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ECEY6011

Team meeting regarding upcoming CIW inspection

Thank you for attending this meeting regarding our upcoming Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection, we will be covering several points this evening to ensure that we are meeting the National Minimum standards (NMS) for regulated childcare including any changes in the standards (Welsh Government 2023). As a flying Start setting, we need to complete a self-assessment of service statement (SASS) form, for the upcoming inspection, enabling CIW to support us in improving our service (Play Wales, 2024). The upcoming inspection will assess the quality of care we provide and highlight areas for improvement. As a setting, we will use this report to review and measure the standard of care that we currently provide children and their families (Blanden *et al*. 2021). We are legally required to complete a SASS, under The Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010. Completing the SASS form means we are meeting Regulation 16, requiring us to annually review the quality of care and gather feedback from children, families, and staff members. Regulation 16 also requires the registered person to prepare a copy of this report and make it available to relevant parties (Welsh Government, 2011). We will be looking at our previous inspection and recent ITERS and identifying areas where we have improved as well as areas that need improvement in the future. Does anyone have any questions before we begin? Sorry to interrupt Ceri but for those in the group who may not be aware could you please explain what ITERS is? ITERS (Infant/toddler Environmental Rating Scale), is a quality assurance tool used by the Flying Start Advisory Team. This independence tool recognises the setting's progress in providing high-quality care, whilst offering best practice feedback to support the delivery of high-quality care (Welsh Government, 2023). I hope that helps answer your question. Moving on, we have recently sent out parent questionnaires and have received several responses. Does anyone have any feedback from these?

Feedback was collected from parents by paper questionnaires with feedback predominantly focusing on our outdoor provision and areas for improvement. Positives to using paper questionnaires is that they are accessible to everyone and that there are no technological barriers for individuals. They can also create a 'tactile experience' that helps the individuals feel connected to the survey process. A questionnaire can also create open-ended and qualitative questions (Everitt, 2024). However, paper questionnaires can also provide incorrect feedback by individuals being reluctant to give honest feedback, there being a low response rate from families and questionnaire questions getting ignored if the individual feels the question is not clear, it does not relate to them or the questions are too difficult to answer (David, 2024). A way of collecting feedback which can be available to all is through having a feedback page visible on the settings page to encourage parents

and families to submit comments (Parenta, 2014). Furthermore, other minor ways to gather feedback is through informal conversations with families who are can share their thoughts and experiences with staff members to identify the settings strengths and weaknesses (Connect Childcare, 2024) and a suggestion box in the foyer to benefit quiet parents who are not comfortable with sharing their feedback and ideas in front of others (Gabrielle, n.d.). We could also look to put a QR code on the main foyer door. This not only simplifies access for parents, but it also ensures that data collected is precise (Byron, 2024).

After analysing the feedback, parents mentioned that they liked the idea of a forest school area and a sustainable garden, however, it was picked up that areas such as the mud kitchen are looking worn out. Sorry to interrupt Bethan, I think that a Forest School area and sustainable garden would be valuable learning spaces. This will help to enhance the Environmental section of the SASS form. However, you are correct the mud kitchen has become worn and requires either repair or replacement to ensure it remains a safe and engaging space for the children.

Once the forest school has been created, it can be linked to both section 1, well-being and section 3, environment of the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) form with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) (Care Inspectorate Wales, n.d.). The well-being section of the assessment investigates the progress children make and their developmental needs. It is also about how the setting contributes towards helping children have a voice, develop skills and encourage them to become more independent. Environmental section is based around ensuring the physical environment that is provided is of good quality and meets the needs of the children. As staff, we need to consider what we do well, how we know we do well and what the benefits are to children of our outdoor area.

Similarly, standard 8 of the national minimum standards (NMS) looks at nurture and well-being. The standard mentions that policies and care given promote self-esteem and independence in a responsive and nurturing environment. This is what we strive to achieve in our setting. Standard 22 of the NMS is about the environment and how it should be welcoming and friendly for both children and parents to provide a rich environment for play and development (Welsh Government, n.d.).

