organisations, it was a year of continued and significant change, where we had to adapt to ensure that we continued to check that people in Wales were receiving good quality healthcare. We introduced new ways of working to ensure we discharged our statutory functions, whilst being as flexible and adaptable as possible to ensure we did not add undue burden to a system already under significant pressure following the COVID-19 pandemic.

We continued with a full range of assurance and inspection activities, building on our enhanced ways of working, allowing us take action where standards were not met but to also support a broader recovery of healthcare services. During the year, we kept our activity under regular review to ensure that we targeted our resources most effectively. We operated responsively, with our work underpinned by our strategic priorities. This report describes our progress against these priorities as we aim to drive improvement and promote quality in healthcare services across Wales.



# To maximise the impact of our work to support improvement in healthcare

HIW has an ongoing programme of national and local reviews which helps us to evaluate how healthcare services in Wales are delivered.

Local reviews are pieces of work which explore an aspect of one organisation or region, whilst national reviews explore healthcare services across Wales.



## National and Local Reviews

### COVID-19 National Review - How healthcare services across Wales met the needs of people and maintained their safety during the pandemic

The purpose of our COVID-19 review was to understand how healthcare services across Wales met the needs of people and maintained their safety during the pandemic. We also considered how services managed their environments of care, infection prevention and control measures, and how the physical and mental well-being of staff was supported.

A key theme to have emerged from our review was the need for healthcare services to further strengthen their infection prevention and control arrangements to mitigate the risk of cross infection or further outbreaks of COVID-19. In addition, the arrangements for supporting and maintaining the physical and mental well-being of staff required attention and focus as healthcare services continued through the recovery phase of the pandemic. However, in general, our review found the quality of care being provided across Wales was good and was delivered by hugely committed and dedicated groups of staff.





## National Review of Mental Health Crisis Prevention in the Community

The focus of our review was to understand the adequacy of the measures in place across Wales, to help mental health crisis being prevented in the community, through timely and appropriate care. We considered the experiences of people who accessed care and treatment to support their mental health and prevent crisis. In addition, whether the services provided were safe and effective, and how healthcare teams worked collaboratively throughout the community to help prevent mental health crisis. Furthermore, we explored how third sector organisations support this.

Our review found challenges across Wales inhibiting the ability of people to access timely support for their mental health, which could increase the risk to their safety (or to others) and may result in hospital admission.



Key findings included inefficiencies in process, particularly for direct referrals where patients were caught in a cycle of continually accessing GP services to re-commence the referral process. This resulted in individuals experiencing lengthy waiting times and a lack of support for their mental health. HIW's review urged health boards to consider how they can address this gap in provision, strengthening the engagement between GPs and other primary and community care services and secondary mental health services. The review did find healthcare staff were committed and dedicated to providing support and care to people with mental health needs.

HIW noted several positive initiatives across Wales, including the implementation of a single point of access. Where this was in place, it ensured that specialist mental health professionals were available to provide clinical triage, onward referral, and effective signposting to individuals in crisis. HIW made a recommendation that health boards must ensure that single point of access services are implemented across Wales and are accessible to all those experiencing mental health crisis.



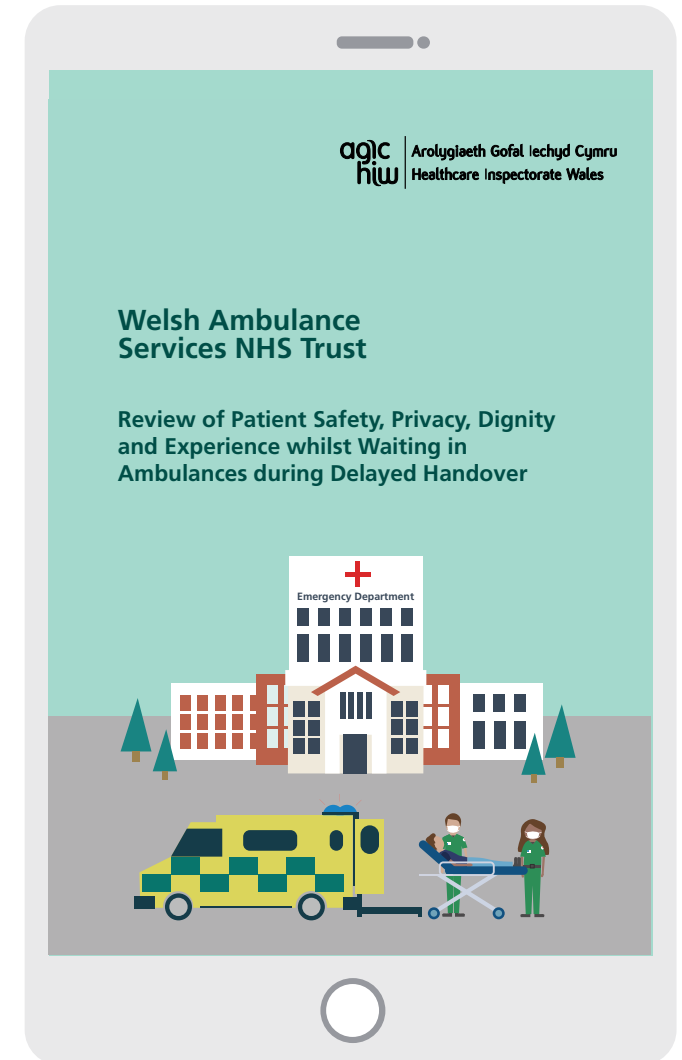
## Review of Patient Safety, Privacy, Dignity and Experience whilst Waiting in Ambulances During Delayed Handover

Our review found that the issue of prolonged handover delays is a regular occurrence with ambulance wait times outside Emergency Departments (EDs) across Wales. The delays and variations in process between and within health boards was having a detrimental impact upon the ability of the healthcare system to provide responsive, safe, and dignified care to patients.

Whilst there are expectations and guidance for NHS Wales to follow, and a clear will to meet these guidelines, there are substantial challenges to achieve timely patient handover across Wales which inhibit efforts to consistently achieve these. The challenges are indicative of the wider patient flow issues across all hospitals. Our review team found some inconsistencies and a lack of clarity between the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) and ED staff about responsibility for patient care, until transfer of care to health board teams. These types of inconsistencies were increasing risk and having a detrimental impact on patient care and safety.

Patients were generally positive about their experiences and provided good feedback about ambulance crews and ED staff, however, this should not detract from the issues associated with delayed handover.

A significant amount of work is already underway across NHS Wales to tackle these issues. Progress has been made in some areas, and improvement work is ongoing between WAST, health boards and Welsh Government to meet these challenges.



## Current Ongoing Reviews

### National Review of Patient Flow (Stroke Pathway)

Ineffective and inefficient patient flow can have a significant impact on the quality and safety of patient care. As a result, we decided to undertake a national review of Patient Flow. In order to assess the impact of patient flow challenges on the quality and safety of patients awaiting assessment and treatment, we elected to focus our review on the stroke pathway. We want to understand what is being done to mitigate any harm to those awaiting care, as well as understand how the quality and safety of care is being maintained throughout the stroke pathway.

The planning of the review commenced in autumn 2021, and the field work began in March 2022. Throughout our review we will consider how NHS Wales addresses peoples' access to acute care at the right time and if care is received in the right place, by people with the right skills, through to timely discharge from hospital services. We want to understand what is being done to mitigate any harm to those awaiting care, as well as understand how the quality and safety of care is being maintained throughout the stroke pathway. We aim to publish the review report during winter 2022-2023.





## Review of Discharge Arrangements for Adult Patients from Inpatient Mental Health Services in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

We made the decision to undertake this review following our assessment of a range of information sources which indicated significant concerns around mental health services within Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB). We commenced the review in January 2022 which will progress into late summer and the report will be published later in 2022. The focus of the review is to explore the quality and safety of discharge arrangements of adult patients from inpatient mental health units, back into the community.

## Local Review of the Quality Governance Arrangements in Place within Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) for the delivery of Healthcare Services to Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Swansea

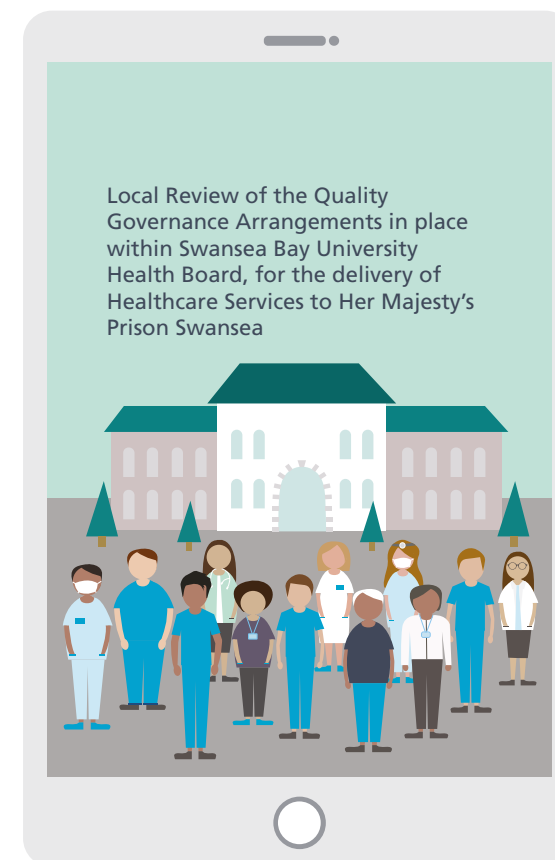
We decided to undertake a review of the effectiveness of Swansea Bay University Health Board's quality governance arrangements for the provision and oversight of healthcare services in HMP Swansea.

The review assessed the actions taken by the health board to address the issues highlighted following previous inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, which we contributed to, and how effective the health board's quality governance arrangements are regarding prison healthcare. Our review concluded that the health board's quality governance arrangements do not adequately support the delivery of good quality, safe and effective healthcare services to the population of HMP Swansea.

We identified a need to strengthen these arrangements and raise the profile of prison healthcare within the health board to ensure that the quality of prison healthcare is designed, delivered, and monitored effectively. The review report details our findings and recommendations for improvement within several areas of the health board and Prison Partnership Board.

HIW recommended that prison healthcare, including the quality of the service, needs to feature more prominently on the health board's quality agenda, so that safe, effective care can be provided to the prison residents. HIW asked the health board and Prison Partnership Board to carefully consider the findings from this review and act upon the recommendations set out within the report.

HIW continue to work with the health board to ensure improvements are made in a timely manner and will monitor the progress made. The report was circulated to other health boards to share lessons learnt, and to consider the findings against their own quality governance arrangements.



## Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA)

During 2021, we worked jointly with four other inspectorates on a second pilot review of child protection arrangements. The review was undertaken in the Neath Port Talbot local authority which is situated within Swansea Bay University Health Board. It was led by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), and included HIW, Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.

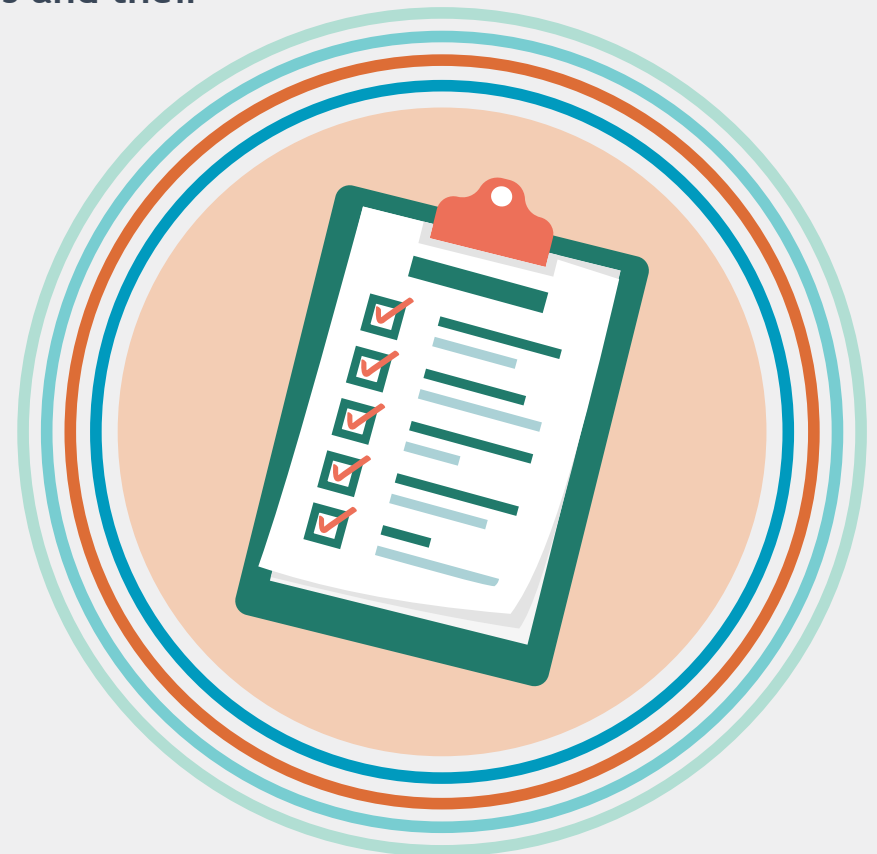
The focus of the review was to explore the arrangements in place for the multi-agency response to children at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation. On completion of the review, we identified several key strengths across the multi-agency partnership in relation to processes, structures and relationships which helped to facilitate effective partnership working where a child was at risk of exploitation. We also identified areas for improvement throughout the review, which included the need to strengthen contextual safeguarding, and the need to reduce the waiting times for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) assessment following referral.

In the last quarter of 2021-2022, HIW, CIW and Estyn submitted a joint business case to Welsh Government to secure additional funding to continue the JICPA work, to enable us to review processes within a further four local authorities across Wales. As part of the plan, we would complete work in six further local authorities and evaluate all JICPA reviews undertaken to produce a national report, which would be published in summer 2024 once all work is complete. A provisional agreement is now in place for the funding early in quarter one of 2022-2023.



# To take action when standards are not met

We are responsible for inspecting, reviewing, and investigating NHS services and independent healthcare services throughout Wales. We inspect NHS services and regulate independent healthcare providers against a range of standards, policies, guidance and regulations to highlight areas requiring improvement. When through our work we find this is not the case, we will take action so that health boards and their services know where they need to make improvements.



## Service of Concern process introduced for NHS Bodies in Wales

One of the key priorities set out within our [strategic plan](#) was to take action when standards are not met. In line with this priority and wishing to increase transparency about how we discharge our role in providing assurance to the public regarding the quality and safety of healthcare services, we introduced a Service of Concern process for the NHS in November 2021.

This process is used when we identify significant service failures, or when there is an accumulation of concerns about a service or setting. The intention of the process is to support improvement and learning, both for the service in question, and across NHS services more broadly. Our escalation and enforcement process for independent healthcare currently utilises such a process.

The process may lead us to make a Service Requiring Significant Improvement designation. This enables us to plan and deliver future activities necessary to gain assurance about the quality and safety of care by a service. We then work with the health board and services to ensure improvements and effective actions are made in a timely manner. We will then consider and review whether the service can be de-escalated and removed from the process.

This process enables a range of stakeholders including health boards to take the rapid action necessary to ensure safe and effective care can be provided to people. The Service of Concern process has strengthened the action we take to drive improvement when services fall significantly short of the required standard. Examples of our use of this process are outlined later within this report.





