

How does HIW inspect the NHS?

What we inspect against

The [Health and Social Care \(Community Health and Standards\) Act 2003](#) (Part II, Chapter 4) gives HIW the power to carry out inspections, reviews and investigations of the NHS or services provided for the NHS. This includes the right of entry to healthcare premises and the power to inspect, take copies of and remove from the premises any documents or records (including personal records).

The [Health and Care Standards 2015](#) apply to all types and size of health service in Wales. These standards “are designed to help ensure people have positive first and lasting impressions of the health service, that they receive care in safe, supportive and healing environments, and that they understand and are involved in their care”. All NHS health services are expected to meet these standards.

During our inspections we look at how services meet these Standards and other relevant legislation and guidance. We use the standards to make judgements about the quality, safety and effectiveness of services provided to patients.

We report and publish our findings from our inspections under three themes:

- **Quality of the patient experience:**

We speak to patients and/or their relatives, representatives and advocates, to ensure that the patients’ perspective is at the centre of our approach.

- **Delivery of safe and effective care:**

We consider the extent to which services provide high quality, safe and reliable care centred on the person.



- **Quality of Management and leadership:**

We consider how services are managed and led and whether the culture is conducive to providing safe and effective care. We also consider how services review and monitor their own performance against relevant standards and guidance.

Who we inspect

We inspect NHS (or NHS funded) services. For example:

- Hospitals
- GPs
- Dental practices
- Mental health services
- Learning disability services
- Healthcare organisations that use ionising radiation for medical purposes e.g. x-ray (see our [website](#) for more details).

How we inspect

Our inspections of NHS services may be announced or unannounced.

We will always seek to conduct unannounced inspections because this allows us to see services in the way they usually operate. The service does not receive any advance warning of an unannounced inspection. Our hospital inspections are usually unannounced.

In some circumstances we will decide to undertake an announced inspection, meaning that the service will be given up to 12 weeks' notice of the inspection by letter or email. In deciding if an inspection should be announced, we consider:

- Whether an unannounced inspection may create an unacceptable level of disruption for patients and staff
- Whether it is necessary to collect pre-inspection information from the provider
- Whether we need to ensure certain key staff are present on the day(s) of the inspection.

For these reasons, our inspections of GP and dental practices are usually announced, although for a variety of reasons, we may choose to conduct an unannounced inspection at anytime.

Our inspection team will include at least one HIW inspector and at least one clinical peer reviewer, who is a person who has expertise in the area we are inspecting. For example, for dental practice inspections, our clinical peer reviewer is a dentist with recent hands on experience of dentistry. The number of inspection team members will differ depending on the size and complexity of the service.

Our inspections usually last between one and three days, depending on the type of service we are inspecting.

How we decide when and where we inspect

When considering when and where to inspect we consider all the evidence and intelligence we have about an organisation built up over time. This includes:

- Information from previous HIW inspections or reviews
- The vulnerability of the patient group or the complexity of the service.
- Specific data available to HIW
- Issues and concerns shared by partner organisations

- Concerns raised by patients and staff (see our [website](#) for further details raising concerns)
- National priorities, new standards or quality requirements
- Blind spots

Further details about how we decide where to focus our work can be found on our [website](#).

What we look at during our inspections

HIW inspections capture a snapshot of the standards of care patients receive. They may also point to wider issues associated with the governance of healthcare services provided.

The following table shows each of the Health and Care Standards we consider, what we are looking for during the inspection and how we do this.

HIW inspection theme	What Health and Care Standards apply?	What are we looking for?	How do we do this?
Quality of patient experience	Staying healthy		
	1.1 Health promotion, protection and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients should be supported to look after their own health and well-being • Patients should know what care and support services there are to help them • Patients should be supported to make choices about their own health and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers • Discussions and interviews with staff • Observations • Review of available patient information

HIW inspection theme	What Health and Care Standards apply?	What are we looking for?	How do we do this?
		wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses within completed HIW patient questionnaires
	Dignified care		
	4.1 Dignified Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients should be treated with dignity, respect and kindness • Patients should have their needs are met whatever your religion, language, culture or feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses within completed HIW patient questionnaires • Observations of interactions between staff and patients • Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers
	4.2 Patient Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients should have good information about their care that is easy to understand • Patients should be supported to make choices about their care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of patient information • Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers • Discussions and interviews with staff • Review of available patient information • Responses within completed HIW patient questionnaires
	3.2 Communicating effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients should have their communication needs met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers

HIW inspection theme	What Health and Care Standards apply?	What are we looking for?	How do we do this?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients should be able to understand information about their care and health • Patients are able to tell health services about what they need or what they think 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses within completed HIW patient questionnaires • Discussions and interviews with staff • Responses within completed HIW patient questionnaires
	Timely care		
	5.1 Timely access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients should have the right care at the right time in the right place with the right staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers • Responses within completed HIW patient questionnaires • Discussions and interviews with staff • Observations • Examination of a sample of patient medical records
	Individual care		
	6.1 Planning Care to promote independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients should be supported to look after their own health and well-being • Patients should be able to make 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers • Responses within completed HIW