Before our inspection, we must ensure that all our outdoor areas are up to an excellent standard and that we have acted upon the feedback from parents about the mud kitchen and that is it looking presentable. We will act on both the SASS form and the national minimum standards to ensure that this is achieved.

To keep you updated our medicine policy has been updated, in line with changes to the NMS regulation standard 11- medication- the administration of liquid paracetamol (Calpol) at registered settings. The health of children needs to be

protected and whilst at setting practitioners can administer Calpol in line with manufacturer's instructions and parental consent. It is important that we ensure that the Calpol is stored accordingly and that all existing parents have given consent. The registration packs have been updated to include consent upon start up (Welsh Government, 2024). Having policies and procedures in place help outline the setting's intentions, highlights underpinning legislation, and provide clarity to build trust and protect the children in our care. It is a requirement to have these in place to safeguard children and maintain transparency with parents, staff, and visitors (Early Years Alliance, no date). Pacey (no date) mentions that policies and procedures must be clear and in line with NMS for regulated childcare. In our previous inspection, they highlighted that staff were consistently implementing health and safety policies and show good understanding of these policies. We were praised for promoting children's health and wellbeing during snack and play activities. However, they have recommended that we have a water station to enable children to access water during the session, we have implemented this inside and has encouraged children's independence to get their own drinks. I feel we could also look at implementing an outdoor drinks station, particularly in the summer. This will enable children to have access drinks whilst outside without interrupting play. This ensures that we are meeting regulation 12 of the NMS- that states fresh drinking water is always available for children (CIW, 2023).

We have policies in place as they are a stated intention, for example a safeguarding policy is designed to protect children. Policies outline actions, responsibilities, and administrative measures, along with the intended outcomes (Bal dock, Fitzgerald, and Kay, 2013). Policies enable the achievement and improvement of objectives by fostering collaboration between policymakers and service providers. This partnership ensures effective implementation and progress. Policies also set priorities, guide public service delivery, ensure regulatory compliance, and support sustainable development (Allen, 2022). On that note, we also need to implement a formal policy for the Forest School and sustainable garden, ensuring that comprehensive risk assessments are consistently in place. This will help prevent accidents, mitigate risks, and ensure we meet and exceed Standard 24: Safety of the National Minimum Standards (CIW, 2023) while fostering a shared commitment to safety and compliance (Welsh Government, 2016), as well as strengthen the safety of our outdoor learning provision and align with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (UK Government, 1999) and best practices outlined by Social Care Wales (Social Care Wales, 2023).

By working closely with parents on policies and procedures, ensures that they will have a clear idea of how the setting is run and the procedures in place to safeguard their children, setting and community (Birth to 5 Matters, no date). Through this continuous positive relationship, I would like to look at ways in which we

could get more parental participation with policies and procedures, establishing parental collaboration, open communication and supportive partnerships (Sadownik and Visnjic Jevitic, 2023 and Apps *et al. 2019*). We currently have a hard copy available for families and practitioners at the setting as well as an electronic copy of our policies to email if this is the preferred format for parents. Engaging parents in policy implementation fosters ownership, transparency, alignment with our ethos and vision, and ensures they feel valued within the setting (Williams-Johnson and Rickert, 2024). Parental feedback highlights barriers to policy sharing, including reading difficulties due to ALN, language challenges if English is a second language, and time restraints to speak to staff. To address these, policies can be shared using plain language, translations, visual aids, interpreters, workshops, and digital tools, alongside culturally sensitive and adaptable communication (Norheim and Moser, 2020, Kreienbrinck *et al. 2025*). We will collaborate with multilingual parents and staff to adapt policies into the languages used within the community, while ensuring they remain compliant with legislation. Accessibility will be enhanced using dyslexic-friendly fonts and audio recordings, with cost evaluations for BSL versions and audio formats conducted alongside the Operations Manager. Open evenings or scheduled appointments will provide parents opportunities to discuss policies, supported by the current staff intake (UK Government, 2021, British Dyslexia Association, no date).

