

Isle of Anglesey County Council Scrutiny Report

Committee:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date:	10 th June 2026
Subject:	Detailed overview and progress following both the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) – 1) Local Authority Assurance Check Letter: Isle of Anglesey County Council Children & Families Services, 2) Inspection of Fostering Services.
Scrutiny Chair:	Councillor Jeff Evans

1. Who will be the portfolio holder presenting / leading the report?

Portfolio Holder	Role
Councillor Dyfed W. Jones	Portfolio holder for Children & Families Services
Service Officer (Supporting)	Role
Fon Roberts	Director of Social Services, and Head of Children & Families Services
Sian Roberts	Lead Inspector, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

2. Why the Scrutiny Committee is being asked to consider the matter

Purpose of this report is to share the outcome of:

1) **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Local Authority Assurance Check of Isle of Anglesey County Council Children & Families Services**, which was carried out 12th -16th January 2026, and providing reassurance on the response taken by the Department to address the issues outlined.

2) **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection of Fostering Services**, which took place in parallel with the above, by a separate inspection team during the same week.

3. Role of the Scrutiny Committee and recommendations

- For assurance
- For recommendation to the Executive
- For information

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee read and digest the full contents of the **Children and Families Assurance Letter published by CIW on the 18th March 2026** and the **Fostering Inspection Report dated 4th March 2026** – links below.

It is recommended that members:

- a) offer comment on the content of the CIW Assurance Letter.
- b) review that the work plan, drafted by the Service, ensuring it reflects on key areas for improvement, as identified in the letter, offering suggestions or comments.
- c) offer comment on the Fostering Inspection Report. No improvement or priority notices were noted in the report, therefore there is no work plan to share with the panel.

4. How does the recommendation(s) contribute to the objectives of the Council's Plan?

This report gives members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee reassurance that our Children & Families Services have achieved the assurance check to review the local authority's social services performance in exercising its statutory duties and functions in line with legislation.

This in turn assists in meeting the Council Plan strategic objectives - Social Care and Wellbeing & Welsh Language - by receiving positive external overview and feedback by our inspectors, we are reassured that the Service is providing a high standard of Service within our communities.

Fundamentally, our core values, as stated in the Council Plan 2023-2028 - Respect, Collaboration, Honesty and Champion the Council and Island - are also supported by the outcomes of both reports.

5. Key scrutiny themes

Key themes the Scrutiny Committee should concentrate on:

1. Monitoring Work Plan and Improvement
2. Four Principles of the 2014 Act
3. Resources and the Capacity of the Workforce
4. Risks and Challenges

6. Key points / summary

1. Assurance Letter – Children and Families Services

The Assurance letter describes the findings of the CIW assurance check, carried out between 12-16th January 2026. The inspection activity carried out was in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (the 2014 Act) and the quality standards in the Code of Practice in relation to the performance and improvement of social services in Wales. The aim was to determine the effectiveness of local authorities in supporting, measuring and sustaining improvements for people and services.

CIW focused on key lines of enquiry on the four principles of the 2014 Act and sought to answer the questions below:

People - voice and control

- To what extent does the local authority ensure children can express their voice, and that they are actively offered an advocacy service?
- To what extent does the local authority ensure the workforce has sufficient numbers, has the relevant skills, is experienced and supported?

Prevention

- To what extent does the local authority ensure the need for care and support is minimised, and the escalation of need is prevented whilst ensuring that the best possible outcomes for people are achieved?
- To what extent does the local authority ensure families are supported to stay together, where this is safe and in the best interest of the child through timely, strengths-based, and preventative approaches?

Wellbeing

- To what extent does the local authority ensure children are protected and safeguarded from abuse and neglect and any other types of harm?
- To what extent does the local authority ensure there is good analysis of risk, protection plans/care and support plans are put in place, and that action is taken when necessary to safeguard children and young people from harm and promote their welfare?

Partnerships

- To what extent do partners work together to deliver high-quality, sustainable outcomes for children and families?

The report outlines strengths and areas of improvement under each of the above headings.