HIW inspection theme	What Health and Care Standards apply?	What are we looking for?	How do we do this?
		choices about their care	patient questionnaires <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of available patient information • Examination of a sample of patient medical records
	6.2 Peoples rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All health services must understand and support equality and human rights for everyone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers • Examination of a sample of patient medical records • Review of staff training records • Observations • Discussions and interviews with staff
	6.3 Listening and Learning from feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients and their families should be able to tell health services about the care they get from health services • Health services should know what is working well and what is not working well • Health services should be open and honest with patients when they tell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers • Responses within completed HIW patient questionnaires • Review of feedback systems including complaints policy and procedures • Observations

HIW inspection theme	What Health and Care Standards apply?	What are we looking for?	How do we do this?
		<p>them that something has gone wrong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services should learn from what patients tell them and make services better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information held by HIW Interviews with senior management
Delivery of Safe and Effective Care	Safe Care		
	2.1 Managing risk and promoting health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services must look after patient's health and safety and make sure that any risks are managed as well as they can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of policies and procedures Observations Discussions and interviews with staff Interviews of senior management
	2.2 Preventing pressure and tissue damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients should be helped to look after their skin Health services should make sure that patients do not get sore skin from sitting or lying down for too long 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of documentation e.g. audits, risk assessments Examination of a sample of patient medical records Observations Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers Discussions and interviews with staff
	2.3 Falls Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services should check if patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of documentation e.g. audits,

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		<p>are likely to fall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services should do everything they can to stop people from falling and hurting themselves 	<p>risk assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination of a sample of patient medical records Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers Discussions and interviews with staff
	2.4 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Decontamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services should involve everyone in helping to control and stop infections so that people do not get ill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of documentation e.g. audits, risk assessments, policies and procedures Observations Discussions and interviews with staff
	2.5 Nutrition and Hydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients should be supported to eat and drink so that they can get better quicker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of documentation e.g. audit and monitoring processes Examination of a sample of patient medical records Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers Discussions and interviews with staff Observations

HIW inspection theme	What Health and Care Standards apply?	What are we looking for?	How do we do this?
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses within completed HIW patient questionnaires
	2.6 Medicines Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients should get the right medicine at the right time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of documentation – e.g. audits, medicines management policy and procedures • Examination of a sample of patient medical records • Discussions and interviews with staff • Discussions with patients; family; friends, advocates and carers • Observation of medicines administration and storage
	2.7 Safeguarding children and adults at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health services must support and protect all children and any adults who are vulnerable or at risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of staff training records • Discussions and interviews with staff • Scrutiny of safeguarding policies and procedures • Review of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) and Mental Capacity Act assessments in patient medical records where appropriate

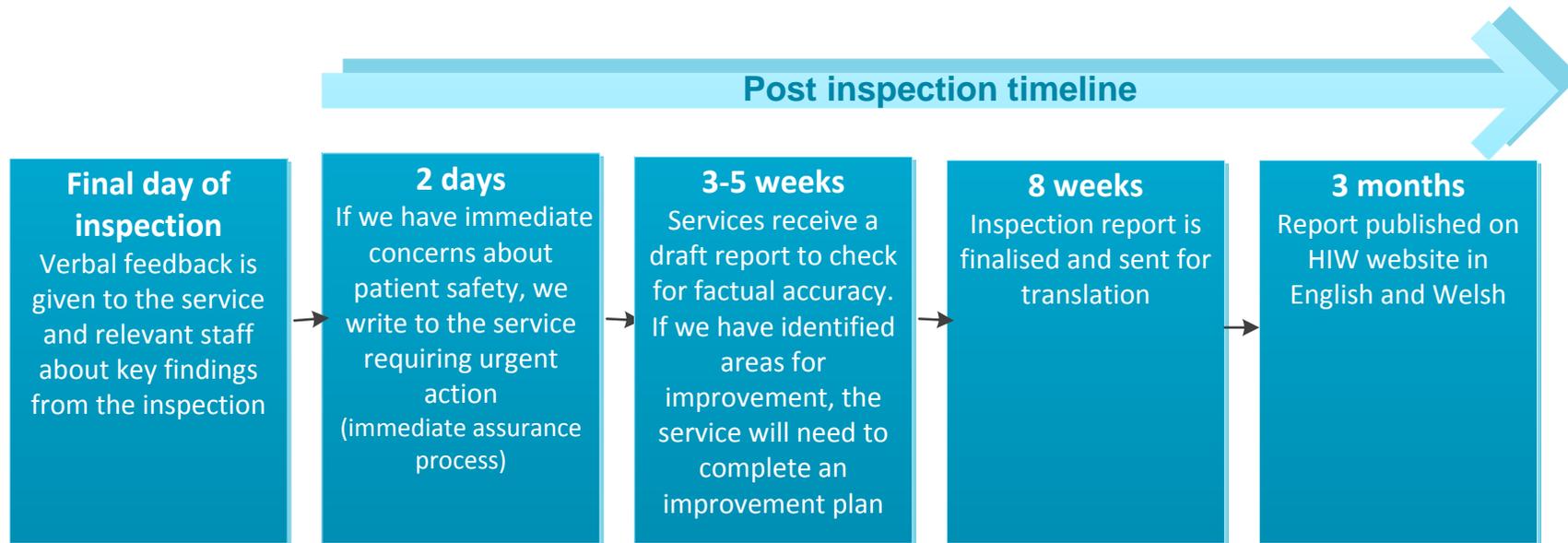
HIW inspection theme	What Health and Care Standards apply?	What are we looking for?	How do we do this?
	2.8 Blood management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients should be able to get blood when they need it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of policies and procedures Staff training records Discussions and interviews with staff Interviews with senior staff
	2.9 Medical devices, equipment and diagnostic systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services must make sure that all the equipment they use is safe and works well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions and interviews with staff Interviews with senior staff Review of documentation e.g. servicing and installation
	Effective Care		
	3.1 Safe and Clinically Effective care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients should get the right care and support for their needs Health services should know the best ways to care and support patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination of a sample of patient medical records Discussions and interviews with staff Review of documentation e.g. audits, risk assessments, monitoring processes Responses within completed HIW staff questionnaires
	3.3 Quality Improvement,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services should look at different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with senior management

