



Display of ratings

**A guide for care providers on
how to display ratings**

March 2015

The Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.

Our purpose

We make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care and we encourage care services to improve.

Our role

We monitor, inspect and regulate services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety and we publish what we find, including performance ratings to help people choose care.

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Introduction

The public has a right to know how care services are performing. To help them to do this, the Government has introduced a [requirement for providers to display CQC ratings](#). The ratings are designed to improve transparency by providing people who use services, and the public, with a clear statement about the quality and safety of care provided. The ratings tell the public whether a service is outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate.

The guidance details the following points:

- If you have been awarded a CQC rating (outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate) you must display it in each and every premises where a regulated activity is being delivered, in your main place of business and on your website(s) if you have any, where people will be sure to see it. This is a legal requirement from 1 April 2015.
- Your ratings must be displayed at the premises where your service is being provided unless you are delivering care to someone in their own home.
- CQC will assess whether or not your ratings are displayed legibly and conspicuously – not doing so may result in a fine and may impact on future inspection ratings.
- CQC will make posters for physical display of your ratings available to download from our website. Using our posters will ensure that you include all the information as set out in the Regulation.
- You must display your rating online if you have a website(s). You can use the CQC templates for online display to help you do so. These are available from www.cqc.org.uk/ratingsdisplaytoolkit.
- Services regulated by CQC, but which are not awarded a rating (for example dentists), are exempt from this requirement.
- You have a maximum of 21 calendar days to display your ratings from the date your inspection report is published on the CQC website.

This guidance describes how you can meet the Regulation. However you are ultimately responsible for meeting the Regulation and deciding how to do this. If registered providers and managers do not follow this guidance, we will ask you to provide evidence that your alternative approach still enables you to meet the requirements of the Regulation.

What must I do?

From 1 April 2015, if you have been awarded CQC ratings you must display them in each and every premises where a regulated activity is being delivered, in your main place of business and on your website(s) if you have any. This includes community premises and other premises which might not necessarily be registered with CQC (for example, premises from which you provide occasional clinics and therefore may not be registered with us as separate locations). You must always display your most up-to-date ratings.

Ratings must be displayed legibly and conspicuously to make sure the public, and in particular the people who use your services, can see them.

We also encourage you to raise awareness of your most recent ratings when communicating with people who use your services, by letter, email or other means.

What do I have to do for the physical display of ratings?

What to display

CQC will make poster(s) populated with your most up-to-date ratings available for download from our website. Using our posters will ensure that you include all the information as set out in the Regulation.

CQC inspectors will refer to the CQC poster(s) when making their decision about whether your ratings display complies with the Regulation. In other words, the CQC poster(s) will be considered as the benchmark. If you decide not to use the CQC poster(s) then you will be required to demonstrate that what you do use is at least as conspicuous and legible as the CQC poster.

As outlined in the table below, most providers will have 1 or 2 posters. NHS acute and ambulance services will have three.

	CQC poster types		
Provider type	Provider poster	Premises poster	Activity poster (core services / population groups)
Description	Overall rating and five key questions	Overall rating and five key questions	Overall rating and five key questions (if available) for each activity
Example posters			<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Core services </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Population groups </div> </div>
Acute hospital (NHS)	✓*	✓	✓
Acute hospital (independent)	X	✓	✓
Mental health (NHS)	✓	X	✓
Mental health (independent)	X	✓	✓
GP practice	X	✓	✓
GP out-of-hours service(s)	X	✓	X
Residential social care and hospice service(s)	X	✓	X
Community-based adult social care service(s), supported living service(s), Shared Lives	X	✓	X
Community service(s)	✓	X	✓
Ambulance service (NHS)	✓*	✓	✓

* Poster will be available for your service type but you only need to display in certain circumstances

At each premises you must show the ratings that relate to the service(s) provided at that location.

Premises poster

- This should **always** be displayed at the premises it relates to.
- This is the only poster you need to display in adult social care.

