



EXECUTIVE CANDIDATE PACK

CQC Company
Secretary
(Req 2862)

Letter from Chris Usher, Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services

Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the national role of **Company Secretary (also acting as Director of Governance & Assurance)** at the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This is an important and exciting time for CQC.

As we continue to strengthen our governance, assurance and regulatory frameworks, we are looking for an exceptional senior leader to help us meet the evolving needs of the health and social care sector. Our commitment to transparency, integrity and excellence guides everything we do, and we are seeking a highly capable and values-driven individual to play a central role in shaping how we operate.

In this role, you will serve as CQC's senior governance leader and a strategic partner to the Chair, Chief Executive and Executive Team. You will safeguard the organisation's constitutional integrity, lead high-quality Board and committee governance, and provide authoritative oversight of our assurance, risk and compliance frameworks.

You will also play a key role in ensuring our decision-making, delegation and accountability arrangements are robust, evidence-based and aligned with best practice.

We are looking for a candidate with significant senior leadership experience in governance, assurance or company secretariat roles, ideally within a large, complex or high-profile organisation. You will bring a strong understanding of statutory and regulatory frameworks, proven experience of supporting Board-level governance, and the confidence to influence and advise senior stakeholders at the highest levels.

Your ability to interpret complex information, exercise sound judgement and lead with integrity will be essential to your success.

At CQC, we are proud of our values—**Excellence, Caring, Integrity and Teamwork**—and we expect our senior leaders to embody these every day. You will be someone who builds trust through authenticity, champions inclusion, and fosters a culture of collaboration, accountability and continuous improvement.

Thank you once again for your interest. I look forward to receiving your application and to welcoming the successful candidate to our leadership team.

With best wishes,

Chris Usher, Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services

About CQC

The Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. We make sure that health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care, and encourage services to improve.

Our role

- Register care providers.
- Monitor, inspect and rate services.
- Take action to protect people who use services.
- Speak with our independent voice, publishing our views on major quality issues in health and social care.



Excellence

We pursue high standards to improve our efficiency and effectiveness.

This requires us to be:

Insight-led Proportionate Innovative



Caring

We recognise the value of every person.

This requires us to be:

Just Compassionate Respectful

We always

- Protect the rights of vulnerable people, including those restricted under the Mental Health Act.
- Listen to and act on people's experience.
- Involve the public and people who receive care.
- Work with other organisations and public groups.



Integrity

We are honest and always seek to do what is right.

This requires us to be:

Transparent Accountable Impartial



Teamwork

We work together across teams, organisations and systems.

This requires us to be:

Collaborative Inclusive Fair

Our Interim Chief Executive & Chair

OUR INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Dr Arun Chopra

Prior to joining CQC, Arun was the Medical Director of the assurance organisation for mental health services in Scotland and is passionate about joining up pathways to create an accessible service for all and joined CQC to drive forward that improvement.

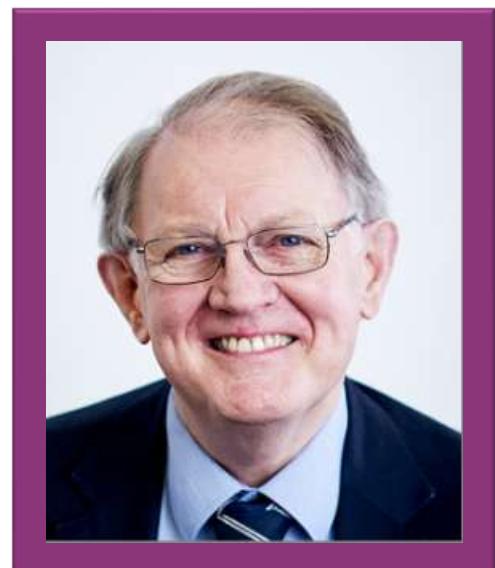


Dr Arun Chopra, holds the substantive role of Chief Inspector of Mental Health and was appointed as interim Chief Executive Office in October 2025.

OUR CHAIR

Professor Sir Mike Richards

Mike was an academic cancer physician specialising largely in breast cancer before being appointed as England's first National Cancer Director in 1999.



After 13 years in that role, he was appointed as the first Chief Inspector of Hospitals at the Care Quality Commission, where he led the development and implementation of a new approach to inspecting, rating and regulating hospitals, mental health, community and ambulance services.



