Chief Inspector's foreword 1

SECTION 1 – Summer 2020 3
Stage 1: Resolve – Addressing the immediate health threat 4
Stage 2: Resilience – Supporting continuity of learning during provider closure 6
Stage 3: Re-imagining – Gathering and sharing intelligence 7

SECTION 2 – Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021 9
Stage 4: Return – Restarting our usual work 10

Strategic objective 1 – Provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales 10
Engagement visits to maintained schools and PRUs 10
Follow-up inspection activity 11
Plans for inspection in non-maintained nursery settings, independent schools and colleges, post-16 and initial teacher education and local government education services 12
Non-maintained nursery settings 12
Independent mainstream and special schools and specialist colleges 12
Post-16 sectors 13
Initial Teacher Education 13
Local government education services 13

Strategic Objective 2 – Inform the development of national policy by Welsh Government 15
Specific advice required by Welsh Government in 2020-2021 15
Ongoing advice, detailed reports and, where appropriate, other resources drawing on evidence from engagement visits 15
Policy areas on which Welsh Government may require advice or support through contributions to working groups 16
Other areas on which Welsh Government may require advice and support regarding education and training in Wales 16

Strategic objective 3 – Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales 18
National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (NEIR) 18
Training for external inspectors 18
Link inspectors 19
Disseminating case studies 19
Celebrating excellent practice 19
Our website 19
Conferences and seminars 20
Stage 5: Reform – Advising on and contributing to long-term education reform
Looking forward

Section 3 – How we deliver our work

Building a better organisation and living our values
Strengthening stakeholder engagement
Joint working with inspection bodies
Feedback and complaints
Effective leaders and good governance
Skilled people
A great place to work
Equality and staff welfare
Welsh language standards
Sustainability and biodiversity reporting

Measuring and reporting performance

Performance objectives against our Strategic Objective 1
Performance objectives against our Strategic Objective 2
Performance objectives against our Strategic Objective 3
Performance objectives against our Delivery Principles
Our budget for 2020-2021

Annex 1: Our core purpose and activities

Annex 2: Our wellbeing statement
This Annual Plan is published in extraordinary circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed peoples’ lives, had a huge impact on economies, and posed major challenges to education systems worldwide.

In response, we have taken strong action during the crisis, supported by staff who are dedicated to serving the public. Our first action was to suspend inspections from Monday 16 March 2020.

In this time of crisis, the work of Estyn will continue and our focus will be on providing independent, objective evidence and advice. In particular, our work will inform the development of national policy, support the education and training system to deliver continuity of learning, and contribute to the recovery of the Welsh education system. We will resume our routine work and our planned Learning Inspectorate programme as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

The pandemic hit just as we were finalising our plans for 2020-21 and this circumstance created a need to rethink and re-negotiate our Annual Plan for the First Minister’s approval. For this fully revised and re-structured Annual Plan, we have identified five stages of response to the crisis: Resolve, Resilience, Re-imagining, Return and Reform that reflect the rapidly changing circumstances we find ourselves in during this period.

Section 1 of the Plan outlines what we did in the summer term of 2020, covering the first three stages of this response: how we responded quickly and resolutely as an organisation to the developing situation, how we supported system resilience, and helped re-imagine a way to return to the usual education provision. We explain how our staff have been deployed to work on a range of activities to support providers, policy makers and the Welsh education system as a whole. We will continue working closely with Welsh Government, local authorities and regional consortia on how best to do this in the future.

In Section 2, we set out our high-level plan for the rest of the financial year (autumn 2020 and spring 2021) in terms of the remaining two stages of response. Our previously published plans for a ‘transition year’ for the academic year 2020-2021, including replacing inspection of a sample of maintained schools with engagement visits to all schools, places us in a strong position to deliver this plan. We will continue to engage with schools, initially through remote means and returning to our planned programme of engagement visits when safe to do so. Our programme for inspecting other non-school sectors will be replaced by engagement activities remotely initially, with visits possible when safe to do so. We will work with our stakeholders in these sectors to decide how we will engage with them and at what point will resume our routine inspection and monitoring work. In this section, we also set out details of the remit letter that the Minister for Education sent me at the end of May 2020.
I believe that Sections 1 and 2 together represent a strong strategic response to the situation facing us as a result of the pandemic that also aligns with our longer-term ambitions to take forward the recommendations in A Learning Inspectorate.

Section 3 outlines ‘how’ we deliver our work. The year ahead will continue to be challenging, but having already seen how my colleagues have responded so far, I am proud to lead Estyn and have full confidence in our ability to continue to bring our impartial and objective judgement and expertise to bear on the current challenges facing the education and training system in Wales. Working in collaboration with our stakeholders, this plan of work will help us support the education and training system during these unprecedented times and help it recover and improve.

**Meilyr Rowlands**  
Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
SECTION 1 – Summer 2020

In response to the COVID-19 situation, we established and will continue to keep foremost in our minds the following four priorities:

- the health and safety of our staff
- the wellbeing of all learners and the continuity of their learning
- the support needed by the leaders, teachers and other staff of the Welsh education system
- the maintenance of effective strategic and operational running of our organisation

Toward the end of March 2020, we quickly developed a flexible response strategy that was and will be subject to ongoing scrutiny by our Inspection Policy and Advice Committee and Strategy Board (including Non-Executive Directors). It will be updated for regular approval by Executive Board. It covers the following five stages of response – resolve, resilience, re-imagining, return and reform; these phases are referenced in the following sections of the Annual plan.

Stage 1: Resolve – Addressing the immediate health threat

During the early months of 2020, we monitored the coronavirus situation closely as it developed, as well as the developing Welsh and UK Government policies. We also gathered intelligence on the practical impact that the coronavirus was having on schools and other providers. As the pandemic situation evolved, it became clear that it was increasingly difficult for schools and other providers to keep working as normal as more children, learners and staff were becoming absent.

We held discussions with schools and other providers that were due to be inspected shortly, with the other home nation education inspectorates (Ofsted, Education Scotland, and Northern Ireland’s ETI) and that of the Republic of Ireland, and with Care Inspectorate Wales. As a result of these discussions, and because of the rapidly changing and challenging period facing schools and other education and training providers due to COVID-19, we decided, in agreement with Welsh Government officials and Ministers, to suspend inspections and instead deploy inspection staff to a range of activities to support providers and the Welsh education system.

On the morning of Monday 16 March 2020, we announced our intention to suspend inspections and related work. Our main rationale for the suspension was to:

- allow leaders and staff in all education and training providers, and those organisations who support them, to focus fully on the wellbeing of their learners, their staff and their families; and

- help providers to maintain staffing levels by ensuring that peer and other inspectors are not out of their institutions at this important time.

Subsequently, the Welsh Government closed schools (except to provide care for the children of key workers and for vulnerable pupils) from Monday 23 March 2020.
At this time the decision was made to move the senior management team and office based staff to home working (HM Inspectors are always home working). Initially, a small number of staff remained in the office to organise the provision of essential equipment to all staff.

Throughout the crisis, a prime concern was ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff. During the initial period of uncertainty, clarity of internal communication was identified as a key concern and systems were established to ensure daily updates. Employment conditions of service were adapted temporarily in line with Welsh and UK civil service and other policies, and appropriate guidance issued to all staff. We also liaised closely with our external additional inspectors regarding the cancellation of inspection contracts. All Estyn’s established meetings and governance structures continued remotely by digital means. Initially, we established additional management and governance arrangements. Executive officers (HMCI and the two Strategic Directors) meeting remotely daily, and a new Senior Management Team (SMT) group was established consisting of the executives, the head of corporate services and assistant directors.

