

Dear

ATISN 26875 - Care Inspectorate Wales' handling of concerns, complaints and inspection / reporting processes

Thank you for your request which we initially received on 07/04/2026 and was subsequently clarified and confirmed on 18/05/2026.

Information requested

You asked for the following information in relation to Care Inspectorate Wales' handling of concerns, complaints and inspection reporting processes:

Policies and Guidance

1. Copies of any policies, procedures, or internal guidance relating to the handling and investigation of complaints raised about CIW.
2. Copies of any policies, procedures, or internal guidance relating to the handling and investigation of concerns raised about regulated childcare services.
3. Copies of any policies, procedures, or internal guidance relating to the drafting, review, and amendment of inspection reports for childcare services (including information on peer review / supervision prior to publication).
4. Copies of any policies, procedures, or internal guidance relating to the process for making changes to inspection reports for childcare services after publication outside of the approved appeals process and, ultimately, Tribunal decision, and whether this happens routinely or often.

Report Changes and Governance

5. What formal process is followed when an inspection report for a childcare service is amended after it has been published, outside of the CIW approved appeals process and Tribunal decision.
6. Who has authority to approve changes to inspection reports for childcare services following publication, and at what level of seniority? Can this be done unilaterally and, if not, what governance is relevant?
7. Are the reasons for changes to inspection reports for childcare services following publication recorded and, if so, how?

Oversight and External Input

8. What safeguards are in place to ensure independence and objectivity in inspection report writing, including peer review and supervision.
9. What safeguards are in place to ensure independence and objectivity in the handling of concerns about childcare services?
10. What safeguards are in place to ensure independence and objectivity in the handling of complaints about CIW?
11. Under what circumstances (if any) can external parties influence or request changes to inspection reports for childcare services?
12. Is it common for a complaint about CIW made by a childcare setting (i.e. entirely separate from the usual appeals process) to lead to the reopening of a published report and substantive amendments, including changes of rating, removal of priority actions, and areas for improvement removed) made?
13. Are such interactions recorded and are there policies governing them?

Data and Statistics

14. The number of complaints about CIW received from 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026 and, of those, how many were upheld, partially upheld, and not upheld.
15. The number of concerns about regulated childcare services received from 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026.
16. The number of inspection reports for childcare services which were challenged by the service provider through the 'requesting a review of evidence and findings of inspection reports' process from 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026, how many went to Tribunal, and how many (as a result of those processes) were amended or quashed.
17. On how many occasions in the past 3 years have inspection reports for childcare services been amended outside of CIW's approved process for requesting amendments (i.e. the setting's appeal process and / or tribunal decision), where these were substantive amendments that change the outcome of the inspection report.
18. The number of cases in the past 3 years where a separate CIW complaint made by a childcare setting led to the reopening of a published report and amendments or changes in findings or outcomes made, where this was entirely separate from the usual appeals process and did not go to Tribunal.

Our response

We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The information you requested is set out below.

Policies and Guidance

1. Copies of any policies, procedures, or internal guidance relating to the handling and investigation of complaints raised about CIW.

- CIW Complaints Policy (public guidance):
<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/complaints-policy-html>

- CIW Complaints Policy - Internal Guidance (internal guidance):
A copy of this guidance is enclosed (CIW-DR-0082-E)

2. Copies of any policies, procedures, or internal guidance relating to the handling and investigation of concerns raised about regulated childcare services.

- Guide to providing feedback about care services (public guidance):
<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/providing-feedback-about-care-services-wales-html>
- Practice guidance on responding to concerns about care services in Wales (internal guidance):
A copy of this guidance is enclosed (CIW-DR-0144-E)

3. Copies of any policies, procedures, or internal guidance relating to the drafting, review, and amendment of inspection reports for childcare services (including information on peer review/supervision prior to publication).

- Guidance on How we inspect childcare and play services (public guidance):
<https://careinspectorate.wales/how-we-inspect-childcare-and-play-services>

- Practice Guidance for Writing Inspection Reports Priority Action Notices and Outcome Statements (internal guidance):
A copy of this guidance is enclosed (CIW-DR-0199-E)
- Practice Guidance on Peer Review and Dip Sampling (internal guidance):
A copy of this guidance is enclosed (CIW-DR-0169-E)
- Requesting a Review of Evidence and Findings of Inspection Reports (public guidance):
<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/responding-inspection-reports-policy-html>

4. Copies of any policies, procedures, or internal guidance relating to the process for making changes to inspection reports for childcare services after publication, outside of the approved appeals process and, ultimately, Tribunal decision, and whether this happens routinely or often.

This is not a routine occurrence. Any decision to change a published report would be managed through the line management process with final agreement by the Head of Childcare and Play Inspection.

Report Changes and Governance

5. What formal process is followed when an inspection report for a childcare service is amended after it has been published, outside of the CIW approved appeals process and Tribunal decision.

