

Future-proof care standards: Achieving high quality adult social care in Wales with compliance management

How compliance management enables Welsh adult social care providers to future-proof against forthcoming compliance shocks



Introduction

The Care Standards Act 2000 seemingly set a new benchmark for a new millennium for care quality across the UK. However, within a decade the Health and Social Care Act 2008 was enacted, overhauling the regulatory mechanism for care standards.

This new legislative instrument created a new regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and precipitated the arrival of a new rulebook, the Essential Standards of Quality and Safety. However this only applied in England. Wales was untouched, leaving standards in the Welsh care sector defined by the Care Standards Act and the National Minimum Standards (NMS).

Omitting Wales from the regulatory update means that different regulatory systems now operate in England and Wales; however this situation seems unlikely to remain untouched in the medium term.

Today, the case for updating regulation of the care sector in Wales is gaining momentum. The investigation into widespread abuse in Welsh children's homes from the 1960s to the 1990s continues to shock and fuel public outrage.

Across England and Wales it seems there is a clear need for the care system to restore its reputation. In England, to prevent repeats of scandals such as Mid Staffs and Winterbourne View, it seems there is only one appropriate response by the authorities: A tougher and more robust approach to compliance and regulation.

Welsh social care providers that want to underscore their commitment to the highest care standards do not have to wait for the CSSIW and its guidance on compliance to be overhauled or replaced. In this guide we explain how care homes in Wales are able to provide care which focuses on the needs of service users through the use of expertly designed and the most up to date compliance management systems.

The need for compliance management

Many small to mid-sized care organisations use a manual approach to compliance. Policies and procedures are written by registered managers or more senior managers and business owners. In those that have been operating for some time, compliance documentation tends to develop organically, with one generation of policies giving rise to the next.

To cover every aspect of regulated activities in Welsh adult social care, a manual system would need to contain in excess of 300 policies and procedures. When regulatory changes occur and there is a need to modify policies, it is clearly desirable to limit the time spent on developing new or revising existing documentation. Inevitably this means that much previously developed policy material is re-used or preserved.

Unfortunately this may lead to policies that are inconsistent, difficult to follow, and long-winded. Such an approach could be a recipe for disaster. At best it may not cross-reference related policies correctly leading to gaps in practice; at worst it may be erroneous and simply fail to enable operational practice to meet the compliance requirement.

There are a number of potential consequences of failing to ensure that care practice meets the compliance requirement. The organisation may be open to a range of actions from the regulator such as warnings or fines. Worst-case scenarios, where a service user is harmed, may result in more serious action. This may damage the careers or see the prosecution of individuals and destroy the reputation and the commercial viability of care businesses.

Clearly, a manual approach to compliance is unsustainable over the long term. There is a compelling need for a better approach to ensuring the requirements of the regulator are met. Many are of the opinion that a compliance management system provides the best approach.

What is a compliance management system?

In its basic form, a compliance management system provides a set of pre-written policies and procedures that enables organisations to operate in a manner that conforms to the regulatory requirements.

For the social care sector in Wales, this is achieved by taking the CSSIW compliance framework and designing a set of policies and procedures that provide a blueprint for practice within care settings. This provides the policies and procedures that enable all regulated operational processes to be compliant.

A key attribute of a good compliance management system is ease of use. There are two aspects to this. Firstly a system should be economic in terms of the steps and routines that are required to achieve any compliance aim. Secondly policies and procedures need to be presented in plain, uncomplicated language, without excessive jargon or acronyms.

The QCS Welsh Social Care Management System

A structured approach to meeting compliance

The QCS Welsh Social Care Management System enables health and social care providers to fulfil the regulatory obligations laid down by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). The content of the Welsh system is built around the compliance requirements demanded by the CSSIW and the NMS. The system provides a structured approach, ensuring that practice is consistent and repeatable and achieves compliance on an ongoing basis.

Customised documentation

For the purposes of registration, ongoing compliance requirements and inspection, generic documentation is not compliant. The regulators require that documentation is specific to each care organisation. The QCS system provides policies and procedures customised to meet the needs of each individual service provider.

Online and in print

The QCS system is a standalone compliance management solution. It takes the form of printed manuals combined with an online equivalent. This provides care organisations with ready reference to a comprehensive set of resources, placing a complete toolbox of policies and procedures at the fingertips of registered managers, supervisors and care workers.

Fully comprehensive and up to date

The QCS Welsh Social Care Management System contains in excess of 300 policies and procedures and 1900+ pages. It is designed to be fully comprehensive from day one onwards. System content is originated and continuously maintained in step with regulatory change by QCS compliance experts.

Loophole free compliance management

With modules covering Administration, Care Management, Health and Safety, Human Resources, Quality Assurance, Residential Services and Registration & Inspections, the QCS Welsh Social Care Management System provides a loophole-free approach to ensuring that adult health and social care organisations in Wales offer the highest care standards.

Ease of use

The system is written in plain language, avoids jargon and acronyms and sets out to achieve any given compliance objective in as few steps as possible. Ultimately it is about communicating and disseminating policy and procedure. The policy and procedural documentation may be taken straight from the system and understood by the vast majority of NVQ1, NVQ2 or QCF qualified care staff.

Summary

The use of two different health and social care regulatory systems has led to contrasting standards in England and Wales. Compliance management enables social care providers in Wales to demonstrate their commitment to providing care of the highest standards.

A compliance management system overcomes the shortcomings of manual methods and uses a structured approach to the problem of ensuring that regulated activities are carried out in a compliant manner.

To meet the updated regulatory requirements in England, QCS takes the CQC compliance framework and designs the management system to deliver exactly what is required. For Wales, QCS does exactly the same, taking the compliance framework of the CSSIW and the NMS. This enables the Welsh adult social care management system to deliver against the specific requirements of the Welsh regulators.

There are no limits within the QCS compliance management system which restrict service providers to achieving the minimum acceptable standard. The effect of this is to enable service providers to raise the bar

by consistently exceeding the minimum compliance standard that is currently required by the regulator in Wales.

Adopting the QCS Welsh Social Care Management System provides the opportunity to change the attitudes of individuals to compliance. Properly reinforced by managerial efforts and supported by QCS this drives transformational change of the care organisation's culture. An organisation that has compliance integrated within its culture is effectively insured against any forthcoming overhaul of the Welsh regulatory system, which is seen by many as inevitable.

Managing compliance with QCS provides a more detailed and immediate solution to the problem of compliance. Not only does QCS compliance management future-proof Welsh social care organisations; it also insulates Welsh social care service providers from the sudden compliance shock that will be experienced by those that choose to retain a manual approach for meeting their regulatory obligations.

About QCS

Quality Compliance Systems (QCS) offers a unique approach to CQC Compliance with an online and paper based service specifically tailored to the individual needs of your organisation.

Whether you are an established Care Provider, Dental Practice, GP Surgery or a start-up organisation, our service is provided with the aim of ensuring that all aspects of compliance are being attended to.

Our industry experts continually update existing policies and procedures, whilst introducing new ones in response to the latest changes issued by the Care Quality Commission (England) and the SCSWIS(Scotland).

Read the reviews

<http://www.trustpilot.co.uk/review/ukqcs.co.uk>

Try QCS with a FREE trial

Find out more or enjoy a **FREE** trial of our CQC management system to see how QCS can help you save time, stay compliant and improve standards:

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