



Annual Plan

2021-2022



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This Annual Plan is also available in Welsh.

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Chief Inspector's foreword

It is hard to imagine that we are publishing a second Annual Plan during this pandemic. Although we all want to get back to normal as soon as possible, COVID-19 remains a threat and is continuing to have a significant impact on economies and communities, affecting school children and learners and education staff worldwide.

Emerging from lockdown

As the summer term began in Wales, children and young people returned to on-site education. Post-16 learners also returned on-site, though blended learning continued in some sectors.

Throughout the pandemic, we continued to engage with schools and pupil referral units (PRUs), initially mainly through phone calls and then through visits. Our engagement work with other sectors has also continued, with some visits restarting. This engagement work across sectors has and will continue to support the Welsh Government's learning recovery plan from the pandemic.

For 2021–2022, this annual plan sets out our intention for our inspectors to gradually and sensitively transition back to on-site activities and to a more normal pattern of work as the year progresses.

Supporting renewal and reform

From the autumn term, we will focus on supporting schools and PRUs on their curriculum journey as well as monitoring schools causing concern. We will resume more inspection work in other sectors, including annual monitoring visits to independent special schools. Our inspections of local government education services will resume, we will pilot a hybrid inspection model for Learn Welsh providers, and we plan to launch the new cycle of ITE inspections. We will also start a programme of monitoring visits to the new apprenticeship providers in the first year of their new contracts. We will continue to join inspection teams where invited by HMI Prisons and HMI Probation.

In other sectors, we'll continue engagement work and we'll produce termly reports sharing insights, including cameos of interesting practice.

Piloting our new inspection arrangements

We want to make sure the changes we have made to the new inspection framework support renewal and reform. So, from spring 2022, we will carry out pilot inspections in a small number of schools and PRUs. Thereafter, we plan to resume inspections



in all remaining sectors and we will continue to work with providers to understand and be sensitive to their individual circumstances.

Continuing our work

During 2021–2022, we will continue with our second strategic objective - to inform the development of national policy - by publishing thematic reviews and other advice as requested by the Minister's remit letter. This will include a review of regional consortia and local authority support for Curriculum for Wales focusing on professional learning. We will also consider the curriculum opportunities for 16-18 year old learners.

We will continue to work with the Welsh Government and our stakeholders to support post-compulsory education and training reform and the national evaluation and improvement resource. Our work with partners to pilot new approaches to supporting schools causing concern will carry on too.

The Chief Inspector's Annual Report will be published in early December 2021. Its focus will be on how schools and other providers responded to the challenges faced during the 2020–2021 academic year.

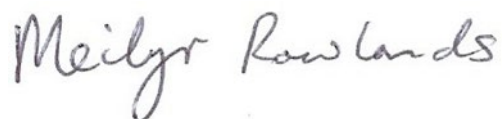
Webinars have given us a new way to help share effective practice and evidence from our thematic reports. We will be doing more of these as well as contributing to conferences and workshops across Wales. We are also planning professional development events for our external inspectors, mixing online sessions with distance learning modules and activities to support personal reflection.

Throughout the pandemic, we have been listening to and learning from our stakeholders. This year, we want to evolve how we engage with you as we think about shaping new ways of working in response to the pandemic.

We will build on our excellent joint working and co-operation with inspectorates in Wales, the UK and further afield. This annual plan also sets out how we will continue to provide value for money and cost effectiveness during a time of considerable financial constraint.

Farewell

This is my last annual plan as Chief Inspector as I hand over to my successor at the end of the summer term. I wish my successor well and I know Estyn's new leadership will take over a strong organisation and a team that is fully dedicated to serving the education and training system in Wales.



Meilyr Rowlands

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

Delivering our strategic objectives



Delivering our strategic objectives

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to keep foremost in our minds the following four priorities:

- the health and safety of our staff
- the wellbeing of all learners and the continuity of their learning
- the support needed by the leaders, teachers and other staff of the Welsh education system
- the maintenance of the effective strategic and operational running of our organisation

These priorities and our ongoing discussions with stakeholder and our own staff have shaped our decisions about how we will deliver our strategic objectives over the coming year.

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

Supporting continuity of learning across education and training in Wales

In 2021-2022, we will focus on supporting the Welsh Government's Learning Recovery Plan from the COVID-19 pandemic for the education and training sectors. This will result in termly reports based on evidence gathered from engagement calls and visits, including cameos of interesting practice in relation to:

- engagement of learners, including effective strategies to support different age groups
- remote learning and arrangements to support learners as they return to full-time provision
- support for learners, parents and professionals, in particular in relation to wellbeing
- equity of access to learning and support
- implementation of the requirements outlined in the ALNET Act
- support for transition into primary, secondary and post-16 education and training
- learning in local authority commissioned EOTAS provision (for example independent special schools, colleges, training providers, home tuition)
- delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, supported by appropriate assessment, that meets the needs of all learners
- leadership and improvement planning
- the system of awarding current qualifications and the development of qualification for the Curriculum for Wales

Drawing on timescales within the Learning Recovery Plan, we will focus our engagement visits, in consultation with stakeholders, on preparation for the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales including:

- professional learning and evidence informed practice (including how schools have used the additional Welsh Government funding to support this work)
- how schools are using the national resource for evaluation and improvement and where they are on their improvement journey

Planning for engagement and inspection activity 2021-2022

During 2021-2022, we will continue to work in an adaptable manner, developing our working practices as necessary, dependent upon the latest situation with COVID-19, and latest public health advice from the Welsh Government.

At this stage of writing the Annual Plan, the Welsh Government and the Minister are optimistic about more stability in education during 2021-2022 and hope to transition to more usual activities as the year progresses. There is also an expectation from our stakeholders that our approach will continue to be sensitive and flexible and will consider the unique circumstances of each provider and the challenges they face.

We have considered carefully how we transition from remote engagement to visiting providers and progress over time to an inspection model. Our plans for each sector are set out below.

Maintained schools and pupil referral units (PRUs)

The extension to the suspension of our core inspection programme for schools and pupil referral units includes the summer term 2021 and the autumn term 2021.

During the summer term 2021, we continued with engagement calls but also introduce a programme of engagement visits.

We recognise that the last year and a half have been difficult and challenging for many learners and their families and for education providers and their staff. During the rest of the summer term, we will be asking for feedback on our new inspection arrangements. We will consider with Welsh Government the best balance of engagement and inspection work to support the journey towards Curriculum for Wales.

From autumn term 2021, we intend to continue to support the education system in renewing and reforming and particularly we will help schools and pupil referral units plan and prepare for the Curriculum for Wales and additional learning needs reform.

We will focus on continuing with our engagement visits to schools and pupil referral units to support them on their curriculum journey. We will also focus on monitoring schools causing concern and undertaking agreed national thematic work (see strategic objective 2).

From spring 2022, we aim to pilot the new inspection arrangements in a small number of schools and PRUs. This will allow us to make sure the changes we have made support renewal and reform. We will ask individual providers for their agreement to be involved in pilots and may still carry out inspections of other schools in exceptional circumstances.

Non-maintained nursery settings

We suspended our joint inspection programme in March 2020 and have been reviewing the situation each term. Together with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) we have decided to extend the current suspension of joint inspections to the end of the autumn term 2021. This will allow us (Estyn) to support the sector in renewing their arrangements and plan for curriculum for Wales and additional learning needs.

We aim to re-start joint inspections in the spring term 2022. We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and evolve our plans as necessary.

During the pause in inspection, we have liaised with a range of stakeholders to evaluate whether any adjustments are required to the joint-inspection framework. We are reflecting on this feedback and making suitable amendments to the framework. We aim to publish the revised framework in November 2021. We will be sensitive to settings' experiences of the pandemic when we resume inspection.

We (Estyn) will continue to undertake engagement activities with settings during the year until we resume our joint inspections in spring term 2022. By the end of the summer term we will have engaged with all non-maintained settings funded by local authorities to deliver early education. We aim to publish a report capturing the main themes from our engagement activities in the summer term to complement our report published in March 2021.

Independent mainstream and special schools

We suspended our core inspection programme in March 2020 and have been reviewing the situation each term in order to determine the right time to resume inspection.

During summer and autumn 2021 we will undertake engagement visits to a few independent mainstream schools as an interim arrangement before returning to core inspections. We will also resume annual monitoring visits to independent schools who provide ALN provision.

From spring 2022, we will resume our new inspection arrangements in independent schools.

During the year, we will continue to consider individual material change requests or applications to register new schools and make decisions on whether we need to visit the sites and respond accordingly. We will also undertake focused visits when asked to do so on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Local government education services (LGES)

Our inspections of LGES will resume in autumn 2021. We have adapted our guidance to take into account the effect of the pandemic on the work of local authorities and have consulted with our key partners on these changes. We will seek feedback after the first inspection and further refine if needed.