## Use of HIW's legal powers

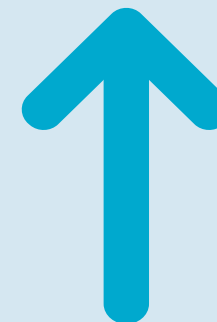
In February 2022 following a criminal investigation relating to an unregistered service, HIW issued a caution for a breach of section 11 of the Care Standards Act 2000.

As the regulator of independent healthcare services in Wales, HIW is committed to taking action when standards are not met. In order to ensure that patients receive safe effective care the use of legal powers on this occasion highlights how HIW will take action when a healthcare provider does not comply with the regulatory requirements.

## Concerns

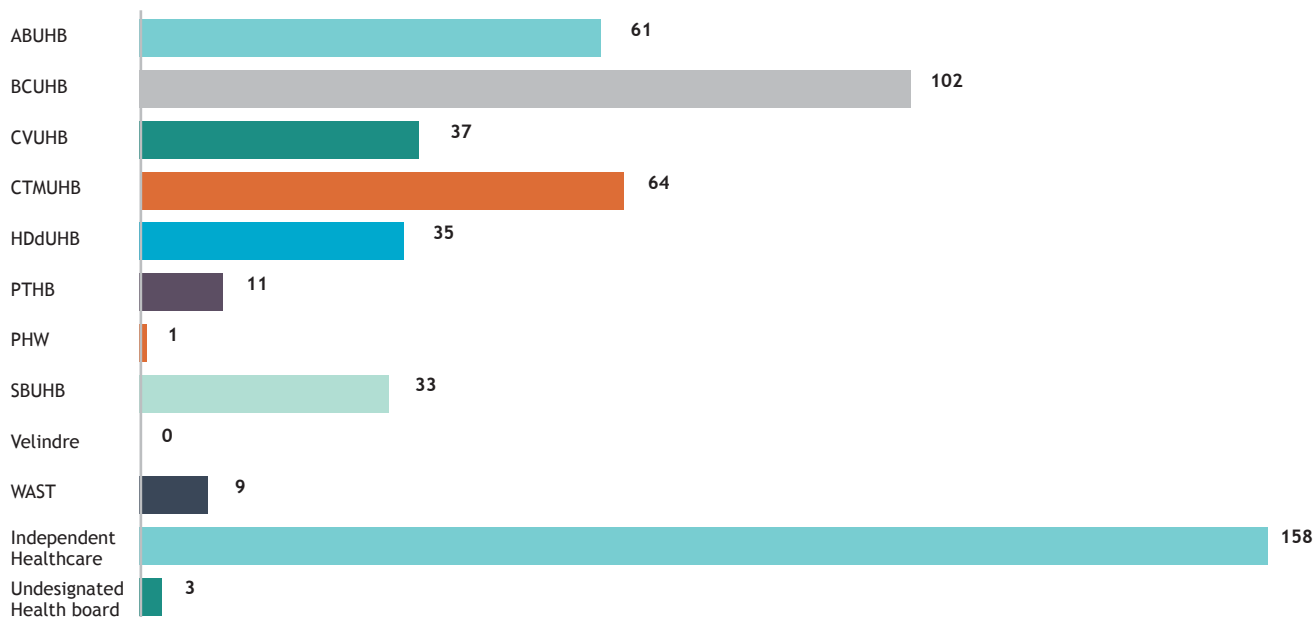
The concerns we receive continue to be an invaluable source of intelligence to the organisation and their importance cannot be underestimated. Some of the onsite inspection work we undertook during 2021-2022 was as a direct result of concerns that had been raised with us. In addition to the evidence we have gathered directly from our inspection and Quality Check activity, we have also sought assurance from healthcare organisations in relation to concerns received.

In total, we received 514 concerns from April 2021 to March 2022. This represents an increase of eighty compared to the previous year. Of note, however, is that HIW is seeing a sustained increase in numbers of concerns being raised since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.



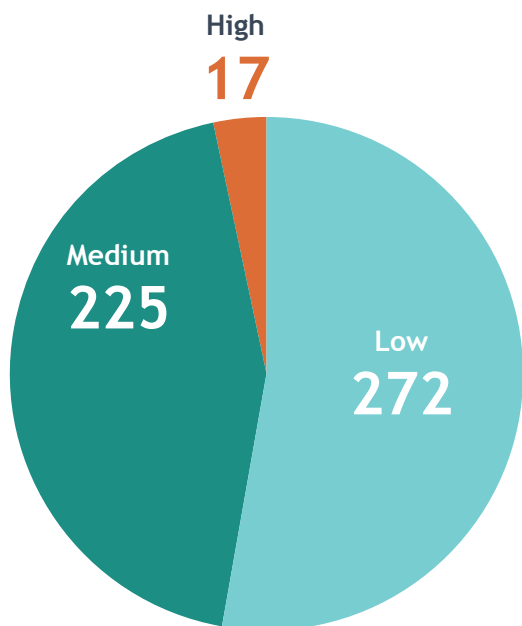
We have seen a **40% increase** in the number of concerns being raised since the 2019-2020 year.

### Location of concerns



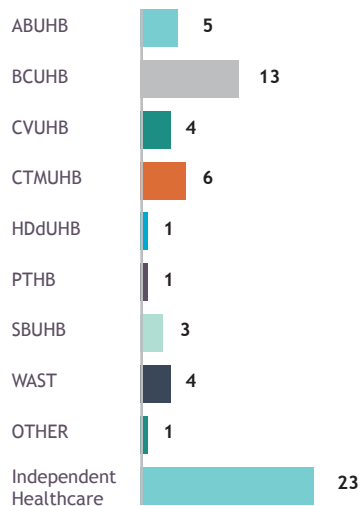
## Concerns, Whistleblowing and Safeguarding

### Risk levels of concerns received



- High-risk concerns require immediate action and response within 2 working days, either by HIW or other agency.
- Medium-risk concerns may require more direct HIW input, and responses should be actioned within 5 working days.
- Low-risk concerns are those concerns that are generally dealt with by way of signposting towards Putting Things Right or the respective local complaints process for independent health providers and responses should be actioned within 7 working days.

### Whistleblowing Concerns



#### Whistleblowing Concerns

25 received for 2019-2020

100 received for 2020-2021

61 received for 2021-2022

In total, we received 17 high risk concerns in 2021-2022. All high-risk concerns were evaluated, actioned and escalated and assurances requested from health boards / trusts or independent healthcare settings. Where appropriate we also contacted the local safeguarding team and shared any safeguarding concerns that we may have identified. At times we have also had to share information with the emergency services such as the police due to the nature of concerns raised or due to concerns over a person’s well-being.

Concerns were received from a range of individuals including, patients, their families, friends, staff, and allied health professionals. It is important to note that of 61 concerns received from whistle-blowers, 37 were in relation to NHS health boards / trusts and 24 were in relation to independent healthcare settings. Common themes identified from concerns received were mainly in relation to two key areas. The first group of concerns were in relation to clinical assessments and treatment. The second group of concerns related to infrastructure, staffing, and facilities.



# 404

Safeguarding referrals  
from local authorities

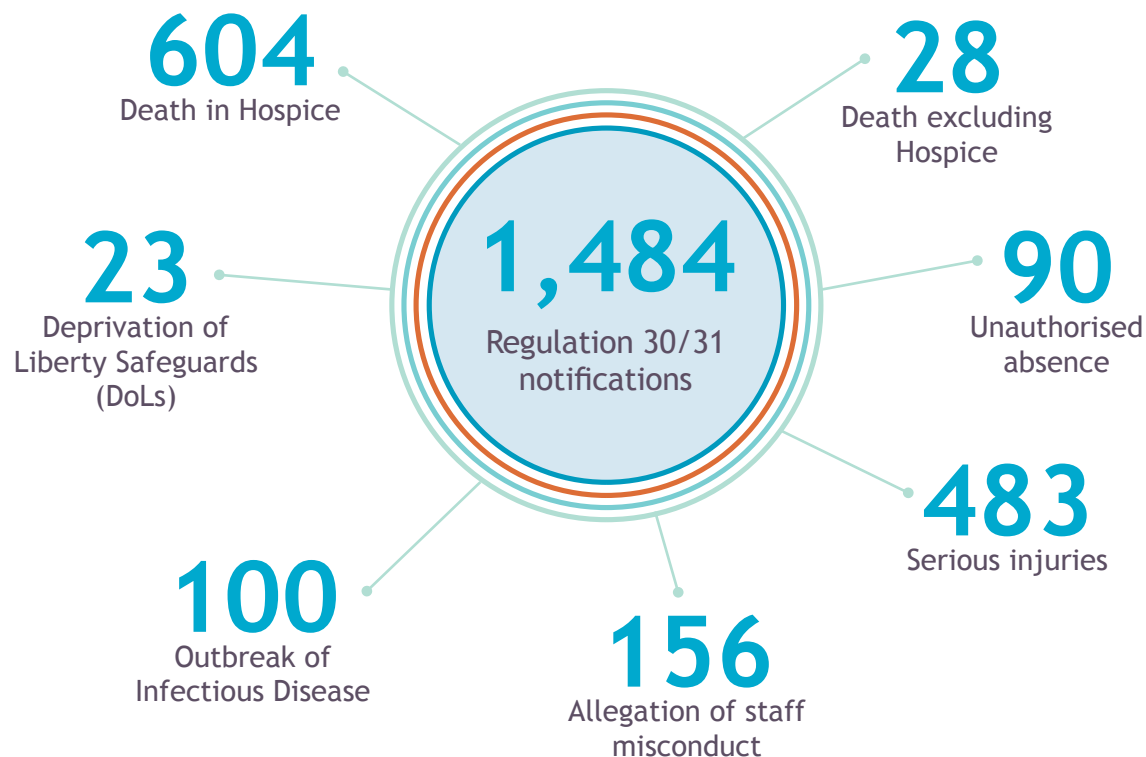
In total we received 404 safeguarding referrals from local authorities.

Local authorities and the police are the statutory lead for all safeguarding referrals and the final decision on action is made by them. HIW is invited to initial strategy meetings where we can have an input into any potential actions that are taken. We also review all referrals that are submitted, and the information is shared internally with relationship managers for intelligence. Relationship managers are the first point of contact for HIW staff and health boards/ trusts. They also take the lead in determining the inspection and assurance activity within each health board. If there is a need for further action, we write out to the health boards / trusts or independent healthcare setting and request assurance or a regulatory notification where applicable.

## Regulatory Notifications

Independent healthcare providers are required to inform us of significant events and developments in their service submitting notifications against Regulation 30/31 of the Independent Healthcare (Wales) Regulations 2011.

In total we received 1,484 Regulation 30/31 notifications. A breakdown of the notifications is as follows:



This is a **36%** increase in the number of notifications we received, compared to 2020-2021. The number of serious injuries reported within independent healthcare services has increased significantly by **72%** over the last year.

During 2021-2022 we received 156 Regulation 25 notifications (The Private Dentistry (Wales) Regulations 2017).

They are as follows:



All notifications are reviewed by a case manager when they are submitted and then reviewed weekly by the Investigation team. For every notification submitted we request follow up information to provide reassurance that the incident has been handled appropriately and that the setting has attempted to mitigate the risk of similar incidents happening again. When similar themes are noted, we refer the information to the enforcement team and the escalation and enforcement pathway starts.



## Death in Custody Reviews

It is the responsibility of the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) to undertake an investigation of every death that occurs in a prison or approved premises in Wales. HIW supports these investigations by undertaking a clinical review of all deaths within a Welsh prison or approved premises. This collaboration has been formally outlined within a Memorandum of Understanding between the PPO and HIW. A link to the agreement can be found on our website.

The purpose of our clinical reviews is to critically examine and evaluate the quality of healthcare services provided to prisoners during their time within a prison or approved premises.

From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, we were commissioned by the PPO to undertake 15 clinical reviews. This is one less compared to 2020-2021. These clinical reviews were conducted at four out of the six prisons located in Wales. No clinical reviews were undertaken in relation to HMP Prescoed or HMP Usk.

The table below identifies the number of reviews and their locations:

Location	Total
HMP Parc	7
HMP Berwyn	2
HMP Cardiff	5
HMP Swansea	1

Overall, our death in custody reviews highlighted that the care provided to prisoners in Wales was equitable with the expected level of care a person in the community would receive. Access to GPs, nursing staff and allied health professionals was deemed sufficient in the vast majority of our reviews.

In all of our clinical reviews we identified the need for improvement and highlighted good practice. There were two key areas highlighted for improvement, these were the need to ensure comprehensive and detailed documentation was completed for all patients and improvement in relation to the timely undertaking of investigations such as blood tests and x-rays.

Good record keeping is a fundamental part of delivering safe and effective patient care. An accurate documented record that details all aspects of the patient's care and treatment is fundamental as it contributes to the dissemination of information amongst different care practitioners involved in the patient's treatment or care. A specific area of documentation that was identified as needing improvement was the recording of physical observations as part of patient assessments. These observations provide a significant insight into a patient's state of health and can alert practitioners to the clinical deterioration of an individual.

It was acknowledged that on some occasions, delays were experienced by prisoners in obtaining blood tests and x-rays. Numerous factors were identified which can impact on the timeliness of these investigations being undertaken, such as transport and the availability of specific staff. In addition, vulnerabilities were identified in alerting healthcare staff when a prisoner had not attended an appointment. The importance of recognising these missed appointments need to be clearly embedded in policies and procedures and escalated accordingly to ensure individuals receive the required investigations.

Our clinical reviews highlighted that healthcare professionals working in prisons were motivated, dedicated and committed. Evidence showed that staff endeavoured to provide high levels of holistic care and treatment to their patients. HIW's findings following a review into the effectiveness of Swansea Bay University Health Board's quality governance arrangements for the provision and oversight of healthcare services in HMP Swansea did provide a differing perspective. Our review concluded that the health board's quality governance arrangements do not adequately support the delivery of good quality, safe and effective healthcare services to the prison population. We identified a need to raise the profile of prison healthcare within the health board to ensure that the quality healthcare is designed, delivered, and monitored effectively. HIW recommended that prison healthcare needs to feature more prominently on the health board's quality agenda, so that safe, effective care can be provided to the prison residents.



## NHS Assurance and Inspection Findings

We continued to deliver a blended approach to assurance and inspection via onsite inspections and remote Quality Checks. There was ongoing work to develop and enhance current methodologies, which are the tools used to undertake inspection and assurance work. All methodologies continued to include a specific focus on COVID-19.

### Hospitals

COVID-19 continued to impact the way in which we inspected and sought assurance of NHS hospitals throughout 2021-2022. During Winter 2021, rates of COVID-19 transmission continued to increase, including the emergence of the Omicron variant. It was important that we took a cautious approach to reduce burden on the services most affected. We therefore cancelled all routine NHS onsite inspection work throughout December and January. We still undertook onsite inspection work where we considered there to be a high risk to patient safety as a result of specific issues that we were aware of and was not possible to gain assurance remotely. All other work during this period

we conducted remotely. In February 2022, we resumed all our routine NHS onsite inspections following the move to alert level 0 across Wales and the general decreasing trend in rates of COVID-19. We provided 24 hours' notice for inspections to elective, scheduled care areas where the flow of patients is planned, and COVID-19 precautions are structured around patients who are being admitted for planned surgery, or where there are patients with compromised immunity due to the treatment they are receiving and in maternity services. This allowed our inspection teams to communicate with NHS staff and for arrangements to be put in place so that the inspection could be undertaken safely. We continued to conduct unannounced inspections (no notice provided) of clinical areas within unscheduled care areas.

During this period, we undertook:





Of the eight onsite inspections we completed, two of those were categorised as a ‘green’ pathway<sup>1</sup>.

