



CQC maintaining standards: next steps

Introduction

This fact sheet aims to give you a few key pointers about the next steps with regard to your CQC assessment visit and about maintaining standards once you are CQC registered. Having applied for CQC registration the next step is to ensure you are prepared for an assessment (a review of compliance). CQC states that:

‘We will continuously monitor a provider’s compliance with the essential standards through a dynamic and responsive system of regulation. To do this, assessors and inspectors will continuously check all available information we hold about a provider, and seek information from people who use services, public representative groups and organisations such as other regulators. Where we have concerns that a provider is not meeting the essential standards of quality and safety, we will act quickly, working closely with commissioners and others, using our enforcement powers if necessary to make sure that improvements are made.’

CQC will carry out planned and responsive reviews of a provider’s compliance with essential standards as part of their monitoring of compliance. A planned review of compliance is a scheduled check of compliance with all of the 16 key essential standards that are most directly related to quality and safety. Where concerns are raised about compliance with any of the other essential standards, CQC may also check these. A planned review looks across all the regulated activities carried out at a location.

CQC will carry out planned reviews on a rolling programme. The frequency of a planned review will be between three months and two years after registration. Where they have concerns about the quality of care provided at a location, or where they feel a provider is carrying out high risk activities, they will carry out planned reviews more frequently than where they don’t.

This factsheet provides an overview on the assessment process and what evidence that you will need to present during a compliance review.

The assessment process

Once you are registered, providers must continue to meet the essential standards. The CQC will check that you are doing this by:

- Collecting and analysing information about the provider (information capture/information analysis).
- Using the outcome of the analysis to make a judgement about whether or not you are continuing to meet the essential standards (judgement on risk).

- Deciding on a regulatory response/regulatory judgement. At the end of the process, they will publish their judgement on their website (judgement published).

The Judgement framework

The Judgement framework is written for CQC staff to improve consistency in the decisions and judgements they make about a provider's registration, and will provide a transparent method that can be used to check their judgements.

It explains how a decision should be reached by considering evidence about compliance. It focuses on the 16 regulations and associated outcomes that most directly relate to the quality and safety of care.

The framework is split into four stages:

Stage 1: Determining whether there is enough evidence to make a judgement.

Stage 2: Checking whether or not the evidence demonstrates compliance, or whether there are concerns about the provider's compliance with the regulations.

Stage 3: If concerns are found, making a judgement about the impact on people using services and the likelihood of the impact occurring.

Stage 4: Validating the judgement.

Setting the bar

This explains where the bar is set when monitoring compliance of registered health and adult social care services –the difference between complying and failing to comply with the essential standards – and how this helps to determine what CQC's regulatory response should be following stage 4 of the Judgement framework.

It provides a framework from which CQC can make consistent decisions about what they will do in order to ensure that services meet essential standards of quality and safety.

It includes: what CQC should do when we have identified concerns about compliance using the judgement framework, what this means for the location at which the regulated activity is carried out and what this means for the provider as a whole.

Evidence of outcomes

When the CQC monitor your compliance with the essential standards, they will check that you are meeting these outcomes. They will focus on evidence which demonstrates that people who use services: have good outcomes and experiences, meaning that their care is effective and that they are safe and are involved in their care and that their views are listened to and acted on.

If your service is large and provides complex services, you will probably need to use evidence from a variety of different sources and in many different formats.

You could use evidence directly from people who use services and those acting on their behalf, such as:

- Surveys of people who use services, their carers and families.
- Complaints and feedback from people who use services.
- Patient reported outcome measures (PROMs).
- Feedback from local representative, community and voluntary groups.
- Feedback from the public.

For more examples of types of evidence that can be provided, visit the CQC website.

Provider compliance assessment tool

CQC have developed a compliance tool to help you assess how you are meeting the essential standards, along with guidance on how to use it. The tool is not mandatory, but they encourage you to use it routinely as it will help you in assessing your ongoing compliance.

When they carry out a review of compliance, they may ask you to send all or part of your assessment. If you decide against using the tool, you must be able to send them the information they require in a suitable format.

Quality and risk profile tool

The Quality and Risk Profile (QRP) is a tool that gathers all we know about a provider in one place. It enables the CQC to assess where risks lie and prompt front line regulatory activity, such as inspection.

Please note that all information is correct on date of issue. For more comprehensive information on the topics raised in this factsheet and to access the assessment tools, visit the CQC website:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/guidanceforprofessionals/independenthealthcare/ourmonitoringofcompliance.cfm>