



Annual Plan

2024-2025

This document is also available in Welsh.

 **Estyn**



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Chief Inspector's foreword

2024-2025 will be a busy time at Estyn with the end of one cycle of inspection and launch of our new arrangements from September. We have ambitious plans for the delivery of our work, and we set these out in this, our third Annual Plan.

Estyn has an important role in driving improvement across education and training providers in Wales. We continue to receive positive feedback on our inspection activities, our inspecting ethos and the training we provide to our partners in the sector. Our approach continues to



evolve retaining the focus on accountability but increasingly providing the diagnostic and guidance to ensure that improvement is a key focus. We've moved away from summative gradings in most sectors to an improvement-focused dialogue between inspectors and providers, who form part of the team. Peer inspectors, who know first-hand the pressures that the sector is under, are highly valued by us and we will continue to expand the peer inspector model as we roll out our new inspection arrangements.

We have engaged widely and frequently with stakeholders and partners on our new inspection arrangements, and I would like to thank everyone who took part in these activities and provided feedback. Our inspection teams have listened to views from each sector alongside feedback from ongoing pilot inspections and we have revised our inspection guidance accordingly. We greatly value working with our partners and will continue to seek feedback as we implement our new inspection arrangements.

Eight years is a very long period between inspections for schools and other providers, so we're planning for a new six-year cycle in many sectors. We will be engaging more regularly through a streamlined core inspection and shorter more focused interim visits in many settings. These visits aim to support improvement and were welcomed in recent consultations. We will also use our resources where they are needed most, such as with providers that need support and monitoring for improvement.

A key facet of our work will be building trust between us and the settings we inspect. Our ethos will support helping the sectors we serve to improve and our message to them continues to be, don't overprepare for inspection – just teach as you usually would. We want to let providers know that they're ready already to ensure they gain the best impact from our visits.

Indeed, one of my main focuses is to deliver greater impact through our work. Delivering more impact requires us to actively listen and ensure that our work,

including inspections and publications, is more user friendly and accessible. Our summary inspection reports for parents allow quick access to key information. Our Annual Report continues to grow in use, and we will again provide sector specific early insights from our Annual Report in October ahead of the full Report launch in January 2025. We will use professional insights from inspection and engagement visits to provide evidence of practice and progress in key areas through our thematic reports.

The introduction of Curriculum for Wales, the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Programme, the review of school improvement support services and the formation of Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research will affect many providers. We look forward to working with the education and training workforce, alongside Welsh Government, Medr and other stakeholders to support implementation of these key areas.

Whilst there are many issues facing the education and training sectors in Wales, highlighted in my recent Annual report, there is also much to celebrate about Wales's education and training provision, and it is our role to highlight and share the best practice we see across Wales. I am committed to listening to the sectors we inspect and every month I will continue to visit providers across Wales. This offers me the opportunity to discuss the changes we at Estyn are making and ensure we can make the most positive impact possible. I look forward to meeting many more sector colleagues this year and extend my thanks to all the educators across Wales for their continuing efforts and strong commitment to supporting learners of all ages to learn and flourish.

As we conclude our current inspection cycle and move forward to deliver this Plan, I'd like to thank my staff for their hard work and professionalism. It's been a huge effort from everyone in Estyn inspecting, planning, organising, and supporting. What we've achieved as an organisation over the past year is only possible because of them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Owen Evans', is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Owen Evans

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales

Our long term vision

Estyn is His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. Inspection plays a central role in improving the quality of education and training for our children, young people and lifelong learners.

Vision and Mission

Our **vision** is to improve the quality of education and training, and outcomes for all learners in Wales

Our **mission** is to support education and training providers to develop a self-improving and learning culture through our advice, inspection and capacity building

Strategic objectives

Providing public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training provision in Wales

Informing the development of national policy by the Welsh Government

Building capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales

Values

- Place learners at the heart of our work
- Listen, learn and work with others
- Act openly, fairly and with integrity
- Show effective leadership and teamwork
- Promote health, wellbeing and equality in all we do
- Value and respect people and their work
- Encourage responsibility, initiative and innovation

Our vision is to improve the quality of education and training and outcomes for all learners in Wales. Learners are at the heart of our work and our mission is to support education and training providers to develop a self-improving and learning culture through our advice, inspection and capacity building.

Our strategic objectives more precisely define what we can uniquely offer to help promote excellence in the system and our values reflect the culture at the heart of our work. A later section in this plan explains our strategic objectives in detail and how we deliver our work.