Provider poster

- This should **always** be displayed if there is no premises level poster (for example, for community or mental health providers).
- This should also be displayed if a premises level poster is not relevant (for example, at an NHS trust head office where that office is not in a rated location).

Activity poster (core services / population groups)

- This should **always** be displayed alongside either the premises poster or the provider poster.
- If you provide more than 12 core/specialist services this poster will be split over two pages to ensure it is legible. If you use our posters we expect both pages to be displayed.

To ensure they are conspicuous, we expect posters will be printed in colour and at a minimum size of A4. However, in some premises you may need to print the posters larger than A4 in order to ensure the poster is conspicuous.

In addition to displaying the CQC poster, we strongly encourage you to consider the specific information requirements of the people using your service and, where appropriate, display additional information (alongside, but not instead of the CQC poster) that supports people using your service to fully understand the CQC ratings.

All posters produced by CQC will include a space for you to tell people how they can find out more about how you are improving, or what you have changed, since the ratings were published. You must only write within the box provided, but can provide additional information next to the poster as long as it does not detract from it.

Where to display

You must physically display your ratings in each and every premises where a regulated activity is being delivered, and in your main place of business. This includes community premises and other locations which might not necessarily be registered with CQC (for example, premises from which you provide occasional clinics and therefore may not be registered with us as separate locations).

In premises where several registered providers operate, it is up to each provider to ensure that their ratings are displayed when they are providing regulated activities to the public.

If you are delivering care to someone in their own home, where that accommodation is not provided as part of their care or treatment, you are exempt from the requirement to physically display the CQC ratings in that location. It must, however, be displayed online if you have a website(s).

The sections below clarify what we expect from different types of providers.

Providers of other services which have received CQC ratings, but which are not explicitly named below, must still display their ratings where they will be seen in any physical premises that are visited, or may be visited, by members of the public (as well as on your website).

Hospitals

We expect you will display your posters at the main entrance(s) to each hospital where as many people as possible are able to see them.

If you provide a community-based service it is your responsibility to ensure that the poster is visible to people who use that service when they come to use it.

If you provide a specialist service from a location that has not been rated, but have been given an overall provider rating, you must display your overall provider rating.

In NHS hospitals you are only required to show the overall trust rating (CQC provider poster) if no other rating has been received in relation to the premises.

It is not a requirement, but you may wish to consider displaying additional posters showing your ratings at the entrances to wards/clinics where core services are delivered.

Mental health and community health services

We expect you will display your poster(s) at the main entrance(s) to all premises where you provide a regulated activity, where as many people as possible are able to see them.

If some of the people who use your services do not have access to the entrance (for example, on a locked ward) you must display the poster somewhere people who use that service can see it (for example on a notice board in the ward).

If you provide a community-based service it is your responsibility to ensure that the poster is visible to people who use that service when they come to use it.

If you provide a specialist service that has not been rated, but have been given an overall provider rating, you must display your overall provider rating and core service ratings.

It is not a requirement, but you may wish to consider displaying additional posters showing your ratings at the entrances to all wards / clinics where core services are delivered.

GP practices

We expect that you will display your poster(s) in the waiting area or where as many people as possible are able to see it.

Care homes and hospices

We expect that you will display your poster at the main entrance to the home and/or where as many people as possible are able to see it, including people who use the service.

Home care agencies, supported living services, Shared Lives, community services, GP out-of-hours services, ambulances and substance misuse services

We expect you to display your ratings at each and every premises from which you provide a regulated activity, and your main place of business.

If your main place of business is your own home, and people who use services do not visit it, you are exempt from the requirement to physically display the CQC ratings there, although you are still required to display your rating on your website(s) if you have one.

If you are delivering care to someone in their own home (which includes supported living and Shared Lives) you are exempt from the requirement to physically display the CQC ratings in that person's home. This is because that accommodation is not provided as part of their care or treatment.

Vehicles are not considered to be premises.

In addition to the display of ratings requirement, as part of our approach for community adult social care services we send providers a copy of the overall summary of the inspection report to share with the people that use the service and the staff who work there. We consider this best practice.