Current context

We are changing how we regulate to improve care for everyone

In the recent times, four important reviews were undertaken into how CQC works. These reviews were:

1. The final report of Dr Penny Dash's review
2. The first report of the review commissioned by CQC from Professor Sir Mike Richards
3. The review from the Care Provider Alliance (CPA) into [the single assessment framework](#)
4. An [independent review](#) into our systems

The outcomes of these reviews have played an important role in helping to set the future direction of CQC. They have reaffirmed the support for a robust health and care regulator, and recognised the dedication and experience of CQC staff.

How we plan to take action

Following the outcomes of our consultation, we plan to make changes to improve the following areas:

Improving our assessment framework

- Describing our expectations of quality for all our rating levels.
- Reducing duplication and making our assessment frameworks more sector-specific, simpler and clearer.
- Publishing more detailed supporting guidance that shows the key standards and sources of evidence that we will consider for the services in that sector.

How we make judgements and award ratings

- Simplifying our rating approach and strengthening the role of professional judgement.
- Supporting our inspection teams to deliver timely and expert inspections, publish impactful reports and develop strong relationships with providers.
- Improving information technology and our data and insight.

(continued on next page)

Context continued

Having the right IT systems and tools to support our regulatory activity

- The findings from [the independent review of our technology](#) are helping us to identify these. We will improve how we collect, analyse and publish data to ensure we can identify regulatory risks and insights for improvement, and ensure our reporting is accurate, timely, and insightful. This includes improving the experience for providers registering with us. We will also identify the next steps for how we can improve the quality and consistency of data.

A skilled specialist inspection workforce

- Through specialist leadership around the sectors we regulate, and our commitment to our people, we aim to continue to develop the skills of our workforce, with expertise in sectors, regulatory methods and relational skills.

We aim to implement these improvements alongside direction set through the government's [10 Year Health Plan for England](#). We will continue to make ongoing improvements to our local authority assessments and strengthen our focus on nationally agreed priorities.

In this next phase of our development, we are working with providers, colleagues, people who use services, local government and wider stakeholders to develop a plan on how we implement these changes and make sure we are realistic about what can be delivered by when.

In July 2025 the Department of Health and Social Care published its review of patient safety across the health and care landscape. This focuses on the broader landscape of health and care arm's length bodies and explores how we can better work with our partners. We understand that this widely informed the government's 10 Year Health Plan, and we will take forward its recommendations to focus on streamlining the patient safety landscape and improving accountability.

Additional reading

[Our Board](#)

[Re-Building a trusted approach to our regulation](#)

[The state of health care and adult social care in England 2024/25](#)

[Evaluation findings on assessor and inspector roles](#)

[Monitoring the Mental Health Act](#)



Our teams

How we deliver our purpose through our directorates

Led by one of our 4 Chief Inspectors, our **operational teams** deliver operational policy and provide sector expertise in the following sector-specific teams: **Hospitals, Adult Social Care and Integrated Care, Mental Health and Primary and Community Care.**

They help to shape and set the direction of policy and practice across their sector and respond to emerging issues and thematic work.

They also help to develop CQC's approach to how we assess, make judgements and award ratings, and oversee how this is implemented. This applies both to health and care providers in both the NHS and the independent sector.

They build relationships with providers, as well as key national and local groups, to listen to the voices of people who use services to improve our processes for registration and assessment, and to understand risk across health and care, and they work collaboratively to develop a single shared view of quality.

Corporate Services

They ensure CQC is supported with highly effective corporate and customer services that keep our people at the centre of everything we do – while maintaining value for money from our resource. They drive continuous improvement and ensure that our purpose, values and behaviours are embedded in all aspects of service delivery.

Digital, Data and Registration

This includes our Technology, Data & Insight, and Registration functions. To deliver a modern, intelligence-led regulatory model, our IT systems need appropriate functionality to support our internal colleagues as well as providers and stakeholders. This supports our regulatory functions, including our assessment and registration process. We are also examining how the data and insights that we generate from our regulatory work can be shared in a better way to enable providers and other stakeholders to use it to support improvements in health and care.



Our teams continued

Engagement, Policy and Strategy

Our Engagement team ensures CQC communicates and engages on what matters most to our audiences. They drive our engagement nationally and regionally with the public, colleagues, providers and other stakeholders to keep people informed and improve how we regulate.

