



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru  
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

# Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

## Annual Report

2008-2009





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We have also published detailed information on the individually regulated services:

- Adult Care Homes
- Adult Placement Schemes
- Domiciliary Care
- Nurses' Agencies
- Children's Homes
- Schools and Colleges
- Fostering and Adoption services
- Children's day care services

These are available on our Internet site [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)

## Foreword

This is the second year since the creation of Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in 2007, that we have brought together all of our findings in respect of social services and social care into one report which provides a comprehensive review of the state of the sector.



As Acting Chief Inspector, I would like to pay tribute to all of the people in local authorities, voluntary and independent sectors who work tirelessly to provide social services and social care to the 150,000 people who use them. Their dedication and hard work, sometimes in difficult circumstances, too often is taken for granted or goes unrecognised.

I would also like to thank all of the staff in the Inspectorate for their work in enabling us to achieve our purpose of encouraging improvement of social care, early years and social services by regulating, inspecting, reviewing and by providing professional advice.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Corbett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small circle at the end of the last name.

**Jonathan Corbett**  
**Acting Chief Inspector**  
**Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales**



# Chapter One

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## Chief Inspector's Overview

Social services and social care have continued to show improvement during the year. However, some services are not good enough and there continues to be widespread variation in the performance, quality and shape of provision. There are many examples of innovative and excellent practice throughout Wales, and people continue to report good levels of satisfaction with services. Social care services need to build on and further develop these opportunities in order to continue and increase the pace of change which is needed.

With public services facing a challenging future, improved partnership working at all levels across services is needed to deliver effective citizen centred services. Social care services have a major role to play in influencing and shaping the agenda to deliver the Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities strategy.

## The Improvement Journey - The last ten years

The report '*Reviewing Social Services in Wales 1998-2008 - Learning from the Journey*' draws together the learning from joint reviews in Wales over the last ten years. It notes that there are welcomed signs of improvement in the leadership of social care within authorities since joint reviews began ten years ago. Social care has been given a much higher profile within authorities and there has been significant new investment. A strong emphasis on workforce development has yielded positive results with most authorities showing consistent improvement in this area.

There has been an overall improvement in the range of services available with more systematic matching of resources to needs and priorities. Better partnerships with the voluntary sector are also helping services to be delivered more effectively. Progress has been made in developing more focused approaches to promoting independence and rehabilitation with some good project based services now available. However, extending the coverage beyond pilot schemes to an enabling ethos across all mainstream services has remained a challenge.

The report identifies that overall satisfaction with social services by those people using them remains high and levels of satisfaction with social services were maintained or improved between the first and second round of joint reviews. However, it identifies that those people using services still find marked differences in the quality and level of social care services provided across authorities, and that there remains too big a gap between the best and worst performing authorities in Wales.

## The Improvement Journey - The last year

Our work during the year clearly shows that there has been steady improvement by local authorities and service providers in meeting statutory and regulatory duties towards children and adults.

Social workers are involving children more in planning and assessing, and taking account of the child's ethnicity, language and religion. The views of children and families about the quality of services they receive are more positive. However, the differences between the highest and lowest performing services continue to be marked. While the timeliness of assessments and care plans for children show improvement, the quality continues to be inconsistent.

For adult service users it is evident that where needs are less complex many local authorities are able to develop care plans in a timely manner. However, where there are more complex issues including a need for specialist assessments where a number of authorities are not performing well enough. Once a care plan has been agreed most authorities are managing to put services in place for adults within an acceptable timeframe, but some report unacceptably prolonged periods before services are commenced.

Whilst services for carers are beginning to show early signs of improvement in a few authorities, this is not from a strong baseline. Our initial Carers Knowledge Management Report, published in 2008, identified potential weaknesses in assessment and service provision for carers of adult service users. For children the use of family and friend carers is increasing. Such placements can offer children a positive experience whilst they are able to maintain their family and cultural identity. However the family and friend carers often need more support and services to enable them to care for children in their family.

There was little overall change in the provision of assistive technology this year for adults. These arrangements can be pivotal in determining whether a person can remain safely in the community. There has been some growth in direct payments. Although there was variation in performance between authorities, it remains evident that both the drive to deliver modernised services and the pace of change needs to continue to increase.

Authorities must also consider the key role of preventative services and question how they are being provided. As part of their commissioning function local authorities need to establish a clear understanding of what is happening and take appropriate action to ensure that people are getting the support they need to live in the community. The balance of care between services delivered in peoples own homes and in care homes this year remains broadly similar to last year.

Our work this year shows that in adult regulated services we are also seeing increasing evidence of more personalised care. In most services, individual needs and wishes are respected and people are being treated in a dignified manner. Care planning and reviews are

taking place in a timely way which is essential in providing appropriate care for service users, who often have complex needs.

This year we are also seeing progress in areas which historically have been problematic. Issues such as staff fitness checking upon appointment, staff competency/training and staff supervision are all showing signs of improvement but must remain priorities for providers. Managers are meeting the qualification requirements in the vast majority of cases and this is essential with the planned professional registration of the workforce.

While long standing areas of concern such as medication management and risk assessment/management have also shown some improvement these need to continue to be addressed with vigour.

Providers in the children's residential and foster placement sector need to ensure a step change in providing staff and carers with adequate support to ensure that they perform their important role of caring for children.

It is most encouraging that providers are taking seriously their own quality assurance processes and the newer regulations which were introduced are being met.

## **Safeguarding vulnerable people**

### **Children**

Safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people has once again become the focus of high profile media attention during the year. The appalling suffering and circumstances surrounding the death of baby Peter Connelly in Haringey touched a chord with the nation, as did those surrounding the death of Brandon Muir in Dundee. Both cases raised fundamental questions about how agencies and professionals worked together in protecting these children.

Keeping vulnerable people safe and protected from harm has to be the priority for all professionals and organisations at all times. As a direct result of the issues raised by the Haringey case, CSSIW undertook a review of safeguarding arrangements in local authorities and local safeguarding children boards and commissioned a review of the serious case review process. Both reports were published in October 2009. They highlight the challenges and complexity of child protection work and identify the need for a change in the culture of how professionals and organisations work together in order to promote best practice and maintain the constant vigilance which is needed to best protect children. The reports identify the need for all professionals and organisations to share equal commitment in protecting children. There is a need for improved alignment, co-ordination and direction at national, regional and local levels to ensure that safeguarding and protecting children remains a priority and that responsibility for this is owned and shared by everyone.

The reports show that while social services have strengthened arrangements to protect children when harm is suspected, once in the system the quality and level of service varies significantly, as does the engagement of other professionals and agencies. They highlight significant variability in the services received by children in need who are not on the child protection register and not looked after. The children in need census data, which is being collected for the first time this year will provide important information about outcomes for this group of children, which will help improve planning and commissioning of services for children.

The reports also raise important questions about the effectiveness of local safeguarding children boards in fulfilling their functions and their relationship with the other partnerships. The issues raised clearly extend to the wider arrangements for partnerships. There is a need for further debate and discussion amongst all stakeholders about the findings in these reports in order to move forward quickly and address the issues raised.

The review of the serious case review process clearly identifies that there is a high level of agreement across Wales about the fact that the current arrangements are not working effectively and the reasons why. Huge amounts of time and resources are being spent in conducting these reviews, which are increasing in number, with little clear evidence to show how they are leading to improvements in systems and practice to safeguard and protect children. Time and again serious case reviews identify the same issues as contributing to not protecting children, yet still the problems keep recurring. Further, given the increasing numbers, the current arrangements are unsustainable and need urgent reform. The review report sets out a way forward to improve the way in which children are protected and how better to embed learning and improve practice when things go wrong.

In taking forward the Children and Families (Wales) Measure there is a need to ensure that it fully takes into account the needs of the whole group of children in need. If we want children to remain safe in their families and to enjoy a quality of life which meets their aspirations and helps them to achieve their potential, there is a need to identify what services are needed and how best can they work together to achieve a positive outcome.

## Adults

Adult Protection is also a priority and core area of work for local authorities, with a number of issues continuing to receive attention. The Ministerial Project Group has continued its work to ensure the arrangements in place in Wales are effective and fit to meet future requirements. This includes a review of the '*In Safe Hands*' policy framework and a wider consideration of the place of legal powers. CSSIW has sought to improve the understanding of its role in adult protection, through consultation on an update to the guidance in '*In Safe Hands*' which sets out the role of CSSIW as an integrated inspectorate.

It is positive to note that there is reporting of a significant increase in the instances where risk has been removed or reduced as a result of adult protection work. There has been an increase in the number of neglect investigations this year with issues being raised in care homes and particularly care homes with nursing.

Given the importance of protecting vulnerable adults CSSIW is undertaking a national inspection of adult protection arrangements in 2009/2010. This is designed to help authorities better understand individual performance and to provide a clear overview of the arrangements across Wales. An overview report will be published when this work is completed in 2010, which will inform the work of the Ministerial Project Group.

## **Moving Forward - the challenges**

Looking back on annual reports for the last few years, I have been struck by the consistency of the messages. There is overall improvement, but the pace and degree of improvement in some areas is relatively slow and small year on year. This begs the question - what needs to happen in order to change the message in future years?

The improvements made to date have been achieved within an environment of very significant investment in increased resources for public services. The outlook is now very different, with the prospect of a very challenging financial climate. Given this, if services are to continue to improve 'status quo' is not an option. Combined with changes in demography, continuing and increasing demand for services from citizens, it seems clear that social services and social care have reached a crossroads.

If services continue with the same approach leading to slow, steady improvement, the changed environment is likely to mean that at best services standstill or at worst start to decline. Continuing to apply the same solutions will not meet the challenges of the future.

## **Meeting the challenges**

What do social services and social care need to do to improve services and outcomes to meet increasing demand and expectations with less resources and within a context of diverse service provision, with the independent sector being the major provider of services?

These are not challenges exclusive to social care services but similar challenges are faced across all public sector services. Improving people's lives and well being is not the sole responsibility of social care services, which operate within an increasingly complex and challenging environment. How social care services interact with other services such as health, education and housing clearly has an impact on how well social care services perform.

Our citizens expect reliable, good quality services provided when they need them and which meet their needs. All public services and independent providers face the challenge of how to deliver better services.

The need to deliver better public services at less cost combined with rising citizen expectations are together powerful drivers for change.

There needs to be a clear shared vision between citizens, policy makers, service commissioners and providers across agencies at national, regional and local levels in order to bring about the changes needed to improve services and meet these challenges.

Achieving the transformational change that is needed, means not just understanding service users needs, but also understanding what works and being prepared to challenge and to innovate. Services provided on this scale cannot be changed overnight and nor can everything be done at once. These are some of the important issues that the Independent Commission on Social Services will need to consider. Meanwhile work must continue in taking the actions needed to drive improvement.

These challenges need to be considered in the context of the strong foundations that are now in place in Wales.

*'Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities'* set out the vision for Social Services as core services within local government intended to promote social inclusion and independence, to provide support and protection and to act as corporate champions for the most vulnerable and at-risk groups within our communities.

To deliver this requires vision that extends beyond the traditional boundaries. Changes are needed in local corporate and political leadership focusing on delivering modern, citizen focused services underpinned by transparent, evidence based commissioning and budget strategies, strong partnership working and robust project and performance management arrangements. A whole systems approach is critical if the required improvements are to be realised with local authorities working closely with other service commissioners and providers, care partners and collaboratively between themselves.

*'Reviewing Social Services in Wales 1998-2008 - Learning from the Journey'* also identified the ingredients that drive improvements in social services - leadership, vision and action combined with learning from service users and staff.

The statutory guidance on the role and accountabilities of Directors of Social Services and the new approach to evaluating performance - the Director's annual reporting framework are central to this.

Together these underline the need for performance to be understood, owned and managed within the local authority. Directors of Social Services will produce and publish an annual report on performance and an improvement plan. This process will help elected members and local authorities to improve their understanding of strengths and weaknesses and to take better informed decisions on developing and improving services.

This process will also help citizens including service users and their carers in understanding how services are delivered to them and allow them to have a greater say in their delivery. Local authorities need to continue to look for new ways of engaging with communities and in forging new relationships. The interest now being shown in different approaches, for example, results based accountability is encouraging and indicative that authorities are already engaged in this agenda.

## Change Agenda

CSSIW has an important role to play in this change agenda. The new framework for local authority inspection and review is an important part of this change programme. The current framework for regulating services has undoubtedly contributed to driving up standards and the quality of services. But it is now a number of years since the regulations and standards were made and changes are needed to modernise and improve these. As service models become more innovative and change, so must regulation and inspection keep abreast of this to ensure that the needs and aspirations of people using these services are properly reflected in the regulatory framework and inspection methodology. CSSIW will be playing an active role in strategic review of regulation announced by the Deputy Minister for Social Services in June.

In recognition of the challenges that face us the Deputy Minister for Social Services announced that an independent commission will be set up which will look at how the strategic intent in *'Fulfilled Lives Supportive Communities'* can be fully realised and will consider how to further support professional practice. It is essential that we all contribute to this work and act on any messages to ensure we can make the transformation that is required. There are strong foundations and a growing improvement climate to build on in Wales, to take forward this work.

In the meantime there are some immediate challenges which need to be addressed. The changes to the NHS in Wales will have a significant impact for all partners in providing care - new relationships and policies and practices will need to be quickly in place. The potential improvements which can be achieved are not in question, but the process of change will demand strong leadership from social services to make their mark in this new environment.

Authorities need to work together to tackle the wide variation in services. This has been highlighted in the annual report for the last four years. Set against a background of continued improvement in services, the degree of variability between services and authorities remains largely unchanged. Tackling variability requires a joint approach between local authorities and improvement agencies. Authorities need to agree to target some key areas of variability, and to take concerted action to improve them. Trying out different approaches and evaluating the impact will help to identify what works best and enable authorities to apply this learning to other areas needing attention.

## Social Work as a profession can support the required change

Much work has been undertaken to tackle some of the underlying problems in social work. The workforce partnerships have achieved very considerable success in meeting the demands for providing a better qualified workforce in sufficient numbers, although many challenges remain. Implementing the guidance on *'Making the most of the first year in practice'* is an important further step. The children's safeguarding review showed that authorities have yet to fully implement this.

Ensuring that the workforce comprises the appropriate mix of knowledge and skills is essential in meeting people's needs. Local authorities have to consider their requirements within the broader context of the range of services in their communities. The children's safeguarding review raises important questions for discussion about the make up of the social work workforce for children in need.

In the wake of the Haringey case, there has been much debate about the service framework and the knowledge and skills social workers need to do their job. The questions being asked now are important. What is the right balance between professional freedom to exercise judgement and the need to ensure that there is a consistent approach based on cumulative evidence of best practice? Has the pendulum moved too far towards prescription and process and in so doing is it stifling professional judgement? These are important questions which have implications for social work training and post qualifying professional development of social workers. The answers are not simple or straightforward, but there is a need for further debate and discussion in shaping the forward agenda.

Similarly, as a profession these difficult cases raise important questions about where responsibility and accountability rests. The codes of conduct for social care employers and social care workforce provide an important framework for understanding respective roles and responsibilities, personal and corporate accountability. In services which are subject to many pressures it is important that all concerned do not lose sight of these. Maintaining the highest standards at all times is a constant challenge, but is essential if we are to build a confident and professional workforce for the future, which can meet the needs and aspirations of citizens and communities.

Looking ahead the future is challenging, but at the same time exciting, as there is clearly an appetite to use the opportunities presented by these challenges to change and to find better ways of delivering services to meet the needs of citizens. It is only by working together effectively that we will be able to meet this challenge. It is very encouraging to see how much agreement there is amongst all parties to achieve this. We must now ensure that together we achieve this.

## Conclusion

It is encouraging to be able to report continuing improvement in social services and social care in Wales. This report provides a comprehensive review of these services, identifying where improvements have been made and where further improvement work is needed. It sets out the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in continuing the improvement journey in providing social services and social care that meet the aspirations and needs of our citizens.

# Chapter Two

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## Meeting the needs of adults

### Overview

The evidence from local authority performance is of incremental improvement in adult social care services over the past year. Progress has been made in a difficult economic context. The pace of change, however, is relatively slow and the variability in performance across Wales remains. The individually regulated sector has continued to improve.

As at the 31 March 2009, there were 81,500 adults receiving social care services and almost three quarters (73 per cent) of people receiving services were aged 65 and over.