What do I have to do for the online display of ratings?

We have developed the **CQC rating widget** and the **CQC rating template** to help you display your rating online. You can access these materials from www.cqc.org.uk/ratingsdisplaytoolkit.

We strongly recommend that you use these materials to support your online display of your rating, as they will ensure that you include all the required information and that it is conspicuous and legible. However it is not a requirement to do so.

If you choose not to use the CQC materials, your website(s) must still include:

- The name of the rated service.
- All provider and premises ratings awarded by CQC. This information could be on different webpages if you have separate pages for different premises.
- CQC's website address (www.cqc.org.uk) and a link to the location on CQC's website where the assessment and ratings of the provider's performance may be accessed.
- The date the inspection report was published.

We encourage you to also include the CQC logo.

You should display your rating on the main homepage of your website(s), or appropriate landing page(s) where as many people as possible looking for information about the service will see it, even if they are not specifically looking for ratings.

General principles for where to put your ratings on your website are as follows:

1. **Website(s)**

- You must put your ratings on every website that you operate that describes the services you offer.

2. **Webpage(s)**

- The overriding principle is to place your ratings on a permanent page(s) that the public (people who use services or those acting on their behalf) frequently visit.
- Wherever possible, place ratings on a context-specific page. For example, a hospital rating should be included on the main page for that hospital. If you don't have premises specific pages, you are still required to display your premises ratings. You should identify other appropriate pages that meet the principles outlined here.
- The ratings should be on a page that can be reached via the main navigation. Pages that can only be reached by using a web search facility are not conspicuous.
- When placing the ratings on a page, put it above the fold so that the user does not need to scroll down to see it.

When do I have to display my ratings?

You must display your ratings no later than 21 calendar days after it has been published on CQC's website. This applies even if you have submitted a request for a review of ratings. This is in line with CQC's approach to publishing inspection reports.

You may add a note to your display of ratings to explain that you have submitted a request for review. However, the ratings must remain legible and conspicuous.

Are there any exemptions?

Any service that receives an overall rating from CQC is required to display it in line with this guidance document. This includes both NHS and other providers registered with CQC.

Providers not rated by CQC are exempt from this Regulation. They currently include:

- Dentists (unless dentistry is provided by a trust)
- Prison healthcare services
- Children's services not registered with CQC
- Independent doctors or independent primary care
- Independent psychiatrists
- IVF clinics
- NHS blood and transplant services.

How will the new Regulation be enforced?

If we assess that your rating is not displayed legibly and conspicuously, or it has been displayed inaccurately (for example, it does not reflect your most recent ratings or does not contain all the information required) we will discuss this with you. We will tell you why we think it is not meeting the Regulation and ask you to take appropriate action.

It is a legal requirement to display CQC ratings. If appropriate steps are not taken by you, we may take enforcement action, such as (but not limited to) imposing a fixed penalty notice. Examples of when we may take enforcement action include:

- When the rating is not displayed at all – either online or within your premises.
- When it is displayed illegibly or inconspicuously and you refuse our request to display it legibly or conspicuously.

Action taken would be in line with our [Enforcement policy](#).

Supporting improvement

If you have been rated inadequate or requires improvement, you are encouraged to display information about what you are doing to improve your service alongside your ratings.

All posters produced by CQC will include a space for you to tell people how they can find out more about how you are improving, or what you have changed, since the rating was published. We strongly encourage those rated requires improvement and inadequate to use this box. You must only write within the box provided, but can provide additional information next to the poster as long as it does not detract from it.

Celebrating excellence

In addition to meeting the legal requirements we actively encourage you to celebrate your rating if you are rated outstanding or good.

There are a number of other ways to publicise your ratings to people using your service and the wider community. This includes placing your rating on appointment letters, displaying banners advertising your rating at your premises and highlighting it through local media.

How to contact us

Call us on: **03000 616161**

Email us at: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Look at our website: www.cqc.org.uk

Write to us at: **Care Quality Commission
Citygate
Gallowgate
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