

Top tips for preparing for a CQC inspection

Brightening Minds training is led by experienced Health and Social care practitioners who have worked in residential, domiciliary care and healthcare organisations. Having experience of working towards and achieving 'outstanding' ratings from CQC, they now share their experiences to support other organisations to 'demystify' the key lines of enquiry and develop organisational confidence in preparation for their conversations with the CQC, at inspection time and across the year.



Brightening Minds Training

Here they have shared some of their top tips for preparing for CQC inspection.

1. Use the information CQC give you.

CQC's website is a really useful (if sometimes challenging to navigate) resource. The CQC has produced detailed information about the areas that its inspectors are looking at, and specific questions that they should be able to answer when inspecting a service. Becoming familiar with these two particular CQC documents will give you insight into what the inspector is looking for, and different sources of evidence to demonstrate this:

CQC Key Lines of enquiry, prompts and ratings characteristics (<http://bit.ly/cqckeyprompts>) will take you to CQC's Key Lines of enquiry, prompts and ratings characteristics for adult social care services. This really useful document helps you to consider where your service is currently and check that you have the basics in place; and look at what other things you can do to enhance your service delivery to provide even better support to you customers.

Sources of Evidence (<http://bit.ly/cqccevidence>) is a document that suggests some possible sources you can use to describe and evidence your organisational

compliance and the quality of service delivery around each specific key line of enquiry.

When you look at these documents they can seem large and overwhelming so maybe take heed of Top Tip 3 when formulating how to approach this!

2. Identify where you are currently in quality of service delivery, where you want to be and how you are going to get there.

Where do you rate your organisation as a service provider currently? Have a think, and be really honest with yourselves, maybe ask your team for input. Look at what CQC say a good social care provider will be doing and consider if this describes your service.

Next think about where you would like to be and why. What are the challenges in your way to achieving this?

Remember that we can always improve so being really honest at this point about what some of the challenges or weaker areas are is a great basis for a conversation with your inspector about how well you know your service and what you are doing to make it even better.

3. We are always stronger together; this is a team responsibility and needs a team approach.

Share out the responsibility of this inspection process just as you share out the responsibility for care and support delivery. If you are employing people and trusting them to deliver a service in your organisation's name then why not seek their cooperation in making this service the best it can be!

Involve the team in identifying your current position; perhaps use the ratings characteristics referred to in Top Tip 1 in a team meeting or supervision to make a baseline assessment of the service currently. Then talk to people about what they think you could all do to provide an even better service.

What are people most proud of about their work? Enable your team to speak about the great things they do to instill a culture of positivity and to celebrate the great things the team does already.

Perhaps allocate roles around the key lines of enquiry to ensure everyone takes a lead on one area to feed back to the Registered Manager. Remember this is about everyone's participation and input!

4. Know your service and tell people what you know!

You are the experts in your service, in the people it serves and the staff who deliver the service. The CQC inspector's expertise is in the key lines of enquiry and applying those to what they see, hear and understand about a service.

If you aren't explicit about what your service does and how that makes a difference to the lives of the people you support, how will the inspector know? They might do some digging and exploring to find out but make it easy for them by having examples to talk about, and by sharing information about the great things you do (appropriate sharing of course) with all the stakeholders of your service and all of your partners.

If everyone who 'shakes hands' with your service or receives a service from you feels positive about it, then the continuous message an inspector receives will be positive.

5. Use your incidents to continuously improve your service.

We dread them, we lose sleep over them, and we hate the paperwork they create. However, reality tells us that sometimes things go wrong. One of the best and most helpful things an organisation can do is honestly report every incident and then use this honest report to grow and improve.

Celebrate the staff member who reports the most to encourage people to report! (I may be being over exuberant here, but we need to be more positive about incident reporting.)

6. Value your values!

Time for a bit of research. Ask 10 people of all different roles or contact in your organisation what the organisation's values are. Could they answer? If so, fabulous, now how do they relate to the key lines of enquiry? If not, then here is another development opportunity.

Your values are there to guide your service and to give confidence to people receiving the service of what they can expect you to do. However, if we are to work to the values we really need to know them.

Find creative ways to embed these values; map them to the key lines of enquiry and build your supervisions, audits, team meetings, training and service planning

around them. Sing them, act them out, rap them, be as creative as you like. But make sure everyone knows them and knows what they mean for their role in the organisation.

7. Impact impact impact! The 'so what' question.

When talking to people about your service, when auditing your service, when managing your team, when describing what it is you do, how often do you ask yourself 'so what'?

We think it's a really helpful question in enabling you to refocus on why you are doing what you are doing, whether it is truly beneficial or just a process, and who it impacts on and how.

What difference does the support you provide make to the people you provide it to? What is your impact and how do you measure it?

Following an incident what improvements or changes have you put in place? What was the impact of this change? So what?

8. A portfolio of your achievements will give you organisational confidence.

Having evidence to back up and inform the conversation you have with your CQC inspector is really valuable. Preparing a portfolio of useful evidence and information is one way that you can do this.

Gather feedback from customers, families, commissioners, other disciplines and other services that you partner with. Show your complaints and how you use them to inform service improvement, dissect an incident report and investigation, and use all of this information as evidence of how well you know your service.

We find case studies can be helpful in making the link between what you do and the impact it has. An inspector isn't going to have time to look through years of care and support plans for someone, so if you can capture some information about the support you have provided and the impact it has in a case study it gives a snapshot of some really positive work.

We have a suggested template for a case study for you to follow available on our website:

<http://www.brighteningminds.co.uk/resources/4594357199>: (<http://bit.ly/bmtresources>)

For more information about how Brightening Minds can help you feel more prepared and confident please visit www.brighteningminds.co.uk, email hello@brighteningminds.co.uk or telephone **01423 561119**.