

Top Tips for preparing for your Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection – Care Homes/Care Homes with nursing.

Frequency of Inspections

A service will have a “comprehensive inspection” at the following frequencies:

- **Services rated as ‘good and outstanding’** – normally within 30 months of the last comprehensive inspection report being published.
- **Services rated as ‘requires improvement’** – normally within 12 months of the last comprehensive inspection report being published.
- **Services rated as ‘inadequate’** – normally within 6 months of the last comprehensive inspection report being published.
- **Newly registered services and those no longer dormant** – the first comprehensive inspection will normally be scheduled between 6 to 12 months from the date of registration.

The above timescales are maximum time periods in which CQC would normally return to inspect, although services may be inspected at any time. The planning and scheduling of inspections will be informed by CQC insight information and the assessment of risk for your service.

Services that are rated as ‘requires improvement overall’, but have at least one key question rating of ‘inadequate’, will normally have a comprehensive inspection within six months of the last comprehensive inspection report being published. This is in line with the ‘adult social care approach to special measures’.

Before the inspection

- Familiarise yourself with the Provider Handbook [How CQC monitors, inspects and regulates adult social care services](#) and the [CQC What to Expect when we inspect](#) guide.
- Sign up for the monthly newsletters from CQC. Click on ‘Subscribe to our newsletters’ at the bottom of the CQC website home page (under heading ‘Explore CQC’).
- Ensure that you are familiar with the new Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) and amendments [Key lines of enquiry, prompts and ratings characteristics for adult social care services](#) and also the [Key Lines of Enquiry and Prompts: Sources of evidence](#).
- Ensure that you are displaying your current CQC rating in the recommended format in a prominent place which is easily visible to people living in the home and visitors (generally in the entrance hall close to the Visitors Book).

- Ensure that your rating is displayed on the home's website.
- Ensure that the service's 'Statement of Purpose' is up to date and you have notified CQC of any changes [Regulation 12, Statement of Purpose guidance](#).
- Ensure that anything identified on previous CQC Action Plans have been completed/you have evidenced what you have done
- Consider downloading the [Skills for Care, Good and Outstanding Care Guide](#) and use checklists provided.
- Showcase all the great work you do, take photos and display them (be mindful of consent).
- Consider a CQC box containing policies, procedures and good news stories (you could have a box for each key question)
- Ensure compliments/cards are date stamped (with date received)
- Read recent CQC inspection reports from similar homes in your area that have been rated 'Outstanding' to see how they achieved this and those rated 'Requires Improvement' to prompt what areas you may need to work on in your own service.
- Consider holding mock inspections or ask members of the team to carry out observations at key times (meal times, activities etc.) and report back on practice, language/terminology used. This process is often used by the CQC and referred to as SOFI ([Short observational framework for inspection](#))
- Inform all staff that you are due an inspection, what to expect and that the inspector might wish to talk to them.
- Check staff knowledge on an ad hoc basis i.e. give them a scenario around safeguarding, Mental Capacity Act etc. and ask them what they would do. This will help to embed training and enable staff to put into practice what they have learnt.
- Look at the home with a fresh pair of eyes. Ensure all maintenance tasks have been completed or at least booked in (are all the light bulbs working? curtains hung on all curtain hooks? would you want to live there?).
- Think about the entrance to the home. Stand on the doorstep, see, hear and smell what an inspector would as they enter the home. First impressions count.
- Consider displaying the [CQC Tell Us Now poster](#) in the home. Encourage visitors to share positive experiences with CQC using the 'Tell Us' icon.

Completing your Provider Information Return (PIR)

CQC will be using a Provider Information Collection (PIC) to collect the information from your PIR.

- Use the [Key lines of enquiry, prompts and ratings characteristics for adult social care services](#) for ideas.

- Consider writing the free text into a Word document first then copy and paste onto the online form - this will allow you to check the word count and keep a record of what you have submitted.
- Here is the link to CQC's [frequently asked questions regarding the PIR](#)
- Involve the whole team in identifying good examples of what you do well. Involving staff with the whole process will help them to feel relaxed on the day of inspection.
- Ensure that you have entered information into all appropriate drop-down boxes (some questions are mandatory, you might need to write N/A or 0 to enable the form to be submitted if the question does not relate to your service).
- Use person-centred language, avoid terms such as 'feeds', 'bed bound', 'with weeks to live'. Instead consider using language such as, 'people who require support to eat/are cared for in bed/are at the end of their life'.
- Avoid acronyms. It will make it easier for the inspector to read. The inspector might not have the same background as you, so may not be familiar with certain acronyms, and they will lose the flow of what they are reading if they have to stop to look it up.
- In the 'what improvements' box, highlight future plans for positive continuous improvements to your service.
- Make sure that you submit information (contact list and provider information return) by the deadline given.
- Go through the answers submitted in your PIR with your staff to ensure that they know what you have told the inspector prior to them coming.

During the Inspection

- Check the inspectors identity badge, ask them to sign in, tell them where all the facilities are (toilets, etc.), and tell them what to do should there be a fire. Inform them of any particular communication needs or anxiety they may encounter from staff and people living in the home that they should be aware of.
- The inspector will tell you:
 - If it is a comprehensive or focussed inspection
 - Whether they are following up on any previous issues
 - The proposed length of the inspection
 - The roles of the inspection team members e.g. inspector(s), 'experts by experience', specialist clinicians.
 - Who they plan to speak with
 - Documents they want to review
 - How they will feed back about what was found during the inspection

- Share with the inspector what you do well (good news, success stories newsletters). Be proactive, tell the inspector all the information relating to how you have met and exceeded the standard required.
- Themes they will check (refer to [CQC Equality Objectives 2017-19](#)) as follows:
 - Services work in a person-centred way
 - Human Rights
 - Equality and diversity (including staff)
 - Accessible Information Standard
 - Safeguarding
 - Mental Capacity Act including Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Also consider current national issues such as Fire Risk Assessments being up-to-date (in response to Grenfell), General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25th May 2018.
- Keep a record of how you work with others – what surveys are carried out? How are people included with improving or designing the service?
- Remember, inspectors will be noting what they observe, hear, smell (odours), taste and what they feel (culture, atmosphere of the home/service).
- Think about the [Mum Test](#) introduced by Andrea Sutcliffe (*Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care at CQC*).

After the inspection

- CQC will send you a draft inspection report. You will have the opportunity to challenge any factual inaccuracies at this stage (10 working days). Guidance regarding factual inaccuracies can be found at [CQC guidance regarding factual inaccuracies](#)
- CQC have 5 days in which to respond.
- Your final report will be published on CQC's website
- You can request a review of the ratings after the report has been published **only** if you think that CQC has failed to follow their process for making ratings decisions.
- Requests for a review of rating must be submitted by the registered manager or the nominated individual by using the on-line form on CQC's website. The request must be submitted within 15 working days of the publication of the report and must be limited to 500 words across all the ratings being challenged.
- CQC will take action where services are in breach of a legal requirement.

Other resources that you might find useful:

- [Skills for Care be prepared for your inspection](#)
- [NICE Quality Improvement Resource](#)
- [Adult Social Care Quality Matters](#)