# Working Collaboratively to Support Accountability & Improvement

## A Strategic Agreement between

Audit Wales (AW)

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

Estyn

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)

**January 2026**

agic hiw Cymru Wales
Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru Care Inspectorate Wales
Estyn
Archwilio Cymru Audit Wales

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## Foreword

While we have quite different functions, we have shared aims, underpinned by the Future Generations Act, to support better outcomes for people over the longer term. We always seek to protect their interests by reporting without fear or favour on the public administration and services that fall within our remits.

By working together effectively, we can increase the beneficial impact on public services. We have a long history of working together as Inspection Wales and developed a range of collaborative approaches to our work. By continuing to develop these approaches, focusing on sharing knowledge and co-ordinating the planning and delivery of our respective work programmes, we will add further value to our activities.

We are therefore pleased to present this updated strategic agreement between our four organisations, setting out how we will further develop our collaborative working arrangements.

Gillian Baranski, Chief Inspector CIW

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

Alun Jones, Chief Executive HIW

Adrian Crompton, Auditor General for Wales

## Building on firm foundations

**Our shared vision is that our inspection, audit and regulation work will be a powerful stimulus for the improvement of public services in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, as well as enabling proper scrutiny and accountability. This includes supporting the achievement of Wales' well-being goals. Achieving this vision will be helped by a clear and effective framework for our collaborative work.**

Several key principles will underpin the work we do collaboratively:

- we will be mindful of each other's statutory functions and the work that we, as individual organisations, do to exercise them;
- we will use our collective competencies to consider whether systems and services are appropriately integrated to deliver joined up services and value for money;
- we will have regard to the individual approaches that each organisation adopts, and seek to learn from each other wherever possible;
- we will seek to place appropriate reliance on each other's findings to avoid the need to repeat or duplicate work;
- we will move, where appropriate, to models of closer collaboration, committing the necessary resources and time;
- we will operate on a continuum of collaboration appropriate to each circumstance, that ranges from simple networking to fully integrated working;
- we will maintain our own scrutiny of our collaborative arrangements to ensure that they are proportionate, appropriate and adding value.

Various bilateral inspection arrangements and initiatives have created a firm foundation for the joint delivery of external review work to support connected and integrated public services.

They have led to the creation of shared tools and processes to

support our work together and foster positive working relationships among our operational staff that are conducive to successful delivery.

We want to continue to build on these firm foundations to further enhance our collaborative arrangements. We recognise this will involve tackling some issues which in the past have proved challenging. These include, where possible[1], aligning our respective business planning cycles to assist better co-ordinated programming and valuing the different perspectives and approaches that we individually bring to work within and across different sectors.

The arrangements set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 may support our efforts to co-ordinate our work programmes in local government. We seek to support a coherent whole systems approach to the performance management and scrutiny of principal councils. Simplified structures within the NHS will also assist by making it easier to co-ordinate the planning of our work and appropriately share information.

[1] Planning cycles are partly determined by statute and therefore cannot be aligned entirely

## Our key objectives for our work together

Building on the firm foundations set out in the previous section, we have identified several key objectives that will frame our approach to collaborative working. These are set out below.

### Key Objective 1

Our collaborative working is guided by our shared vision, and supported where necessary by strategic agreements and operational protocols.

### Key Objective 2

We will develop the approaches to information and knowledge sharing between our respective organisations to inform our programmes of work and to help ensure intelligence is lawfully, actively and promptly shared.

### Key Objective 3

Our respective planning and programming activities will be appropriately co-ordinated, with a view to proportionate programmes of work that avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure key risks and concerns are being examined.

### Key Objective 4

We will identify appropriate opportunities to bring together the knowledge and intelligence we each hold on public services, and report this in ways which support service improvement, inform policy making and national scrutiny and strengthen public accountability.

### Key Objective 5

We will monitor the progress we are making with collaborative working and report this openly and transparently to key stakeholders through our respective annual plans and reports.

## Making it happen

We recognise that successfully working together does not happen by itself. Strategic commitments, such as those set out in this document, need to be backed up by identification of resources to take forward the work, and by clear accountabilities for collaborative working within each organisation.

Where we plan and undertake collaborative work, will agree our priorities and work programme through the following strategic groups.

### Heads of Inspection Group

The Heads of Inspection group is made up of the head of each organisation and their nominated deputy with oversight of collaborative working. The group will meet 3 times per year and the chairing and secretariat responsibility will rotate each meeting.

### Strategic Co-ordination Group

The Strategic Co-ordination Group is made up of the nominated deputies from each organisation with oversight of collaborative working. The group will meet 6 times a year to take forward our shared objectives, drawing in other members of staff from across our organisations as needed. This group will report annually to the Heads of Inspection Group about any collaborative work undertaken and its impact.