

16 March 2020

Immediate cessation of routine CQC inspections

Dear colleague,

Further to our [letter of 4 March](#), we're writing to update you on CQC's regulatory approach at this difficult time for the sector. Firstly however, we wanted to thank you for the incredible work you and your team are delivering at this challenging time. We are acutely aware of the pressure you are facing and we wanted to thank you for everything you are doing.

Our primary objectives during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic will be to support you to keep people safe during a period of unprecedented pressure on the health and care system.

As a result, we will be stopping inspections from Monday 16 March.

It may be necessary to still use some of our inspection powers in a very small number of cases when we have clear reports of harm, such as allegations of abuse. However, inspections and Provider Information Requests for health services will not be conducted during the period of the pandemic. We are talking to social care providers about how to most effectively collect information from them to ensure that the Government has a clear picture of social care in the absence of a single national body equivalent to NHS England.

We encourage everyone to act in the best interests of the health of the people they serve, with the top priority the protection of life. **We encourage you to use your discretion and act in the best way you see fit.** We also wanted to briefly outline what other support we are offering the system. Clinically qualified CQC special advisors have already returned to the frontline to help with the wider national response; we have offered DHSC, Public Health England and NHS England our staff where they have relevant skills and a number have been seconded already; and we expect to be using our customer contact centre to start taking non-clinical COVID-19 calls from next week in support of 111. In addition, we are asking our teams to stand ready to help any other part of the national effort whether that be in the public or private sector.

We hope this reassures you of CQC's commitment to offering the health and care system all the support possible to ensure that people – those who use services and those who work in them – are kept safe during this global health emergency.

We will update you further if things change significantly. Please be assured we will not be doing anything to distract you and your teams from using your discretion in looking after the public and will continue to maintain a focus on the safety of health and social care services through the introduction of an interim methodology for the period of this pandemic.

Of course should you or your team wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours sincerely

Ian Trenholm,
Chief Executive

Prof Ted Baker,
Chief Inspector of Hospitals

Dr Rosie Benneyworth,
Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care

