

News story: Independent doctors to be rated by the Care Quality Commission

New changes mean that, for the first time, all healthcare organisations in England that offer regulated care will be rated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Organisations will have to display their inspection ratings so patients can clearly see safety standards.

The CQC's current ratings programme – which covers hospital care, social care and GPs – will be extended to include more than 800 additional providers. This includes independent doctors that offer primary care online.

The CQC will require providers affected by these changes to publicly display their rating, for instance on their website or business premises. This will allow patients to make an informed choice when deciding which care service they want to use.

The ratings scheme has been 'future-proofed' to cover services that may develop in the future. It will ensure that new services are also given a rating.

The changes will bring the services in line with the rest of the NHS. It will reassure patients who use digital GP apps provided by independent doctors about the quality and safety of the service they are choosing.

The CQC will now develop an approach for how it will rate the additional services. The CQC will continue to inspect these services and publish its findings in the meantime.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

With our NHS now in its 70th year, we are planning ahead to guarantee safer and better care for patients in the years to come. These changes are a world first for patient safety, modernising our tough Ofsted-style inspection scheme so we keep pace with the changing landscape of healthcare, as well as helping tech-savvy patients to make informed decisions about their care.

Sir David Behan, Chief Executive of the Care Quality Commission, said:

CQC's ratings of health and care services are helping people to make informed choices about their care as well as supporting providers to improve. Never before has the public had such clear information about the quality and safety of their health and care services.

CQC already inspects and publishes reports for these additional

services. The ability to award ratings to them will bring increased transparency for the public about the quality and safety of their healthcare.

We look forward to taking this work forward in the new year.