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Q&A GUIDE

The CQC Fit Person Interview

Introduction

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) fit person interview is a source of much anxiety for prospective registered managers of social care, GP and dental services providers.

As a registered manager you have joint legal liability with the registered provider for the quality and safety of the services provided. This applies to the specific regulated activities at the specific locations given in the registered manager application. Clearly, such an undertaking is not to be taken lightly.

Every registered manager must undergo a fit person interview to assess their suitability. As a result of the high level of responsibility and the CQC's need to ensure standards, it is easy to form the impression that this is no easy ride. However, the simple purpose of the fit person interview is to verify the information outlined in the application and to check that the applicant is fit to be registered.

We are here to help you to quash any fears had about what may happen at such an interview. This Q&A guide helps provide you with an indication of what to expect and offers hints and tips to help you thoroughly prepare for a CQC interview.

1. How long does a fit person interview last?

CQC may quote 2-3 hours for a fit person interview. Much of this assessment process is subjective; it's not a test to complete X questions in Y minutes, so there are no hard and fast rules. Realistically, for most applicants, the assessor should be able to gather enough information to enable a decision to be made in 1-2 hours.

2. Where do I have to go for the interview?

CQC fit person interviews are generally held on-site at the service provider's premises or on the telephone if this is appropriate. They may also be held face-to-face at a CQC regional office.

3. Am I going to be quizzed on the legislation?

It is unlikely that really detailed knowledge of legislation will be required; however, an understanding of how legislation relates to CQC compliance requirements is wise, including the name of the legislative instrument or Act.

4. Is detailed knowledge required of CQC compliance?

It is unrealistic to expect every candidate for registered manager to know every detail of the CQC compliance requirement inside out. However, a broad familiarisation with the scope of compliance and a good knowledge of essential outcomes should be regarded as the minimum level knowledge requirement. To achieve this candidates should ensure that they are familiar with the regulations as well as the assessment framework.

5. Is my background important?

The CQC objective is to determine that you are the right person to be responsible for care services that look after the welfare of adults at risk. The CQC will certainly regard your background as very important, particularly the need for an unblemished record.

6. Do I need a background in care?

Experience in the care sector is important; however, this does not need to be decades long. Candidates should maximise the opportunity to appropriately relate their experience of working within care environments wherever possible. Good managerial or supervisory skills are readily transferable from other sectors providing they are tempered with some experience of the care sector.

7. Are my motivations relevant?

The motivations of prospective registered managers are of great interest to CQC. The role may be challenging, and requires sensitivity, tact and understanding. The CQC want to be sure that you are a person with suitable values and the appropriate ethos to lead and manage a setting that serves others.

8. Are my personal values of any importance?

Personal values and beliefs are central to determining who is a fit person to be a registered manager. Expect to be asked questions on such matters. Attitudes to equality and diversity will always certainly be tackled and may be the launch pad for an expansive conversation around how the applicant intends to support people to live the life they choose.

9. Are my formal qualifications adequate?

Registered managers in social care

The current registered manager's qualification in England is the RQF Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care. Applicants may be in the process of working towards the qualification rather than already holding it.

This Diploma is designed for individuals working with adults and children across all social care settings as either managers or senior practitioners. There is a unit-based approach for selecting Residential and Non-Residential pathway options.

Level 2-3 Diplomas in Health and Social Care qualify holders for non-managerial roles and are a stepping stone to the higher qualification. Holders of older versions of qualifications should carefully check equivalence.

Registered managers in GPs and dentists

For GP and dental service providers registered managers need to be suitably qualified and competent persons to oversee delivering GP and dental services.

10. Are there any good ways to prepare?

Ask a co-worker or a mentor to put some hypothetical situations to you and ask you how you would act. Such scenarios allow you to bring different elements of your training, knowledge and experience together.

11. Are there any topics of particular importance?

All areas are important, however, don't just focus on the personalised care and support side of the services for which you will have responsibility; think about other areas too such

as HR issues like recruitment, disciplinary procedures and training as well as important subjects such as safeguarding, health and safety and Quality Assurance.

12. Do I have to accept the decision of the interviewer as final?

The fit person interview is not a test or an exam that the applicant passes or fails. Matters may be re-visited and assessed outside of the interview.

The outcome of an unsuccessful application process is given as a Notice of proposal to refuse registration, or as a Notice of proposal to register with conditions.

If the applicant disagrees with the Notice, representations may be made at a hearing. If the hearing outcome is unsatisfactory, it is possible to appeal against the resulting Notice of Decision to the First-tier Tribunal.

Following a successful registration, a certificate will be issued electronically via email to the applicant.