Inspection 2024

Inspection plays a central role in improving the quality of education and training for our children, young people and lifelong learners. That's why we have been reviewing how we inspect to make sure our work keeps pace with changes in Wales and meets the needs of the next generation of learners.

From September 2024 most sectors will be starting a new cycle of inspections, so our work over the last few years has helped us reflect and review the focus of our work and concentrate on those areas that drive most improvement. We have already made significant changes to the way we inspect and report, such as removing summative judgements, increasing the focus on professional dialogue and strengthening our nominee model. We are keen to make further improvements and explore ways of ensuring that our inspection work supports and complements self-evaluation and improvement in the system. The review also provides us with ways of exploring how we engage more frequently with our providers.

We have engaged widely with all our stakeholders and partners to make sure that their views are built into what and how we inspect from 2024.

We value and have listened carefully to the views of everyone involved in education – from senior leaders, to teachers, classrooms assistants, parents, learners and the wider community. We have also invited input and feedback via our various consultation processes including public consultations, sector reference groups and our post-inspection questionnaires. We have spoken to staff across our organisation and policy leads within each sector to make sure that everyone has had an opportunity to take part and feed into our development work.

Working with the sectors, we have trialled our proposed arrangements. Feedback from providers and inspection teams alike has been positive and informed our new inspection arrangements.

Our key themes for the future are set out below. **Annex 1** of this plan outlines our individual sector arrangements in detail.

Key themes for the future

Part of our aim has been to bring external inspection and providers' internal evaluation processes closer together. Better alignment of these processes will better support improvement. We want our inspection work to support and complement self-evaluation and improvement. Key themes include:

- We will engage more regularly with schools and other providers, offering timely feedback and more up-to-date assurance for learners, parents and carers.
- We will explore a wider variety of inspection activities to better support improvement across individual providers and sectors. This will include individual provider inspections, thematic and themed inspections and a range of other visits.
- The new arrangements will be leaner and more focused on the most important areas that drive improvement.
- We'll use our resources where they are needed most, such as with schools that need support and monitoring for improvement.
- We value highly the involvement of practitioners as we introduce our new approach to inspection.
- We will continue to build and develop relationships with providers and educational bodies across the sectors we inspect.
- We will continue to share effective practice but improve the impact of our work, through more accessible and useful reports, including inspection and thematic reports and His Majesty's Chief Inspector's Annual Report.

The insights from our engagement and piloting will continue to inform our thinking as we firm up our inspection frameworks in the summer term, in advance of rolling out ready for September 2024.

As part of our rollout plans, there will be increased communications with our stakeholders and a programme of professional learning and development for all our inspectors.

The broader policy context

Medr, the [Commission for Tertiary Education and Research](#), will have extensive funding, planning and regulatory powers, enabling it to improve quality, efficiency and efficacy across the Tertiary Education and Research (TER) sector in Wales. The introduction of Curriculum for Wales, [Curriculum for Wales: overview](#), the implementation of the [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) Transformation Programme](#), and the review of school improvement support services [Welsh Government 2023](#) are all derived from improvement focused policy reforms and the effects are far reaching.

We will work with Medr, the Welsh Government and other stakeholders to support implementation of these key policy areas.

Mitigating the impacts of poverty on learning and educational attainment is a Welsh Government priority: [Child poverty strategy for Wales](#). We will continue to focus on providers' work to mitigate the impact of deprivation. [Cymraeg 2050: Welsh language strategy](#) is the long-term strategy of the Welsh Government. We promote the use of the Welsh language, culture and its historical context in line with our vision for education in Wales. The vision to achieve an anti-racist Wales by 2030, [Anti-](#)

[racist Wales Action Plan](#), is a key Welsh Government priority, as is the vision to make Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe, [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#). We will continue to focus on making long term change to support these visions. We also will play our part in delivering a better and lasting quality of life for us all as set out in the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

Through inspection and thematic work we are able to highlight and share examples of effective practice we see across Wales in all these priority areas.



Our priorities for 2024-2025

In addition, through the actions set out under our strategic objectives in the next section, we have identified areas of work where we can make the greatest impact in the coming year:

- Begin to deliver and continually evaluate our new core inspection arrangements for 2024-2030, along with our new programme of interim visits to engage with and support providers
- Continue with our strategy to share effective practice and resources to support improvement across the education and training system, through our programme of stakeholder engagement
- Deliver our people strategy, with a focus on a positive organisational culture, leadership and development, the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce and well-being for all colleagues
- Deliver our deployment strategy for external inspectors with a particular focus on peer inspectors
- Consolidate our working arrangements with Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, as the body becomes operational in August 2024
- Continue on our digital transformation journey, to improve our infrastructure and integrate our systems; to develop an agile and responsive resource management system and to optimise our knowledge management systems

Delivering our strategic objectives

Our strategic objectives are focused on improving the quality of outcomes for learners in Wales through:

- providing public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales
- informing the development of national policy by the Welsh Government
- building capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales

The way we think about our work – our mindset – helps us to:

- ensure the best for all learners
- offer leaders, teachers and support staff the chance to contribute professionally and constructively
- share what we've seen from across Wales to support improvement

Our mindset



Strategic objective 1: Provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales



Legislation gives HMCI various duties and powers to inspect education providers and services in Wales.

