



EXECUTIVE CANDIDATE PACK 2026

Deputy Director of
Mental Health
Central
(*Req 3088*)

Letter from Stuart Dunn, Director of Mental Health

Dear candidate

Thank you for your interest in the national role of **Deputy Director Mental Health, Central** at the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

This is a pivotal time for CQC as we continue to strengthen our regulatory frameworks and activity to meet the evolving demands of the health and social care landscape. As an organisation committed to transparency, integrity, and excellence, we are seeking a highly capable and values-driven leader to join our leadership team.

We have been working in sector-specific regulatory teams since November 2025, which saw the introduction of a dedicated Mental Health Inspectorate in CQC for the first time. Working closely with directors and the Chief Inspector of Mental Health, our Deputy Directors are crucial in ensuring operational delivery against our priorities, as well as ensuring our teams have the right skills, knowledge, guidance and support to be able to flourish in their roles.

We are looking for a candidate with passion and dedication for health and social care delivery. They need to be motivated to drive improvements in services and use the regulatory tools at CQC's disposal to lever change in services and recognise good and outstanding care. Our deputy directors need to be able to work flexibly, combining operational delivery with strategic oversight and project delivery. We are looking for leaders who can empower and inspire colleagues, whilst ensuring rigor in the way regulations are used, as well as being supportive and empathetic. We also need Deputy Directors who are skilled at engaging with both internal and external audiences, often in the face of high levels of challenge and scrutiny.

At CQC, we are proud of our values - **Excellence, Caring, Integrity, and Teamwork** - and we expect our senior leaders to embody these in everything they do. You will be someone who builds trust through authenticity, champions diversity and inclusion, and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

I look forward to receiving your application and to welcoming the successful candidate to our leadership team.

With best wishes,

Stuart Dunn

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 Chief Executive & Chair

OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Emily Miles

Emily joins CQC from her current role as Director General for Food, Farming and Biosecurity at the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and will take up the role in October from interim Chief Executive Dr Arun Chopra.

Arun will be returning to his substantive role of Chief Inspector of Mental Health.

Emily brings a wealth of experience to the role, including as CEO of the Food Standards Agency, overseeing food safety and protecting the consumer interest in the food system across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Emily will join CQC in October.



OUR CHAIR

Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger DBE

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, James Murray MP, has named Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger DBE as his preferred candidate to be the next Chair of CQC.

Subject to approval by the Health and Social Care Select Committee, Baroness Neuberger will take over from the current Interim Chair, Kay Boycott, once appointed. The Committee hearing is currently expected to take place in September.

Kay Boycott, a serving CQC non-executive director, will continue as Interim chair until the new chair is appointed.





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)



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.