The proportion of the population aged 65 and over is growing and all sectors of the population have increasingly high expectations of social care services. We expect more people will require a service in the future and many will want services to help them stay in their own homes for longer. In addition, the increasing and welcome transparency about the performance of local authorities has made it easier for people to compare and contrast their experience with others. These developments present a tremendous opportunity to rethink the approach to meeting the needs of adults, coupled with a significant challenge in putting these new ideas into action.

It is difficult to gauge the level of improvement in services to carers as comparative data from previous years is not available.

In regulated settings individual service providers in both the care home and domiciliary sectors have shown evidence of continued improvement in several core areas, including the quality of care planning and respecting the dignity of service users. While some concerns remain about important components of quality such as staff supervision and management of medication, the overall evidence suggests better performance.

Increasingly complaints are being dealt with at a local level. The issues raised are largely similar to previous years, including staffing levels and skill and competence of staff.

This year has seen the number of adult protection investigations by local authorities remaining at a similar level to the previous year. In the regulated sector investigations into neglect increased and a significant number were proven. Care homes with nursing raised particular issues.

The overall pattern of services remains similar to previous years. The number of people using direct payments has grown. The provision of assistive technology remains broadly the same. In relation to the balance of care the percentage of older people and younger adults supported in the community is much as it was last year.

Achieving fundamental change is not an easy or short term task. However, we see signs that progress is being made in adult services but the pace needs to be increased. Progress has been made where local authorities show an appetite for collaboration and partnership working across geographical and organisational boundaries. Significant and lasting change must be built on sound commissioning strategies including an appreciation and analysis of the needs of service users and carers. Tackling the variable quality in the delivery of assessments, care plans and reviews is central to this goal.

## Access

Overall, authorities continue to make progress in improving access. Many local authorities have established first contact teams to help ensure effective working between corporate customer care services and the intake team. A number of authorities have risk assessment systems in place which managers audit frequently to ensure that urgent issues are appropriately prioritised.

It is important that local authorities can provide good quality information which is accessible to the public and available in appropriate formats. Most authorities are achieving this. Increasingly, authorities are improving their websites to ensure comprehensive and up to date information is easily accessible online. This is important in encouraging service user participation. Some local authorities are using innovative methods to enhance service access such as a transactional internet service so that people can request services online.

In addition, local authorities need robust systems to collect and monitor data so that they have an accurate picture of how well access arrangements work in practice. A range of agencies and individuals make referrals, so it is essential to have a common understanding of the eligibility criteria for accessing services. Authorities need to continually monitor their responses to ensure they understand the impact of eligibility criteria.

Recording of ethnicity is sporadic throughout Wales, so this issue must be addressed by local authorities to ensure individual needs are appropriately met.

CSSIW is conducting a National Review of Access and Eligibility. It will consider activity across Wales and will focus on:

- the thresholds for accessing social services;
- the application of eligibility and whether it is fair and consistent;
- how eligibility fits with the broader issues on accessing services;
- the monitoring of how eligibility criteria are applied;
- the impact on provision for service users.

An overview report will be published in 2010.

For individually regulated services the expectation is that the registered person will produce appropriate and accurate information for service users in the form of a statement of purpose and a service user guide. These important documents tell potential service users and commissioners of care about how a service meets specific needs. Both documents must be regularly reviewed and updated.

This year has seen some improvement with only nine per cent of regulatory requirements made regarding the key information in the statement of purpose in relation to care homes. There have been fewer requirements in other service areas.

### Views/experiences of service users and carers

Local authority performance indicators on work with carers for 2008-09 were revised in 2008 and therefore we have no directly comparable data with previous years. The data suggests that more carers are being offered an assessment in their own right, although the situation varies greatly across Wales and further work is needed to improve performance in a number of authorities. The data across Wales shows that 61 per cent of identified carers who were offered an assessment were assessed and as a consequence of their assessment 46 per cent were provided with a service. Future improvements should focus on increasing the number of carers offered an assessment and in reducing waiting times for assessments.

CSSIW's assessment of local authority services for carers has also been enhanced this year by our publication of a knowledge management report<sup>1</sup>. The report draws on academic and practice research, the findings of Joint Reviews and Performance Evaluations and the views of carers. It explored the issues and challenges in the delivery of help and support to carers. The report constitutes phase one of a two stage process and highlights areas which may require more in-depth evaluation in the second phase of the process.

In the coming year CSSIW will work with partner agencies to facilitate focused workshops to explore issues identified with both practitioners and carers from the first report. This work will result in the publication of a further updated '*Carers Knowledge Management Report*'. We expect our work to inform the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) Carers Measure and its subsequent guidance.

The Welsh Assembly Government has made considerable progress in obtaining Assembly and Parliamentary approval for its Carers' Legislative Competency Order (LCO). The LCO should complete its final stages of obtaining Parliamentary and then Privy Council approval in early 2010. Subject to the formal approval of the LCO, it is intended that a draft Carers' Measure will form part of the Welsh Assembly Government's 2009-10 legislative programme. The draft Carers' Measure will propose the introduction of requirements on the NHS and local authorities to work together to develop and implement an information and engagement strategy for carers. The Welsh Assembly Government has established a Task and Finish Group

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<sup>1</sup> Carers Knowledge Management Report, CSSIW 2008

(including representatives from the voluntary sector as well local authorities and the NHS) to help develop the draft Carers' Measure.

CSSIW remains committed to ensuring that service user and carer views are at the heart of its work. Most carers who responded to our surveys were positive about the help received. Most, for example, said they received a good response during the day.

In some local authorities we found evidence that service user and carer feedback is used to shape policy, planning and service development.

Most authorities involve service users in their individual assessments, personal plans of care and reviews. In addition, a small number of authorities include service users in their recruitment processes, particularly for services for people with a learning disability and mental health services.

In relation to individually regulated services, service users' views and experiences are captured and reflected in each inspection report. Additionally, national inspections and reviews conducted by CSSIW include the views of and implications for service users and carers. During the year these included the National Services Framework for Older People and Commissioning which address in particular the use of third party payments in care home placements.

In general, most authorities are working hard to take this important area forward and need to continue promoting the views and hopes of service users and their carers for remodelling and improving services. Variation in performance across Wales must however be addressed.

## Assessment and care management

Good assessment and care management, including planning and review, are crucial to achieving positive outcomes for service users and their carers. The statutory guidance *'Creating a Unified and Fair System for Assessing and Managing Care'* requires authorities to adopt a whole systems approach, including gathering the unified assessment minimum data set. Some authorities report a more consistent use of the process than others who continue to struggle with its implementation.

The initial knowledge management review of the National Services Framework for Older People<sup>2</sup> jointly produced by CSSIW and HIW supports this view. This review found variations in the way local authorities manage assessments throughout Wales. Some evidence suggests that progress is greater where a unified assessment coordinator is in post. However, obstacles in information sharing and problems with joint funding arrangements still present

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<sup>2</sup> Review of the Impact of the National Services Framework (NSF) for Older People in Wales, Phase 1, (2008-2009). Published October 2009

difficulties. It is widely recognised by all stakeholders that this area of work requires continued effort and commitment from all partners.

Local authorities now report on the average number of working days between initial enquiry and the completion of a care plan. This reporting process includes specifying whether or not a specialist assessment was carried out. The amount of time different authorities take to complete care plans varies widely. Long delays in undertaking the care planning process is unacceptable and leaves service users potentially at risk.

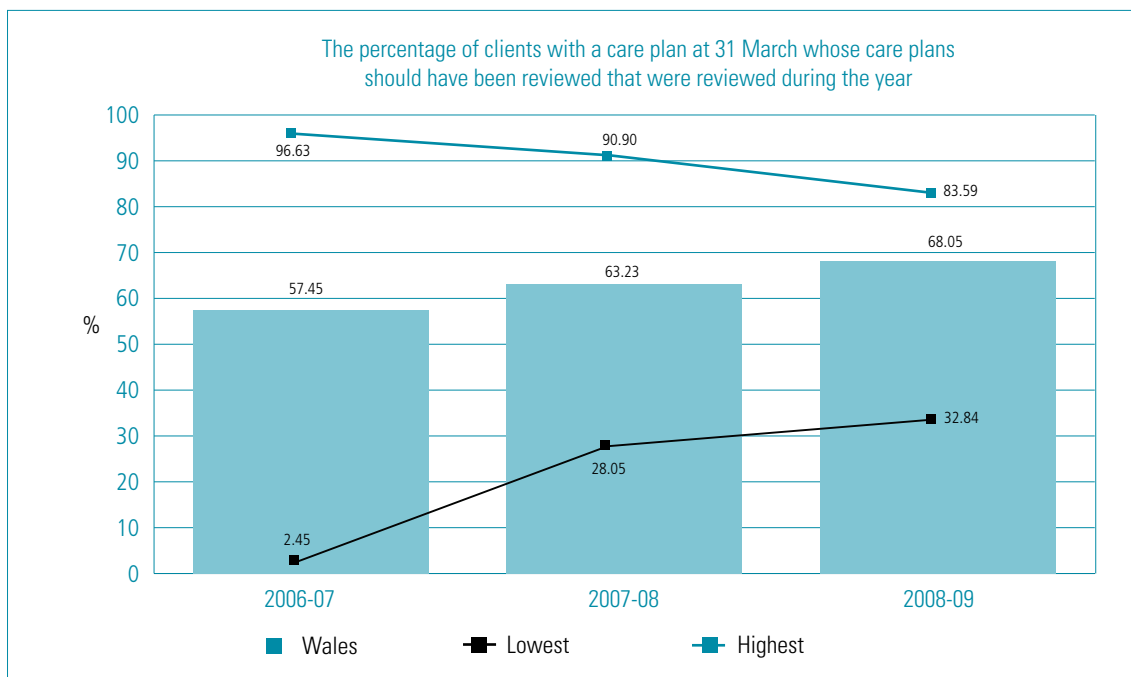
The average working days local authorities take to complete care plans, **excluding specialist assessments**, from the date of the initial enquiry, ranges from just five working days for the best performing authorities, up to 57 working days for the poorest performance. The all Wales figure is 20 days.

The average number of working days from initial enquiry to completed care plan, **including specialist assessments**, ranges from 16 to 56 days, with a Wales figure of 34 days.

A key component of the assessment process is the identification of risk. Local authorities still need to work at developing and implementing risk management strategies for adult service users. A lack of appropriate risk assessment and management can cause harm to vulnerable people.

Once an assessment is made and a care plan is in place, service users should then expect timely delivery of services. This year local authorities started reporting the percentage of service users aged 65 plus receiving home care or a day care service within 29 days of a review or care plan completion. The percentage receiving a service in this timeframe varies from 70 per cent to 99 per cent, with an all Wales figure of 91 per cent. It is however concerning that those not completed in this timeframe can take anything up to an average of 117 days. The all Wales figure for those not completed within 29 days is 67 per cent.

Once a service is in place local authority staff must carry out timely and regular reviews on at least an annual basis as well as if an individual's needs or circumstances change. This is key to ensuring service users receive a personalised service. Most local authorities have continued to make progress in this area, although a number have failed to do so. In the year to March 2009, the all Wales figure shows 68 per cent of service users with care plans which should have been reviewed were reviewed. The graph overleaf shows the significant variation in the highest and lowest performing authorities with over 50 per cent difference.



For individually regulated services, providers are responding positively. Providers reviewed service delivery plans in all but six per cent of inspection reports in domiciliary care agencies. This is an improvement of 13 per cent on the previous year. Requirements were made in eight per cent of inspection reports in relation to care homes.

At an all Wales level, over the last three years we see evidence of more timely reviews of care plans by both local authorities and individually regulated services.

## Supporting independence and personalised care

Over the last year the percentage of service users aged 18 to 64 supported in the community is unchanged at 94 per cent. The percentage of service users aged 65 and over supported in the community has edged up from 82 per cent to 83 per cent.

In 2008-09 local authorities continued to encourage service users to access direct payments. As a result, the number of adults supported in the community receiving direct payments rose from 23 per 1,000 in 2008 to 30 per 1,000 in 2009. While receipt of a direct payment is no guarantee of increased independence, it can be positive for the individual service user.

The take up of electronic assistive technology as part of a package of care has not increased since last year's rate of 111 per 1,000 adults assessed. The take up rate varies widely across Wales from 47 to 215 per 1,000.

In relation to the providing and/or installing of more traditional aids/equipment the average number of working days taken from completion of the care plan to provision is seven days on an all Wales basis. However, the figure varies between three and 15 days, depending on local authority. This data excludes housing adaptations.

Community equipment is key to enabling people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. CSSIW has supported the work on integration of community equipment services. There are now 11 formal partnerships operating across Wales. This is the only service area covered by formal partnership agreements and pooled budgets operating across Wales. Partnership working has also developed on an all Wales basis through the work of Value Wales with the development of an all Wales commissioning framework to improve the procurement of routine equipment in terms of both cost and quality. Further work is underway in developing an all Wales approach to improve the provision of complex equipment. These developments have proved the benefits of partnership working at all levels.

For individually regulated services, we saw a general improvement in complying with those requirements most likely to support the independence of service users. These include consistency in care planning and timely reviews, particularly where needs change. In care homes the compliance with these requirements has improved over the past three years and it is evident that most homes are delivering more personalised care. In the adult placement sector, service users are participating in care planning as we would expect in ten of the eleven agencies inspected.

Service users have a fundamental right to privacy and dignity. Having single bedrooms in care homes can significantly contribute to achieving this goal. The national minimum standards set out a staged approach for achieving single room occupancy. Many providers have met or are taking appropriate action to meet the 2010 target.

Overall, the picture is of positive, incremental improvement in supporting independence and person focused care for service users. However, local authorities need to continue to actively support services such as direct payments and the provision of assistive technology so that they offer more choice and flexibility to service users.

## Commissioning

Good commissioning relies on information linking the needs of service users to service planning and development. The commissioning decisions of local authorities also influence the range of services available to those who fund their own social care. It is not enough for local authorities simply to be concerned with the services they fund. They also have a responsibility to ensure that social care services provided by other organisations in their area are well planned, designed and delivered.

We found a wide variation in Wales for how well such frameworks are embedded in practice. In general we saw evidence of some increased capacity in commissioning and contracting teams. This extra capacity enables service remodelling and the further development of improved contract compliance frameworks. A number of local authorities are working with the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) to identify what support they can get to make them effective commissioners of affordable quality services which meet local need.

Where commissioning strategies have been more fully implemented these have been mainly in relation to mental health and learning disability services. We also see evidence of more partnership working between health and social care within these service user groups.

Demographic trends suggest that more people are likely to need services in the future with many people choosing to remain in their own homes with additional support. So it is important that service users and their relatives have a range of local services available to meet their needs.

In 2008-09 the rate of older people (65 or over) supported in the community remains at 89 per 1,000, which is similar to the previous year. At the same time we saw a slight reduction in the rate of older people who authorities support in care homes per 1,000 population aged 65 or over.

It is not possible to identify the role of the third sector and other partners in developing preventative services. However, we will consider this in the forthcoming national review on access and eligibility.

When we consider the balance of care for service users who actually receive social services support the local authority figures for supporting service users aged 65 plus in the community have risen by one per cent. There is little change in the percentage of service users aged 18 to 64 who are supported in the community.

In terms of demand for services the needs of people with dementia continue to raise significant issues. Research on dementia<sup>3</sup> suggests that by 2025 one million people in the UK will have dementia. In Wales one in five people over 80 has dementia. The total figure for the population as a whole with dementia is 36,704. This is forecast to rise to almost 48,000 by 2021. As a result the Minister for Health and Social Services commissioned a Task and Finish Group in September 2008 to develop a national dementia plan. In addition CSSIW has commissioned an initial mapping exercise on dementia services to look at current services with a view to conducting a more in depth review at a later date.

Demographic changes raise key issues about how care needs should be paid for. A report on Paying for Care in Wales by the Stakeholder Advisory Group set up by the Minister for Health and Social Services puts forward proposals for reforming the system. These proposals are designed to establish fair and more sustainable arrangements for service users in the future. A green paper containing options for reform is scheduled for consultation in autumn 2009.

The Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services has announced a proposed new Measure calling for greater consistency and fairness in local authority charging for non-residential social services across Wales. The proposed Measure will require authorities to provide free information about charging and will make the existing statutory elements of the Fairer Charging Guidance mandatory. These provide financial safeguards for those on low incomes. The proposed timescale for implementation by local authorities is 2010.