Inspection plays a central role in improving the quality of education and training for our children, young people and lifelong learners. It provides assurance to Welsh Government Ministers, Medr, parents, carers, local authorities and our other stakeholders. That is why we have been reviewing how we inspect to make sure our work keeps pace with changes in Wales and meets the needs of the next generation of learners.

From September 2024, most sectors will be starting a new cycle of inspections, so we have reflected and reviewed the focus of our work in order to concentrate on those areas that drive most improvement.

Details of our revised inspection processes for 2024 and beyond, our inspection schedule and inspection reports can be found on [the inspection page](#) of our website.

Annex 2 sets out details of our planned core inspection activity in 2024-2025.

Our activities set out in this annual plan will be underpinned by detailed work programmes covering both the end of the current inspection cycle and our revised arrangements from September 2024.

As always, we are operating within an ever-changing context so we will need to retain flexibility in our delivery and update this plan accordingly.

Maintained schools and pupil referral units

There are 1,460 maintained schools (primary, secondary, all-age and special) and 22 pupil referral units (PRUs) in Wales.

As part of our inspection arrangements from September 2024, we have committed to engaging with maintained schools and PRUs twice within a six-year period. For maintained schools and PRUs, normally this will mean at least one core inspection and one interim visit.

We will:

- complete our current inspection cycle by August 2024
- use the findings from consultations, and pilot inspections to finalise our inspection arrangements in the Summer term 2024
- begin our new inspection cycle 2024-2030 using our revised inspection framework from September 2024
- begin our programme of interim visits to maintained schools and PRUs from September 2024

Independent schools

There are currently 84 registered independent schools in Wales. This number is fairly equally split between mainstream schools and those providing for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) or special educational needs (SEN). In order to register and remain on the register the school must comply with the regulations and meet independent school standards. Independent schools standards for registration have been updated for the first time in 20 years and implemented from February 2024. [The Independent School Standards \(Wales\) Regulations 2024.](#)

We will:

- complete our current inspection cycle by the August 2024 including any registration visits required in the Summer term
- use the new regulations, the findings from consultations, trials and pilot inspections to finalise our new inspection arrangements in the Summer term 2024
- begin our new inspection cycle 2024-2030 using our revised inspection framework from September 2024 with each independent school receiving:
 - one core inspection per cycle – to include compliance with the new standards for registration
 - one compliance-only inspection per cycle
 - monitoring visits when a school doesn't meet the standards and causes concern

Local government education services, youth work sector and Welsh immersion provision in local authorities

Local government education services include those provided or commissioned by a single local authority as well as those provided in partnership with other local authorities. School improvement services are provided largely in conjunction with regional consortia or through partnerships on behalf of local authorities, though the model for how this works varies across Wales. There are 22 local authorities across Wales. Our local authority link inspectors carried out regular liaison work with local authorities.

Our inspection approach is bespoke to the youth work sector. We plan to develop a model that can be applied both to youth work being delivered by local authorities but also separately to voluntary sector organisations delivering youth work, where appropriate.

Local authorities receive a specific budget via a grant to develop Welsh immersion provision. This can be provided by establishing a Welsh Immersion Centre or by funding a peripatetic teacher to support latecomers to the language in various schools. We will begin inspecting this provision this year.

We will:

- begin our new cycle of inspecting local government education services from September 2024 with Audit Wales joining us on our inspections; local authorities will receive:
 - one core inspection per cycle
 - annual enhanced local authority link inspector (LALI) engagement
 - annual risk and assurance workshops which we contribute to along with Audit Wales and CIW
- pilot inspection arrangements for Welsh immersion provision in the summer term and then roll out this out in the autumn and the spring terms
- begin our new cycle of inspections of local authority statutory youth work from September 2024 and also inspections of other voluntary youth work providers

Further education, adult learning in the community, independent specialist colleges and work-based learning apprenticeships

There are 12 further education colleges in Wales. There are 13 regional partnerships, plus Adult Learning Wales that operates nationally providing adult learning in the community provision. There are ten work-based learning apprenticeship providers. Seven independent specialist colleges provide education and well-being support for learners with a wide range of additional learning needs (ALN).

