

CQC Update

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Credit: Disabled and Here

Testing of Draft Assessment Framework

Status: Live

Location: Test Locations Across England

- We are testing the draft assessment framework. This framework is sector specific and designed to be clearer. It moves from 34 quality statements to 24 key lines of enquiry (KLOEs). The 5 key questions remain, but scoring has been removed with judgements at key question level.
- Testing is now live in locations across England and pilots are running from June to October 2026 using a shadow process alongside normal inspections.
- The testing is helping us check whether the framework is clearer, reduces duplication, works across different types and sizes of provider, and supports fair, proportionate judgements focused on people's experiences and outcomes.
- Feedback from providers, people using services and inspectors will be used to refine the framework, guidance and tools before final implementation.

Return to Good

Status: Live

Location: All ASC

- Return to Good is an assessment approach for services currently rated good, where data and intelligence indicate the rating is likely to have been maintained. It's aimed at increasing assessment activity and whilst maintaining quality.
- The approach enables us to focus more on people's experiences and outcomes, supported by observation and targeted record review.
- Return to good was fully tested, with positive feedback from both providers and inspectors.
- It was launched in early June, with an update in the provider bulletin at end of May.

Safe

- **Learning culture**
- Safe systems, pathways and transitions
- **Safeguarding**
- **Involving people to manage risks**
- **Safe environments**
- **Safe and effective staffing**
- Infection prevention and control
- **Medicines optimisation**

Effective

- **Assessing needs**
- **Delivering evidence-based care and treatment**
- How staff, teams and services work together
- Supporting people to live healthier lives
- **Monitoring and improving outcomes**
- **Consent to care and treatment**

Caring

- **Kindness, compassion and dignity**
- Treating people as individuals
- **Independence, choice and control**
- Responding to people's immediate needs
- Workforce wellbeing and enablement

Responsive

- **Person-centred care**
- Care provision, integration, and continuity
- Providing information
- **Listening to and involving people**
- Equity in access
- **Equity in experiences and outcomes**
- Planning for the future

Well-led

- **Shared direction and culture**
- Capable, compassionate and inclusive leaders
- Freedom to speak up
- Workforce equality, diversity and inclusion
- **Governance, management and sustainability**
- Partnerships and communities
- **Learning, improvement and innovation**
- Environmental sustainability

Portfolios

Status: Phased roll out underway

Location: ASC London

- We have restructured our teams back into sector specific inspection teams. Across all sectors colleagues are starting to re-introduce portfolio holders.
- We have piloted portfolios for around 1,500 ASC locations, refining the model through stakeholder feedback and learning from previous pilots.
- Providers told us having a portfolio holder was 'a lot easier', 'gave consistency' and 'improved trust'.
- For providers this will mean a named inspector, better oversight of quality and risk and reduced duplication.
- Planning is underway for roll out in June for London with wider roll out planned in early autumn.
- Updates will be provided in the June bulletin and locations will be contacted directly advising who their portfolio holder is.

Remote Access to Digital Care Records

Status: Phased expansion of Pilot starting July 2026

Location: ASC North

- We are testing how inspectors can safely, lawfully and effectively access providers digital care record systems directly from CQC devices, both on site and remotely.
- The aims of this work are to reduce disruption and impact on providers, improve inspection efficiency and ensure robust evidence collection.
- Initial testing is complete, overall positive feedback with some residual issues
- We are expanding pilot from test and learn team to wider ASC teams, this will start in July in our North region.
- This is a voluntary consent-based process
- There will be consultation prior to any business-as-usual roll out.

Any questions?



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