

## **NEWS STORY**

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### **CQC responds to increased pressure on health and social care by pausing some routine inspections**

CQC has taken the decision to pause some routine inspections of NHS acute services, GP practices and urgent care services planned for January. This is in response to increased pressure on the health and care system as services cope with additional demand driven in part by a rise in respiratory illness and flu.

#### **Sir David Behan, Chief Executive of CQC, said:**

“As we highlighted in our State of Care report, the entire health and social care system is at full stretch - now an increase in respiratory illness and flu has further intensified this pressure. To support the system as much as possible, we are rescheduling some routine inspections of services. This is to allow frontline staff and leaders to focus on continuing to ensure that people receive safe, high-quality care during this period of increased demand.

“However, inspections scheduled in response to concerns about quality or safety will go ahead as planned. These include those that are in response to new information, as well as those to follow up on previously identified concerns.

“We will always act in the best interests of people who use services – so while it’s appropriate to recognise the need for staff to focus on patient care at this particularly busy time, we must balance this with our responsibility to check that increased pressure doesn’t result in deterioration in the quality of care. We will continue to monitor performance very closely and will act to protect people if necessary.

‘It is important to reiterate that these pressures do not originate with and are not restricted to Emergency Departments, or to NHS acute trusts. As we set out in the interim findings from our first six local system reviews, this is a whole system issue, which demands a whole system response.

“The long-term solution must be for health and care providers and commissioners to collaborate to provide health and social care services that meet the needs of their local population, with a stronger focus on keeping people well and helping them stay out of hospital, and on reducing variation that can inhibit people’s access to and choice of services.”

- For the remainder of January, consideration will be given to rescheduling planned routine inspections of acute NHS Trusts, based on individual Trust circumstances. Responsive inspections which have been scheduled based on concerns about quality or safety will continue as usual.
- There will be a temporary pause in re-inspections of GP practices and urgent services (including NHS 111, GP out of hours and urgent care centres) rated

good or outstanding where there is no information to indicate concerns about quality or safety. Re-inspections of services rated requires improvement or inadequate will continue as scheduled, while inspection to follow up on concerns will be unaffected.

- The majority of Adult Social Care inspections are carried out on an unannounced basis in response to risk and to follow up concerns. As such, the planned inspection schedule will not change but will be kept under constant review and if CQC receive a notification of a flu or norovirus outbreak at a location it will be amended accordingly.
- A normal inspection schedule is expected to resume in February but this will be subject to review based on close monitoring of system performance. Any inspections deferred during January will be rescheduled as soon as possible. Providers will be contacted directly about any changes to planned inspections

**ENDS**