

Providers of NHS general practice

An introduction to registration with CQC

October 2011

Introduction

“ This is an introduction to the process and timetable for registering providers of NHS general practice and other primary medical services with CQC by April 2013.

We will be working hard to make sure that you understand what you need to do and provide support to help you through the process.

The new registration system was created by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 to ensure that essential standards of quality and safety apply across both health and adult social care. We have already brought 22,000 health care, adult social care, independent ambulance and dental care providers into the new system, and primary care is the final part of this.

The Government recognised that there were a number of challenges for us while registering general practice, so they have given us extra time to register primary medical services – up to April 2013.

We are listening to what all providers tell us about the challenges of our current way of working and will use this valuable feedback as we develop our approach for registering primary medical services. We are also working closely with organisations including the Royal College of GPs, NHS Alliance, the BMA and the Medical Protection Society, to make the process as smooth and efficient for you as possible.

This is a collaborative process and we need your help to make sure we work together to ensure the best possible care for everyone. ”

Cynthia Bower
Chief Executive



“ In a time of change and challenge for health and social care, we must keep the needs of patients as our focus.

Although the vast majority of general practices are run by professionals who are proud of the service they provide, we all know that such quality isn't universal.

You are required by law to register with the Care Quality Commission. By registering, you assure your patients, and the Government, that your services meet essential standards of quality and safety.



We understand that some of you have concerns about the process and that's why we're keeping you posted about some of the key aspects of registration.

For example, there have been suggestions that CQC will be shutting down GP practices. I can tell you this is extremely unlikely and we would only take this action where we find extreme cases of very poor care. Instead, CQC will use the most appropriate action to ensure that a provider meets the standards; and this will always be proportionate to the level of concern we find.

You do not have to buy external auditing or compliance systems in order to demonstrate your compliance with the standards. We know that most primary medical care providers already have good monitoring and governance systems in place, which means you are likely to have plenty of information to show that you meet the standards.

As we move closer to registration, we'll make sure you get all the support and information you need. In the meantime, if you want to be involved in shaping CQC's processes and ways of working, you can join our Provider Reference Group (PRG). We ask members of the PRG to test key aspects of the registration process and use their feedback before we implement changes. We encourage GPs and GP practice managers to join this group. ”

Professor David Haslam FRCGP
Professional Adviser to CQC

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Why must I register?

The Health and Social Care Act 2008 introduced a single registration system that applies to health and adult social care services.

From 1 April 2013, providers of NHS general practice and other primary medical services (including walk-in centres and GP-led healthcare centres) are required by law to be registered with the Care Quality Commission. For more information see our website: www.cqc.org.uk/primarymedicalservices.

By registering, you give assurance to your patients that you are meeting the essential standards of quality and safety (see more information on the next page). Registration will also provide a way to address poorly-performing practices.

We have a range of legal powers to make sure providers meet the standards including fines and public warnings. When necessary, we can use criminal or civil law, including prosecution, suspension or, in the most serious cases, cancellation of a provider's registration.

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What is registration?

Registration is the process where you tell us who you are, what services you provide and how you are meeting the essential standards of quality and care. You don't have to be fully compliant with all of the standards when you register, but we need to know how you are managing any associated risks or how you plan to become compliant.

Registration is an online process, and we are working to make it as straightforward as possible. Completing your registration form will not require you to purchase additional software or employ extra staff.

Each provider will only need to apply once. Once registered, you must continue to meet the essential standards of quality and safety. Registration should not be a burdensome task, as most providers will already be meeting the essential standards and will easily be able to demonstrate evidence of compliance.

There is no 'joining' fee when providers or managers apply to be registered. However, providers will be required to pay an annual registration fee once registered. We will carry out a consultation on this before April 2013.

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What are the essential standards?

The essential standards of quality and safety have been created from the 28 regulations that you are legally required to comply with, which are set out in the legislation governing our work.

The standards focus on the outcomes that patients should expect when they use your services. They cover basic areas of care that most providers are already delivering effectively each day, including:

- How you make sure care is safe.
- How you keep patients informed and involved in their care.
- How you make sure their care is personalised.
- How you safeguard your patients.
- How you ensure you have the right staff with the right skills.