We will:

- complete the current inspection cycle for adult learning in the community partnerships and independent specialist colleges by August 2024
- continue to inspect work-based learning apprenticeship providers (completing the cycle of inspections by August 2025)
- begin our new inspection cycle from September 2024 for further education colleges, adult learning in the community partnerships and independent specialist colleges

Welsh for adults

There is one National Centre and eleven providers in the Welsh for Adults sector which offer a range of Welsh language courses, from entry to proficiency level, in-person and online.

We will

- conduct an inspection of the National Centre for Learning Welsh to complete the current cycle
- roll out new arrangements from September 2024 including:
 - a full inspection from a sample of Learn Welsh providers
 - an annual themed inspection sampling provision across a number of Learn Welsh providers

Non-maintained nurseries

There are 540 non-maintained nurseries in Wales. Non-maintained nursery inspections are conducted jointly with Care Inspectorate Wales.

We will:

- review our current joint inspection arrangements alongside CIW to identify what is going well with our processes and how we can improve these
- continue our current cycle of inspections
- work with Care Inspectorate Wales to finalise new inspection arrangements for September 2025

Initial Teacher Education

Our new Initial Teacher and Education (ITE) system is the culmination of several interconnected and interdependent reforms of the last five years including our new curriculum, Cymraeg 2050, the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system, the reforms to the professional standards and the regulatory changes for the accreditation of ITE.

There are currently seven providers of ITE. All are partnerships comprising one higher education institution (HEI) and its lead schools for ITE. The Education Workforce Council (EWC) has statutory responsibility for the accreditation of each ITE programme in accordance with criteria specified by the Welsh Government. Estyn has a vitally important role in maintaining and enhancing quality in ITE. Through our inspection activity, we will inform EWC if provision is judged not to satisfy accreditation requirements.

We will:

- continue our current cycle of inspections
- work closely with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and adapt our arrangements following feedback and finalise our new inspection arrangements for September 2025

Learning in the justice sector

There are five prisons and one young offenders institution in Wales. We join HM Inspectorate of Prisons on their inspections of prisons focusing on the education, training and skills aspects of purposeful activity. There are 17 youth offending services in Wales and we are currently exploring ways to inspect the care, support

and guidance for young offenders since we have ceased joint inspections with HM Inspectorate of Probation. There is one secure children's home in Wales, where we join Care Inspectorate Wales on their inspection to focus on education and training aspects.

We will:

- continue our inspections of secure children's homes with Care Inspectorate Wales
- review our current joint inspection arrangements with inspectorates of Prisons, Probation and CIW to identify what is going well with our processes and how we can improve these
- work with HM Inspectorate of Prisons to finalise new inspection arrangements for September 2024

Follow-up inspection activity

During an inspection, we consider whether the provider needs any further support. We call this 'follow-up' activity. The different types of 'follow up' can be found on the [follow up](#) page of our website.

We will continue to use Estyn review until September 2024, and will monitor the progress of providers placed in Estyn review until 2026. However, as our new inspection arrangements from September 2024 will include more frequent visits to all providers, we plan to discontinue Estyn review as a category of follow-up after this date. Statutory follow-up (Significant Improvement and Special Measures) will continue, in line with the current statutory guidance.

We will:

- continue formal monitoring of each provider in need of follow-up activity as a result of core inspection
- continue working with the Welsh Government and local authorities to support the multi-agency programme for secondary schools causing concerns, including all secondary schools and special school in special measures
- continue to provide link inspector support to local authorities causing concern including carrying out improvement conferences and monitoring visits as required

Further joint working with inspection and other bodies

We will:

- conduct a review, following on from our national report in 2023, on aspects of the Jobs Growth Wales+ youth employability programme
- continue our work in partnership with HMI of Prisons and HMI of Probation to inspect the learning in the justice sector in Wales
- along with other inspection partners, contribute to a study led by Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) on mental health and young people
- work with Ofsted to support, in a quality assurance role, on apprenticeship inspections, where requested

- continue to work alongside Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in joint inspections of child protection arrangements (JICPA)
- work closely with the Welsh Government and Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, to consider the future inspection arrangements for further education and training provision and initial teacher education
- continue to work with education and training inspectorates from neighbouring countries, at both a strategic and operational level, regularly sharing information and knowledge
- continue to actively engage with the activities of the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates to share with and learn from other inspectorates

Safeguarding

We will be vigilant in our work to uphold the safety and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and continue to evaluate how well providers carry out their responsibilities in a manner that safeguards children, and where appropriate vulnerable adults.



