

How to prepare for a care inspection





- 03** What to expect
- 04** Focus on people
- 05** Value employees
- 06** Create an open culture
- 07** Striving to improve
- 08** Quality assurance
- 09** Health and Safety
- 10** Creative and innovative
- 10** Vision and values
- 11** Working in partnership
- 12** Sustaining outstanding practice

Contents



What to expect

We've built this guide to provide you with lots of proven tips to help improve your care service's rating – whether it's the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the Care Inspectorate (Scotland), the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), or the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) in Northern Ireland, inspecting your service.

Many of our top tips will apply whether you're a care home, a domiciliary care agency or a learning disability service.



Focus on people

The people you care for should be at the heart of your service at all times. To make sure a person-centred approach is rolled out throughout your business, make sure you, your employees and managers are reading from the same page.

Our top tips:

- put the people you care for at the centre of what you do
- make sure all employees treat everyone with kindness, compassion, dignity and respect
- ensure care plans and daily records are detailed, up-to-date and reflect the needs of the people in your care
- involve people and their relatives in how their care is provided, e.g. through surveys or focus groups
- maximise the independence and choices of the people in your care
- ensure all risk assessments for people in your care are up-to-date – including social activities
- make sure the environment is designed and decorated to support people's needs
- tailor activities to suit the needs of individuals' preferences, e.g. ensure people's abilities don't leave them at a disadvantage when it comes to participating
- manage staff levels so that employees have enough time to get to know the people they're caring for and build meaningful relationships
- have a clear and accessible process in place so that everyone in your care knows how to raise a complaint.



Value employees

Happy employees stay longer and work harder. At the end of the day, your employees are the backbone of your business, so make sure you're doing everything you can to enrich your relationship with them.

Our top tips:

- talk to employees and raise awareness of the areas the regulator will look at during an inspection
- ensure employees are confident to talk about safeguarding procedures, medicines, mental capacity and the safety of the people in their care
- make sure employees are effectively trained to carry out their roles, including a robust induction
- have a vigorous recruitment process in place that helps to identify the values, attitudes and behaviours of potential employees
- carry out regular workplace observations, supervisions and appraisals of employees
- remember to reward employees and involve them in determining incentives and initiatives
- promote and support employee wellbeing, e.g. with team building events and one-to-one catch-ups
- continually support employees by providing learning and development opportunities
- listen to employees' views and concerns – and act on them
- make sure employees know how much their contributions are valued, by providing regular feedback and praising good work.





Create an open culture

Every single employee and person in your care should feel comfortable and confident to be themselves and voice their opinions. If they don't, you could be missing a trick in terms of receiving invaluable, frontline feedback.

Our top tips:

- make sure you have policies and procedures in place that reflect the service you provide, and issue them to employees to ensure they have the knowledge and guidance required to carry out their roles
- create a person-centred culture of fairness, where employees are proud of the service and care they provide
- provide an atmosphere where everyone's comfortable to freely express their views
- break down any barriers to communication so that employees and people in your care are listened to
- embed a strong organisational commitment to equality and inclusion
- when you run surveys, share the results with employees, people you care for and their families
- make sure employees feel empowered to challenge and question any issues relating to how people in your care are treated
- celebrate and recognise the diversity of people in your care, e.g. religious holidays
- ensure employee training in dignity, equality and diversity is regularly refreshed
- encourage employees to have strong and productive relationships with each other and their managers.

Striving to improve

There's no such thing as perfect. No matter how many positive changes you've made in the past, there's always room for improvements that'll benefit your employees, the people in your care and your business.

Our top tips:

- document all your good practices and write-up any improvements as you go
- support the positive impacts you've seen as a result of your improvements by collating evidence
- carry out comprehensive audits that help identify patterns and trends to support continual improvement
- learn from accidents, incidents, complaints and feedback, and use them to drive necessary improvements
- make sure all employees are fully engaged and support your approach to continual improvement
- as well as making sure they're engaged, make sure employees contribute to shaping the improvements of your service
- measure and review your delivery of care against current guidance
- embed a strong framework of accountability to monitor performance
- complete regular surveys of employees, the people in your care and their relatives, to identify any areas in need of improvement
- involve specialists in the monitoring and continual improvement of your service – like Healthwatch and quality assurance teams.





Quality assurance

Quality is key. If it takes an inspector to identify any gaps for you, chances are your service isn't outstanding.