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<sup>3</sup> Kings College London, London School of Economics and the Alzheimer's Society (2007)

Separately, CSSIW has started a national review of commissioning, particularly addressing the use of third party payments in care home placements. The key questions to be answered by this review are:

- to what extent are top ups/third party payments used across Wales and what are the variations?
- why are they used and what is the impact on service users and carers?

The findings of this review will be reported in 2010.

The Welsh Assembly Government plans to consult on statutory guidance focused on commissioning. This will be in the form of standards which local authorities will be expected to achieve. The guidance will build on and replace that provided in '*Promoting Partnership in Care - Commissioning across Health and Social Services*' (WAG, March 2003).

The Framework's commissioning standards will set the benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of local authority commissioning. The standards centre on the development of evidence-based commissioning plans and their delivery through effective procurement. Part two of the Framework will provide good practice in commissioning and procurement.

In addition, CSSIW has worked with policy colleagues and the Learning Disability Implementation Advisory Group (LDIAG) to develop guidelines on the commissioning of services for people with a learning disability. At the time of publication the guidance was being considered for consultation.

## Partnership working

There is an increasing need for more partnership working to support improvements and developments in both services and practice. Last year, CSSIW worked in partnership with others to support the development of statutory guidance on Escalating Concerns and Home Closures. This guidance advises local authorities and local health boards on how to manage situations where the quality of care provided is the source of concern and also covers instances where care homes are faced with voluntary or enforced closure.

The Welsh Assembly Government is working to develop an accurate picture of the use of formal partnerships with pooled budgets. These are currently under-developed, but it is important that local authorities work with the new Local Health Boards (LHB's) to encourage partnership working.

Last year CSSIW worked with the Making the Connections team to run awareness raising seminars explaining the benefits of pooled budgets. CSSIW also commissioned the development of templates for section 33 formal partnership agreements to assist local partnerships. We have shared these templates with local authorities.

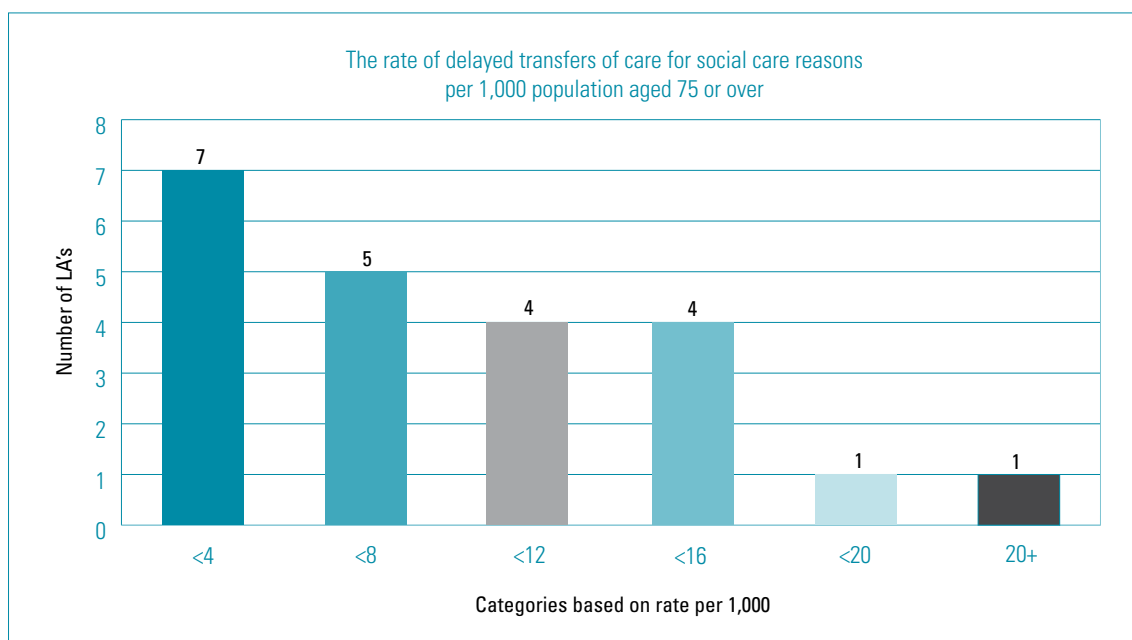
The Welsh Assembly Government continues to work with partners to develop service models for older people. The Framework for the Delivery of Services to Older People is the first of a series of clearer service frameworks for social services. The Framework will be completed

in 2010 and will contribute to the achievement of modern, accessible and responsive services. It will:

- promote the independence of and improve outcomes for older people;
- strengthen and build on community services;
- ensure that services respond to changing need;
- avoid unnecessary hospital admissions;
- ensure that residential care remains a positive and appropriate choice;
- encourage partnership working with a shared view on what services and support in the community should look like with seamless provision.

## Delayed transfers of care

Performance has improved in respect of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons over the last three years, though it remains variable across Wales.



While the majority of authorities improved their performance, ten showed a rise in delayed transfers of care. Several issues are likely to affect local authority performance:

- problems in assessing need, including the assessment of eligibility for continuing healthcare;
- difficulties in arranging care home and domiciliary care services;
- the challenge of turning strategic vision for promoting the independence of service users into tangible service development and change delivered in partnership with health service colleagues.

The authorities with better performance looked at all the services available and how they interact, and then worked with partners to make visible changes to their service models.

On the whole we see evidence of increased partnership working at a strategic level. We also found signs that local authorities are making commissioning a higher priority with increased capacity. In the longer term this will enable a more effective response to locally identified need.

The commissioning practices of local authorities can be viewed through the shape and pattern of individual services available in any area. In terms of regulated services the following pattern is evident:

### Care homes

The overall size of this sector has changed little over the past two years. As at 31 March 2009 the number of care homes in Wales was 1,187 and the number of beds registered was 26,824. Care homes registered to provide personal care totalled 890 with 14,454 bed spaces, while 297 homes with 12,370 beds were registered for nursing care.

As in the previous year, 25 per cent of care homes are registered to provide nursing care. The balance between the independent and local authority sectors has altered slightly after a small increase in the proportion of independent sector providers. The independent sector accounted for 87 per cent and local authorities for 13 per cent (a decrease of one per cent). Last year 27 homes voluntarily ceased to operate, down from 41 in 2007-08 but similar to the 2006-07 level.

CSSIW received 164 applications for registration in 2008-09, down three per cent on 2007-08. The number of homes deregistering due to change of ownership fell by 41 per cent. As of March 2009, Wales had 184 small care homes (those with three or fewer places), down two per cent from 2007-08.

### Domiciliary care

On 31 March 2009, 354 domiciliary care agencies were registered in Wales compared with 340 the previous year - a four per cent increase. The percentage of independent providers was slightly higher than the year before at 87 per cent. The remaining 13 per cent of agencies were run by the local authority. However, these percentages do not reflect the actual level of service delivered by the public sector as CSSIW only records the size of the agency and not the overall extent of provision.

The distribution of agencies remains broadly the same, with the largest concentrations in Cardiff and Swansea. The number of agencies exceeding 200 hours of provision a week increased once again and these now make up 76 per cent of all provision.

## Adult placement schemes

Twelve adult placement schemes are registered with CSSIW, up one from the previous year. The new scheme is based in Wrexham. The total number of settings available in 2008/09 increased to 303 from 234. There are no adult placement schemes registered in Ynys Môn, Flintshire, Powys, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Newport, although some schemes cover a number of local authorities.

## Nurses' agencies

Between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009, the number of registered nurses' agencies increased by four to 36. Many of these agencies are also registered to provide domiciliary care and are therefore subject to two slightly different regulatory frameworks.

## Quality of services

Service users and their carers rightly expect services to be of an appropriate quality. In addition to individual inspections and reviews of local authorities and services, national reviews have a key role in identifying how quality is achieved. A two year review of the NSF (National Service Framework) for older people began in April 2008. The strategy was originally launched in 2006 and sets out national evidence based standards for the health and social care of older people in Wales.

The review is being delivered jointly over a two year period by CSSIW and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW). It aims to find out what impact the NSF has on the quality of life of older people. The first phase, a knowledge management review, has been completed and work has started on the second phase. This phase will look at the NSF standards from the perspective of a specific group of older people and is likely to include dementia services. The review will look at:

- Service User Involvement;
- Commissioning and planning;
- Provider interests;
- Health and Social Care Pathways for older people.

CSSIW and HIW will publish a National Overview Report once the review is completed in summer 2010. The outcome of this fundamental review will inform the targets and actions for the second strategic phase of implementing the NSF for older people in Wales.

Related to this is the Welsh Assembly Government programme on dignity and respect. A National Dignity in Care Co-ordinating group was set up in summer 2008 to offer advice on implementing a three year programme. In the past year progress has been made with the establishment of a social care sub group. The sub group has obtained funding from the Welsh Assembly Government to raise awareness of the dignity in care agenda. Training will be available in spring 2010 to social care workers as well as commissioners of services.

This work fits in with the broader Older Persons' Strategy to improve the quality of services for older people. Forecasts suggest that the number of older people will increase by eleven per cent over the next twenty years. So it is important that their role and contribution in communities is recognised and that they enjoy good health and an improved quality of life.

To encourage higher quality services, CSSIW supported a pilot scheme in one local authority to develop an outcome approach to commissioning and care planning. We plan to share this work more widely.

In addition CSSIW directly inspects the quality of regulated services. These inspections provide extensive information on the state of individual services. They also allow the inspectorate to consider the performance of local authorities, including their role in commissioning and contracting, assessment and care management and adult protection arrangements.

## Care homes

CSSIW analysed the findings of over 90 per cent (1,059) of inspection reports last year, providing us with a comprehensive picture of the care home sector. Inspectors concentrated on regulations which have the most impact on the quality of life for service users and on core areas likely to improve services. Consequently not all regulations were inspected against. Overall there was evidence of continued improvement in several core areas including:

- the quality of care planning;
- service user involvement in decision making;
- respecting service users' privacy and dignity;
- maintenance and cleanliness of premises;
- staffing levels showed some sign of improvement.

In addition:

- 93 per cent of registered managers have either achieved or are working towards an appropriate NVQ in management;
- most providers will meet the 2010 requirement of places in single rooms;
- recruitment practices including pre-employment staff checks have improved. However, 14 per cent of reports showed that checks are not made before employment. This is an improvement on the previous year but still needs addressing;
- promoting the health, safety and welfare of service users saw continued improvement.

Although we saw improvements in aspects of care home staffing, we still have concerns about some issues, for example:

- 25 per cent of reports showed that staff did not have the appropriate competencies;
- 25 per cent of reports made requirements on sufficient staff being on duty to undertake their work;

- 16 per cent of reports had requirements in relation to appropriate arrangements for the training of staff in protection of vulnerable adults, an increase on last year;
- 29 per cent of reports raised issues about regular supervision of staff;
- 27 per cent of the reports had requirements in relation to the management of medication indicating that although an improving picture that this remains problematic.

### Domiciliary care

Our evidence shows that regulations and national minimum standards are embedded in practice and that domiciliary care services are improving particularly around:

- consistency in care planning and clarity about the way in which a service is delivered;
- procedures for administration, recording, handling and disposal of medication. Requirements were made in only four per cent of reports, an improvement on the previous year;
- six per cent of reports had requirements in moving and handling risk assessments, an improvement of 13 per cent since our last report;
- reviews in the service delivery plan showed improvements;
- systems are in place to monitor and review services: all but ten per cent of reports indicated that service users and their representatives views were sought.

Workforce issues present a more positive picture this year with an increase in the proportion of managers who have achieved appropriate qualifications. At least 89 per cent have enrolled, gained or are working towards appropriate qualifications. In addition, we found:

- failure of staff to meet competency levels required for their work. Seven per cent of reports raised this as a requirement, an improvement of 15 per cent on the previous year;
- most agencies now carry out staff supervision. Only nine per cent of reports listed requirements in this respect; a 25 per cent improvement over the year.

In general agencies also improved their recruitment practices, but providers still need to follow procedures diligently. Ten per cent of reports highlighted shortfalls in this respect.

### Adult placement schemes

The quality of care in adult placement schemes has generally improved and providers have responded to most of the previous year's requirements. Our analysis shows that:

- key policy documents are in place in all but one scheme;
- the views and experiences of service users are helping to improve and develop services.

Two areas need further attention. Firstly, schemes must provide appropriate training for adult placement carers. Secondly, specific training needs should be identified with regard to health and personal care of individual service users. We are concerned that there has been no improvement in the fitness of workers or the adequacy of their training.

The Welsh Assembly Government remains committed to reviewing the regulations and national minimum standards for adult placement schemes. As a result, initial consultation has already taken place around changes to a number of key regulations.

### Nurses' agencies

This year CSSIW analysed the reports of 27 nurses' agencies. In general we noted some improvement from last year. The strengths we identified related to:

- the quality and provision of staff handbooks;
- information for service users.

However, progress is still limited on supervision, staff skills and competencies. Agencies need to address these issues to ensure that vulnerable service users receive appropriate care. Concerns are mainly about the adequacy of staff qualifications, their skills and experience for the tasks they carry out.

We are pleased to see that the improvement noted last year in giving information to service users has continued. However, two reports requested improvements to ensure that policy documentation is in place on what to do after an allegation of abuse, neglect or other harm.

### Complaints

All regulated services must have a robust complaints procedure in line with service users' needs. The regulations which came into force in January 2007 require providers to have a comprehensive complaints procedure with clear time scales for investigating and responding to the complainant.

Local authorities must have a complaints procedure for their own services and those they commission. Under the local authority arrangements complainants also have the right to access an independent panel and the Public Service Ombudsman if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint. Wherever possible complaints should be resolved at the point of service delivery.

### Care homes

In 2008-09 CSSIW received 200 complaints about care homes, slightly down on the previous year's 211 complaints. Many complainants were happy to have their complaint dealt with by providers. Consequently, 90 of these complaints were referred for local resolution.

As in the previous year, the number of complaints received by CSSIW in 2008-09 varied between local authorities.

The following table shows the number of complaints received by local authority.

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Number of Complaints received</b>	<b>Number of Complaints received as a per cent of places</b>
Ynys Môn	15	2.01
Gwynedd	23	1.77
Conwy	38	2.02
Denbighshire	21	1.25
Flintshire	14	1.4
Wrexham	19	1.43
Powys	1	0.08
Ceredigion	0	
Pembrokeshire	5	0.38
Carmarthen	3	0.14
Swansea	15	0.69
Neath Port Talbot	6	0.52
Bridgend	0	
Vale of Glamorgan	7	0.68
Cardiff	7	0.32
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3	0.17
Merthyr Tydfil	0	
Caerphilly	3	0.28
Blaenau Gwent	3	0.46
Torfaen	4	0.59
Monmouth	6	0.86
Newport	7	0.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	

Many complaints are complex and often include a number of issues. Each issue is investigated separately and is broken down into the broad categories shown in the following table:

<b>Broad categories</b>	<b>Number of issues relating to complaints received</b>
Care practice - personal care and addressing health needs	94
Staffing and management	88
Premises	59
Nursing care	17
Medication	14
Admission process - record keeping	8
Food	7
Care planning	6
Activities	5

The number of concerns listed under categories is higher than the number of complaints received. This is because some complaints cover a number of issues which we record separately.

The most common complaints under the heading staffing and management of services were about staffing levels, staff failing to follow the service user care plan, staff attitudes and the skills and competence of staff. Again this is consistent with the findings of inspection activity where inspectors found it necessary to make requirements in all these areas.

Generally, complaints investigated in care homes with nursing focused on the standard and delivery of nursing care, which included the care of pressure areas, assessing and managing continence needs and meeting nutritional needs. The nature of the complaints was similar to those received in the previous year.

### **Domiciliary care**

During 2008-09, CSSIW received and dealt with 45 formal complaints from individual complainants regarding domiciliary care. This represents an increase on the previous year. The complaints investigated were primarily about:

- responsiveness of service and continuity of carers;
- care practices around the provision of personal care;
- adequacy of record keeping.