We have continued to work closely with our trade unions (FDA and PCS) and increased our meetings with the education professional associations and trade unions, including ASCL, NAHT, NEU, NASUWT and UCAC, as well as bringing forward our usual joint meeting.

Clarity of purpose is essential during such times. We ensured that all staff knew what they were supposed to do personally in terms of their work programme. Line managers worked closely with staff to decide what was best for them to focus on over the first few weeks – this work included completing ongoing work, including the completion of all inspection and thematic reports, and professional learning from an existing list of resources, supplemented by new opportunities specifically written to replace planned professional learning week activities that had been cancelled. Inspectors were encouraged where possible to move forward their research enquiry work (originally timetabled for our transition year, commencing September 2020). We also enabled individual staff to volunteer, for example to support local schools or authorities where they were able to do so.

A new approach to external communication was required. HMCI thanked education staff across Wales for their work under these difficult circumstances by video. We explained clearly on our website and through direct communication with education providers and our other stakeholders that we would not be promoting our publications such as thematic reports or provider inspection reports during this period, although these would still appear on our website. We did this to minimize the amount of information that leaders and others had to process, so they could give their full attention to tackling the immediate crisis.
Stage 2: Resilience – Supporting continuity of learning during provider closure

During this second stage, our main priority was supporting the Welsh Government ‘Continuity of learning’ programme. This priority constituted a ‘new purpose’ for the organisation and was communicated clearly to staff.

Welsh Government contacted us on 18 March seeking our support for providing ‘Continuity of learning’ for the vast majority of children and young people who were now not at school. This was a major programme of work, consisting of four Underlying Principles (UPs) and, initially, 12 ‘Deliverables’ (Ds). In addition to Estyn and Welsh Government, the programme involved local authorities and regions. Estyn was asked to lead on two strands (UP2 – inclusion, and D7 – support for school leaders on how best to continue with school business) and to contribute to most of the other strands.

We established internal workgroups, involving most of our inspectors, some corporate staff, and all managers, as well as governance and accountability structures to manage these work-streams. Quick progress was made with the various work-streams and Estyn’s support for all the strands have been very well received.

Advice for schools and PRU leaders on continuing with school business (Deliverable 7) was published on 23 April 2020, on the Welsh Government website and our website here. School and PRU leaders are able to use this advice to build on what they've already achieved or as a reminder or reassurance. The advice consisted of:

- Supporting continuity of learning for children and young people
- Advice for school and PRU leaders and governors on how to continue with school and PRU business during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Key principles to support the continuation of school and PRU business, using technology where appropriate
- Developing integrated approaches to support blended learning for the phased opening of schools
- FAQs: COVID-19 and inspection
- Our support for Welsh education and training in the current climate

Alongside the advice above, we also published a range of cameos to bring to life how schools approached conducting school business during the crisis. We will work with stakeholders to publish and promote these case studies on our website.

- Cameos and ideas from schools and PRUs on continuing with school business
- Cameos and ideas for continuity of school business during COVID-19
- Insights into how independent schools and specialist colleges have responded during COVID-19

We worked closely with local authorities and regional consortia to design a self-evaluation process for them to consider how they were supporting vulnerable
learners. We used their feedback to identify examples of strong practice and areas where they needed more support or guidance in a report that we shared with ADEW and Welsh Government.

We offered our support to Welsh Government childcare colleagues and liaised with CWLWM partners, Social Care Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales.

We offered our support to the Post-16 and independent sectors. Welsh Government published a ‘Post-16 Resilience Plan for the Post-16 sector’ in May 2020 and established several task and finish groups to support the key delivery areas of the plan, involving working closely with Estyn and a wide range of post-16 stakeholders and organisations. Estyn was asked to chair the group developing guidance to support A-level provision in school sixth forms and further education colleges. We also contributed to work on developing blended learning guidance for the post-16 sectors and we are part of a group looking at supporting wellbeing. Alongside this ongoing advice, we have also published a range of cameos to bring to life how post-16 providers have approached their work during the crisis.

- Cameos and ideas from FE colleges
- Cameos and ideas from wok-based learning providers
- Cameos and ideas from adult-learning providers

We have worked closely with Qualifications Wales over the new teacher assessment ‘fair grade’ arrangements that will take the place of this year’s examinations and arranged a programme of regular meetings to discuss the arrangements for 2021.

**Stage 3: Re-imagining – Gathering and sharing intelligence**

On the 3 June 2020, the Minister for Education announced her wish for the increasing of operation of schools from 29 June 2020 and for FE colleges to re-open for certain groups of learners from 15 June 2020. Schools increased their operation for the last three weeks of the summer term in most local authorities, with three authorities adding a fourth week of schooling and one local authority continuing to only provide care due to a local outbreak.

At the request of the Director of the Education Department, Welsh Government, HMCI joined a group called ‘COVID-19 response: Evidence for operation of schools - middle tier’ to develop principles for making the decision on when and how schools should increase their operations.

Having contributed to the Continuity of learning programme, the next stage of our work was to re-establish contact with individual providers and services – a ‘keeping in touch’ strategy. We started with those needing the most support – providers causing concern. We did this carefully and sensitively and this approach was highly appreciated by those we contacted. We also built on the existing good relationships that we have with local authorities, FE colleges, work-based learning providers and adult learning partnerships through our link inspector contacts. In addition, we have had regular contact with the new ITE partnerships. This ‘keeping in touch’ allowed us to gather intelligence that we could then collate and feed back to Welsh Government. We produced ‘summary reports’ based on these engagement phone calls, which were sent to Welsh Government on 2 June 2020, 19 June 2020, 7 July
2020 and 17 July 2020 to provide independent, objective evidence on how schools have dealt with the challenges of the current crisis to support policy decision-making.

The ‘keeping in touch’ work was based on and benefited from the training and piloting we had done in the previous financial year on ‘engagement visits’. Following our decision to suspend inspection on 16 March 2020, we considered whether engagement visits, which we intended to continue to pilot during the summer term 2020, should continue and whether this would be particularly useful during these circumstances. We made the decision to replace the engagement visits with phone calls. The focus of the engagement also changed, with a focus now on how schools are coping rather than on curriculum reform, so that we could identify general challenges and support schools needed from the system.

Towards the end of the summer term, Welsh Government asked Estyn to facilitate a group of headteachers and ADEW members to identify and publish a document to illustrate different models of full school opening. The focus will be to share practical information/strategies to help schools and PRUs to help to minimise social contact between groups of pupils and staff, as the biggest challenge facing schools in returning to full operation in September of course. This thematic work will continue over the summer period with the intention of publishing the case studies and cameos outlining various approaches before September 2020 to help schools refine their plans.