Our top tips:

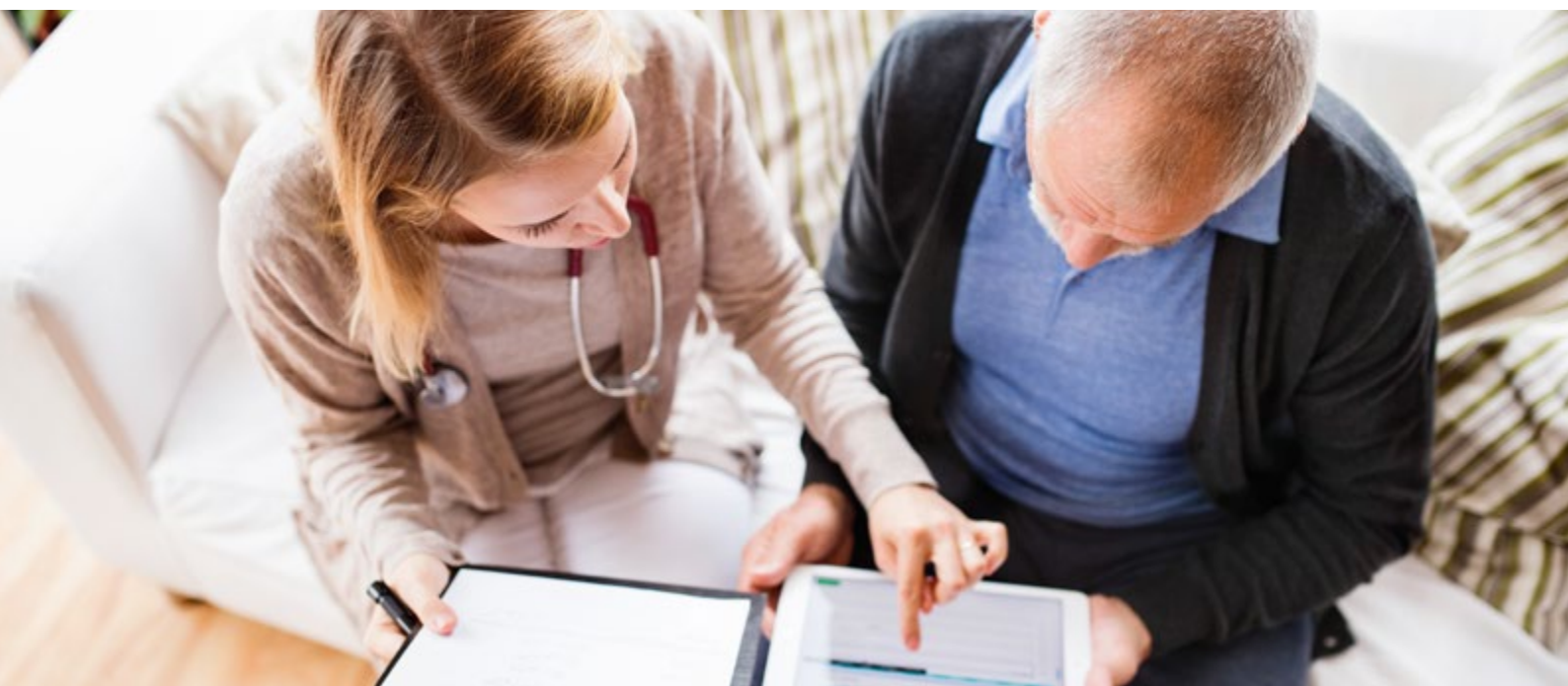
- make sure you have a robust quality assurance system in place, that allows you to effectively monitor the standards of your service
- make sure your system is easy to manage, and you can demonstrate it to others in a way in which they'll understand
- continually identify areas in need of improvement, and put action plans in place to implement the required changes
- ensure care plans, daily records, Medication Administration Records (MARs) and cleaning schedules are up-to-date and complete
- check that any audits – like Health and Safety, infection control and medicines – are fully documented and provide the basis to make any follow-up actions
- carefully analyse the results of any audits to establish any emerging patterns or trends
- record the name of the person who's responsible and accountable for ensuring actions and improvements are completed, and the deadline for completion
- make sure employee and people's records are accurate, legible, up-to-date and securely stored
- make available all records, documents and certificates, that demonstrate your equipment, services and checks have been completed.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety can be a minefield, but it's critical to make sure you have sufficient measures in place to not only stay on the right side of the law, but to keep your employees, people you care for and business safe.