Our Policy and Strategy teams develop high-quality policies and strategies that enable CQC to regulate services effectively to encourage improvement in the quality of care, meet our equality and human rights obligations, and influence CQC's future role in the health and social care system.



Your team explained

Team information

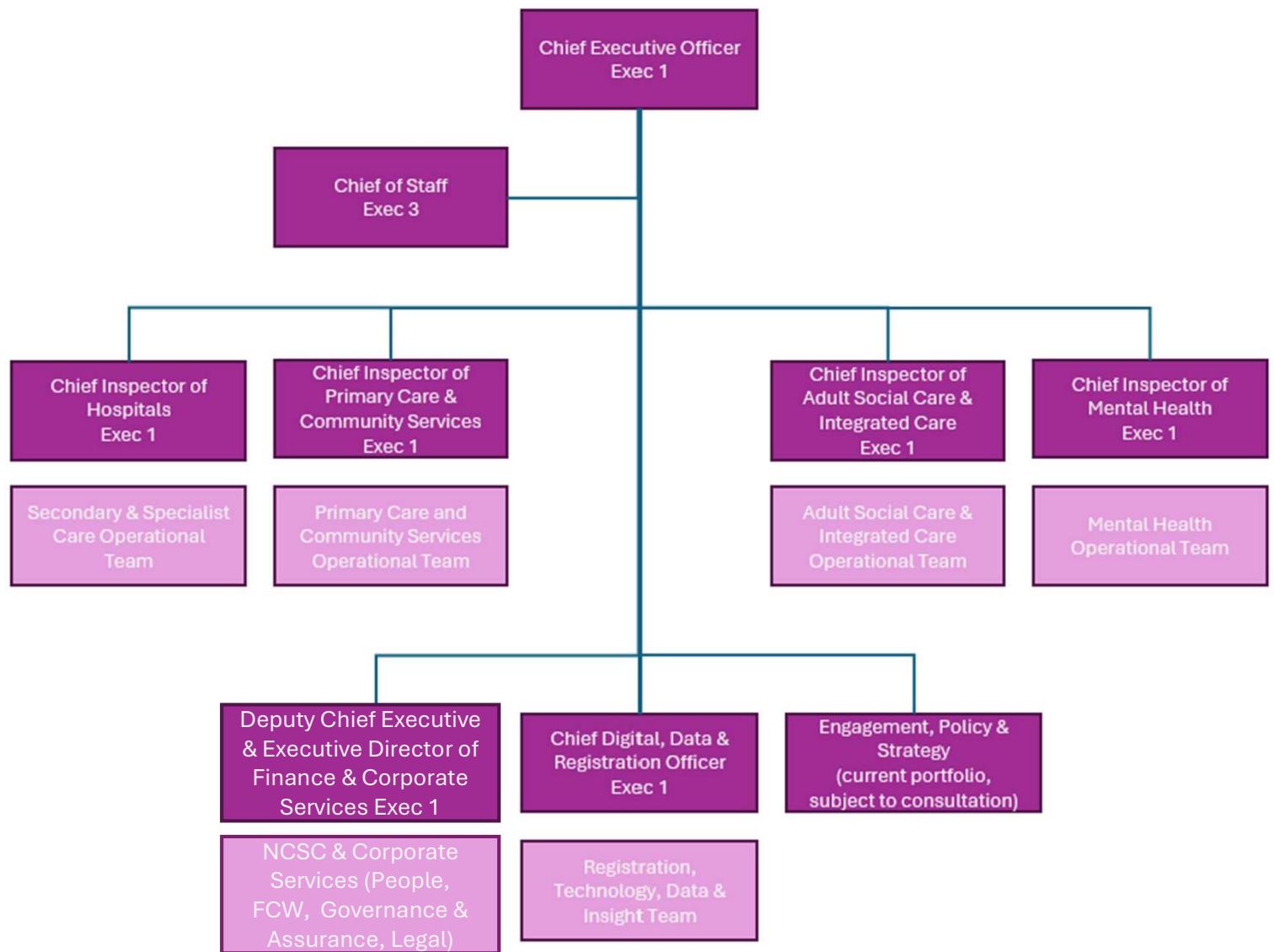
Governance and Assurance

This directorate brings together the Secretariat, Corporate Governance, Ratings Review, Complaints, Risk and Assurance teams.

