

FAQs for Provider Information Returns (PIRs), Questionnaires and contact lists

Most Frequently Asked Questions

1. Please can a paper version of the PIR be requested/ submitted?

No, we cannot provide a paper version to fill in. The PIR was developed as a Webform so that we can efficiently store, analyse and report on the data returned by providers. The only exceptional circumstance is where your service does not have access to the internet (due to technical reasons such as there is no broadband coverage in the area), or if reasonable adjustments are required under the Equality Act. In the first instance, however, we would ask that you arrange your own transcribing resource as a solution.

Internet access is important because email is an important way for CQC, as well as people using services and their families, to communicate with providers. The CQC website also has lots of important information for providers, including all our published reports. We are also currently inviting providers in stages to sign up for the CQC 'provider portal' which is an online system that allows you to complete transactions with us quickly and efficiently, including statutory notifications and changes to registration. Providers will also find many other important sources of information and good practice on the internet such as Care Improvement Works (<http://www.careimprovementworks.org.uk/>).

Some providers have requested a copy of the PIR to see an 'advanced list' of the questions. Guidance documents that accompany PIRs provide question headings so please use these when planning your response. If your service is experiencing difficulties completing the PIR within the deadline, managers can be sent a PDF copy of the guidance and form for reference only.

The previous PIR form allowed Registered Managers access to the entire form and complete their answers in any order. This resulted in mandatory fields being missed which stopped the PIR from being able to be submitted. The new form overcomes this in that all mandatory questions must be answered on each page before you can move on to the next page. The supporting PIR guidance document provides a list of the question headings so that you can gather the relevant information beforehand to help complete the PIR.

2. We did not receive a PIR to complete before our inspection but we have recently been inspected and feel it has disadvantaged our inspection and subsequent ratings. Why can't we fill one in retrospectively?

The PIR provides an important opportunity for providers to share information and evidence about their service with our inspectors. This is used by inspectors to help plan inspections and information providers give us is considered alongside all other sources of evidence, including inspection visits. However, judgements about the overall quality of services and ratings of a service are not based on the PIR but on information gathered across the whole inspection process, which was designed to be able to proceed without a PIR, in the event of technical or other difficulties.

The process for requesting PIRs is being refined and we encourage providers to sign up to the provider portal. This will enable more reliable delivery of PIRs to services to complete. and reduce the likelihood of failures to receive a PIR.

Whilst providers may feel disadvantaged in not being able to submit information in a PIR ahead of an inspection, registered managers, or equivalent, should make sure they are

familiar with the five key questions (Are services safe, effective, caring, responsive, and well-led?), the Key Lines of Enquiry and Characteristics of Ratings found in the Adult Social Care [Provider Handbooks](#), as these will help support the narrative the service may wish to share with inspectors when an inspection is carried out.

The only disadvantage the provider should have in relation to the PIR process is if the ratings limiter is applied to the Well-led question for a late/non-return of the PIR when it has been requested.

3. My inspector says that I have not returned a PIR but we have never received a PIR request email, what should I do?

The email may have been filtered out by your spam filter and sent to a 'junk' folder, please check this in the first instance. If you still cannot find the email please contact ASCinspections@cqc.org.uk who can confirm which email address was used to send the request. If your location has an old or incorrect address as your contact details you will need to submit a **SN15 Notice of Change** for an update of contact details to take place. It is part of a registered provider's responsibilities to ensure CQC is notified whenever their registration details or email address for service of documents change.

4. We are having technical problems with accessing the PIR / contact list webforms, what should we do?

There can be some compatibility issues with the webforms. You need to contact ASCinspections@cqc.org.uk to ask for help.

5. The information on the webforms sent out is incorrect (e.g. location ID), why?

This information was checked prior to sending out invitations to complete PIRs /contact lists and should be correct. These need to be investigated on a case-by-case basis so please contact ASCinspection@cqc.org.uk.