Our top tips:

- make sure you have comprehensive risk assessments in place for employees and people in your care
- check that you have an up-to-date fire risk assessment in place, and your fire equipment is regularly checked and trained employees know how to use them
- report and investigate accidents, incidents and concerns in an open and transparent way
- ensure appropriate assistive technology, aids and other equipment are available and fitted, so that people you care for can live as independently as possible
- make sure all employees receive training and understand basic Health and Safety issues – including fire safety, moving and handling heavy equipment or people in your care, and basic life support
- put contingency plans in place in case of an unforeseeable event, like a fire, flood, gas leak or lack of water supply
- regularly check and maintain all equipment and services
- ensure you have robust safeguarding systems in place to protect people in your care from abuse, neglect, discrimination, harassment and breaches of dignity and respect
- prevent and control infections to ensure people in your care are protected
- make sure people in your care are supported to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet.



Creative and innovative

Continually challenge your processes and throw any ideas out to the wider team for extra input, to take your innovation and creativity to a whole new level.

Our top tips:

- encourage positive risk taking to support people to lead fuller lives, e.g. by taking residents into the local community – with the right precautions in place
- take imaginative approaches to risk taking, to help people reach their goals
- find creative ways to make food as appealing as possible when people are on specific diets, i.e. soft diets
- make sure your service is inclusive and recognises different cultures and religions, and this is evident in food choices, cultural events and activities
- consider incorporating safeguarding discussions during employee meetings
- test employees' knowledge – on things like mental capacity, consent and medicines – at meetings using case studies
- have a think about using 'champions' in areas like medicines, infection control, moving and handling, mental capacity and equality and diversity
- incorporate the vision, values and behaviours of your business throughout your supervision and appraisal processes
- establish relationships with best practice organisations, and use their research to deliver high quality care
- involve the people in your care in the recruitment process, e.g. let candidates interact with residents for half an hour to gauge how they bond.

Vision and values

Your business' vision and values should flow through every element of what you do.

For them to be truly effective, they must be encompassed by all employees, at all times.

Our top tips:

- clearly communicate your vision and values to all employees and managers, e.g. in one-to-ones, team meetings, videos or posters
- your vision and values should be at the heart of your service, so make sure they're supported by appropriate policies, procedures and employee handbooks
- make sure all managers lead by example and act as role models
- ensure all employees understand their roles and responsibilities, and "live" your business' values
- make sure your vision results in positive outcomes for the people in your care
- employees should feel supported, respected and valued by managers at all times
- embed a set of values that include involvement, compassion, dignity, independence, respect, equality, wellbeing, safety and a person-centred culture
- develop your vision and values with people and employees in meaningful and creative ways, e.g. involve them in the process and include their input
- make sure your vision and values are realistic and achievable
- during the recruitment process, clearly communicate your vision and values to potential employees.



Working in partnership

Reap the benefits of outside support by building and maintaining solid relationships with relevant, local professionals. Remember, it should be a two-way relationship where you can lean on them, and they can come to you too.

Our top tips:

- maintain strong relationships with health care professionals – like the local GP, speech and language therapy teams, district nurses and occupational therapists, for example
- build good relationships with the local authority safeguarding and multi-disciplinary teams, to support joined-up care
- make sure people in your care maintain links and contact with the wider community, and have access to any specific diverse needs, i.e. religious or cultural
- work in partnership with other organisations and use the latest guidance to provide high quality care
- assess, understand and integrate the benefits of community engagement
- empower employees to work together to ensure people receive consistent, timely, co-ordinated and person-centred care
- ensure the people in your care have access to other healthcare services
- make sure your service is an important part of the community, and develops mutually beneficial relationships with those in the proximity
- involve, empower and work together with family, relatives, friends and advocates to improve outcomes for people in your care
- consider gaining membership of your local care association, so you've a platform to share best practice and the latest guidance.

Sustaining outstanding practice

From ISOs to performance management, there's a whole load you can do to keep your service on top of its game all year round.

Our top tips:

- use current guidance to adopt best practice approaches to the care you provide
- consider an ISO certification to support and maintain the highest quality throughout your service
- ensure people's social needs and physical and mental health are holistically assessed and reviewed
- think about implementing a safety management system that takes current best practice models into account, and sustains outstanding practice
- encourage innovation and ideas from people and employees, to help carry out tasks and processes more efficiently
- make sure your business is seen as 'a good place to work' by external organisations and individuals
- have a structured 'plan, do and review' process in place to sustain improvements and positive outcomes for the people in your care
- ensure all employees take ownership of your service's performance
- make sure managers and employees strive for excellence through consultation, research and reflective practice
- put pre-planned and effective performance management processes in place, and make sure they're regularly reviewed.





For more information visit:

marshcommercial.co.uk/for-business/care

Or call our Health and Care team on:

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