Our onsite inspections and Quality Checks covered a variety of different types of hospital wards including emergency departments, maternity, oncology, cardiac, paediatric units, step down facilities and one minor injury unit.

It was clear, from work carried out throughout the year, that there was significant and sustained pressure on the emergency care system, and that this directly impacted patient care. Through our inspection and assurance work we identified a clear difference between scheduled and unscheduled care. We identified many more areas requiring improvement within unscheduled care compared to scheduled care. In particular, scheduled care areas, such as oncology and cardiac wards, where the staff have more control over admission and can provide more patient centred care had fewer areas for improvement.

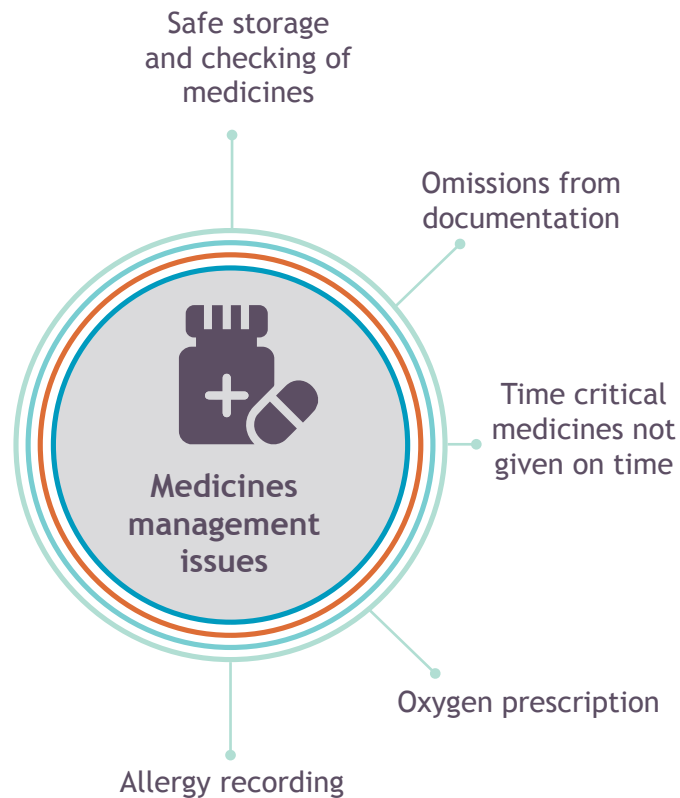
<sup>1</sup>The Green Pathway is the term given to COVID-free areas of a hospital. Within the pathway there are specific pathways such as surgical pathways. Measures taken can include patients being assessed as having no current risk of COVID and patients booked for surgery may be asked to self-isolate in their homes.

Although responses we received to our staff questionnaires indicated low staff morale, particularly related to challenges around staffing numbers and high demand for services, this did not generally seem to impact on the experience patients had of staff. Patients told us staff were kind and compassionate.

Our inspections continued to note low levels of compliance with mandatory training for staff. Mandatory training plays a key role in ensuring staff can provide safe and effective care to patients.



Medicines management continues to be a concern for HIW, as we identified issues across all of our hospital inspections in relation to:



Through our work we experience many clinical areas. We encounter patients who receive their care within and from services, and when visiting is possible, we also meet relatives, carers and others involved in their lives away from healthcare. We also encounter the staff working within services day to day; therapy staff whose work takes them to departments to support with specific issues, housekeeping staff whose input supports the smooth running of departments, and managers and senior leaders who provide the governance and leadership that is needed daily to ensure services achieve and maintain standards, and where necessary, improve. We have observed services at times of significant pressure, and the staff within them working relentlessly to deliver care. We have seen services at times when pressure is not significant, but staff still working hard to deliver care. We acknowledge the challenge and stress that sustained high pressure can cause. The case studies below demonstrate the way in which we continued to focus on patient safety in 2021-2022, challenging services and health boards to look for different ways of doing things when outcomes for patients could be improved.



## Case Study - Inspection of the Emergency Department, Prince Charles Hospital, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

In the following case study, we have focussed on the findings and outcome of an inspection we carried out of the Emergency Department (ED) in Prince Charles Hospital. This example of our work illustrates a department working under significant pressures leading to issues with patient safety. What happened next was an example of a health board working responsively and constructively to tackle the issues our work highlighted. By responding in this way, early progress was made in improving patient safety and outcomes for patients.

During our inspection in September 2021, we found that the ED, as the front door to a wider healthcare system, was experiencing a period of heightened pressure due to high demand on services. Patient flow throughout the hospital was clearly an issue.

We acknowledged that this was a very challenging and stressful environment for staff, who continued to work above and beyond in exceptional and challenging conditions.

The inspection revealed extensive issues in relation to patient safety, meaning that we could not be assured that patients in attendance at the ED were receiving safe

care. These concerns related to inadequate infection prevention and control arrangements, ineffective arrangements for the segregation of COVID-19 patients, inappropriate or incorrect usage of Personal Protective Equipment, and numerous environmental factors impacting on the ability of staff to provide safe and dignified care. The department and GP assessment unit were significantly overcrowded to a level where this affected patients' dignity and safety. The paediatric area was not sufficiently staffed, and the environment was not conducive to safe and dignified care. Patients were not always monitored at a frequency which would identify deterioration and changes in their condition. Our discussions with staff also revealed concerns about their well-being, due to the environment that they were working within.

We used our Immediate Assurance process, where we formally write to a health board immediately after the inspection, to outline the urgent remedial actions that were needed to ensure patient safety. [Our full inspection report](#) identified the longer-term improvements that were required.

Key staff at the health board were positive in their response to our feedback, and in our subsequent engagement, with a clear commitment to addressing the issues highlighted. The health board's responses included a comprehensive set of actions, with much progress already made at the time our report was published.

Due to the significance of the issues found in the inspection, we undertook a [follow-up inspection in January 2022](#).

At the time of the follow-up inspection, we found that the ED continued to experience a period of heightened pressure due to high demand on services. Once again, we acknowledged that this remained a very challenging and stressful environment for some staff, who continued to work above and beyond in exceptional and challenging conditions. Whilst some areas still needed attention, there were no urgent patient safety issues.

There was a clear commitment to addressing the issues highlighted in the initial inspection and we found that the health board had made significant progress in addressing most of the improvements raised in a sustainable way, rather than quick fixes to issues which cannot be maintained. The rapid and positive outcome achieved within this example is of note, with this being achieved through a constructive and supportive style adopted by senior leaders in supporting staff in the department. Staff felt there was a shared responsibility for improvement. Our work provided an insight into challenges at the department, and this will support the health board in continuing to improve delivery of care provided by the ED. The outcome of our work and the effort from the health board was improved patient safety in the department.

## Case Study - Enhanced Quality Check Ysbyty Glan Clwyd, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

In May 2022, we identified the Emergency Department (ED) at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board as a Service Requiring Significant Improvement.

This designation was based on an accumulation of evidence where HIW identified specific risks following a No Surprises Notification in January 2022, concerning potential unsafe discharge from the ED. A patient was unfortunately found deceased after discharge. Following insufficient assurances from the health board in response to HIW's initial correspondence, HIW undertook an in-depth review of the case notes of the patient involved. This review highlighted a number of concerns and significant patient safety concerns. This was fed back to the health board and assurance and actions were provided to HIW that safe care and treatment was being provided at this time.


HIW subsequently completed an enhanced Quality Check of the department in March 2022. Quality Checks are a snapshot of the standards of care within healthcare services. They are conducted entirely offsite and focus on three key areas: infection prevention and control,

governance (specifically around staffing) and the environment of care.

Due to the issues noted in January 2022, we expanded our usual methodology to seek assurance on how the health board ensures patients are cared for, and discharged, safely.

Our work identified numerous patient safety issues. We issued an Immediate Assurance letter, where we write to the health board immediately after the Quality Check, outlining urgent remedial actions to ensure patient safety.

Whilst the health board responded positively with a detailed action plan, the severity of the issues identified led HIW to remain concerned about wider patient safety at the department. Consequently, we undertook a full onsite inspection in May 2022 to inspect the full environment of care, and ensure the actions set out in the health board's response to the March Quality Check were completed and sustained.




Our onsite inspection identified further significant patient safety issues. We also identified areas where the health board's actions in response to the March Quality Check had been ineffective. We escalated our concerns to senior staff at the health board during the inspection, as well as at our standard feedback meeting at the end of the inspection. We received verbal assurances from the health board on actions that would ensure patient safety, and we issued a further Immediate Assurance letter on 9 May 2022.

Having considered the findings and evidence gathered since January 2022, HIW determined that the health board had not been able to demonstrate sufficient progress against several key areas of concern relating to patient safety and quality of care, with particular concern regarding the poor standard of nursing documentation. Our May 2022 onsite inspection highlighted that the health board had not demonstrated improvement to an acceptable standard in response to the Immediate Assurance issues identified during the

March 2022 Quality Check. Furthermore, the May 2022 inspection identified several additional areas of concern relating to patient safety. As a result, we were concerned there was a risk to the safety of patients seeking care at the Emergency Department in Ysbyty Glan Clwyd.

The designation of Ysbyty Glan Clwyd Emergency Department as a Service Requiring Significant Improvement enabled HIW to plan and deliver any future activities necessary to gain assurance about the quality and safety of care in the service. This process considers the timing of any follow up activity, to enable HIW to decide whether the service can be de-escalated and removed from this process.



## General Practice



**We continued to use Quality Checks to seek assurance on the quality of care being provided by GP practices during 2021-2022. Our Quality Checks continued with a specific focus on COVID-19. During this period, we undertook 25 Quality Checks of GP practices across health boards in Wales.**

It was positive to note from our assurance work that there was good evidence of GP practices using their membership of a cluster<sup>2</sup> to support the provision of patient care and sharing of ideas and good practice between GP practices. We noted that most GP practices had

<sup>2</sup>A cluster is a group of GP surgeries working together to pool resources and share best practice in a bid to help patients remain fit and healthy, and to improve the way patients are cared for if they become unwell.

made significant changes to their practice environments to ensure that they were safe for patients and could be easily cleaned in response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, it was disappointing to discover that at some GP practices there was a lack of cleaning policies and full cleaning schedules. We also noted a lack of completed risk assessments at some practices for home visits, practice staff and the environment. Policies and risk assessments are management tools which help to ensure that all staff are aware of what is expected of them, they can be used to help outline and ensure safe practice and they can help to maintain consistency in standards and support improvements in quality. Where these tools are absent or are not kept up to date it indicates a weakness in management practices, and this is of concern. GP practices and primary care leaders within health boards should ensure there are processes and systems in place to support effective management of these services.

We identified a theme through our activity and intelligence relating to the accessibility and availability of face-to-face appointments. This showed that although practices were doing their best to recover services affected by the pandemic, issues of access still persisted. People told us that they could not always get appointments when they needed them and found it difficult in some areas to access practices by phone. We also found that an element of digital exclusion has continued, with some people unable to access services in an equal way due to a focus on online and telephone consultations. We found that practices had continued to respond well to the challenges of the pandemic. This included releasing staff to provide vital support to vaccination programs and clinics. A number of areas had developed innovative approaches to manage consultations and meet the demands of their communities. As a result, we have redesigned our methodology for GP inspections and introduced new peer reviewers to this process. This will ensure that HIW keeps pace with the developments in this sector.



## Mental Health

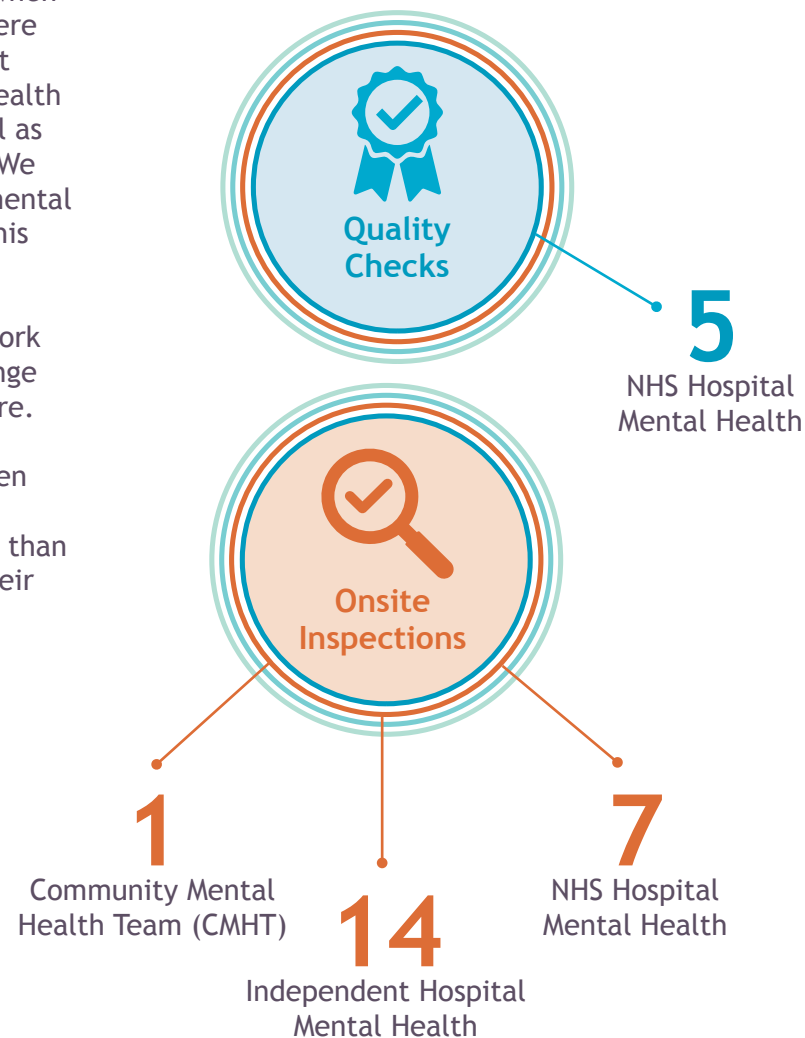
We look at how NHS mental health and independent mental health care services meet and comply with a range of professional standards and guidance, including the Mental Health Act 1983 and the Independent Healthcare (Wales) Regulations 2011.

The provision of mental health care during the pandemic has been challenging and complex for both the NHS and independent healthcare service providers. We continued to use a mix of remote Quality Checks and onsite inspections for our work to mental health care settings. This hybrid approach enabled us to seek assurance from services at a time when the

risk threshold for conducting inspection visits was high and to conduct our work onsite when either the COVID-19 risk was lower, or where the risk to patient safety was of significant concern. Our Review Service for Mental Health (RSMH) continued during this time, as well as our concerns and notifications processes. We also continued to respond to patients in mental health settings who contacted us during this period.

Over the past 12 months, our assurance work evidenced several key themes across a range of settings in relation to mental health care. Mental health is challenging and complex and inspections highlighted staff were often required to intervene to manage patient behaviours and ensure their safety, rather than provide care and treatment bespoke to their needs.

During 2021-2022 we undertook:





### Inspections also highlighted instances of:

- **Mandatory training for staff not being completed or up to date**
- **Poor medication management including incomplete administration charts and medication being stored incorrectly**
- **Risks being identified and subsequently not addressed in a timely manner or not addressed at all**
- **An over reliance on agency staff and repeat periods of inadequate resourcing**
- **Care and treatment plans not being monitored and regularly updated**
- **A lack of governance oversight including collaborative working and sharing information for future improvement.**

In most cases we found that staff working in services providing mental health care and treatment, treated patients with kindness and respect. We also saw that most services continued to work well to adapt to the changing needs presented by the pandemic. Patients were receiving compassionate care in most cases which promoted their independence and autonomy. We also saw that in some cases the recovery from the pandemic was going well, with improvements on previous inspections noted.