In summary, our staff were involved in a range of activities during the summer term 2020:

- supporting ‘Continuity of learning’ and resilience plans for the Post-16 sector, as described above
- establishing contact with and ‘keeping in touch’ with providers
- supporting providers, particularly those in a follow-up category (special measures or significant improvement); for example, we established a pastoral HMI link for each of these schools, starting with the schools in the Welsh Government Schools Causing Concern pilot project
- secondments and loans of some of our staff to Welsh Government, including inspectors to support ALN, quality assurance of published material and digital developments
- some 40% of inspectors who were in a position to do so volunteered on a personal basis to support local authorities directly, for example to staff hubs; this offer was made to about a half of local authorities in Wales and was much appreciated – in most cases, these inspectors were placed on a reserve list to be accessed when there was need
- continuation of the ongoing work and professional development and research opportunities, as described in the ‘resolve’ stage above
Section 2: Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021
SECTION 2 – Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021

Stage 4: Return – Restarting our usual work

On 9 July 2020, the Minister for Education announce her strong ambition to see schools open fully for all pupils by the end of September 2020. Other providers are also increasing their operations, for example with FE colleges reopening with some face-to-face provision from 15 June 2020 and non-maintained providers increasing their childcare operations from June with a view to resuming the provision of education from September.

Strategic objective 1 – Provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales

Engagement visits to maintained schools and PRUs

Our strategic three-phased ‘transition plan’ previously published in our Annual Plan 2019-2020 was based on recommendations for Estyn in the independent ‘Learning Inspectorate’ report here. Our current understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the Welsh education system suggests that this transition plan, though needing some adaptation, places us in a strong position to respond to the current crisis.

Phase one of the transition plan was that the 2020-2021 academic year would be a ‘transition year’ for maintained schools and PRUs. Inspections of a sample of schools were to be replaced by ‘engagement visits’ to all schools. The main focus of these one-day visits was to explore how schools are planning and preparing for curriculum reform and for education reform more broadly.

This plan to partially suspend maintained school and PRU inspections for one year from September 2020 has not changed. We will still be using 2020-2021 as a transition year. We will be undertaking engagement phone calls or visits during the transition year as planned. We will not start visits until it is safe and practicable to do so.

In the summer term of 2020, we made engagement phone calls to a broad sample of primary, secondary, all age and special schools, and PRUs. The main focus was the wellbeing of learners, staff and the provider’s community. We also learnt about how providers are approaching particular challenges of engaging and supporting their learners and their communities during these difficult times. We used this information to provide evidence and to advise the Welsh Government at a national level to support their decision-making.

We intend to continue to engage with schools, initially through remote means, and returning to our planned programme of engagement visits when safe to do so. The aim of these engagement phone calls and visits will focus on the response to the impact of the pandemic, during this initial period. It will be important during this time...
to identify the challenges schools are facing, for example in re-integrating learners back to school partially and then fully.

At an appropriate point, our focus for these engagement visits will shift back to how schools are preparing for curriculum reform.

**Follow-up inspection activity**

We have established the following principles for guiding our future work with **schools currently requiring follow up**:  

- During the period of schools and other providers reopening, we will adopt a sensitive, flexible and balanced approach to our work, including with schools requiring follow up  
- We have been in touch with all schools and providers requiring follow-up activity and are tailoring our approach to their individual circumstances  
- For schools and providers recently placed in a statutory follow-up category we will offer remote support in constructing their Post-Inspection Action Plan  
- We will also contact schools and providers in special measures to discuss the possibility that their next visit will not result in a formal written report

HMI have been contacting schools and PRUs in statutory categories of follow-up (Special Measures and Significant Improvement), in their role as ‘pastoral’ HMI. We have already received positive feedback from headteachers and senior leaders about how helpful they find these conversations. We will share the main overarching findings with Welsh Government to help to inform their policy and decision-making.

We have continued our involvement with Welsh Government’s multi-agency trial for secondary schools causing concern. Although many of the meetings planned for late spring/summer 2020 were cancelled due to Covid-19 we have maintained regular contact with most of the schools involved, either through telephone calls or short meetings with members of the SLT. We have used this time to work with Welsh Government to survey all partners involved in the trial to consider what amendments can be made to the trial when multi-agency meetings resume during autumn 2020.

We have also continued to provide support to local authorities causing concern through the work of our link inspectors. This has included supporting local authorities recently inspected to develop their post-inspection action plans. In discussion with individual local authorities, we will consider at what point it will be appropriate to restart other aspects of our follow up work, including improvement conferences. We will also work with the Welsh Government to pilot other ways of providing a multi-agency approach to supporting local authorities causing concern.

There are four post-16 providers requiring follow up currently. We continue to maintain contact with each provider and will work closely with them to determine when it is appropriate to resume formal monitoring activity.
Plans for inspection in non-maintained nursery settings, independent schools and colleges, post-16 and initial teacher education and local government education services

We are currently building on the existing links we have with providers in these non-maintained nursery settings, independent schools and colleges, post-16 and initial teacher education and local government education services. In most of these sectors we are making engagement phone calls to individual providers. The main focus of these is the wellbeing of learners, staff and the provider's community. Will also learn about the approaches they are taking to their work during this time. We will capture and share new and interesting approaches and use the information gathered to provide advice to the Welsh Government rather than judge or report on individual providers.

Inspections will not resume as soon as education and training providers open. We recognise that providers may face challenges in assisting their learners to reintegrate and will want to prioritise learner and staff wellbeing. We will work with providers and other relevant stakeholders to gather feedback to inform our plans to resume inspection and other formal monitoring work. We will share these plans well in advance.

We will extend our suspension of inspection activity into the autumn term for many of the other sectors we inspect. We will review each term whether core inspections can go ahead during the following term. We aim to re-start core inspections as soon as it is safe, practicable and appropriate to do so. We will be sensitive to individual circumstances. When it is safe to resume inspection we will give the same notice period as usual, even if a provider had their inspection cancelled. We will not necessarily prioritise those whose inspection was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Non-maintained nursery settings

We are building on the existing links we have with nursery providers in the nonmaintained sector. We continue to work closely with Care Inspectorate Wales. We will not carry out joint inspections too soon and only when it is safe and appropriate to do so. Together, Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn have decided that the current suspension of joint inspections of non-maintained settings will continue until at least 31 December 2020. We will review the situation in the autumn and consider the options for restarting the joint inspection programme in the future. We aim to give the sector at least 6 weeks’ notice before resuming routine joint inspections.

Over the coming months each inspectorate will make separate arrangements for getting in touch with a sample of settings but we will share relevant information from these engagement activities where necessary. These will focus on safety, wellbeing and engagement in learning as appropriate.

Independent mainstream and special schools and specialist colleges

From September, one of our inspectors will be in touch with a sample of providers to arrange an engagement phone call. This will focus initially on wellbeing and
engagement with. We will assess the situation regularly, and when safe and appropriate for us to do so, we will begin to make short engagement visits. We will liaise with other inspectorates where necessary to reach joint decisions about resuming core inspections.

We will consider individual material change requests or applications to register new schools and make decisions on whether we need to/can visit the sites and respond accordingly. Schools who receive engagement phone calls/visits will not necessarily be precluded from core inspections when they resume.

For independent special schools and specialist colleges, we will resume annual monitoring visits when it is safe and appropriate for us to do so.

**Post-16 sectors**

From September, link inspectors will continue to keep in touch with providers as they have done in recent months. We will assess the situation regularly, and when safe and appropriate for us to do so, we will begin to make short engagement visits. We will liaise with other inspectorates where necessary to reach joint decisions about resuming inspections.

We will also publish a synthesis of findings from the link inspector engagement calls or visits at a national level in the spring term, including sharing learning and insights that may help spread effective practice and making recommendations to further improve practice.

**Initial Teacher Education**

The new inspection cycle for Initial Teacher Education partnerships will be postponed until 2021-2022, as the partnerships have not yet had an opportunity to run their full programmes. We will continue to engage with the sector through a range of link meetings conducted virtually with all seven of the ITE partnerships.

