

## Overview

**Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)** is responsible for regulating **private healthcare** and inspecting **NHS services**. We check services are provided in a way which maximises the health and wellbeing of people. Our Dental Practice inspections evaluate whether patients are receiving high-quality care, meet the **Private Dentistry Wales Regulations 2017** and consider the **Health and Care Quality Standards (2023)**. We also assess how dental practices comply with the **Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (IR(ME)R) 2017** and meet standards and guidance relevant to dental practices, such as **Welsh Health Technical Memorandum (WHTM 01-05)**.

We plan our inspections ahead of time based on information we collect about the quality of care in healthcare settings. For Dental Practices, we announce inspections up to **12 weeks in advance** because the practice will stay open during the inspection. This notice period allows the practice to prepare necessary paperwork, brief staff, and make arrangements so there is no disruption for patients.

If there are urgent concerns, we issue either a **non-compliance notice** (private dental practices) or an **immediate assurance letter** (NHS only practices) within two working days of the inspection. The Dental Practice is required to submit an **Immediate Improvement Plan**, explaining how they'll resolve the issues over the next 5-7 days.

We publish an **Inspection Report** approximately three months after the inspection, outlining what the practice does well and any areas needing improvement. The Dental Practice must submit an **Improvement Plan** explaining the steps they'll take to address any issues we found.



# Who Attends Dental Inspections?



## The Healthcare Inspector

The Inspector works at Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and leads the inspection.

They look at the Dental Practices policies and procedures, as well as gather non-clinical feedback from patients and dental team such as the practice manager and reception staff.

After the inspection, they write an Inspection Report that highlights areas for improvement, which is published on our website. Additionally, they will provide the dental practice with an Improvement Plan to implement.



## Clinical Peer Reviewers

These are dentists who work with us and have recent hands-on experience of dental practice who make sure our work is based on current practice and experience.

For Dental Practice inspections, there is always a clinical dentist peer reviewer in the inspection team. They review records and meet with the practice team to gather their feedback.

# What Happens During an Inspection?

## Before an Inspection

- HIW will send a letter to the Dental Practice up to 12 weeks in advance to notify them of the inspection.
- We ask staff to complete an anonymous survey to find out what it's like to work at the practice. We also ask patients to complete an anonymous survey to ask them about the quality of service they are receiving.
- The inspector will review any information we've collected about the Dental Practice. This intelligence can include concerns, feedback, or any other information (whether positive or negative) that we've received about the practice.

# What Happens During an Inspection?

## During an Inspection

- The Inspection Team will begin by meeting with the Practice Management Team and will be given a tour of the environment.
- They will observe the practice in action and speak with management, staff, and patients to get a full picture of how the practice operates.
- The team will review policies, procedures, and important documents related to the practice, asking for clarification when needed. The Clinical Peer Reviewer will examine a sample of patient records, while inspectors assess the facilities and practice environment.
- At the end of the visit, the team will provide verbal feedback on their key findings.
- The Inspector and Clinical Peer Reviewer will complete a workbook throughout the inspection. We focus our inspections on three areas:
- Quality of the patient experience.
- Arrangements for providing patients with safe and effective care.
- How the Dental Practice is led and managed.
- You will see these categories in the Workbooks that the Inspection Team complete, as well as the final report.

## After an Inspection

- We will send the Practice Management Team a draft report within six weeks of the inspection, asking them to check for any factual errors.
- If we identify areas needing improvement, we will send an Improvement Plan. The Practice Management Team must complete the Improvement Plan within 2 weeks detailing the actions they will take and the timeline for completion. These actions will need to be agreed by HIW.
- For urgent issues, we send a non-compliance notice (private dental practices) or an immediate assurance letter (NHS only) within two days of the inspection, outlining the necessary actions and deadlines. In this case, the Dental Practice must provide an Immediate Improvement Plan within 5 working days.
- The final report will be published on our website, usually three months after the inspection.