Strategic Objective 2: Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government



We provide a nationwide perspective on education and training provision in Wales, through the broad-ranging evidence we gain from inspection activities and thematic reviews. We play a role in strategic committees and working groups, engaging with Welsh Government Ministers, officials and other stakeholders, providing evidence-based advice on the development of policy and regulation.

We also have a statutory duty to provide an annual report on the standards of education and training in Wales. We will continue in publishing sector summaries in early October 2024 with the full report published in January 2025. Key themes to be included this year are likely to be:

- anti-racism
- Curriculum for Wales
- attendance
- self-evaluation and improvement planning
- recruitment and retention
- Welsh

The items included in the thematic reviews for 2024-2025 reflect a strategic remit that has a focus on the current reforms for the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, ALNET Act and Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) reform, and include an item focusing on Welsh language development and a focus on supporting vulnerable learners.

Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, will be operational from August 2024. Medr will fund Estyn's thematic work in the sectors it is taking over responsibility for. For 2024-2025, the Welsh Government has set the budget and remit for Estyn and Medr.

We will begin work on six detailed thematic reports included in our remit for 2024-2025:

- Teaching in the context of Curriculum for Wales
- Maths and Numeracy Area of Learning and Experience (AOLE)
- Promoting positive behaviour in secondary schools
- Promoting positive behaviour in FE colleges (Set by the Welsh Government, and will be inherited by Medr)
- Review of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol training schemes
- Basic skills in adult learning in the community (Set by the Welsh Government, and will be inherited by Medr)

We will continue to provide ongoing advice based on evidence from inspection, engagement work and other activity through meetings with Welsh Government officials, contributions to national working groups, the National Network Conversations, written advice, published guidance and reports.

We will also provide consultation responses on matters of education and training in Wales, and publish our responses.

In addition, based on evidence gathered from inspections, engagement work and other activity, Estyn will also provide regular updates and advice on:

- Curriculum for Wales
- the implementation of ALNET Act
- school attendance
- Welsh in English-medium schools
- anti-racism
- self-evaluation and improvement planning

We will provide advice to various working groups. This will include support for those aspects of post-compulsory education and training within the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research's remit. We will also provide general support to the Welsh Government regarding education and training in Wales and specifically on school closure and reorganisation proposals.

Estyn will continue to work with partners to ensure that their monitoring and support for schools and PRUs causing concern dovetails with the school improvement support provided by others.

The full remit letter that the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language sent to HMCi can be seen here ([Estyn annual remit: 2024 to 2025 | GOV.WALES](#)).

Strategic objective 3 – Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales



Our inspection and thematic activity places us in a strong position to evaluate the quality of the education and training sector in Wales. Our professional conversations and recommendations help to inspire and support improvement in the system.

Our stakeholder forum groups and reference groups – both sector specific and project based – inform what we do and allow us to engage more deeply on specific issues. Listening to their perspective away from the inspection process gives us a clearer picture. We will work to ensure greater diversity across the representatives in our stakeholder groups.

Peer inspectors are invaluable to us – they help create shared understanding and expectations across education and training. With around 1,000 peer inspectors across all sectors, they have an opportunity to see practice different from their own – honing their analytical skills and understanding to help them build capacity across their sectors in supporting a self-improving system.

We will:

- develop and launch a new website to provide a better user experience
- deliver our programme of stakeholder engagement, including webinars and other fora to inform professionals, learners, parents and carers about our work, with a particular focus on increasing the diversity of the stakeholder voices to enrich our work
- work with Medr and Welsh Government fora and steering groups to collaborate on a range of matters relating to education and training policy and practice, including workload
- seek feedback from our various reference groups across all our sectors and obtain a 'sense and reality check' as we implement our new inspection framework from September 2024
- prepare the external workforce for the new inspection framework, carrying out update training in Summer term 2024 for Registered Inspectors, additional inspectors, peer inspectors, local authority improvement partner inspectors and

lay inspectors

- continue our programme of training, bringing new inspectors into our external workforce, with a particular emphasis on continuing to extend the involvement of current practitioners as peer inspectors on inspection activity
- evaluate and strengthen our leadership development programme for practitioners from ethnic minority backgrounds and plan for cohort 2 as part of our strategy to build capacity and increase diversity in the education workforce, including our peer inspector workforce
- produce informative and engaging reports and supporting materials specifically for individual groups of stakeholders such as practitioners, learners, parents and carers
- continue to identify effective practice from our inspection and thematic work and consider the best ways to share this online and at conferences
- continue the work of our local authority and school improvement link inspectors across Wales
- continue the work of our post-16 link inspectors to engage regularly with providers of further education, work-based learning and adult learning in the community
- continue to engage regularly with providers in the learning in the justice sector and independent specialist colleges



How we deliver our work



We aim to support and develop our workforce to be a force for improvement. Our workforce is made up of a management team, central staff and inspectors. We train additional inspectors, peer inspectors (who currently work in education and training), local authority improvement partner inspectors, lay inspectors and nominees (who act as the provider's representative) to work as part of inspection teams.

