

Working Collaboratively to Support Improvement

A Strategic Agreement between

Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)

Estyn

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)

Wales Audit Office

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Foreword

Our shared aim is to support better outcomes for citizens, seeking always to protect their interests by reporting without fear or favour on the public services that fall within our remit.

By working together effectively, the impact we can have is increased. Whilst we have always pursued joint and collaborative working, we know that we can do more to co-ordinate the planning and delivery of our respective work programmes, and to share knowledge and information between our organisations. Governed by clear principles and shared objectives, our collaboration must be visible and demonstrate the value it adds to our activities.

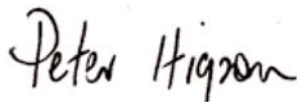
We are therefore pleased to present jointly this strategic agreement between our four organisations which sets out how we will further develop our collaborative working arrangements.



Imelda Richardson, Chief Inspector CSSIW



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



Peter Higson, Chief Executive HIW



Huw Vaughan Thomas, Auditor General for Wales

Vision and underlying principles

Our common vision is that our inspection, audit and regulation work will be a powerful stimulus for the improvement of public services in Wales helped by a clear and effective framework for joint and collaborative working amongst ourselves and with others.

There are a number of key principles that will underpin the work we do collaboratively. Namely, that:

- we will be mindful of each other's statutory functions and the work that we, as individual organisations, need to do to discharge these requirements;
- we will respect and value the individual approaches that each organisation adopts, and seek to learn from each other wherever possible;
- we will actively seek to place reliance on each other's findings to avoid the need to repeat or duplicate work;
- we will not work together jointly or collaboratively for the sake of it, but because it adds value and ultimately results in better services and outcomes for citizens in Wales;
- we will move where appropriate, to models of joint working predicated on one of us having a 'lead' role on any given piece of work, with the others providing intelligence and expertise as appropriate;
- we will commit the necessary resources and time to the joint working agenda; and
- we will maintain our own scrutiny of joint working arrangements to ensure that they are continually improving and adding value.

Building on firm foundations

Frameworks and initiatives such as the Wales Programme for Improvement and the Concordat for Health & Social Care have created a firm foundation for the joint delivery of external review work.

They have led to the creation of tools and processes to support joint working and have helped foster positive working relationships among our operational staff that is so vital to successful collaboration.

We want to build on these firm foundations and take our joint working arrangements to the next level. We recognise that this will involve tackling some issues which in the past have proved challenging. These include aligning our respective business planning cycles to assist better joint programming and valuing the different perspectives and approaches that we individually bring to work within and across different sectors.

The arrangements set out in the new Local Government (Wales) Measure provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen collaborative arrangements and good progress is already being made. Simplified structures within the NHS will also assist by making it easier to plan our work collaboratively and share intelligence.

Our key objectives for better collaborative working

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

Key Objective 1

Our joint and collaborative working is guided by a common vision and purpose, and supported where necessary by strategic agreements and operational protocols.

Key Objective 2

Our respective planning and programming activities will be co-ordinated such that they result in proportionate programmes of work which avoid duplication and ensure that key risks and concerns are being examined.

Key Objective 3

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

Key Objective 4

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

Key Objective 5

We will continuously monitor the progress we are making with joint and collaborative working and report this openly and transparently to key stakeholders.

Making it happen

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

We have already made good progress by agreeing to fund a fixed term joint post to work across all four organisations. This key resource will help us set up the necessary frameworks and processes to support joint working. The work will be guided by a strategic collaborative group made up of senior colleagues from each organisation, with ultimate sign off provided by the heads of our respective organisations.

Specific working groups and project activities will be set up to support each of the objectives set out in this document and the objectives themselves will be kept under review to ensure that they remain relevant.

We will report on our progress periodically identifying in an objective way the factors that help or hinder joint and collaborative working across our organisations.