Today I will be addressing the key health and safety considerations we need to focus on ahead of our upcoming CIW inspection. I will also highlight the positive feedback we have received in relation to our existing practices, as well as areas where we have excelled and where further development is needed.
Reflecting on our previous CIW inspection and recent ITERS assessment, we were praised for the safe and secure environment we provide. Our last CIW inspection highlighted our comprehensive risk assessments, the protocol ensuring all visitors sign in upon arrival, and our consistent implementation of fire drills in alignment with the school's schedule. Inspectors also noted how thoroughly we document these drills. As according to The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (UK Government, 2005), schools must carry out fire drills at least once per term to ensure that all staff and children are familiar with evacuation procedures. This consistent implementation aligns with best practices and statutory requirements to maintain fire safety preparedness.

Similarly, feedback from ITERS reinforced our ability to create a well-organized and safe physical environment that supports children's development. These measures align with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (UK Government, 1974), which places a legal duty on employers to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of staff and children.

In addition, we were commended for our safeguarding procedures, which reflect the principles of the Children Act 1989 (HM Government, 1989), ensuring that

children's welfare remains at the heart of our practice. Furthermore, our focus on well-being aligns with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (Welsh Government, 2015), demonstrating our commitment to creating a sustainable and supportive environment for the children in our care.

While we have built a strong foundation in health and safety, there are some key areas that require attention before the next inspection.

Through feedback gathered via our suggestion box and structured multiple-choice questionnaires from staff and parents, some critical maintenance issues have been identified. While these tools provide valuable insights, we recognize the importance of supplementing them with face-to-face discussions and regular staff meetings to fully understand concerns.

One of the most pressing issues raised is the fire exit doors not consistently releasing when the exit button is pressed. This presents a significant safety risk and needs immediate action to ensure compliance with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (UK Government, 2005b), which mandates that fire exits always remain operational. Additionally, there is an ongoing issue with faulty lighting in the children's toilets, which requires urgent repair to maintain adequate visibility and safety. This is an essential requirement under The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (GOV.UK, 2023), which stipulates that all workplace facilities must be appropriately maintained. These issues align with our commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly Article 3, which states that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children (UNICEF, 2025).

Looking ahead, it would also be beneficial for additional staff members to attend training in Forest School Practitioner qualifications, as well as health and safety, and first aid courses. This will enhance our approach to safety and risk management across all areas, ensuring that staff are well-equipped to handle any situation that may arise, both indoors and outdoors. Sorry to interrupt Georgina, I will look into forest school training for everyone. That'd be brilliant thanks Katie.
To ensure we address these concerns effectively, we will be taking several steps. Firstly, we will be working closely with the caretaker to resolve the fire exit and lighting issues as a matter of urgency, ensuring full compliance with safety regulations.

Additionally, we want to strengthen our approach to risk management across all areas, so we'll be encouraging more staff members to undertake relevant training, including Forest School Practitioner qualifications, health and safety courses, and first aid.

As part of this, we'll also be creating a Forest School risk assessment to make sure all staff fully understand and follow the necessary procedures. While we know the mud kitchen is a well-used and much-loved resource, we need to assess

whether it can be repaired or if replacement is the best option to maintain a safe and engaging learning space.

And finally, we will be drafting and implementing a more comprehensive policy to cover health and safety within our Forest School and sustainable garden spaces. This will ensure we are fully aligned with the guidance from Public Health Wales (Public Health Wales, n.d.) and Social Care Wales (Social Care Wales, 2019) while also setting clear expectations for staff and families.

By taking these proactive steps, we will continue to provide a safe, secure, and enriching environment for the children in our care, in line with theorists such as Abraham Maslow, who emphasized the importance of safety as a foundational need for learning (Maslow, 1943); John Bowlby, whose attachment theory highlights the role of secure environments in emotional and social development (Holmes, 1993); and Urie Bronfenbrenner, who argued that a child's development is shaped by their surrounding environment, from immediate caregivers to the broader community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). I appreciate everyone's cooperation in ensuring these issues are resolved promptly before the inspection. If anyone has any additional comments or concerns regarding health and safety, I encourage you to share them now.

