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The Care Quality Commission changes the way they schedule GP practice inspections

Michelle Golden, the Head of General Practice Inspections for London at the Care Quality Commission (CQC), recently informed us of a change to the way they schedule their inspections of NHS GP practices.

Current approach

A team of inspectors visits a number of practices within a single Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) area during a four week period. The inspectors then return later to inspect other practices. This approach was initially driven by an expectation that the CQC could publish reports in batches linked to a CCG area and provide feedback to Area Teams and CCGs about findings for a group of inspections.

New approach

From October 2015, every CCG will have an allocated inspector who will carry out the majority of inspections in that area and the inspections will be scheduled throughout the year. Practices will still receive two weeks' notice of their inspection. The CQC believes that this change will support closer working relationships between named inspectors and the CCGs in managing risk, as well as inspectors having an ongoing relationship with the practices they inspect.

The CQC feel that this change in the way that they schedule their inspections will lead to an improvement in the way their inspection team work with commissioners. The named inspector will be in regular contact with the CCG to share information about the inspection programme. The Inspection Manager will, as now, be the primary contact for the NHS England Area Team but will include the inspector in key meetings before and after inspections.

The inspection manager responsible for the inspection programme in your area will contact you by the end of August to confirm who the named inspector will be for your CCG. In the meantime if you have any questions please contact Michelle Golden at the CQC (Michelle.Golden@cqc.org.uk).