During 2021-2022 we inspected two out of the three children and adolescent mental health units in Wales, Tŷ Lliardiard in Bridgend, and Hillview Hospital in Ebbw Vale.

## Learning Disability

5

Onsite  
Inspections

8

Quality Checks



HIW undertook eight Quality Checks and five inspections of facilities providing learning disability services. In most cases, we found that patients accessing care in these facilities were receiving person centred and compassionate care and treatment. Tailored care plans were in place and allowed staff and patients to work towards common goals for the benefit of patients. We saw that staff interacted with patients in a kind and compassionate manner and worked hard to meet patient needs. However, we did find that staffing numbers were not always at a level which met patient needs. We also saw that the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively affected the promotion of independence in some of these settings. We saw in one case that there were significant issues relating to the environment, governance and safety of the unit. As a result, an Immediate Assurance letter was issued, and significant improvements were implemented by the Hywel Dda University Health Board.

## The Second Opinion Appointed Doctor (SOAD) Service

HIW operates the SOAD service for Wales, and we appoint registered medical practitioners to approve some forms of treatment. The role of the SOADs is to safeguard the rights of patients who are detained under the Mental Health Act and either do not consent or are considered incapable of consenting to treatment (section 58 and 58A type treatments). Individual SOADs come to their own opinion about the degree and nature of an individual patient's mental disorder and whether the patient has capacity to consent.

They must be satisfied that the patient's views and rights have been taken into consideration. After careful consideration of the patient and approved clinician's views, a SOAD has the right to change the proposed treatment. For example, a SOAD may decide to authorise only part of the proposed treatment or limit the number of electroconvulsive therapies (ECTs) given.

The SOADs have a responsibility to ensure the proposed treatment is in the best interest of the patient. The appropriate approved clinician should make a referral to HIW for a SOAD opinion relating to:

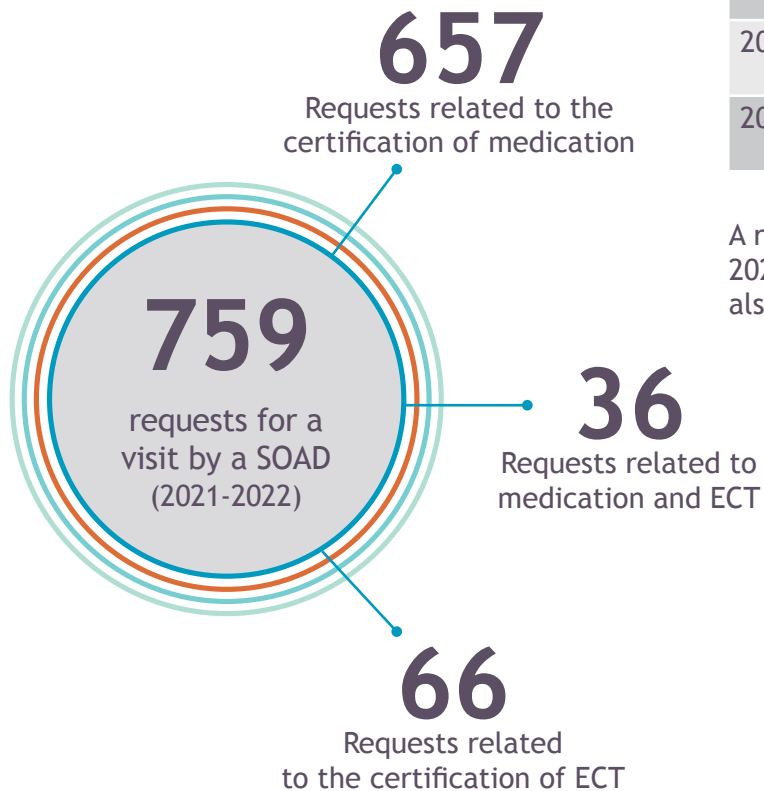
- liable to be detained patients on Community Treatment Orders (CTO) (Section 17A) who lack the capacity to proposed treatment or who do not consent for Part 4A patients
- serious and invasive treatments such as psychosurgery or surgical implements for the purpose of reducing male sex drive (Section 57)
- detained patients of any age who do not consent or lack the capacity to consent to Section 58 type treatments (section 58)
- patients under eighteen years of age, whether detained or informal, for whom Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is proposed, when the patient is consenting having the competency to do so (Section 58A), and
- detained patients of any age who lack the capacity to consent to electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) (Section 58A).

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and health and safety concerns regarding on site visits for the SOADs, in 2020-2021 we operated a temporary COVID-19 safe methodology for the SOAD service, wherein onsite hospital visits were temporarily suspended and replaced with teleconference or telephone call appointments. As we move to a post-pandemic operating model, the SOAD service now operates a hybrid methodology where onsite visits, where safe and practicable, are carried out, however, remote certification is still also utilised enabling the efficiencies gained from the remote methodology to continue, whilst ensuring patients safety and rights are prioritised.

We continue to work with Mental Health Act administrators in health boards and independent providers to ensure that patients get timely access to a SOAD and that the process is as smooth as possible to ensure that the rights of patients are protected. We attended the Mental Health Act Administrators annual forum and engaged with stakeholders directly to support understanding of our hybrid methodology.

In Wales during 2021-2022, there were 759 requests for a visit by a SOAD. This figure is a slight drop from the previous year, although it remains broadly consistent with figures from previous years.

These were:



The following table provides a breakdown of requests per year:

Requests for visits by a SOAD in 2021-2022

Year	Medication	ECT	Both	Total
2019-2020	855	50	27	932
2020-2021	869	60	27	956
2021-2022	657	66	36	759

A regular programme of training is provided to all SOADs to encourage best practice. In the year 2021-2022 training which focussed on depression treatment and medications was provided. SOADs also attended a session in winter 2022 focussing on Legal Updates to the Mental Health Act 1983.

## Review of Treatment (Section 61)

Following the authorisation of a treatment plan by an authorised medical practitioner (SOAD) that has been appointed by HIW, a report on the treatment and the patient's condition must be provided by the responsible clinician in charge of the patient's treatment and given to HIW. The designated form is provided to the Mental Health Act Administrators office for all local health boards and independent settings for the Responsible Clinician to complete. For the sixth consecutive year HIW undertook an audit of these forms to ensure that adequate patient safeguards were in place. The treatments are reviewed by our lead SOAD for Wales on a monthly basis.

**There remain very few instances where discrepancies are identified by the reviewer. Further improvements from our previous report continue in relation to the following areas:**

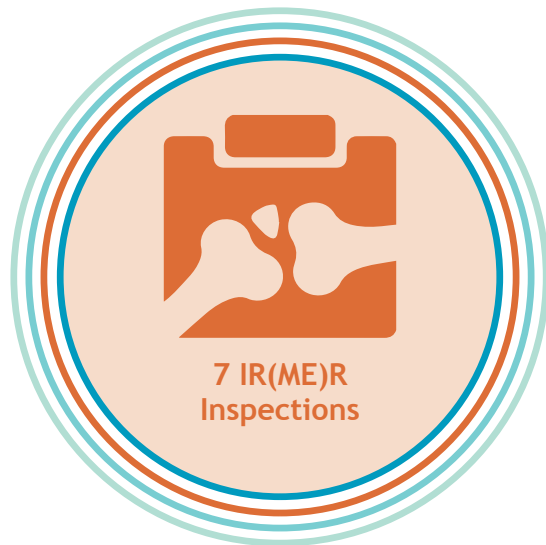
- There continue to be minimal occasions where more medication is listed under the treatment description than is authorised on the CO<sup>3</sup> form. In these instances, the reviewer highlights the need for a SOAD request to be submitted by the setting.

<sup>3</sup> The Mental Health (Hospital, Guardianship, Community Treatment and Consent to Treatment) (Wales) Regulations 2008 are the principle regulations dealing with the exercise of compulsory powers in respect of persons liable to be detained in hospital or under guardianship, together with community patients, under the Mental Health Act 1983. The Regulations prescribe the forms that are to be used in the exercise of powers under the Act, and these are set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These Regulations (and the prescribed forms) came into force on 3 November 2008 and include CO forms.



## Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 (IR(ME)R)

HIW is responsible for monitoring compliance against the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 (IR(ME)R). The regulations are intended to protect people from hazards associated with ionising radiation. Our inspection approach checks that services are compliant with these (IR(ME)R) regulations and looks at whether care and treatment is being provided in line with the Welsh Government's Health and Care Standards.



During 2021-2022 HIW completed seven IR(ME)R inspections, covering the three modalities of medical exposures. Six of these inspections covered the NHS and one covered independent hospitals.

HIW was assisted in these inspections by a Senior Clinical Diagnostic Officer from the Medical Exposures Group (MEG) of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), who acted in an advisory capacity. All the inspections were undertaken onsite. As part of the process, we asked providers to undertake a full self-assessment and then we held discussions with staff about the content of the self-assessments and the supplementary evidence provided to support the self-assessment. Whilst onsite we also reviewed clinical and other relevant records as well as observing the environment in which services were delivered. We also requested patient and staff feedback through online surveys. The QR code to access the survey was displayed on posters in the services we inspected, and we promoted the surveys through our social media channels. Paper copies of the patient survey are also provided in advance of the inspection to the setting to accommodate patients who are unable to access the online survey. HIW received 273

completed patient questionnaires and 214 staff questionnaires covering these seven inspections.

Feedback from patients was overwhelmingly positive with patients confirming that they had been treated with dignity and respect and had been helped to understand the risks and benefits of the procedure they were receiving. During our IR(ME)R assurance activity we continued to meet experienced and committed teams of professionals, with a good team working ethos. Overall, staff we spoke with demonstrated a good awareness of their responsibilities under IR(ME)R and we were assured that examinations at all sites inspected were undertaken safely.

Medical Physics Experts (MPEs) are qualified staff who are able to act or give advice on matters relating to radiation physics applied to medical exposure in diagnostic radiology, nuclear medicine, and radiotherapy. We noted that the relationships between the various IR(ME)R locations inspected and the MPEs was good, whether this was provided as part of a service level agreement with another health board or by staff employed directly by the health board.



Some common themes have emerged across our IR(ME)R inspections this year. They are summarised as follows:

**Employer's Procedures** - on several occasions we identified that these did not provide enough detail and did not reflect the actual agreed practices staff described to us. We also saw examples where procedures were not up to date and had not been reviewed. Therefore, whilst staff could describe safe practises to us, we could not be assured that the written procedures would provide new, locum or agency

staff with the required level of information to guide them in performing their relevant roles. Examples of common areas where detail was lacking in Employer's Procedures included:

- The information supplied in the self-assessment form contained additional information which should be included in the employer's procedures to explain the process in more detail.
- Pregnancy employer's procedures and relevant documents did not always reflect the terminology used in IR(ME)R 2017. Also, pregnancy enquiry EPs were a common area where agreed practise described by staff was not reflected accurately in the employer's procedures itself.

**Entitlement** - is the process of defining the roles and tasks that individuals, referred to as duty holders, are allowed to undertake. We identified that duty holders had not always been formally notified of their entitlement and scope of practice under IR(ME)R.

**Clinical audit** - is a key component of improving patient care through identifying areas for improvement and to promote effective use of resources and enhance clinical services. Audits should also highlight any discrepancies between actual practice and standards. Some instances were noted where the difference between IR(ME)R audit and clinical audits was not fully understood and as a result clinical audits had not been completed.

**Staff Capacity** - in most cases staff told us that they felt supported by senior management and the wider organisation. However, they did tell us that they struggled in terms of capacity to undertake all relevant tasks required as part of their duty holder roles. This may have been evident in the number of recommendations made in relation to mandatory training levels being low and appraisals not being completed in a timely manner.

We identified recommendations for improvement relating to collecting feedback from patients and informing staff of the results of this feedback. In most cases this was due to the COVID-19 pandemic which had reduced the collection of feedback. It is hoped that the process of collecting feedback would return to pre-pandemic levels in 2022-2023.

## Dental Practices



Earlier in the pandemic, dental practices worked under a Red Alert which was issued by the Chief Dental Officer for Wales and which prevented them from undertaking any Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs). Enhanced cleaning and the requirement for time in between patients, led to a much more limited dental care provision than pre-pandemic. In summer of 2020 dental practices were able to increase the treatment they could provide and during 2021-2022 we saw them steadily increase service provision, working to recover back towards pre-pandemic levels.

During the year we undertook 77 pieces of assurance work across dental practices across Wales. Due to COVID-19 risk levels, we conducted most of this work remotely, and undertook ten onsite inspections where the level of risk to patient safety could not be explored remotely.

In three Quality Checks we had concerns which meant we needed to ask the practices to take immediate action to reduce risks to patient safety; we did this either via our Immediate Assurance process or issuing a Non-Compliance Notice, dependant on whether the practice provided NHS dental treatment, private dental treatment or a mixture of both. In one instance, a health and safety assessment had been

correctly carried out by the practice, but the findings had not subsequently been acted on, leaving outstanding areas of health and safety concern. In the other two instances we found that there were inadequate seals to either flooring or to the flooring and worksurfaces in clinical decontamination rooms. Appropriately sealed floors and worksurfaces are necessary to reduce the risk of contamination and to support good standards of infection prevention and control.

Overall, we found evidence that dental practices had effective COVID-19 procedures in place to reduce the risk of virus transmission. This included social distancing, fallow time (settle time in between patients which is necessary for reducing levels of circulating air particles), and quick methods of communication with staff teams to ensure they received timely updates on COVID-19 procedures.

We also found evidence that many dental practices had considered the Welsh language needs of the patient population and were able to provide bilingual information to patients and a bilingual service where possible.



We were also pleased to note the efforts made by some practices to support and accommodate patients with additional needs to receive their treatment. One practice, 'MyDentist' in Wrexham told us that they held dedicated sessions, twice per year, for patients diagnosed with autism to receive treatment in a calming environment. Extra time was set aside for each appointment, lights are dimmed, and the radio volume lowered. We were also told that there were sensory toys, light blocking glasses and ear defenders available for patients to use.

Bryant Dental Practice also told us that during the pandemic, the practice utilised the 'Attend Anywhere' service and remote triage to reach patients who were too nervous to attend the practice due to COVID-19. We were also told that protected appointment slots are made available for vulnerable or at-risk patients at the start or end of each day.

We did find some common areas for improvement through our work. The majority of dental practices needed to improve their documentation recording staff training and ensure that all staff completed mandatory training sessions. We recognise that training has been challenging to source at times during the pandemic, but practices must continue to prioritise this as up to date training supports with quality and patient safety.

We found some areas of management and governance which needed strengthening:

- **A number of practices did not have a system which ensured all risk assessments were being kept up to date. We noted that some fire risk assessments were out of date. Risk assessments are an important management tool which helps to keep patients and staff safe and should be reviewed and updated regularly to reduce risks.**
- **Some dental practices did not have an up-to-date Infection Prevention and Control policy to work from. Whilst we acknowledge there have been some frequent updates to infection control advice over the course of the pandemic, correct IPC procedures (which should be governed through a policy) are crucial for maintaining patient safety.**
- **We also found numerous examples of practices not undertaking audits of their work. Audits offer an opportunity to review the consistency.**

Practices should ensure they take account of the above findings, considering whether they can apply any of this learning to their service to improve the quality and safety of care and treatment that is provided.

## Independent Healthcare



### Acute Hospitals

Due to the impact of NHS waiting times, independent healthcare is being utilised by patients now more than ever. After exclusively making use of remote Quality Checks throughout 2020-2021, it was important for our inspectors to return to onsite visits of independent hospitals to ensure patients received safe and effective care.

