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Module: ECEY6011

Leadership and Management for systems of quality
Performance Script

Case Study:

We are a non-maintained daycare setting, registered with the Care Inspectorate Wales for 30 children aged 2 to 4 years. We have a team of 7 employees.

Meeting date: 20.03.2026
Time: 5:30pm – 6:30pm via Teams -
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Meeting ID: 315 420 787 644 17

Passcode: Zh3bh3Wj

Attendees:	***Roles:***
Natasha	Setting Manager (Responsible Individual) and Meeting Chair
Nicola	Deputy Manager
Barbara	Health and Safety Manager
Emily	Quality Assurance Manager
Maka	ALN/Inclusion Manager

Presentation Script:

Natasha:
Good evening, everyone and thank you for attending today's meeting. Before we begin, I need to inform everyone that this meeting is being recorded to support accurate record-keeping and quality assurance. Please let me know if you have any objections before we begin.

Ok I'll briefly outline the purpose of our discussion. We are a non-maintained daycare setting registered for up to 30 children aged 2-4 years, supported by a team of 7 staff.

Today's meeting focuses on our quality assurance processes as we prepare our annual Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS), aligning with Regulation 16 of *The Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010*, the inspection framework Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) four key areas, those being; well-being, care and development, environment, and leadership and management as well as *National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care for Children up to the Age of 12 Years* (Welsh Government, 2023b) and Regulated Childcare (Wales) Regulations 2016 (Welsh Government, 2016a).

Our focus today is critically reviewing how we collect feedback from stakeholders, how effective this is, and how it informs improvements in practice and outcomes for children.

We will review key areas including leadership, policies, environment, stakeholder voice, ALN and staffing as we have already completed Regulation 17 (The Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010, reg. 17).

To ensure a thorough review, each team member has responsibility for leading on a particular area of the SASS. This supports a distributed leadership approach, where staff contribute to evaluating and improving the quality of the service (Rodd, 2013).

Attending the meeting today is.

Nicola – our **Deputy Manager**

Barbara – the **Health and Safety Lead**

Emily – our **Quality Assurance Lead** and

Maka – ALN and Inclusion Lead

As the Manager and Responsible Individual, I oversee the leadership and management of the service, ensuring CIW regulations and NMS are met. This includes ensuring our policies are implemented to improve the quality of care for children and families.

Over to you Nicola.

Nicola:

Thanks Natasha.

I'm going to focus on how our policies are used in practice, particularly around accident and incident recording and our behaviour policy, and how this links to SASS and improving quality within the setting.

As part of the operational review for SASS, I've been looking at how our policies are used in everyday practice rather than simply existing as written documents.

From a CIW perspective, this links directly to the Leadership and Management theme and Care and Development, because policies shape how we support children's behaviour, wellbeing and daily experiences.

Rodd (2013) explains that policies are most effective when they are embedded in everyday practice. Similarly, Campbell-Barr and Leeson (2016) highlight that leadership involves ensuring policies guide professional decision-making and interactions with children and families.

Emily:

I agree, Nicola. Simply having policies *isn't* enough to guarantee high-quality provision.

As the OECD (2021) points out, *real* quality comes from how those policies are brought to life through reflective practice and professional dialogue.

This means staff need time, space, and support to reflect on their work and engage in ongoing monitoring. Schön (1983) describes this as reflective practice, and Siraj *et al.,* (2015) emphasise that it plays a key role in driving up quality across early years settings.

Natasha:

Absolutely Emily, there is a risk that increased reliance on systems and documentation can shift focus away from relational practice with children (Douglass and Gittell, 2012; Munro, 2011). This reflects wider concerns within early years research that process quality, particularly interactions between adults and children, has the greatest impact on outcomes (Howard *et al.*, 2024; Degotardi, 2010). Therefore, leaders must ensure that compliance does not override meaningful interactions that links to the Care and Development area of the SASS.

Nicola:

Thanks, Natasha.

