

Our Strategy 2026-2030

A future where healthcare in Wales
is safe, effective, and high-quality
for everyone.

Enter





Foreword

At Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), we play a key role in improving the quality and safety of healthcare across Wales.

Our Strategy for 2026–2030 sets a clear and ambitious direction for how we will meet the challenges and opportunities ahead, placing people at the heart of everything we do, and using our independent voice to drive meaningful and sustainable improvement.

This strategy builds on what we've learned, and what we've heard from those who use and deliver healthcare. It sets out how we want to work in the future. **This strategy has been directly shaped by the voices of patients, carers, healthcare professionals, and stakeholders from across Wales, who took part in our national consultation. We are grateful to everyone who contributed, your views and experiences have been invaluable in informing our priorities and approach. Over a 12-week period, we received 2,353 submissions, reflecting the desire of people across Wales to improve healthcare.**

This strategy reflects our renewed focus on collaboration, smarter use of intelligence and lived experience, and a commitment to take timely action where care falls short. It also recognises the importance of continually challenging ourselves to improve how we work, embracing innovation, responding to national priorities, and being clear about what good care looks like. **It highlights our plans to celebrate good practice, and positive outcomes in order to share learning across the healthcare system.**

Our people are central to our vision. We will continue to support, develop and empower our teams, to ensure

they have the knowledge, skills and tools they need to make a difference. **We will continue to strengthen how we work internally, ensuring our processes are efficient, transparent and focused on impact.** We are proud to present a bold, forward-looking strategy that reinforces our role as a trusted and influential voice, driving improvement in a healthcare system that is continually evolving to meet the needs of everyone in Wales.

We will continue to ensure our work supports national priorities such as improving access to services and reducing inequalities. This strategy is informed by key legislative and policy frameworks that shape healthcare in Wales, including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.



Alun Jones
Chief Executive
Healthcare Inspectorate Wales

"This strategy marks an important step forward for HIW. It reflects our ambition to be an independent force for improvement in healthcare. We are committed to putting people first, investing in our teams, and working in partnership to address the most important risks and challenges in the system. Above all, we want to make a difference to patients, to communities, and to the quality of healthcare across Wales."

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Who We Are

We are the independent regulator of healthcare and the inspectorate for NHS services in Wales. Our role is to check that healthcare is safe, effective, and meets the needs of people and communities.

We highlight good practice where we find it, and take action when care falls short or poses a risk to safety. What matters to people is at the heart of our work. We look at whether services are designed for the communities they serve, and challenge inequalities wherever they exist.

We are committed to being a visible and accessible presence for the public, ensuring our role, powers, and purpose are widely understood. We will further improve how we communicate our work and findings, so they are clear, accessible and meaningful to people.

Equality and diversity are embedded in everything we do. We will continue to focus on how services reach those facing the greatest barriers to access and the poorest health outcomes.

We have specific responsibilities to consider the rights of people cared for under the Mental Health Act, and the Mental Capacity Act, including the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. These duties apply across both NHS and independent healthcare.

We also work with other inspectorates to review healthcare delivered in non-healthcare settings, such as prisons, ensuring standards are upheld everywhere care is provided.



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Register, regulate and inspect independent healthcare services, taking enforcement action where standards are not met.



Inspect NHS services across Wales to ensure quality, safety, and effectiveness.



Undertake national reviews to explore key issues in depth, and drive improvement.



Monitor concerns and safeguarding referrals, acting swiftly where risks are identified.



Recommend improvements – both immediate and long-term – to strengthen care across independent and NHS sectors.



Take regulatory enforcement action to ensure independent healthcare providers meet legislative requirements.

Our work is delivered by:

- A dedicated team of staff based across Wales, supporting our assurance and regulatory functions.
- Specialist Peer Reviewers, recruited continuously to provide up-to-date expertise on services and quality standards.
- A panel of Patient Experience Reviewers and Experts by Experience to capture the voice of patients out on inspection.
- A panel of Independent Consultant Psychiatrists who deliver our Second Opinion Appointed Doctor service.

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Our Purpose, Vision and Values

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Our Purpose

We check the safety and quality of healthcare across Wales.



Our Vision

A future where healthcare in Wales is safe, effective, and high-quality for everyone.



Our Values

Our values shape our work every day and ensure people remain at the heart of everything we do.

We are:

- **Independent:** we are impartial, deciding what work we do and where we do it
- **Objective:** we are reasoned, fair and evidence driven
- **Decisive:** we make clear judgements and take action to improve standards and highlight the good practice we find
- **Inclusive:** we value and encourage equality and diversity through our work
- **Proportionate:** we are agile, and we carry out our work where it matters most



Our work also follows a Code of Conduct that ensures independence, evidence-based practice and public trust, guided by six core principles:

1.

