

As a social care provider, you may have a lot of questions regarding audits and their impact on your operations. In this article, we aim to address some of the most commonly asked questions.

## **What is an audit?**

A tool that uses a set of agreed best practice standards to measure the effectiveness of an activity or process and identify what actions may be needed to improve the effectiveness of the activity or process.

## **How many audits do care homes conduct a month?**

This varies greatly, anywhere between 5 and 25. Or more depending on the size and nature of the service.

## **Who is normally responsible for audits?**

The manager is ultimately responsible. They may delegate the completion of specific audits, or audit actions to members of their team.

## **Is good governance the only CQC Regulation audits sit within?**

Reg 17 Good governance is the one most relevant to audit but this regulation features in every Key Question.

## **What's the difference between an audit and a risk assessment?**

A risk assessment identifies the risk is and puts measures in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. A risk assessment should be reviewed at regular intervals, or if an event occurs that is relevant to the risk assessed. This is to ensure that the risk assessment remains effective.

For example, the service users fall risk assessment would be reviewed monthly, but also after any time the service user has had a fall.

An audit uses a set of agreed best practice standards to measure the effectiveness of an activity or process and identify what actions may be needed to improve the effectiveness of the activity or process. The need for a risk assessment to be in place would be highlighted in an audit standard.

## **When should an audit be carried out?**

The Manager or Operations Manager will decide which audits need to be done as well as how often.

When the audit is due, the person responsible for completing it must do so, in the required timescale, otherwise, the audit is missed for that period. Once complete any actions needed must be documented and given ownership and timescale for completion. The audit will then be repeated to ensure all actions are completed and any new ones are identified. It is a continuous and ongoing process.

There are no set lists of audits or timescales dictated by the regulator. Under Regulation 17, it states:

'To meet this regulation; providers must have effective governance, including assurance and auditing systems or processes. These must assess, monitor and drive improvement in the quality and safety of the services provided, including the quality of the experience for people using the service. The systems and processes must also assess, monitor and mitigate any risks relating the health, safety and welfare of people using services and others. Providers must continually evaluate and seek to improve their governance and auditing practice'

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulation-17-good-governance>

### **What happens if an audit is missed?**

This is a red flag to CQC and will be seen as non-compliance. If it occurs the provider must complete it immediately, document findings and explain how any risks or harms have been managed. They should also demonstrate what actions they have put in place to ensure audits are not missed again.

[Want to know more about audit? Visit QCS Audit Centre](#)