An example of this came up during a recent review of our accident and incident recording procedures. Under the National Minimum Standards, safeguarding responsibilities fall under Standard 20, requiring clear processes for recording concerns (Welsh Government, 2023b).

During our review, we identified inconsistencies, mainly because staff were interpreting the form in different ways.

Emily:
Yes, and when I investigated that, it was clear that staff *understood* the policy, but the form itself was being interpreted differently across the team.

Maka:
We've also had some feedback from parents, particularly one parent of a child with ALN, who received duplicate notifications with slightly different information, which understandably caused some confusion.

Nicola:

Thank you Maka and Emily that's important feedback.
We identified that the inconsistency came from how incidents were being recorded, so we introduced a digital system to improve accuracy and consistency.

Emily:

It's proving to be working well so far Nicola, my recent training audit shows that all staff have completed introductory training on the new system; I am confident that this will improve quality standards in relation to clarity and consistency of accident recording and feedback but will continue monitor this closely.

Nicola:

Thanks, Emily. As we have updated our procedures, we have also revised our Data Protection and Digital Information Policy to ensure our new process remains compliant with GDPR and aligns with guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO, 2023).

Natasha:

Brilliant, thanks Nicola. While the digital system has improved consistency, we need to critically monitor whether all staff are using it confidently and consistently over time, particularly new or less confident practitioners, to ensure standards are sustained.

Maka:

Just to share some positive feedback here - during a recent handover, a parent commented on how efficient the new accident reporting system was. They appreciated being able to contact the setting straight away after receiving the notification and getting their questions answered promptly.

Nicola:

Fantastic to hear, Maka.

Feedback like this shows we are supporting an open-door approach to communication and building strong partnerships with families.

This is supported by the EPPE study, which highlights the importance of clear communication in developing trust between settings and parents (Sylva *et al*., 2010). It also aligns with Standards 6 and 18 of the National Minimum Standards, which emphasise effective communication and responding to feedback to improve practice (Welsh Government, 2023b).

This change also reflects Deming's (1986) Plan–Do–Check–Act cycle. We identified the issue, implemented the digital system, and are now reviewing its impact to ensure greater consistency.

Emily:

And this ongoing reflection is key to continuous improvement. It has not only helped us respond more efficiently to incidents but has also improved consistency and reduced time spent reviewing records, allowing us to focus on other areas of development.

Nicola:

It also links to the Curriculum for Wales, which aims to support children in becoming healthy, confident individuals through safe environments, strong relationships and responsive practice.

Natasha:

Thank you. That links clearly to the Leadership and Management theme within SASS and the CIW inspection framework.

By improving the accuracy and consistency of our record-keeping, we are strengthening safeguarding practice, improving communication with families, and supporting better outcomes for children. This also aligns with Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards (Welsh Government, 2023b).

Nicola:
Thanks Natasha. My second point today relates to an issue we recently identified within our behaviour policy.

A disclosure from a child suggested that an incident of physical punishment *may* have occurred at home.

In response, we shared our behaviour policy with parents through a short questionnaire, available both online and in paper format, to ensure that families are fully aware of the legal framework, particularly the *Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020*.

Engaging parents in policy review is particularly important. This aligns with UNCRC, (1989) article19 particularly children's rights to be protected from harm.

Emily:

Yes Nicola, collecting feedback in this way helps us identify gaps in parents' understanding and ensure our behaviour approaches are consistently understood between the home and setting. This strengthens our partnership with families which is recognised by CIW as supporting children's development and well-being in childcare settings (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2026a).

Barbara:

This also links to the National Minimum Standards, as we must inform CIW of any changes to behaviour policies within 28 days (Standard 9.2) (Welsh Government, 2023b).

Nicola:

That's an excellent point, Barbara and it's something we've built into our governance procedures.

We also recognise the importance of working with other professionals, such as health visitors, speech and language therapists and education specialists who support children in our setting.