Where possible, we also support secondment arrangements both into and out of our organisation. Our [Organisational structure](#) available on our website.

Our [governance framework](#) of boards, committees and groups, including our assurance framework, helps us to fulfil our strategic objectives as a well-run and efficient organisation. Within the framework, [non-executive directors](#), serving as members of our Strategy Board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), will continue to both challenge and support the senior management team.

We will continue to invest in the professional learning and development of all our workforce and invest to make our systems work more smoothly for them. Accessing and analysing our data more efficiently will maximise the impact we can make. We will continue to explore ways to increase the diversity of our workforce. We are committed to playing our part in the Welsh Government net zero ambition, conducting our work in an environmentally responsible manner and embedding sustainability into the core of our operation. Our Welsh language policy helps us to ensure that we approach everything bilingually and our communication meets stakeholders' language preferences.

We will:

- implement our people strategy to ensure a stimulating, rewarding, health-promoting and inclusive environment for our people to build a diverse workforce
- review our peer inspector deployment processes with the aim of overcoming barriers to timely deployment and enhancing capacity
- continue to invest in our workforce's learning and development to support our

- workforce and the organisation to develop
- engage with our staff to explore the issues and take action on the People Survey 2023 results
 - continue on our digital transformation journey:
 - undertake a comprehensive review of our IT systems to improve our infrastructure and integrate our systems
 - develop a responsive resource management system to ensure that appropriate resources are deployed efficiently
 - improve our knowledge management systems and extend our use of business intelligence (BI) platforms to provide accurate and reliable data and information across the organisation
 - continue to meet our statutory responsibilities and key corporate activities including equality and diversity, Welsh language standards and sustainability

The [about us](#) section on our website further explains the work we do and how we do it.



Our budget

Although inflation as measured by CPI fell gradually throughout the 2023-2024 financial year, we were not immune to the additional financial pressures it brought through increasing costs. We are acutely aware of the financial pressures that higher costs have on the delivery of all public services and the ongoing budgetary challenges that colleagues within the Welsh Government face and acknowledge the difficult decisions that they face. However, we are pleased that the essential work that we do to improve outcomes for learners across Wales continues to be recognised and supported.

Our funding settlement for the forthcoming 2024-2025 financial year remains unchanged from the indicative figure provided in last year's Annual Plan at £15.893m.

	£000s	£000s
Expenditure		
Staff costs (Internal and External)	14,224	
Non-staff costs	2,479	
Total expenditure		16,703
Funding		
Core funding	11,023	
Additional funding from Education and Welsh Language	4,870	
		15,893
Grants		308
Total funding		16,201
Surplus / (Deficit)		(502)

In addition to the above, we have a non-cash (depreciation) budget of £200k and a capital budget of £250k.

Our Operations Management Group and Strategic Management Group scrutinise and discuss our financial performance monthly as we continuously seek ways to improve our efficiency and effectiveness. Additional oversight is provided throughout the year by Strategy Board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC).

Changes in funding

From 1 August 2024, Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, becomes operational, and we will consolidate our working arrangements with them. Direct funding from Medr for our post-16 work in FE, apprenticeships, adult learning in the community and sixth forms will begin from 1 April 2025.

Monitoring our performance

Our annual plan is produced each year and subsequently we publish our annual report and accounts, which explains progress in delivering our annual plan and provides a full set of our accounts for the financial year.

In 2024-2025, we will continue to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to measure, report and reflect on our performance. This includes regular reporting to our Operational Group, Inspection Leadership Group, Strategic Management Group and Strategy Board on progress made towards delivering our strategic objectives and achieving our key performance indicators. It will also include internal audit reports to our Operational Group, Strategic Management Group and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

We have identified a set of high-level key performance indicators that will help us measure progress made towards delivering our strategic objectives. These are complemented by a broader set of operational management indicators, which are reported on internally with many also reported externally in our annual report and accounts.



