

# A guide to launching a domiciliary care agency

A Quality Compliance Systems Guide



## Welcome

Setting up a new business is often a daunting task. There are many things to consider and pitfalls to avoid. Launching a domiciliary care agency has the added burden of ensuring that you are successfully registered with the Care Quality Commission. Turning your dream into reality requires many things; you need to know where to begin, an organised approach and a thorough understanding of the market place in which you will be operating.

517,000 adults currently receive state-funded homecare whilst 527,000 adults receive self-directed support via Social Services. These are substantial figures and are indicative of how important the domiciliary care market is in the delivery of care. It's an industry currently worth £7.8 billion per year and there are now in excess of 6,830 providers of homecare in England registered with the CQC. 84% of them operate in the private and voluntary sectors.

To get started it is essential to have the right policies and procedures in place to ensure that you successfully register with the regulator and are able to pass future inspection. This applies just as much as to registration with the SCSWIS in Scotland and CSSIW in Wales, as it does with the CQC in England. Quality Compliance Systems is here to help you with this essential element of launching your domiciliary care business. The following pages provide advice and guidance on the other start-up elements you need to consider.

## Registration

First things first, before you offer any care services in England, you need to register with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). It is a legal requirement under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 to register your organisation and the individual who will be your Registered Manager. This may be you if you have the relevant qualifications and are not employing or entering into partnership with someone who is to fulfil those requirements.

QCS provides advice and guidance about successfully registering in England, as well as providing over 300 accompanying policies and procedures that are required. To begin your registration in England, visit the following CQC webpage:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/organisations-we-regulate/registering-first-time>

Before registering you need to consider whether you have the relevant qualifications and experience to provide homecare; whether you satisfy the Essential Standards in Quality and Safety; and whether you truly are committed to the vocation of providing excellent standards of care that respect and enrich the lives of those to whom you provide services.. It's an important consideration and one which the CQC will ascertain through your registration and delivery of services. Here are the key elements of registration on which you need to concentrate.

1. You need to apply for a DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) check. Formerly known as a CRB check, the DBS ensures that you can lawfully work with vulnerable adults. This is the very first action which you must undertake. The DBS check needs to be carried out for the following:
  - Individuals registering to provide a care service
  - All partners (if there are any)
  - Registered Manager

Click the following link to apply for your DBS check: <https://cqc.disclosures.co.uk/>

2. References: You need to provide employment references for your career history, including your last employer, plus one from your GP. The latter is to establish that you are fit enough to provide such a service.
3. Fill in the right registration form. The forms vary according to whether you intend to supply services as an organisation, a partnership or as an individual.
4. Fill in the Registered Manager application.
5. You must have a statement of purpose in place. This is quite information-rich so to ensure nothing is omitted, QCS provides you with a template which you adapt to your needs. Much information needs

to be included within the Statement of Purpose, including but not limited to: Details of the services provided; contact details and the provider's aims and objectives.

6. Once you have received the green copy of your DBS and fulfilled the above, you are ready to submit your application. It should be sent by email, but post is also acceptable.

The CQC provide a useful webpage which highlights the most common errors found in applications. Read this list and ensure that you don't make these mistakes, as it will only delay your application and the start of your business:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/organisations-we-regulate/registering-first-time/how-register/common-registration-errors>

## Qualifications & Training

All care professionals must satisfy the CQC's requirement that "care providers show that that they are complying with the relevant regulations covering staff competence and training". This means that all care staff must have completed the Common Inductions Standards (CIS), which are applicable to the adult social care sector. These standards must also be completed within 12 weeks of commencing employment.

## Registered Manager

Beyond the CIS, certain roles require that specific qualifications be in place before care is provided, and in one case, before a service is provided. This position is that of the Registered Manager, perhaps the single most important position recruited into any care business. When sourcing a Registered Manager, you must make absolutely certain that they have the relevant skills and experience before a care service is provided. This is a critical role within your establishment and one which will be scrutinised by the CQC from the registration stage.

The current qualification which the Registered Manager should possess is the QCF Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care, choosing one of the following pathways:

- Management of Adult Services
- Management of Adult Residential Services

If the Registered Manager does not have the Level 5 Diploma, then he/she ought to register on to the programme within 3 months of appointment and expect to complete it within 18 months to 2 years. This advice has been provided by Skills for Care and is utilised by the CQC in making a proportionate judgment about any Registered Manager that does not possess either the Level 5 Diploma or an equivalent older qualification. When making a decision the CQC takes into consideration such factors as the impact this could have on service users; whether the individual has registered on to the programme; previous experience and relevant qualifications.