Further education (FE) colleges

We will work with providers in the summer and autumn terms 2021 to consult on changes to the inspection arrangements. In the autumn term, we will continue engagement visits to colleges and publish an update report on how the FE sector is developing its vocational, technical and general education provision.

We plan to resume core inspections during the spring term 2022.

Adult learning in the community

We will work with partnerships in the summer and autumn terms 2021 to consult on changes to the inspection arrangements. In the autumn term, we will continue engagement visits to adult learning partnerships. We will publish an update report on how the adult learning in the community sector is delivering against its remit letter and on the early impact of the reconfigurations in the sector.

We plan to resume core inspections during the spring term 2022.

Work-based learning

We will not carry out core inspections of work-based learning providers in the first year of the new apprenticeship contracting period beginning autumn term 2021. Instead, we will do a monitoring visit to each of the work-based learning providers over the course of the year (autumn term 2021 to summer term 2022). This activity will include visits to sub-contractors and consortium members and result in published letters for each of the main apprenticeship providers.

We will carry out an engagement visit with all the remaining traineeship providers before those contracts come to an end in March 2022.

Welsh for adults

In January 2021, we piloted a remote inspection of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. We aim to build on this experience by piloting a hybrid inspection model for Learn Welsh providers during the autumn term 2021.

Initial teacher education (ITE)

During the summer term 2021 (and the spring term 2021) we have undertaken virtual try outs to three of the ITE partnerships with our peer inspectors to trial and test out our new methodology for inspection.

We plan to launch the new cycle of ITE inspections in autumn 2021 and will be inviting peer inspectors and representatives from the sector to a briefing in the summer term to share further information about our arrangements.

This first year of the new cycle will be a pilot year and we will seek feedback from the sector to support us with our arrangements.

Independent specialist colleges

We will resume annual monitoring visits during the autumn term 2021, before restarting core inspections from January 2022.

Learning in the Justice sector

We will continue to join inspection teams where invited by HMI Prisons and HMI Probation to inspect the quality of education, training and employment in Wales. We have joined HMI Prisons inspections since they resumed inspection activity in September 2020.

Follow-up inspection activity

During an inspection, we consider whether the provider needs any further support. We call this 'follow-up' activity.

Different types of follow-up

	Maintained Schools and PRUs	Non-maintained	Post-16**
Estyn review	x		x
Progress review		x	
Focussed improvement		x	
Significant improvement*	x		
Special measures*	x		
Re-inspection			x

*Denotes a statutory category **Except work-based learning providers

We have established the following principles for guiding our future work with schools and other providers currently requiring follow up:

- During the period of schools and other providers learning on site, we will adopt a sensitive, flexible and balanced approach to our work, including with schools requiring follow-up
- We will continue to be in touch with all schools and providers requiring follow-up activity and will tailor our approach to their individual circumstances
- For schools and providers recently placed in a statutory follow-up category we will offer remote support in constructing their post-inspection action plan

Inspectors will continue to contact schools and PRUs in statutory categories of follow-up (special measures and significant improvement), in their role as 'pastoral' inspectors, until such time as we resume formal monitoring activity. In the summer term, we continued with our programme of pastoral calls and visits for some schools but also began to resume monitoring visits for a small number of schools and PRUs. From autumn 2021, we intend to return to regular monitoring visits to providers in

statutory follow-up, always being sensitive to the provider's context and local circumstances.

For schools and PRUs in Estyn review, we will continue with our local authority panels to review the progress these providers have made in building their capacity for improvement. Where we identify that improvements are too slow or ineffective, we may decide to visit the provider during the spring or summer of 2022 to evaluate progress at first hand.

We will continue our involvement with the Welsh Government's multi-agency programme for secondary schools causing concern. This programme has been developed following a programme trial 18 months ago and will now involve secondary schools in special measures.

Our link inspectors will also continue to provide support to local authorities causing concern. We will also carry out progress conferences in two of these local authorities and a monitoring visit in another.

There are four post-16 providers requiring follow up. We have conducted three provider reviews in the summer term 2021 and plan to review the fourth provider in the autumn term.

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

Specific advice required by Welsh Government in 2021-2022

A summary of the remit letter that the Minister for Education sent HMCI in March 2021 is given below. The full letter can be seen [here](#).

During any period that core inspections are suspended due to the pandemic, we will carry out engagement activities with providers to provide ongoing advice and termly update reports as described under Strategic Objective 1.

Detailed reports and, where appropriate, other resources drawing on evidence from thematic inspections

The thematic reviews to be included in our remit for 2021-2022 reflect a strategic remit that links to the Minister's stated priorities for education and training, and with emphasis on the current reforms for the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, ALNET Act and PCET reform. The planned thematic reports are:

- Regional consortia and local authority support for the Curriculum for Wales focusing on professional learning (large review)
- The changing approach to assessment
- Welsh language immersion approaches
- Impartial advice and guidance for young people, focusing on Careers Wales
- Rapid response reviews of post-16:
 - Professional Learning : qualifications for post-16 practitioners in further education, work-based learning and adult learning in the community
 - Use of the Post-16 Recruit Recover and Raise Standards/catch-up funding in FE colleges and school sixth forms
- The 16 – 18 curriculum
- Implementation of the ALNET Act in schools

In addition, we will continue with work on our Welsh and Black, Asian and minority ethnic history and culture thematic review and the thematic review of all age schools, which were paused during 2020-2021.

Continuation of the work on the national evaluation and improvement resource

We will continue to work with the Welsh Government on the national evaluation and improvement resource. See the details under objective 3 of this Annual Plan.

Continuation of work with the Welsh Government, local authorities and regional consortia to support schools causing concern

We will continue to work with partners to roll out new approaches to supporting schools causing concern. See the details under objective 1 – 'follow-up inspections' of this Annual Plan.

Continuation of work with the Welsh Government and stakeholders to support PCET reform

We will continue to work with the Welsh Government and stakeholders to support post-compulsory education and training (PCET) reform and preparations following legislation in creating the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research.

Provision of advice on local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

We will provide each local authority with feedback on their Welsh in Education Strategic Plan as part of their formal consultation processes.

Policy areas on which the Education Directorate may require advice or support through contributions to working groups

We provide advice and support for decision making in a range of areas, for example in response to requests to provide support to various working groups through representation, presentation of written evidence or discussions with senior Education Directorate officials.

Other areas on which the Welsh Government may require advice and support regarding education and training in Wales

We will also provide ongoing support in the following areas:

- school closure and reorganisation proposals
- annual monitoring of independent schools which have been approved under section 347(1) of the Education Act 1996, to admit pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) generally and has pupils with SEN on roll; or an independent school that has registered to admit pupils with SEN under section 158 of the Education Act 2002 and has SEN pupils on roll
- inspection and annual monitoring of all independent specialist colleges in Wales and provision of an inspector as part of a team on the inspections or annual monitoring visits of independent specialist colleges in England where 10 or more learners from Wales are funded to attend
- registration of independent schools, including material change requests
- pupil development grant
- education improvement grant for schools
- development of qualifications and inspection arrangements for any proposed new initial teacher education and continuing professional development requirements for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector
- schools causing concern
- follow-up work in respect of local authorities and regional consortia
- Honours nominations
- background information for Ministerial visits to schools
- Senedd questions

Written and oral evidence to Senedd Cymru Committees and consultation responses on matters of education and training in Wales

HMCI and other inspectors are periodically asked to present evidence to or attend committees that perform a scrutiny function for the Senedd Cymru and as such are cross-party and independent of the Welsh Government. Each year, HMCI attends a Children, Young People and Education Committee meeting to discuss the HMCI Annual Report. Where there are committee inquiries on matters of education and training, we will provide written evidence and may also attend committee hearings when asked for oral evidence. We usually give evidence to the following committees: Children and Young People and Education Committee, Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, and the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee.

During 2021-2022, we will continue to provide written responses using our extensive evidence base to respond to the Welsh Government's consultations on a wide range of educational matters. We will also provide responses to other education and training organisations' consultations where relevant, such as consultations on qualifications reform from Qualifications Wales and responses to consultations from organisations such as the Welsh Language Commissioner or Children's Commissioner.

HMCI's Annual Report

HMCI's Annual Report for 2020-2021 will be published in early December 2021. It will cover the academic year from September 2020 to August 2021. The original intention of the annual report covering this period was to use the information gathered during engagement visits to report on the progress that maintained schools and PRU's were making to plan and prepare for the rollout of the Curriculum for Wales. However, the COVID-19 pandemic means that the annual report will now focus on the response of providers in all sectors to the challenges they have faced during that time. This information will come from any forms of engagement that inspectors have had with providers, including engagement calls, telephone calls, pastoral inspector calls and any visits that inspectors have been able to make.