Thank you, Georgina Today I am going to be talking about staffing and qualifications. Firstly, we have had a new intake of staff and making sure we support them with continuous professional development (CPD) social care Wales (2016) says that continuing professional development is planned ongoing development of knowledge and skills throughout working life and helps develop more knowledge, skills and personal qualities to be able to perform to fullest you can. It's important to make sure everyone is up to date on first aid, child protection and make sure the new starts also have all this if not get booked on straight away. CPD training (2022) believes that continuing professional development not only enhances the skills and knowledge needed but also contributes to job satisfaction when staff feel valued and supported, they are more likely to remain committed to their job role. Of course, we face some challenges providing good CPD such as training is out of working hours I know a few staff have children and struggle to get childcare for them (.gov, 2025) Staff working with young children should be suitably trained and qualified, have an understanding of how children develop and learn, and be sensitive and responsive to their needs and feelings. On the note of training, I've had a staff member approach myself on staff appraisals who would like to complete their NVQ level 4, we will look in to accommodating this with our training provider. We currently have 2 staff members completing their level 3, they are progressing well, if anyone else would like to further their levels please let me know and I can enrol you. We also currently have 9 staff members at level 3 with 3 of these being at level 5. By having a high level of training staff, means that we are in line with the CIW NMS and also flying

start expectations flying start (2025) says Staff working with young children should be suitably trained and qualified, understand how children develop and learn, and be sensitive and responsive to their needs and feelings. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) (2017) the independent regulator of social care and childcare in Wales, expects providers to ensure staff are suitably qualified and competent to meet the needs of service users, emphasising the importance of training and development as we take up to 36 children with 28 of these being flying start, we can maintain a 1:4 ratios within the setting. We are also looking to recruit more staff to help maintain ratios during different routine times such as the preparation of snack, drop off and collection. Having staff that are well trained they help better the environment around them that can help promote learning, growth and emotional well-being this help leads to better outcomes for the children nursery story (no date) believe that its simple better trained staff means better care for all the children in your setting. The BBC (2019) backs this up but also adds better staff-to-child ratios mean staff can spend more time in one-to-one interaction with children and this is very beneficial. If anyone can think of any further training, they would be interested in please let me know.

I'd like to thank you all for all the feedback with the supervisions social care Wales act (2016) section 36 states The service provider must ensure that any person working at the service including a person allowed to work as a volunteer receives appropriate supervision and appraisal. Like everything there is obviously pros and cons to doing appraisals some pros are they can motivate staff if supported by good merit increase, they provide a structured process for employees to express how they feel some cons of appraisals can be some staff may hold everything in till they have their appraisals and bursts everything out, if a staff member is sensitive, it can be taken negatively. More cons could be that can be a waste of everyone's time if not done correctly. LinkedIn (2017) believe that performance appraisals are very time consuming and can be overwhelming to managers with many employees. They can cause a stressful environment for staff as they are worried on the build up to it or could be a staff has addressed a problem with another staff member during their appraisal which could cause tension. The biggest challenge doing appraisals is having the time and making sure we are in ratio to complete them and of course making sure that they are fair and not bias against certain staff. another challenge faced is maintaining the staffing so we can provide the appraisals. Ceri, could we review the staff folders for the new intake to ensure all necessary paperwork, including contracts, induction documents, and health questionnaires, is complete? During this, we should confirm that contract details align with the Employment Rights Act 1996, addressing discrepancies in working hours noted by CIW during our last inspection. Additionally, it would be practical to check existing staff contracts to ensure they comply with legislation. We must also book new staff onto safeguarding courses to comply with our safeguarding policy, that is in-line with the Children Act

1989 and Children Act 2004. This ensures that we are fulfilling our duty of care, as safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Yes, Katie, I will set some time aside for us to do this.