During the autumn term 2020, we will continue to engage with all the ITE partnerships individually, hold national stakeholder events and meetings with the partnerships and with ITE representatives in the consortium. In the spring term, 2021, we plan to undertake the remaining try-out visits to the five remaining partnerships. If this isn’t possible we will complete a few of these try-outs during the summer term the following year.

**Local government education services**

We will extend our suspension of core inspection activity under our current inspection guidance into the autumn term for local government education services. We will evaluate each term whether core inspections can go ahead during the following term. We aim to re-start core inspections as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so in the next academic year.

In the meantime, we propose to use our engagement work with schools and local authorities to review how local authorities and regional consortia have worked with schools to promote wellbeing and learning, put in place early planning for the
accelerated learning programme, and support vulnerable learners to re-engage in school. We will also provide opportunities for learners, parents, governors and school leaders to provide feedback to inform our review. We will aim to write to each local authority, copied to their regional consortium and Welsh Government, with feedback by the end of the autumn term. Our link inspectors will work with local authorities to follow up on any areas for improvement during the rest of the Autumn term and during Spring 2021. This work will consider:

- Promoting wellbeing and learning – what quality assurance work has been done to improve the quality of the learning offer and schools’ support for learners' wellbeing; how has the feedback from quality assurance activities been used to develop further guidance and professional learning
- Accelerated learning programme – how effective has early planning and implementation been
- Supporting vulnerable learners – how has the local authority targeted services and support to vulnerable learners to support their wellbeing and engagement in learning, what barriers still exist; we will use the feedback from local authorities’ self-evaluation in June 2020 in relation to support for vulnerable learners this term to help the detailed scoping of this work

We will also publish a synthesis of these findings at a national level in the autumn term, including sharing learning and insights that may help spread effective practice and making recommendations to further improve practice.
Strategic Objective 2 – Inform the development of national policy by Welsh Government

Specific advice required by Welsh Government in 2020-2021

A summary of the remit letter that the Minister for Education sent HMCI at the end of May 2020 are given below. The full letter can be seen here.

Ongoing advice, detailed reports and, where appropriate, other resources drawing on evidence from engagement visits

The usual set of thematic reports will be ‘paused’ and instead we will concentrate on supporting the education system’s recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We completed the visits to providers for some thematic reports before they closed and we will publish these reports over the next few months as planned. We hope some of them will have particularly helpful practice for the current difficult circumstances. For those thematic reports we have already started, we will consider when it might be appropriate to visit the final few providers to gather evidence.

Our remit letter identified that the Welsh Government would welcome advice across the sectors within our remit in relation to:

- Engagement of learners, including effective strategies for different age groups
- The home curriculum and the transition to the recovery curriculum in all education providers
- Support for learners, parents and professionals, in particular in relation to emotional wellbeing
- Equity of access to learning and support
- Support for transition into primary, secondary and post-16 education and training
- Learning in local authority commissioned EOTAS provision (e.g. independent special schools, colleges, training providers, home tuition)

We will capture feedback through engagement phone calls and visits and, where appropriate, surveys with different stakeholders.

This advice may be through contributions to working groups, written advice or published guidance or reports. We have already provided a range of advice as described in Stage 2 and Stage 3 above. During the autumn and spring terms we will continue to provide ongoing advice to the Welsh Government and in particular we have already agreed that we will publish national reports in the following areas:

- Local authorities’ approaches to supporting schools, their governing bodies and pupils during the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on the quality and impact of provision, support and guidance for vulnerable learners and local authorities’ work to secure the delivery of teaching and learning from September 2020
- Blended learning approaches in further education, work-based learning and adult learning in the community
• Support for learner wellbeing in further education, work-based learning and adult learning in the community

Depending on the recovery of the education system, we will determine in consultation with Welsh Government and other stakeholders, the appropriate point to start focusing engagement visits on preparation for the implementation of Curriculum for Wales. Once we refocus on preparation for the Curriculum for Wales, we will continue with our plan to regularly publish summaries of our findings to help share learning.

**Policy areas on which Welsh Government may require advice or support through contributions to working groups**

We will provide advice and support for decision making in a range of areas, for example, in response to requests provide support to various working groups through representation, presentation of written evidence or discussions with senior Welsh Government officials.

**Other areas on which Welsh Government may require advice and support regarding education and training in Wales**

We will also provide ongoing support in the following areas:

- School closure and reorganisation proposals
- Placements for pupils with a statement of special educational need where specific Welsh Minister consent is required under section 347(5) (b) of the Education Act 1996
- Annual monitoring of independent schools which have been approved under section 347(1) of the Education Act 1996, to admit pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) generally and has pupils with SEN on roll; or an independent school that has registered to admit pupils with SEN under section 158 of the Education Act 2002 and has SEN pupils on roll
- Inspection and annual monitoring of all independent specialist colleges in Wales and provision of an inspector as part of a team on the inspections or annual monitoring visits of independent specialist colleges in England where 10 or more learners from Wales are funded to attend
- Registration of independent schools
- Pupil development grant
- Education improvement grant for schools
- Development of qualifications and inspection arrangements for any proposed new initial teacher training and continuing professional learning requirements for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector
- Schools causing concern
- Follow up work in respect of Local Education Authorities
- Honours nominations
- Background information for Ministerial visits to schools
- Senedd questions
HMCI’s Annual Report

HMCI’s Annual Report for 2019-2020 academic year will report on inspection outcomes for the period from September 2019 to 16 March 2020, when inspections were suspended. In addition, the Annual Report will also report on developments during the period from March-August 2020 relating to COVID-19 including decisions relating to education provision, and the response of education providers during this period.
Strategic objective 3 – Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales

National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (NEIR)

Last year, in phase one of the National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (NEIR) project, we worked with a number of schools, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), regional consortia and ADEW to consider the tools, approaches and culture that can support quality school improvement work. The hard work and commitment from all partners ensured that the new resource made very good progress.

We are currently in phase two of developing the resource although due to COVID-19 school-based piloting has been paused until late autumn 2020 / early spring 2021.

During this year, the project team (Estyn, Welsh Government, local authority representatives and regional consortia links) will work to adapt the NEIR website hosted on HwB as well as developing an animation to explain the purpose of the resource to school leaders, teachers and governors.

We plan to strengthen the link between the professional learning journey website developed by Welsh Government (to support the professional learning of teachers and leaders) and the NEIR platform. This will enable us to share resources efficiently, improve the range of resources available to schools and to avoid the duplication of work.

We will be adapting the NEIR prompts in light of COVID-19, for example by supporting schools to evaluate blended learning and also to make sure that the tone and focus is appropriate given the challenges of the current situation. We will continue to update pilot schools and other stakeholders about our developments.

Training for external inspectors

Our usual programme of training for additional inspectors, peer inspectors, challenge advisers and lay inspectors will be suspended in line with the suspension of core inspections. We have been in touch with all our peer, lay, additional, registered inspectors and registered nursery inspectors. While face-to-face training may be some way off, we will continue to keep in touch with our inspectors and explore how we can ensure their skills are kept up-to-date.

We will consider later in the year whether we are able to provide a programme of initial training for new registered nursery inspectors and initial training for new additional inspectors to inspect in teacher education and training, although we recognise that is likely to be deferred.