Key performance indicators:

PI No	Strategic Objective (SO)	Performance measure	Key performance indicators	Target 2024-2025
1	SO1	Ensure public accountability to our service users (and enhance capacity in the delivery of education and training in Wales)?	a) Percentage of completed inspections that met planned inspection activity set out in our annual plan	97%
			b) Deployment of peer inspectors and lay inspectors on inspection in line with Estyn standards	at least 1 peer inspector on each inspection with a lay inspector on each school inspection
2	SO1 / SO3	Ensure providers' experience of inspection is a positive process that promotes improvement	Percentage of providers who complete a post inspection questionnaire who indicate their satisfaction following inspection: a. That inspectors gave helpful feedback during the inspection by identifying relevant strengths and areas for improvement (PIQ1 – Q 15)	97%
			b. With the reliability and independence of our judgements (PIQ2 – Q22)	97%
			c. That the inspection helped them to plan for improvement (PIQ2 – Q20)	97%
3	SO1 / SO3	Develop our working arrangements with the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research whose aim is to promote greater coherence and collaboration across post-16 provision	Consolidate our working arrangements with the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research as the body becomes operational in August 2024	31 March 2025

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4	SO2 / SO3	Ensure that our stakeholder engagement activity amplifies the positive impact of Estyn's work and drives improvement across the education and training sector in Wales	a) Proportion of stakeholders who rate our stakeholder events as useful or very useful	Implement a new stakeholder engagement approach to gather biennial independent feedback from our audience (survey Spring term 25)
			b) Proportion of stakeholders who said they gained a useful insight from our work that they would not have acquired elsewhere	
			c) Proportion of stakeholders who believe that our work has led to improvements in the delivery of education and training services and policy development in Wales	
			d) The combined views and downloads for our key publications (Annual report & Thematic reports) and associated materials during the reporting period	50,000 annual target
			e) The percentage of people who click through to read our key publications from various sources	Search engines: 26% Direct traffic: 50% Referred links from other sites: 5%
			f) Click through rate (CTR) of our half termly external stakeholder newsletter (this is distributed to more than 2,500 contacts highlighting topical headlines and publications)	CTR: 7%
5	How we deliver	Create and maintain an engaged and skilled workforce	a) Civil Service People Survey employee engagement index (EEI) score	In the top quartile
			b) Implement our learning and development strategy for all colleagues	31 March 2025

Annex 1: Sector arrangements 2024-2025

Maintained schools and pupil referral units

We will be reverting to a six-year cycle. As part of 'other engagement' with maintained schools and PRUs, we are introducing an 'Interim Visit'. For these sectors, this will mean at least one core inspection and one interim visit during the cycle.

The core inspection

- Continue the involvement of practitioners as peer inspectors and further enhance the role of the nominee.
- Move to three inspection areas (from five):
 - IA1: Teaching and learning
 - IA2: Well-being, care, support and guidance
 - IA3: Leading and improving

Consolidating our inspection areas like this removes duplication and will help us to talk more easily about cause and effect. For example, in inspection area 1 we can report on how well the curriculum is taught and the impact the teaching has on pupils' standards without having to comment separately, as we currently do under Learning (IA1) and Teaching and learning experiences (IA3).

It will ultimately give rise to a report that helps providers drive improvement in their setting.

It will also help us to have the flexibility to use the draft framework so that inspectors can report in a focused way on the main strengths and areas for development for the individual provider, considering the provider's unique context.

This approach will also help build capacity and enable us to increase our engagement with schools and PRUs.

Interim visit

One way of increasing our engagement is for us to conduct an interim visit. Whilst we are still engaging with stakeholders about the detail of the interim visit, it is likely to be a short visit – likely to be a day or two undertaken by a small inspection team. This is likely to comprise one to three inspectors, possibly a team of four for the largest secondary schools.

The interim visit will most likely focus on the most important recommendations from a provider's previous inspection report or current development plan. The interim visit will conclude with us providing feedback to the head and publish a brief report on our website. This report is more than likely to be in the form of a brief letter.

Detailed guidance will be published on our website in the Summer term 2024.

Independent schools

Based on consultation with our stakeholders we are looking to combine our inspection and annual monitoring work to build a more consistent pattern of inspection across all kinds of independent schools – those with additional learning provision and those without.

A more proportionate approach will allow us to spend more of our time in any schools who don't meet the Independent School Standards. Arrangements are being piloted ahead of rolling out in September 2024.