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

Webinars and conferences

We will extend the programme of webinars that we hold to disseminate evidence and effective practice from our thematic reports. During 2021-2022, we will hold a series of webinars to help promote effective approaches to language acquisition, following the publications of our thematic reports on English language and literacy and Welsh language acquisition in settings and primary schools. We have run one webinar connected with Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales and will hold two further webinars in the autumn term in this series. We will continue to provide inputs to conferences and workshops across Wales to share practice.

Training for external inspectors

Our usual programme of training for additional inspectors, peer inspectors, local authority improvement partners and lay inspectors was suspended last year in line with the suspension of core inspections.

We recognise and value the inclusion of external inspectors in our work and therefore it is important that we provide regular professional learning opportunities for each one. While face-to-face activities may be some way off, we plan to host a programme of online professional development events for all our external inspectors. During the summer term 2021, we are running drop-in sessions for some inspectors (Registered, additional and lay inspectors) to discuss our new inspection arrangements. In the autumn term, we are planning to roll out these drop-in sessions for peer inspectors as well. In this term, we will also run some training on our new inspection arrangement for those external inspectors involved in specific pilot inspections. In the spring term 2022, we are planning to run training in the new inspection arrangements for all inspectors ahead of re-starting inspections.

This year, we are planning a blended approach, which would include opportunities for online engagement as well as time for inspectors to engage with distance learning modules and activities to support personal reflection. This is important to ensure that all inspectors are kept up-to-date and have an opportunity to develop their skills as we consider new ways of working in response to the pandemic.

Earlier this summer term 2021, we ran initial training for new additional and peer inspectors to inspect in the initial teacher education sector. During the year, we will train new peer inspectors. This includes peer inspectors for local government education services, which we postponed from last year. These initial training events are likely to be a blended model that will involve elements of online training supported by personal professional reflection and, when it is safe and appropriate for us to do so, face-to-face activities and assessments.

Link inspectors

Our regional and local authority link inspectors will continue with their ongoing work in

all local authorities and regional consortia across Wales. These engagements will be virtual in the main, but they will also carry out physical visits for the added value of face-to-face meetings as and when it is appropriate and safe to do so. We aim that our link inspectors develop a close and trusting relationship with the leadership of the local authorities and regional consortia and be the first point of contact for sharing developments, reflecting on successes and challenges, and sharing effective practice.

Link inspectors will focus on a range of aspects of local authorities' and regional consortia's work over the year. They will meet senior managers to discuss strategic priorities, and risks and will attend (virtually or in person) appropriate scrutiny committees, and in the case of the regional work, the joint committee or company board.

We will carry out risk assessment workshops in each local authority with colleagues from Audit Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales.

Our post-16 link inspectors will continue to engage regularly with providers of further education, apprenticeships, traineeships and adult learning in the community. We will continue to engage regularly with providers in the learning in the justice sector and independent specialist colleges. This work will support the ongoing response to the pandemic and share interesting and emerging practice across the post-16 sectors.

Disseminating case studies

We are committed to identifying and disseminating effective practice that we see during inspection activities and other engagement work. This ensures that all providers can benefit from the work of others. Over the years, we have published case studies of effective, interesting and innovative practice on our website to encourage leaders, managers and staff to access them for training and development purposes and to set high professional standards.

During this year we will continue to publish cameos and case studies that illustrate how providers have approached the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. These will be published on our website under [effective practice](#).

Celebrating excellent practice

When it is safe and appropriate for us to return to our programme of core inspections we will recognise and celebrate effective, innovative and interesting practice across a range of providers.

It may not be possible for us to do this in face-to-face event, so we will explore the possibility of hosting virtual events this year. In addition, we will send each of the recognised providers a framed certificate as well as a personal letter from HMCI congratulating them on their excellent work. We will also list the providers that have demonstrated excellence through their work on our website and they will be referenced in our Annual Report. In addition, we will draw their achievements to the attention of the Welsh Government's Minister for Education.

Our website

Since our website re-launch we have continued to improve its functionality to make it easy for users to access our content. Our next project is to introduce HTML documents to replace PDFs for some areas. We are starting with supplementary guidance to support our inspectors in finding the information they need. HTML documents offer many advantages to users such as responsiveness to screen size and easy navigation. In addition, we plan to harness 'H5P' technology to bring new interactive content to help support improvement across education and training.

National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (NEIR)

We will continue to work in partnership with the Welsh Government, regional consortia and schools to develop the NEIR. Specifically, this will include re-establishing joint governance arrangements to ensure appropriate oversight of, and agreement in relation to, all project related activity. These arrangements were paused during the last year because of COVID-19. We will contribute to the strategic development of the NEIR by working with the Welsh Government and the regional consortia to develop a series of options in relation to the development and piloting of materials and roll out to practitioners.

In practice, this will mean that members of the project team will support with aspects of the development of the resource.

Ongoing work will include:

- refining and editing the content of the NEIR
- linking the reflection prompts to existing Welsh Government and Estyn resources
- editing the approaches text from the 'HOW' section of the resource
- providing exemplar materials to strengthen the 'HOW' section, for example to support schools to think about how they might use data.
- refreshing Improvement Journey materials and associated thematic studies to be included in the NEIR
- planning and implementing a communication, engagement and professional learning strategy
- finalising and implementing quality assurance arrangements for resources (draft complete, need to put into practice and test out)
- agreeing a strategy for capturing resources and gathering feedback through the pilot year

Advising on and contributing to long-term education reform

We will continue to provide the Welsh Government with advice on its education reform programmes, including whether and how these programmes will need to be adapted in light of the present situation.

In addition to our membership of the Welsh Government delivery and change boards for the Curriculum for Wales reform and PCET Reform, we also have representation on the 'COVID-19 response' group. We have ongoing full engagement with the 'continuity of learning', and 'Resilience Plan' for post-16 sectors, and we are also part of the Welsh Government research network group.

During 2021-2022, we will continue to engage with schools and PRUs, consortia, local authorities and the Welsh Government to evaluate whole system progress towards curriculum reform. Our engagement with schools and PRUs will continue to focus on the steps they are taking to prepare staff at all levels to prepare for the Curriculum for Wales and, where possible, the impact these changes are having on improving teaching and securing progress for all learners.

When we resume core inspections during 2021-2022, we will evaluate how well leaders are supporting staff to prepare for curriculum reform. This will include considering if professional learning is supporting staff to improve their understanding, the steps they have taken to develop their vision for curriculum and teaching and how well staff are being supported to develop their approaches to teaching and learning.

We will continue to identify and share interesting practice through our thematic and inspection work and will continue to make use of blogs and online webinars.

How we deliver our work



How we deliver our work

The COVID-19 situation has required us to adapt the focus and delivery of all our work, but our mission, vision, strategic objectives and values remain unchanged:

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

Building a better organisation and living our values

Our aim is to continually improve. The past year has required us to adapt our systems and working practices to meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities of remote working; we will use the lessons learned to continue to develop as an efficient and effective organisation that delivers for our stakeholders and for ourselves.

In 2021-2022, we will build upon the effective working practices that support efficiency and greater fairness, flexibility and wellbeing for staff. We will:

- continue to use virtual meetings where this supports equality of access and experience
- develop formal arrangements to support more flexible working opportunities
- review our office requirements and look at opportunities to share facilities and down-size our own space
- progress our journey to cloud-based information systems
- develop our performance management processes
- continue our focus on developing inspiring leaders in all roles, with skilled people throughout an organisation that's a great place to work and attracts great people
- ensure that our learning and development programme supports staff to further develop the skills that help underpin our values

Strengthening stakeholder engagement

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our work significantly, we have continued to listen to and learn from our stakeholders, making sure that our communications only focus on the most important messages at the time. We will continue to ensure that learners are at the heart of inspection and our work reflects the expectations of our stakeholders.

This year, the way that we engage with our stakeholders will evolve as we consider new ways of working with our stakeholders to shape our plans as we respond to the pandemic. We will consult widely, using different methods of communication to reach new and different groups of stakeholders and use their views to help direct our activities and improve our work.

We understand the importance of holding engagement events in order to share messages with key stakeholders in an organised and strategic way. This year is an opportunity for us to re-think and strengthen how we run these events so that they are accessible, supportive, reflective and transparent.