Integrity

Acting honestly and ethically in all we do

2.

Objectivity

Basing decisions on evidence, not opinion

3.

Impartiality

Remaining fair and unbiased

4.

Transparency

Being open about our work and findings

5.

Accountability

Taking responsibility for our actions

6.

Respect

Valuing people, diversity and rights

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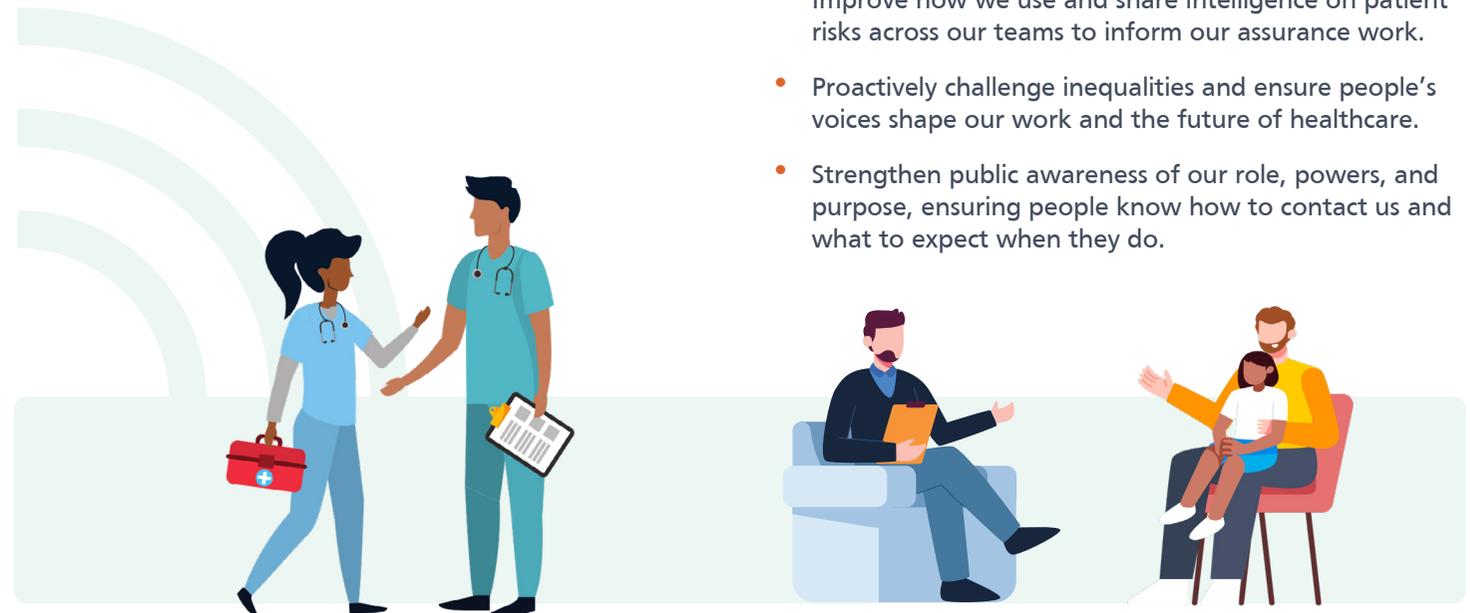
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Our Strategic Priorities

Putting People First

We will focus on the biggest risks facing people and communities as they access healthcare services now and in the future.

During the consultation and engagement work undertaken whilst developing this strategy, we heard that waiting times and access to services remain significant barriers to effective care. The feedback also emphasised the need for patient-centred care and the importance of Welsh Language services in health and care.



What we will do:

- Better understand lived experience throughout the patient journey, including care access, quality, and how well services work together.
- Improve how we carry out and report our work to make it easier for services to learn and take action.
- Research and apply inclusive and innovative methods to engage with the public, healthcare staff, and partner organisations.
- Improve how we use and share intelligence on patient risks across our teams to inform our assurance work.
- Proactively challenge inequalities and ensure people's voices shape our work and the future of healthcare.
- Strengthen public awareness of our role, powers, and purpose, ensuring people know how to contact us and what to expect when they do.

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Learning and Working Together

We will collaborate with partners to share learning and drive lasting improvements.

We continue to develop a range of approaches to collaboration, focusing on joint planning and effective delivery to improve the impact of our work, and raise standards of healthcare services. Respondents to our strategy consultation highlighted the unique position HIW has in sharing learning from inspection and assurance work, identifying common themes and findings including promoting best practice.

Our new NHS Engagement Process, which came into effect from 6 October 2025, is designed to ensure consistency, strengthen collaborative relationships, and enhance the flow of intelligence and information within HIW and between HIW and NHS Wales organisations.

