

Action Plans: Roadmaps to a Better Service



When things go wrong in your service, you may need to create a CQC action plan.

Creating an action plan is a useful exercise because it requires you to analyse with a high degree of granularity what went wrong, decide how to fix it, and assign a level of priority to each required task. An action plan also provides a structure for following up and ensuring that everything has been completed. In addition, it may help alleviate your stress levels as you start to impose a sense of order on the chaos and take active steps to resolve the problem.

Action plans can have other uses. They can provide a roadmap to becoming (or remaining) good or outstanding. In their January 2021 strategy consultation, CQC have indicated that in the future, they will be looking for more continual improvement than before and will want services to demonstrate organisational learning. An action plan will not only help you take stock and plan improvements, but also outline for CQC what you have learned, what you are working towards, and what you have recently achieved.

When CQC are involved, there is usually an inspection report, warning notice or other compliance action that forms the starting point for your action plan. This will set out CQC's view of the shortcomings in your service and can provide a structure (either by domain, regulation or topic) for your action plan. Draft the action plan in line with CQC's views and you will be able to show that you are meeting each concern head on, item by item.

CQC action plans usually take the form of a table with the following columns:

1. Item to be rectified;
2. Actions required;
3. Deadline;
4. Person responsible for each task;
5. Red, amber, green (RAG) rating which indicates the progression of each task; and
6. Key documents relevant to each item. The action plan is a living document. Do not make the action plan and then forget about it. It should be re-visited weekly or fortnightly and updated to ensure that matters are progressing. Previous versions should be retained so that your progress can be illustrated over time.

Lastly, CQC action plans are critical to managing any compliance action issued by CQC. It is important to be able to demonstrate that your service is moving forward and that further compliance action is not required.



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