We will continue to hold stakeholder events such as sector and national fora, virtually until it is safe and appropriate for us to host face-to-face events. Based on the feedback we gather, we will update our approach to stakeholder engagement to reflect these new approaches. We will consider feedback from our usual channels as well as from our newly formed parent and carer reference group and our teacher forum. Throughout all our engagement this year we will focus on improving the way we:

- **Inform stakeholders:** providing stakeholders with clear, coherent and consistent messages; keeping them up to date with developments in inspection, the latest effective practice, recommendations from our thematic and inspection work
- **Involve stakeholders:** seeking views on arrangements for inspection, commenting on policy and encouraging conversation through different communication channels
- **Listen to stakeholders:** making best use of their time by seeking their views, engaging them in decisions and sharing information, encouraging feedback on both compliments and concerns to help inform our decision-making processes and help us build better relationships

During the year, we will continue to work closely with the Welsh Government, regional consortia and local authorities to share key messages from our inspection and engagement activities.

Last year for the first time, we published several blogs and hosted our first series of webinars to disseminate findings from our engagement activity with providers and thematic work. We also published a range of sector reports that provided valuable insight into how schools, PRUs and other providers responded to the challenges posed by the pandemic. We will continue to publish these reports and blogs as well as hosting events to share innovative and effective practice. We also aim to hold conference events during the year to share findings from our thematic reports.

Our headteacher reference group, engagement with teachers and other education and training professionals, and our parent and carer reference group continue to be valuable listening tools, giving us insights and challenge from the profession.

Headteacher reference group

In 2019, we invited headteachers of schools and PRU leaders from across Wales to apply to join our headteacher reference group. The scope of the reference group's work arose mainly from the recommendations in the 'A Learning Inspectorate' report. The reference group's work to date has focused on supporting the development of our new inspection arrangements, and also the subsequent arrangements for inspections that will be based on validating schools' self-improvement processes.

We were delighted with the quantity and quality of applications that we received and invited 22 representatives, representing the primary, secondary, independent, special and PRU Welsh and English-medium sectors from across Wales, to join the group. Prior to the pandemic, we met termly in Central Wales for whole day workshops. Since the pandemic, our meetings have taken place virtually. The virtual meetings have been equally valuable in providing a sounding board for our development work, and helping to provide feedback and a 'sense and reality check' as we devise new methodological approaches to our work. For example, the reference group has provided its opinions about the questionnaires that we use prior to inspection, that in turn has helped to inform our thinking, and subsequently changes to the way that the questionnaires are organised and worded.

During 2021-2022, we intend to continue to engage with the group and gather its feedback about the changes to our inspection and follow-up arrangements and how best to communicate these with other school leaders.

Engagement with teachers and other education and training professionals

To support our engagement work we held a series of teacher fora. Feedback from teachers has been positive and they appreciated the opportunity to share their views about aspects of our work. We also held national staff focus groups with post-16 professionals to gather feedback as part of our thematic reviews, which was also positively received.

We will extend this work into this year and include engagement with teachers and other education professionals as a strand of our stakeholder engagement work.

During 2021-2022, we also intend to establish a post-16 reference group made up of representatives from adult learning in the community partnerships, further education colleges, independent specialist colleges and work-based learning providers to discuss amendments to our current inspection arrangements. This group will meet from September and members will be a conduit back to their sectors to gain feedback and help inform our arrangements. We will also seek feedback from learners separately and build this into our consultation arrangements.

Parent and carer reference group

We have always valued the views of parents and carers and listen carefully to them. Earlier this year, we improved the way that we engage with these key stakeholders by establishing a new parent and carer reference group. Engaging effectively and regularly with parents and carers will allow them to give their views to inform our decisions and help us shape future projects.

During 2021-2022, we plan to ask the group to complete surveys, become part of discussion groups and to give their views on specific topics to strengthen our national evidence base for thematic reports and inform how we approach our work.

This additional channel to communicate our work will provide us with important two-way communication as well as access to rapid responses to determine parental views when required.

Joint working with inspection bodies

Our aim is to continue and build on our current joint working and co-operation with inspectorates in the UK and further afield.

We currently have four partnerships with inspectorates in the UK that support us to fulfil strategic objective 1 “provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales”.

- Together with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and Audit Wales (AW) we are Inspection Wales. We work jointly on our inspections of non-maintained settings (with CIW) and local government

education services (with AW) and identify other opportunities to share expertise and work together.

- We have an information sharing partnership with Ofsted regarding learners in England who are funded by the Welsh Government and who attend specialist colleges and regarding apprenticeship providers in Wales who access funding from England.
- We work in partnership with HMI of Prisons and HMI of Probation to inspect learning in the justice sector in Wales, including the inspection of Youth Offending Teams in Wales.
- We work closely with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for higher education in Wales and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to share practice, discuss quality improvement and information about individual providers relating to further and higher education and training.

The aims of these partnerships are to co-ordinate the planning and delivery of our respective work programmes, and to share knowledge and information between our organisations. Our joint working is governed by clear principles and shared objectives and together we will continue to increase the impact we have together to secure better outcomes for citizens, seeking ways to protect their interests by reporting without fear of favour on the public services that fall within our remit.

Through the Offshore groups, we share information and practice regularly with neighbouring countries at both a strategic and operational level to inform the continued development of member inspectorates in similar educational and political contexts. Much of our joint work throughout 2021-2022 will focus on sharing approaches to inspection and curriculum recovery in light of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the education system and on outcomes for learners. This will, however, not be the sole focus of our work. We will continue to foster exchange programmes with other UK education inspectorates. For 2021-2022 there will be a series of virtual meetings with the Department of Education and Training Ireland focusing on promoting learning in schools and PRUs, including blended learning, supporting vulnerable learners, professional learning for inspectors and support for schools in difficulty.

In our post-16 Offshore groups, our termly meetings share approaches to inspection and thematic reviews. In 2021-2022, meetings will focus on discussing remote and blended learning approaches, apprenticeships, and careers advice and guidance, with the possible collaboration of inspectors from the other UK inspectorates joining our thematic review of impartial advice and guidance for young people from Careers Wales.

Our continued engagement with the activities of the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates, with its 34 members across Europe and beyond, ensures that we benefit from the ability to learn from other inspectorates and their processes. It also provides an opportunity to take part in and contribute to the international debate on inspection and evaluation in an environment that is free from domestic or political pressures. In addition to attending workshops and conferences, either virtually or face to face, individual lead officers will continue to foster links with

other inspectorates across Europe to co-operate on organisational developments, such as on research and thematic inspection approaches, the inspection of initial teacher education and on approaches to inspecting curricula.

Exchanges and co-operation such as these contribute to the professional development of inspectors, the development of inspection practice in the inspectors' home jurisdictions, and as such contribute to the improvement of educational outcomes for learners. New ways of working have allowed us to explore efficient ways of sharing such knowledge, information and practice, and we will continue to build on these approaches throughout 2021-2022.

Feedback and complaints

We are committed to providing the highest standard of service to all our customers and stakeholders. Our aim is to get things right first time. However, if someone is not entirely satisfied with any aspect of our work, we encourage them to tell us and we will do our best to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. Our feedback and complaints process outlines how we address and respond to feedback and complaints about inspection and other aspects of our work.

We will continue to ensure that all received complaints are investigated fully and fairly and in accordance with the timescales outlined in our policy. We will pay particular regard to complaints received as a result of the pandemic, providing advice and direction to those whose complaints relate to education providers rather than our own work. We will also take account of all concerns received in relation to our new inspection framework.

Effective leaders and good governance

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, accountable to our staff, stakeholders and the general public.

Within the framework, [non-executive directors](#), serving as members and chairing our Strategy Board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), will continue to both challenge and support the senior management team.

Our leaders will be expected to effectively model the attributes of our [Leadership statement](#), constantly developing themselves to be the best that they can be. Our performance management processes will continue to strongly focus on behaviours and our values.

Skilled people

We are committed to creating a culture and environment for everyone to learn and grow. We recognise that effective learning and development offers benefits to the individual and the organisation, which ultimately contributes to the achievement of our strategic objectives.

We will resource a range of learning and development approaches in order to develop high-performing, adaptable staff who work to the best of their ability and take personal responsibility for their work and their wellbeing. In 2021-2022 we will

continue to facilitate virtual learning and professional development activities, returning to face to face activities when it is considered safe to do so. We will upskill our leaders to lead and support our people to adapt to new ways of working as we continue to respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will continue with our plan for professional learning and development for our inspectors to be focussed on supporting curriculum, PCET and ALN reforms, and professional learning and self-evaluation for improvement.

We will:

- strengthen our professional learning and development strategy
- widen the existing 'menu' of professional learning and development activities, with a balance of 'traditional', 'experiential' and 'performance-based' approaches to professional learning and development
- identify priority areas of focus, considering the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by our inspectors and address skills gaps identified in our professional development needs analysis
- continue to review and improve arrangements for the operational planning and evaluation of inspector professional learning and development and evaluate the impact of professional learning and development on inspectors' skills, knowledge and practices
- sustain the progress made to ensure professional learning and development weeks support the professional learning and development strategy for inspectors
- develop professional development pathways for inspectors through personal inquiry projects and research-informed activities
- develop possible career pathways and progression for inspectors in our organisation

A particular focus for the next year will be providing induction, professional learning and mentoring for our cohort of new inspectors.

We will implement our plan for professional learning and development for corporate services staff. This includes collaborating with a group of Welsh Government Sponsored bodies on a leadership development programme covering essential management skills and strategic leadership.

A great place to work

We recognise that our people are our most valuable resource and that each person brings different skills and experience to our organisation, and we encourage all our people to develop their talents, welcome diversity and value differences.

We will seek to maintain our consistently high engagement ranking within the Civil Service People Survey. We will continue to listen to our people and take action to address any areas of concern. We will use the Investors in People process to help evaluate how closely we 'live our values' and to identify further organisational improvements. Our aim is to continue to develop staff within a supportive and trusting environment that will help maintain our high levels of engagement.

Full details on the benefits of working for us are on our website [here](#).

Equality and staff welfare

We will continue to support a fair and inclusive work environment through delivering the actions within our [Strategic Equality Plan](#) "

We will continue to promote and support staff wellbeing through actions aligned with our Corporate Health Standard 'action plan'. We will be seeking re-accreditation of the Standard in 2021-2022.

We will continue to place particular emphasis on supporting staff wellbeing to deal with new ways of working and other challenges resulting from COVID-19. We will ensure that we provide our staff with the equipment and support to continue to do their jobs safely during the pandemic. During 2021-2022 we will consult with staff on new ways of working, after the pandemic, and manage the transition to the new normal.

The Socio-economic duty came into force on 31st March 2021. The overall aim of the duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage and we will ensure that our strategic decision-making takes into account the spirit of the duty.

Through our Time to Change Pledge action plan we will continue to raise awareness of mental health issues. Through our newsletter, health campaigns and notice boards we will share mental health experiences, aiming to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

Safeguarding

We are committed to upholding the safety and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. We will continue to be vigilant in all of our work. In all aspects of our work, the needs, interests and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be put above the needs and interests of all others. Through appropriate training we will continue to raise the awareness of our staff to potential abuse, neglect and unsafe professional practice both within settings we inspect and within other settings we visit. We will continue to ensure that all staff are familiar with the procedures to follow when they have concerns. We will continue to follow locally agreed safeguarding procedures with referral where appropriate to local authority social services and/or the police.

Through our inspections, monitoring visits and engagements with providers, we will continue to evaluate how well providers of education and training carry out their responsibilities in a manner which safeguards children, and where appropriate vulnerable adults. We will continue to work actively with other agencies to respond to national and local initiatives and to develop strategies that are designed to prevent and/or reduce the risk of abuse from occurring.

To support and manage this work we have a designated team of safeguarding officers including a designated strategic director, with responsibility for the strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding within our organisation. The safeguarding team will advise Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of any action required to safeguard children and vulnerable adults including any advice that needs to be given to other

statutory bodies, for example the Welsh Government. The safeguarding team will also maintain an ongoing summary of relevant issues including the implementation of our safeguarding procedures and an analysis of enquiries, queries and referrals made to us. These matters will be subject to termly and annual reports to our Executive Board.

Specifically, in 2021-2022, we will pilot a further Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in a local authority area working with CIW and other UK inspectorates.

Welsh language standards

We treat the Welsh and English languages equally in the work that we do, both internally and externally while engaging with the public and stakeholders, as well as in inspecting education and training in Wales. We will continue to review and develop our policies and approaches to meeting the Welsh language standards as laid out by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Our [Welsh language policy](#) is published on our website.

Sustainability and biodiversity reporting

We are required to comply with the section 6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty for public authorities in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales. To comply with the section 6 duty we seek to embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into our early thinking and business planning, including any policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as our day to day activities.

We reported on how the consideration of biodiversity is being embedded within our organisation in our [Environmental report \(including biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty reporting\) November 2020](#) and will set out what we propose to do to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience in our Environmental Policy 2021-2022.

Measuring and reporting performance

The COVID-19 situation has continued to impact on our usual core activities and we will have reduced levels of activity in particular areas covered by our standing performance measures. It will remain important that we continue to measure and monitor performance throughout the year to help:

- evaluate the effectiveness of our processes
- learn from experience
- improve performance
- make resource allocation decisions

Performance objectives against our Strategic Objective 1

Our aim is to:

- ensure that inspections and their reports meet the quality requirements set out in our published frameworks for inspection guidance and are published within statutory timescale
- ensure that providers' experience of inspection is a positive process that promotes improvement
- ensure that engagement visits are a positive process that collects valuable evidence to produce national reports

We will measure and report on:

- percentage of inspection reports published within statutory or agreed timescales
- percentage of published inspection reports requiring amendment after publication as a result of substantiated challenge to judgements
- number of upheld complaints about inspection process
- provider feedback (questionnaires) on their experience of an inspection and satisfaction with the reliability and independence of judgements
- number of providers going into and coming out of a statutory category following inspection
- number of engagement call/visits carried out to maintained schools (including pupil referral units)

Performance objectives against our Strategic Objective 2

Our aim is to:

- publish an informative and influential HMCI Annual Report
- ensure that all priorities set out in the Ministerial remit inform and impact on the development of national policy and are published to agreed deadlines
- ensure that we impact on the wider development of national policy and education and training initiatives through papers and evidence presented to groups and committees

We will measure and report on:

- media and website analytics on HMCI Annual Report
- percentage of recommendations for improvement in thematic reports that are accepted for implementation / commented on by Welsh Government
- number and influence of advice on school reorganisation proposals
- number and influence of responses to Welsh Government consultations
- number of groups and committee meetings attended by inspectors
- feedback on papers and evidence presented

Performance objectives against our Strategic Objective 3

Our aim is to:

- ensure that our professional development and training events and stakeholder events meet the needs of delegates
- enhance capacity in the delivery of education and training in Wales
- identify practice that is interesting, innovative and worthy of sharing

We will measure and report on:

- number of hosted events (stakeholder events / training activities)/delegates
- delegate satisfaction levels based on questionnaire feedback
- Number of inspections that include one or more peer inspectors (PIs)
- number of effective practice case studies published on our website and views/downloads

Performance objectives against 'how we deliver our work'

Our aim is to:

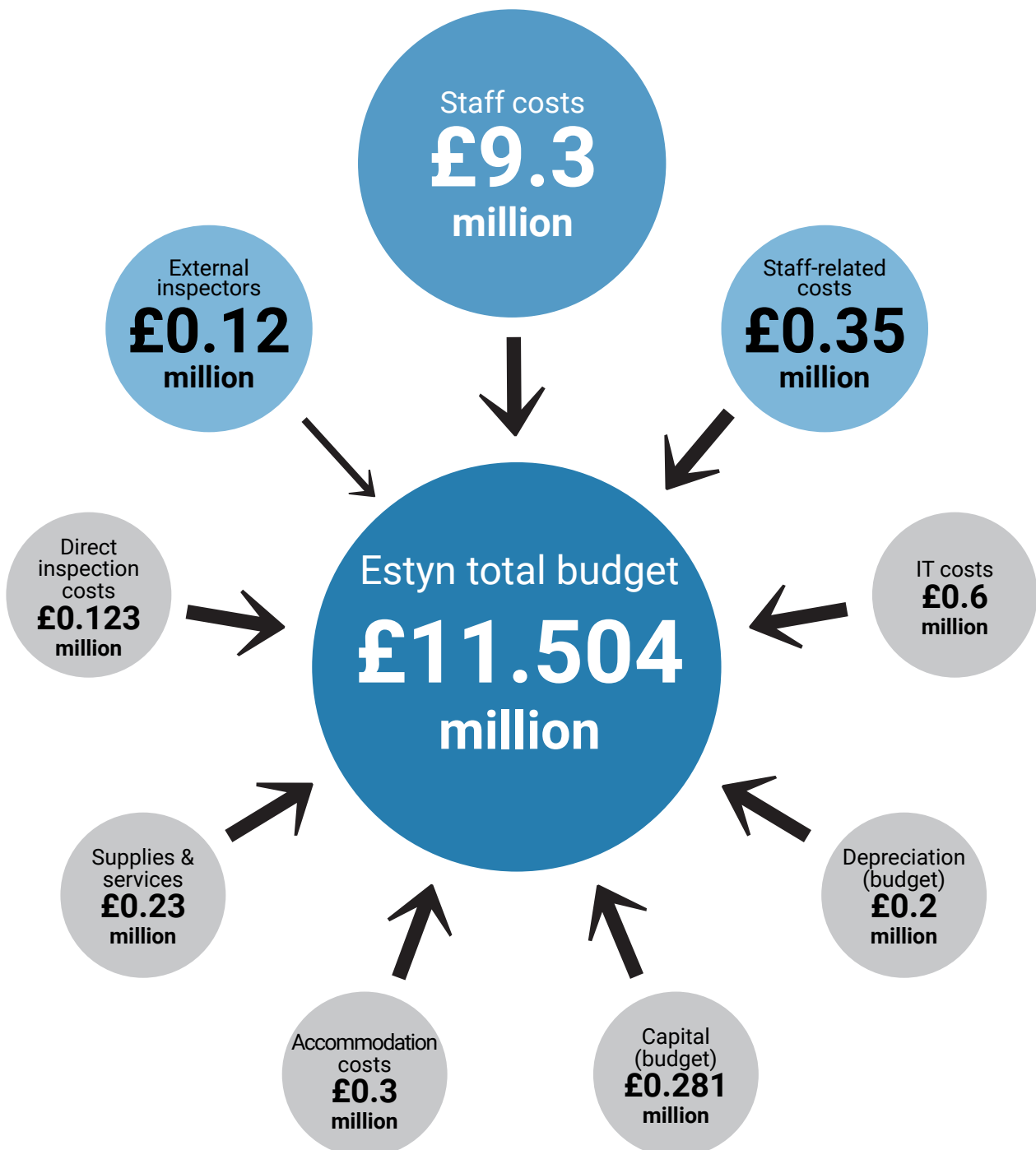
- engage more effectively with all our stakeholders and work collaboratively with other inspectorates in Wales and beyond – sharing knowledge and information to support improvement
- create and maintain an engaged and skilled workforce
- respond to requests for information and feedback and complaints and use them to help us improve
- Fully meet our statutory responsibilities and key corporate activities including equalities, Welsh language standards and sustainability
- ensure good governance and appropriate financial management

We will measure and report on:

- Civil Service People Survey engagement index score
- staff sickness absence rate
- staff turnover
- annual report and accounts produced within statutory timescale, with no qualification or audit Management Letter
- implementation and ongoing maintenance of action plans to meet our statutory responsibilities and key corporate activities

- percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days / 30 days
- percentage of responses provided to all complaints and requests under Freedom of Information completed within 20 working days of receipt
- number of personal data-related incidents
- results of external assessments (accreditations, including Investors in People, Green Dragon Standard, Corporate Health Standard) and compliance audits, for example Welsh language
- our collaboration work, including the number of external stakeholder events attended by our staff, number of joint inspections carried out

Our budget for 2021-2022



Earlier this year, we agreed with Welsh Government that they would provide additional grant funding to cover the extra costs for staffing engagement visits and our work for secondary schools causing concern. We will only call upon this funding, which is not included in the above graphic, if we are unable to meet the cost of this additional work from the savings we are now expecting to achieve through the further suspension of our core inspection activities, that is, through savings which will arise from reduced external inspector costs and reduced travel and subsistence expenses of our own staff carrying out inspection work.

We will hold regular discussions with our education and finance links in Welsh Government on budget matters. If we experience challenges delivering all our commitments, such as resourcing or scheduling difficulties, we will discuss options with Welsh Government.

We continue to recognise the pressures on the public purse but also recognise that we will not be able to sustain this year's savings in future years; additional core funding for the next financial year 2022-2023, and for subsequent years, would be required to maintain appropriate staffing levels to deliver our full programme of inspection activities and other work. We will look forward to holding appropriate discussions with Welsh Government on future funding scenarios and implications at the earliest opportunity.

Annexes

1: Our core purpose and activities

2: Our wellbeing statement



Annex 1: Our core purpose and activities

Estyn is led by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (HMCI) and inspects quality and standards.

We are a Crown body, established under the Education Act 1992. We are independent of Senedd Cymru but receive our funding from the Welsh Government under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998.

Our workforce is made up of a management team and corporate services staff, normally based in our office located in Cardiff but currently working from home, and inspectors who are home-based. We train additional inspectors, peer inspectors (who currently work in education and training), local authority improvement partners, 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](#) is available on our website.

We inspect providers of education and training. We also provide advice and guidance, build capacity and share effective practice. We also work in partnership with other inspectorates, education bodies and stakeholders. In this time of crisis, our focus will be on providing independent, objective evidence and advice. In particular, our work will inform the development of national policy, support the education and training system to deliver continuity of learning, and contribute to the recovery of the Welsh education system. Details of our inspection processes, plans for resuming inspection and inspection reports, and our support to keep Wales learning can be found on [the inspection page](#) of our website. The [about us](#) section on our website further explains the work we do.

Statute and regulations underpin our core activities but we also operate within a wider legislative environment. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out a shared purpose to achieve a better and lasting quality of life for us all. Although the duty does not apply to us (we are not a listed public body for the purposes of the Act), we nonetheless support the spirit of the Act and seek to build the necessary wellbeing components and sustainable development principle into our planning, governance and delivery.

Our wellbeing statement, included in this Plan, sets out how we align our strategic objectives with the wellbeing goals for Wales. We provide an update on our progress in contributing to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within our Annual Report and Accounts.

A strategic overview setting out our **vision, mission and values together with our strategic objectives** can be found in this plan at the beginning of the section 'How we deliver our work'.

Annex 2: Our wellbeing statement

Our wellbeing statement forms part of our corporate planning processes. It shows how our strategic objectives are contributing to the wellbeing goals for Wales and explains how we are working in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

Overview

The Welsh Government has announced an ambition to become carbon neutral by 2050. Wales has not just an ambitious target but also a unique legislative framework for climate policy through the Well-being of Futures Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹ ('the Act') sets out a shared purpose to achieve a better and lasting quality of life for us all. The shared purpose is represented by an integrated set of seven wellbeing goals. The Act also puts in place a sustainable development principle which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act. Public bodies identified within the Act are required to develop wellbeing objectives, and a supporting statement of wellbeing.

We have been embedding the principle of sustainable development into the way we use our resources for many years. Although the duty does not apply to us (we are not a listed public body for the purposes of the Act), we nonetheless support the spirit of the Act and seek to build the necessary wellbeing components and sustainable development principle into our planning, governance and operational delivery and into how we lead, communicate and involve our staff and stakeholders.

In May 2020, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales published the first [Future Generations Report](#). The report analyses the progress of listed public bodies, including Welsh Government, in implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act since it became law in 2015.

Our strategic objectives, which drive everything we do, will serve well as our wellbeing objectives. Our strategic objectives provide direction for the organisation at all levels with strategic objectives linked to team and personal objectives across the organisation. This will help us to embed the Well-being of Future Generations Act across our organisation.

Wellbeing goals

The wellbeing goals for Wales, as defined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are set out below.

¹ [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) and the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 The Essentials](#)

A prosperous Wales

An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

A resilient Wales

A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.

A healthier Wales

A society in which people's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

A more equal Wales

A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.

A Wales of cohesive communities

Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

A globally responsible Wales

A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global wellbeing.

Alignment of the wellbeing goals for Wales and our strategic objectives

Table 1 below sets out how we have aligned the wellbeing goals for Wales with our strategic objectives and key activities. This mapping will enable the monitoring, review and reporting of our strategic objectives against the wellbeing goals.

The steps we will take in 2021-2022 to deliver our strategic objectives are set out in the main sections of this plan. This Annex provides a flavour of some of our specific activities that contribute the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

In terms of ensuring resources, including financial, are appropriately allocated to our work activities and keeping these under review, our established [governance framework](#) will facilitate this.

Progress towards the delivery of our work activities is monitored by an executive committee (Inspection Policy and Advice Committee, Executive Board and/or Audit and Risk Assurance Committee). We formally review and report progress in delivering our strategic objectives in our Annual Report and Accounts.

Our Strategy Board establishes and monitors our strategic agenda, promotes effective corporate governance and advises on our development so as to ensure our wellbeing and continued improvement as an employer and as a high-profile public service.

A prosperous Wales

A prosperous Wales is dependent on a skilled and well-educated population. Our core work is reporting on the quality and standards in education and training, which has the aim of developing ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives. Specifically, our [inspection guidance](#) emphasises the importance of involving the school or provider fully in the inspection, gaining the perspective of learners and stakeholders and applying the principle of equality for Welsh and English for all our inspection work. When we are back inspecting, on our website, we will publish details on which providers are due to be inspected and when their [inspection reports](#) will be published.

