

CQC's inspections: Hospice services

What to expect when we inspect

We have compiled this quick guide to help providers of hospice services understand what to expect from a typical inspection using our new approach. We hope you find this useful...

General information

CQC carries out two types of inspection. In a **comprehensive inspection** we look at all of the five key questions (Is the service safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led?) and award a rating for each question. We also award an overall rating.

In a **focused inspection** we follow up breaches of legal requirements or look into serious concerns that may have come to light since a comprehensive inspection. A focused inspection can award new ratings for the key questions that were inspected. However, changes to the overall rating can only be made if the focused inspection was within six months of the previous comprehensive inspection.

General preparation

- Read your provider handbook, including the appendices, in the 'Guidance for providers' section of our website. It explains all you need to know about how we inspect. There are differences in how we inspect community-based hospice services (for people in their own homes) and hospices where people stay.
- The size and make-up of our inspection team will be tailored to your service and what we need to inspect. In many cases the team will include a minimum of an inspector and an Expert by Experience (someone who has had a personal experience of care). The team may also include a specialist advisor and/or a pharmacist inspector.

What you can do to assist the inspection

- Help our inspection team to find evidence that your service is safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

What we will do

- Our inspection team will carry out a range of assessment activities, including talking to people who use the service, their families and carers, staff and professionals. We will also observe how people who use the service are cared for and how staff interact with them, and we will review information such as records about care, policies and procedures. The activities we carry out will depend on whether the hospice is community based or one where people stay.
- We will rate each key question and award a new overall rating after comprehensive inspections. We want to highlight examples of your good and outstanding practice, and encourage you to improve the service where necessary.

Preparing for a comprehensive inspection

- We will normally send you a link to an online Provider Information Return for you to give us information about your service before the inspection. You will have about four weeks to complete and return this to us.
- We will also ask community-based hospices for details of people who use their services and their families, staff and community professionals and may contact some of them to ask for their views and other information about your service. For hospices where people stay, we will just ask for details of community professionals.
- For community-based hospices, we will send out questionnaires to a sample of people who use services, staff and community professionals – either hard copy or online.
- We will speak with local stakeholders, such as Healthwatch, commissioners and other community organisations in your area to find out what they think about your service.
- For community-based hospices, our inspector will normally call you 48 hours before your inspection starts. Our inspections of hospices where people stay will usually be unannounced.

On the day of the inspection

- In hospices where people stay, our inspection team will need to speak to people who use services, their families and carers, staff and visiting professionals on the day of inspection. We will tell you at the beginning of the day who we need to speak to and for how long. We will try to plan these conversations so they limit the impact on your service.
- At the end of the inspection the team will hold a feedback session with you to share their initial findings. Remember, this will not be a full statement of our findings, as the team will need to consider all their evidence before making their final judgements.

After the inspection

- We will carry out internal quality assurance checks on the inspection report.
- We will send you a draft inspection report. You will have the opportunity to challenge any factual inaccuracies you find at this stage.
- We will publish the final inspection report on our website – www.cqc.org.uk
- You can request a review of the ratings we have awarded after we have published the final report, if you think we have not properly followed our published procedure for doing this.
- We will take action where services are in breach of regulations, but we will also celebrate good and outstanding practice.

For more information, read our provider handbook for hospice services at:
www.cqc.org.uk/content/adult-social-care-providers