We will also consider when we might be able to continue with initial training for new peer inspectors and update training for existing peer inspectors to inspect teacher education and training, local government education services and post-16 providers (including further education institutions, adult learning, work-based learning providers and prisons), as well as update training for existing peer inspectors to inspect Welsh for adults and in independent schools and independent special schools.
**Link inspectors**

Our teams of link inspectors for local authorities, further education institutions, work-based training providers and adult learning in the community partnerships have engaged regularly with providers during the summer term 2020. This has been supportive to providers and helped to gather intelligence on the response of the education system to COVID-19. We will continue with more regular engagement during the rest of the financial year and continue to summarise the intelligence in advice to Welsh Government.

Our local authority and regional consortia link inspectors work in pairs to monitor and challenge local authorities about the performance and progress of their schools and education services. We will ensure that link inspectors have opportunities to carry out engagement phone calls and visits to schools in their local authority area to gain first hand evidence of the impact of the work of the local authority and its regional consortium. Link inspectors will prepare a report on the work of their local authority and its regional consortium which will be shared with the local authority by the end of the autumn term. They will then work with their local authority to consider any areas for improvement.

During spring 2021, we expect to work with CIW and Audit Wales to hold joint risk assessment workshops with senior leaders in each local authority.

**Disseminating case studies**

During this year we will continue to publish cameos and case studies that illustrate how providers have approached the challenges presented by the current crisis. These will be published on our website [https://www.estyn.gov.wales/best-practice?type=effective_practice](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/best-practice?type=effective_practice)

**Celebrating excellent practice**

Due to COVID-19, we will not hold an annual awards evening in 2020 but we will recognise and celebrate effective and interesting practice across a range of providers. We will send each of the providers a framed certificate as well as a personal letter from HMCI congratulating them on their excellent work. We will also list the providers that would have been invited to the awards evening on our website and they will be referenced in our Annual Report. In addition, we will draw their achievements to the attention of Kirsty Williams, the Welsh Government's Minister for Education.

**Our website**

We've been improving our website to make sure that it is fully accessible and takes advantage of the latest technology. Upgrading our site strengthens our stakeholder engagement by giving us better tools to promote our resources and providing a first-class online experience that enables users to quickly and easily find information. We will launch our new website this year; it will provide an improved user experience and allow us to make greater use of analytics to tailor and target information to meet user interest.
Conferences and seminars

We understand the need to hold stakeholder engagement fora in order to share messages with key stakeholders in an organised and strategic way, and to listen to their views and ideas.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our work significantly, it does present us with an opportunity to re-think how we run events. It also allows us to develop our event content to be more supportive, reflective and transparent.

During the remainder of the financial year, we will pilot holding stakeholder events virtually and using a blended approach, giving delegates the option of attending in person or virtually, possibly using smaller multi-venues. Based on the feedback we gather, we will update our stakeholder engagement strategy to reflect these new approaches.

During the year, we will consider how we can work more with regional consortia to disseminate key findings from our work through their existing communication mechanisms.

We will also pilot how we could use virtual events such as webinars to disseminate findings from our engagement visits and thematic work. In particular, we aim to hold events during 2021 to share findings from our thematic report on early language acquisition which we will publish by January 2021.

Stage 5: Reform – Advising on and contributing to long-term education reform

We will continue to provide Welsh Government with advice on its education reform programme, including whether and how that programme will need to be adapted in light of the present situation.

In addition to our membership of the Welsh Government ‘COVID-19 response’ group, and ongoing full engagement with the ‘continuity of learning’, and ‘Resilience Plan’ for Post-16 sectors, we are also part of the Welsh Government ‘Quadripartite’ research group. On 24 March, this group met to consider the priorities for ongoing research in light of the coronavirus situation and the long-term implications for teaching and learning, and distance and digital learning in particular. Several research enquiry projects undertaken by HMI during this period are also relevant.

On 3 June 2020, the Minister announced that schools and other education providers will only partially re-open in the first instance in the sense that not all learners will return fully all at once due to ongoing social distancing requirements. Even after there is full return to education and training for all learners, education and training providers will take time to get back to ‘normal’, as they will be coping with the ‘shock to the system’ and with a range of specific issues such as responding to the various implications of social distancing and lockdown. The challenges of returning to normal and for the continuation of education reform are many, but there are also opportunities for progressing education reform and of seeing novel ways of addressing some of the perceived challenges for the education reform programme.
The current crisis has meant that there has been a sharper focus on the wellbeing needs of the learner and a fundamental re-appraisal of what learning should consist of. In terms of curriculum reform specifically, the current situation has brought the importance of the following to the fore:

- physical and mental wellbeing of learners and staff
- developing independent, resilient learners
- vulnerable learners
- strengthening learner voice and parental voice
- researching the most effective teaching and learning approaches, particularly in terms of digital and distance learning

These present an opportunity to re-evaluate the community-focus of schools including strengthening relationships with parents and having a more integrated approach to learner wellbeing and multi-agency support for families. We can also re-think how best to reduce any bureaucratic and other barriers for schools and other providers, as well as to re-think examination practice and performance measures. There is also an opportunity to re-imagine education and training more broadly, for example in terms of the use of digital and distance learning, school and education provider opening arrangements and staff work-life balance.

We will use all the work we do with education providers to encourage a strong focus on self-evaluation and reflection on how their provision has and will continue to adapt and change.

**Looking forward**

In Phase two of our transition plan, we re-start inspections of schools and PRUs in September 2021, with a new framework and with no grading. This is a particularly useful development in light of the pandemic. Whenever schools fully reopen, it will take them time to get back to normal, and accountability will need to support their recovery.

We are considering the impact of not being able to pilot our new inspection framework and arrangements as we had originally planned in summer 2020. We still intend to roll out the new framework for all maintained and independent schools and PRUs from September 2021. During the academic year 2020-2021, we will consult with all our stakeholders about the new framework and its rollout.

The proposed changes, other than not grading, are likely to be minimal, therefore for these reasons, we plan that inspections during 2021-2022 be effectively considered pilots for the following year. We will review and evaluate the inspections carried out during that year and make any necessary ‘tweaks’ and adjustments for subsequent years as usual.

We will continue to work closely with other home nation education inspectorates (Ofsted, Education Scotland, and Northern Ireland’s ETI) and that of the Republic of Ireland to refine our approach to inspection. To support our evaluation of blended learning approaches, we will work in partnership with Education Scotland to produce guidance for inspectors and self-evaluation advice for schools.
We will continue to discuss with Welsh Government on the timing of restarting inspection and whether we need to look at the inspection framework and arrangements for September 2021 depending on any ongoing impact of the pandemic. We will continue to explore the implications for us of not inspecting during the 2020 summer term (and the last three-weeks of the spring term) not least in terms of our statutory obligation to inspect all schools within a statutory period. There are similar considerations for all the other sectors we inspect.

We will use the opportunity of our planned consultation of future inspection arrangements for post-16 sectors to consider how inspection can reflect the ongoing changes to provision following COVID-19. In particular, our early work on blended learning approaches in post-16 sectors will help to shape future inspection work. We will work closely with Welsh Government, HEFCW and the QAA to consider how we can work towards a more shared approach to quality assurance in the post-16 sectors. We will continue to work with the Welsh Government to provide feedback and advice about the proposed TER Bill.
Section 3: How we deliver our work
Section 3 – How we deliver our work

The COVID-19 situation has required us to adapt the focus and delivery of all our work, but our mission, vision and strategic objectives remain unchanged:

Our mission is to achieve excellence for all learners in Wales by providing independent, high quality inspection and advice on policy.