As we didn't receive as much feedback as we hoped last time,
We introduced a simple QR code in the visitor book so professionals can leave feedback before they leave.
This allows for immediate feedback, helping to increase response rates (OECD, 2018).

I'm hopeful that this new means of capturing feedback whilst visitors are on site, will proactively improve the way gather information and viewpoints to help maintain and improve on our standards here, something CIW highlight as an important part of quality assurance within regulated service.

Natasha:

Great Nicola, from a leadership perspective, regularly reviewing feedback ensures improvements are visible to families and stakeholders throughout the year, supporting continuous improvement and high-quality provision (Hadley *et al.*, 2024; Doh and Quigley, 2014). Although, we should recognise that relying on QR codes may exclude some stakeholders, particularly those less confident with digital tool, so alternative method must remain available.

Nicola:

Thanks Natasha, just to close on policies the key message is that regular policy review matters because policies should not only ensure compliance, but also actively support high-quality practice within the setting. Policies need to remain dynamic documents that evolve as practice develops, and this reflects the importance of reflective, responsive leadership in early years settings (Rodd, 2013). This also aligns with the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, as it reflective and responsive practice.

Natasha:

Thank you, Nicola. That has highlighted some important points for us to consider as we continue to ensure that our policies and procedures are not only in place but are appropriate to the needs of our children and actively guide our practice to ensure and improve on standards of quality. One area we may need to strengthen is ensuring that policy updates are consistently embedded across all staff, not just understood at a surface level.

Barbara, could you now share your review of the health and safety practices and how they can link into our SASS evaluation please.

Barbara:

Thank you Natasha.

As the Health and Safety Manager for this setting, my role is to ensure that children feel safe and are not placed at risk while in our care, in line with the Childcare (Wales) Regulations 2016. *Safeguarding*, in this context, goes beyond child protection for individual children, it also includes promoting their overall health, safety, and well-being, all of which are statutory requirements set out by the Welsh law (Welsh Government, 2024). This ensures compliance with Working Together to Safeguard People: Volume 5 (WG, 2016), supporting effective safeguarding practice.

Natasha, have all safeguarding procedures been implemented appropriately, to ensure that our approaches to children feeling safe are at the highest possible quality?

Natasha:

Safeguarding procedures are effectively implemented overall; however, ongoing monitoring has identified the need to ensure consistency in recording and staff confidence, particularly when responding to more complex concerns. Our safeguarding report includes: *'consideration of engagement outcomes and analysis of aggregated data on the incidents, notifiable incidents, safeguarding matters, and complaints'*, ensuring compliance with the Quality-of-Care Review (regulation 80, 2017). This reflective use of data supports continuous improvement, enabling the setting to enhance safety and maintain a secure, supportive environment (CIW, 2026).

Barbara:

In this setting, part of my role is to ensure the highest possible quality environment for effective and relational pedagogy, and to cultivate positive interactions daily (Welsh Government, 2023a; Welsh Government, 2024). The REPEY research suggested that high-quality pedagogy is embedded in strong, sustained interactions between adults and children. Also, they highlighted that professionals who engaged in *'sustained shared thinking'* - using strategies such as demonstrating, questioning, and extending children's ideas – helped children make the most progress in their learning environments. We know that higher quality provision has a greater, longer-lasting outcomes for children (Siraj-Blatchford, 2022; UCL, 2026). Furthermore, this aligns directly to the CIW Environment, Care and Development themes in SASS, as children thrive on spaces that are safe, stimulating and highly responsive to their needs (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2026b).

The National Minimum Standards (NMS) highlight that effective, enabling environments are essential for allowing children to feel safe, secure and ready for learning (DfE, 2022). By identifying potential hazards in our setting, we create spaces that support high-quality activities and promote children's holistic development. This ensures that the layout of our setting is fit for purpose, supporting the specific needs of the people being cared for (NOS, 2021; WG, 2023a; WG, 2024). When individuals feel physically and emotionally safe, they are more likely to feel relaxed, confident and be able to participate fully in daily activities, supporting both their emotional security and personal development (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2026b). This is a child-centered and relational pedagogy, with process quality at its forefront (Birth to 5 Matters, 2025).