Our publication *Guidance about compliance: Essential standards of quality and safety* explains the standards in detail and gives guidance to help you decide if you are meeting them. You can download it from our website or order a hard copy from our publications line (details are at the end of this booklet).

The essential standards and outcomes apply to all health and adult social care providers. These standards are the same for all providers and will not change for primary medical care providers. However, when assessing registration applications we will be proportionate when applying the standards to providers in the primary care sector.

MYTH:

You are required to hire additional staff to ensure you meet the essential standards.

FACT:

We do not require you to hire additional staff to meet the standards or submit your application. The regulations state that an organisation or partnership must designate a manager who is in day-to-day charge of regulated activities and hold a role that enables them to effectively ensure that the provider meets the essential standards. We expect that you will be able to identify an appropriate person from your current staff. This person will be required to register with us.

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What evidence will CQC need to judge whether I'm meeting the standards?

You don't need to send us any evidence with your application to register, but we may ask for more information or visit you while we are assessing your application form. After you are registered, we may also ask to see more information to help us monitor your compliance.

The important thing to remember is that the standards focus on the outcomes experienced by patients, not the policies and procedures your services have.

The evidence to show that you are meeting those standards should be focused on the outcomes your patients experience, a lot of which you will already hold.

For example, carrying out a survey of your patients each year is one way of showing us that you respect and involve the people who use your services (Outcome 1 of the essential standards). We may ask you to tell us more about the survey, and how you use the results to improve the care and experience of your patients.

It might be helpful for you to start thinking now about how you meet the essential standards, what evidence you have that shows the outcomes your patients experience against the standards, and where you have gaps in that information.

MYTH:

You will need compliance systems and software in order to complete the registration process and demonstrate your compliance with the essential standards of quality and safety.

FACT:

The majority of practices will already be meeting the essential standards of quality and safety. While some practices may wish to purchase systems and software for their own auditing purposes, this is not necessary for registration with CQC.

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What happens if I don't meet the standards?

Primary medical services that don't meet all the standards on 1 April 2013 will still be able to register with us. However, you will need to tell us when you will be compliant and how you are managing any associated risks.

We would only use our power to refuse registration in the most serious of circumstances, and following registration, to close a service down. This would only be in the most extreme cases of risk to patient safety and we would need to take into account the effect on the people who use the services if they were not available.

The legislation does give us other enforcement powers, which can lead to prosecution or fines, but again, we will only use these in serious cases of non-compliance that affect patient safety, and where a provider is unresponsive to improving the issues.

MYTH:

Providers who do not meet essential standards will have their registration refused and their services will be shut down.

FACT:

Because this is a new system of regulation, you are able to declare 'non-compliance' with the standards you don't yet meet. You will have to show us how you plan to become compliant and by when. We will only close down a service or refuse a registration application in the most serious of circumstances.

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How is CQC developing the process for primary medical services?

Improving the registration process

We are committed to working with stakeholders, including providers of NHS general practice and other primary medical services, to improve the registration process and iron out any problems to make the process as smooth and efficient as possible. This also applies to monitoring providers' compliance after registration.

We are working to review our processes in a number of ways, including through our Provider Reference Group (PRG) and Stakeholder Advisory Group. The PRG communicates mainly through an online community, to take part in polls, discussion groups and reviews of our processes and guidance. We also ask members of the group to take part in focus groups and pilot programmes. You can find out how to join at the end of this booklet.



Understanding registration

Early next year, we'll make sure you have all the information you need to understand what you have to do. We'll do this by:

- Holding national events
- A dedicated telephone helpline
- Speaking at key conferences
- Publishing guidance for all providers
- Having clear and up-to-date information on our website
- Sharing information through your representative organisations

Remember: you only need to register once – you don't need to re-apply annually.