During 2021-2022 we completed four onsite inspections of Independent Hospitals.

Overall, our inspections found that safe and effective care is being provided to patients. Most patients who participated in the inspection expressed satisfaction with the care and treatment received.

Patients told us that staff were kind and caring and we observed good interactions between staff and patients, with staff supporting patients in a calm, dignified and respectful manner.

We found that the staff teams were committed to providing patients with safe and effective care and patients' care needs had been assessed by staff and monitored to promote patient well-being and safety.

The hospitals we inspected were clean and tidy and arrangements were in place to reduce cross infection. This is of high importance as during the time of our inspections, COVID-19 was still prevalent. However, even our most positive of inspections identified issues in medicines management procedures, for example, daily controlled drugs checklists not fully completed. We also noted issues with medications security, storage, and temperature checks.

We found good management and leadership in the hospitals with staff commenting positively on the support that they received from the management team. There was a clear multi-disciplinary approach to provisions of care across all three inspections.

## Hospices

Hospices provide care to adults, young people and children who have a terminal illness or a long-term condition that cannot be cured. Due to the vulnerability of the patients, it is imperative that hospices have policies and procedures in place to protect patients from COVID-19.

During the year we completed:



Overall, our assurance and inspection work of hospices throughout the year was positive with evidence that services provided safe and effective care.

## Adults

We noted the interaction between staff and patients was good and it was evidence that family members were engaged and involved in their relative's care. There were good examples of multi-disciplinary working to improve provisions of care.

Staff emphasised the importance of maintaining visiting as far as possible for the well-being of patients and their relatives, particularly for patients in their last days of life. Staff described how this was achieved in a timely and effective manner in line with public health guidance at that time. This included initially restricting visiting numbers and COVID-19 testing for relatives before visiting.

We did find some common areas for improvement through our work:

- Environmental risk assessments and action plans were not always complete.
- Low levels of completed mandatory training.

## Young People and Children

During our inspection we observed staff being kind and respectful to children. We saw staff making efforts to protect children's privacy and dignity when providing assistance with personal care needs. We viewed staff communicating with children in a calm, friendly and cheerful manner. Staff were observed communicating with children in an encouraging and inclusive manner.

The multi-disciplinary team provided patients with individualised care according to their assessed needs. There were robust processes in place for referring changes in patients' needs to other professionals such as tissue viability nurses, speech and language therapists and dieticians.

Children who completed the online survey told us that they were involved in the planning and provision of their own care. Parents/guardians told us that they were being consulted and encouraged to ask questions and make decisions around care provision.

## Treatment using a Class 3B/4 laser or Intense Pulsed Light (IPL)

The 2021-2022 year saw many registered lasers and IPL providers re-open their services to patients following a period of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



<sup>4</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/the-national-minimum-standards-for-independent-health-care-services-in-wales-2011-no-16.pdf>

Once these services reopened, we returned to seeking assurance that laser and IPL services were safe for patients through our Quality Checks.

During this period, we conducted 15 Quality Checks and one onsite inspection of laser and IPL registered providers across Wales.

The themes from our work during this time are set out below and providers should use these as learning points, considering whether they can make any improvements based on what we have found and recommended.

Registered laser and IPL services provided us with good evidence of COVID-19 procedures, such as social distancing arrangements for patients and staff in waiting areas. Many services also had comprehensive COVID-19 risk assessments in place. It was reassuring to find that many of the services had taken time during their period of closure to understand the COVID-19 regulations and put safe practices in place to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. We found that nearly all providers ensured that a face-to-face consultation was carried out on prospective patients prior to the start of any treatment. They also ensured consent was obtained from patients ahead of treatment taking place.

During our Quality Checks we discovered that not all providers had an up-to-date safeguarding policy. Safeguarding policies and procedures which are accurate and up to date are an important means of supporting safe practices. We also noted that not all providers had a valid set of local rules that refer to the current IPL device in place. Local rules are set by the Laser Protections Adviser (LPA) which outline the safe and correct use of the laser machine. Providers must have a contract in place with an LPA to be able to provide laser treatments safely and legally.

Many providers were required to update their Infection and Prevention Control Policy. By ensuring the policy is up to date, providers can be assured that staff and patients are protected infectious diseases and infections.

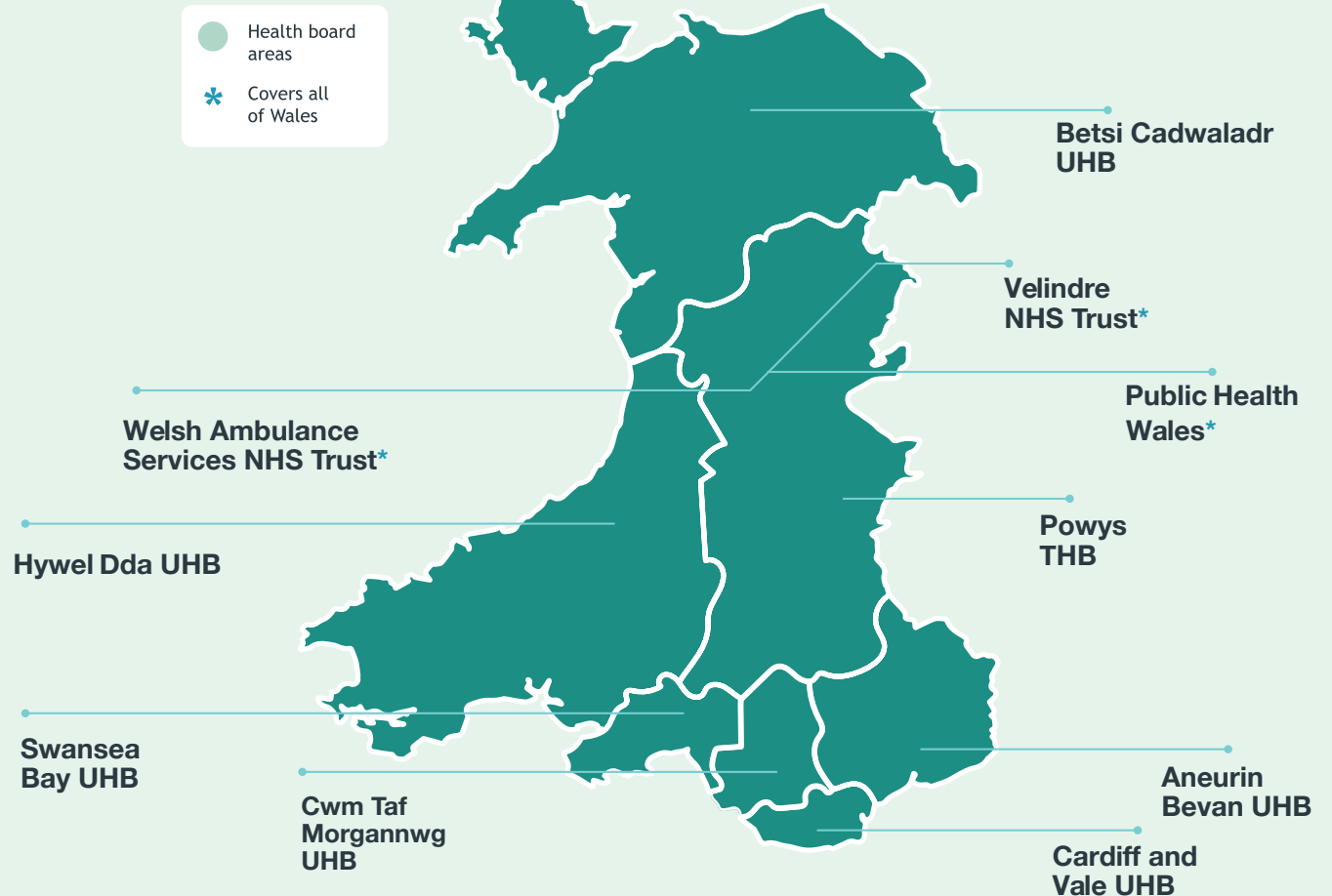
Nearly half of the providers did not have a policy in place which outlined how the service would approach the need to communicate and provide information in Welsh should the patient request it. Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards of Independent Health Care Services in Wales<sup>4</sup> states that services should comply with legislation and guidance to ensure effective, accessible, appropriate and timely communication and address all language and communication needs.

# NHS Health Boards and NHS Trusts

The period covered by this report, 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022, continued to present healthcare services, and health boards with unique pressures and challenges.

This year they have faced not just the challenge of dealing with COVID-19 itself, but the added challenge of recovering services, tackling long waiting lists and demand for services as a result of many being paused in the initial pandemic response.

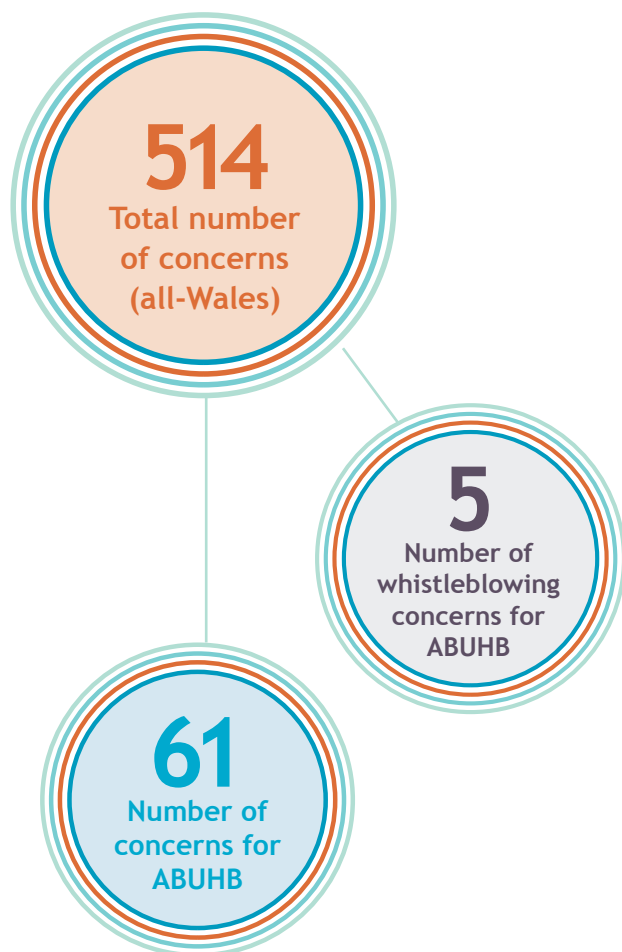
Across Wales we noted some common areas of concern through our work; in general, these were pressures associated with recovery of services, waiting times for treatment and significant issues with patient flow in hospitals, and notable pressure and demand on children's services, mental health services and primary care.



## Aneurin Bevan University Health Board



Below is a breakdown of quality checks and onsite inspections that took place within the health board



Quality Checks	9
GP	5
Hospital	2
Learning Disability	1
Community Hospital	1

Onsite	3
Hospital	2
IRMER	1
Mental Health Hospital	1

Within Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, during the 2021-2022 period, our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care within the health board comprised of a mix of Quality Checks and onsite inspections, consideration of the themes and trends presented by concerns and whistleblowing reports received directly by us, and monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit](#) | [Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the health board developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence.

During this period, we have seen evidence of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board working hard through difficult times to resolve the issues that have arisen from the pandemic and in specific service areas where there have been particular challenges.

Changes made to governance structures during the pandemic have been carried forward due to the beneficial impact the health board found these had. We noted that engagement with senior leaders continued to be positive and considered that communication between the health board and HIW had shown improvement.

The health board has been proactive in sharing the learning from our assurance and inspection work across its services and has also proactively worked to deliver and embed actions for improvement that we have recommended through our work. The health board has kept us up to date on its progress on a regular basis.

A challenge for the health board throughout this time has been the newly opened Grange hospital. We undertook an onsite inspection to the emergency department and found several issues, some of which required immediate attention to improve patient safety. Staff who responded to our questionnaire told us about feeling pressured and struggling to cope with high levels of demand. High levels of demand for emergency department treatment have been seen across Wales, but this coupled with a new department, new building and new team pose an additional challenge and we urged the health

board to continue with the positive input to support the department as it matures as a service.

In many of our Quality Checks, our findings were positive, in particular around access to PPE, with minimal improvements required in any area. However, we were disappointed to note that compliance rates with mandatory training continued to need improvement.

During this period, we noted the health board working hard to maintain service delivery in the face of some substantial staffing challenges. At times, emergency actions have needed to be taken, such as temporarily pausing some services until staffing levels were safe again. Recruitment drives and promoting positive working cultures across services will need to be areas of focus for the health board as it continues to tackle this challenge.



The concerns we received the most for Aneurin Bevan UHB related to:

- **Clinical Assessment**
- **Infrastructure (Staff facilities and the environment)**
- **Treatment / Procedure**

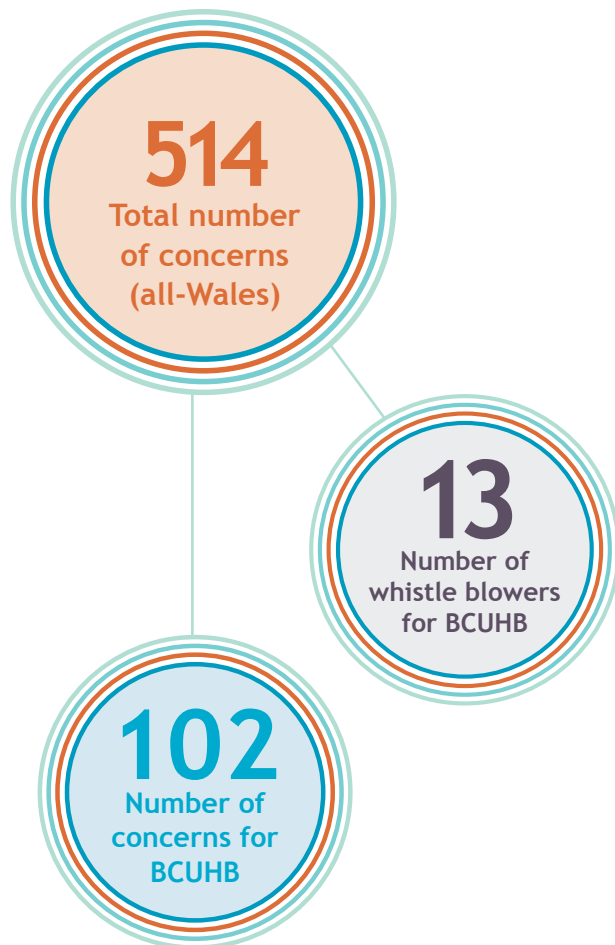
## Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

Below is a breakdown of quality checks and onsite inspections that took place within the health board



Quality Checks	7
GP	3
Hospital	2
Learning Disability	2

Onsite	4
Mental Health Hospital	2
IRMER	1
Learning Disability	1

Within Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, during the 2021-2022 period, our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care within the health board comprised of a mix of Quality Checks and onsite inspections, consideration of the themes and trends presented by concerns and whistleblowing reports received directly by us, and monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit | Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the health board developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence. During the period in question, the health board had recently come under the leadership of a

new Chief Executive, Jo Whitehead, who was appointed in January 2021. We noted positive evidence of change at this most senior level through open dialogue and a commitment to working together with us and other partners to help bring about change and improvement in services throughout the health board.

We noted that the culture in many areas across the health board still required work to ensure that staff feel empowered to challenge issues and raise concerns. It is critical that the health board continue to work on this area, empowering staff and developing a culture where staff feel confident to raise concerns and constructively challenge.