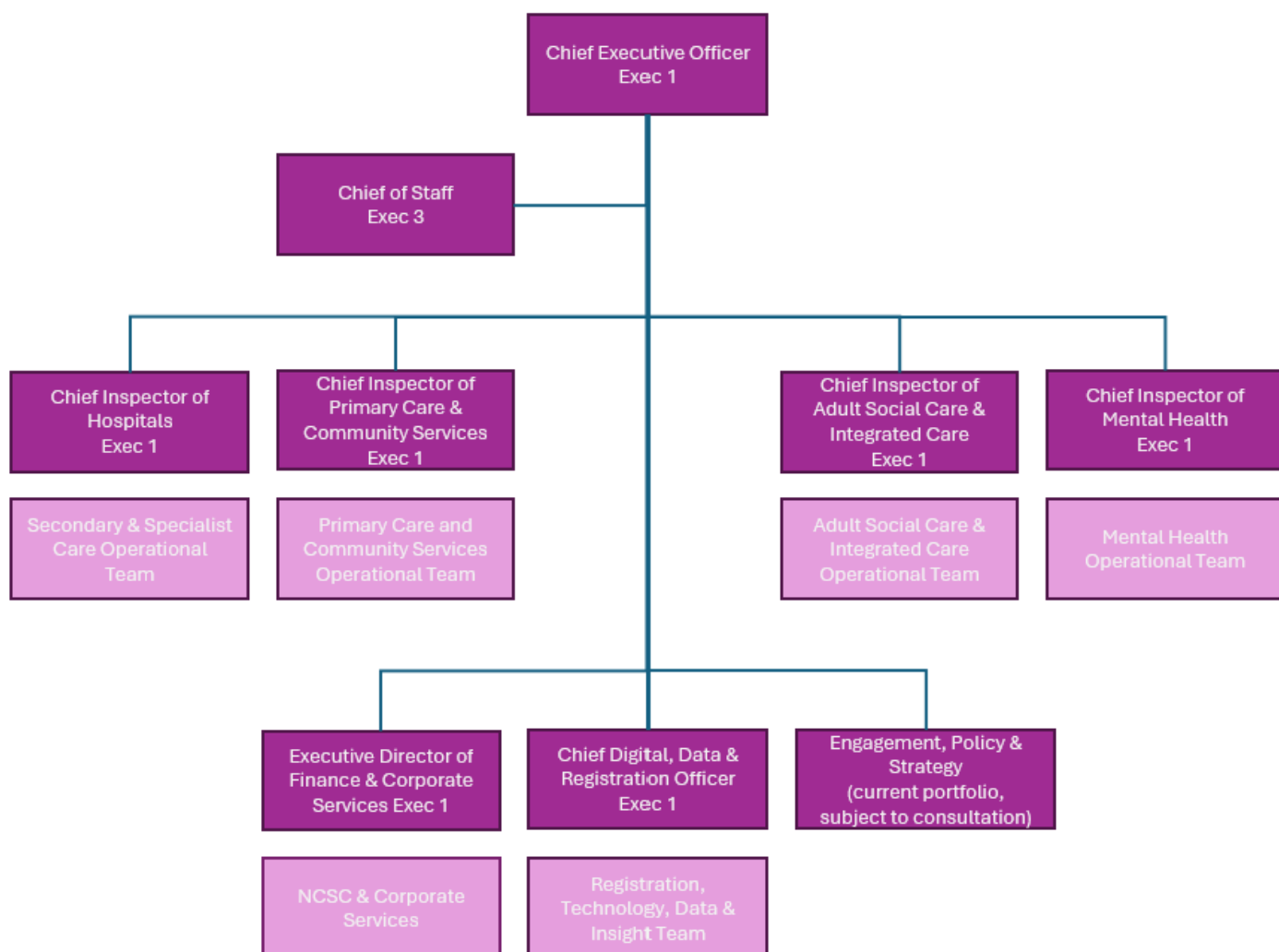
Our teams continued

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.

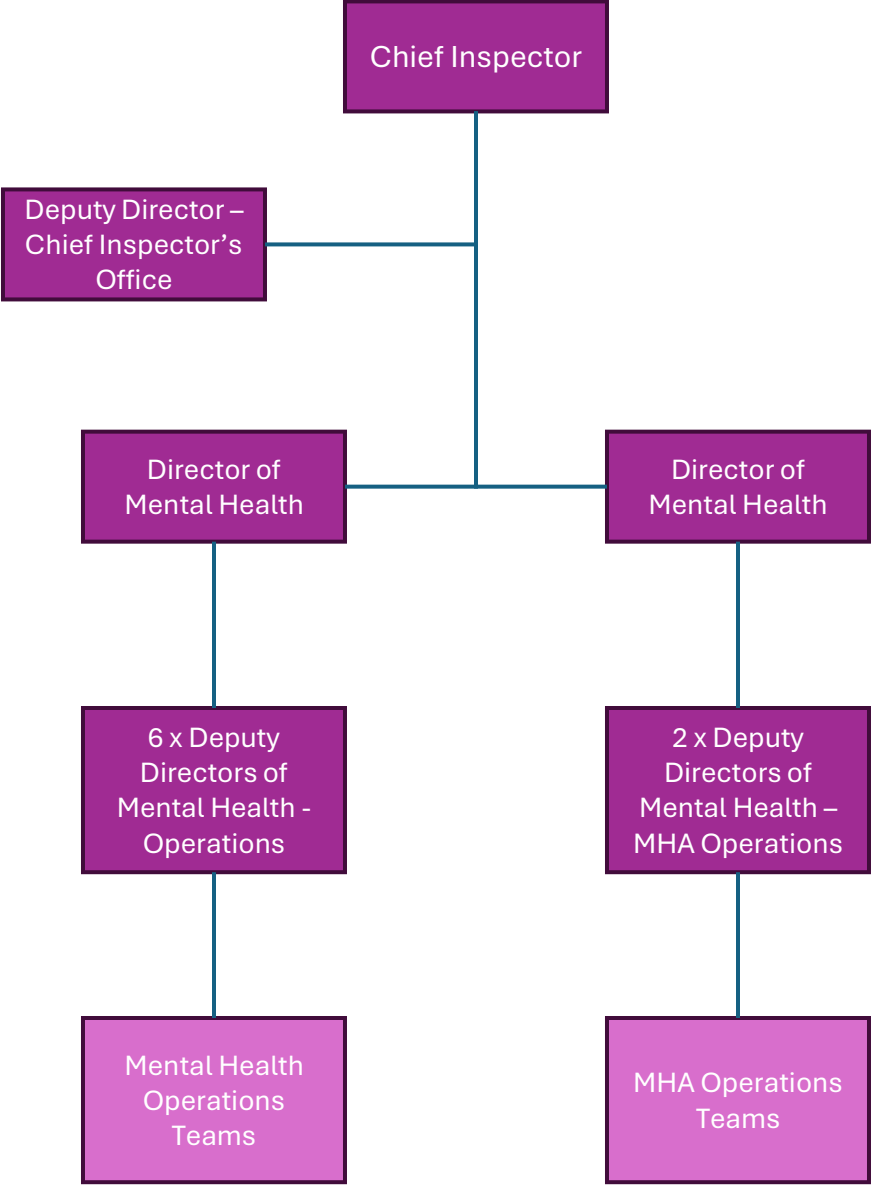
Our Policy and Strategy teams develop high-quality policies and strategies that enable CQC to regulate services effectively to encourage improvement in the quality of care, meet our equality and human rights obligations, and influence CQC's future role in the health and social care system.