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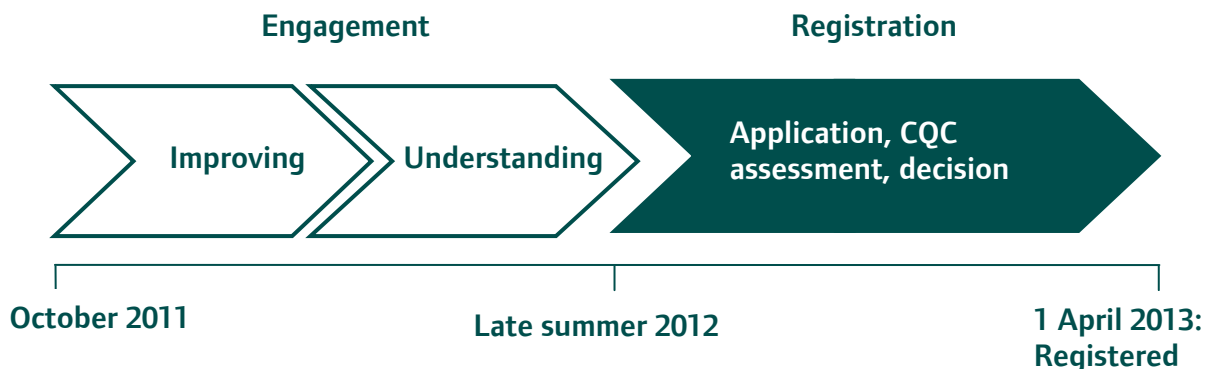
How does the registration process work?

The application process will start in the summer of 2012. This will involve you completing one online form on which you will register details of all the services you provide at each of your locations. We will be working with you through the PRG and in other ways to help design the process. You will need to give us details about the following. They are central to the registration process, but don't worry if these don't mean much to you at the moment, we will explain them fully to you well in advance of registration:

- **Type of provider** – a provider is the legal entity responsible for carrying on the services (regulated activities) that we regulate.
- **Regulated activities** – what services you provide (and at which locations). You must register each regulated activity that you carry on, and it is common to register for more than one activity.
- **Locations** – the place in which, or from which, regulated activities are provided or managed.
- **Essential standards** – a provider must meet essential standards of quality and safety in all of its regulated activities at each location. For registration by 1 April 2013, if you aren't yet compliant in certain areas you can tell us how you plan to become compliant, and by when.
- **Individual's details** – information about who is responsible for the management of the regulated activities and who is the point of contact.
- **Registered manager** – the person who is in day-to-day charge of one or more regulated activities. In most cases, a provider will need to have one or more registered managers.

We'll provide detailed guidance to help you through the registration process, including more detailed explanation of key terminology, specific examples, a step-by-step guide to the process and other key aspects such as requirements relating to CRB checks.

We're using the extended deadline for registration to improve our process, so we haven't set the exact timetable and process for applications at this stage. However, you can see an indication of the timescale below, and we'll contact you as soon as it has been decided.



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Monitoring your compliance

Once you are registered, we will monitor your compliance with the essential standards of quality and safety, focusing on areas where we think there is a risk that standards are not being met.

We are developing the monitoring approach for primary medical services and will be using input from stakeholders and providers in the process, as well as developing pilot programmes. You can get involved by joining the Provider Reference Group (see below.)

We'll tell you everything you need to know about this later in the process.

MYTH:

To be registered with CQC you must meet strict building standards. Old buildings, carpeted premises and toys in waiting rooms will also affect a practice's ability to register.

FACT:

Patients should expect care to be provided in safe, accessible surroundings that promote their wellbeing. We always take a proportionate approach, and care provided in carpeted premises (or those with toys and books in their waiting rooms) is not likely to cause us concern, or lead to non-compliance with the essential standards of quality and safety. We just need to be assured that you have identified any risks and have taken reasonable steps to manage them (or have a plan in place on how you will manage them).

The important thing is that you identify risk and manage it appropriately.

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Keep up to date

Get the latest information and guidance from our **website** www.cqc.org.uk/primarymedicalservices.

Join our **provider reference group** at www.cqc.org.uk/prg.

Get a copy of our **Guidance about compliance: Essential standards of quality and safety**. You can either:

- Download from our website at www.cqc.org.uk/standards.
- Use a interactive online version at www.cqcguidanceaboutcompliance.org.uk, or
- Order a hard copy from our publications line on 0870 240 7535.

If you have any questions about registration or you need more information, you can:

- Call us on 03000 616161 (press option 3 for registration, then option 2 for enquiries about primary medical services).
- Email us at 2012registration@cqc.org.uk, or
- Write to us at:

CQC HSCA Registration
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

Need help?

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