This is managed through the line management process with formal agreement by the Head of Childcare and Play Inspection.

6. Who has authority to approve changes to inspection reports for childcare services following publication, and at what level of seniority? Can this be done unilaterally and, if not, what governance is relevant?

This is managed through the line management process with formal agreement by the Head of Childcare and Play Inspection.

7. Are the reasons for changes to inspection reports for childcare services following publication recorded and, if so, how?

No, they are not formally recorded, but discussions are held and the rationale for any changes clearly explored.

Oversight and External Input

8. What safeguards are in place to ensure independence and objectivity in inspection report writing, including peer review and supervision.

CIW's safeguards combine clear guidance, structured quality assurance (peer review, moderation, dip sampling), management supervision, and formal challenge mechanisms, ensuring that inspection reports are evidence based, independently scrutinised, and to a consistent standard across the organisation.

9. What safeguards are in place to ensure independence and objectivity in the handling of concerns about childcare services?

There is a clear, structured concerns process with defined decision pathways. Formal practice guidance (e.g. Practice guidance on responding to concerns about care services in Wales) sets out how concerns are assessed and handled, including options to take regulatory action, refer matters to providers, or signpost to appropriate external agencies, ensuring decisions are proportionate and based on the nature of the concern rather than individual judgement.

10. What safeguards are in place to ensure independence and objectivity in the handling of complaints about CIW?

Formal complaint investigations are allocated to an investigating officer who is a manager who is operationally independent of the case. The resulting investigation report is reviewed by the Head of Support Services or Senior Manager Support Services to undertake a quality assurance gatekeeping exercise.

11. Under what circumstances (if any) can external parties influence or request changes to inspection reports for childcare services?

The 'Requesting a review of evidence and findings of inspection reports (including ratings)' policy sets out how providers can request a review of the evidence and findings of their inspection report. There is no defined process for other external parties to request changes to an inspection report. However, the information provided by people/children using the service, parents/carers, professionals etc coupled with what we observe during the inspection and any other available intelligence, inform inspector's findings which are articulated within the inspection report.

12. Is it common for a complaint about CIW made by a childcare setting (i.e. entirely separate from the usual appeals process) to lead to the reopening of a published report and substantive amendments, including changes of rating, removal of priority actions, and areas for improvement removed) made?

It is not common for a complaint to lead to the reopening of a published inspection report.

13. Are such interactions recorded and are there policies governing them?

Issues not able to be covered by the complaints policy are noted and recorded. Those issues are then picked up by the relevant inspection team who aim to respond to or resolve those issues. The record would be the response to the person raising the complaint.

Data and Statistics

14. The number of complaints about CIW received from 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026 and, of those, how many were upheld, partially upheld, and not upheld.

A total of 23 complaints about CIW were received from 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026. 8 of these were addressed under a stage 2 formal investigation. Of these, 4 complaints had some complaint issues upheld, 4 had no complaint issues upheld.

15. The number of concerns about regulated childcare services received from 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026.

A total of 407 concerns about regulated childcare services were received by CIW from 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026.

16. The number of inspection reports for childcare services which were challenged by the service provider through the 'requesting a review of evidence and findings of inspection reports' process from 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026, how many went to Tribunal, and how many (as a result of those processes) were amended or quashed.

A total of 56 inspection reports for childcare services were challenged by the service provider through the 'Requesting a Review of Evidence and Findings of inspection reports' process from 01/04/2026 to 31/03/2026. Of these, 46 challenges resulted in amendments to the inspection report.

There is no process for appealing an inspection report to Tribunal, and reports do not get 'quashed'. All reports are published, whether amendments have been made to them or not.

17. On how many occasions in the past 3 years have inspection reports for childcare services been amended outside of CIW's approved process for requesting amendments (i.e. the setting's appeal process and / or tribunal decision), where these were substantive amendments that changed the outcome of the inspection report.

From a search of our records, we have identified one instance where an inspection report was amended outside of the 'Requesting a review of evidence and findings of inspection reports' process, where these were substantive amendments which changed the outcome of the inspection report.

18. The number of cases in the past 3 years where a separate CIW complaint made by a childcare setting led to the reopening of a published report and amendments or changes in findings or outcomes made, where this was entirely separate from the usual appeals process and did not go to Tribunal.

From a search of our records, we have identified no instances where a complaint from a service provider addressed under our complaints process, led to a published inspection report being amended or changes in findings and outcomes raised, separately to the usual inspection report appeal process. Complaints about the content and findings of our inspection reports are not subject to our complaints policy. However, we have identified one instance where matters addressed outside of a complaint investigation, which were not subject to the complaints policy, resulted in a published inspection report being reviewed and subsequently amended due to concerns about the evidence relied upon.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an

internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely