

Fulcrum Care

Systems and processes in preparing for CQC
assessment

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Your Partner in Achieving Exceptional Outcomes

- Award Winning Turnaround Consultancy
- CQC/CIW/CI Mock Inspections
- Remote Mini Mock Inspection
- Quality Audits
- Comprehensive Operational Due Diligence Reviews
- CQC support including NI role
- CQC Registration
- Asset Management
- Bespoke quality & operational consultancy
- Support with Complaints & Safeguarding including investigations and analysis
- Operational efficiency assessment & solutions
- Outsourced quality function
- Care packages
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Auditing software

Pressing Issues Facing Care Providers Today

- As care providers navigate the evolving landscape of social care, the challenges are more complex and numerous than ever before.
- The sector faces challenges within the regulatory landscape, growing demand for services, and shifting workforce dynamics. Understanding these pressing issues is key to adapting and thriving.
- Changes to the CQC inspection regime coupled with a lack of recent inspections are leading to many care providers being ill-prepared for inspection and as a result falling foul of poor ratings and enforcement action.
- Whilst there is now public and political recognition of the failings at CQC and a plan to reform CQC's approach, future changes are unknown and we must be prepared to work within the current framework, meeting these challenges head on.

Pressing Issues Facing Care Providers Today



- The findings of the Dash report have led to significant changes being implemented at CQC
- Sir Julian Hartley has been appointed as CEO and will commence his role in December 2024.
- 4 Chief Inspectors will be appointed with specialist knowledge
- CQC are reviewing the current Assessment Process
- CQC are updating their approach to relationship management and providing improved tools to providers.

Pressing Issues Facing Care Providers Today: Registration

"We aim to conclude reviews of representations at the earliest possible opportunity. We are currently concluding reviews within an average of 60 working days. This means some cases may take more than 60 working days to conclude."

	CQC Registered Care Home Providers	CQC Registered Home Care Providers
Outstanding	572	445
Good	10173	7724
Requires Improvement	2375	1322
Inadequate	144	52
Not rated	1447	5797

Pressing Issues Facing Care Providers Today: Analysis

Many care providers face difficulties in navigating regulatory demands, which can lead to negative outcomes from CQC inspections. Common pitfalls include:

- Lack of consistency in care delivery
- Insufficient staff training or oversight
- Lack of clear systems and processes
- Poor record keeping
- Inadequate governance structures

Pressing Issues Facing Care Providers Today: Analysis

Requires Improvement and Inadequate Care Homes: What went wrong? Several key themes and issues have been identified across Requires Improvement and Inadequate rated care homes:

- **Staffing Issues:** Many inadequate and requires improvement homes struggle with staffing, both in terms of quantity and quality. This includes insufficient staff numbers to meet residents' needs and lack of proper training or qualifications.
- **Management and Leadership Deficiencies:** Poor management and weak leadership are prevalent in these homes, often leading to ineffective communication, inadequate oversight, and a lack of clear direction or standards.
- **Non-Compliance with Safety Standards:** These homes frequently fail to meet essential safety standards. This includes issues with medication management, emergency preparedness, and general safety protocols.
- **Inadequate Resident Care:** There are significant concerns about the quality of care, including failure to meet residents' individual needs, lack of person-centred care, and poor handling of residents' dignity and privacy.
- **Regulatory Enforcement Actions:** In response to these shortcomings, various enforcement actions have been taken by the CQC, including requirements for action plans, planned re-inspections in the future, and, in some cases, more severe legal or operational restrictions.

How to Effectively Respond to CQC Challenges

Failing to meet CQC Standards & being unable to evidence that you are meeting the quality statements can lead to poor inspection outcomes, reputational damage, and operational difficulties. Responding to CQC challenges requires:

- **Proactive Approach:** Conduct regular internal audits and mock inspections to ensure continuous improvement. Embed the quality statements into all aspects of day-to-day operations.
- **“Stage Manage the Inspection”** Be prepared and provide coaching and mentoring for your team to ensure that they are ready for an inspection. Many managers lack inspection experience due to the amount of time between inspections over recent years.
- **Thorough Documentation:** Ensure all processes are documented and that systems are embedded in daily activities to provide evidence of all aspects of compliance.
- **Crisis Management:** Develop a robust response to quickly address and rectify any issues raised during inspections. Engage external help when needed to reassure regulators and support the internal team to make the necessary improvements.

