



# **Care Quality Commission's Public Engagement Strategy 2017-2021**

# **We are the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.**

We make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care and we encourage care services to improve.

## **Our ambition**

We're aiming to improve the way we engage the public by using their views and experiences in our work and helping them use the information we have about the quality of care.

This will help make sure we are a strong, independent regulator that is always on the side of people using care services.

We want the public to have positive and consistent experiences when they contact us and to understand how we've used their information.

As with all our work, we want to do this in the most cost-effective way we can.

## **Our priorities**

We plan to focus on the following four priorities over the next four years.

1. Working with organisations that represent people who use services to help improve the quality of care.
2. Encouraging people to share their views and experiences of care with us, improving the way we use this information and reporting on the action we take.

3. Producing and promoting simple, clear and concise information for the public that explains what good care looks like and supports people to make decisions about services.
4. Improving the way we work by involving and engaging the public in our policies, plans and processes.

# **Priority 1: Working with organisations that represent people who use services to help improve the quality of care**

To be a credible and effective regulator, we know that we need a strong and trusting relationship with people who use services.

To help build that relationship, we will work with organisations that represent public groups, such as the Richmond Group of charities and Healthwatch. We are lucky that these organisations are keen to work more closely with us both at a local and a national level to help people who use services let us know what they think.

## **Our aim in this area**

We want organisations that represent people who use services to feel they have a positive relationship with us that brings benefits on both sides.

This means they will:

- feel informed about our work;
- understand how we use the information they share;
- use our information as evidence when demanding improvements; and
- believe we are working together to improve care.

## **Our plans in this area**

We aim to:

- engage national organisations that represent people who use services or work on their behalf (this work will include regular briefings and events);

- engage the public and their local representative groups through our inspection teams for all types of services (this will include Healthwatch, overview and scrutiny committees, patient participation groups, patient advice and liaison services, NHS complaints advocacy services and local voluntary-sector and community-sector organisations);
- encourage organisations to use our information and reports to demand improvements in care; and
- find ways to record and check the quality of our relationships with these organisations.

## **Priority 2: Encouraging people to share their views and experiences of care, improving the way we use this information and reporting on the action we take**

In order to target our inspections and other regulatory work effectively, we need to understand the experiences of people using care services.

People want to share their experiences of care with us for different reasons, including to achieve a specific outcome (such as improving the service), to make sure poor care doesn't happen to others, or to deal with an injustice.

We also know that health and adult social care services that engage the public well provide

higher-quality care. As a result, we can play an important role in improving care by checking on how well providers do this.

### **Our aim in this area**

We want people to understand our role and purpose and to have a good experience when sharing their views about their care with us. We also want people who use services and the organisations that represent them to understand how we've used this information to improve care.

We aim to understand how well people's different experiences of care can show where the quality of services has changed. We will also need to know how many people we need to hear from to do our job well.

Through our inspections, we also want to see providers improving the way they engage with the people who use their services and using their information to improve.

## **Our plans in this area**

We aim to:

- encourage providers to listen and act on the views and experiences of people who use their services and check on how well they do this;
- use new technology or systems to access and analyse information from people using services;
- improve the experience people have when they give us feedback on their care and make sure we can tell them what action we take (this includes creating a new online form for people to use to tell us about the quality of their care services);
- engage with the public as part of registering, monitoring and inspecting services;
- work with organisations and politicians to help them share information about the quality of care from people they are in contact with;
- run campaigns, work with the media, support events and make speeches to raise the public's understanding of us and our role;
- use digital technology to increase the number of people we reach and help them tell us about their care; and
- make sure we engage with people who use services, our own staff and the broader care-services market to design and deliver an effective programme of public involvement in our inspections.

## **Priority 3: Producing and promoting simple, clear and concise information for the public that explains what good care looks like and supports people to make decisions about services**

We know the main reasons people come to us for information are to understand:

- the quality of the care services they or their loved ones use or plan to use;
- what standards they can expect from these services; and
- how to comment on – or complain about – services.

These three areas make up most of the visits to our website and calls and emails to our contact centre from the public.

### **Our aim for this area**

We want all of our published information and services for the public to meet – and be designed around – their needs.

We also aim to support people to make informed decisions about their care services using our inspection reports and the information we publish alongside these.

### **Our plans in this area**

We aim to:

- agree a clear purpose for our website and a more rigorous process for deciding what information we publish and how it is evaluated;

- review all of our public information to make sure it is simple, clear, concise and accessible to all who need it;
- involve people who use services and their representatives when designing and testing key pieces of public information;
- make sure people who are unable or unwilling to use digital services can still achieve the same outcomes offline;
- use a consistent and public-friendly categorisation of services that helps people find information more easily; and
- promote the use of simple, clear and concise language in all our information for the public, including our inspection reports.

## **Priority 4: Improving the way we work by involving and engaging the public in our policies, plans and processes**

People who use services, and organisations that represent them, are important to improving the way we do our job. Engaging them when developing our plans helps us understand the effect they will have and how they will work in practice.

### **Our aim for this area**

We want the changes we make as an organisation to be based on the needs and views of the public. This means involving them in our plans from an early stage.

We also want the people who are involved in developing our policies and plans to understand how we've used their views to help us meet our role and purpose.

### **Our plans for this area**

We aim to:

- make sure we understand who our customers are and what they need from us so that we can use this information to improve;
- consult the public at an early stage \_when we're producing new plans, products and policies, and involve them in their production;
- explain in simple, clear and concise terms what our proposals mean for the public;
- make sure we share the views of the public with the people making decisions about the way we work and that these views help us improve;

- introduce a new public payments policy to make it clear what support can be offered, and when and how people can receive this support;
- allow people to apply to take part in our work in a way that's fair, transparent and clear about what we expect;
- use our team of Experts by Experience and digital technology to hear from a wider range of people; and
- work with other organisations – particularly within the public sector – to reduce the duplication of work and share what we learn.

# How to contact CQC

If you would like this report in another format or language, or you would like to tell us something, you can contact us:



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