Natasha:

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Thank you, Barbara — that clearly links to the Well-Being area of SASS and Standard 20, NMS.

We aim to provide a safe, nurturing environment where children feel confident and listened to, supporting their wellbeing and development (Social Care Wales, 2026).

Barbara: Thanks Natasha.

Emily informed me that her quarterly audit highlighted a significant increase in the time it took children to evacuate the premises during our last drill. I then spoke with professionals and children to explore some of the reasons and was advised that some newer children found the alarm distressing and were reluctant to leave the building.

I proposed increasing fire drills alongside clear discussions with children to improve preparedness. This aligns with the Quality-of-Care Review, which emphasises skilled staff supervision during drills (CIW, 2026) and NHS guidance requiring fire drills at least every six months for more regular practice (WG, 2023a; Play Wales, 2023). Early exposure helps children understand procedures and observe adult responses, reflecting Bandura's Social Learning Theory, where learning occurs through observation, imitation and reinforcement (Waters-Davies, 2022; McBlain, 2025). By having more frequent fire drill practices, this enables children and professionals to respond more effectively during an emergency, promoting confidence, self-regulation and safety in a well-structured environment (Siraj-Blatchford *et al.*, 2015; Burton-Hughes, 2018; Triviedi *et al.*, 2019). This aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and SASS requirements, promoting safety and security, while enabling progression in wellbeing and holistic development (CIW, 2026).

I would like to reinforce that, last term, a young boy has joined our daycare setting and required a wheelchair. The parents wanted to understand the procedures for: Enhanced Fire Safety (EFSM), and a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), for those with additional support needs. These pre-prepared documents, outline the steps professionals must take to safely evacuate pupils with ALN under time pressure (Safeclincs, 2023; Swansea University, 2026). By enforcing this policy, we ensure that we adopt a rigorous evacuation procedure, that places quality at the forefront of this process, whilst not harming children's health, and safety. Similarly, the CIW emphasised that clear, effectively emergency routes and communication help to create safe, enabling environments for all individuals. It reinforces the need for staff training and regular review of procedures to maintain safety and compliance (Estyn, 2020; WG, 2021; HSE, 2024; CIW, 2026).

Maka, can you outline any additional elements we should consider when supporting children with ALN and/or physical disabilities during emergency procedures?

Maka:

Yes Barbara, it's important we consider the needs of all children during emergencies, particularly those with ALN or physical disabilities.

Some children may find alarms distressing or struggle with changes to routine, so we ensure staff are assigned to support specific children and use strategies such as preparation, reassurance and, where appropriate, quieter spaces. (The Accessibility, 2024; East Essex Fire and Rescue Service, 2023).

Barbara:

Lastly, a robust, tested lockdown procedure should be adopted, as recommended in our last inspection. Such procedures protect pupils and professionals during an emergency, whilst minimising disruption (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, 2022). Effective planning requires clear risk assessment, regular staff training, and strong communication between stakeholders. The *Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016* highlights that professionals must support children during planned and emergency departures, ensuring placements meet individual needs (WG, 2019). Similarly, the EPPE emphasised the importance of safe, stable and well-structured environments as central to high-quality pedagogy in the EYEC, especially during a lockdown procedure (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2015). Should a lockdown occur, professionals must respond swiftly and appropriately (WG, 2015). Therefore, collaboration between policymakers, practitioners, parents, and stakeholders ensures high-quality learning for individuals. Whilst process quality shapes children's experiences and outcomes, it is structural quality which keeps children safe (Osgood 2008, cited by Birth to 5 Matters, 2025).

Nicola:

That's a really important point. Inclusive safety planning ensures all children are protected during emergencies, particularly those who may need additional support.

It also shows how policies must work in practice for every child, not just exist on paper.