Our vision is to be recognised through the expertise of our staff as an authoritative voice on education and training in Wales.

Our strategic objectives are focussed on improving the quality of outcomes for learners in Wales through:

- Providing public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training provision in Wales
- Informing the development of national policy by the Welsh Government
- Building capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales

In doing so, it is equally important that Estyn follows its delivery principles.

- Continue to develop Estyn as a ‘best value’ organisation and ‘exemplary employer’
- Continue to work collaboratively with stakeholders and other inspectorates to support improvement

Our values

- Keep learners and citizens at the centre of our work
- Demonstrate effective leadership and teamwork at all levels
- Encourage responsibility, initiative and innovation
- Act with openness, integrity and objectivity, demonstrating the highest standards of public service
- Value people and the contributions they make
- Foster an engaging and healthy working environment
- Work in partnership with others, while maintaining our independence

Annual Plan 2020-2021
Building a better organisation and living our values

As a learning inspectorate, our aim is to continually improve. We want to continue to be a well-run organisation that delivers for our stakeholders and for ourselves – having a bigger impact and making a greater difference for all learners in Wales. This means having inspiring leaders in all roles, with skilled people throughout an organisation that’s a great place to work and attracts great people.

We are evaluating the changes in working practices and the skills that we’ve needed to develop in the period since March 2020 to inform the ways we will work in the longer term. The enforced shift to remote working for all staff has provided valuable insights into the way we collaborate, run meetings and organise and deliver events. We now have clear evidence that many office based staff can work effectively and successfully from home – which is helping to reduce our environmental footprint, facilitate a greater focus on outputs and support greater flexibility and individual wellbeing.

We have established a working group to develop our ‘future ways of working’. This group, which includes TUS representation, is using feedback from an all-staff survey to develop initial options for further discussion. The group will identify ways, and develop appropriate guidance, to meet existing and potential challenges under each option, such as preventing social isolation and maintaining high engagement and innovation when staff work remotely. The group will also report on the financial implications of each options, for example any potential savings that could arise from a permanent shift to more home working and less office accommodation.

We will run a ‘virtual’ staff conference in early spring 2021 to further discuss options and develop long term proposals.

Strengthening stakeholder engagement

By stakeholder engagement we mean how we listen, involve and inform learners, their families, providers of education and training, government policy makers and other individuals and groups who have a direct interest in our work. Our approach to stakeholder engagement is set out in our strategy. Our stakeholders are people or small groups with the power to respond to, negotiate with, and change the strategic future of our work. Through listening to and learning from our stakeholders we shape how and what we do to help deliver each of our strategic objectives. We will always aim to engage with our stakeholders and will resume face-to-face forums when it is safe and practicable to do so. In the meantime, we will explore other means of engagement, such as through using online conferencing, to:

- **Listen to stakeholders**: make best use of their time by seeking their views, engaging them in decisions and sharing information, encourage feedback through compliments and concerns to help inform our decision-making processes and help us build better relationships
- **Involve stakeholders**: seek views on arrangements for inspection, involve stakeholders directly in our inspections, work together on shared projects and encourage conversation through different communication channels
Inform stakeholders: provide stakeholders with clear, coherent and consistent messages; keep them up to date with developments in inspection, the latest effective practice, recommendations from our thematic and inspection work.

At the right time, we will resume consultation on our preparations for the implementation of ‘A Learning Inspectorate’. We will also consult with post-16 sectors about changes to our inspection arrangements in relevant sectors.

Joint working with inspection bodies

We will continue to work with other inspectorates in Wales, the UK and in Europe with a shared aim to support better outcomes for people, seeking always to protect their interests by reporting without fear or favour on the public services that fall within our remit. By working together effectively, the impact we can jointly have for people can be enhanced. While we always have pursued joint and collaborative working, we are exploring more effective ways to share knowledge and information; this will continue to prove particularly useful in addressing challenges arising from the current COVID-19 situation. Our aim is for closer co-ordination in planning and delivery of our work with other inspectorates in Wales and the UK.

Specifically, we work with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and Audit Wales (AW). Together we are Inspection Wales, a joint initiative between the four main inspection, audit and review bodies in Wales; our strategic agreement sets out how we could further develop our collaborative working arrangements.

In A Learning Inspectorate, Estyn is recognised as responsible for much of current thinking internationally about effective inspection and that our international joint working could contribute effectively to our future development. The majority of our international joint working going forward will focus on sharing practice around the impact of and responses to the COVID-19 crisis on inspection and education in general.

We will continue our involvement with international partners, for example through regular and close working with the Offshore group of UK and Irish inspectorates and engagement with national and regional inspectorates of education in Europe who are members of the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI).

Through the Offshore groups, we will continue to share information and practice regularly with neighbouring countries at both a strategic and operational level to inform the continued development of member inspectorates in similar educational and political contexts.

Through our continued involvement with SICI activities we benefit from the ability to learn from other inspectorates and their processes as well as from the opportunity to share our practice, discuss this with our peers and undertake joint projects in an environment that is free from domestic or political pressures.

As part of the BIBESOIN (Better Inspection for Better Social Inclusion) project, co-funded by an Erasmus+ grant, Estyn will continue to play a significant role together with SICI and other international partners in developing a framework for inspecting schools’ approaches to addressing disadvantage throughout 2020 and 2021.
We have a close working relationship with Ofsted to liaise where work-based learning providers or independent specialist colleges operate across England and Wales.

**Feedback and complaints**

We are committed to providing the highest standard of service to all our customers and stakeholders. Our aim is to get things right first time. However, if someone is not entirely satisfied with any aspect of our work, we encourage them to tell us and we will do our best to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. Our feedback and complaints process outlines how we address and respond to feedback and complaints about inspection and other aspects of our work.

We will continue to ensure that all received complaints are investigated fully and fairly and in accordance with the timescales outlined in our policy.

**Effective leaders and good governance**

Our governance framework of boards, committees and groups, including our assurance framework, helps us to fulfil our strategic objectives as a well-run and efficient organisation, accountable to our staff, stakeholders and the general public. As stated earlier in this plan, these arrangements have continued and been supplemented during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Within the framework, non-executive directors, serving as members and chairing our Strategy Board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), will continue to both challenge and support the senior management team.

Our leaders will be expected to effectively model the attributes of our Leadership Statement, constantly developing themselves to be the best that they can be. Our performance management processes will continue to strongly focus on behaviours and our values.

**Skilled people**

We recognise that effective learning and development offers benefits to the individual and the organisation as a whole, which ultimately contributes to the achievement of our strategic objectives.

We are committed to resourcing a range of learning and development approaches in order to develop high-performing, adaptable staff who take personal responsibility for their work; in 2020-2021 we expect greater use of online training and remote delivery of our professional development activities. We will continue with our plan for professional learning and development for our inspectors to be focussed on supporting curriculum and ALN reform, and professional learning and self-evaluation for improvement. We will:

- Strengthen our professional learning and development strategy
- Widen the existing ‘menu’ of professional learning and development activities, with a balance of ‘traditional’, ‘experiential’ and ‘performance-based’ approaches to professional learning and development
• Identify priority areas of focus, establishing a training needs analysis, and considering the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by our inspectors
• Review and improve arrangements for the operational planning and evaluation of inspector professional learning and development
• Remodel professional learning and development weeks
• Develop professional development pathways for inspectors through personal inquiry projects and research-informed activities
• Develop possible career pathways and progression for inspectors in our organisation

We will also collaborate with a group of Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies when developing our professional learning and development programme for corporate services staff – this programme will include the essential management skills and strategic leadership.