Together, with key stakeholders including pupils, we are creating a new resource to support consistent levels of high quality school improvement work. This [National Evaluation and Improvement Resource](#) reflects our vision to develop a national resource that will be useful for all schools across Wales. Self-evaluation is at the heart of the new evaluation and improvement arrangements that we are developing to support and align with the new Curriculum for Wales.

The Chief Inspector's Annual Report contributes significantly to **a prosperous Wales**, and to many of the other wellbeing goals such as **a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales** and **a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**. The Annual Report for the 2020-2021 academic year will be published in December 2021.

In support of **a prosperous Wales**, we aim to develop ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives. To this end, and in support of a

number of the other wellbeing goals, we build capacity in the delivery of education and training through the publication of effective practice case studies. In 2020 we published [Developing pupils' independence and life skills](#). It refers to a school where staff actively plan for the development of pupils' independence and life skills. We also hold 'leadership and improvement' conferences for providers. This year it may not be possible for us to do this in a face-to-face event, so we will explore the possibility of hosting virtual events. This year we will be providing specific advice to the Welsh Government in a number of planned thematic reports including, 'Impartial advice and guidance for young people, focusing on Careers Wales' and 'the changing approach to (classroom) assessment'.

We are committed to maximising local wellbeing. Our procurement policy for goods and services considers sustainability and social value rather than cost alone. We use local suppliers of goods and services and pay suppliers promptly, having targets to monitor this. We also aim to use local Welsh venues for events.

We aim to support fair work practices through employment and services. We support the living wage and all those directly employed by us are paid at rates above the living wage. We support membership of trade unions and involve unions in the ways that we consult with staff. We ensure individuals seeking access to work are not disadvantaged by reason of gender, race, disability, sexuality or other protected characteristics.

We work with others to support the development of skills for the future. We look to second staff into and out of our organisation and use local agency staff to share knowledge and develop transferrable skills. We will also undertake a staff skills survey in 2021.

We wish to contribute to a low carbon society. We annually calculate and publish our carbon footprint in our environmental report and have a target to reduce it to support Welsh Government's ambition for a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. When travel resumes, we will continue to encourage colleagues to car share when travelling on official business and use interactive conference calling facilities, to support the organisation in its aim of minimising travel to meetings. This year we are introducing a Green Car Scheme (ultra-low emission vehicle leases).

Table 1: Alignment of the wellbeing goals for Wales and our strategic objectives

The seven wellbeing goals for Wales						
A Prosperous Wales (1)	A Resilient Wales (2)	A Healthier Wales (3)	A More Equal Wales (4)	A Wales of Cohesive Communities (5)	A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language (6)	Globally Responsible Wales (7)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strategic objective one: Provide public accountability on the quality and standards of education and training provision in Wales						
Engagement and inspection activity						
Follow-up inspection activity						
Supporting continuity of learning across education and training in Wales						
Strategic objective two: Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh						
HMCI's Annual Report						
Annual remit letter						
Other advice work						
Strategic objective three: Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales						
Training, liaison and engagement						
Disseminating case studies						
National Evaluation and Improvement Resource						
How we deliver our work						
Strengthening stakeholder engagement						
Governance and developing people						
Carrying out our supporting duties (including equality, Welsh language, and sustainability and biodiversity)						
Joint working with inspection bodies						

A resilient Wales

Biodiversity is the variety of life found on earth. Mainstreaming biodiversity activity in organisations not involved in land management tends to focus on tackling the pressure on species and habitats, for example by climate change mitigation / decarbonisation, including procuring locally and from sustainable sources and reducing, re-using and recycling resources.

We will aim to ensure the efficient use of our office, including our space requirements, and seek opportunities to minimise the consumption of natural resources in the delivery of our services. We will also seek to reduce plastic usage in support of the Welsh Government's ambition for a Wales free from unnecessary, single use plastics. Achievements to date include stopping the purchase of single use plastic cups and, when we have purchased cups for visitor use, these have been bio-degradable. We decant washing-up liquid from large containers into refillable bottles. Regarding stationery, we recycle and reuse items where possible to reduce wastage and will explore further sustainable options, particularly in light of home working.

In normal times, staff and visitors to our office are encouraged to recycle as much as possible. We increased our recycling / energy recovery efforts at our office to the point of zero waste going to landfill. This is thanks to our staff and to improvements in waste recycling / energy recovery processes. We will continue to encourage staff working from home to recycle a range of items from printer cartridges to batteries and unwanted paper. Homeworkers would normally bring such items into the office for recycling at regular intervals. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented this practice for the time-being but this will resume once we return to a new normal.

2021-2022 will be our fourth year of using clean energy with our scope 2 emissions for electricity to be reported as zero. Our 100% renewable energy tariff is backed by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO).

We will continue to use procurement frameworks for the purchase of goods and services where suppliers are required to meet minimum environmental criteria to be included in tender lots. When using alternative procurement routes, we will continue to place a weighting on environmental characteristics in the evaluation process where it is deemed essential to the performance of the contract, and ensure that consideration is given to whole life cost of products purchased where applicable (e.g. maintenance / running costs and disposal) We will also ensure that consideration is given to prospective suppliers' environmental credentials and capabilities as part of the selection process where appropriate. Goods and services will continue to be sourced locally where possible, for example stationery supplies (via framework route), building maintenance contractors and when catering is required for in-house training events.

We will seek to develop a culture of environmental responsibility amongst our staff and through our inspection processes. We will assess progress in pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship when inspections resume and identify examples of strong practice. We will aim to inspire and involve our staff through environmental articles.

Our environmental policy 2021-2022 and our [Environmental report 2020](#) include how the consideration of biodiversity is being embedded within Estyn.

A healthier Wales

Maximising people's wellbeing under **a healthier Wales** is a focus of our inspection framework. Inspectors are required to look at standards of learners' wellbeing, including their attitudes to keeping healthy and safe, and the provision made by a provider. An example of effective practice is captured in our case study [Developing an outdoor education programme](#) which refers to a college that uses their outdoor education and activities programme to develop pupils' spiritual, intellectual and physical wellbeing. [Support for learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing](#) is a recent thematic report that provides an overview of how further education colleges, work-based learning providers and adult learning in the community partnerships have supported learners' mental health and emotional wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021-2022, the continued suspension of inspections will enable inspectors to support providers' recovery from the current situation through engagement calls and visits. One aspect we will provide advice to the Welsh Government on relates to support for learners, parents and professionals, in particular in relation to wellbeing.

We will continue to support our staff to act with compassion and to facilitate understanding of mental wellbeing. We have a [Health and Wellbeing Policy](#) and provide an Employee Assistance Programme. Through our Time to Change Pledge action plan we will continue to raise awareness of mental health issues. Through our newsletter, health campaigns and notice boards we will share mental health experiences, aiming to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

Our attendance policies are well-being informed and mental health awareness training has been provided to a group of managers. In 2021-2022 we will continue to focus on mental health and wellbeing, providing mental health awareness training to all managers and promoting tools to help our people build resilience. A key focus of our learning and development strategy will be supporting our people with the transition to new ways of working, for example hybrid working to continue to encourage collaboration and engagement.

We are committed to supporting the health and well-being of our staff and have a Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Group. We provide time for staff to attend appointments relating to their health and wellbeing and we reimburse staff the cost of the vaccination against flu. This will help to keep people well and save money and inadvertent sick day costs.

We wish to be part of a drive for an active nation. To make it as easy as possible for staff to commute by bike, we installed showers and a secure bike pen at our offices. We will continue to provide a Cycle to Work Scheme. We also offer staff a small amount of time in the working week to focus on activities that enrich their mental and/or physical health through a 'wellbeing hour'.

As part of our commitment to our people's health and wellbeing we are focusing on key areas of activity, guided by the principles of the Corporate Health Standard.

A more equal Wales

All our activities aim to contribute to **a more equal Wales** where people can fulfil their potential. We will continue to support a fair and inclusive work environment through delivering the actions within our [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#).

The Socio-economic duty will come into force on 31st March 2021. The overall aim of the duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage and we will ensure our strategic decision-making takes into account the spirit of the duty.

Our [family friendly policy](#) sets out the statutory and enhanced benefits and support that we will provide to employees who are parents and having a baby. Our [flexible working policy](#) offers a range of flexible working options including home working, part-time, compressed hours, job sharing, part-year, annualised hours and flexi time. These are regularly communicated to staff and we monitor flexible working requests and outcomes.

Inclusion training and Becoming Disability Confident are mandatory for all to drive culture change and challenge stereotypes in the workplace. We promote leadership opportunities to all staff.

We ensure that reasonable adjustments are offered throughout the recruitment process and the employee life cycle. We have policies and procedures for putting in place reasonable adjustments to ensure that our people can quickly and easily access the adjustments they need to perform to their best.

