

General Practice (GP) Inspections

Overview

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales is responsible for regulating **private healthcare** and inspecting **NHS services**. We check services are provided in a way which maximises the health and wellbeing of people. Our General Practice (GP) inspections evaluate whether patients are receiving high-quality care, and consider the **Health and Care Quality Standards (2023)**.

We plan our inspections ahead of time based on information we collect about the quality of care in healthcare settings. For GPs, we announce inspections up to **12 weeks in advance** because the practice will stay open during the inspection. This notice period allows the practice to prepare necessary paperwork, brief staff, and make arrangements so there is no disruption for patients.

If there are urgent concerns, we issue an **Immediate Assurance Letter** within two days of the inspection. The GP is required to submit an **Immediate Improvement Plan**, explaining how they'll resolve the issues over the next 5-7 days.

We publish an **Inspection Report** approximately three months after the inspection, outlining what the practice does well and any areas needing improvement. The GP practice must submit an **Improvement Plan** explaining the steps they'll take to address any issues we found.

Who attends GP inspections?

The Healthcare Inspector

The Inspector works at **Healthcare Inspectorate Wales** and leads the inspection. They look at the GPs policies and procedures, as well as gather non-clinical feedback from patients and staff in the GP practice such as the practice manager and reception staff.

After the inspection, they write an **Inspection Report** that highlights areas for improvement, which is published on our website. Additionally, they will provide the GP with an **Improvement Plan** to implement.



Peer Reviewers

These are professionals who work with us and have recent hands on experience of general practice who make sure our work is based on current practice and experience.

Our Peer Reviewers include a **General Practitioner**, a **Practice Manager** and a **Practice Nurse**. They review records and meet with the GP practice team to gather their feedback.

What happens during an inspection?

Before an inspection:

- The Inspector will send a letter to the GP up to 12 weeks in advance to notify them of the inspection.
- We ask GP staff to complete an anonymous survey to find out what it's like to work at the practice. We also ask patients to complete an anonymous survey to ask them about the quality of service they are receiving.
- The inspector will review any information we've collected about the GP practice. This intelligence can include concerns, feedback, or any other information (whether positive or negative) that we've received about the practice.

After an inspection:

- We will send the Practice Management Team a draft report within six weeks of the inspection, asking them to check for any factual errors.
- If we identify areas needing improvement, the Practice Management Team must submit an Improvement Plan detailing the actions they will take and the timeline for completion.
- For urgent issues, we send an Immediate Assurance Letter within two days of the inspection, outlining the necessary actions and deadlines. In this case, the GP must provide an Immediate Improvement Plan.
- The final report will be published on our website, usually three months after the inspection.

During an inspection:

- The Inspection Team will begin by meeting with the Practice Management Team and will be given a tour of the environment.
- They will observe the practice in action and speak with management, staff, and patients to get a full picture of how the practice operates.
- The team will review policies, procedures, and important documents related to the practice, asking for clarification when needed. Clinical Peer Reviewers will examine a sample of patient records, while inspectors assess the clinical facilities and equipment used by the practice.
- At the end of the visit, the team will provide verbal feedback on their key findings.

The Inspector and Peer Reviewers will complete a workbook throughout the inspection. We focus our inspections on three areas:

1. Quality of the patient experience.
2. Arrangements for providing patients with safe and effective care.
3. How the GP practice is led and managed.

You will see these categories in the Workbooks that the Inspection Team complete, as well as the final report.

