



Independent GPs and Clinic services Newsflash

CQC are now using our Emergency Support Framework (ESF) with General Practice and health and care providers in the criminal justice system. CQC will now be rolling out the framework to independent doctors and clinic services from 8 June.

What is the Emergency Support Framework?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Emergency Support Framework (ESF) is the way the CQC maintain an oversight of your service and gets 'first-hand' information to inform the national picture. The ESF is based around a conversation with you, during which they will ask you a few set questions. These questions help the CQC understand how well you are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, whether additional support may be required and also if you are continuing to deliver safe, effective care for the people you support during the increased pressures caused by the pandemic.

When can I expect a call?

The CQC started using the ESF framework for Independent GPs and Clinic services from **8th June**.

The CQC will arrange a time that is convenient with you for the call, so you can be prepared for the conversation. They will not call you unannounced or expect you to fit in around their arrangement.

How will the call be made?

The CQC will telephone you or use Microsoft Teams to have a video call, whichever is the most convenient for you. They may also ask you to send additional information by email or ask you to share information on your screen if using Microsoft Teams.



Who do the CQC want to talk to?

The CQC will normally want to speak with the Registered Manager as they are the person with responsibility for the service. If there is no Registered Manager in place, or they are unavailable, then the most senior member of staff with the widest knowledge and understanding of the service should be made available for the call.

What will they ask me about during the call?

The call will focus on four main themes. The focus of the questioning is how you have managed the service during the pandemic and mitigated the impact of any concerns you have had:

1. Safe care and treatment
2. Staffing arrangements
3. Protection from abuse
4. Assurance processes, monitoring and risk management

What are the individual questions under each theme?

There is a total of 15 questions across the four themes. Under each question there are some further questions that you will need to provide a more specific response to. Please do refer to the CQC website for a full and up-to-date [list](#).

CQC have recorded a webinar for providers setting out what to expect from the ESF, which is [available via YouTube](#)

How should I prepare for the ESF call?

You should read this guidance and other information on the CQC website to make sure you are aware of the structure of the call and the questions that are going to be asked.

Treat the call as an opportunity to feedback to the CQC what your concerns are, the areas that you think that you have been innovative and how you have worked with other organisations to ensure the best outcomes for people who use your service.

Are the calls seen as an inspection?

No. The CQC are clear that the ESF calls are not classed as an inspection and as such, the report isn't published on the website, there is no 'factual accuracy' process and your rating will not be changed as a result of the call.

Is there a written report of the call?

Yes. The CQC produce a 'summary report' of the conversation that is sent to you as a PDF attachment to an email. This report will include:

- The 15 questions that were asked and some standard wording that reflects your answer to each question
- Details of any innovative ways you may have developed to manage the situation
- A summary of the specific internal and external risks and challenges that we discussed
- Any sources of support that the CQC suggested to help you
- A short summary of whether the CQC have assessed if your practice is 'managing' or 'needs support'





What will CQC do after the call?

The CQC may do a number of things dependent upon whether they think you are 'managing' or 'needing support'.

If they assess you as 'managing', there will normally be no further action taken as a direct result of the call, but your inspector will stay in touch with you and may plan another call if there is information that your situation has changed. The record of the call will be used to inform regulatory planning beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

If the CQC come to the opinion that you 'need support', they have a number of avenues that they will explore with you dependent upon the nature, scale and impact of the concerns on your service. They may:

- Provide additional sources of support and suggest ways for you to manage more effectively
- Arrange a follow-up call to discuss progress with you

Who will the CQC share information about us with?

The actual summary record document will not be shared with anyone else apart from you, but if you want to share it you can do. However, if there is information that the CQC feel it is appropriate to share with the other partners, they will.



What action do I need to take?

- You should be proactive and make sure that you are regularly updating your own knowledge and understanding of the CQC approach during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Take full advantage of the latest information, resources, policies and guidance provided as part of your membership of QCS
- You should sign up for newsletters and emails from the CQC
- Be an active member of any local networks that are good sources of information and support
- Reach out to other Registered Managers to understand and learn from their experience of the ESF
- Join the [QCS Facebook discussion group for General Practice](#) to share ideas and get support