As a result of ongoing concern about standards of care in mental health inpatient services at the health board we conducted two onsite inspections to the Hergest unit. We were concerned to find issues relating to staffing levels and significant staff fatigue, and infection prevention and control during our inspection work to Hergest.

The health board responded constructively to the challenges we raised as a result of this work, but continued input from the health board will be necessary to bring about and sustain the level of improvement needed in this service. We will continue to monitor the progress made against the specific recommendations we made following our inspection to Hergest and will consider how the learning is shared to other services across the health board.

Poor record keeping was also an area of concern emerging through our ongoing work and monitoring of the health board. As a result of this emerging trend, we specifically focussed on record keeping in work within the health board during this year. We undertook an offsite Quality Check of the emergency department at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd in March 2022, with a significant focus on the evidence drawn from patient record keeping. We found a high level of risk to patient safety through this work and requested the health board take immediate action to reduce the risk. The outcome and findings of this work have contributed to the overall view of this specific service as an emergency department in Wales. We will continue to monitor the progress the health board makes in this specific department and how the learning is shared and used to shape improvement across their services.

The concerns we received the most for Betsi Cadwaladr UHB related to:

- **Infrastructure (Staff facilities and the environment)**
- **Whistleblowing**
- **Clinical Assessment**

## Cardiff and Vale University Health Board



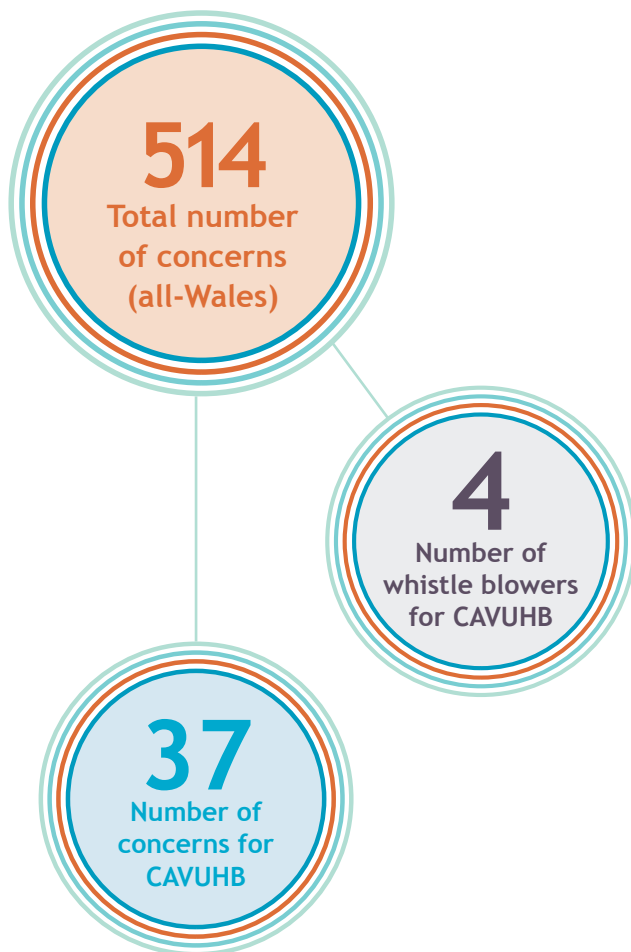
GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Caerdydd a'r Fro  
Cardiff and Vale  
University Health Board

Below is a breakdown of quality checks and onsite inspections that took place within the health board

Quality Checks	6
GP	5
Hospital	1

Onsite	3
Hospital	1
IRMER	1



Within Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, during the 2021-2022 period, our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care provided by the health board comprised of a mix of Quality Checks and onsite inspections, consideration of the themes and trends presented by concerns and whistleblowing reports received directly by us, and monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit | Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the health board developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence.

Through our assurance work, we did not identify any significant concerns during the year. However, we noted a significant increase in demand for services, as the health board began recovery from the pandemic. This was also evident within the University Hospital for Wales Emergency Unit, which saw a rapid rise in demand at a time where additional measures were required to help maintain adequate infection prevention and control. The health board is undertaking a significant amount of work to improve the infrastructure, environment, and processes to manage this. We also noted significant pressure within the health board's Mental Health services including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

This includes the timely compliance with referral, assessments, and treatment times. However, the health board has made progress with some improvements already in these areas.

Bed availability within inpatient CAMHS units nationally, is at a premium. Challenges remain in the health board, with its ability access CAHMS inpatient services in other localities.

As a result, where children and adolescents require inpatient treatment, and beds are not available in a specialist unit, some patients require admission to general paediatric areas, with the support of registered mental health nurses, and at times, older adolescents have been admitted to the adult inpatient services located in Hafan Y Coed. The challenge for the health board will be to sustain and continue improvements in this area, particularly when

the demand for CAMHS services remains high. We will continue to monitor our findings for the past year throughout the 2022-2023 inspection year. This will include undertaking planned and reactive inspection and assurance work as necessary, maintaining our relationship manager communication with the health board and partner organisations and through our engagement with service users and staff. This will enable us to check that healthcare services are provided in a way which maximises the health and well-being of people who use services within the health board's hospitals and its community services.

Throughout the year, we identified that the health board teams have continued to work tirelessly during several significant challenges which remain as a result of the pandemic. These challenges include an increase in staff absences and vacancies, stretched services

and the resulting impact these challenges can have on staff well-being and patient safety. The health board has been proactive in supporting its staff, with a plan in place to support their health and well-being.

Our engagement with the executive team has continued to be positive and constructive, both to HIW and the health board. There has been number of changes within the executive team which included the appointment of a new Chief Executive, and the recruitment process in place to obtain additional key executives, which included the Executive Director of Nursing, Medical Director, and Chief Operating Officer. We endeavour to maintain our positive relationships with the executive team and other senior leaders.

The concerns we received the most for Cardiff and Vale UHB related to:

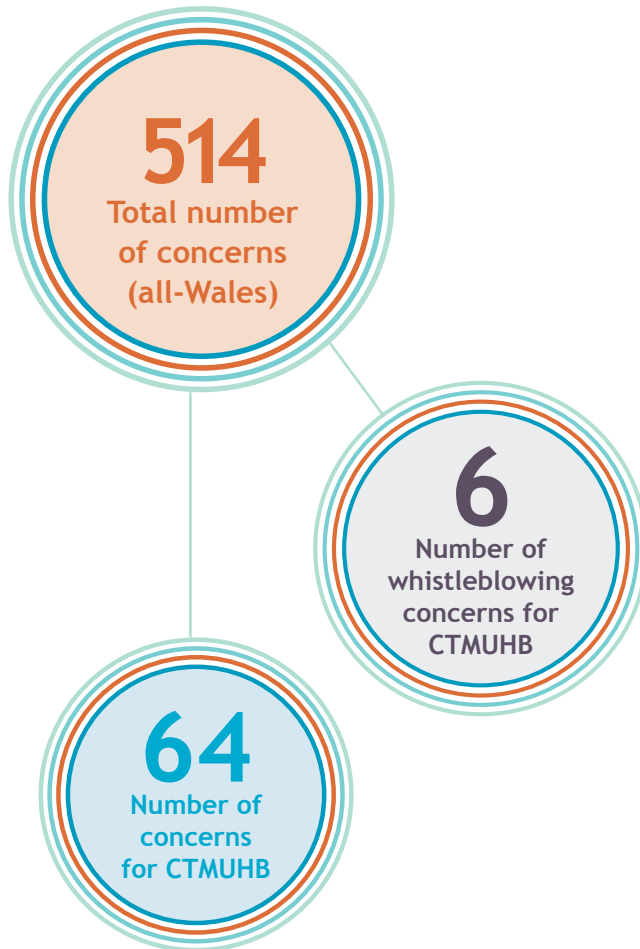
- **Infrastructure (Staff facilities and the environment)**
- **Mental Health Act**
- **Clinical Assessment**

## Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Cwm Taf  
University Health Board



Below is a breakdown of quality checks and onsite inspections that took place within the health board

Quality Checks	9
GP	3
Mental Health Hospital	3
Learning Disability	2
Hospital	1

Onsite	5
Hospital	3
IRMER	1
Mental Health Hospital	1

Within Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, during the 2021-2022 period, our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care within the health board comprised of a mix of Quality Checks and onsite inspections, consideration of the themes and trends presented by concerns and whistleblowing reports received directly by us, and monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit | Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the health board developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence.

Overall, we found that the health board was continuing to make progress against the joint [Audit Wales and HIW review of governance conducted in 2019](#). Both organisations jointly followed this up during 2020, [reporting in May 2021](#). We found that there was a greater strategic focus on quality, safety and risk than had been previously found. However, we noted that it was too early to fully assess the effectiveness of the improvements and consequently we will be undertaking a further follow-up review during 2022-2023.

As a result of growing concern about the Emergency Department in Prince Charles Hospital, we carried out an unannounced inspection of the unit. We had significant concerns about patient safety and the potential high levels of risk to patients because of our findings. We were pleased that the health board responded very positively to our findings, noting their openness and willingness to work on tackling and addressing the issues we had highlighted through our work. We returned to the department unannounced four months later to consider their progress and could see several improvement initiatives in place which were already beginning to make a difference. We noted, however, that there were still areas which needed more work and urged the health board to maintain the momentum behind the improvement.

A challenge for Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board will be around sustaining these improvements. Some of the issues we identified indicated that the culture at the department needed to be addressed. Where there are cultural issues, the challenge of maintaining the impetus and embedding changes may be greater. In a health board that has previously faced challenges with quality governance, it was positive to note the beginnings of change and the progress made by the health board to improve and sustain those improvements. The work done on improving the culture, values and behaviours across the organisation is a positive step for the whole health board but one that will need continued focus to make sustainable change.



The concerns we received the most for Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB related to:

- **Infrastructure (Staff facilities and the environment)**
- **Treatment / Procedure**
- **Clinical Assessment**

## Hywel Dda University Health Board



Below is a breakdown of quality checks and onsite inspections that took place within the health board

Quality Checks	8
GP	2
Mental Health Hospital	2
Learning Disability	2
Hospital	2

Onsite	3
Hospital	2
IRMER	1

Within Hywel Dda University Health Board, during the 2021-2022 period, our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care within the health board comprised of a mix of Quality Checks and onsite inspections, consideration of the themes and trends presented by concerns and whistleblowing reports received directly by us, and monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit](#) | [Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the health board developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence.

During this period, we have seen evidence of Hywel Dda University Health Board working hard through difficult times to recover services following the early restrictions of the pandemic. Through our engagement with senior leaders in the health board and observing at quality and safety meetings, it has been evident that quality is clearly embedded in their approach to leading the health board, and we have seen a strong focus on a learning culture.

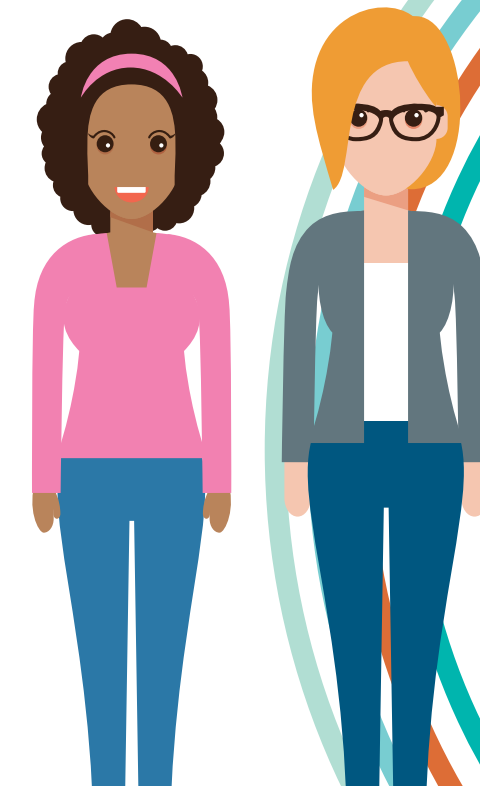
Difficulty in recruiting qualified staff continues to be a challenge for the health board, although there had been an increase in numbers of applicants for roles as healthcare support workers. The health board has continued

to tackle recruitment challenges through initiatives such as the use of an apprenticeship scheme, which enables people to work and gain healthcare qualifications. Resilience across their services has been fragile at times due to the staffing issues and compounded by the rurality and geographical spread of the health board and their hospitals. We note that senior leaders continue to plan and work proactively in an attempt to develop sustainable services for the future.

We carried out an offsite Quality Check of one of the health board's inpatient learning disability services and had significant concerns about the safety of the environment and the day-to-day management of risks in a service which was caring for vulnerable patients. The health board responded very quickly and constructively to the issues we identified and sped up their intention to discharge the

patients to alternative placements. This action meant the service was empty and the health board did not admit any further patients for the remainder of the year while they worked to tackle the numerous service delivery issues that were present. We will continue to closely monitor the progress and re-opening of this service through our work and will consider further intervention and escalation if necessary. Through our partnership working with the Community Health Council (CHC), we were made aware of reports of poor patient experience within maternity services provided by the health board. The CHC ran a survey asking for experiences of maternity services within the health board. The results were mixed and saw several negative responses from patients. We engaged with the health board and have monitored their initial response to the issues; the challenge for them will be to fully embed the changes and maintain the

momentum behind the improvements. We will continue to engage with the CHC to understand whether the patient experience within these services is improving and will consider future assurance work to check on the improvements in service delivery that have been made because of these interventions.



The concerns we received the most for Hywel Dda UHB related to:

- **Infrastructure (Staff facilities and the environment)**
- **Treatment / Procedure**
- **Self-harming behaviour**

## Powys Teaching Health Board



Below is a breakdown of quality checks and onsite inspections that took place within the health board

Quality Checks	2
GP	2

Onsite	3
Hospital	1
CMHT	1



Within Powys Teaching Health Board, during the 2021-2022 period, our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care within the health board comprised of a mix of Quality Checks and onsite inspections, consideration of the themes and trends presented by concerns and whistleblowing reports received directly by us, and monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit | Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the health board developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence.

During this period there have been several changes to senior leadership and management within the health board. This includes staff leaving, retiring, and undertaking secondments elsewhere within the organisation. Due to the level of recruitment, this is an area which may take time to stabilise, but it has been positive to note that the executive team is focusing on supporting and embedding leadership changes as a priority in support of their workforce and the continued delivery of frontline patient care.

There has been continued positive engagement with the leadership team, including regular and ongoing meetings with the Director of Nursing and Medical Director throughout the year.



Powys Teaching Health Board commissions a significant proportion of its services from providers in both England and Wales. There are arrangements in place to monitor the performance of the providers used to deliver services to Powys patients via a Commissioning Assurance Framework. However, some of the performance data was paused earlier in the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore this monitoring arrangement has not been fully functional throughout the year. As some services are provided by other health boards and trusts, the restarting of services has been variable, leading to a potential inconsistency and impact on Powys residents.

The health board has been monitoring this closely, reporting issues openly at quality, safety, and performance forums. We will continue to engage with the health board on this to ensure we remain up to date on this

complex situation, and we will consider future work to better understand commissioning arrangements.

We undertook an onsite inspection to the mental health ward at Bronllys Hospital and identified that there had been limited improvements to some of the recommendations we had made at an inspection we carried out there in 2019. The lack of progress seemed to be particularly around the buildings and maintenance issues that we had identified. We urged the health board to improve their oversight of this area and make progress on these actions. Since then, it has been pleasing to observe updates provided by the health board to their quality and safety committee regarding the overall progress made against HIW recommendations and their subsequent completion.