The following table indicates the distribution of complaints by local authority:

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>No of Complaints</b>
Ynys Môn	0
Gwynedd	4
Conwy	4
Denbighshire	0
Flintshire	2
Wrexham	5
Powys	0
Ceredigion	2
Pembrokeshire	1
Carmarthenshire	2
Swansea	5
Neath Port Talbot	1
Bridgend	1
The Vale of Glamorgan	0
Cardiff	3
Rhondda Cynon Taff	0
Merthyr Tydfil	0
Caerphilly	5
Blaenau Gwent	3
Torfaen	3
Monmouthshire	2
Newport	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>

Only one complaint was recorded in adult placement schemes and there were no complaints in nurses' agencies.

## Safeguarding and adult protection

The protection of vulnerable people is a core concern of the inspectorate. CSSIW undertakes its duties in line with the framework for responding to and investigating allegations of abuse outlined in *'In Safe Hands'*. CSSIW works alongside other statutory partners including the police and local authority who have the lead role in adult protection.

During the year significant new legislation was implemented with the aim of increasing further safeguards for vulnerable people. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 which was implemented in October 2007 provides a statutory framework to empower and protect vulnerable people who are not able to make their own decisions. It makes it clear who can take decisions.

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards were approved in 2007 and came into effect on 1 April 2009. Based on the principles of the Mental Capacity Act, they seek to ensure that no-one who lacks mental capacity should be deprived of their liberty unnecessarily or without proper consideration in either a hospital or residential social care setting.

External assessments are required and substantial preparation needed to ensure that the safeguards above would be in place. Across Wales, health and social services authorities have worked together to agree how their responsibilities will be met and to provide training to staff at all levels. Social services have made training available through their social care workforce development partnerships.

### Findings from the inspectorate's local authority work

CSSIW produces a monitoring report annually which examines the key findings on local authority performance from the previous year. The report indicates trends, achievements and concerns across Wales.

This year the data gathered from local authorities is significantly improved in its accuracy with 18 of the 22 authorities making use of a common database to collect and collate the information. There are still some inconsistencies and variations in the way in which the data is recorded by each authority, such as inconsistent interpretation of categories of reporting. In addition, reported concerns may not reflect the incidence of abuse, which by its nature may be hidden or, for example, masked by symptoms of illness. Further work during 2009-10 with partners in the local government data unit and in the local authorities, will help to achieve still greater accuracy in the data.

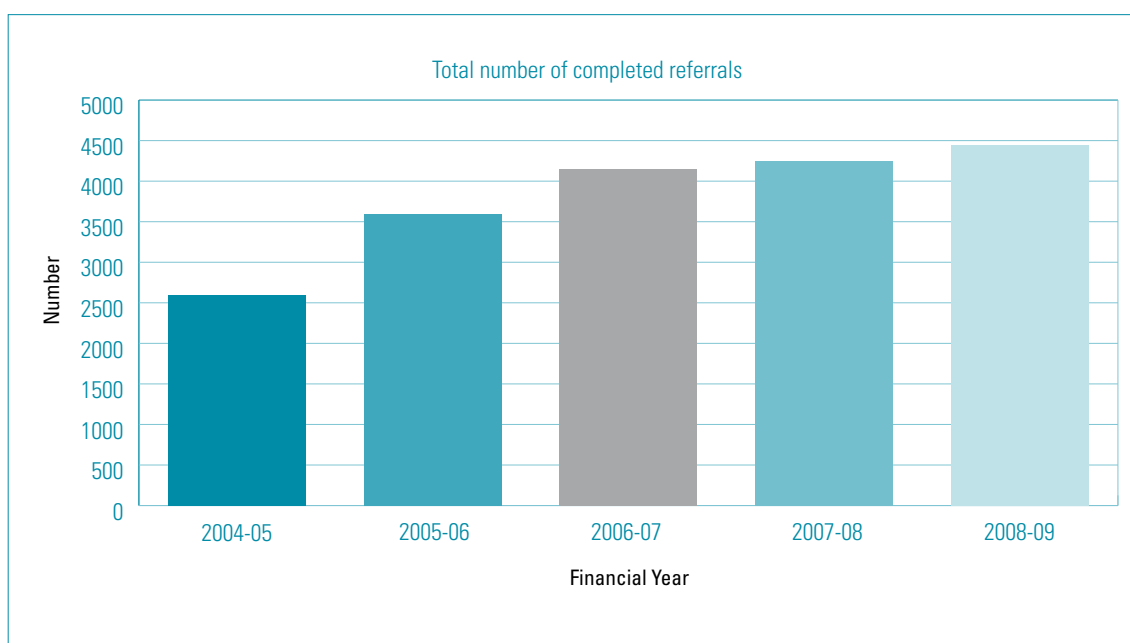
The Wales Adult Protection Advisory Group has continued to promote improved practice. Together with the four regional Adult Protection Forums, it has focused on promoting effective partnerships, improving understanding of the criminal justice system and developing the workforce, in order to bring about improvement. All local authorities now employ specialist adult protection staff and some have created specialist teams of workers.

The Ministerial Adult Protection Advisory Project Group established in 2008 has a key role in reviewing adult protection policies and procedures across Wales to ensure they remain robust enough to meet future need. The group has commissioned an independent evaluation of *'In Safe Hands'*, the statutory guidance on adult protection arrangements in Wales. This evaluation, undertaken by the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care will be presented to the group in October 2009, with the steps for improvement set out during early 2010.

During 2008-09 the plan for the national inspection of adult protection by CSSIW was finalised. This inspection will be delivered during 2009-10 and has three main elements:

- a knowledge management phase that will be informed by the survey undertaken as part of the independent evaluation of *'In Safe Hands'*;
- a thematic enquiry in care homes delivered as part of the scheduled inspections of all care homes;
- detailed fieldwork in all 22 local authorities.

## Monitoring data



The number of completed referrals of abuse has shown a rise from 4,251 in 2007-08 to 4,451 in 2008-09. Caution is needed when interpreting the data as rates of referral can indicate a higher incidence of abuse, but may also suggest improving recognition of adult protection issues and awareness of the procedures. Conversely, lower rates of referral may imply less effective recognition and awareness rather than fewer incidents of abuse.

Trends identified in the '*Protection of Vulnerable Adults Monitoring Report*' published in 2009, based on local authority returns for 2007-08, identify that:

- the most common victim of alleged abuse in Wales was an older woman;
- the most frequently reported type of abuse was physical abuse which was reported in 32 per cent of cases;
- the largest proportion of alleged victims lived in their own home in the community, but the proportion of the population living in care homes who were identified as alleged victims (6 per cent) is notable; and
- the most common form of help for alleged victims was increased monitoring by social services.

Early indications from the local authority monitoring data for the year 2008-09 suggest that physical abuse continues to be the most frequently reported type of abuse. There has, however, been a growth in the reporting of neglect.

In local authorities, data from the core performance indicators for adult protection show that:

- of the adult protection referrals completed during 2008-09, 83 per cent across Wales led to an adult protection investigation. This is a similar level to last years figure and
- of the adult protection referrals completed, there was a very slight decrease in the number that were admitted or proved, but a significant increase in the percentage across Wales where the risk had been removed or reduced: from 45 per cent in 2007-08 to 56 per cent in 2008-09.

The separate local authority monitoring report focusing specifically on adult protection contains the detailed findings for 2008-09.

The general picture is of a continued activity in adult protection work, but with the rate of growth slowing in the last two years. The continued regional variations in performance by individual local authorities may have a number of explanations. It could indicate differential understandings of thresholds and definitions; it might equally be a consequence of varying practice and professional responses to similar issues and concerns. The national inspection will begin to report its findings on these and other issues during the latter part of 2009-10.

### Findings from individual service regulation

This year CSSIW reports a decrease in the number of investigations of adult protection in regulated services which has directly involved CSSIW. Investigations by the inspectorate have decreased from 219 in 2007-08 to 109 in 2008-09. This development is a likely reflection of the inspectorate clarifying and consolidating its role in adult protection. The focus for the inspectorate is on regulation, with our involvement in investigations of adult protection concerns targeted on those examples where potential breaches of regulation have been identified. The majority of investigations that involved CSSIW (104) were located in the care home sector. CSSIW were engaged overall in 768 strategy discussions/meetings about care homes.

In 2008-09, as in 2007-08, of the 104 investigations over half of the adult protection investigations in care homes for older people were undertaken in care homes with nursing which represents one quarter of the sector. In care homes there was a decline in investigations of physical and financial abuse and a marked increase in those focused on neglect. This development is not surprising given the growth in completed referrals of neglect identified in the local authority data above.

There was a noticeable increase in clear outcomes from investigations, with only 9 per cent remaining inconclusive in 2008-09 compared with a figure of 15 per cent in 2007-08. Of the concluded investigations the number that were proved were mainly in relation to neglect. Furthermore, when the type of accommodation was considered it was evident that of the proven cases that the greatest number were proven in care homes with nursing. Although a number of investigations were not concluded at the time of reporting the trend continues to raise similar concerns to last year.

CSSIW also participated in 230 strategy meetings to discuss adult protection concerns for individuals receiving a service from a domiciliary care agency. Of these only four resulted in the inspectorate's participation in an investigation.

The categories of concern dealt with included physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, financial abuse and neglect.

Taken as a whole the figures from the local authorities and CSSIW's regulatory activity suggest a number of themes:

- a focus by the inspectorate on potential breaches in regulation;
- an increase in neglect investigations which may reflect increased recognition by all of the seriousness of neglect;
- a need to consider further the relatively low number of investigations in the domiciliary sector;
- the continued relevance of regional forums or similar bodies in driving greater consistency in the reporting and response to concerns about abuse.

# Chapter Three

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## Meeting the needs of children

### Overview

Local authorities and service providers have made steady improvement in meeting statutory and regulatory duties towards children in the past year (2008/09). This improvement is a testimony to the effort and commitment made by individuals as well as to more robust arrangements for monitoring and reporting performance.

The death of baby Peter Connelly in Haringey in August 2007 reminded us of the harm children can suffer. We must learn the lessons from this tragedy and continue to promote vigilance and close attention to children's experiences by the public and professionals. Crucially, we must sustain our focus on children even when the public outcry has subsided.

However, in Wales the differences between the highest and lowest performing services remain pronounced. They are most evident in the way local authorities and their partners work with children and families outside the systems for child protection and court orders.

On the other hand we have seen improvements in:

- 'front of house' arrangements for receiving and allocating referrals;
- prioritising children in need of immediate care and protection;
- meeting the requirements for timely initial assessments and reviews;
- information management.

The main areas for further improvement are:

- high thresholds for delivering services for children in need;
- the quality of assessments and care plans for children;
- the gap between the best and worst services, both locally and nationally;
- shared responsibility and consistent performance by all disciplines and agencies;
- the gap between the aspirations of senior managers and strategic partnerships and the actual delivery of services to children and families.

It is vital that the social care sector for children sets about understanding and overcoming the many causes and factors for the wide variation in service standards.

One factor is the differing level of demand, with some local authorities reporting increasing volume and complexity of work. All authorities have seen an increase in the population of children aged 0-4, with a 2.8 per cent rise last year bucking the trend towards an ageing population. The referrals to children's social services increased by 9.4 per cent last year, although the number of referrals is no higher than two years ago.

Another factor is the range and effectiveness of services available to prevent or intervene early on in problems affecting children. Our reviews show some impressive examples of practice by individuals. Yet the quality of assessments and care management is inconsistent. Some of the variability is a result of practitioners having insufficient capacity, organisational support and personal resources to carry out consistently good work with children and families.

These problems are in spite of new local authority workforce strategies which have led to an increase in social worker recruitment. However, many social workers are relatively inexperienced in child protection work. The value and importance of experienced team managers and senior practitioners is evident where this is available. It is also clear that we need a sustained and committed focus on improving the children's workforce.

It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance introduced in 2008 by the Care Council for Wales for newly qualified social workers<sup>4</sup> and for employers.<sup>5</sup> However, the staff interviewed by inspectors confirmed that the guidance is much needed and valued.

Yet another factor contributing to inconsistency in service levels is the variation in the commitment and progress made by councils in corporate parenting. This is often reflected in the uncertain engagement of schools and education services in safeguarding children. Local government performance data indicates that the basic educational and healthcare support arrangements for children who are looked after is not showing sustained improvement.

In addition, organisational barriers within social services often prevent parents from receiving services for mental health problems and drug and alcohol abuse, factors frequently linked with poor outcomes for children.

Our follow up of the self assessments of safeguarding also shows that the contribution of the police and NHS practitioners varies from one area to another. Services often rely too much on the hard work of a small number of practitioners working in isolation from other colleagues in their employing organisation. Finally, we believe there is too much reliance on children's social services for coordinating and administering multi-agency working.

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<sup>4</sup> Care Council for Wales - Making the most of the first year in practice 2008 - a guide for newly qualified social workers

<sup>5</sup> Care Council for Wales - Making the most of the first year in practice - an employers' guide 2008

## Our findings this year

Our findings and conclusions come from a variety of sources. We started with our programme of regular inspections of daycare, fostering, children's homes, schools and colleges. We looked at our programme of regular monitoring and review of the performance of local authorities. We also carried out some national reviews, including a major review of children's safeguarding after the concerns about the circumstances which led to the death of baby Peter Connolly. We completed reviews of independent reviewing officers<sup>6</sup>, private fostering<sup>7</sup> and carried out a review of children and adolescent mental health jointly with other inspectorates. In addition, our conclusions are drawn from the trends and lessons about children's social services from our ten year programme of joint reviews of local authority social services<sup>8</sup> and our participation in a five year programme of joint inspections of youth offending teams<sup>9</sup>.

## Safeguarding children and young people

Safeguarding is a key dimension of all CSSIW inspection and improvement work. Safeguarding children is complex and extensive. It includes protecting children from abuse and neglect, but also extends to preventing impairment of children's health or development and ensuring they receive safe and effective care. While children and young people's safety is a matter for everyone, the statutory services rightly carry the greatest responsibility.

We followed up the self evaluation of all 22 local authorities and the local safeguarding children boards required by the Welsh Assembly Government. We found that the conclusions they reached in the self assessments were generally reasonable and accurate:

- local authorities and local agencies have strengthened the arrangements for responding to initial concerns about child harm and abuse;
- decision making is timely and appropriate action is taken to protect children;
- once in the system, children and families experience differences in the quality and type of response they receive and in the continued engagement of all agencies;
- for children who become the subject of care proceedings and come under the scrutiny of courts the quality of engagement and work is consistently better;
- for those who remain on the child protection register, local authorities remain the primary agency working with the child and family. The engagement of other professionals and organisations is subject to local and regional variations.

Our review highlights the challenges in maintaining constant vigilance and in keeping all parts of the system working well together all the time. On the positive side we found a heightened awareness and response among everyone involved in protecting children after

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<sup>6</sup> National review of independent reviewing officer service in Wales

<sup>7</sup> Review of Welsh local authorities arrangements for private fostering, 2008

<sup>8</sup> Reviewing social services in Wales 1998-2008 Learning from the Journey

<sup>9</sup> HM Inspectorate of Probation Joint Inspection Findings of Youth Offending Teams in Wales 2003-2008

the Victoria Climbié Inquiry report. However, the arrangements for monitoring and scrutiny by members are not well embedded.

## Local Safeguarding Children Boards

LSCBs are responsible for:

- co-ordinating what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority by which it is established; and
- ensuring the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes. (Section 32(1); Children Act 2004)

## Effectiveness

The follow-up of the LSCBs' self evaluation provided a significant insight into the effectiveness of LSCBs. We found that the LSCBs were not developing at the same pace across Wales.

- some have yet to secure the participation of all the relevant agencies or the representation at a senior enough level to make decisions;
- few boards have extended their remit beyond child protection;
- but most boards have a greater recognition about the impact of adult substance misuse and mental health issues on the welfare of children;
- and most now have adult service representation on the board.

The ambition of each board must be to achieve full interagency and corporate leadership and move away from a reliance on children's social services to drive it forward.

LSCBs had been established for two and a half years when this review took place. Some had made good progress in that time and others were still in the early stages of confirming membership and business plans. There was no clear relationship between their size and effectiveness.

The review identified that not all frontline practitioners were aware of LSCBs and what they did in their area. Where there was clear leadership and commitment from all parties, we found evidence that the board was effective. However, the effectiveness was often dependent on particular individuals, rather than being well embedded in the organisations and their inter-relationships.

Inadequate resourcing and business support arrangements limited many boards in carrying out their role and functions. The management and administration of Local Safeguarding Children Boards often relied on leadership and resources from children's social services.

