

## Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Quarterly Update: 31 December 2023

### Annual Audit Summary

Description	Timetable	Status
A report summarising completed audit work since the last Annual Audit Summary, which was issued in February 2023.	January/February 2024	Being drafted

### Financial Audit work

Description	Scope	Timetable	Status
<b>Audit of the Council's 2023-24 statement of accounts</b>	To confirm whether the statement of accounts provides a true and fair view.	To be confirmed	Audit preparations underway.
<b>Audit of grant claims and returns 2022-23</b>	Annual certification of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing benefit subsidy claim</li> <li>• Teachers' pensions return</li> <li>• National non-domestic rates return</li> </ul>	August – April 2023	Teachers' pensions return and national non-domestic rates return – Audit work completed.  Housing benefit subsidy claim – Audit work ongoing.

## Performance Audit work

2022-23 Performance Audit work	Scope	Timetable	Status
<b>Assurance and Risk Assessment</b>	<p>Project to identify the level of audit assurance and/or where further audit work may be required in future years in relation to risks to the Council putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources and acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial position</li> <li>• Capital programme management</li> <li>• Use of performance information – with a focus on service user feedback and outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing monitoring of financial position</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>February – September 2023</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Audit Wales will not undertake detailed work at all councils as part of our 2022-23 work programme. We are currently exploring our options for undertaking a detailed piece of work on this topic either in 2023-24 or future years.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Report published</u></a></p>

2022-23 Performance Audit work	Scope	Timetable	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting of well-being objectives</li>   <li>• A consideration of other core arrangements and services</li> </ul>	<p>February – September 2023</p> <p>April 2022 – March 2023</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Report published</u></a></p> <p>Complete</p>
<b>Thematic Review – Unscheduled Care</b>	<p>A cross-sector review focusing on the flow of patients out of hospital. This review will consider how the Council is working with its partners to address the risks associated with the provision of social care to support hospital discharge, as well as prevent hospital admission. The work will also consider what steps are being taken to provide medium to longer-term solutions.</p>	<p>August 2022 – October 2023</p>	<p>Reporting from February 2024 onward.</p>
<b>Thematic review – Digital</b>	<p>A review of councils’ strategic approach to digital, and the extent to which this has been developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle; and that it will help to secure value for money in the use of councils’ resources.</p>	<p>January – September 2023</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Report published</u></a></p>

2023-24 Performance Audit work	Scope	Timetable	Status
<b>Assurance and Risk Assessment</b>	Project to identify the level of audit assurance and/or where further audit work may be required in future years in relation to risks to the Council putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources and acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle.	Ongoing	Ongoing
<b>Thematic review – commissioning arrangements</b>	A review focusing on how councils' arrangements for commissioning services apply value for money considerations and the sustainable development principle.	January – July 2024	Scoping
<b>Thematic review – Financial Sustainability</b>	A review of councils' financial sustainability including a focus on the actions, plans and arrangements to bridge funding gaps and address financial pressures over the medium term.	March – June 2024	Scoping
<b>Bespoke local project</b>	Performance management	To be confirmed	Scoping

## Local government national studies planned/in progress

Study	Scope	Timetable	Status	Fieldwork planned at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
<b>Planning for sustainable development – Brownfield regeneration</b>	Review of how local authorities are promoting and enabling better use of vacant non-domestic dwellings and brownfield sites	October 2022 – September 2023	Report drafting – publication due January 2024	No – Interviews were undertaken with nominated officer at eight councils and survey.
<b>Governance of special purpose authorities – National Parks</b>	Review of systems and effectiveness of governance	November 2022 – September 2023	Report drafting – publication due February 2024.	No
<b>Governance in Fire and Rescue Authorities</b>	Review of systems and effectiveness of governance	September 2023 – August 2024	Fieldwork underway	No
<b>Homelessness</b>	Examining how services are working together to progress the response to homelessness.	To be confirmed	Scoping	To be confirmed

## Estyn

Our link inspectors are continuing to work with Torfaen as part of our follow-up process for an authority causing significant concern. We inspected Conwy local government education service in the week beginning 6 November 2023, and the report will be published early in January 2024. We will be piloting our new inspection arrangements in the Vale of Glamorgan in the week beginning 11 March 2024. We will also be inspecting the Vale of Glamorgan’s youth work services in the week beginning 19 February 2024, and the findings of that inspection will contribute to the evidence base for the LGES inspection.

We have published a report outlining the approaches of local authorities and secondary schools in promoting attendance. The report will be published on 18 January 2024.

## Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

CIW planned work 2023-25	Scope	Timetable	Status
<p><b>Thematic reviews</b></p> <p><b>Community Learning Disability Team (CLDT)</b></p>	<p>Working with HIW we will complete a small sample of joint CLDT inspections in 2024. We will use this approach to evaluate and consider our approach to joint inspection.</p>	<p>2024-25</p>	<p>Planning</p>
<p><b>Stroke pathway</b></p>	<p>Working in collaboration with HIW a <a href="#">National Review of Patient Flow: a journey through the stroke pathway</a> has recently been published.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Published</p>

CIW planned work 2023-25	Scope	Timetable	Status
<p><b>National review of Care Planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline pre-proceedings</b></p>	<p>Purpose of the review To provide external scrutiny, assurance and to promote improvement regarding the quality of practice in relation to the care planning for children and young people subject to the public law outline pre-proceedings.</p> <p>To consider the extent to which practice has progressed since the publication of both the CIW ‘National Review of care planning for children and young people subject to public law outline pre-proceedings’ and the publication of the PLO working group report 2021 including best practice guidance.</p>	<p>Awaiting publication</p>	<p>Publication January 2024</p>
<p><b>Child Protection Rapid Review</b></p>	<p>The review looked at to what extent the current structures and processes in Wales ensure children's names are appropriately placed on, and removed from, the child protection register (CPR) when sufficient evidence indicates it is safe to do.</p> <p><a href="#">Rapid review of child protection arrangements, Care Inspectorate Wales</a></p> <p><a href="#">Rapid review of child protection arrangements – interim findings, Care Inspectorate Wales</a></p>	<p>Published</p>	<p>Published</p>
<p><b>Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Annual Monitoring Report for Health and Social Care 2022-23</b></p>	<p>The <a href="#">2020-21 report</a> was published on 7 February 2021.</p> <p>The 2021-22 report is underway.</p>	<p>Published</p> <p>To be confirmed</p>	<p>Published</p> <p>Preparing</p>

CIW planned work 2023-25	Scope	Timetable	Status
<p><b>Joint Inspection Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA)</b></p>	<p>We will complete a further two multi-agency joint inspections in total.</p> <p>The findings following Denbighshire County Council have been published – <a href="#">Joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA): Denbighshire 2023   Care Inspectorate Wales</a></p> <p>The findings following Bridgend County Borough Council have been published – <a href="#">Joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA): Bridgend 2023   Care Inspectorate Wales</a></p> <p>The findings from Powys County Council are underway.</p> <p>We will publish a national report in late spring 2024.</p>	<p>April 2023 – April 2024</p>	<p>Delivery</p>
<p><b>Performance review of Local Authorities</b></p>	<p>We continue to inspect Local Authorities in line with our updated <a href="#">Code of Practice for our local authority inspection activity   Care Inspectorate Wales</a></p> <p><a href="#">How we inspect local authority services and CAF/CASS Cymru</a></p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



## Audit Wales national reports and other outputs published since December 2022

Report title	Publication date and link to report
Corporate Joint Committees – commentary on their progress	<a href="#">November 2023</a>
Governance arrangements relating to an employment dispute at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales	<a href="#">November 2023</a>
Failures in financial management and governance and losses incurred – Harlech Community Council	<a href="#">November 2023</a>
Putting out the false alarms: Fire and Rescue Authorities’ responses to Unwanted Fire Signals	<a href="#">October 2023</a>
Covering teachers’ absence – follow-up (letter to the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee)	<a href="#">October 2023</a>
NHS workforce – data briefing	<a href="#">September 2023</a>
Income Diversification for National Park Authorities in Wales	<a href="#">September 2023</a>
Approaches to achieving net zero across the UK	<a href="#">September 2023</a>
Springing Forward: Lessons learnt from our work on workforce and assets (in local government)	<a href="#">September 2023</a>
Local Government Financial Sustainability Data tool update (further update planned in January 2024)	<a href="#">September 2023</a>
NHS finances data tool – to 31 March 2023	<a href="#">September 2023</a>