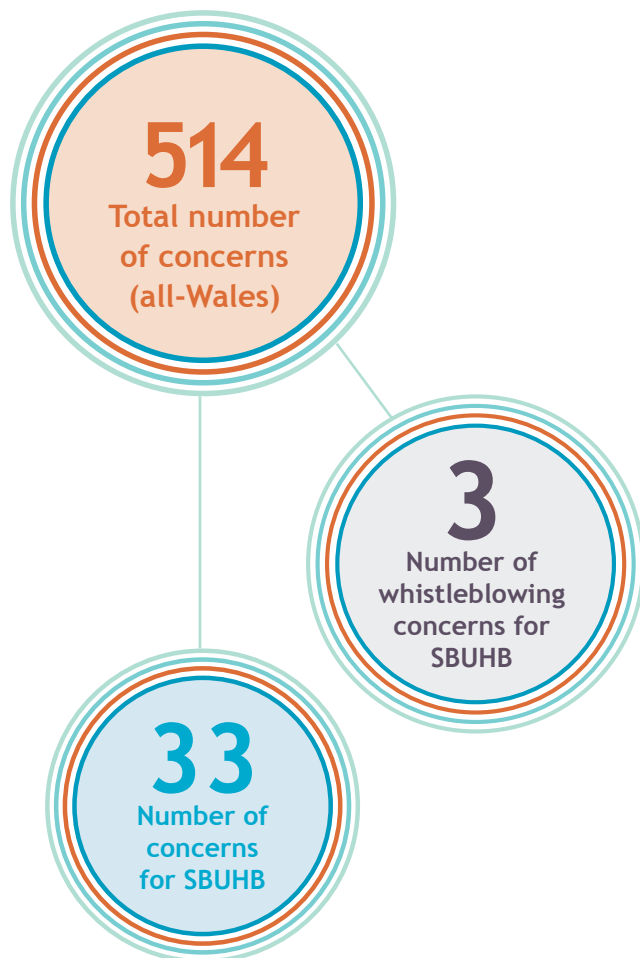
The concerns we received the most for Powys THB related to:

- **Infrastructure (Staff facilities and the environment)**
- **Treatment / Procedure**
- **Clinical Assessment**

## Swansea Bay University Health Board



Below is a breakdown of assurance work that took place within the health board



Quality Checks	8
GP	5
Hospital	2
Learning Disability	1

Onsite	4
Learning Disability	1
Mental Health Hospital	1
IRMER	1
HMP	1

Within Swansea Bay University Health Board, during the 2021-2022 period, our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care within the health board comprised of a mix of Quality Checks and onsite inspections, consideration of the themes and trends presented by concerns and whistleblowing reports received directly by us, and monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit | Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the health board developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence.

During this period, we have seen evidence of Swansea Bay University Health Board working hard through difficult times to resolve the issues that have arisen from the pandemic and also in specific service areas where there have been particular challenges.

There have been changes in the executive team over a number of years, however, the health board has made new executive appointments, including a new CEO and Executive Nurse Director. We also note the positive impact of stability in the executive team will require time to achieve and will continue to monitor progress through our work.

As a result of negative findings from a previous HIW inspection to Morrison Hospital Emergency Department in January 2020, we undertook an offsite Quality Check to check on progress and to consider how the department was responding to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. We found that there had been improvements made but a significant demand for emergency care and lack of capacity elsewhere in the hospital due to the high number of inpatients was continuing to be a challenge. We were concerned to find that the training data being maintained by the department was not up to date so we could not be assured that there was an appropriate number of trained staff covering the area. The health board responded positively to this challenge and was able to assure us of

sufficient numbers of trained staff by providing additional evidence. Whilst this is one specific example, we noted that demand and capacity challenges were present in other areas, these can present immediate challenges and divert the focus away from longer term improvement work. We were pleased to see that the health board was continuing to look for solutions to demand and capacity issues, such as dedicating the Neath Port Talbot site for planned and elective surgical procedures, supporting a better flow of patients at acute sites and to ensure continued attempts to reduce lengthy waiting lists. We recognise this is an ongoing challenge for the health board which will need to support and maintain the resilience of its workforce to meet continued high demand.

We also carried out a review of the governance arrangements in place by the health board in the provision of healthcare services to the prison population in HMP Swansea. **This review** was as a result of previous concerns raised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) regarding the prison. The evidence we gathered pointed to gaps in oversight by the health board and processes that were not robust enough to ensure an effective service was being provided. The health board responded constructively and positively to our findings on this and will need to continue working on the recommended actions in order to create and sustain improvement.

The concerns we received the most for Swansea Bay UHB related to:

- **Infrastructure (Staff facilities and the environment)**
- **Safeguarding**
- **Clinical Assessment**

## Public Health Wales

Within Public Health Wales, during the 2021-2022 period, our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care within the trust comprised of consideration of the themes and trends arising from concerns, attendance at quality and safety meetings, engagement with the senior executive team, monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit | Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the trust developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence.

During this period, we observed Public Health Wales providing an important contribution to the ongoing surveillance of COVID-19 rates and communication of this to the public. Health Improvement programmes demonstrated innovation to delivering services remotely. Valued work was undertaken to support schools and businesses look after the emotional and mental well-being of pupils and staff as the nation came out of the pandemic. The delivery of vital public health screening services provided by the trust continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw evidence of services working to overcome these challenges in line with agreed recovery plans. Dedicated

resource has been invested to tackle demand for each service and find solutions to the loss of community facilities which were used to host clinics pre-pandemic.

We recognised improvements with the recovery of services such as bowel and cervical screening and activities operating at pre-pandemic capacities for services such as breast screening and abdominal aortic aneurysm screening. We have noted the trust has an open and constructive culture amongst their staff and senior leaders which is positive as they continue working post-COVID-19. Through our work and engagement with the trust we will continue to monitor these areas which have been a particular challenge and will consider undertaking assurance work to further investigate issues as appropriate.



## Velindre University NHS Trust

Our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care within Velindre University NHS Trust during the 2021-2022 period comprised of monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit](#) | [Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the trust developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence.

We saw evidence of Velindre University NHS Trust working very hard to maintain the services they provide through specialist cancer inpatient and outpatient services, and also across Wales through the Welsh Blood Service. COVID-19 remained the biggest risk to service delivery with staff absences, capacity reductions and increasing patient numbers impacting on the trusts ability to reduce waiting times for treatment and services such as radiotherapy. Attempts to undertake HIW assurance work at the trust were hindered by an increase in infections in early 2022. This work will now take place in 2022-2023 and will provide us with a sense of how services are recovering from the pandemic.

We noted the efforts of the Welsh Blood Service to build and sustain blood stocks throughout the pandemic. We noted evidence of the organisation continuing to plan for future service requirements and monitored progress with the Transforming Cancer Service Programme. We have seen transparent and constructive challenge taking place by independent members on all aspects of the trust at committee meetings. Engagement between HIW and the executive team for the trust remains positive and constructive, with a welcome for the scrutiny we are able to provide.



## Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

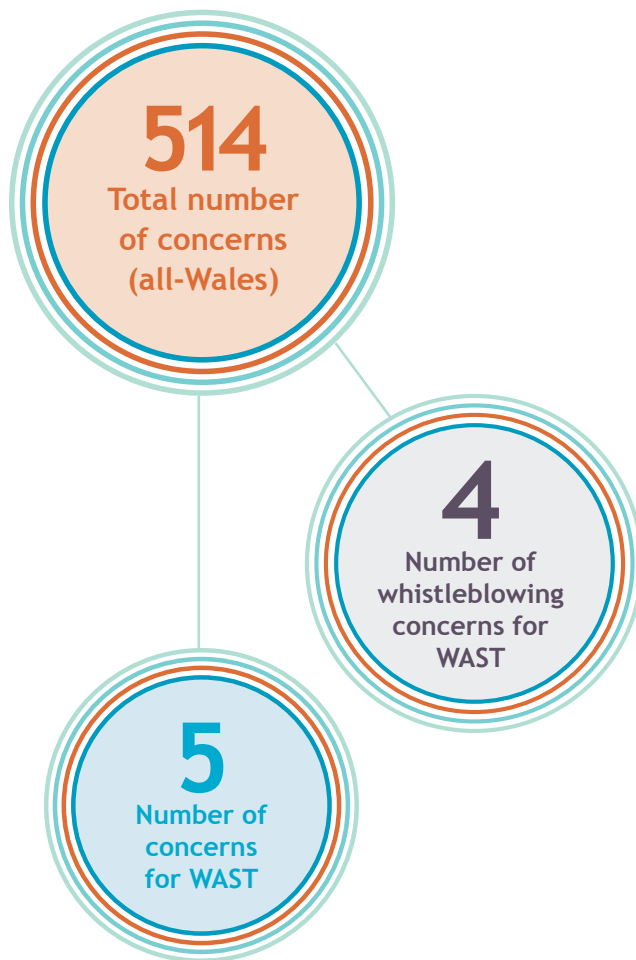


During the 2021-2022 period, our work to seek assurance on the safety and quality of care within the trust comprised of the final part of our local review exploring the impact of patients being delayed on the back of ambulances, consideration of the themes and trends presented by concerns and whistleblowing reports received directly by us, and monitoring of data sets and intelligence shared with us from partner organisations who make up our National Healthcare Summit members [[Healthcare Summit](#) | [Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(hiw.org.uk\)](#)]. The view of the trust developed over this time is a culmination of all the above sources of evidence.

During this period, we noted the trust working through highly challenging times to provide their services and expertise across all parts of Wales.

Throughout the year the trust has been very open and honest with HIW, responding promptly to requests for information and data. We observed good levels of scrutiny and challenge at quality and safety meetings and have been assured that senior leaders seem to clearly recognise the issues they are facing and are committed to improvement. However, we also noted ongoing issues in service delivery despite this commitment to improvement.

Staffing has been a particular and significant challenge for the trust as it continues to see COVID-19 related absences impacting their workforce. Military personnel were brought in to support on community response vehicles and whilst this may have provided a temporary solution, once this resource is no longer available, the trust will need to continue to find solutions to their workforce challenge. We realise that this will not be simple to resolve and we will continue to monitor the trust's approach to service design and workforce planning through our work.



Our local review of patient experience whilst waiting in the back of ambulances found a number of examples where delays in handover had impacted extremely negatively on patients, but also on the ambulance staff providing their care. Staff told us that they were frustrated to find themselves waiting for long periods of time, sometimes entire shifts, waiting outside a hospital to transfer a patient and felt demoralised at not being able to provide care to patients in need of their help within the community. Whilst patients reported being cared for well by the ambulance staff who looked after them, they did not report positively about the length of time spent in the ambulance environment.

We made several recommendations through our review which we recognised were a substantial challenge to the trust and wider NHS system, however, to improve patient safety and tackle the impact on staff well-being, these recommendations must be acted on. The challenge for the trust will be the need to collaborate with health boards across Wales, all of whom have their own unique features and challenges. Supporting the well-being of ambulance staff who provide direct patient care and have direct contact with patients as call handlers will need to be of the utmost priority to the trust as it continues working on the recommendations and through this challenging time.



# To be more visible



## Collaboration and Engagement

Collaboration and joint working with other organisations are an integral part of the way in which we work. This year we continued to build on the strong relationships we have in place with our partners, once again acknowledging the additional insight this provided and the positive impact on our work that this gave us.

## Collaboration

We continued to work with partners to explore how we can share data and intelligence. This included hosting two Healthcare Summits, in May and November 2021.

The summits were attended by the key regulatory and improvement bodies for healthcare in Wales. We agreed a collective view on the key national issues and risks across Wales, for example access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). We shared these concerns, on behalf of all partners, with the NHS Wales Chief Executive. The purpose of this was to help us better understand what improvement action is underway at a national level. This forum continued to be a rich and valuable source of information and route for information sharing. We also started working with partners to develop a new mechanism, for members of the Healthcare Summit to share emerging serious patient safety risks and concerns across the sector. The work to develop this new mechanism will continue into 2022-2023.

During the year we continued to work closely with our partner, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

In March 2022 we jointly published our report into the use of **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) in Wales**. The safeguards apply to people over the age of 18 in hospitals or care homes, who cannot consent to treatment or care. We worked alongside CIW again, plus Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Probation (HMIP) and of Constabulary and Fire Services (HMICFRS), as well as Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales to review **the child protection arrangements in place in the Neath Port Talbot area**.

We also work closely with Audit Wales, and in May 2021 we published a report providing detail on the progress made by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board in addressing the recommendations from our 2019 joint review into their governance arrangements. HIW's clinical team has been actively working in collaboration with training providers and professional organisations to support training delivered by the General Medical Council and to pre-registration nursing students. This supports greater awareness and understanding of the role of HIW in Wales. The clinical team has also been sharing good practice we have identified through our inspection work by signposting health board teams to the services they can approach to learn from.



## Engagement



**Speaking and listening to people who use healthcare services and who work within healthcare services is of the highest priority to us.** By doing this, we can better understand what matters to people and can gain a greater understanding of the culture within a service and insight into the experience patients receive.

During our inspection and review work we ask patients to tell us about the care they receive by completing a short survey, and when we are able to speak to patients in person during onsite visits, we gather views directly. This year, for example, we used a short engaging video on social media to help explain our **National Review of Patient Flow** and to encourage people to tell us about their personal experience, or the experience of their loved ones if they have been treated for a stroke. In January 2022, we launched a refreshed area on our website, keeping all our **surveys** in one place and making it easier for people to find out what active work we have ongoing, and provide their comments. Work on our 2022-2025 strategy was a key focus during the year and as part of this we undertook two large scale online surveys open to stakeholders and the public. We used these surveys to help shape our future direction through the increased understanding the responses gave us about the impact of our work on people and services.

In February 2022, we increased our social media presence and launched on LinkedIn. We recognised this as an important additional avenue for engagement with healthcare professionals. We have continued to use Twitter and Facebook to engage widely with social

media users about our work, encouraging people to click through to our website where they can find out more about our work and role in Wales. Across our digital platforms we have seen an increase in engagement with a higher number of impressions and a wider reach of our content.

We also developed a new methodology for onsite inspections of Mental Health Units. One important change in this area is the implementation of a process to use questionnaires for patients, staff, friends, and family members. This will increase our engagement with people who use mental health services and those who work within them.

In response to previous feedback from the public that our reports can be hard to understand, we concluded a project to implement a new reporting style for onsite inspections. This new approach was implemented in April 2022 and involves publishing a public summary and a full detailed report for the setting. We also reviewed how we report to remove unnecessary duplication and make the reports easier to read. The outcome of this will be reports that are easier to understand and engage with.

# To develop our people and our organisation to do the best job possible

## Internal Update

Although the last year has been one of significant change, we have continued to invest in the development of HIW and its people in order to ensure we monitor and check that people in Wales are receiving good quality healthcare. We introduced many new ways of working to continue to fulfil our organisational functions, whilst being flexible to any emerging risks. People are at the heart of what we do, and it is important we strive to share lessons learnt, reflect on what has worked well and take forward this learning to continuously improve.

We listened to and supported the well-being of our people to enable them and our organisation to do the best possible job and keep our communities safe and well. Our Corporate Service department developed a bespoke Learning and Development programme for our staff, tailoring unique opportunities to enable our workforce to build on vital skills. Following the launch and implementation of our internal Well-being Strategy our staff survey scores have shown clear signs of improvement across our key themes including inclusion, leadership and change.

We have also recruited to several new roles including Mental Health Act and peer reviewers to strengthen our access to clinical expertise alongside developing a professional pathway for all our HIW inspectors. Over the past 12 months we have recruited a number of peer reviewers with experience in specialised nursing roles including stroke and child and adolescent mental health.

