



09 October 2014

Making the 'Mum Test' real: CQC sets out its new model for inspecting adult social care

Today (Thursday 9 October), the Care Quality Commission (CQC) confirms how it will regulate, inspect and rate care homes and community adult social care in England.

Following extensive joint development, consultation and testing over the last eighteen months, CQC has issued documents called 'handbooks', which will help care providers to understand how they will be assessed and rated from now on.

Specialist teams, including trained members of the public (called Experts by Experience), will inspect services, unannounced, against what matters most to the people who use them – are they safe, caring, effective, responsive to their needs, and well-led.

CQC will then rate these services as Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate so that the public has clear information to help them make choices about their care.

CQC has issued one handbook covering its regulation of residential adult social care (care homes, with and without nursing) and another covering its regulation of community adult social care (including services that care for people in their own homes).

Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care at the Care Quality Commission said: "The handbooks mark an important milestone for CQC and the adult social care services that we regulate.

"We have developed our regulatory model with people who use services, care providers, commissioners, national partners and our staff. I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time and effort to respond during our consultation, participate in our various events, and work with us during our test inspections to help us to develop our strengthened approach.

"Our new regulatory model has people right at its heart. We will ask the questions that matter most to people

who use services, listen to their views, take action to protect them, and provide them with clear, reliable and accessible information about the quality of their services.

"The detail in the handbooks is about making the Mum Test real. On their visits, I will ask our inspection teams to consider whether these are services that they would be happy for someone they love and care for to use. If they are, then we will celebrate this through our ratings. If they are not, we will take tough action so that improvements are made. Above all else, my priority is to make sure people receive care that is safe, effective, high-quality and compassionate."

In response to people's feedback during the consultation, CQC:

- Will further develop its "Provider Information Returns" with an online system so that care providers can submit information about their services to CQC continuously.
- Has strengthened and broadened 'key lines of enquiry' that its inspection teams will use to guide them on their visits and reviewed their language so that they reflect current practice, do not use jargon and are fully focused on people who use services.
- Has reviewed the descriptions of its ratings so that they are clearer and use plain English. Also, CQC has strengthened its descriptions of 'Outstanding' care so that it sets a high but achievable bar and will recognise services that are innovative, creative, and dynamic.
- Will publish information on the use of surveillance for health and adult social care providers, as well as for members of the public, to help them make decisions about its potential use. CQC expects to publish this soon.

Further information is available in CQC's consultation response, which it has published alongside the handbooks.

Care and Support Minister, Norman Lamb said: "This marks a turning point for the way we care for people in this country. Gone is the tick-box exercise for inspecting care homes and home care – now we are listening to the views of the people who rely on these services and have tougher checks to make sure they are getting safe, compassionate care from staff who are supported by good managers. And at the end of it the service will be given a rating that's easy to understand, so families will know if it is up to scratch. All this will support the wider work we are doing to stamp out poor care and build a fairer society."

Tony Hunter, Chief Executive of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) said: "At SCIE, we recognise the importance of the 'Mum Test' in making sure that CQC's inspections are truly focused around the people who receive care. CQC's new model of inspection will go a long way towards ensuring that poor care is stamped out and that quality care is celebrated."

"The handbook will make it more straightforward for providers to recognise what quality care is; and also to determine how to achieve it. At SCIE, we're passionate about supporting the improvement of care experiences and outcomes. To this end we are engaged with the whole range of stakeholders in the development of improvement toolkits and other resources."

Des Kelly OBE, Executive Director of the National Care Forum (NCF) said: "The publication of provider handbooks by CQC is an important step in changing the way in which adult social care services in England are inspected, assessed and rated. NCF has welcomed the intention by CQC to regulate different services in different ways as we believe that it is vital that the regulator has a role in promoting quality improvement.

"NCF has been pleased to support CQC in the development of this essential guidance for providers. NCF has consistently supported the reintroduction of a quality rating scheme as a valuable means of providing information to the public, and others responsible for commissioning services, as well as acting as a driver for quality improvement. The handbooks represent another key aspect of a reform agenda that will build a stronger regulatory process giving greater reassurance to everyone involved in the provision of care and support."

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