This reflective approach links directly to SASS, as we are required to show how practice is monitored, reviewed and improved (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2026a).

Overall, regular policy review helps ensure our practice is not only compliant, but actively supports children's safety, wellbeing and inclusion.

Natasha:

Thank you Barbara. Before we move on, it is important to recognise that while our safety procedures are robust, children's emotional responses, such as anxiety during drills, highlight the need for more child-centred approaches. On to Emily, I know you would like to discuss updates relating to feedback from parents and children.

Emily:

Yes, thanks Natasha.

As Quality Assurance Lead for our day care setting, my role feeds into *all* elements of our provision here, including those that sit within our *structural processes* such as staffing ratios, administrative procedures and safety management, and those important *process structures* that support our interactions, relationships, learning and care. My role involves overseeing preparations and compliance audits for inspections, however I would like to remind us that it is also important to consider quality improvement as an *ongoing* process, not just for inspections, but as early years research supports, it should be a *cyclical process* of monitoring and striving for continuous improvement so that we can achieve the best care, support and outcomes for the children in our provision (Snyder, 2024; Garvis & Taguchi, 2021). This aligns with CIW's inspection focus on continuous quality, particularly within the Leadership and Management theme, which evaluates how effectively services monitor, review, and improve practice (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2026c).

Supportive and secure relationships within early years settings play a vital role in shaping children's social and emotional development, learning engagement, and overall wellbeing which contributes to building a strong foundation for healthy development (Spilt *et al*., 2025; Pearse & Boylan, 2025).

Barbara:

However, maintaining these positive relationships also requires careful consideration of how we gather feedback from both children and their families.

Emily:

Yes and ensuring that multiple channels of communication are available to capture their views and experiences (Dickerson *et al*., 2025). Crucially, acting on this feedback is essential for driving quality improvement, as reflective engagement with evaluative input has been shown to enhance practitioners' awareness and lead to meaningful improvements in process quality (Baustad *et al*., 2025).

Firstly, I would like to focus on how we gather meaningful feedback from the parents and guardians of the children in our care, and how this information can directly support our improvement planning. Parent partnership is a key requirement of the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare in Wales, specifically Standard 6 which outlines the recommendations for engagement and communication with parents, but also Standard 18 which stipulates the requirement to seek out, and act on the views of the service users, as well as Standard 19 which outlines standards for complaint handling (Welsh Government, 2023b). Evidence from the *SEED Survey of Families* study demonstrates how parental insights contribute to understanding and enhancing early years provision (Department for Education, 2025). Our setting recognises the value of this insight, as we actively gather parent feedback through a range of methods, including both digital and paper-based questionnaires. We found a low response rate from questionnaire form, something which is seen in the sector (Schilpzand *et al.,* 2015), and so we have introduced a new *tech-savvy* QR code digital feedback link, however we must mindful that some of our parents might not be as confident using digital communication (Erdreich, 2021) and may need some support with this. So far the QR code feedback shows positive engagement and strengthened our feedback processes in this way further supports compliance with CIW's Leadership and Management theme by enhancing the effectiveness of our parent voice opportunities and contributions (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2026c).

A recommendation from our recent CIW inspection encouraged us to consider how families with *English as an Additional Language* might encounter barriers when accessing our publications or providing feedback. In response, Natasha and I collaborated with our website developer to introduce a translation feature, enabling families to access key information in their preferred language. This adaptation has significantly improved the accessibility of our communication

systems and has even prompted a local daycare provider to seek our advice on implementing a similar approach, demonstrating how sharing effective practice between settings can contribute to enhanced service quality. This initiative aligns closely with CIW's commitment to promoting and sharing examples of strong practice across the sector to support ongoing improvement (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2026d), as well as their expectations under the Care and Support theme, which emphasises the importance of ensuring that all families are able to engage meaningfully with the service (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2026c).

Natasha:
Yes, thanks Emily, very important, especially for our setting, operating in a very culturally diverse community. We have nine different first languages recorded by families and so we must always consider this as a potential barrier to communication and be mindful of how significant our registration and *getting-to-know-you phase i*s for both our children and families.

