

**MEDICAL PROTECTION SOCIETY**

33 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0PS, UK  
DX 42736 Oxford Circus North  
Telephone 0845 605 4000  
International code +44 (0) 20 7399 1300  
Facsimile +44 (0) 20 7399 1301



www.mps.org.uk

Dr Kate Chamberlin  
Chief Executive  
Prif Weithtredwr  
Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)  
Arolygiaeth Gofal Iechyd Cymru  
Llywodraeth Cymru  
Parc Busnes Rhydycar  
Merthyr Tudful  
CF48 1UZ

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Dear Dr Chamberlin

**Healthcare Inspectorate Wales Strategic Plan 2015-18 consultation**

The Medical Protection Society (MPS) welcomes this opportunity to respond to Healthcare Inspectorate Wales's (HIW) consultation on its Strategic Plan for 2015-18. As a not-for-profit organisation supporting over 9,000 healthcare professionals in Wales, HIW's inspection regime is something we continue to monitor closely.

A principle objective for HIW is to improve the safety and quality of the healthcare service in Wales; to achieve that it must ensure that it plays its part in fostering a culture of openness in healthcare. MPS believes that cultural change in the NHS is the key to creating safe, responsive, patient centred care and high quality communication between professionals and patients. We offer a wide range of educational and training programmes to members to support this goal, alongside continuous learning.

As HIW looks ahead to the next three years, we would like to take this opportunity to raise some points in relation to the proposed thematic reviews, and also on some more general issues in relation to the current inspection regime.

**Thematic Reviews**

In the Strategic Plan, it is proposed that HIW will undertake a thematic review in 2016/17, into the treatment of patients in the right setting and preventing unnecessary admissions. MPS would encourage the review team to focus on the implications and challenges posed by the significant workforce shortages that exist in Wales. The Royal College of GPs earlier this year pointed to a declining number of GPs per head of the population in Wales and a lack of trainee GPs coming through the system.<sup>1</sup> The recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals into primary care is a fundamental issue for any improvement in services to be forthcoming.

The Strategic Plan also proposes a thematic review of diagnostic services. Poor availability and poor accessibility to diagnostic services can have serious consequences for the

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<sup>1</sup> Policy Forum for Wales, 2015 – Dr Paul Myers, Chair of RCGP Cymru

outcome of a patient's treatment. When diagnostic services fail, there are often significant medicolegal consequences. We would encourage HIW to bring this review forward from the current proposed time frame of 2017/18, as the subject matter is worthy of earlier consideration.

### **General comments – HIW inspection regime**

We note with interest that HIW is placing an emphasis on intelligence led inspections as part of its Strategic Plan for the next three years, and we welcome this focus. Our recent experience suggests that a rolling programme of inspections has targeted specific practices where there is nothing to indicate substantive concerns, but rather questions about the minutiae of regulatory compliance. Healthcare professionals must of course comply with all regulations covering their practice, however we have experienced a number of instances where HIW has criticised a practice for not going beyond what is required in the relevant regulation.

Inspections should be risk based and proportionate to achieve 'right touch' regulation.<sup>2</sup> For instance, MPS and the British Dental Association (BDA) were recently made aware of a case where a general dental practitioner was criticised by HIW and informed that he could not carry out Portable Appliance testing himself, and instead this had to be done by a qualified electrician. Our understanding of the regulation in question is that it specifically advises that testing by someone with appropriate training is valid, and that testing by a qualified electrician is not compulsory.<sup>3</sup>

While one example, we are concerned that this is indicative of a general focus on the part of HIW, rather than an intelligence led and proportionate inspection regime, investigating issues of concern. We therefore welcome and encourage the emphasis HIW's is placing on intelligence led inspections and an adherence to the principles of 'right touch' regulation.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet you and discuss these points further. If that would be beneficial, or if you have any questions, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



**Dr R A Hendry**  
**Medical Director**

Contact                    Thomas Reynolds  
Direct Telephone        +44 (0)20 7399 1314  
Email                        thomas.reynolds@medicalprotection.org

<sup>2</sup> Professional Standards Authority (PSA) – Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence. *Right-touch regulation*. August 2010

<sup>3</sup> Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. / S 7671:2008 (2011) Requirements for electrical installations