

ENGLAND | CARE QUALITY COMMISSION

CQC Registration Guide and Checklist 2026

Every document CQC asks for, for seven types of service, and the checks to run before you send your application.

Inside this guide

- Which documents your type of service needs
- Tick-box checklists for the forms, policies and evidence
- The ten reasons CQC sends applications back
- The registration process, step by step

Updated September 2026. Free to download, print and share.

How to use this guide

CQC will not assess an application until the pack is complete. Most applications that come back fail on the same small group of points, and nearly all of them can be caught before you press send. This guide lists those points.

Start with the table on the next page. It shows which documents your type of service needs. Then work through the checklists in order. Tick a box only when the item is finished and saved in its final version, not when it is planned.

The guide is based on CQC's published guidance and on our own work with real applications up to September 2026. CQC changes its forms and document lists with little notice, so check its supporting documents page for your service on the day you submit.

At a glance

Regulator	Care Quality Commission (CQC). England only.
Main law	Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, and the Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009.
Forms	Provider application (version 12 or later), registered manager application (version 19), and any additional form for your service.
How to apply	Email the forms and every supporting document together to HSCA_Applications@cqc.org.uk .
Cost	CQC does not charge to apply. Once you are registered you pay an annual fee.
People you need	A Nominated Individual (for a company) and a Registered Manager. Each needs an enhanced DBS check done through CQC's route.

Which documents does your service need?

Find your service in the columns. Yes means CQC asks for the document. Check means you need it only in some cases, explained in the row. No means CQC does not ask for it from this type of service.

Document	Home care	Supported living	Care home	GP practice	Online GP	Dental	Ambulance
Forms							
Provider application form	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Registered manager application form	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional form: providers of personal care (2026 issue)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Additional form: autistic people and people with a learning disability (Check: if you support these groups)	Check	Yes	Check	No	No	No	No
Additional form: online independent health providers	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Additional form: oral health services	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Additional form: ambulance services	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Statement of financial viability, signed by an accountant or bank	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Core documents							
Statement of Purpose	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Safeguarding policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consent policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Complaints policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Recruitment policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equality, diversity and human rights policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Governance policy, with an organisation chart inside it	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Infection prevention and control policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Medicines management policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public and employers' liability insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ICO registration certificate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Evidence of legal occupancy (lease, tenancy or deeds)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Extra documents for some services							
Business plan with a monthly forecast for two years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Service user guide	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

Document	Home care	Supported living	Care home	GP practice	Online GP	Dental	Ambulance
Staff training plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Business continuity plan and environment risk assessment	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Floor plan, and gas and electrical safety certificates under 12 months old	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Planning permission, or confirmation that it is not needed	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Fire risk assessment and Legionella risk assessment	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Health and safety risk assessment	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Medical emergency policy	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Inclusion and exclusion criteria policy, and medical indemnity	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
X-ray: critical examination report, HSE registration, radiography risk assessment and local rules	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Lift (LOLER) certificate (Check: if the practice has a lift)	No	No	No	No	No	Check	No
Vehicle details, bariatric patient policy, staffing structure, incident reporting policy and restraint policy	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Patient Group Directions, major incidents policy and clinical pathways (Check: if you apply for treatment of disease, disorder or injury)	No	No	No	No	No	No	Check
Only if it applies							
Positive behaviour support and restraint policies (Check: specialist learning disability or autism service)	Check	Check	Check	No	No	No	No
Separate child safeguarding policy (Check: if children are a service user band)	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check
Building control final certificate (Check: building work that needed approval, from 5 May 2026)	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check	Check

Dental: the extra documents apply to applications from 5 May 2026. Ambulance services: from 17 August 2026. Have a booking policy, a waste management policy and your ICO registration ready too, because CQC asks ambulance applicants for them later. GP practice: confirm the list on CQC's supporting documents page on the day you submit. CQC can ask any service for more during assessment. Home care has not needed a statement of financial viability since 1 July 2025.

Checklist 1: before you start

- ☐ I have chosen my regulated activities, service type and service user bands, and they are the same in every document.
- ☐ I have checked CQC's supporting documents page for my type of service today. CQC changed the lists for several services in 2026.
- ☐ Every required topic is written inside the document CQC asks for. CQC does not read extra policies, so content held in a separate policy does not count.
- ☐ If this is a resubmission, I have treated it as a new application and checked it against the guidance in force today. It also goes back to the start of the queue.
- ☐ The Nominated Individual and the Registered Manager have enhanced DBS checks done through CQC's route. Each check will still be under 12 months old when CQC assesses the application, not only on the day I send it.