Each LSCB has a responsibility to satisfy itself that the arrangements to identify and support private fostering placements are robust and that such arrangements are appropriately used. Our review of private fostering<sup>10</sup> highlighted that compliance with requirements for carers to notify their local council of children in private fostering remains very poor. Although the number of children known to be privately fostered in Wales is low, we found that the overwhelming majority of children in these arrangements are highly vulnerable.

Many privately fostered children have become almost invisible to public organisations and the consequent lack of prioritisation in this area means that the vulnerability of privately fostered children often goes unrecognised. The overwhelming majority of private fostering placements were not identified as a result of the notification system for parents and carers. Rather, they were identified following intervention by social services in fulfilling other responsibilities or by referral from other agencies.

Where privately fostered children were identified, the assessments were often not comprehensive and were accompanied by weak monitoring and management oversight. Checks were not always completed and followed up. The decision making rarely took into account whether private fostering was appropriate to meet the child's needs in the medium to long term or whether the local authority should exercise any of its other duties e.g. accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Some authorities decided that a child's needs were being met without reference to the *'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families'*. Local authorities cannot discharge their responsibilities without completing an initial assessment. In many cases a core assessment will also be required. Monitoring visits, particularly where the child was receiving additional services as a child in need, did not always cover the minimum requirements including finding out whether the accommodation was suitable.

It is imperative that LSCBs understand their own effectiveness, share good practice and identify areas for improvement. To support self improvement, CSSIW has commissioned a Self Assessment and Improvement Tool (SAIT). The tool has been piloted and national benchmarks and descriptors for measuring LSCBs' performance have been agreed. We have also commissioned practice guidance for using the tool and held a trainers' event for facilitators and commissioners. The SAIT will be rolled out as the standard self assessment and improvement tool for all Welsh LSCBs. We expect that the boards will carry out a self assessment every year and that this will be subject to monitoring and support by the inspectorates.

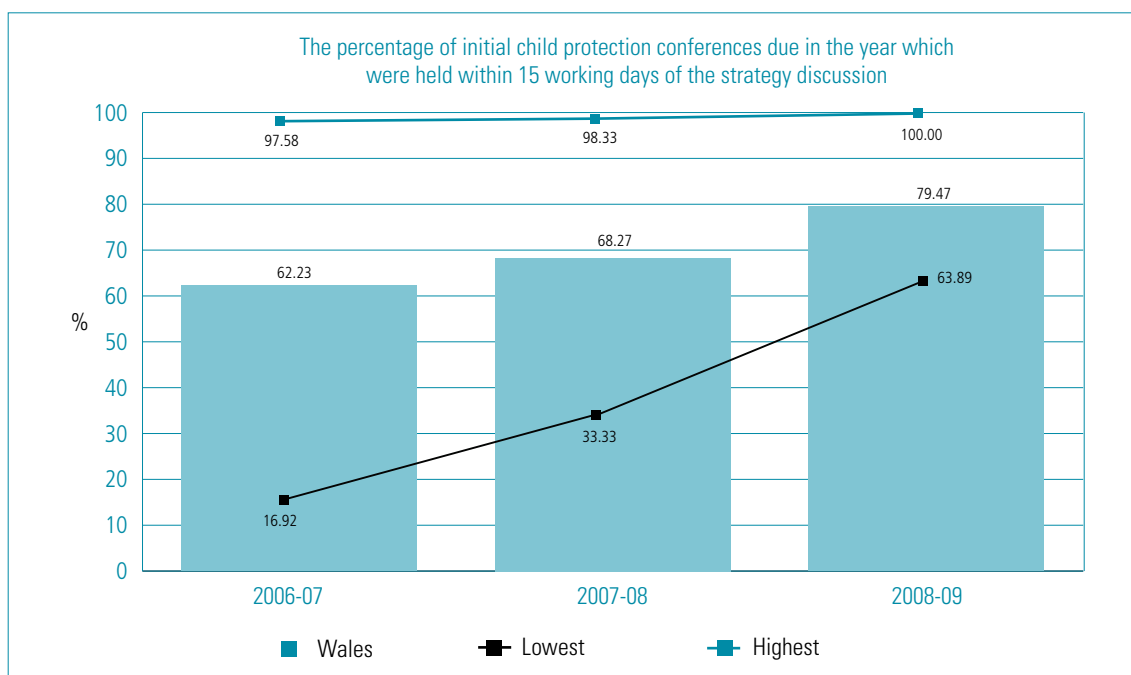
We welcome the political and professional interest in learning from serious case reviews. CSSIW has commissioned a review of the way serious case reviews are carried out and their impact on policy and practice. While this work is underway we will continue to monitor the individual serious case reviews and their impact on improvement.

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<sup>10</sup> Review of Welsh local authorities arrangements for private fostering in 2008

Our reviews indicate that the policies and procedures for protecting children are fit for purpose and are being followed by local services and other agencies when concerns exist about harm to children. In addition we found that:

- access to procedures and guidance for staff is generally satisfactory;
- the management of front-line practice has improved, with the protection of children given appropriate priority;
- local government performance data indicates that the timeliness of case conferences and reviews is improving as shown in the following chart.



However, the follow-up of children’s safeguarding shows that the quality of the multi-agency scrutiny at these meetings and subsequent child protection planning was inconsistent. All agencies need to share responsibility for identifying risk, assessing need and delivering against child protection plans. And we should all work towards better coordination of strategies and the provision of targeted services to deal with specific needs such as substance misuse and the effects of domestic violence.

Our review of independent reviewing officers confirmed that these officers are making a strong contribution to safeguarding vulnerable children and young people. They often encourage improved attendance at review meetings by all professionals and better engagement of children and young people in safeguarding their own welfare. In some local authorities, they also coordinate risk assessments for children placed at home on care orders.

Care providers continue to improve their safeguards for children, but some important aspects of safeguarding need more attention. For example:

- fostering services have been inconsistent in the safeguards for ensuring the suitability of foster carers;
- the safeguards did not meet the requirements about checks and references in 17 per cent of services, a similar proportion to the previous year;
- the approval system was often affected by the time taken to receive CRB checks;
- fostering services should improve support arrangements for foster carers and children and young people during child protection enquiries;
- improvements in training foster carers about child protection were required in a similar proportion of services to the previous year;
- independent fostering agencies need clear policies for managing an allegation against a foster carer;
- concerns remain that some children's homes have not been complying with the regulations about keeping children safe;
- 39 per cent of children's homes need to improve recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of staff.

## Supporting parents and carers

Our reviews show how the absence of community and family based support services often results in more acute problems being referred to children's social services.

The vision for children's care and social services for the next ten years<sup>11</sup> is to provide more accessible and personalised care at an earlier stage. Local authorities have a duty in section 17 of the Children Act to promote the upbringing of children in need by their families and to provide an appropriate range and level of services. In 2010, the Welsh Assembly Government is introducing a census of children in need. The census will provide better information about children who receive family support services, as part of section 17 of the Children Act, and how they compare with children who are subject to child protection procedures or become looked after.

## Children's daycare

CSSIW regulates daycare services used by parents so that parents can train or work and provide opportunities for their children's social and educational development. We also regulate short break fostering services where the child remains in the care of his/her family while the service provides significant levels of support and respite. These services are usually commissioned from independent or voluntary agencies, although some are provided directly by the local authority. Most local authority fostering services also have friends and family approved as carers.

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<sup>11</sup> Fulfilled Lives Supportive Communities

The number of child care places across Wales has increased by 1,260 in the last year, with an increase in the number of services and places available in childminding, full day care, out of school care and sessional care services. The number of open access schemes has not changed, although the number of places available has increased. The number of crèche settings and places has fallen by 20 per cent. Other services remain unchanged.

Overall the quality of day care services has continued to improve. Providers have made good progress in implementing the additional regulatory requirements introduced in 2007. Almost all providers have responded satisfactorily to the new assessment of service process. Quality assurance reviews, complaints processes and response to compliance notifications have also shown encouraging improvement.

## Supporting children and families

The seven core aims of the Welsh Assembly Government are for children and young people<sup>12</sup> to:

- have a flying start in life;
- have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
- enjoy the best possible health free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
- have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
- be listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
- have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
- be free from disadvantages and poverty.

We need a broad range of services to achieve these aims.

Many community services used by children and families and provided by local authorities, independent or voluntary bodies are not subject to regulation by CSSIW. The Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to work with their partners to publish a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) which forms the basis of commissioning services which support children and families.

The Welsh Assembly Government is introducing a legislative measure to ensure that the provision of daycare, play and support to parents meets local needs, especially in circumstances of child poverty.

## Experience of children and families

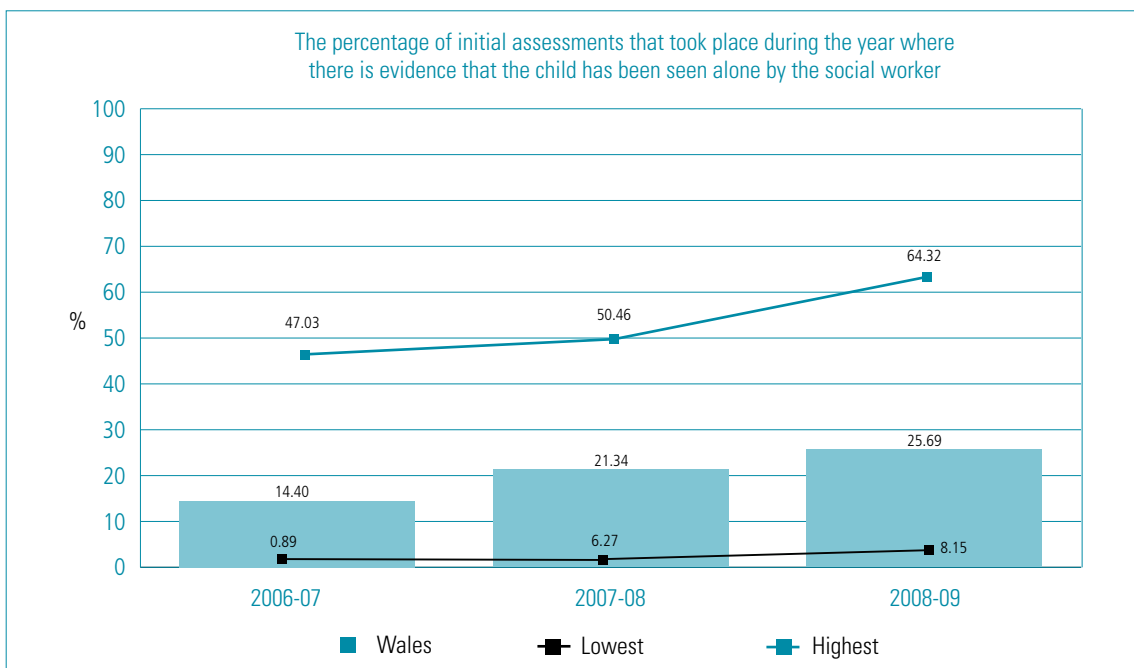
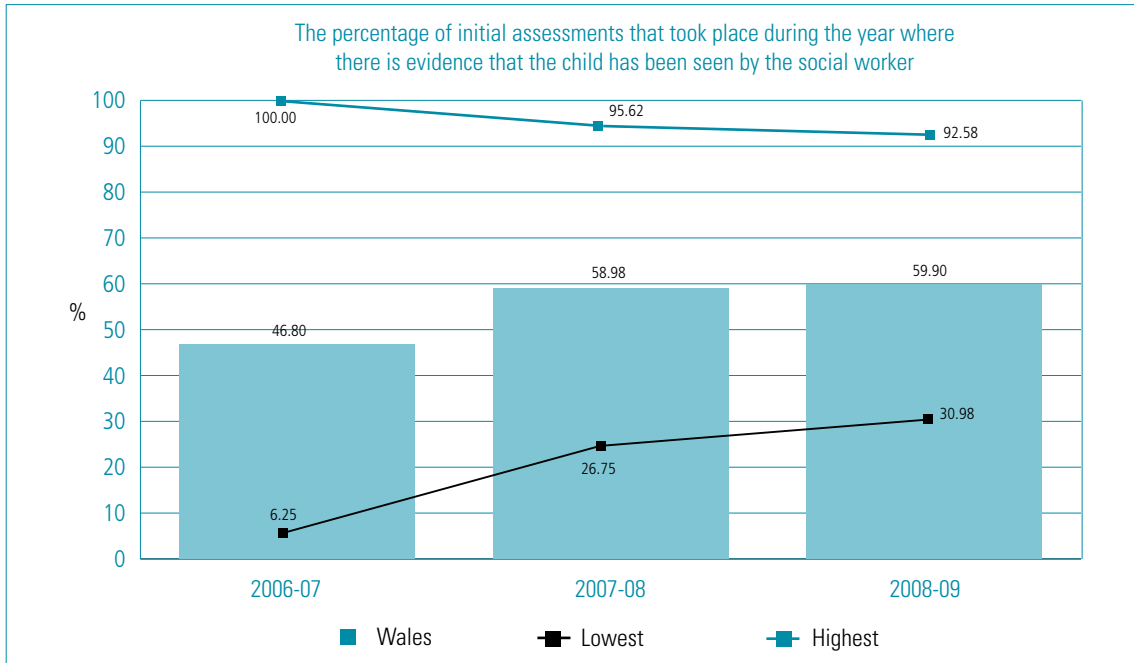
Local government performance data shows more social workers are involving the child in initial assessments and taking account of the child's ethnicity, language and religion.

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<sup>12</sup> Shared Planning for Better Outcomes 2007

A pre-requisite of any assessment is that the child is seen by a social worker. Performance reported by authorities for ensuring that a child is seen as part of the initial assessment has improved slightly. Altogether 60 per cent of children were seen and 26 per cent were seen alone.

Authorities have developed more effective systems for capturing and understanding the reasons why children are not always seen. They must continue to give priority to the participation of children as this is an area which has been unsatisfactory for too long.



Local authorities have improved the written information available to families. Many are using a wider range of media, including the internet to communicate with service users and the public. Our surveys of local authority children's services in the past year show mixed experiences: 51 per cent of children and 47 per cent of parents felt that services they receive are of good quality. However, less than 44 per cent said there was a clear care plan for the services.

The responses of children and young people who are looked after in a national survey<sup>13</sup> conducted by CSSIW are more encouraging, with 64 per cent of children and young people reporting a positive overall experience of being looked after. Many noted changes for the better in recent years.

Although local authorities have improved the regularity of reviews, children and young people's experience of them is mixed:

- the timing or venue for the review is sometimes not to the child's satisfaction and accounts for some of their non-attendance;
- young people sometimes find the reviews 'long and boring';
- 62 per cent of children and young people felt they had a say in their review meetings and their views on their care plans were taken into account;
- a substantial proportion of children and young people looked after (42 per cent) said they had no choice over the placement provided for them.

Our recent evidence is generally in accord with the findings of our joint reviews over the past ten years<sup>14</sup>. The most noticeable improvement in children's social services from the perspective of children and parents has been in initial contact and information about entitlements. Although referrals to children's services have increased in the last ten years, respondents confirmed that they get a faster response and are more likely to be assessed formally.

However, they frequently report that getting help is confusing unless you know the system. Their satisfaction with children's services varies substantially across local authorities, with the variation more marked than in adult services. The least improvement from their perspective has been in continuity of social workers, 61 per cent of children report not having known their social worker for more than a year, while 36 per cent report seeing their social worker less than every few months.

CSSIW recognises that the participation of children is a critical aspect of its work and welcomes the Welsh Assembly Government's decision to extend these rights through a new service framework for children and young people's advocacy. We continue to work on our overarching strategy for involving children in inspections and reviews. Registered providers of children's care services have commented on the value of the cartoon questionnaire and report formats we introduced for engaging children of primary school age in registered settings. This questionnaire and report were designed to meet the Welsh Assembly

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<sup>13</sup> Review of IRO services 2009

<sup>14</sup> Reviewing social services in Wales 1998-2008 Learning from the Journey

Government's Children and Young People's Participation Standards (Having a Voice, Having a Choice).

Our inspections of foster care services have shown that many providers use creative approaches to involving children, foster carers and members of the child's families. Fostering services have improved the way they promote the welfare of children and take into account their wishes and feelings, even though surveys of local authorities show that many children do not feel they have a choice.