Our proposed offering will cover the following:

- Inspection of unregistered provision
- Initial inspection of a new independent school
- Follow up to registration visit
- Core Inspection (Section 163)
- Monitoring Inspection
- Responding to a post-inspection action plan
- Post-inspection monitoring of an independent school (Follow up)
- Focused visit
- Application for material change

Non-maintained nursery settings

Since January 2019, Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales have jointly inspected care and education in regulated non-school settings eligible for funding for part-time education. Estyn and CIW are currently in the process of a review of the inspection processes and framework for this work and will work together to consider the outcome of the review to evolve and improve the joint inspection process.

Local government education services and youth work sector

Based on our consultation with stakeholders our inspection framework will follow (IA1) Education services and their impact, and (IA2) Leading and improving. We are piloting a reduced notice period and a new way of reporting on IA1 and IA2, as well as equity in the education system, Welsh language and safeguarding.

We are also developing our inspection arrangements in the Youth Services sector and linking these to our LGES inspection with a view of providing a more holistic view.

The post 16 sectors

Medr, the [Commission for Tertiary Education and Research](#), will become operational in August 2024 and from the following financial year will be responsible for Estyn's funding and giving us direction for our post-16 work in FE, apprenticeships, adult learning in the community and sixth forms.

Further education, adult learning in the community and independent specialist colleges

Following a period of consultation and engagement with our stakeholders, plans are underway to pilot our draft arrangements.

We will continue to include a nominee and peer inspectors as a part of our core inspection team.

During the inspection we speak with staff and learners and visit as many teaching sessions as possible. After the core inspection, we'll publish a report that will show the strengths and areas for improvement. The reports will not include a summative grading.

We are continuing with our regular link or monitoring visits to providers. These will focus on a small number of key topics that will feed into our annual report or thematic work. They will allow us to follow up on recommendations from core inspections and give providers a regular opportunity to engage with us. Link visits are intended to support ongoing improvement.

As well as routinely following up on recommendations from core inspections in our link or monitoring visits, we will continue to have a formal follow-up process for providers in need of more support.

The outcomes from our pilot inspections will inform our plans ahead of September 2024.

Welsh for Adults

We are proposing significant changes and findings from our recent consultation exercise demonstrates significant support. The changes include:

- removing summative gradings from our reports
- removing requirements for a core inspection for all providers, instead keep a core inspection model for a sample of providers only
- introducing themed inspections each year, visiting a sample of providers on a particular focus and providing a national report
- publishing two individual reports to providers based on evidence gathered on themed inspections in years 3 and 6 of the cycle
- one inspection of the National Centre, which will focus on progress against any recommendation we have left from the themed inspections

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

We will continue with the roll out of inspections following pilot inspection in 2022-2023 and will continue to adapt arrangements following feedback. We will roll out a revised inspection cycle in 2024-2025.

Learning in justice sector

Arrangements for inspections of learning in justice sector will be reviewed and updated during 2024-2025, working with HMI Prisons and HMI Probation.



Annex 2: Planned inspection activity 2024-2025

Planned inspection activity by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and independent inspectors 2024-2025 (financial year)				
Unit of inspection	No of providers (2023)	Planned number of inspections leading to reports ⁽¹⁾ (Annual)		
		Current cycle of inspections Summer 2024	New inspection arrangements	
			Autumn 2024	Spring 2025
Non-maintained nursery settings	540	30 ⁽²⁾	30 ⁽²⁾	30 ⁽²⁾
Primary schools	1216	84	71	69
Secondary schools	176	5	12	12
All age schools	29	1	3	2
Maintained special schools	39	4	2	2
Pupil referral units	22	1	2	3
Independent schools and independent special schools	84	5	7	5
Independent specialist colleges	7	0	0	1
Local government education services ⁽³⁾	22	2	1	2
Further education institutions	12	1	0	2
Initial teacher education (ITE) partnerships	7	1	1	1
Work-based learning (WBL) apprenticeship providers	10	1	1	1
Adult learning in the community (ALC) partnerships (including Adult Learning Wales)	14	2	1	1
Welsh for adults (WfA) – 11 Learn Welsh providers plus a National Centre.	12	1	2	0
Welsh Immersion		1	1	1
Total⁽⁴⁾		139	134	132

(1) Based on information as of 20/03/2024.

(2) These inspections are jointly delivered with CIW.

(3) The five inspections to include youth work being delivered by the local authorities.

(4) In addition, one inspection of Consortia, four of Learning in the Justice Sector and one of a voluntary sector organisation delivering youth work.

(5) Spring 2025 term continues to the 14th April.

We welcome feedback and comments about this annual plan, which can be emailed to us at feedback@estyn.gov.wales

This annual plan will be submitted for the attention of, and approved by, the First Minister of Senedd Cymru.