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	Research and Innovation	ways to make services better based on good research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of documentation e.g. audits, quality improvement initiatives • Responses within completed HIW staff questionnaires
	3.4 Information Governance and Communications Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health services should have the right information and make sure this information is shared safely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior management • Review of documentation e.g. policies and procedures • Discussions and interviews with staff
	3.5 Record keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is very important that health services keep good records to make sure patients get the right care • Health services must follow the rules about how to record information and keep it safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of a sample of patient medical records • Discussions and interviews with staff • Review of documentation e.g. audits
Quality of Management and Leadership	Governance, Leadership and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All health services should be person centred. They should focus on patient's needs and listen to them • Health services should do the right things well, know how well they are doing, be open and honest in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior management • Discussions and interviews with staff • Review of documentation e.g. policies and procedures, audits, future plans • Information held by HIW

HIW inspection theme	What Health and Care Standards apply?	What are we looking for?	How do we do this?
		everything they do, be caring and kind and work hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses within completed HIW staff questionnaires
	Staff and Resources		
	7.1 Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health services should have enough staff with the right skills and training to be able to give patients the best care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses within completed HIW staff questionnaires. • Discussions and interviews with staff • Review of documentation e.g. rotas, staff training records, recruitment procedures • Observation

What happens after our inspections?

The diagram below shows the process following our inspections.



We will write an inspection report

After our inspections we will write an inspection report which will be published on our website. Prior to this, services will receive a draft inspection report to check for factual accuracy.

We will require services to make improvements where necessary

Where we identify areas of improvement or concerns, we may take the following actions:

- We will raise any immediate concerns relating to patient safety with the service on the day of inspection
- We may also write to the service within 2 days of the inspection requiring them to submit an immediate improvement plan. This is known as our immediate assurance process. The purpose of this is to require the service to address our concerns immediately or to put interim measures in place to ensure that patients are protected
- We may ask the service to submit an improvement plan which describes how the service will address the overall findings from the inspection
- We may ask service representatives to attend a face to face meeting to discuss our concerns

We expect health boards and NHS trusts to have good governance arrangements in place to continually monitor the care and services they provide or commission and to ensure that patients receive safe and effective care in line with the Health and Care Standards. We expect health boards to be able to quickly and effectively identify and deal with any issues in the healthcare services they provide, so that patients are safe and well cared for.

The Welsh Government has responsibility for performance management of the health boards and NHS trusts.

We will decide if we need to take further action

Following an inspection and the receipt of any improvement plan, we will consider if any further action is necessary in order to follow-up on issues identified during an inspection. We may take the follow actions:

- Request an update from the service on delivery of an improvement plan
- Conduct a focused inspection to check or test whether specific actions have been completed

- Conduct a full re-inspection which is not limited to the issues noted in the original inspection
- Ask other agencies to consider undertaking follow-up activities with HIW or on their own

On an ongoing basis, we will also consider any concerns (e.g. from patients and staff) and intelligence (e.g. incidents and inspection findings) we receive about healthcare services to determine what action from HIW is necessary. Further details can be found on our [website](#).

For all our NHS work, we will share our findings (good and bad) with the Welsh Government and other relevant bodies. Our work also feeds into the [NHS Wales Escalation and Intervention Arrangements](#).