### Access to local authority children's services

Establishing a common language and framework for responding to children's needs among all the relevant agencies is essential to enable children and their families to find the services they need. Referrals to social services come from a range of organisations and all local authorities and partner agencies now have a common multi-agency referral form.

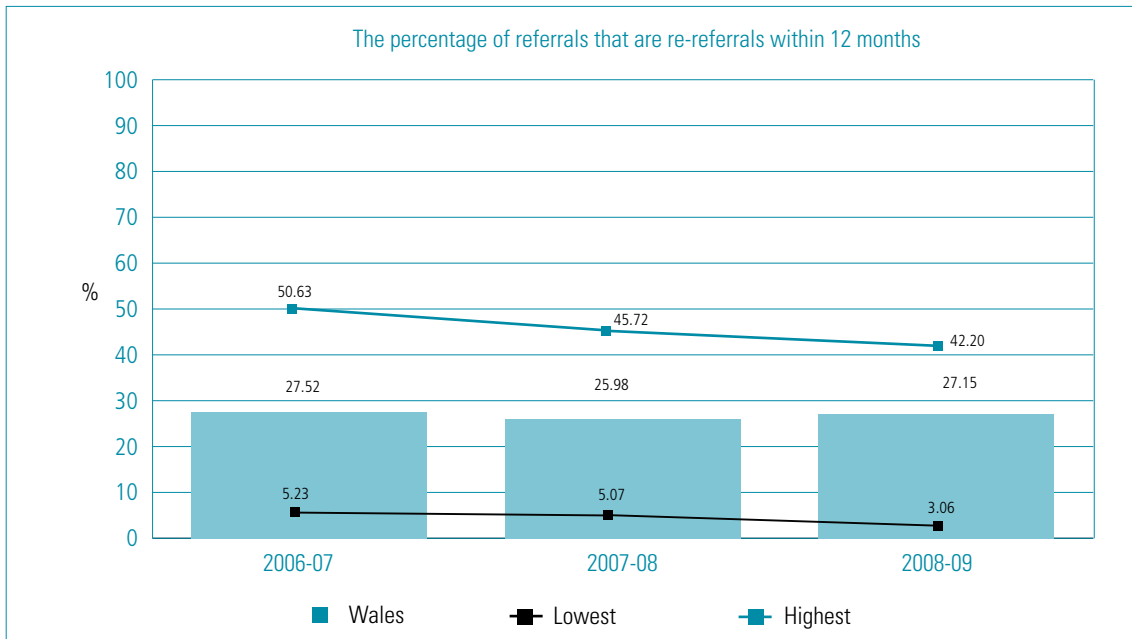
There were 46,172 referrals of children to local authority social services in the year ending March 2009, an increase of 9.4 per cent on the previous year. However, the number of referrals is less than two years ago, when it was 49,561. Most local authorities have taken steps to strengthen the 'front door' arrangements. Some have introduced a first response customer service which routes enquiries to a duty team. All local authorities have produced written guidance and protocols to assist partner agencies to understand the role and responsibilities of children's social services.

It is essential therefore that all staff responding to families or referrers understand the importance of accurate and reliable recording of information at an early stage. This information determines the service needed by the particular child and is also useful in commissioning and developing the range of services.

The early response must be sensitive to the cultural and communication needs of children and their families. Local authorities are making steady progress in recording the ethnicity, religion and language needs of children and families.

Some 95 per cent of referrals were subject to a decision taken within one day. This is an important area of practice which has shown sustained improvement over the past three years. In Wales as a whole, 57 per cent of referrals were allocated for an initial assessment, 44 per cent of these were allocated to a social worker for an initial assessment and 14 per cent to someone other than a social worker.

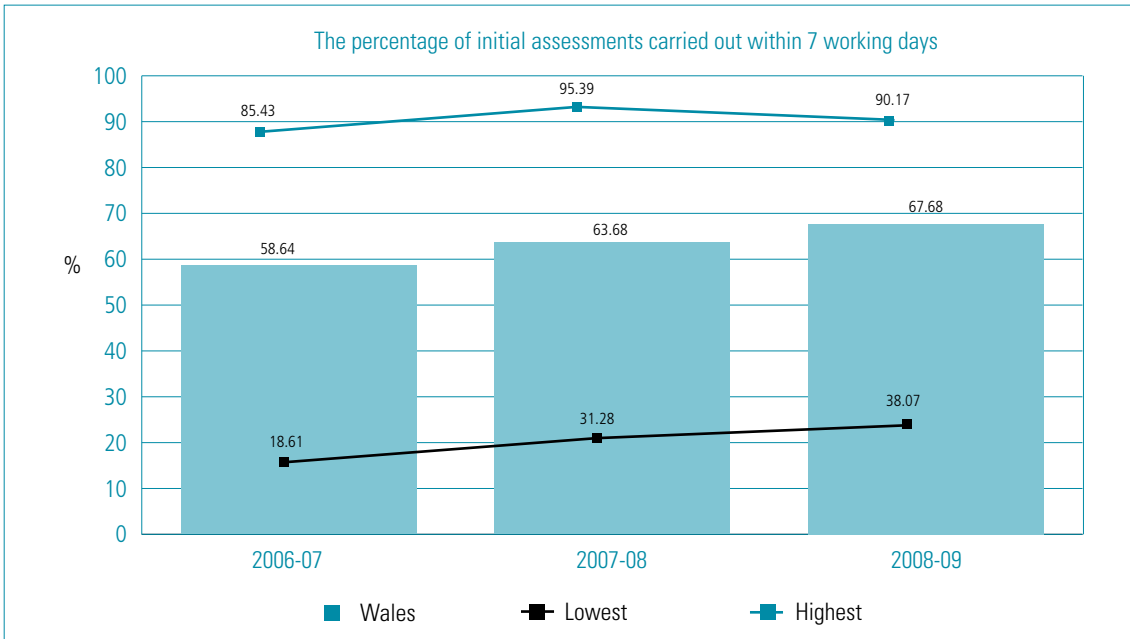
The variability between authorities in allocating cases was very pronounced. The percentage of referrals which did not proceed to initial assessment varied between authorities from four per cent to 81 per cent. The variability in the rate of re-referrals was also very pronounced, as shown overleaf:



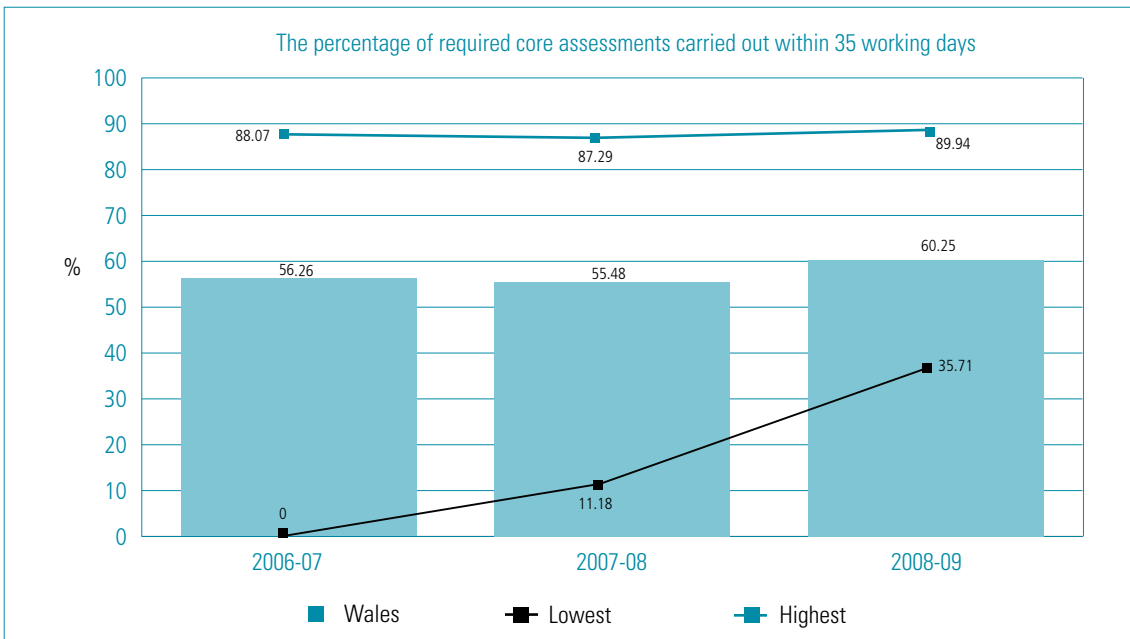
Those authorities with high re-referral figures should ensure systems are in place to provide information about these children so that their staff can take appropriate action to address the problem. The Children and Young People's Partnerships and the Local Safeguarding Children Boards have a key role in achieving a better understanding of patterns of referrals and how they are handled.

### Assessment by local authority children's services

Effective and timely assessment is essential to fully understand a child's needs. The analysis of this information should provide a firm basis for planning for further protection, care or family support. Local government performance data shows that the timeliness in completing initial assessments continues to improve.



Overall performance for the timeliness of core assessments also shows some improvement. This is encouraging, but timeliness varies considerably between authorities.



Recent reviews by CSSIW show that the quality of assessments is inconsistent within and between local authorities.

The recent CSSIW review of children's safeguarding found that everyone agrees that social workers should be allocated to children on the child protection register and children looked after. However, this is not the case in respect of children in need, where the proportion allocated to either a social worker or another worker varied substantially between authorities.

So, we believe there should be a debate as to what children in need and their families require and can expect from social services. Local authorities must be confident that the right level of oversight and supervision is in place where assessments are carried out by someone other than a social worker.

An important underlying principle in the '*Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*' is that the responsibility for meeting needs falls on all agencies, even though local authority social services have a key statutory function. Our recent reviews highlight the importance of other agencies in supporting assessment and service provision. Plans are more likely to be effective where they are based on good quality needs assessments and there is sufficient engagement and consultation with children, young people and their families. Some authorities report that delays in completing assessments are sometimes caused by difficulties in obtaining information from other agencies. For assessments to provide a holistic picture of the child's needs it is essential that partner agencies provide social services with relevant and good quality information and professional advice.

### Care planning by local authority children's services

Families and children need to be clear about the objectives of any plan and their part in it. Similarly, all agencies should have a shared understanding of the expected outcomes and what their roles and responsibilities are for delivering them. Professionals and agencies should also, where appropriate, challenge each others' contributions.

It is also important that plans are relevant and timely. The timeliness of care planning processes has shown some improvement since the previous year. Local government performance data for looked after children show that:

- 91 per cent of reviews were held on time;
- 84 per cent of statutory visits took place in accordance with regulations;
- 79 per cent of initial child protection case conferences and 79 per cent of core groups were held on time.

However, in contrast, in relation to children in need only 57 per cent of children in need plans were reviewed in accordance with the statutory timetable.

Again, marked differences remain in performance across authorities. Our inspections of adoption and fostering services and children's homes show that care planning and support is inconsistent. Even when social workers do complete plans, they do not always find their way to the carers who have day to day responsibility for the child.

## Young carers

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to strengthening the framework of support for carers through a legislative competence order and other measures in the Children and Young People Act 2008. It is important that we provide services for adults to enable them to fulfil their parenting role, as too many children carry inappropriate responsibilities for caring within families, especially where someone has a disability.

The percentage of young carers known to social services who were assessed at 75 per cent; and who received a service, at 76 per cent, has remained at similar levels for the past 3 years, but with marked variability across Wales. We need to understand why this performance for a vulnerable group of children and young people is not improving.

## Child disability

The Welsh Assembly Government has set out its policy agenda for disabled children and young people in the document *'We are on the way'*. The intention is to improve the right of a child to challenge assessments of special educational need. Access to early years childcare for disabled children has been an area of particular concern. We need to strengthen support for disabled children in the forthcoming review of *'The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services'*.

## Family support and specialist services

As part of the Assembly's legislative measure for combating child poverty, local authorities will have to establish integrated family support teams over the next two years to ensure early and effective intervention, especially where there are concerns about substance or alcohol misuse by parents. These problems, as well as domestic violence, are often linked with poor mental health in parents and children. A recent joint review of children and adolescent mental health in Wales<sup>15</sup> found that services are inconsistent. The review recommends an action plan at national, regional and local level to improve service quality.

## Children's homes

Altogether 205 children were in residential placements on 31 March, 2009, a fall in the proportion of the number of children who are looked after. Inspections continue to report weaknesses in placement planning for many children in children's homes, despite the improved performance in care planning indicated by local government performance data.

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<sup>15</sup> Joint review of children and adolescent mental health services in Wales - awaiting publication

To achieve the best outcomes for children, placement plans need to identify how the day to day care of the child meets the aim of the care plan. This requires sustained attention by both managers and providers. We also need to improve the information provided by local authorities, the timeliness of placement plans and reviews and the actions taken to achieve the best outcome for children.

As part of our review of independent reviewing officers, all 22 local authorities indicated that they had placed children in a children's home. The review found that many placements of the most vulnerable children still do not have enough information or plans in place.

Planning and review of children placed out of area is also often unsatisfactory. Some 40 per cent of children are placed with foster carers outside the local authority, although the distance from home is not always great. However, too often the placement is arranged on an emergency basis and with little or no choice.

We found that qualification and training standards for managers and care staff have changed substantially since the introduction of guidance and regulations. However, the quality of care planning in placements, including placements out of area, has not shown the same level of improvement and needs further analysis and an urgent action plan.

The past year has seen the number of places available in children's homes increase, although there remains considerable regional variation. The independent sector is still the main provider, with 69 per cent of homes managed by private companies. As at 31 March, 2009, Wales had 123 registered children's homes providing 535 places. Despite losing five homes, the number of places rose by five, continuing a trend of small increases each year.

Many placements in Welsh children's homes are of children placed by non-Welsh authorities. This results in pressures on local services, particularly specialist health services such as children and adolescent mental health services.

Policy makers and those who plan and commission services need to monitor the distribution of homes, the pattern of ownership, the profile of the services and placements and the level of vacancies in each setting. They should also have a clear understanding of these issues. And we need to use our powers to promote quicker progress in this important service for the most vulnerable children.

As in the previous year a mixed picture of quality and improvement is evident in children's homes. Some of the care provided is generally good, such as managing health needs and facilitating contact with family and friends. However, other important aspects of the service remain inconsistent, such as leadership, attention to continuous improvement, recruitment and staff supervision, training and development.

## Residential Schools

Wales has 1,678 residential places in specialist schools, boarding schools and colleges, a small decrease from the last inspection cycle. Thirteen residential special schools offer 284 places. Eleven of these schools are run by local authorities and two by voluntary organisations. They vary in capacity; offering between two and 46 places each. All pupils have specific needs and their own statement of special educational needs. Many of the children in the schools exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of illness or disability. A few schools, registered as children's homes, offer accommodation for longer periods.

Inspections of residential schools showed little change from the previous year and identified the following areas of good practice: statements of principles and practice, consultation and participation were actively promoted, enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of staff was frequently observed. The main areas requiring improvement include child protection policies and procedures, as well as processes for recruiting and supporting staff.

## Providing Stability for Children and Young People

### Children looked after

Altogether 4,705 children were being looked after in Wales, excluding short-term or respite care, on 31 March, 2009 - an increase of 1.5 per cent. The fall in the number of children being looked after in the previous year appears to have been a temporary fluctuation (the only decline in the last 10 years) in a larger trend of an increasing population. We need to understand the factors which generate the increases.

### Supporting placements

For the past three years local government performance data on care planning at the time of first placements and subsequent reviews has improved.

However, concerns remain about the failure to use assessment and progress records, in planning. Inspectors conducting the review of the Independent Reviewing Officer services found that plans for permanency for children and young people looked after, do not always include specific targets and are not always clear about the desired outcomes.

In our audit of the impact of the regulations '*Towards a Stable Life & Brighter Future*', we concluded that placement planning is poor and key documentation about children's needs is not always in place. In addition, the evidence of pre-planning for the health and education of children and young people was poor.

## Fostering

Matching placements to children's needs remains challenging for local authorities and fostering services. Some innovative recruitment campaigns were seen again last year, with time and resources spent trying to attract would-be foster carers who have the required skills.

However, our inspections of fostering services show that carers often do not receive enough information about children either initially or during their placements. The support given to carers is particularly important at times of transition for the child, but is of inconsistent quality in Wales. We have seen some improvements in the supervision of foster placements, but there is much variation between services.

