

Making a difference to people's lives through modern health care and social care regulation

What we do

The quality of health care and social care services can have a profound impact on our lives and on the lives of our families and carers. The Care Quality Commission is the regulator of the quality of health and adult social care in England.

Our job is to:

- **make sure that essential standards of safety and quality are met wherever health and social care is provided;**
- **protect the rights of people whose freedoms are restricted under mental health legislation;**
- **encourage those who purchase and provide care to continue to improve services and;**
- **promote the efficient and effective use of resources in the provision of health and social care.**



Improving care for people who use services

In our work, we:

- **put the people who use services first, be informed by what they tell us and stand up for their rights;**
- **have a particular focus on people who find themselves in more vulnerable circumstances, including those with mental health problems, learning disabilities, physical disabilities or long-term conditions, older people, and children and young people;**
- **provide accountability to the public and taxpayer for how well public money is being used to improve outcomes for people.**

We will work with people who use services and their families, and people who purchase and provide services to make sure that we do our work to the highest standards.



Our priorities

Our starting point is that people who purchase and provide services are responsible for making sure that they meet essential standards of safety and quality. Our role is to check that that they are doing this, to hold them to account and promote improvement.

In carrying out our role we will focus on:

- **making sure care is centred on people's needs and that people's rights are protected;**
- **championing joined-up care, so services work well together in meeting people's needs for health and social care;**
- **acting swiftly to help eliminate poor quality care;**
- **promoting high quality care;**
- **ensure that regulation reduces bureaucracy, is streamlined and efficient as possible.**

Our new registration system for health and social care will assure that minimum standards of safety and quality are met and maintained. Our new system for assessments of quality will look at standards of safety and quality beyond the essential.



How we will work

Registration

The new registration standards for health and adult social care cover 6 outcome areas that we expect people who provide care to be able to comply with.

These are:

- **information and involvement** – the information that providers make available to people so they can make informed decisions about their care and support;
- **personalised care, treatment and support** – the way in which providers make sure that people get effective and safe care and treatment that supports their individual needs;
- **safeguarding and safety** – the way in which providers assure people who use services that equipment and premises are safe and suitable, risks are managed and people’s human rights and dignity are safeguarded;
- **suitability of staffing** – what providers do to make sure that they have suitably qualified, skilled and knowledgeable staff who can ably support people
- **quality and management** – what providers do to manage risk and ensure essential standards of safety and quality are maintained;
- **suitability of management.** – what providers and managers must do to show CQC that they are suitable to run the service and to notify CQC of any relevant changes



The new system is focussed on outcomes more than systems and processes, and places the views of people who use services at its centre.

Assessments of quality above essential standards

In addition to checking that people can expect services that meet essential standards of safety and quality, we also have an important function in promoting improvement. We do this by providing independent, reliable and timely information about the quality of care above essential standards, to help people make better informed decisions about where to go for their care.

Our work in delivering the new registration and assessment of quality system is to:

- **bring together information about the safety and quality of care that a service provides, including information from inspection of services;**
- **identify where there are risks that services could fail people or might cause harm;**
- **take action in response to the risks that we identify and make judgements about compliance with registration;**
- **take proportionate enforcement action and make sure that improvements are made and sustained;**
- **assess and publish information on the quality of care.**



Bringing together information about the safety and quality of care

We will collect information about all the services we register and about those who purchase care for their communities.

The information will be different for different services and organisations – ranging from care services in the home to large hospitals. But whichever service we are assessing we seek views of people who use services, carers and families. We work with Local Information Networks (LINKs) to get that information. We will improve our approach to this through increasing use of internet sites to capture those views.

We also have information from our own inspections and service reviews, from the declarations that providers make about their compliance with essential standards of safety and quality as part of registration, and information that government departments and other regulators collect.

We will also collect information directly from those who provide and purchase care services – information that they already collect and use in their own work. We expect them to be able to show how they have listened to the views of people using services and how they have acted on these.



Analysing information about safety and quality

We will analyse the information we have to identify risks to the safety and quality of care. We will continually monitor compliance with essential standards as part of a dynamic and responsive system – so as new information becomes available we can make decisions about whether any further action is needed from us or other organisations.

For people purchasing and providing care, we will analyse information on death rates and other measures to identify services which appear to be performing less well, so that we can follow up and check if there are problems in the safety and quality of care.

We will also monitor the risks to people's well being because they cannot access services.

Taking action in response to concerns about safety and quality that are identified and making judgements about compliance with registration

In the light of all the available information on the safety and quality of care, our staff may decide on the need for further action to be taken.



This may include:

- **asking for further information from the people purchasing or providing the care;**
- **doing our own inspections and if needed drawing in specialist expertise as required for example from Royal Colleges;**
- **asking another organisation to take action such as:**
- **the Local Authority or the Primary Care Trust, Strategic Health Authorities or other regulators such as Monitor for NHS Foundation Trusts.**

Our inspections where we decide we need to do these will generally be short, focussed and unannounced. They will primarily centre on the assessment of outcomes and the experiences people have as a result of their care.

We will be most active in areas where we think the risks to people are greater, where people are less able to assert their rights, where information on the quality of care is poor, or where providers are failing to improve. Equally we will be less active where services are performing well.

Where our inspections and other activities lead to a judgement that registration requirements are not being met, we will take action to ensure improvements are made – including issuing improvement letters, statutory warning notices, fines, attaching conditions to registration, suspension or cancellation of registration. Our biggest concern is to protect the safety of people using services.

We will work with others – including those who purchase care for their communities and other organisations to make sure that improvements happen and are maintained.

Assess and publish information on the quality of care

We want to make the information we provide as timely and relevant to people as possible.

We are creating a 'quality and risk profile' for all those who purchase or provide services, bringing together the information we hold about the safety and quality of care. This will build up over time and provide detailed information about safety and quality of care. The profiles for providers will offer a dynamic view of safety and quality and will include our judgements about compliance with registration which will be updated on an ongoing basis. The profiles will be available to the public, and those people who purchase and provide care.

For providers of adult social care, we will have an ongoing programme of 'quality ratings', where we publish an assessment of the overall quality of the service. Making a judgment about the safety and quality of these services will always involve a site visit. For NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts, we will report on progress against the national priorities set by Government.

For those that purchase care for their local communities we will assess and publish our judgements about how well they are achieving better outcomes for their local communities and how effectively they are using public money. We will also hold them to account for the safety and quality of care they buy from those services we register.

Holding us to account

We have set out an ambitious programme of work to make sure people get safer, better quality care. We expect people using services, carers, and those purchasing and providing care to hold us to account for the quality of our work, and for the values we demonstrate in delivering it. We will do this by surveying our key stakeholders at established periods of time.