A particular focus for the next year will be providing induction, professional learning and mentoring for our cohort of new local authority and regional consortia link inspectors.

A great place to work

We recognise that our people are our most valuable resource and that each person brings different skills and experience to our organisation, and we encourage all our people to develop their talents, welcome diversity and value differences.

The majority of our staff completed the civil service ‘Pulse Survey’ in May 2020; relative to the general civil service we had positive response to questions relating to effectiveness of working arrangements and support provided to staff so far during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will seek to maintain our consistently high engagement ranking within the Civil Service People Survey, and while we have needed to defer the process to later in the year we will use the Investor in People process to help evaluate how closely we ‘live our values’ and to identify organisational improvements.

Our aim is to continue to develop staff within a supportive and trusting environment that will help maintain our high levels of engagement.

Full details on the benefits of working for us are on our website here.

Equality and staff welfare

We will continue to support a fair and inclusive work environment through delivering the actions within our Strategic Equality Plan and we will continue to promote and support staff wellbeing through actions aligned with our Corporate Health Standard ‘action plan’ (we will be aiming for re-accreditation of the Standard in 2020-2021). We will continue to place particular emphasis on supporting staff wellbeing to deal with new ways of working and other challenges resulting from COVID-19.
## Welsh language standards

We treat the Welsh and English languages equally in the work that we do, both internally and in inspecting education and training in Wales. We will continue to review and develop our policies and approaches to meeting the Welsh language standards as laid out by the Welsh Language Act.

Our [Welsh-language-policy](#) is published on our website.

## Sustainability and biodiversity reporting

We are required to comply with the section 6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty for public authorities in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales. To comply with the s6 duty we seek to embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into our early thinking and business planning, including any policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as our day to day activities.

We reported on how the consideration of biodiversity is being embedded within Estyn in our [Sustainability Report (including biodiversity duty reporting) December 2019](#) and will set out what we propose to do to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience in our Environmental (and biodiversity) Policy/Plan.
Measuring and reporting performance

The COVID-19 situation has impacted on our usual core activities and we will have reduced levels of activity in particular areas covered by our standing performance measures. It will remain important that we continue to measure and monitor performance throughout the year to help:

- evaluate the effectiveness of our processes
- learn from experience
- improve performance
- make resource allocation decisions

Performance objectives against our Strategic Objective 1

Our aim is to:

- ensure inspections and their reports meet the quality requirements set out in our published frameworks for inspection guidance and are published within statutory timescale
- ensure providers experience of inspection is a positive process that promotes improvement
- ensure that engagement visits are a positive process that collects valuable evidence to produce national reports

We will measure and report on:

- Percentage of inspection reports published within statutory or agreed timescales
- Percentage of published inspection reports requiring amendment after publication as a result of substantiated challenge to judgements
- Number of upheld complaints about inspection process
- Provider feedback (questionnaires) on their experience of an inspection and satisfaction with the reliability and independence of judgements
- Number of providers going into and coming out of a statutory category following inspection
- Number of engagement call/visits carried out to maintained schools (including pupil referral units)

Performance objectives against our Strategic Objective 2

Our aim is to:

- publish an informative and influential HMCI Annual Report in December 2020
- ensure all priorities set out in the Ministerial remit inform and impact on the development of national policy and are published to agreed deadlines
- ensure we impact on the wider development of national policy and education and training initiatives through papers and evidence presented to groups and committees
We will measure and report on:

- media and website analytics on HMCI Annual Report
- percentage of recommendations for improvement in thematic reports that are fully accepted/implemented by Welsh Government
- Number and influence of advice on school reorganisation proposals
- Number and influence of responses to Welsh Government consultations
- Number of groups and committee meetings attended by inspectors
- Feedback on papers and evidence presented

Performance objectives against our Strategic Objective 3

Our aim is to:

- ensure Estyn training events and effective practice conferences meet the needs of delegates
- enhance capacity in the delivery of education and training in Wales
- identify practice that is interesting, innovative and worthy of sharing

We will measure and report on:

- Number of events/delegates
- Delegate satisfaction levels based on questionnaire feedback
- Number of peer inspectors deployed (as percentage of all post-16 inspections)
- Number of effective practice case studies published on our website and views/downloads

Performance objectives against our Delivery Principles

Our aim is to:

- Engage more effectively with all our stakeholders
- Work collaboratively with other inspectorates in wales and beyond – sharing knowledge and information to support improvement
- Create and maintain an engaged and skilled workforce
- Respond to feedback and complaints and use them to help us improve
- Fully-meet our sustainability responsibilities
- Be an exemplar organisation in terms of meeting Welsh language standards and leadership in a bilingual country
- Ensure good governance and appropriate financial management

We will measure and report on:

- Civil Service People Survey engagement index score
- Staff sickness absence rate
- Staff turnover
- Annual report and accounts produced within statutory timescale, with no qualification or audit Management Letter
- Implementation and ongoing maintenance of action plans to meet our statutory responsibilities and key corporate activities
• Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days / 30
• Percentage of responses provided to all complaints and requests under Freedom of Information completed within 20 working days of receipt
• Number of personal data-related incidents
• Results of external assessments (accreditations, including Investors in People, Green Dragon Standard, Corporate Health Standard) and compliance audits, e.g. Welsh Language
• Our collaboration work, including the number of external stakeholder events attended by our staff, number of stakeholder events we hosted, number of joint inspections carried out

**Our budget for 2020-2021**

- **Staff costs**: £9 million
- **External inspectors costs**: £0.2 million
- **Staff-related costs**: £0.5 million
- **Direct inspection costs**: £0.2 million
- **IT costs**: £0.5 million
- **Supplies & services costs**: £0.3 million
- **Depreciation (budget)**: £0.2 million
- **Accommodation costs**: £0.3 million
- **Capital (budget)**: £0.3 million

Estyn total budget: £11.5 million

Staff costs account for around 78% of our total budget.
We recognise that Welsh Government is likely to seek savings from departments to help address the additional financial pressures caused by COVID-19. We have already agreed with Welsh Government that grant funding initially planned to cover the extra costs for staffing engagement visits, and our work for the Secondary schools causing concern and National Evaluation and Improvement Resource projects, will not be sought this year.

This year, we are able to cover all our staff and other costs from our core funding (Welsh Government published budget for 2020-2021) by using savings from reduced external inspector costs, reduced travel and subsistence, and from events we will not run. We will postpone appointment of new inspection staff to replace staff who retire this year and other ‘gaps’. This is likely to mean that we will be able to identify some funding within our budget for the year that may be re-allocated by Welsh Government in 2020-21; we will hold regular discussions with our finance links in Welsh Government on this. If we experience challenges delivering all our commitments, such as resourcing or scheduling difficulties, we will discuss options with Welsh Government.