These teams aim to strengthen our approach to CQC's governance and assurance.

The vacancy of Company Secretary leads this directorate and is part of the Corporate Services senior leadership team.

Executive structure



Accountabilities

Corporate Governance & Secretariat

- Act as principal governance adviser to the Chair, Chief Executive and Board.
- Maintain and safeguard CQC's governance framework, ensuring alignment with statutory requirements, the CQC Framework Agreement, Government Functional Standards and all Board-approved governance documents.
- Lead the Board and committee governance cycle, ensuring high-quality secretariat support, disciplined forward planning and effective decision-making.
- As Company Secretary, oversee Board and committee effectiveness reviews, induction, development and ongoing support for all Board members.
- Maintain the Scheme of Delegation, ensuring clarity of authority and disciplined application across the organisation.
- Oversee the management of conflicts of interest, codes of conduct, registers and ethical governance arrangements.
- Ensure transparent publication of Board papers, minutes, registers and statutory disclosures.

Organisational Assurance & Risk Management

- Lead CQC's assurance and risk frameworks, ensuring they provide clear, evidence-based insight to the Board and Executive Team.
- Design and deliver a comprehensive corporate assurance programme, ensuring risks are identified, mitigated and managed within appetite.
- Provide assurance on the effectiveness of internal controls and compliance systems.
- Drive a culture of continuous improvement in assurance, quality and performance oversight.

Internal Audit & Control

- Oversee the relationship with CQC's Internal Audit function, ensuring internal audit activity is well-planned, risk aligned and integrated into the corporate assurance framework.
- Work with the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee to ensure findings are acted upon and controls strengthened.
- Provide expert advice on governance, risk and control matters to senior leaders.

Accountabilities

Statutory, Regulatory & Corporate Compliance

- Ensure CQC meets all statutory and regulatory obligations, including ensuring independent assurance over information governance, data protection, transparency and public accountability requirements.
- Lead the governance elements of the Annual Report and Governance Statement.
- Ensure compliance with DHSC directions, Cabinet Office requirements and ALB reporting obligations.

Stakeholder Engagement & Government Relations

- Act as a key interface with DHSC, other ALBs, regulators and government bodies on governance matters.
- Build strong internal and external partnerships to share learning and embed best practice.
- Provide clear, timely communication to the Board, Executive Team and senior leaders on governance and issues.

Leadership & Directorate Management

- Lead the governance and assurance directorate, fostering a culture of empowerment, inclusion, trust and high performance.
- Ensure resources are used effectively, delivering value for money and operational excellence.
- Deputise for the Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services as required.

The role continued

What are we looking for?

Experience and Expertise:

- Senior leadership experience in governance, assurance or company secretariat roles within a complex, high-profile organisation.
- Deep knowledge of statutory and regulatory frameworks relevant to public bodies and ALBs.
- Proven experience of Board and committee governance, risk management, internal control and assurance frameworks.
- Experience of working with or supporting Board-level audit and risk committees.
- Strong track record of building trusted relationships with senior stakeholders, including government departments.
- Ability to interpret complex information and provide clear, concise recommendations.

Leadership & Personal Qualities:

- Inspiring, resilient and inclusive leader who builds high-performing teams.
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to influence at the highest levels.
- High integrity, sound judgement and the courage to challenge constructively.
- Strategic thinker with agility and clarity in a fast-moving political and organisational environment.

Qualifications:

- Degree or recognised professional qualification in governance, law, business administration, finance or a related field (or equivalent experience).
- Governance or company secretariat accreditation is desirable.

Terms and conditions

Contract Type: Permanent

Location: Home-based, with travel to meetings, CQC offices and providers as required

Salary: £95,000 - £113,625 per annum





Recruitment timeline

The recruitment and selection process

Timetable

Advert closing date:	23 rd February 2026 at 11.59pm
Shortlisting	Wc 9 th March 2026
Assessments	Tbc between 18 th – 23 rd March 2026
Final interview	1 st / 2 nd April 2026 in CQC Newcastle Office

Application instructions

To apply for this role, please submit a copy of your CV and Supporting Statement (no more than 750-words) via the Recruitment System.