There were no cases where Social Work practice was of concern raised during the inspection.

Some examples of the strengths/ positive practice identified:

1. (4.6) The local authority is aware of the challenges in recruiting and retaining practitioners in children's services. The local authority mitigates these risks through corporately and politically supported initiatives such as Grow Your Own. This has enabled practitioners to progress into qualified social work roles, strengthening succession planning, retention, and service stability for children and families. **This is positive practice.**
2. (4.14) Children and families benefit from well-embedded trauma-informed practice across the local authority, including in direct care and education settings. One secondary school has achieved trauma-informed status, which is a notable achievement. **The model is being shared regionally and nationally.**
3. (3.2) Practitioners are skilled, innovative, and committed to supporting children and families to achieve the best outcomes. This is consistently acknowledged by leaders.
4. (3.3) There is a positive culture where healthy professional challenge is encouraged. Leaders promote two-way communication and an open-door approach with the workforce. Practitioners are encouraged to be innovative and share their suggestions to improve services.
5. (4.24) Safeguarding practices are robust and mostly consistent with the WSP. Most decisions and subsequent actions are undertaken in a timely manner, including making decisions within one working day of receiving a report about a child's potential safety, and holding strategy discussions within 24 hours of determining that one is required.
6. (4.36) Leaders and practitioners continue to develop, strong partnerships locally, regionally and nationally, both strategically and operationally.

In response to the published report, we have prepared a work plan identifying our areas for improvement, a copy of which is shared with this report. This document outlines the tasks that need to be addressed by the service. This work is ongoing and will be monitored via our Service Delivery Plan 2026-27, which is currently being drafted.

2. Fostering Inspection

We were extremely pleased with the outcome of the weeklong Fostering inspection:

- a) CIW has **no areas for improvement identified.**
- b) CIW has **not issued any Priority action notices.**

To receive a report with no areas of improvement highlighted by our inspectors is extraordinary, and a reflection on how well our services are managed, supported and administrated.

CIW found that ***“The fostering service is well established and staffed by skilled, competent practitioners. Foster carers receive appropriate support, and assessments ensure their suitability. Arrangements for recruitment, supervision, annual reviews, and development are effective. Children experience stability that supports their***

development and access to education and health services. They are regularly consulted and have various ways to share their views.”

“Children’s emotional health needs are well supported. Trauma-informed practice training has strengthened support by developing foster carers’ understanding of trauma and equipping them with skills to respond sensitively. As a result, foster carers use constructive strategies that help children regulate their emotions, manage challenges, and express themselves more appropriately.”

We are incredibly proud of all our staff who have supported both inspections, as well as the day-to-day work, and are pleased to celebrate the positive outcomes of both inspections as a team in recognition of all the hard work and efforts.

7. Impact assessments

- a. Has an impact assessment (equality considerations, the socio-economic duty, Welsh language) been undertaken?

Yes

No

If not, please explain why:

Not required at this stage – we are in the consideration of planning our work plan.

- b. Potential impacts on opportunities to use Welsh and not treating the language less favourably than English

Section 7 of the CIW Assurance Letter refers to the Welsh Language.

“CIW is committed to providing an active offer of the Welsh language during its activity with local authorities. The active offer was accepted on this occasion. We carried out focus groups and interviews through the medium of Welsh during this assurance check.”

The Letter is also available in the Welsh language.

Section 4.3 states: “The local authority benefits from a strong cohort of Welsh-speaking practitioners. There is clear evidence of services provided in Welsh to meet children and families’ linguistic needs. “

- c. Possible impacts on groups protected under the Equality Act 2010

See 7.1 above

- d. Possible impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage (strategic decisions)

See 7.1 above

- e. Potential impact on the Council's Net Zero Carbon target

Neutral

The Inspection itself was conducted face to face and purely electronic - no paper files or documentations were shared during this inspection, assisting in our carbon footprint.

The impact is assessed as minimal.

