

CQC INSPECTION READINESS

BY FUSION

A guide for care providers



Care Management Software

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About CQC



The **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** is the independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England. Its purpose is to ensure that care providers deliver services that are safe, effective, compassionate, and high-quality, and that they continually strive to improve.

In 2024, the CQC introduced a new regulatory model called the Single Assessment Framework (SAF). While the CQC still assesses services under its familiar five Key Questions - **Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive, and Well-led**. The new framework replaces the older KLOEs (Key Lines of Enquiry) with clearer, more consistent Quality Statements and structured evidence categories.

This shift means providers are now assessed using standardised statements that describe what good care looks like, supported by evidence that reflects people's lived experiences, outcomes, and organisational processes.

Follow our 10-step guide to help your care home prepare for CQC inspections.



1 Creating a Culture of Readiness

A culture of readiness is not about scrambling to fix things; it's about embedding continuous improvement into your daily routines. This starts with leadership championing quality and compliance, making it a core value throughout the organisation.

- **Communicate Regularly:** Hold regular meetings to discuss quality, compliance, and any emerging issues.
- **Empower Staff:** Encourage staff to raise concerns and suggest improvements without fear of reprisal.
- **Lead by Example:** Managers and supervisors should consistently demonstrate a commitment to quality and compliance.
- **Open Door Policy:** Make sure that staff know that their voices are welcome at every level.



2 Preparation Starts Now

Do not wait for an inspection announcement to begin preparing. Proactive preparation is key to demonstrating consistent quality and compliance.



- **Review Key Policies & Procedures:** Ensure all policies and procedures are up to date, accessible, and understood by staff.
- **Conduct Mock Inspections:** Regularly conduct internal audits and mock inspections to identify areas for improvement.
- **Stay Informed:** Keep abreast of changes to CQC guidance and regulations.
- **Self Assessment:** Perform a self assessment on how your service is performing against CQC frameworks.

3 Build Skills, Demonstrate Competence

Competent staff are essential for delivering high-quality care. Invest in training and development to ensure your team has the skills and knowledge they need.

- **Comprehensive Training:** Provide training on key areas such as safeguarding, medication management, infection control, and person-centred care.
- **Skills Matrix:** Use a skills matrix to track staff competencies and identify any training gaps.
- **Regular Supervision:** Provide regular supervision to support staff and address any concerns.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** Encourage staff to engage in ongoing learning and development activities.



4 Care Plans That Reflect the Person

Care plans should be individualised and reflect the unique needs, preferences, and goals of each person you support. Avoid generic care plans that do not truly capture the person's individuality.