We have also seen improvements in the written agreements between the local authority and children placed in independent fostering agencies. This follows some local authorities working together to share good practice about delegation agreements. However, we found that social workers did not make visits to children in placement within the minimum time periods in 24 per cent of services.

Wales has 47 fostering services, 25 of which are in the independent/voluntary sector. All local authorities have their own fostering service. Many local authorities have service level agreements with voluntary organisations to provide respite or short term care. The overall picture is of fostering services maintaining a similar level of compliance with regulations as in previous years, with moderate improvement in some areas. As last year, there was no formal enforcement action in fostering services within the independent sector.

However, significant shortcomings remain, such as the lack of information given to foster carers mentioned above. Foster carers have an important contribution to make to the implementation of children's care plans. But placement agreements are frequently inadequate and do not provide enough detail for foster carers to meet children's needs or make informed decisions. Fostering agencies depend on the children's social workers to provide this information. Local authorities must ensure that their staff share information about children where appropriate, particularly with the carers.

The pilot on "Support Care" being developed by the Fostering Network Wales (partly funded by the Welsh Assembly Government) is proving to be a positive use of foster care in enabling children to remain with their birth families.

## Education of children looked after

Local government performance data shows that 66 per cent of children looked after received a personal education plan within 20 school days of entering or joining a new school, an increase on the previous year.

The percentage of children looked after permanently excluded from school fell to 0.18 per cent. Fixed term exclusions have remained at a similar level for the past three years, with an average 6.79 days for each child looked after. Inspections of children's homes show that almost all encourage and provide facilities for homework and study and maintain good links with schools.

### Health of children looked after

Children who are looked after are known to have health needs well above the average child. Local government performance data shows that 82 per cent of these children were checked by a dentist, a similar level to the last three years. Similarly, 82 per cent of children in new placements were registered with a GP within ten working days and 81 per cent of all children in placements had an annual health assessment.

However, we need to understand why there is no improvement in these arrangements. The proportion without healthcare support may seem small, but at 800 the number of children involved is high.

### Adoption

The percentage of children who are adopted from being looked after, at 16 per cent, has remained at a similar level for four years.

CSSIW has piloted a more integrated approach to inspecting adoption services in the past year. The objective of the inspections was to evaluate the effectiveness of the local authority's policies, procedures, practice and decision making processes in relation to assessment, care management and placement finding. We also looked at policies on Special Guardianship and Residence Order applications as well as the actions of the local authority as corporate parent.

We found some good practice, such as the introduction of permanency panels and increased scope for the development of advanced knowledge and skills by practitioners and teams.

The main areas for development are:

- better adoption records and files;
- improved support for adoptive placements or special guardianship orders;
- more proactive services for children in long term fostering;
- and improved leadership and support from the authority as a corporate parent.

The inspections found that planning for adoption in local authorities was not embedded in policy and practice. Local authorities are still adapting to the new legislation and the increased role of the court in shaping care planning for children.

We recognise that better integration of our work within the Inspectorate and with other inspectorates is important. Better integration will enable organisations, commissioners and providers to improve their services and better understand how they impact on citizens. In the past year, we have piloted a more joined up approach to local authority inspection and the registration/regulation of adoption services. The objective is to broaden the scope of inspection and regulation of adoption services in a wider framework of planning for permanence for children.

This approach has a number of potential benefits. It provides a more holistic framework to focus on the child and how different elements of services interact and impact on their lives. It follows their care pathways throughout the different processes and legislative frameworks. This enables the inspectorate to help authorities and agencies to identify which parts of the system need to improve and also to identify good models of practice.

Local authorities and adoption agencies have welcomed this new approach. In future we plan to use the experience to improve our methods of inspecting and engaging with the sector.

### Young people leaving care

The number of young people leaving care has been increasing, while the number of children looked after who return to live with parents or relatives has fallen over the past four years. The percentages of care leavers in touch with the local authority, at 92 per cent, and in education, training or employment, at 49 per cent, have been at similar levels for the past four years. Some 89 per cent of care leavers were known to be in suitable accommodation. This is a slight improvement on the previous year, but for four authorities the proportion known to be in suitable accommodation is as low as 40-75 per cent.

### Youth justice

CSSIW continues to inspect the youth offending teams as part of a partnership of inspectorates which include HM Inspectorate Probation, Estyn, the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and HM Inspectorate of Prisons. A number of factors make Welsh youth offending services complex to manage:

- criminal justice services remain within the UK government remit;
- performance is measured through the Youth Justice Board, but local authority services, including children's services, are financed and held to account by the Welsh Assembly Government;
- the All Wales Youth Offending Strategy (2004) was a joint statement of intent in relation to Youth Justice in Wales;
- the majority of youth offending teams are small in terms of population but large in terms of geographical area. This can impact on service delivery.

A review of the programme of youth offending team inspections in Wales over the past five years has been published.<sup>16</sup> Overall, provision has been inconsistent, with examples of excellent but also poor practice.

Proportionally, there have been more re-inspections due to weaknesses in management and governance. The work with children and young people in the community was hampered at times by poor premises and a lack of attention to their physical health, education and safe-keeping. Assessments were generally completed on time and work in assessing and managing a child or young person's risk of harm to others is improving. Children and young people were often subject to frequent and intensive supervision and surveillance programmes. On the other hand, children and young people in custody were supported well by visits from youth offending team staff, even though they were often a distance away and in England. However, on release, partner agencies such as health, education and social services did not always provide the services needed. The Welsh language was given low priority in some services even in areas with a significant proportion of Welsh speakers.

### Quality Assurance and Performance Management

We have seen a sustained trend of improvement in the collection and use of performance information in children's social services. During reviews conducted by CSSIW, most local authorities provided up to date performance information.

We are seeing evidence that managers are using performance information as a basis for motivating and rewarding practitioners for timely completion of processes. Similarly managers and practitioners are using the management information now available to improve planning to meet the needs of children and their families.

However, a narrow interpretation of performance indicators on their own will not necessarily improve outcomes for children. It is vital that performance is linked to the quality of the work produced. We need to embed the culture of improving quality through analysis of evidence and accurate information at all levels within the sector.

CSSIW's reviews show that the most common form of quality assurance used by local authorities is case file auditing by managers. However, the results of these audits, and the impact of auditing on improving the quality of work, are unclear. Processes for case file audit often lack clear outcome measures and are rarely backed up by a clear process for sharing any lessons learned. This is particularly evident when multi-agency working is the subject of the audit.

The following improvements are needed in quality assurance:

- agencies need to make the contributions of specific managers, reviewing officers and others with responsibility for quality assurance more explicit and subject to agreed standards;

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<sup>16</sup> HM Inspectorate of Probation Joint Inspection Findings of Youth Offending Teams in Wales 2003-2008

- all agencies involved in safeguarding and promoting children's welfare should take equal responsibility for communicating the messages from quality assurance systems to practitioners and managers;
- agencies should keep records of improvements in performance resulting from auditing processes;
- local authorities should consider other innovative quality assurance methods, especially those which involve children and their families.

Implementation of the Integrated Children's System (ICS) is progressing. Feedback from practitioners and evidence from reviews indicates that the base test for ICS is how far it supports both the social work professional role and the collection of information to enable the local authority and its partners to improve outcomes for children and their families. The development of each stage of ICS must be driven by social work practitioners and their managers defining what they need to conduct their work to the highest standards. It should not be driven by information technology experts.

The Welsh Assembly Government has set up a National Steering group to take ICS forward. The Steering Group will play an important role in ensuring that the ICS is implemented effectively and meets the needs of local authorities. The group's primary functions will be to:

- consider the implications of developing policy on ICS to ensure it reflects Welsh policy and practice and meets the needs of local authorities;
- act as an advisory group to the Welsh Assembly Government on issues relating to the implementation of ICS and report on implementation;
- bring together in the Steering Group and sub groups local authority management, practice and technical interests, to ensure engagement, share good practice and issues of concern and enable effective implementation;
- facilitate through a sub group or groups a collective consortia on approach in negotiation with suppliers.

## Complaints

The number of complaints received by CSSIW about regulated services for children, except for children's homes, has fallen. Three complaints about fostering agencies were drawn to the attention of CSSIW last year, compared with 7 and 6 in the previous two years. This has continued the downward trend of the last three years.

All fostering services have written complaints procedures, but these services should ensure that they are accessible to everyone, including children with disabilities. Sixteen complaints were received about childminders, 10 of which resulted in no action being taken by CSSIW. Sixty formal complaints were received about full day care. Six complaints were received about sessional day care. Eight complaints were received about after school care.

Only one complaint was received about open play services and none were received about registered crèches.

This year CSSIW received 11 complaints about registered children's homes compared with seven last year. Twenty-two per cent of homes did not have complaints processes for use by children and young people. The issues raised in complaints were similar to last year and included use of restraint, recording of absconding and the state of repair of the home.



# Chapter Four

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## Local Authority Performance

### Reviews, Evaluations and Inspections of Local Authority Social Services

The findings from our evaluations, reviews and inspections show that local authority social services continue to improve in core areas of assessment, care management and review. However, once again, performance varies with growing gaps between the best and worst performers. The challenge for local authorities remains to sustain and increase the momentum of improvement. This is evidenced both in our findings and by local authorities' reported performance.

However, achieving the vision for social services and social care in Wales set out in *'Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities'*

*'social services which are strong accessible and accountable, in tune with citizens' and communities' needs and promote social inclusion, citizens' rights and good outcomes'*

requires a step change in local corporate and political leadership. It means delivering modern, citizen focused services, underpinned by transparent, evidence based commissioning and budget strategies. It requires strong partnership working and robust project and performance management arrangements. It requires a vision that extends beyond traditional boundaries. These areas remain central challenges to the modernising agenda in Wales.

Since the publication of our last report, the Inspectorate has conducted a wide-ranging programme of inspection and follow-up work in local authorities, both singularly and jointly with other inspectorates and the Wales Audit Office. As part of this process, we have carried out focused reviews in Caerphilly County Borough Council and Newport. We have also completed the final round of local authority performance evaluation, reporting on the year 2007-08.

We have published, jointly with the Wales Audit Office, the report *'Reviewing Social Services in Wales 1998-2008: Learning from the Journey'*. This report draws together the substantial evidence base generated by the Joint Review programme. It highlights where improvements have been made and identifies the significant remaining challenges. The report has been distributed widely and is available on our website.

The report highlights evidence of improvement in social care services over the last decade. People using services continue to value them highly. However, we might have expected more progress given the increased level of investment. There remains too big a gap between the best and the worst councils, and between what a council aspires to do and what it delivers to people at its front door.

The report notes that in relation to services there has been consistent improvement in providing information about services and in front of house services. There is more systematic matching of needs, priorities and resources. Family support services, new projects to support reablement and rehabilitation and service partnerships with the voluntary sector have been developed.

Social care now has a higher profile in councils and there is clearer political and managerial leadership. There is a strong emphasis on workforce development, improving management information and an enhanced strategic outlook.

In contrast the report highlights that significant improvement is still required in the quality of assessments and plans for individuals, especially the analysis and management of risk and in the tailoring of support to match individual need. Progress is also required in providing options for older people with dementia and in providing timely support for carers as well as in maintaining the continuity of care workers, including social workers.

At an organisational level social services must maintain high level priorities and avoid diversions and ensure that robust medium term financial plans are in place to support service strategies. There must be increased attention on building capacity to deliver change using a modernised infrastructure and on understanding and managing organisational risk. The capacity to build alliances to support disinvestment and the redesign of mainstream services must also be improved.

*'Learning from the Journey'* goes further than identifying what has improved and what still needs to improve. It also draws together the factors which help and hinder continuing improvement:

Improvement is helped by:	Improvement is hindered by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leaders demonstrating the importance of social care to the community</li> <li>• leaders articulating how they want to reshape services to better meet the community's needs and building consensus for their vision</li> <li>• managers translating the vision into realisable priorities and maintaining a focus on these</li> <li>• leaders and managers ensuring financial plans are aligned to service strategies</li> <li>• modernising infrastructure to deliver the change, i.e. commissioning, performance, project and risk management skills and capacity</li> <li>• tight quality assurance to ensure good standards of care delivering positive outcomes for people</li> <li>• focusing much more on what is to be done as opposed to who does it</li> <li>• attracting and supporting good professional staff and dealing with incompetence</li> <li>• learning from and involving people who use services and front-line staff</li> <li>• operating in partnership within and outside the council to deliver jointly commissioned services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of consistent commitment to social care at the political and corporate level</li> <li>• ever-changing priorities that react to external pressure</li> <li>• avoidance of difficult decisions leading to drift and uncertainty</li> <li>• resources follow historical demands and pressure points</li> <li>• fragile capacity to translate change into results on the ground. Risks not identified and managed</li> <li>• inadequate quality assurance to ensure front-line services are delivered consistently well. This serves to divert managers' time to tackling front-line problems and risks</li> <li>• maintaining a provider mind set</li> <li>• inadequate staff support leading to high turnover, sickness and failure to attract good people</li> <li>• top managers out of touch with front-line staff and people who use services</li> <li>• failure to negotiate joint strategies leading to conflicts and tensions with main partners</li> </ul>

The report also considers the effectiveness of structural change as a way to drive improvement. It notes that structural changes can cause upheaval for staff without delivering the results for service users and that change can be a distraction and give a false impression of progress. Structural change is unlikely to be the main solution to help a failing service - in fact it is more likely to make things worse!

Where such change is to be embarked upon the desired outcome for service users must be explicit. Leadership and managerial roles and accountabilities must be clear and straightforward and local authorities must spell out the purpose of any change to staff and partner organisations and ensure that they understand it.

The report concludes that leaders should direct their attention to modernising infrastructure rather than focusing on structural change in order to bring about improvement at a faster rate. Areas for particular focus include:

- increasing delegation and ensuring faster decision-making;
- better communications with staff and partners;
- better information and IT systems;
- more flexible workforce skills and attractive rewards packages;
- dedicated capacity to design and arrange services and project manage change;
- managing integrated services in a joined up way;
- better links with the people who use the services.

The messages in the report - about improvements and challenges, about what helps and hinders improvement and about the risks associated with structural change have much resonance with our individual inspection and review reports and with previous reports of the Chief Inspector.

The role of good leadership, management and engagement is well known. The message is summed up in '*Learning from the Journey*' which states that:

*'good leadership of social care is the ability to articulate a sense of direction that is based on traditional values as to why social care matters, but that is also able to describe modern services to meet modern needs.'*

It is clear that to drive forward change a range of managerial approaches must be in place. These approaches include strategic and business planning, commissioning strategies and strategic partnership working. In addition, the values of equality, respect, dignity and compassion must remain as an enduring foundation to work in personal care underpinning why social services matter.

*'Learning from the Journey'* considered whether Joint Reviews had in themselves helped to improve social services in Wales. Certainly, they raised the profile of social services and demanded more of corporate and political leaders. However, most importantly, reviews worked best where they were part of a Council's own efforts to do better and where there was a learning, non-defensive approach on all sides.

CSSIW's new framework for the inspection and review of local authority social services was agreed in March 2009. It builds on the above message by placing on councils themselves the responsibility to ensure effective delivery of social services accountabilities and report on plans for improvement.

The recently published Welsh Assembly Government guidance on the role and accountabilities of the director of social services provides an excellent platform for taking forward the messages from *'Learning from the Journey'* locally. It gives renewed legitimacy to the leadership of the director and sets out a framework for achieving the broader vision. Taken together the guidance and the report are powerful learning tools for directors, their councils and for staff and stakeholders.

## Authorities subject to the serious concern protocol

### Bridgend

CSSIW published a review of children's services in Bridgend in July 2008. It concluded that the authority was well placed to sustain and improve services, although services remained inconsistent. It identified the overall progress which had been made but there remained some areas of continuing concern. In particular these related to the quality of practice and arrangements for the protection of vulnerable children and the impact that the restructuring of the authority would have on the delivery of children's social services.

The Chief Inspector decided it would not be appropriate to lift the protocol at that time, but did "step down" the monitoring visits and reporting arrangements. Inspectors arranged further visits to review these areas in 2009, with particular reference to the discharge of the role and responsibilities of the Director of Social Services, and to assess the degree of progress in improving practice and implementing quality assurance systems.