We appreciate the current pressures on the public purse and the uncertainty over future funding levels but also recognise that we will not be able to sustain this year’s savings in future years; additional funding for the next financial year 2021-2022, and for subsequent years, would be required to maintain our current staffing levels. Indeed, we would need to recruit additional staff to resource the extra work set out in A Learning Inspectorate and to ‘catch-up’ on suspended inspection activity in order to meet current statutory timescales. We will look forward to holding discussions with Welsh Government on future funding scenarios and implications at the earliest opportunity.
Annex 1: Our core purpose and activities

Estyn is led by Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (HMCI) and inspects quality and standards. We are a Crown body, established under the Education Act 1992. We are independent of the National Assembly for Wales but receive our funding from the Welsh Government under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998.

We inspect providers of education and training. Details of why we inspect and the legislation that applies to each sector can be found on our website. We also provide advice and guidance, build capacity and share effective practice. We work in partnership with other inspectorates, education bodies and stakeholders. The about us section on our website further explains the work we do.

Our workforce is made up of a management team and corporate services staff, normally based in our office located in Cardiff, and Her Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) who are home-based. We train additional inspectors, peer inspectors (who currently work in education and training), challenge advisers, lay inspectors and nominees (who act as the provider’s representative) to work as part of inspection teams. Where possible, we also support secondment arrangements both to and from Estyn. Our organisational structure is available on our website.

Statute and regulations underpin our core activities but we also operate within a wider legislative environment. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out a shared purpose to achieve a better and lasting quality of life for us all. Although the duty does not apply to us (we are not a listed public body for the purposes of the Act), we nonetheless support the spirit of the Act and seek to build the necessary wellbeing components and sustainable development principle into our planning, governance and delivery.

Our wellbeing statement, included in this Plan, sets out how we align our strategic objectives with the wellbeing goals for Wales. We provide an update on our progress in contributing to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within our Annual Report and Accounts.

A strategic overview setting out our vision, mission and values together with our strategic objectives can be found on our website.
Annex 2: Our wellbeing statement

Our wellbeing statement forms part of our corporate planning processes. It shows how our strategic objectives are contributing to the wellbeing goals for Wales and explains how we are working in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

Overview

The Welsh Government has announced an ambition to become carbon neutral by 2050. Wales has not just an ambitious target but also a unique legislative framework for climate policy through the Well-being of Futures Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹ ('the Act') sets out a shared purpose to achieve a better and lasting quality of life for us all. The shared purpose is represented by an integrated set of seven wellbeing goals. The Act also puts in place a sustainable development principle which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act. Public bodies identified within the Act are required to develop wellbeing objectives, and a supporting statement of wellbeing.

We have been embedding the principle of sustainable development into the way we use our resources for many years. Although the duty does not apply to us (we are not a listed public body for the purposes of the Act), we nonetheless support the spirit of the Act and seek to build the necessary wellbeing components and sustainable development principle into our planning, governance and operational delivery and into how we lead, communicate and involve our staff and stakeholders.

For clarity of purpose, our strategic objectives, which drive everything we do, will serve well as our wellbeing objectives. Our strategic objectives provide clarity of purpose for the organisation at all levels and link to team and personal objectives across the organisation. This clarity of purpose will help us to embed the Well-being of Future Generations Act across our organisation.

Wellbeing goals

The wellbeing goals for Wales, as defined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are set out below.

A prosperous Wales

An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

A resilient Wales
A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.

A healthier Wales
A society in which people’s physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

A more equal Wales
A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.

A Wales of cohesive communities
Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

A globally responsible Wales
A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global wellbeing.

Alignment of the wellbeing goals for Wales and our strategic objectives

Table 1 below sets out how we have aligned the wellbeing goals for Wales with our work activities. This mapping will enable monitoring, review and reporting against the wellbeing goals.

The steps we will take in 2020-2021 to deliver our strategic objectives are set out throughout this plan.

In terms of ensuring resources, including financial, are appropriately allocated to our work activities and keeping these activities under review, our established governance framework will facilitate this.

Progress towards the delivery of our work activities is monitored by an executive committee (Inspection Policy and Advice Committee, Executive Board and or Audit and Risk Assurance Committee). We formally review and report progress in delivering our strategic objectives in our Annual Report and Accounts.

Our Strategy Board establishes and monitors our strategic agenda, promotes effective corporate governance and advises on our development so as to ensure our well being and continued improvement as an employer and as a high profile public service.
Table 1: Alignment of the wellbeing goals for Wales and our strategic objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The seven wellbeing goals for Wales</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Prosperous Wales (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Resilient Wales (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Healthier Wales (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A More Equal Wales (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Wales of Cohesive Communities (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globally Responsible Wales (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategic objective one: Provide public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training provision in Wales

- Core inspections
- Engagement visits
- Follow-up activity

Strategic objective two: Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government

- HMCI’s Annual Report
- Annual remit letter
- Other advice work

Strategic objective three: Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales

- Our core work to build capacity
- ‘National Evaluation and Improvement Resource’
- Conferences and seminars
- Support for long-term education reform

How we deliver our work

- Strengthening stakeholder engagement
- Good governance
- Carrying out our work and supporting duties (including equality, Welsh language, and sustainability and biodiversity)
The sustainable development principle

The Well-being of Futures Generations (Wales) Act 2015 emphasises the value of preventing problems from occurring rather than addressing them after they emerge. It aims to merge policy issues, such as public health, education, climate change and economic prosperity, and mandates that all policy must contribute to sustainability and not undermine long-term goals.

The Act puts in place a ‘sustainable development principle’ which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act.

There are five things that public bodies need to think about in applying the sustainable development principle.

- The long term – the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs
- Prevention – how acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives
- Integration – considering how the public body’s wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies
- Collaboration – acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its wellbeing objectives
- Involvement – the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves

Our strategic objectives (wellbeing objectives) and the activities set out in this annual plan are consistent with the requirements of the sustainable development principle. Here are a few areas of our work which exemplify the sustainable development principle.

We recognise the value of preventing problems from occurring rather than addressing them after they emerge. Much of our work around education reform focuses on prevention. Specifically, thematic inspections help to prevent problems in education and training from emerging or worsening by identifying policies or practices that do not benefit learners nor support the quality of educational and related provision. For example, in 2020, we published a thematic review of how the ‘Prevent’ agenda to combat extremism is being embedded in schools.

Integrated thinking helps us to work collaboratively within our organisation and with other inspectorates to support improvement. We undertake inspections work jointly with other inspectorates and regulatory bodies, co-ordinating planning activities so that they result in proportionate programmes of work that avoid duplication and ensure that key risks and concerns are being examined.
We regularly involve and collaborate with staff and external stakeholders. Through listening to and learning from our stakeholders we shape how and what we do to help deliver each of our strategic objectives. Our approach to stakeholder engagement is set out in our strategy. Our mission, vision and values were reviewed at our staff conference in 2019 to ensure they reflected the organisation we want to be. Our revised mission, vision, and values was subsequently developed and can be found at the beginning of section 3 of this plan.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (the S6 duty) for public authorities in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales. The duty can help organisations to seek the best outcomes for the economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing of Wales as required by the Well-being of Futures Generations (Wales) Act.

In line with the duty we will be publishing an Environmental (and Biodiversity) Policy/Plan that includes how we propose to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience. We reported on how the consideration of biodiversity is being embedded within our organisation in our Sustainability Report (including biodiversity duty reporting) December 2019.
This Annual Plan is also available in Welsh.

Estyn welcomes feedback and comments about this Annual Plan, which can be emailed to us at feedback@estyn.gov.wales

This Annual Plan has been submitted for the attention of, and approved by, the First Minister of the National Assembly for Wales.