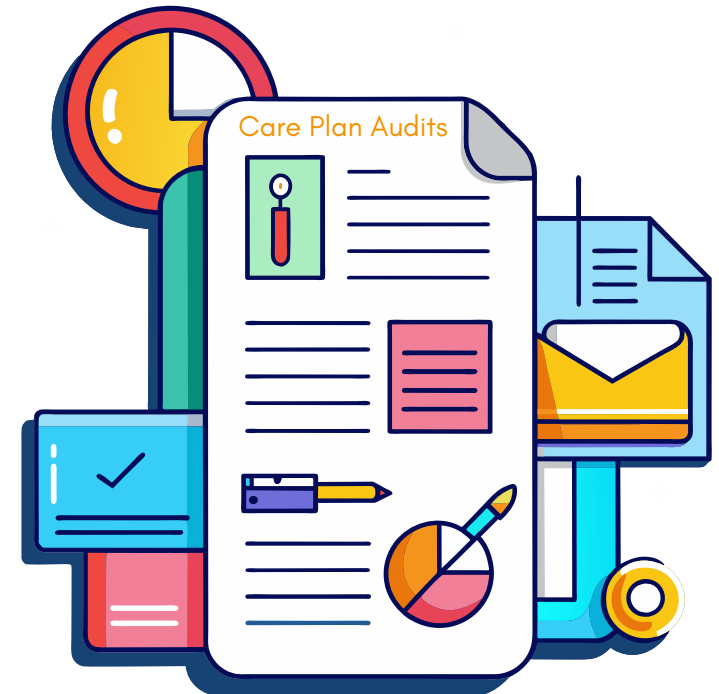


- **Person-Centred Approach:** Develop care plans in collaboration with the individual, their family, and other relevant professionals.
- **Detailed Assessments:** Conduct thorough assessments to identify the person's needs, preferences, and risks.
- **Regular Reviews:** Regularly review and update care plans to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to the person's changing needs.
- **Involve the Individual:** Make sure the people you support are always at the heart of their care planning.

5 Assure with Quality Audits

Quality audits are essential for identifying areas where improvements are needed. Use audits to proactively monitor your performance and identify potential risks.

- **Regular Audits:** Conduct regular audits of key areas such as care plans, medication management, and infection control.
- **Action Plans:** Develop action plans to address any issues identified during audits.
- **Monitor Progress:** Monitor the progress of action plans to ensure improvements are implemented effectively.
- **Learn from Mistakes:** Treat mistakes as learning opportunities. Identify the root causes of problems and implement preventative measures.



6 Handling the Visit with Confidence

When the inspectors arrive, remain calm and confident. Preparation is key to a successful inspection. Project calm and control.



- **Designated Point of Contact:** Identify a designated point of contact to liaise with the inspectors.
- **Cooperate Fully:** Be open and transparent with the inspectors, providing them with the information they need.
- **Answer Questions Honestly:** Answer questions honestly and accurately. If you do not know the answer, say so and offer to find out.
- **Be Respectful:** Treat the inspectors with respect, even if you disagree with their findings.

7 People Make the Difference

Recognise and value your staff. They are the heart of your service and their commitment to quality is crucial.

- **Positive Work Environment:** Create a positive and supportive work environment where staff feel valued and appreciated.
- **Recognition and Rewards:** Recognise and reward staff for their contributions to quality improvement.
- **Teamwork:** Foster a culture of teamwork and collaboration.
- **Staff Wellbeing:** Prioritise staff well being. Happy staff deliver great care.



8 Making Readiness Routine

Integrate readiness activities into your daily routines. This will ensure that quality and compliance are always a priority.



- **Daily Huddles:** Use daily huddles to discuss any issues or concerns.
- **Regular Training:** Provide ongoing training and development to keep staff up to date.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Embrace a culture of continuous improvement, always looking for ways to enhance the quality of your service.
- **Embedded Processes:** Embed checking processes into day-to-day activities.

9 Responding After the Visit

The inspection does not end when the inspectors leave. Responding effectively to the inspection report is crucial.

- **Further Information:** Ensure that any further information requested by CQC is sent promptly.
- **Review Feedback:** Carefully review the feedback from the day and identify areas where improvements or changes are required.
- **Develop an action plan:** Develop and implement a detailed action plan to address any issues raised. Allocate actions, set completion deadlines and monitor progress.
- **Review the final CQC report:** Check that all areas requiring action correlate with the initial action plan and add where necessary.
- **Communicate with CQC:** Keep CQC informed of your progress in implementing your action plan and your outcomes.



10 Be Proud of What You Do

Remember why you are in care. Celebrate your successes and recognise the positive impact you have on the lives of the people you support. Take pride in the hard work and dedication of your team.



- **Celebrate Successes:** Acknowledge and celebrate achievements in quality and compliance.
- **Share Positive Feedback:** Share positive feedback from people you support and their families with your team.
- **Reflect on Your Values:** Regularly reflect on your values and ensure they are reflected in your practice.
- **Acknowledge the Importance:** Always acknowledge the importance of the work that you do.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



This guide has provided a roadmap for CQC inspection readiness, emphasising proactive preparation, continuous improvement, and a people-centred approach.

By embedding these principles into your daily routines, you can ensure quality care and compliance, and be proud of the service you provide.

**Remember that readiness is a journey,
not a destination.**

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