Inspectors visited the authority in April 2009 to determine the progress made in the areas identified. They reported that the authority had made significant improvements at political, corporate and service levels since major concerns were first identified in 2004. Bridgend had addressed the systemic problems which originally led to the decision to invoke the serious concern protocol, and the conditions which amount to serious concern were no longer present. The Chief Inspector decided to lift the protocol in recognition of the progress made.

### Swansea

In Swansea, the Chief Inspector set improvement targets for children's services. Regular monitoring of progress took place throughout 2008, leading to a full review in December to determine the progress made in improving children's services.

The inspection concluded that there had been some improvement, but the overall judgement was unchanged since the previous inspection in April 2007. Swansea's children's services remained inconsistent and the prospects for improvement were uncertain.

As a result, the Deputy Minister for Social Services decided that the authority was, without reasonable excuse, in default of its social services duties and responsibilities as set

out under the Children Act 1989. The Deputy Minister therefore directed Swansea to meet all its statutory duties under the Act without delay.

This was the first time that Welsh Ministers had used these powers in respect of a social services authority. The Deputy Minister also established an Intervention Board to provide a robust challenge to the authority in improving its services. CSSIW will conduct a further inspection of children's social services in Swansea in January 2010.

## Encouraging Improvement: Specific Initiatives

### Performance Management

The Inspectorate leads on the performance management development grant.

This programme promotes a robust performance management framework and culture. It encourages a co-ordinated approach to information and computer technology issues, particularly the strategic information systems for children's and adults' services. In 2008-09 the performance management development grant provided local authorities with £4.65 million.

We are seeing continued improvement in performance management across Wales. Specifically, this is in the form of better systems to collect information and a better understanding of how to share that information to improve services.

Many authorities are making significant progress in implementing the Integrated Children's System (ICS). This must remain a priority if authorities are to continue improving performance management.

We have also seen improvement in the completeness, validity and timeliness of the return of data in the *'Performance Measurement Framework 2008/09'*, enabling a more comprehensive view of activity and performance by local authorities.

### The Workforce

CSSIW manages the Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP). In 2008-09, SCWDP grants contributed £8.9 million to total workforce development programme expenditure of £12.73 million. Local authorities made up the difference themselves.

The SCWDP is underpinned by the guidance *'Planning For Training And Staff Development Across The Social Care Sector; Guidance To Help Welsh Authorities And Their Partners Draw Up Effective Training And Staff Development Arrangements For The Social Care Sector In Their Area'* published by the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in July 2003.

In 2008/09 we completed and published a review to report on the effectiveness of the programme, the grant and its impact on the workforce and broader partnerships.

The most significant and important message of this review is that in the five years since the publication of the guidance and the introduction of the SCWDP approach, an enormous amount has been achieved and there is much to celebrate and consolidate. However, the review also showed that progress is not even and that the partnership approach can be further developed and evolved, and outcomes can be improved.

The review demonstrated that the programme has had a wide-ranging impact. It has helped develop greater understanding of the training and staffing issues faced by the many independent social care providers and local authorities. It has also helped more staff to access training and achieve the necessary qualifications, skills and knowledge. Attendance at courses has risen each year, with an increasing proportion from the voluntary and independent sectors.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of specified awards gained by staff across the sector.

#### Specified awards gained by staff<sup>17</sup>

	2005-06	2008-09	Overall increase (%)
Childcare staff	389	789	103
Community care staff	3437	4839	41

Over 70 per cent of voluntary and independent sector providers who responded to a survey undertaken as part of the review said they now have a more planned approach to training because of the SCWDP. Over 80 per cent said this better planned approach has had a positive impact on the quality of life and care of service users.

This positive view is supported by research from Swansea University. The researchers found that better staff and managerial training and qualifications contributed to better quality of life and care in residential homes for older people.<sup>18</sup>

We know from our reviews, inspections and performance evaluation and from the report *'Learning from the Journey'* that workforce planning has improved. Similarly, we know local authorities are giving a higher priority to recruitment, retention and training and that this extends to the social work workforce where we are seeing a growing stability and sustainability. This is welcome particularly where we see the investment in partnerships with universities and 'growing your own' schemes resulting in more newly qualified staff joining the workforce. This must remain a focus of attention if we are to sustain the improvements made and rise to the challenges of modernising services and improving outcomes.

The review confirmed that the SCWDP partnership approach contributes significantly to these improvements. The partnerships are maturing as they learn lessons from what works and what

<sup>17</sup> Specified awards include National Vocational Awards (NVQs), social work qualifications, post qualifying and advanced awards taken from SCWDP monitoring reports

<sup>18</sup> The Impact of Staff Training and Qualifications on the Quality of Care and Outcomes for Older People in Residential Care 2007 Welsh Assembly Government /Swansea University

else needs to be done. They have also fostered collaborative working across the former sector divides and created a model for partnership working.

The review identified several critical factors for implementing the social care workforce development programme model set out in the guidance.

## Nationally

Leadership from the Welsh Assembly Government in setting out and driving the 'one sector, one workforce' approach:

- Setting out an expectation for local partnerships;
- Providing funding through the annual ring-fenced grant and specifying how local partnerships should use the grant;
- Ensuring annual, local and national monitoring;
- Engagement of key national partners, such as Care Council for Wales and Care Forum Wales.

## Locally

Leadership from local authorities in:

- Setting up and maintaining local partnerships;
- Achieving wide engagement in and ownership of partnerships;
- Developing systems and processes to underpin those partnerships;
- Sharing resources.

## Local providers

A commitment to the partnerships through:

- Engagement and shared ownership;
- Sharing resources.

We are developing a plan to take forward the messages from the review. We look forward to working closely with the task group on workforce issues in social care announced by the Deputy Minister for Social Services.

# Chapter Five

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## Our Performance

The year 2008-09 saw us complete our second year as an integrated Inspectorate. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) has created a new structure to deliver the best from the organisation. We have also created a new framework for the inspection and review of local authority social services.

At the same time the Inspectorate has maintained its focus on the core tasks of carrying out local authority review, individual service regulation and inspection as well as providing professional advice. This chapter sets out how we met these twin objectives.

## Our vision

CSSIW encourages the improvement of social care, early years and social services by regulating, inspecting and reviewing services. We also provide professional advice to Ministers and policymakers. We aim to raise standards, improve quality, promote best practice and tell people about social care.

To realise this vision, CSSIW has identified a number of aims, including:

- a stronger, integrated view of social services and care - from strategy to delivery - and of the pathways followed by people of all ages through the public, independent and private sectors;
- a clearer reference point for service users and stakeholders about service assessment;
- a larger capacity to analyse trends identified through regulatory and inspection activity and to provide professional advice;
- more resilience over sustaining and deploying independent professional advice, based on a whole system approach to services generally;
- better use of the combined resources of the two predecessor organisations;
- promotion of better quality services from providers;
- better coordination and joint working with other inspectors and regulators.

Turning these aspirations into tangible outcomes is at the heart of what we do.

## **Major Change Programmes**

### **Establishing a new regional structure**

CSSIW has restructured its organisation to consolidate and strengthen its regional teams and make a reality of the 'circle of care'. The regions are our focus for professional assessment and judgement about local services and organisations.

Four new regions came into being on 1 July 2008. Each region is led by a Regional Director supported by a management team. The management team oversees inspection, regulation and review activities across all social services and social care in that region.

### **Modernising the local authority social services inspection, evaluation and review process**

During the year CSSIW completed work with key partners to develop new inspection, review and evaluation arrangements. After wide consultation the Deputy Minister for Social Services agreed a new framework for implementation from 1 April 2009. This framework enables a more proportionate, flexible and timely approach which builds on the responsibility of local authorities to understand and improve their own performance.

The framework will be taken forward through the CSSIW regional structure. Regional directors will work with local authorities, other regulators and inspectors and service users to develop an up to date picture of the strengths and areas for improvement in each authority. This local work will inform our programme of national reviews and inspections, our joint work with other inspectorates and our evidence based professional advice to Ministers and policy colleagues.

CSSIW continues to work closely with colleagues in local government and health and social care policy to ensure that the new model reflects the wider improvement agenda.

### **Local Authority and National Inspection and Reviews**

In tandem with the change programme, CSSIW delivered its remaining commitments to inspection, evaluation and review. We followed up joint reviews in authorities where this was required. We conducted children's services reviews in Bridgend and Swansea. We completed and published focused reviews for Caerphilly and Newport. We also carried out the final round of annual evaluations of performance of local authorities and completed a number of national reviews.

We published our work in 2008-09 in the following reports:

Assessment of readiness of Social Care IT systems	20/05/08
Review of the Social Care Workforce Development Programme and Partnership (SCWDP)	25/06/08
Making the most of social workers' first year in practice	27/06/08
Review of children's services in Bridgend County Borough Council	18/07/08
Joint Review of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Social Services	24/07/08
Inspection of child protection services in the county of Powys	19/08/08
Inspection of child protection services in the Vale of Glamorgan	19/08/08
Joint Review of Gwynedd Council Social Services	16/10/08
Interim knowledge management report of assessment and service provision to carers in Wales	22/12/08
Review of Welsh Local Authorities arrangements for private fostering 2008	20/01/09
Joint CSSIW/HiW fundamental review of the National Service Framework (NSF) for older people in Wales	28/01/09
Focused review of Newport City Council social services	17/03/09
Focused review of Caerphilly County Borough Council social services	26/03/09
Protection of vulnerable adults monitoring report 2007-2008	31/03/09
Review of children's social services in the City and County of Swansea	31/03/09

These can be found at [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk).

## National Reviews and Inspections

CSSIW worked jointly with HIW to complete phase one of the review of the '*National Service Framework*' (NSF) for Older People in Wales. We published a knowledge management report on carers for adult services. We also published the annual monitoring report on adult protection.

Preparatory work for a series of other reviews started during the year included:

- access and eligibility;
- commissioning - use of third party payments;
- national Inspection of adult protection arrangements.

## **Working with other Inspectorates**

A key feature of our work is to develop joint working with other inspectorates by building on existing arrangements. This includes working with the Wales Audit Office, Estyn, Health Inspectorate Wales, HMI Probation, Ofsted and HMI Constabulary.

For example, in addition to the review of the older persons' NSF, during 2008-09 the Inspectorate will also work with HIW on a review of substance misuse. CSSIW has led work with other inspectorates in Wales and England to develop a multi-agency inspection framework for evaluating the Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Children and Young People's Partnerships.

## **Providing professional advice and promoting improvement**

CSSIW provides professional advice within the Assembly Government to inform policy direction and development across a wide area of services, including new legislation, policy and practice guidance. This has included advice on the new Local Government Measure and on the Guidance on the role and accountabilities of the director of social services.

CSSIW sponsors the Social Care Institute for Excellence and works with other improvement agencies, such as the Social Services Improvement Agency, in promoting and supporting better services. CSSIW has held a range of seminars and workshops and attended practice networks across Wales to raise awareness and promote best practice. CSSIW has also commissioned research and development in different areas of work.

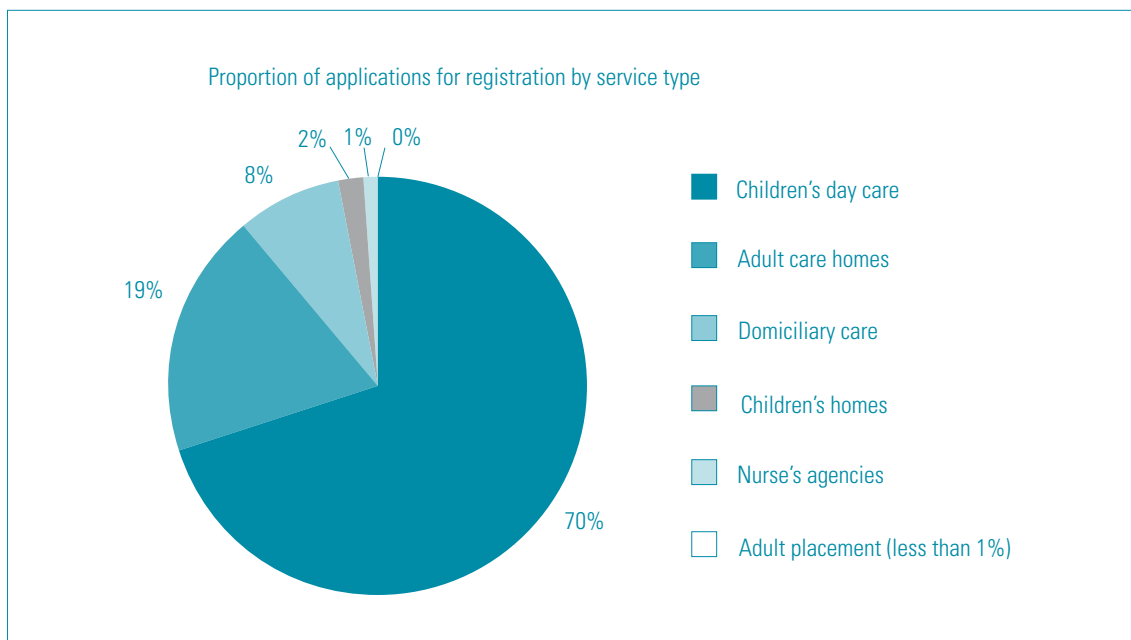
CSSIW continues to provide professional advice about adult and children's services.

## Service regulation and inspection

### Registration

In 2008-09 CSSIW dealt with 859 applications for registration - an 18 per cent decrease on 2007-08. Almost all regulated services need to register with CSSIW before they start to operate so that we can ensure that they meet the regulations.

The following chart shows the proportion of applications for registration by service type.



The profile of registration is comparable to the previous year's applications. A majority, 70 per cent, were received from children's day care services which make up 71 per cent of all registered services.

### Inspection

CSSIW completed 3,542 announced and unannounced inspection visits in 2008-09. We made 1,390 inspections of adult services and 2,152 of children's services.

CSSIW made an additional 1,035 monitoring visits during the year. This is a lower figure than for 2007-08 and is in line with our proportionate approach to inspection.

We aim to publish reports within 63 days of the end of an inspection. We met this target in 90 per cent of cases in 2008-09 compared with 92 per cent in the previous year.

## Child and adult protection

The following table shows the number of adult protection investigations and child protection notifications from 2007 to 2009.

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>Comparison</b>
Adult protection	219	112	-107
Child protection	201	69	-132
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>-239</b>

Many regulated children's services are required to alert CSSIW of any child protection issues, regardless of the nature or cause of the concern. CSSIW focuses on the implications for the management of the service and any links to a potential breach of regulation. The figures above are drawn from the notifications received by CSSIW. Not every notification requires regulatory attention or action.

Last year's figures for child protection show a decrease from 2007-08 and probably give a more accurate picture of activity. The fall in numbers follows efforts in 2007-08 to encourage providers and statutory agencies to make appropriate notifications.

The number of adult protection investigations fell for the third year in succession. The figure probably reflects a better understanding of CSSIW's role as an inspectorate and regulator by other organisations. Overall the level of adult protection activity continues to increase.

## Complaints

CSSIW received 246 complaints across the range of adult services in 2008-09 compared with 244 the previous year. Complaints about children's services fell to 105 from 140.

## Compliance

The focus of CSSIW's work is on improving social care services. The Inspectorate, working with other stakeholders, responds to issues and concerns in proportion to the risks identified. We respond to breaches in regulations in a number of ways and use a targeted approach to resolve difficulties quickly and efficiently.

In most circumstances placing requirements on the provider, who is legally accountable for the quality of the service, is enough to ensure compliance with regulations. However, in some cases formal enforcement action is necessary. The table overleaf details action taken in 2008-09. The challenge for us is to ensure that such action is part of a service-wide response that tackles the systemic nature of many service failures.

**CSSIW enforcement action in 2008-09 (i.e. notice of decision issued)**

Setting	Refusal to register any proposed registered person	Refusal to register a manager	Vary, remove or impose conditions of registration	Urgent action to vary, remove or impose conditions of registration	Refusal of application by providers to vary, or remove conditions of registration	Cancellation, ordinary procedure	Prosecutions
Younger Adult care homes	1	1	5				
Older Adult care homes		1	7		6		3
Adult Placements			1				
Domiciliary care agencies						1	
Full Day Care			2				
Children's Residential			3			1	
Out of school care							
Sessional day care			1				
Childminders			1		1	1	1

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## Further copies and other formats

Further copies of this document are available in large print or other formats if required.  
Audio versions of the report and data relating to the graphs and charts are also available.

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