Improving Care Quality and Navigating the Regulatory Landscape: Evidence Categories



The CQC explain; *"Our assessment framework focuses on what matters to people. We encourage people who use services, and organisations who represent them or act on their behalf, to share their experiences at any time."*

- People's experience of health and care services
- Feedback from staff and leaders
- Feedback from partners
- Observation
- Processes
- Outcomes

Enhancing Governance and Oversight: Well Led

- **Values and Vision** is the way a provider helps its staff and leaders to demonstrate a positive, compassionate, listening culture that promotes trust and understanding between them and people using the service that is focused on learning and improvement.
- **Effective governance** is at the heart of any well-run care service. Strong governance structures ensure that care providers can meet their regulatory obligations while fostering continuous improvement.
- **Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** Ensure that everyone in the organisation knows their duties concerning compliance and quality of care.
- **Effective Communication:** Regular communication between management and staff promote a shared understanding of quality standards and compliance.
- **Data-Driven Oversight:** Utilise technology to collect and analyse data on care delivery and outcomes, helping to spot trends and areas for improvement.

Enhancing Governance and Oversight: Well Led

Options:

- Review your work place culture: [Culture toolkit activities \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://skillsforcare.org.uk)
- Evaluate your recruitment processes: [Values-based recruitment \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://skillsforcare.org.uk)
- Speaking up: encourage a culture of speaking up allowing staff to raise concerns ... without fear of detriment. When concerns are raised, leaders investigate sensitively and confidentially, and lessons are shared and acted on.
- Foster: Staff at all levels have a well-developed understanding of equality, diversity and human rights, and they prioritise safe, high-quality, compassionate care.
- Evidence and action plan your progress
- Grow together: [Quality Improvement Films and Resources for Care Home Staff | React To](#)

Overcoming Regulatory Challenges

Overcoming these challenges is key to succeeding and providers must focus on the following key areas:

- 1. Implement Consistent Standards:** Develop clear, consistent policies, systems and processes that staff can follow daily.
- 2. Continuous Staff Training:** Regular training programs ensure that staff remain updated on best practice and regulatory requirements.
- 3. Strategic Compliance Planning:** Embed compliance within the organisational culture, with strong leadership and clear accountability.
- 4. Governance and Oversight:** Ensure that robust governance structures are in place giving clear oversight to the leadership team within the organisation.



Enhancing Safe and Effective Care: Safe

Options:

- Access your local safeguarding adults board to ensure you have applied the national policy and local procedures
- Access your NHS ICB medication management policy to ensure you are following local processes
- Align audit processes to best practice and your MAR systems
- Involve people in the process

Enhancing Person Focused Care: Effective

Options:

- Follow guidance set out in legislation – for example the MCA code: [Mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414222/Mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice.pdf)
- Create a comprehensive assessment process that marries to your organisational vision and values
- Involve people in decisions and plans about their care

Transforming Care Quality

- **Transforming care quality** involves more than meeting minimum standards; it's about striving for excellence in every aspect of care delivery & embedding best practice in all aspects of day-to-day activity.
- **Innovative Training Programs:** Develop comprehensive training programmes that empower staff to enhance their skills and deliver person-centred care with the best possible outcomes for those receiving care.
- **Quality Assurance Systems:** Implement robust quality assurance frameworks to regularly assess performance, gather feedback, and make informed improvements.
- **Empowering Staff:** Foster a culture where staff feel valued, supported, and motivated to contribute to high standards of care.

Building Resilience

- In an environment of constant regulatory challenges, building resilience is essential for care providers to ensure sustainability.
- **Adapting to Change:** Stay informed about regulatory updates and sector trends, and adjust operational strategies as needed.
- **Investing in Workforce Development:** A well-trained and supported workforce is the foundation of a resilient care service.
- **Operational Efficiencies and Resource Management:** A focus on ensuring operational efficiencies are well managed maximising commercial results to help care providers weather external pressures and maintain quality of service delivery.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

As care providers face growing challenges, responding effectively to CQC requirements and fostering a culture of continuous improvement is crucial. By addressing regulatory challenges head-on, enhancing governance, transforming care quality, and building resilience, care services can ensure that they provide safe, high-quality care to those who need it most. Now is the time to act, invest in your workforce, and implement sustainable strategies to meet the demands of the future.

Resources:

- CQC Web-page: [Search Results - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#)
- Fulcrum Insights: [Fulcrum - Alarming Trends in Care Home Ratings - Version 3 \(hubspotusercontent-na1.net\)](#)
- CQC response to Dash Inquiry: [Response to the interim findings of the Dash review into CQC's operational effectiveness - Care Quality Commission](#)
- LinkedIn: [Caroline Barker on LinkedIn: #cqc #socialcare #mustdobetter | 12 comments](#)
- HBR: [To Change Your Company's Culture, Don't Start by Trying to Change the Culture - HBS Working Knowledge](#)
- Skills for Care – Care Exchange: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Support-for-leaders-and-managers/Support-for-registered-managers/The-care-exchange/The-care-exchange-Series-3.aspx>
- CQC Regulation 9a: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/about-us/equality-human-rights/consultation-our-guidance-visiting-care-homes-hospitals-and-hospices/regulation-9a-consultation-process-equality-impact-assessment>