6. We would like a copy of the PIR as we haven't had a submission receipt following our PIR submission.

In some cases this may be because you haven't pressed the 'submit' button, so whilst it is completed and saved it hasn't been finally submitted. In other cases locations have input an incorrect email address in the PIR form so the receipt has been sent to the incorrect address. If you find you are still able to press submit, please check the email address you have submitted and then click 'submit'.

We are able to send a pdf version of the PIR to locations where the receipt has been misdirected once checking on the online system whether the form is showing as completed. This needs to be done on a case-by-case basis.

7. My location has already submitted a PIR and we have been asked to complete another one, why?

Generally, if you have submitted a PIR in the last 12 months you will not be asked to submit a new one.

If your service has received a PIR within the last 12 months then it may have been due to one of the following issues:

- An administrative error resulted in a number of locations being sent multiple requests to complete PIRs in February 2015. This has been investigated and an email has been sent to apologise to those locations affected.
- Some locations have partially completed PIRs and taken the auto-response received as confirmation of final submission, these have therefore not been submitted correctly and it may be why you have been asked to complete another.
- There have also been cases where locations have submitted printed hard-copy PIRs directly to inspectors and not via the online system. Where this has taken place offline, there will be no record on our systems of the PIR being completed and we may issue a new one.

8. We very recently completed a PIR but have since re-registered. Do we still need to complete a new PIR?

Yes, new PIRs are required where ownership the service has been taken over by a new provider (for example a new company set up to do so). Existing PIRs submitted by the previous provider can no longer be accepted. In exceptional circumstances, for example where there is a transfer of legal ownership but there are no changes to the service, registered manager, staff, service provision, policies and procedures, we may be able to accept an existing PIR, but only if there are extenuating circumstances to indicate why you cannot submit a new PIR.

9. We have sent in a contact list but since re-registered. Can this still be used as no details have changed?

No, once the service becomes a different legal entity as a result of a change in location ID we cannot use the information under the Data Protection Act.

The contact information is personal information that was gathered for a specific purpose in relation to a particular location ID and we would be breaking the law to use it in respect of another location ID – even if the service has not changed, its legal entity has.

10. A PIR request has been sent but we are currently working through a Registered Manager application with CQC, what can I do?

When the PIR is sent, a notification is also sent to the Nominated Individual who has the opportunity to respond to the notification with an alternative email address and can therefore appropriately manage the PIR request.

10. Our deadline is approaching/ we need a quick response to our query – what can we do to speed up a response?

There is a username that you will find on the covering letter of your PIR or Contact list covering letter, this is a unique code for the PIR or Contact list, please quote this when talking to the ASC Inspections team and it will help us track the audit trail quicker.

12. I have been asked to complete a contact spreadsheet but haven't had a request to complete a PIR – has the process changed?

Locations that are included in the questionnaire programme are being asked for a contact spreadsheet before they are being asked to complete a PIR. This is because of the timescales involved in the programme. A PIR request will follow at a later date.

13. I am the Nominated Individual for a service, I have received a letter regarding the PIR but I am unable to find the link to complete it.

The letter sent to the Nominated Individual is for information only and it is the Registered Manager who receives the PIR form to complete. The Nominated Individual is sent a link to update the Registered Manager details only where they are no longer correct.

14. Could the PIR request also go in the post to ensure the key recipients are aware of the information request?

We do not send out paper versions of the PIR – it only exists as a Webform and we are not able to analyse the data if it is returned in any other format. It is also government policy to use paperless systems as much as possible in order to cut down on waste so we would not send a notification of the request in the post when one has already been sent via email.

15. Can we share the PIR across our services so when we have one requested we can submit it quickly?

We would request that you ensure you use the link in the email when completing the PIR form. The PIR has not undergone any significant changes for several months however some outdated forms have been sent in. These forms may not be on the right software or include the correct questions which can cause delays in managing the information and technical delays for the person trying to complete the PIR.