Checklist 2: the application forms

- ☐ Every CQC form is the current version, downloaded from cqc.org.uk in the last few days: provider form version 12 or later, manager form version 19, personal care additional form January 2026 issue.
- ☐ No table, row, question or guidance text has been deleted. Sections that do not apply are left in place and empty.
- ☐ I filled in the form fields properly. I did not type over the grey placeholder text, because that can delete the field.
- ☐ Employment history starts at age 16, runs to today, and explains every gap longer than 28 days.
- ☐ All dates are written as DD/MM/YYYY, with start and end dates for every job.
- ☐ The referee is the most recent employer, or the form explains why not. A referee is never a relative.
- ☐ The forms are saved in Word format, as CQC issued them. They are not turned into PDF.
- ☐ Every declaration is signed and dated on the day the pack is sent, and every signature date in the pack is the same.

Checklist 3: Statement of Purpose

- ☐ It names every regulated activity and service user band in the application, and nothing else.
- ☐ Part 3 gives the Registered Manager's full name, contact details and an address for serving notices.
- ☐ The provider phone number is exactly the same as on the application form.
- ☐ It describes the location, including any other use of the building, such as a family home.
- ☐ It explains how the service will meet the needs of each specialist band, and how people can get and use the document.
- ☐ It meets Schedule 3 of the Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009.

Checklist 4: business plan and forecast

For home care, supported living, care homes and ambulance services.

- ☐ An executive summary, the company's background, and the experience of the management team.
- ☐ Local market research that names real local competitors: who they support, what they charge and their CQC rating. General statistics about the area are not enough.
- ☐ A SWOT analysis, and who will pay for the service: local authority, NHS or private clients.
- ☐ Full prices: hourly, 45-minute and 30-minute visits, evenings, weekends, bank holidays and double-handed calls.
- ☐ A monthly profit and loss forecast for year 1 and for year 2. That is 24 separate months, with the assumptions written down.
- ☐ Every pay rate is at or above the National Living Wage for the forecast period. From 1 April 2026 this is £12.71 an hour for workers aged 21 and over.
- ☐ The organisation chart names every person and matches the forms and the governance policy. A vacant post is shown as vacant.
- ☐ The tables add up, and the rent and pay figures match the lease and the rest of the pack.
- ☐ If you used a CQC template with a sign-off section, it is signed, named and dated.

Checklist 5: premises and legal occupancy

- ☐ A lease, tenancy agreement or title deeds, valid today, naming the company that is applying.
- ☐ If you do not own the premises outright: signed and dated permission from the landlord or mortgage lender that names the type of service. Permission for general business use is not enough.
- ☐ The address is a real office. CQC does not accept virtual offices, registered-office services, PO boxes or a bedroom in someone's home.
- ☐ I have not used a Companies House confirmation statement as proof of occupancy.
- ☐ If the building work needed building regulations approval, the final certificate is in the pack. This applies from 5 May 2026.

Checklist 6: insurance and data protection

- ☐ The insurance covers both public liability and employers' liability. For home care and supported living, both are in one document.
- ☐ The policy is for the service I am applying for, not for an earlier business of the same company.
- ☐ It names the right company and the address I am registering, not a home or registered-office address.
- ☐ The quote or certificate is still in date on the day I send the pack.
- ☐ The insurer's statement of fact declares every service user band and regulated activity I am applying for.
- ☐ My ICO registration certificate is included.

Checklist 7: the policies CQC reads most closely

Safeguarding

- ☐ Covers the 10 types of abuse, including domestic abuse and modern slavery, and the signs to look for.
- ☐ Names the adult safeguarding team for every local authority area you will cover, with the direct number checked on the council's website on the day. The council switchboard number is not accepted.
- ☐ Explains how to report an allegation about the manager, and how it will be investigated fairly.
- ☐ If the Nominated Individual and the Registered Manager are the same person, it names another person inside the organisation to contact, with full details.

Consent

- ☐ Names the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and sets out all five of its principles.
- ☐ Gives the full two-stage test of capacity, and says when capacity is assessed and who assesses it.
- ☐ Covers lasting power of attorney, deputies, deprivation of liberty and advocacy inside the policy itself.
- ☐ Does not say that the Liberty Protection Safeguards are in force. They have not been brought in.

Governance

- ☐ Contains an actual organisation chart with names and job titles, not a paragraph describing it.
- ☐ Names the systems that hold care records and staff records, who can see them, and how long they are kept, using the Records Management Code of Practice 2021.
- ☐ Lists the audits you will carry out and how often.

Medicines

- ☐ All medicines content is in this one policy: assessment, levels of support, storage, refusals, PRN and covert medicines, errors and staff competence.
- ☐ Includes STOMP if you support people with a learning disability or autistic people, and STAMP if you support children.