We implemented a new Customer Relationship Management system in March 2022. The new system replaced many of our existing spreadsheets and documentation. The system has been successfully rolled out and allows

our staff to use data and information more effectively and efficiently to strengthen our ability to generate intelligence and insight. We have continued to work with partners to explore how we can share data and intelligence. This includes early collaborative work to develop a new process for healthcare organisations and partners in Wales to share serious patient safety risks and concerns across the sector. We have held regular staff forums to discuss lessons learnt, areas of improvement and empower our workforce to have their say. The forum and anonymous staff suggestion box are monitored and fed back to senior leadership, where ideas, concerns and proposals are reviewed and actioned.



# Commitment Matrix

The following table is a list of the objectives HIW set itself for 2021-2022, together with details of how we met the objective.

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Regulating independent healthcare</b>		
<b>Deliverable 1</b>		
<p>Process applications to register, or changes to registration, in a timely manner.</p> <p>Ensure all applicants can demonstrate they meet relevant regulation and minimum standards.</p>	<p>Registration applications determined within 12 weeks of full and complete submission.</p>	<p>The following registration work was completed during 2021-2022</p> <p><b>Independent Healthcare Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44 New Registrations</li> <li>• 28 Changes of Registered Managers</li> <li>• 12 Changes of Responsible Individuals</li> <li>• 22 Variations of HIW Registration Conditions</li> </ul> <p><b>Private Dental Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 New Registrations</li> <li>• 37 Changes of Registered Managers</li> <li>• 12 Changes of Responsible Individuals</li> <li>• 1 Variation of HIW Registration Conditions</li> </ul>

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Regulating independent healthcare</b>		
<b>Deliverable 2</b>		
<p>Conduct a programme of visits to suspected unregistered providers as required.</p> <p>Deliver a programme of assurance and inspection work on independent settings in line with our frequency rules.</p> <p>Continue to plan and deliver the rest of our work programme in areas where we believe there is the highest level of risk to patient safety.</p>	<p>Number of visits undertaken.</p> <p>Number of Quality Checks undertaken.</p> <p>Number of reports published four weeks following Quality Check.</p> <p>Number of full inspections undertaken.</p> <p>Number of reports published three months following an inspection.</p> <p>Where urgent action is required, following assurance working the independent sector, the service will be issued with a Non-Compliance Notice within two days.</p>	<p>We carried out three visits to unregistered providers.</p> <p>We carried out 91 Quality Checks of independent services.</p> <p>We carried out 34 onsite inspections of independent services.</p> <p>We published 91 Quality Checks during 2021-2022. 75 of these were published within four weeks.</p> <p>We published 34 onsite inspections reports during 2021-2022. 28 of these were published within three months following the inspection.</p> <p>We issued 16 Non-Compliance Notices.</p>

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Regulating independent healthcare</b>		
<b>Deliverable 3</b>		
<p>Ensure that concerns and Regulation 30/31 notifications are dealt with in a timely and professional manner.</p>	<p>Number of concerns received.</p> <p>Number of Regulation 30/31 notifications received.</p> <p>Analysis of source and action taken.</p>	<p>During 2021-2022 we received 144 concerns from the public or staff. We also received 16 concerns in relation to unregistered providers or settings that do not require registration with HIW.</p> <p>All concerns are reviewed and evaluated on a weekly basis and inform decisions about our inspection activities and priorities.</p> <p>Independent healthcare providers are required to inform us of significant events and developments in their service. These Regulation 30/31 notifications continue to be managed in line with our process and dealt with effectively.</p> <p>In total we received 1,484 Regulation 30/31 notifications. A breakdown of the notifications are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death in Hospice - 604</li> <li>• Death excluding Hospice -28</li> <li>• Unauthorised absence - 90</li> <li>• Serious injuries - 483</li> <li>• Allegation of staff misconduct - 156</li> <li>• Outbreak of Infectious Disease - 100</li> <li>• Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) - 23</li> </ul>

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
Regulating independent healthcare		
Deliverable 3		
		<p>In total we received 156 Regulation 25 (The Private Dentistry (Wales) Regulations 2017) notifications during 2021-2022.</p> <p>They are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious injuries - 8</li> <li>• Outbreak of an Infectious Disease - 147</li> <li>• Allegation of staff misconduct - 1</li> <li>• Death of a patient - 0</li> </ul> <p>All notifications were evaluated, and additional assurances were sought where necessary.</p>

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Inspecting the NHS</b>		
<b>Deliverable 4</b>		
<p>Deliver a programme of assurance and inspection work in the NHS across all settings informed by analysis of risk and how our resources are best deployed.</p> <p>Continue to plan and deliver the rest of our work programme in areas where we believe there is the highest level of risk to patient safety.</p>	<p>Number of Quality Checks undertaken.</p> <p>Number of reports published five weeks following Quality Check.</p> <p>Number of full inspections undertaken. Number of reports published three months following an inspection.</p> <p>Where immediate assurance is required following an NHS assurance process, letters will be issued to the Chief Executive of the organisation within two days.</p>	<p>We carried out the following Quality Checks and inspections:</p> <p><b>Quality Checks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25 GP</li> <li>10 NHS Hospital</li> <li>5 NHS Mental Health Hospitals</li> <li>8 Learning Disability</li> <li>1 Step Down Community Hospital</li> </ul> <p><b>Onsite Inspections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 NHS Hospitals</li> <li>7 NHS Mental Health Hospitals</li> <li>5 Learning Disability</li> <li>6 IR(ME)R</li> </ul> <p>We published 49 Quality Checks during 2021-2022. 26 of these were published within four weeks.</p> <p>We published 23 onsite inspection reports during 2021-2022. 17 of these were published within three months following the inspection.</p> <p>We issued 12 out of 14 Immediate Assurance letters within two days of inspection/Quality Check.</p>

## What we said

## Measured by

## Outcome

## Inspecting the NHS

## Deliverable 5

Continue our programme of reviews including:

- Mental health crisis prevention in the community.
- Medicines management review.
- Focused local reviews; one of these will be a local review of WAST. That will consider the safety, dignity, well-being and overall experience of patients whilst waiting in ambulances at hospital emergency departments.
- COVID-19: Themes and learning from our work.

Undertake follow-up work on previously published local or national reviews, including:

- Phase one of our National Review of Maternity Services.
- Review of Patient Discharge from hospital to GP Practices.
- Review of Integrated Care: Focus on Falls.
- Substance Misuse Services in Wales.
- WAST - Assessment of Patient Management Arrangements within Emergency Medical Service Clinical Contact Centers.
- PHW - Assessment of how the breast screening process is managed in a timely manner for women who have an abnormal screening mammogram.

Analysis, production and publication of the review.

Publication of terms of reference for these reviews.

Commence programme of follow up work.

During the year we published:

- COVID-19 National Review
- National Review of Mental Health Crisis Prevention in the Community
- Review of Patient Safety, Privacy, Dignity and Experience whilst Waiting in Ambulances during Delayed Handover

We also completed our local review of Governance Arrangements at Swansea Bay University Health Board for the Provision of Healthcare services to Her Majesty's Prison Swansea.

We started work on our National Review of Patient Flow (Stroke Pathway) and Local Review of Discharge Arrangements for Adult Patients from Inpatient Mental Health Services in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.



What we said	Measured by	Outcome
Inspecting the NHS		
Deliverable 6		
<p>Conduct a high-level review of each NHS body through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further development of the Relationship Management function.</li> <li>• Producing an annual statement for each health board and NHS trust.</li> </ul>	<p>Publication of health board and NHS trust annual statements.</p>	<p>As part of our 2021-2022 annual report, we have undertaken a high level review of each NHS health board and trust. We have produced a statement for each health board and trust, and these can be found in the <i>'To take action when standards are not met'</i> section of this report.</p>

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Our work in mental health</b>		
<b>Deliverable 7</b>		
<p>Undertake a programme of assurance and inspection work on NHS, independent mental health and learning disability settings.</p> <p>Continue to plan and deliver the rest of our work programme in areas where we believe there is the highest level of risk to patient safety.</p> <p>Undertake a minimum of one piece of Learning Disability assurance work in each Health Board area in this inspection year.</p>	<p>Number of assurance and inspection activities undertaken.</p>	<p>During 2021-2022, we undertook the following assurance and inspection work across NHS, independent mental health and learning disability settings:</p> <p><b>Quality Checks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 NHS Mental Health Hospitals</li> <li>• 8 Learning Disability</li> </ul> <p><b>Inspections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 Independent Mental Health Hospitals</li> <li>• 7 NHS Mental Health Hospitals</li> <li>• 5 Learning Disability</li> </ul>

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Our work in mental health</b>		
<b>Deliverable 8</b>		
Provide a Second Opinion Appointed Doctor service for approximately 1000 SOAD requests.	Publication of Key Performance Indicators.	The SOAD services undertook 759 case reviews. These were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 657 - Medication</li> <li>• 66 - ECT</li> <li>• 36 - Medication and ECT</li> </ul>

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Sharing what we find</b>		
<b>Deliverable 9</b>		
Publish reports from all our assurance activity in accordance with our performance standards.	Publication of reports according to our Publication Schedule.  Publication of HIW performance against targets.  Publication of Annual Report for 2020-2021.	We published 140 Quality Checks during 2021-2022. 101 of these were published within four weeks.  We published 57 inspection reports during 2021-2022. 45 of these were published within three months following the inspection.

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Sharing what we find</b>		
<b>Deliverable 10</b>		
<p>To actively share our findings and recommendations with stakeholders, service providers and the public to influence and drive improvements in healthcare. In particular in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital Assurance activity</li> <li>• GP Practices</li> <li>• Dental Practices</li> <li>• Mental Health Act Annual Monitoring Report</li> <li>• Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS)</li> <li>• IR(ME)R</li> <li>• Lasers</li> <li>• HIW Annual Report</li> </ul>	<p>Publication and dissemination of our findings in a number of ways including:</p> <p>Learning bulletins distributed.</p> <p>Case studies of good practice distributed.</p> <p>Improved website content.</p>	<p>We held regular workshops with Community Health Councils and quarterly summits key stakeholders for the NHS and independent healthcare sector.</p> <p>We issued 19 newsletters throughout the year ranging from updates and guidance to dental practices, winter update to stakeholders, and monthly newsletters.</p> <p>We have supported improvements to our website in 2021-2022 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• created a new surveys section on our website.</li> <li>• created a new social media feature on our website.</li> <li>• Made regular improvements to the functionality of the website to provide a better user experience including engaging features, streamlined navigation tools and the use of branded imagery.</li> </ul>

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Working with others</b>		
<b>Deliverable 11</b>		
Continue our joint inspection work with UK agencies. Details to be agreed on a quarterly basis.	Number of inspections undertaken.	<p>We carried out 15 death in custody investigations.</p> <p>We undertook two prison inspections with HMI Prisons and HMI Probation.</p>

What we said	Measured by	Outcome
<b>Working with others</b>		
<b>Deliverable 12</b>		
<p>Continue working with other agencies on inspections and influencing best practice.</p> <p>Our five planned reviews with other Inspection Wales and Her Majesty's Inspectorate services are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of Health Board and Trust Quality Governance arrangements (Governance reviews with Audit Wales).</li> </ul>	Participation in joint work. Consolidation of the key findings and emerging themes from our joint work, and consider how these can inform our future work programmes.	<p>CIW had involvement in design of work through our stakeholder group for our Mental Health Crisis review.</p> <p>We continued to work with Audit Wales to review Health Board and Trust Quality Governance arrangements.</p> <p>We undertook a JICPA second pilot review with all relevant agencies of child protection arrangements.</p>

## What we said

## Measured by

## Outcome

## Working with others

## Deliverable 12

- CIW providing support to our Mental Health Crisis Prevention review.
- Joint Inspectorate of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) review (with CIW, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation) and Estyn).
- Supporting HMI Probation with their joint thematic inspection of community-based drug treatment and recovery work with probation service users (for intelligence to support our Mental Health Crisis Prevention review).
- Supporting HMI Prisons with their inspections of prison services in Wales.
- Work with the Welsh Government, Care Inspectorate Wales and other stakeholders to review the effectiveness of Regional Partnership Board joint working.

HIW, CIW and Estyn submitted a joint business case to Welsh Government to secure additional funding to continue our JICPA work, to enable us to review processes within a further four local authorities across Wales. Within the plan, we would conclude the work undertaken in six local authorities and will evaluate all JICPA reviews undertaken to produce a national picture within a report, which would be published in summer 2024 once all work is complete. A provisional agreement is now in place for the funding early in quarter one of 2022-2023.

HIW continued to work closely with CIW and Welsh Government to undertake work with and assess the effectiveness of the regional partnership boards. Our newly appointed Director of Strategy and Engagement will be leading this work through work with the partnership boards and providing regular updates to our review steering board.

## Our priorities for 2022-2025

Healthcare exists for people and communities, and the work we carry out looks at whether it meets the needs of a community and whether it is of a good quality. Where we find inequalities in healthcare provision, where a service is not designed for the needs of the community it serves, we will challenge this.

Equality and diversity is embedded in the work we do and we consider how healthcare services reach those who face the greatest barriers to accessing quality healthcare.

Our responsibilities in relation to mental health span both the NHS and the independent sector. HIW also works with other review and inspectorate bodies to consider the quality of healthcare delivered in non-healthcare settings such as prisons.

As we head into the next three years we will be working to our new **strategy**.

Our goal is:

**To be a trusted voice which influences and drives improvement in healthcare.**



These priorities will help us to consider whether healthcare meets the needs of a community and whether it is of a good quality. Equality and diversity will be core to the work we do and our strategy supports us to consider how healthcare services reach those who face the greatest barriers to access, and poorest outcomes in health.

# Our Resources



For 2021-2022 we had a budget of approximately £4.3m. Although the pandemic impacted our ability to deliver a full programme of onsite activity, we continued to make use of our new method for gaining assurance offsite, known as a Quality Check, where appropriate. We strengthened this approach during 2021-2022 following an evaluation of its effectiveness and suitability for its use beyond the pandemic. However, we continued to respond to emerging in-year intelligence which gave us immediate cause for concern or where the risk to patient safety was such that onsite activity was the most appropriate method for gaining assurance.

We have posts equivalent to approximately 83 full-time equivalent staff. We currently have a panel of over 200 specialist peer reviewers with backgrounds including specialist and general nurses, GPs, dentists, anaesthetists, and GP practice managers. We also have specialists in Mental Health Act Administration and a panel of psychiatrists who provide our Second Opinion Appointed Doctor (SOAD) service. We have over 30 Patient Experience Reviewers and Experts by Experience.

The table shows the number of full or part time posts in each team within HIW during 2021-2022.

Team	Whole time posts
Senior Executive	3
Inspection, Regulation and Concerns	39
Partnerships, Intelligence, and Methodology	14
Strategy, Policy and Communication	5
Clinical advice (including SOAD service)	4
Corporate Services (including business support)	18
Total	83



## Finance

The table shows how we used the financial resources available to us in the last financial year to deliver our 2021-2022 Operational Plan.

	£000's
HIW Total Budget	£4,376,000

Expenditure	£000's
Staff costs	3,882,624
Travel and Subsistence	13,150
Learning & Development	18,883
Non staff costs	45,944
Translation	59,939
Reviewer costs	414,358
ICT Change Program costs	333,816
ICT Non CRM costs	15,102
Depreciation of assets	13,866
Total expenditure (a) £	4,797,682

Income	£000's
Independent healthcare	311,790
Private dental registrations	241,900
Total income (b) £	553,690
Total Net Expenditure (a-b) £	4,243,992



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