

CQC Inspection Readiness Checklist

A practical six-step review to help care providers look across people's experience, records, open risks, incidents, staff understanding and audit follow-up before an inspection.

Use this as a focused review, not a test of perfection.

Choose a small number of recent examples, follow them properly, and pay attention to where the information stops making sense.

01 - LISTEN

Start with people's experience

Choose a small sample of people and compare what they or their families are telling you with what your records suggest is happening.

- ☐ Review recent feedback, concerns, compliments or complaints.
- ☐ Check whether people's current preferences and choices are reflected in everyday care.
- ☐ Where someone raised a concern, can you see what happened afterwards?

02 - TRACE

Follow one recent change

Take a change in someone's needs, risks or preferences and follow it through the information staff are using.

- ☐ Can you trace the change from being noticed to a decision being made?
- ☐ Was the care plan or relevant risk information updated?
- ☐ Do recent notes and staff practice reflect the updated information?

03 - FOLLOW UP

Find an action that's still open

Choose an outstanding action from an audit, incident, complaint or review and check whether it is being actively managed.

- ☐ Is it clear who owns the action?
- ☐ Is there a realistic review or completion date?
- ☐ Can you explain how you will know when the underlying risk has reduced?

04 - LEARN

Look across recent incidents

Take one type of incident that has happened more than once and look at the reports together rather than in isolation.

- ☐ Do the incidents share common circumstances or contributing factors?
- ☐ What changed after the earlier incidents?
- ☐ Has anyone checked whether those changes reduced the concern or prevented recurrence?

05 - ASK

Compare paperwork with staff understanding

Choose one person whose care has changed recently and have a normal conversation with someone who regularly supports them.

- ☐ Do staff understand what matters to the person today?
- ☐ Do they know what has changed and what they need to do differently?
- ☐ Does their understanding broadly match the current care plan and risk information?

06 - CLOSE THE LOOP

Follow one audit finding

Start with something a recent audit identified and trace it through the action taken to the later check that tells you whether things improved.

- ☐ What action was agreed, and who took responsibility?
- ☐ What actually changed in practice?
- ☐ Was the area checked again afterwards to see whether the improvement lasted?

WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED

Bring the six checks together

Step back from the individual examples and ask: Which issue needs our attention first? Prioritise what could have the greatest effect on people's safety, wellbeing or quality of care. Make the next action clear, give it an owner, and decide when you will go back and check whether it made a difference.

Priority issue	
Owner	
Next action	
Review date	
How will we know things improved?	

The goal isn't to remove every imperfection before an inspection.
It is to know where your risks are, take proportionate action and be able to show what you are doing to improve.

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This checklist is a practical internal review aid. It is not CQC guidance and does not guarantee an inspection outcome or rating.