Emily:

Thanks Natasha – similarly with our children, the importance of capturing their voices and allowing opportunities for meaningful feedback is not only a requirement of CIW, reflected in the Well-being theme where inspectors consider *"the extent to which children have a voice"*, and further reinforced within the Care and Support theme which emphasises involving children in decisions and ensuring their wishes and communication needs shape their care (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2021, p.6), *but* also firmly embedded in children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 12, which states that every child has the right to express their views freely and to have those views taken seriously in all matters that affect *them* (UNICEF, 2022).

Our setting achieves this well as we offer multiple options for children to give feedback including photo-choice boards, emotional check-in prompt cards and 'feedback faces' which have been very useful in giving us a picture of what is working well and where improvements or new ideas could be made. Last week, I was invited to attend the children's committee meeting with Natasha *(with refreshments served by children in real china cups!),* and it was a brilliant opportunity for the children to voice their thoughts about experiences and opportunities here. There were discussions about activities and resources they were enjoying (*particularly the slime area and mud kitchen*) but also suggestions about what they would like to see and do, communicated to us in verbal feedback and some very lovely illustrations of animals they would like to see. Where it is not

always possible to meet the children's suggestions, *in this case having donkeys visit our garden area*, we are able to support their learning requests by seeking out alternative experiences to meet their ideas of enhanced quality time whilst in our care – and so we are in the process of arranging a trip to a local farm with many donkeys and other animals to enjoy!

Barbara:

It is great that we have listened to our children, and where we cannot meet their wants owing to safety restrictions and other limitations here, we are able to adapt and offer alternative experiences.

Maka:

Yes, and even for those children who find trips or changes to routine difficult, we will be exploring mini-beasts and butterfly hatching with a caterpillar house here at the centre.

Natasha:

Excellent, it is important for children to have their voices heard and for the setting to accommodate where possible.

Emily:
Agreed, these actions demonstrate our commitment to genuinely listening to children and responding to their feedback so that every child can experience opportunities that are shaped around their individual perspectives and needs. Our children feel confident and comfortable sharing their ideas within the setting, which reflects the strength of the trusting, caring, and attuned relationships we build with them. Research highlights that this kind of open communication and shared understanding between children and practitioners is a key contributor to enhanced *process quality* and improved developmental outcomes (Slot, 2018).

Nicola:
Absolutely, Emily. Our pupil voice approach is central to how we work and is clearly reflected in our provision's policy and evidenced in the lovely activities the children get to do – I am looking forward to the next newsletter!

Emily:

So am I Nicola!

Natasha:
Thanks Emily, Maka, over to you....

Maka:

As the ALN and Inclusion Lead my role is to ensure that all children and their families feel included as service users of our setting, and that the environment and activities are accessible for all. This is reflected in the principles of UNCRC (1989), which highlights that all children have the right to feel included, valued and safe. In preparation for our upcoming CIW inspection and the completion of the SASS documentation, I have carefully evaluated how our setting promotes inclusion, and how effective our approaches are, with particular focus on assessing how we support our children who have ALN. For these children, this involves adapting the environment to ensure all areas are accessible as well as working in partnership with parents and the wider community. This aligns with Standard 4 and 6 of the National Minimum Standards which emphasises the importance of meeting children's individual needs by providing an environment that is inclusive for all (Welsh Government 2023b).

When supporting children with ALN it is important that we identify any possible needs as early as possible to ensure that they get the right support. This aligns with the (ALN) *Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018*, which emphasises the importance of early identification so that each child can get the support they need. This setting supports this through continuous observation of children, clear communication amongst staff and management as well as maintaining regular dialogue with parents, guardians and multi-agency teams. When issues arise, we work as a team to support the children by adapting our approach and strategies to provide additional support for children when needed. This includes differentiation of tasks and activities, promoting clear and consistent routines, using visual aids and ensuring our practitioners have relevant training. This aligns with Standard 8 of the National Minimum Standards, which highlights how important it is to support children’s emotional well-being and sense of belonging and is also reflected in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Welsh Government 2023b; Maslow, 1943).

