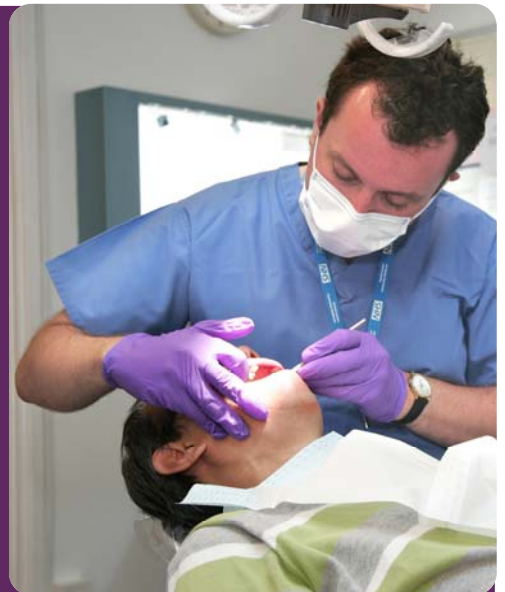


Voices into action

Have your say about dentists and independent ambulance services

A bulletin for local involvement networks (LINKs), overview and scrutiny committees and other local voluntary and representative groups

Issue 3: June 2010



In this issue of our bulletin, we update local groups on how we would like to work with you to improve services, and bring you news of some exciting new projects to develop the way we assess services. If you would like to see issues 1 and 2, and find out more about our work as the regulator of health care and adult social care in England, visit:

www.cqc.org.uk/getinvolved/viewsfromlocalgroups.cfm

Key messages

For the first time, you can now tell us people's views of the **performance of local dentists and independent ambulance services**. This will help us decide whether these services meet essential standards of quality and safety to register with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) from April 2011.

All NHS providers have now registered with us to provide their services – some with conditions requiring them to improve. We are using the information you send us to help monitor them.

We are making **important changes to our assessment of adult social care providers**. Read more on page 2.

All LINKs and overview and scrutiny committees now have a **named local CQC contact**. Any problems, please contact us at: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

By the end of July we will have made **major improvements to the webform** you can use to tell us how you think your local services are doing at www.cqc.org.uk/localvoices. Your ideas have helped us make it easier to use.

Don't forget: you can send information to us at **any time** about NHS, social care or independent healthcare providers, or about commissioners (primary care trusts and councils) to help us monitor performance.

Your views of dentists and independent ambulance services

All primary dental care services (or dentists) and independent ambulance services must be registered with CQC from April 2011.

This includes dentists who do NHS work, private work or a mixture of both.

Independent ambulance services include any vehicles designed for the main purpose of carrying someone who needs treatment.

For the first time, you can now send us people's views and experiences of these services, or your reports about them.

You can send us information in three ways:

1. Complete our webform for local groups at www.cqc.org.uk/localvoices
2. Provide information to your local CQC contact in your region.
3. Encourage individuals to send their views and experiences directly through our website at www.cqc.org.uk/tellus or to our National Contact Centre (see back page).

Find out about our assessments of the NHS

You can now look up any NHS organisation and find out whether they meet our essential standards (or are "compliant"), or whether we think there are areas where they need to improve (these are called conditions on their registration).

During this year we will be making more information we hold about services available on our website. We have taken account of any information we have received from LINKs or scrutiny committees in making our decisions about registering the NHS. Thank you again to those groups who have sent us information. Go to <http://healthdirectory.cqc.org.uk> to look up your NHS organisations' registration details.

Changes to our assessment of adult social care providers

From 1 October 2010, the way adult social care providers are regulated will fundamentally change. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2008, all adult social care providers who carry on regulated activities must be registered with CQC under our new registration system.

Over this summer, we will finish our assessments of performance using the old quality ratings (or "star ratings") system. After 30 June, providers that are currently rated will not receive a review of their rating, and new providers will not be rated. However, from 1 October, we will assess providers' performance against the essential standards of the registration system and publish our judgement.

We are developing a new assessment system to replace the star ratings. We will work with people using services, carers, providers, commissioners, performance managers and others to decide what an excellent service looks like. You can take part in our consultation, which will open later this year. We will keep you up to date on ways to get involved through our website and this bulletin.

New projects to work with you in 2010/11

Following advice from CQC's advisory groups of LINKs and scrutiny committees, we are running pilot projects to involve local groups in our assessments. You can look out for:

- A report showing case studies of how some LINKs and scrutiny committees have worked with CQC in our first year.
- Guidance about how LINKs and scrutiny committees can take part in our assessments of healthcare and social care services, including our commissioner assessments of councils and primary care trusts. For example, we hope to work on this in the East and West Midlands and the South East over the next few months.
- Ideas and solutions about how we can share and use information from people who use services.
- How you can contribute to our registration of primary medical services – including GPs which are planned to be ready for 2012.
- How CQC can share the information we hold with you in the best way.

We are also working directly with some voluntary organisations such as Age UK, to find out how we can make the best use of their feedback about local services. We will update you on these projects in future issues of this bulletin. If your LINK or scrutiny committee would like to get involved in any of this work, please contact lucy.hamer@cqc.org.uk or clare.delap@cqc.org.uk or contact enquiries@cqc.org.uk and ask for the involvement team.

New CQC guidance on essential standards and 'What to expect from your NHS hospital'

We have published the final guidance setting out our essential standards of quality and safety for all health and social care services, which updates the December 2009 version. You can find the final guidance and an easy read summary at:
www.cqc.org.uk/finalguidance

At the end of June, we will be publishing a new guide for people who use or may need to use NHS services. It explains our essential standards of quality and safety and our new approach to assessing services throughout the year. It reminds people that they can contact their local LINK to raise issues about local services.

CQC survey of LINKs

CQC has a duty to “have regard” to the views of LINKs. We are asking all LINKs to complete a short survey to tell us how we are doing in working with them so far. The survey will be sent to all LINK hosts during the summer. The responses will help make sure we have the correct details of all LINKs and tell us how we can improve our work with you this year. We hope you can spend 15 minutes to complete the survey for us.

Do you have a complaint or concern about health or adult social care services?

We do not deal with individual complaints about services. If you have a complaint about a particular service, you should first contact the provider. However, we are interested to hear your views and experiences to help us monitor services. For more information, go to the complaints page on our website.

If you have urgent concerns about the wellbeing of a child or vulnerable adult, you should contact your local authority children's or adult social care department. For more information, go to the safeguarding page on our website.

How else can people get involved in the work of CQC?

Giving us advice

We have set up a LINKs advisory group and a sounding board for overview and scrutiny committees to advise us on what we do and how we do it. We also run other reference groups of people who use services. For information about this, please contact the involvement team through enquiries@cqc.org.uk.

Responding to consultations

We are consulting on our enforcement policy until 31 August 2010. This explains what we do if a service does not meet our essential standards. You can comment at: www.cqc.org.uk/getinvolved/consultations.cfm

More information

Visit our website, and subscribe to our monthly newsletter on the home page: www.cqc.org.uk

Ring our National Contact Centre on 03000 616161 or email enquiries@cqc.org.uk
If your query is about the information in this bulletin please ask for the involvement team when you make your enquiry.