Thanks Katie. Previous ITERS inspection and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection outlined many positive aspects of care provided to our additional learning needs children within the setting. We were praised for our positive interactions with children and parents. However, it was recommended that we look at further strategies to engage children with additional learning needs (ALN) to participate in activities. Currently the use of snapshot observations has been especially useful and is going well. But in terms of non-verbal/ additional learning needs children the question arises if the observations are meaningful. Are we listening to the voice of the child and does insight from the observations give us enough feedback to help develop and further progress? The Reggio Emilia approach highlights the importance of Observation and documentation in understanding and supporting children's learning. It provides insight to their thoughts and a way to celebrate each child's unique learning. (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman, 1998)

We need a structured approach to ensure snapshot observations for ALN children are meaningful. To do this we will need to incorporate further strategies, such as visual aids or sensory materials to encourage engagement. Combine snapshot observations with other methods, for instant reading journals, parent feedback, to build an understanding of the child's needs. We can use picture exchange communication systems (PECS) or Makaton to help non-verbal children express themselves during activities. These methods allow to plan for inclusivity and link with National minimum standards 4, which emphasises meeting individual needs by recognising each child's interests, and abilities. Alongside this it aligns with, The Additional learning needs and education tribunal 2018 (ALNET) framework, which emphasizes on inclusion and personal development. ALNET implement the use of individual personalised plans, which are vital to ensure meaningful and consistent support tailored to the individual needs.

To implement snapshot observations effectively, we can develop a consistent schedule ensuring all ALN children are observed in different contexts. Staff should be trained to interpret observations critically and document how children use gestures, expressions, and use of body language during activities. I agree Noreen, this is something I can look in to, particularly with the new staff intake coming up. Thank you Katie, I also think that regularly review data, this can be used to plan future activities, review progress, and support the child. Observations could also be linked to the Curriculum of Wales to align with their core purposes. For example, meaningful observations can help providing engaging activities that meet individual needs. Regular updating of child's IDP with information obtained is essential, otherwise observation would just be a tick box exercise, if the information is not used

appropriately. By implementing these strategies, we will be covering the four areas of the SAAS form linking to quality of care and education, by providing child centred care, supporting learning through play and including the use of IDPs. Another area of SASS that we would cover is the support for children's wellbeing through listening to the voice of the child, respecting choices especially those with ALN and communication problems. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNNCR) Article 12, respect of the views of the child aligns with our practice of inclusivity and respecting all children's feelings and wishes in all matter affecting them. As well as Article 23, which is the right of children with a disability to have the independence and active part in the community. (UNICEF, 2025)

In our planning we must add more inclusive and accessible activities, allowing children to make choices that suit their ability. Planning activities that are visual, auditory and hands on, which will suit different learners. The use of calmer spaces within the setting for children to have a break if required during activities. (Vygotsky,1978) Zone of Developmental process (ZPD) discusses the gap between what a child can achieve independently and what can be achieved through support. Staff can use ZPD as a tool for planning differentiated activities to tailor child's individual need, which is especially relevant for ALN children and important in scaffolding to develop their needs.

Additionally, I would like to add that although we have positive relationships with parents. It would be ideal to make continuous improvement in this department. (Epstein, J.L.,2019) promotes collaboration between families, schools, and communities to support children's education. Her Framework of six types of involvement includes assisting parents with creating supportive environments, ensuring clear two-way communication, encouraging volunteering of parents to involve them in activities, providing resources for home-based learning and involving parents in decision making such as governance and planning. And finally collaborating with the community. This is a great positive model that encourages shared responsibility, empowering families, and communities to build meaningful relationships. This model would link to NMS 12, working in partnerships with parents and NMS 13, Additional needs. Which emphasises supporting ALN children inclusively and collaboratively with parents and other agencies. This also aligns with Article 23, parental guidance, and support. (UNICEF, 2025).

Thank you everyone for attending this meeting, I hope you have all found it useful and that we now have a clear idea of what we need to do in readiness for the inspection and we are happy to progress with what we have discussed. Hopefully, we can all see how we can maintain quality care within the setting, along with the importance of implementing the above to help us go above and beyond to benefit the children and families that use our service. I have full confidence in achieving what we

have set out to do and that this upcoming inspection will help us ensure that we are maintaining these standards and make improvements if required. Thank you all again.

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