Natasha, can you confirm if all staff have completed the Level 2 training in Supporting ALN.

Nathasha:

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Yes, I can confirm all staff have completed the Level 2 Supporting ALN training as part of their continuing professional development. However, as part of preparation for our inspection, would you be able to provide some internal refresher training to ensure staff are confident and that practice is consistent?

Maka:

Yes of course, more than happy to deliver some internal refresher training, I think this will be really beneficial for the team. I will look to arrange this before the inspection. If there are any queries in the meantime, please don't hesitate to meet with me one on one and we can have an informal discussion to identify where I can support you further. This training will contribute to maintaining high standards of care quality with a particular focus on the areas of Well-being and Care and Development (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2026c).

I would also like to emphasise the importance of effective multi-agency working as this supports the provision of referral and assessments in line with the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (Welsh Government, 2021). When necessary, this often leads to the implementation of an Individual Development Plans (IDP), outlining the child's specific needs. CIW assess our compliance in relation to assessing and providing for prospective and confirmed additional learning needs, so it is very important that all observation records are clear and updated to evidence this.

Nicola:

Yes, Maka it's really important that our approach in recording evidence is consistent across the whole setting especially for those children with ALN.

Maka:

Thanks Nicola I couldn't agree more.

A significant part of my role relates to ensuring effective partnerships with parents, guardians and members of the wider community as these relationships contribute to ensuring the children's individual needs are consistently understood and supported closely linking to the Quality of Care and Development and Wellbeing (CIW, 2026c). I can see that the engagement within partnership working has deepened since our last inspection through the use of constructive feedback. At our setting we regularly request that parents provide us with feedback through a range of different methods, these include paper copy questionnaires, QR codes, our digital platform- Seesaw, and

informal discussions. We can then draw up all the feedback and use the information to help us determine what our strengths are and what we could improve on. Providing parents with various options supports accessibility and flexibility and increases engagement, it also gives parents the opportunity to address any concerns or any changes that they think might help their child's development. This then allows us as a setting to continuously monitor and improve the standard of provision, which reflects the Quality of Leadership and Management area (CIW, 2026c).

Emily:

Yes, parents are definitely engaging more when we have a range of different options.

Maka:

We also encourage parents to take part in different events throughout the year, such as the Easter bonnet parade, annual trips and interactive stay and play sessions. These interactions have strengthened our relationships with families, providing further opportunities to express their thoughts and feedback, which will then be embedded within our practice

Whilst using QR codes and digital questionnaires has improved our engagement, some parents of ALN children at drop off and collection times have expressed face to face communication being more effective highlighting the need for more face to face conversations as they find these interactions more beneficial and meaningful, which will support us in gaining a deeper understanding of the child's developmental needs, improving the quality of Care and Development (CIW, 2026c). This indicates using a balanced approach of communication is key to meeting the needs of all families.

From an ALN perspective it is particularly important that parents feel confident sharing their views so a more personable approach when communicating may be needed as partnership working is essential to childrens learning and development (DfE, 2021). Parents and Carers play a crucial role in supporting the children because they have a deeper understanding of their child and know their strengths and challenges, supporting the quality of Care and Development (CIW, 2026c). This is also supported by the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), which suggests that children's development is widely influenced by their relationships and their environment.

As a result of recent parent meetings, it was brought to our attention that there are some concerns regarding the accessibility in some areas of the environment. Parents highlighted that accessibility

could be improved and mentioned ramps and ease of movement improving play provision (Play Safety Forum, 2021). In response to this we are reviewing the layout of the setting and seeing what adaptations are able to be made as part of the *Equality Act 2010*, which will allow children to be more independent when accessing areas of the setting, strengthening the quality of Environment (CIW, 2026c).

