

New CQC care regulation strategy set to herald major changes

The CQC is aiming to play a role in making the health and care system work better and work for everyone.

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The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has launched a [new strategy](#) which sets out a fundamental change to the way the CQC intends to interact with health and care providers.

Further announcements are expected following the launch including, amongst others:

- A new inspection framework, including revised definitions of 'Good' and 'Safe' care
- A new Scope of Registration guidance document
- New ways of collecting data much more regularly from providers.
- Development of new ways to collect information about service user experiences, particularly for those with communication challenges.

Carl May-Smith, a partner and barrister at law firm Browne Jacobson specialising in regulatory law with a particular focus on the health and care sector, said :

"This strategy emphasises how much the CQC is aiming to move beyond just provider-by-provider regulation to play a role in making the whole health and care system work better and work for everyone.

"Much of this will come from the powers due to be bestowed on the CQC in the Health and Social Care Bill. This should be welcomed by those who have said that the CQC's decisions over recent years have demonstrated a lack of a 'big picture' view.

"It does not mean the end of CQC inspections, but we expect them to be dramatically reduced in frequency and scope, targeting identified risks and tasks that cannot be carried out remotely.

"Where inspections are carried out, providers should expect that they will be challenging and prepare accordingly."

"Perhaps most welcome should be the CQC's drive to improve its relationship with those it regulates. Providers tell us that CQC decisions are often hard to understand, appear to lack a real understanding of their services and, above all else, are wildly inconsistent.

"If the CQC really can develop "ongoing, collaborative relationships" from the point of registration "built on openness and trust" it would amount to a true revolution in the way health and care is regulated and operates.

"To be achieved, that openness and trust must go both ways, with the CQC recognising that almost all health and care services and businesses exist to provide high quality care and have expertise that the CQC can learn from as well as scrutinising."

"The CQC's stated aim is also to reduce the workload created by its regulation and support services by being more constructive and helping them identify problems early and providing or signposting practical advice.

"It remains to be seen whether this is achieved, with concerns remaining over some aspects of the new approach. The strategy

acknowledges that this will be reliant on upskilling CQC teams and finding digital solutions for collecting information that take account of the diversity in how services operate and the digital systems they use.”

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