

IR(ME)R inspections

Our specialist inspectors assess compliance with the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017. This includes both NHS and independent healthcare providers.

We have a programme of planned inspections and may inspect a provider at any time when we receive a notification of a significant accidental or unintended exposure that we consider to be a serious incident. We may also inspect when we receive concerns from a whistle-blower or through information from CQC inspection colleagues.

Our inspection team includes clinical specialists who are either state registered radiographers or clinical scientists with experience in medical physics.

When we inspect, we assess compliance against all IR(ME)R regulations unless the inspection is part of a specific programme or theme. We usually announce the inspection in advance and normally spend one day on site.

When we are responding to a notification of a serious incident, the inspection may be announced or unannounced. We may either focus on the area of concern or assess all regulations if appropriate.

Themed inspection programmes

We are running three separate inspection programmes to focus on assessing compliance with IR(ME)R in:

- nuclear medicine
- radiotherapy
- diagnostic radiology

For each area, we will inspect a sample of:

- radiotherapy in independent health care
- nuclear medicine departments, initially concentrating on therapy services
- interventional radiology and cardiology departments
- chiropractors
- dental providers (by self-assessment)

This is in line with CQC's risk-based approach for inspections.

Following an inspection, we provide formal written feedback. This may include recommendations to improve practice or specify actions required to achieve compliance.

We do not award a rating following IR(ME)R inspections and our findings do not change a provider's existing ratings.

We are not required to publish reports of findings from IR(ME)R inspections. However, sometimes we may publish details of compliance with IR(ME)R where it is relevant to our regulatory activity under the Health and Social Care Act 2008.