We are committed to giving people equal opportunities to participate in decision making, to enable equal outcomes. Our office is compliant with accessibility needs, both for access and facilities and when we host events, we ask if people have access requirements at the point where they register.

We also use UN 'International Days of' to educate, inspire and involve people. All our website documents are screened for accessibility and our parent questionnaires are available in a number of languages other than English and Welsh – see [questionnaires in additional languages](#).

We also produce best practice guidance on equality and diversity issues, examples of which can be found on our website searching under the ['equality and diversity'](#) tag.

The Welsh Government's report on [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group](#) maps a way forward in how – across each Area of Learning and Experience – the diverse experiences and contributions of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic peoples in Wales is made integral. We will be responsible for taking forward two recommendations in the report (42 and 43).

A Wales of cohesive communities

We are committed to **a Wales of cohesive communities**. Our inspection framework requires inspectors to consider how well a provider works with strategic partners including community groups. An example of a **Wales of cohesive communities** is

the case study [Pupils' life skills develop from their community work. Developments in remote and blended learning practice](#) is a recent thematic report that looks at the work of further education, work based learning and adult learning in the community providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our staff are enthusiastic supporters of charity events, raising thousands of pounds for a number of good causes each year. We wish to support employees who want to contribute to the wider community. Therefore, special leave with pay is usually allowed to enable employees to serve the community through volunteering, carrying out public duties, attending jury service or serving in the reserve forces.

In terms of connecting communities, as referred to under **a Healthier Wales** and 'a drive for an active nation' we promote active travel to our staff by providing facilities such as showers and a cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Our commitment to **a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** is embedded in working practice and our [Welsh-language-policy](#) demonstrates how we meet the requirements of the Welsh language standards. We continue to develop and review our policies and procedures and support Welsh language training for staff in order to improve our Welsh language services. We provide staff with access to learning during their working week. Welsh speaking staff use the Cymraeg comma on their email signatures and wear the Cymraeg comma lanyards to promote our culture and Welsh language. Our access points all have bilingual greetings. We also assess Welsh language need as part of developing job descriptions.

We seek to develop opportunities to celebrate and promote the Welsh language and Wales' culture to broaden and maintain cultural identity locally and as part of the national picture. For example, in normal times we exhibit at the Eisteddfod yr Urdd and the Royal Welsh Show. We will be providing specific advice to Welsh Government this year in a planned thematic report – 'Welsh Language immersion approaches'.

We use qualified translators that are members of Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru for Welsh translation and to develop bilingual information.

A globally responsible Wales

We strive to contribute to **global responsibility** and inspectors evaluate how well schools help pupils to develop an understanding of their culture, the local community and the wider world. Inspectors consider how well the school prepares pupils to become active citizens and to make decisions about the life and work of the school. They consider pupils' participation in decision-making at a school level, including the opportunities they have to influence what and how they learn, and the effectiveness of the school council and other pupil groups, for example the eco-committee. One case study, [Supporting pupil wellbeing](#), relates to a school that has fostered strong international partnerships as a follow on from their role within an Erasmus project (EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe).

We are committed to supporting improvement by working collaboratively with our

peers internationally. Through the Offshore group, we share information and practice regularly with neighbouring countries at both a strategic and operational level to inform the continued development of member inspectorates in similar educational and political contexts. Much of our joint work throughout 2021-2022 will focus on sharing approaches to inspection and curriculum recovery in light of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the education system and on outcomes for learners.

Our continued engagement with the activities of the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates, with its 34 members across Europe and beyond, ensures that we benefit from the ability to learn from other inspectorates and their processes. It also provides an opportunity to take part in and contribute to the international debate on inspection and evaluation in an environment that is free from domestic or political pressures.

Linked to **a resilient Wales**, we have a focus on decarbonisation and sustainable consumption and production through the procurement of products and services and a commitment to reduce, re-use and recycle resources. It is in these areas that Estyn can make the greatest contribution to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and the section 6 duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

We continue to incorporate the purchasing elements of the Welsh Government's [Code of Practice: Ethical Employment in Supply Chains](#) into our procurement process.

Our senior management team is committed to influencing and promoting environmental responsibility within our operations. The Green Dragon Environmental Standard is awarded to organisations that can demonstrate effective environmental management and that are taking action to understand, monitor and control their impacts on the environment. Thanks to the support of our staff, we have been reaccredited to level 3 of this standard since 2007.

The sustainable development principle

The Well-being of Futures Generations (Wales) Act 2015 emphasises the value of preventing problems from occurring rather than addressing them after they emerge. It aims to merge policy issues, such as public health, education, climate change and economic prosperity, and mandates that all policy must contribute to sustainability and not undermine long-term goals.

The Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act.

There are five things that public bodies need to think about in applying the sustainable development principle.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The long term – the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs• Prevention – how acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives• Integration – considering how the public body’s wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration – acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its wellbeing objectives• Involvement – the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves |
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Our strategic objectives and the activities set out in this annual plan are consistent with the requirements of the sustainable development principle. Here are a few areas of our work which exemplify the sustainable development principle.

Education in Wales is on an ambitious reform journey and our work is crucial in supporting this long-term aim. The independent report, [‘A Learning Inspectorate’](#) sets out the implications of education reform for us. This plan addresses the short-term ‘key actions’ for 2021-2022. We will be working together with staff and our stakeholders to consult every step along the way.

We recognise the value of preventing problems from occurring rather than addressing them after they emerge. Much of our work around education reform focuses on prevention. Specifically, thematic inspections can help to identify what is working well, barriers to progress and provide case studies of emerging practice. For example, in 2020, we published a thematic review of [‘Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales – case studies and cameos from secondary, all-age and special schools’](#). This year we will be providing specific advice to Welsh Government on the planned thematic report – ‘Regional consortium and local authority support for Curriculum for Wales focusing on professional learning’.

Self-evaluation is at the heart of the new evaluation and improvement arrangements that we are developing to support and align with the new Curriculum for Wales. We will continue to work in partnership with the Welsh Government, regional consortia and schools to develop the [‘National Evaluation and Improvement Resource’](#) (NEIR). Collaboration and involvement continue to be key in developing and rolling out this resource for schools in Wales.

When pilot school inspections resume in the spring term 2022 and our new inspection arrangements are introduced, the new framework will reflect the new curriculum and arrangements for self-evaluation. We will consider how any planned changes to inspection will impact across all the sectors we inspect. If there are sensible improvements, with support from stakeholders, we will consider how we can put these in place across different sectors.

During 2021-2022, we will continue engagement activities. The aim of the call or visit is to see how providers are approaching particular challenges of engaging and supporting their learners and their communities during these difficult times. We will also re-start our conversations about the Curriculum for Wales.

The feedback from many providers so far have been very positive. Many headteachers have welcomed the opportunity to share their experiences and views about how they are managing in challenging times through an informal discussion. In 2021-2022, we will focus on supporting the Welsh Government's learning recovery plan from the COVID-19 pandemic for the education and training sectors. This will result in termly reports based on evidence gathered from engagement calls and visits, including cameos of interesting practice. Our 'support to keep Wales learning' [improvement resources](#) share these reports into how providers are supporting their learners and community in response to the difficult circumstances due to COVID-19. Providers may be able to adapt these to their own context.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our work significantly, we have continued to listen to and learn from our stakeholders, making sure that our communications only focus on the most important messages at the time. We will continue to ensure that learners are at the heart of inspection and our work reflects the expectations of our stakeholders. This year, the way that we engage with our stakeholders will evolve as we consider new ways of working with our stakeholders to shape our plans as we respond to the pandemic. We will consult widely, using different methods of communication to reach new and different groups of stakeholders and use their views to help direct our activities and improve our work.

Integrated thinking helps us to work collaboratively within our organisation and with other inspectorates to support improvement.

During the year we will transition back to inspection activity. We undertake some inspection work jointly with other inspectorates and regulatory bodies, co-ordinating planning activities so that they result in proportionate programmes of work that avoid duplication and ensure that key risks and concerns are being examined.

Through the Offshore group, we share information and practice regularly with neighbouring countries at both a strategic and operational level to inform the continued development of member inspectorates in similar educational and political contexts. Much of our joint work throughout 2021-2022 will focus on sharing approaches to inspection and curriculum recovery in light of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the education system and on outcomes for learners. Our continued engagement with the activities of the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI), with its 34 members across Europe and beyond, ensures that we benefit from the ability to learn from other inspectorates and their processes.

This Annual Plan is also available in Welsh.

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

This Annual Plan has been submitted for the attention of, and approved by, the First Minister of Senedd Cymru.