Panel information

Panel

- Chris Usher, Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services
- Dr Arun Chopra, Interim Chief Executive
- TBC, Additional Panel Member
- TBC, Independent Panel Member

Independent panel members

The role of an independent panel member (IPM) is crucial to supporting our Diversity and Inclusion strategy and a key part of ensuring our recruitment process is fair, open, and transparent; by working alongside hiring managers and panel members throughout our recruitment campaigns.

Independent Panel Members bring independence, objectivity, and challenge whenever they feel it necessary.

It is mandatory for all CQC Executive level recruitment campaigns to have an IPM on the interview panel.



Benefits at a glance

Pension

We want to help you plan for your future. When you start in your new role with us you will join the [NHS pension scheme](#). Or, where appropriate, [Nest](#), the government-backed workplace pension scheme.

Annual leave

We offer 27 days of leave per year for all new starters on a permanent contract. After three years this increases to 29 days. After five years you can take 32.5 days.

You get time off for bank holidays too. This is usually 8 days per year but depends on national holidays.

We know that you may need to take time off for emergencies, medical appointments or other significant life events. To support you we have a range of special leave policies.

Home, office and hybrid working

Depending on the requirements of your role, you might be able to work:

- from home
- from one of our offices (we have locations in several cities including Leeds, London and Newcastle)
- from both (hybrid working).

Most of our teams work remotely, and we are proud to support that flexibility. Office-based employees can also work from home regularly. And for those based at home, our offices are always available when needed - whether for meetings, collaboration, or a change of pace. We aim to support home working with appropriate equipment, depending on your role and circumstances.

From day one, you can request flexible working. Each application is considered carefully, based on your role and personal needs.

Fleet scheme

When you join us, you can access a salary sacrifice car leasing scheme run by NHS Fleet Solutions. You can use it to lease a car for up to three years. This benefit is only available to permanent employees.

Find a comprehensive list of our benefits [here](#)

Diversity & inclusion

Our current strategy focuses on diversity and inclusion for our colleagues and within our teams.

We've created a three-year strategy to achieve our vision of being a truly inclusive organisation where all our people are valued and make a difference.

Our commitment to equality, diversity and human rights underpins our work. We take part in these schemes:

- Business Disability Forum
- Mindful Employer
- Employers for carers
- Positive about disabled people



Our equality networks and memberships

We currently have five internal equality networks at CQC. We know that for equality networks to be successful they need to be valued and be able to contribute effectively to organisational improvement.

We have ensured that our networks are fully supported, and they are viewed as an essential partner for the promotion of our diversity and inclusion vision of creating a fair and inclusive workplace. The equality networks at CQC are increasingly working together to develop awareness and provide support on a wide range of issues around diversity and inclusion.

Equality

Ensuring people are treated without bias, prejudice or discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 ensures equality in employment, service delivery and how we carry out our functions such as regulatory work.

Diversity

Diversity is about everyone being different and unique in their own way. A diversity led organisation values and celebrates differences and the individual talent, strength and experience it brings.

Inclusion

Inclusion gives us a sense of belonging and helps us feel respected and valued for who we are. It helps create an environment where we feel valued for our views and experiences.

Diversity continued

Equality and diversity continued

CQC is committed to promoting a fair and inclusive workplace where all our people can flourish and reach their full potential. We know diverse teams allow for a more creative and productive environment and therefore encourage applications from everyone regardless of age, gender, gender identity or expression, religion or belief, disability, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

For this role, we are particularly encouraging disabled people and people from an ethnic minority background to apply, as colleagues in these groups are currently under-represented at this level in the organisation.

Equal opportunities

We aim to be a modern and equitable employer. We recognise and encourage the potential of a diverse workforce, positively welcome all applications, and appoint on merit.

Disability confident scheme for disabled people

We commit to offering interviews to a fair and proportionate number of disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria.

Nationality

All non-UK residents must be free from any restrictions to reside and take up employment in the UK.



Declaration of interests

We ask all candidates to declare any interests that could potentially raise concerns or conflicts regarding their impartiality or commitment to the work of the Care Quality Commission. Candidates are required to declare any relevant business interests, shareholdings, positions of authority, retainers, consultancy arrangements or other connections with commercial, public or voluntary bodies, both for themselves and for their spouse/partner. The successful candidate will be required to give up any conflicting interests and other business and financial interests may be published.