Qualifications which are no longer offered, but are still valid in satisfying the CQC's requirements are:

- Registered Manager's Award (RMA)
- NVQ Level 4 in Leadership and Management for Care Services

It's important to remember that the two general qualifications above need to be supplemented with a further qualification which demonstrates that the Registered Manager has the right skills and knowledge for the specific care setting. An NVQ Level 4 in Health and Social Care or a relevant nursing qualification are two examples.

Ensure that proof of all qualifications upon preparing your official registration with the CQC is supplied.

## Responsible Individual

The Responsible Individual is a key management position, whereby the post holder must demonstrate that they have all the key skills and experience for overseeing the running of a care business. This is not necessarily a position where the post holder provides care. However, it is reasonably common for the

Registered Manager and the Responsible Individual to be the same person in a start-up business. In this case, all of the above requirements for the Registered Manager apply.

For further guidance please visit the Skills for Care website. You can view relevant material and resources to help you ensure that you have the right qualifications and skills in place for all your employees, not just the Registered Manager:

<http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/>

## Funding

Establishing an adequate cash-flow is one of the most significant challenges for start-up businesses. Winning tenders is likely to be a significant element in securing the income you need and understanding the essentials of the process is one of the keys to success.

Once a tender has been advertised, say by a Local Authority, you need to register your expression of interest with the tendering body. Following this a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) is sent out to you with a deadline for completion and return. The shortlist of providers is drawn from the submitted PQQs. Having successfully made the shortlist you are then able to officially tender to provide the service(s).

The structure of the PQQ may vary from one tendering body to another and may include, but is not limited to:

- Evidence of financial viability of the applicant organisation
- Evidence of registration with the CQC
- Evidence of relevant experience in the provision of similar services
- Evidence of previous businesses including director prosecutions, insolvency, etc.
- Evidence of suitably qualified and trained staff
- Contact details for suitable referees
- Personnel information about both the provider and any staff
- Certificate of incorporation
- Health & Safety information
- Company financial information
- Business Continuity Plans

It may take time to establish that you have enough history to successfully win a tender contract for the provision of care services, so finding income from independent paying clients is often crucial. Effective marketing can help enormously, but so does having a prudent cash-flow policy and start-up fund.

## Employing Staff

Running a domiciliary care agency is a very challenging undertaking. The logistics of providing care in multiple locations requires the recruitment of suitably qualified, trustworthy staff. When sourcing suitable candidates, you need to be certain about the qualifications and experience that are required. We have a qualifications page which gives you essential guidance on this. You also need to think about background checks via the DBS where appropriate, where to advertise, which agency to use and how an interview must be conducted.

Helpful advice about employing staff can be found at the following websites:

- Department of Business, Innovation and Skills: [www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk)
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development: [www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

The QCS Management System contains a comprehensive Human Resources section and includes an accompanying folder. This provides you with policies and procedures covering everything from absence, sickness, contracts, employee handbooks, equality and disability and job descriptions, through to performance and discipline, recruitment, training and induction. Our aim here is to provide you with solid support, enhanced by our HR partners and expert contributors, Employer Solutions Ltd.

## Checklist

- Registration with the CQC, CSSIW or SCSWIS: Both your agency and the Registered Manager
- Setting up your business: Sole trader; Limited Company; Partnerships
- Insurance
- Tendering
- Recruitment, induction and training
- Marketing
- Pay and VAT
- Disclosure Barring Service
- Company registration
- Funding – tendering, direct payments, cashflow

## 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:

- Full Access to up to **2,300+ online** pages of easy to use guidance with **300+** policies & procedures
- It's completely, totally, absolutely **FREE!**
- **PLUS!** Gain FREE online trial access to our Mock Inspection Toolkit

Register for a free trial here: [www.ukqcs.co.uk](http://www.ukqcs.co.uk)

Or Call one of our **Compliance Advisors** now on **0333 405 33 33** or email: [info@ukqcs.co.uk](mailto:info@ukqcs.co.uk)