

CQC Inspection Checklist

Ready every day, not just on the day · by Safe Workplace / CompliantCare

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THE FRAMEWORK

The five key questions

Every CQC assessment weighs your evidence against these five. Organise the checklist below around them — the anchor that survives the 2026 reform.

Safe	Protected from avoidable harm
Effective	Good outcomes, consent (MCA/DoLS)
Caring	Dignity, compassion, respect
Responsive	Person-centred; complaints acted on
Well-led	Governance & learning culture

EVIDENCE CHECKLIST

Policies & procedures

- ☐ Statement of purpose current and accurate
- ☐ Policies in date and reviewed on schedule
- ☐ Staff have read & understood them — acknowledgement on record

Staff files & training

- ☐ DBS, right-to-work, references and induction on file
- ☐ Mandatory training up to date, with evidence of competence
- ☐ Supervisions and appraisals current

Incidents & safeguarding

- ☐ Incident log complete, with duty-of-candour records
- ☐ Safeguarding referrals and outcomes documented
- ☐ Evidence you learned and changed practice — not just logged

Risk & audits

- ☐ Risk assessments and register current, actions tracked
- ☐ Recent audits (medicines, IPC, care plans) with findings actioned
- ☐ A quality-assurance cycle leadership can see

Care records & medicines

- ☐ Person-centred, current care plans with consent (MCA / DoLS)
- ☐ MAR charts complete; medicines stored, stocked and audited
- ☐ Care plans reflect the individual — not a template

Governance & feedback

- ☐ Complaints log with responses and learning
- ☐ Feedback from people, families and staff, acted on
- ☐ A golden thread: issue -> action -> improvement -> evidence

MOCK INSPECTION

Run a dry run first

- ☐ Independent assessor booked (not the person who runs the unit)
- ☐ Scored against all five key questions
- ☐ Evidence retrieval timed — care plan, MAR, training, incident learning
- ☐ Staff can explain safeguarding, whistleblowing and a person's care
- ☐ Environment walked as a first-time visitor
- ☐ Findings written, owners and deadlines set, re-checked

What's changing in 2026: CQC is replacing the 34 quality statements with ~24 new assessment areas and four sector-specific frameworks (rollout completing end 2026). The five key questions and the four-point rating scale stay the same — so prepare around the five questions. Always check [cqc.org.uk](https://www.cqc.org.uk) for your sector's current framework.