Barbara:

It's great to hear that we are actively responding to the feedback and I look forward to seeing how the environment is adapted.

Maka:

Me too Babara! I also thought that from this evidence perhaps increasing parent meetings to once every term could be an effective way to continuously improve our setting and practice which also increases face to face interactions.

As well as this we have also been able to make strong connections within local community, including schools nearby, health professionals and community centres. Working with the local services has allowed us to provide additional support for the children and families and created more learning opportunities. As part of our engagement with the local community, we have provided the children and their families with meaningful experiences. For example, the children expressed their interest in gardening through informal conversations and their play. In response to this we have recently expanded our planting area where children are now able to grow their own fruit and vegetables which is then donated to the local foodbank. Which all families are able to access, promoting inclusion through the community, this supports the quality of Well-being (CIW, 2026c).

Natasha:

Thank you Maka, this links directly to both the Well-being, and the Care and development themes within the CIW framework, as it demonstrates how children's emotional needs are supported while also promoting their learning, development and overall outcomes.

So, one of the challenges that has come to light when reviewing the staff training records and supervisions as part of this quality of care review, is mandatory training. Four of the team are due

to attend refresher paediatric first aid training around the same time. The issue we have is balancing limited access to local authority courses, which limit each setting to only one participant.

Barbara:

Yes, I'm concerned my certificate will expire before a course is available.

Natasha:

The second challenge is that staff may have to complete training in their personal time, as courses are currently available only during our working hours, this is a challenge for the setting unless planned appropriately or held during the weekend. Newport City Council (2022) argues that if staff training is not accessed or up to date, children will not reach their full potential. As the leader, it is my responsibility to ensure the setting meets the Health needs of children, Regulation 24 (The Childminding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010 and Standard 10.24 (NMS), which require a ratio of at least 1:10 of suitable, trained staff.

Maka:

The setting could potentially be vulnerable during the summer term, especially if any of the training expires, as, in the case of sickness, we would be outside this ratio for trained staff and unable to meet the NMS, which could impact on inspection outcomes.

Natasha:

After consultation with staff and having a passion to support their well-being by protecting their time outside of work, I have collaborated with a peer group of fellow nursery managers to source alternative options that can support a mixture of online and in-person training, meeting the 12-hour paediatric first aid requirement. This would not only be a great opportunity to ensure CIW compliance but also for the staff to visit another setting. I understand the importance of networking as childcare can be a lonely place for decision makers. Drawing on the expertise and knowledge of others can resolve issues and influence best practices (Skinner, 2023; Nutbrown, 2012).

McMullen *et al.* (2020) argue that practitioners whose professional well-being is unsupported leave the sector. This has a direct impact on the quality of daycare settings and children's outcomes, as unhappy staff can be distracted and sever relationships they build with children. Insecure attachments have been linked to behaviour difficulties, poor emotional regulation and long-term mental health risks for children (Barlow *et al*., 2016). Consistency of allocated key worker staff supports children's emotional security, improves mental health, and enhances learning outcomes,

which directly align with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs for children to thrive: they need to first feel safe.

To ensure we are inspection-ready, Emily I think we need a full audit of the staff files and identify and plan for any pinch points over the next two years so that training can be staggered, rather than sending the entire team on the same course, and can be addressed more appropriately.

Emily:

Of course, I'll add that as an urgent matter to the action plan.

Natasha: (at the end of the meeting)

Well done, everyone.

Overall, while our current systems for collecting and responding to feedback are varied and increasingly effective, critical reflection highlights that there are still areas for development, particularly in ensuring consistent engagement across all stakeholder groups. By continuing to review and adapt our approaches, we can ensure that feedback is not only collected but used meaningfully to drive continuous improvement and enhance the quality of care within our setting.

The Quality of Care report will be finalised and made available to all stakeholders and Care Inspectorate for Wales, upon request, within 28 days, aligning with NMS standard 5 and Regulation 16, point 3.

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