What we will do:

- Build strong, effective partnerships to share insights and support improvement across healthcare services.
- Collaborate with others to address national issues impacting healthcare.
- Follow up on our work in a timely way to ensure our findings drive improvement.
- Plan and deliver an intelligence-led programme of reviews-based work that reflects healthcare priorities and focuses on what matters most to people.
- Ensure patients, carers and frontline healthcare staff are actively involved in our work, including planning, delivery and evaluation.



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Investing in Our People

We will ensure our people feel supported, valued, and empowered.

Our workforce is central to achieving a future where healthcare in Wales is safe, effective, and high-quality for everyone. We aim to create an inclusive work environment where staff can make best use of their skills and experience to respond to the opportunities and challenges we face in delivering our work.

The responses to our strategy consultation highlight the importance of investing in our workforce, and how this underpins consistent, high-quality inspections.

What we will do:

- Embrace innovation and adoption of digital tools to increase our impact and efficiency.
- Create a culture of reflection and learning, where we challenge ourselves to continually improve.
- Measure the impact of internal changes to ensure they lead to meaningful improvements for our people and the way we work.
- Provide clearer development pathways and ensure our staff have the tools they need to work effectively.
- Build on the implementation of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy, supporting an inclusive culture.



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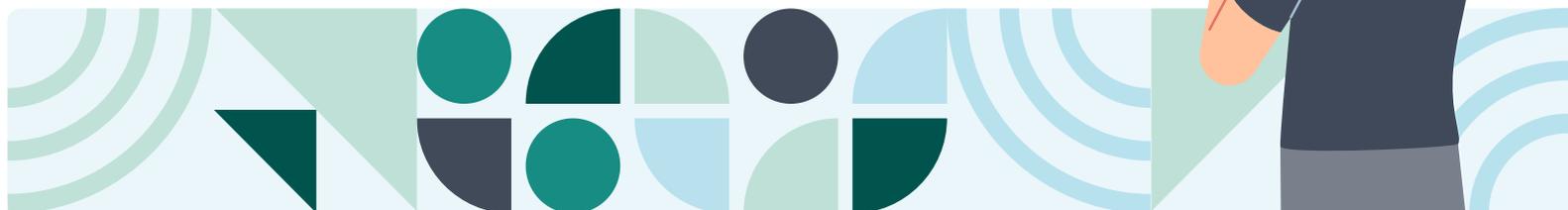
We will take action to improve the quality and safety of healthcare for the future of Wales.

HIW exists to make a meaningful difference to the safety, quality and effectiveness of care across Wales. We aim for our regulatory activities to be both proportionate, and robust where necessary, so that we can support improvement and protect patients.

Our Service of Concern process for the NHS continues to be a strength of our approach to providing assurance to the public about the quality and safety of healthcare services.

What we will do:

- Regulate and inspect healthcare services using clear, fair, and innovative methods.
- Take decisive enforcement action when care falls short, holding providers to account.
- Review and adapt our assurance methods to reflect the needs of a modern, evolving healthcare system.
- Strengthen how we listen and respond to concerns, including through our whistleblowing channels, to protect people and support improvement.
- Publish clear information about what action we have taken and the impact it has achieved.



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This strategy will be supported by clear actions, practical tools, and ongoing engagement to deliver meaningful and improved outcomes for people and healthcare services across Wales.

We will use our governance structures to ensure effective delivery of the priorities in this Strategic Plan.

Regular monitoring of progress against delivery of our strategic priorities is carried out by our Senior Leadership Team.

Monthly meetings of our Risk and Escalation Committee help us remain agile and responsive to emerging patient safety risks across services.

In addition, our Strategic Planning Board ensures we set a strategic long-term direction for our review and inspection programmes and approve new assurance methods that support future priorities.



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We recognise our responsibility to support the ambitions of Welsh Government's *More than just words* strategic framework, which promotes Welsh language services across health, social services and social care.

Our approach focuses on embedding the Welsh Language Active Offer within our inspection methodologies, ensuring people can access services in Welsh without having to ask.

Through our work, we report on positive examples of the Active Offer in practice and identify areas for improvement so that services provide a proactive Welsh language offer. In doing so, we share learning and encourage good practice across healthcare services.



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We have set ourselves challenging strategic priorities to deliver by 2030. To achieve these, we will continue strengthening how we operate.

This includes listening to our staff, seeking feedback from the services we inspect and regulate, and using insights from patient experience. Through the actions outlined in this strategy, we will use our independent voice to influence change and hold services to account, so that safety and quality standards are improved.



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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence
and telephone calls in Welsh.