Report title	Publication date and link to report
Public interest reports – Ammanford Town Council and Llanferres Community Council	<a href="#">September 2023</a>
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board – Quality Governance Arrangements Joint Review Follow-up	<a href="#">August 2023</a>
'Cracks in the Foundations' – Building Safety in Wales	<a href="#">August 2023</a>
Maximising EU funding – the Structural Funds Programme and the Rural Development Programme	<a href="#">June 2023</a>
Digital inclusion in Wales (including key questions for public bodies)	<a href="#">March 2023</a>
Orthopaedic Services in Wales – Tackling the Waiting List Backlog	<a href="#">March 2023</a>
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board – Review of Board Effectiveness	<a href="#">February 2023</a>
Welsh Government purchase of Gilestone Farm	<a href="#">January 2023</a>
Together we can – Community resilience and self-reliance	<a href="#">January 2023</a>
A Picture of Flood Risk Management	<a href="#">December 2022</a>
'A missed opportunity' – Social Enterprises	<a href="#">December 2022</a>

## Audit Wales national reports and other outputs (work in progress/planned)<sup>1, 2</sup>

Title	Indicative publication date
Ukrainian refugee services	February 2024
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board – review of board effectiveness follow-up	February 2024
A465 Section 2 – update	February 2024
NHS quality governance	March 2024
Local government digital strategy review – national summary	March 2024
Local government use of performance information, outcomes and service user perspective – national summary	March 2024
Affordable housing	Spring 2024
Active travel	Spring 2024

<sup>1</sup> We will continue to keep our plans under constant review, taking account of the evolving external environment, our audit priorities, the context of our own resourcing and the capacity of audited bodies to engage with us. Follow-up work could also lead to other outputs, as may other local audit work where we consider there is merit in a national summary output of some kind.

<sup>2</sup> We have also published to our website a paper – [Our work programme for 2023-2026](#) – that provides additional detail about our national work (including local thematic reviews). In addition to new work that we will be taking forward in 2023-24, the paper includes details about indicative topics for work to start in 2024-24 or 2025-26.

Title	Indicative publication date
Audit Committees. 'What does good look like?'. Research and Development work to understand the broad audit committee landscape across all sectors in Wales. Outputs to support Good Practice Exchange events and potential future audit work.	Research and Development work September – December 2023 Good Practice Event Spring 2024
NHS Workforce planning (national messages)	Late spring 2024
Cancer services	Late summer 2024
The senior public service	To be confirmed (scoping early 2024)
Challenges for the cultural sector	To be confirmed (starting in 2023-24)
Rebalancing care and support	To be confirmed (starting in 2023-24)
Tackling NHS waiting lists (local audit work at health boards)	To be confirmed (starting in 2023-24)
Access to education for children with Additional Learning Needs	To be confirmed (starting in 2023-24)
Addressing biodiversity decline (pan-public sector and at Natural Resources Wales)	Research and Development work underway September to December 2023. Data gathering with representative groups. Outputs will inform any further audit work. Pan-public sector review – Autumn 2024
Velindre Cancer Centre	To be confirmed (scoping)

Title	Indicative publication date
Welsh Government capital and infrastructure investment	To be confirmed (scoping)
Further and higher education funding and oversight – Commission for Tertiary Education and Research	To be confirmed (scoping)

## Good Practice Exchange events and resources

Title	Link to resource
The Good Practice Exchange – Our yearly round up Research and Development	<a href="#">December 2023</a>
<b>Integrity in the Public Sector:</b> ‘Trust is built and maintained through competence, reliability, and honesty, as well as the building of genuine and sound relationships between the public sector and the public it serves. That means the public sector must be accountable for the management and delivery of public services and outcomes, for the direction and control of the work it does, the resources it manages, and for its behaviour and ethics.’ This event will look at how public services can promote a culture of integrity.	5 December 2023 10 am – 12 pm online
<b>Working in partnership to improve wellbeing:</b> This event will bring together the North Wales Insight Partnership, the Public Service Boards and the C4C community to share wellbeing plans across the North Wales region, as well as sharing the innovative work being undertaken by a range of sectors around wellbeing in our communities. The event will provide opportunities to discuss how we can connect all of this work to deliver real change.	24 October 2023 9.30 am to 4.30 pm  Cardiff date: to be confirmed
<b>Strategy to Action: How digital makes a difference to everyday lives:</b> This event will take a practical and honest view of the digital landscape in Wales and will offer practical ideas for public and third sector organisations which will help them achieve the best value for money.	27 September 2023, 9 am to 1 pm – North Wales  5 October 2023, 9 am to 1 pm – Cardiff

Title	Link to resource
<b>Podcast: Auditing Community Resilience:</b> In this edition of The Exchange, our Local Government team discuss some of the factors that cause poverty in Wales, as well as the value provided by social enterprises, and the importance of keeping wealth in communities.	<a href="#"><u>Podcast: Auditing Community Resilience, August 2023</u></a>