Recruitment, complaints and equality

- ☐ The recruitment policy refers to Regulation 19 and explains what is checked at each stage, including why a person left an earlier care job.

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- ☐ The complaints policy refers to Regulations 16 and 20, gives a time limit for each stage, and explains how to complain about the manager and how to go to the Ombudsman.
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- ☐ The equality policy covers the people who use the service as well as staff, and deals with bullying and harassment inside the document.
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Training plan and service user guide

- ☐ Training is a plan for this service, not a training policy. It includes the Care Certificate, a named training provider and a refresher date for each topic.
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- ☐ It includes the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism.
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- ☐ The service user guide states the actual fees as figures, and says what the service does not offer.
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Checklist 8: final checks before you send

- ☐ No placeholders, square brackets, template notes or other company names remain in any document.
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- ☐ Every policy has a named person responsible, a creation date and a review date.
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- ☐ Every web link works. Better still, remove web addresses a reader does not need, and name the source instead.
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- ☐ Names, addresses, bands and figures are the same in the forms, the Statement of Purpose, the policies and the business plan.
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- ☐ I have opened every attachment and it contains what its file name says. No document is attached twice.
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- ☐ Documents are attached one by one, not in a zip file, and sent together in one email to HSCA_Applications@cqc.org.uk.
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Ten reasons CQC sends applications back

- 1 An old form, or a form with rows taken out.**
CQC treats a missing question as an incomplete application.
- 2 A required document is missing.**
Often the pack looks complete: one file is attached twice and another is left out.
- 3 Market research with no named competitors.**
CQC expects real local providers, their prices and their ratings.
- 4 A yearly forecast instead of monthly figures.**
CQC asks for 24 months: every month of year 1 and year 2.
- 5 A consent policy without the five principles.**
Saying that the Mental Capacity Act applies is not enough.
- 6 The wrong safeguarding number.**
CQC checks it. A council switchboard number does not count.
- 7 Insurance for the wrong trade or address.**
Or public liability only, without employers' liability.
- 8 No organisation chart in the governance policy.**
A chart in the business plan does not count, because CQC reviews each policy on its own.
- 9 Broken web links.**
A web address typed as plain text, which cannot be clicked, is also counted as broken.
- 10 Template text left behind.**
Placeholders, writing instructions or another provider's name.

The registration process, step by step

- 1 Decide your scope**
Choose the regulated activities, the service type and the service user bands. Every other document follows from this.
- 2 Set up the basics**
Company, premises with the right permissions, insurance and ICO registration.
- 3 Appoint your people**
Nominated Individual and Registered Manager. Start their DBS checks through CQC's route early.
- 4 Write the Statement of Purpose first**
Then write the policies, business plan and other documents to match it.
- 5 Complete the current forms**
Download them fresh from CQC and fill them in without changing their layout.
- 6 Check the whole pack**
Use the checklists in this guide. Check again after every change, because edits are how rows and dates go wrong.
- 7 Send everything together**
One email to HSCA_Applications@cqc.org.uk, with the documents attached one by one.
- 8 Assessment**
CQC reviews the pack and asks questions. It interviews the Registered Manager, and the Nominated Individual where needed, and may visit the premises.
- 9 Decision**
If CQC plans to refuse, or to add conditions you did not ask for, it sends a notice of proposal and you have 28 days to reply in writing. If it agrees, you receive your certificate of registration.

How long does it take?

CQC does not promise a time for new registrations. Build several months into your plan before any income arrives. A returned application goes back to the start of the queue, so a complete pack the first time is the best way to save time.

Want a second pair of eyes on your pack?

Cura Compliance UK has helped more than 100 care providers register and pass inspection. We write full registration packs, check packs you have written yourself against this list, and prepare managers for the CQC interview.

Book a free 30-minute consultation: curacompliance.co.uk/cqc-registration-free-consultation

CQC registration support:

curacompliance.co.uk/cqc-registration-support-expert-help-for-healthcare-providers-in-england

CuraFlow Registration: your whole application in one place: curaflow.net/registration

Sources

CQC: Supporting documents for your application (cqc.org.uk), checked September 2026

CQC: Provider and registered manager application forms (cqc.org.uk), checked September 2026

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)

Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009, Schedule 3 (legislation.gov.uk)

Mental Capacity Act 2005 (legislation.gov.uk)

National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates, April 2026 (gov.uk)

This guide is general information based on published guidance as at September 2026. It is not legal advice. Requirements depend on your service, and CQC can change them. Always check the current requirements with CQC before you apply. Copyright 2026 Cura Compliance UK. You may share this guide as long as you do not change it.