8. Financial implications

Our inspector recognised and recorded the challenges we faced with regard to meeting demand due to lack of staffing capacity within the letter. Section 3.6 states "*However, people at times experience **delays in receiving support due to the limited capacity of practitioners and multiagency partners.***" Similar references was made in Section 3.7, 4.18 & 4.19 stating "***The local authority should review the workforce to ensure it is sufficient to meet current and predicted demand together with consistency in meeting its statutory Responsibilities***" all identifying the issue.

Following a detailed look at Social Work case load, work pressures and referral increase the Local Authority have agreed to invest in three additional Social Work posts into the Children and Families Structure this year with an addition 1 Social Worker for 2026/27 should demand continue to increase.

9. Appendices

1. Copy of the CIW report can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2026-03/260318-anglesey-childrens-services-assurance-letter-en.pdf>

2. Copy of the CIW Work Plan is available as a separate document.

3. Copy of the CIW Fostering Report can be accessed via the following link:

<https://digital.careinspectorate.wales/directory/service/SIN-00000740>

10. Report author and background papers

Report written by Emma Edwards, Business Manager

Assurance Letter, Fostering Report and Work plan are available in Section 9 above.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) - Assurance Check of Ynys Môn Children's Services 2026

Area	Must do / Should do	
<p>People – Voice and Control</p>	<p>4.3 The local authority must ensure that records consistently reflect whether an active offer of a service through the Welsh language has been made.</p> <p>4.5 The local authority should ensure that records consistently reflect that practitioners have had opportunities to reflect on their practice in supervision.</p> <p>Areas of Improvement:</p> <p>4.8 The local authority must ensure formal advocacy, is actively offered, re-offered, and provided in a timely manner (where required).</p> <p>4.9 The local authority must consistently ensure that children's voices, including their views and wishes, presentation, and understanding of events, are clearly noted in all relevant records.</p> <p>4.10 The local authority must strengthen its offer of a formal carers assessment to ensure the rights and voice of all informal carers are fully promoted.</p>	
<p>Prevention</p>	<p>Areas for Improvement:</p> <p>4.18 Once the report is received, the local authority should drive forward any recommendations made in relation to the preventative agenda to ensure sufficiency in early help and prevention services.</p> <p>4.19 The local authority should review the workforce to ensure it is sufficient to meet current and predicted demand together with consistency in meeting its statutory responsibilities.</p>	

	<p>4.20 The local authority should ensure that communication with children and families is consistent and timely.</p> <p>4.21 The local authority should ensure recording standards are consistent and that records are uploaded promptly.</p> <p>4.22 The local authority must ensure its quality assurance framework, Securing Practice Quality and Improvement, is robustly embedded in practice.</p> <p>4.23 The local authority should ensure outcomes are consistently SMART to support effective evaluation of whether, and how well, progress in children and families ‘outcomes, have been achieved.</p>	
Wellbeing	<p>4.29 The local authority should ensure that contingency plans are implemented consistently.</p> <p>4.30 The local authority should confirm the outcome of reports made to children (if appropriate) and in writing to a child’s parent/carer.</p> <p>Areas of Improvement:</p> <p>4.32 The local authority must ensure all relevant practitioners, to include practitioners from other agencies, are invited to attend strategy discussions where circumstances allow.</p> <p>4.33 The local authority must ensure that decisions made, and actions taken, are consistently timely and in line with relevant procedures.</p> <p>4.34 In order to further support timely safeguarding of children, the local authority should consider convening further regular forums with stakeholders.</p>	

	<p>4.35 The local authority must ensure that records consistently clarify what support, information and advice is provided and by whom for adults who are deemed to be in positions of trust, and who are subject of concerns/allegations.</p>	
<p>Partnerships and Integration</p>	<p>4.39 Once the report is received, the local authority should drive forward any recommendations made.</p> <p>Areas of Improvement:</p> <p>4.40 The local authority should continue with its work with the BCUHB to further improve outcomes for children and families.</p> <p>4.41 The local authority should continue its efforts in ensuring a range of suitable accommodation within its area to meet the needs of the children it looks after.</p>	