Executive Structure





Mental Health Team





The role

Accountabilities

Leadership & Management

- Deputise as required for the Director for Mental Health.
- Take an active role in the sector specific development of individuals within teams across CQC.
- Take responsibility for developing and managing productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
- Use expertise and credibility to lead and influence their sector including engaging and presenting at external speaking events and interaction with the media.
- Establish strong working relationships across CQC through a partnership approach to deliver our strategic vision and priorities.
- Play an active corporate leadership role across CQC including role modelling inclusive behaviours in everyday interactions and promoting diversity and equality of opportunity, treating everyone with dignity and respect and challenging discrimination.
- Promote a culture of respect and fairness and understands personal responsibilities around delivering against CQC diversity and inclusion strategy.
- Role models the CQC Way values and behaviours in everyday interactions.

Workforce and Performance Management

- Manage development of direct reports, carrying out any performance and people management activities as required. Establish clear accountabilities and Key Performance Indicator management to build a confident, empowered and trusted team.
- Providing active leadership in people management. This includes management of the people establishment, recruitment, retention, recognition and reward, and providing senior level support in relevant HR processes.
- Lead and develop high performing sector focused teams, ensuring effective supervision, performance reviews, and development plans are in place to drive individual growth and support wider organisational effectiveness.



The role continued

Accountabilities

- Ensure operational policies and procedures are consistently applied across services to support staff, enhance service delivery, and maintain compliance with organisational standards.
- Provide senior-level support for operational investigations, casework, and service reviews, ensuring issues are addressed promptly, fairly, and in line with organisational values and procedures
- Establish and monitor delivery against clear objectives and Key Performance Indicators, ensuring alignment with sector priorities and organisational strategy
- Lead regular performance reviews and use data-driven insights to identify trends, address underperformance, and celebrate success.
- Embed a culture of accountability through transparent reporting, continuous feedback, and clear ownership of outcomes.

Regulatory

- Accountable for driving the delivery of regulatory operational activity and ability to effectively manage regulatory risk. Applying sector expertise on a day-to-day basis, allowing flex to respond to emerging priorities, which can include contribution to public inquiries.
- Accountable for the regulatory decisions of their teams (following appropriate consultation) in line with Ways of Working and Framework of Operational Delegation and Assurance (FrODA). Respond to high-risk provider/system issues and ensure professional leadership - using sector expertise to support regulatory decision making and complex activity.
- Ensure appropriate enforcement action is taken in line with Framework of Operational Delegation and Assurance (FrODA) and in collaboration with legal colleagues.
- Provide senior sector expertise as required across the region and nationally.
- Ensure delivery of regulatory functions through working across the system, with other sector colleagues to ensure improved outcomes for people and populations. Ensure that user voices are heard across all our work in line with our strategy ambitions.



The role continued

Accountabilities

- Ensure Data & Insight operational insights are appropriately actioned through their geographical area, for example provider and system-based risks, working in collaboration with the Data & Insight team when required.
- Informs CQC's national MHA Monitoring methodology and operating model
- Ensures that CQC's operating model for MHA complies with Human Rights legislation and the requirements of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), to meet CQC's role as a National Preventative Mechanism.

Strategic

- Use expertise and credibility to lead and influence the region and national sector, shaping and delivering CQC internal approaches and engaging with external stakeholders at a strategic level alongside CIs and Directors helping to ensure there is effective cross-sector working.
- Contribute strategically to accelerate improvement for people and communities, driving the equalities agenda and supporting smarter regulation.
- Lead commissioning, co-production and consultation in order to drive specific programmes of work as directed by Chief Inspectors and Directors.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of CQC's strategic direction, ensuring this includes a culture of collaboration across the organisation aligned to the CQC Way.

Finance

- Owns the delegated budget for their areas of responsibility and ensuring financial balance is achieved.
- Ensure that the finances are effectively managed, representing value for money that can withstand public scrutiny.



The role continued

What are we looking for?

- Senior leadership experience in a complex health, social care or regulatory environment
- Significant knowledge of mental health services and relevant policy or regulation
- Experience leading large-scale change or improvement programmes
- Leader who can support and deliver change, work independently and collaboratively and are passionate about improving services.



Terms and conditions

Contract Type: Permanent

Location: Homebased covering Central Region

Salary: £75,183 per annum



Recruitment timeline

The recruitment and selection process

Timetable

Advert closing date	Sunday 27 Sep at 11.59pm 2026
Shortlisting	w/c 5 Oct (outcomes shared with candidates by COB Wednesday 14 Oct)
Stage 1 Written Assessment (to be carried out remotely from home)	Emailed to candidates by COB Thursday 15 Oct – to be completed & returned by 9am Monday 19 Oct
Stage 2 Final interviews (for those who pass Stage 1)	Wed 28 October 2026 – these will be Face to face in our London Office

Application instructions

How to apply

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

Your Supporting Statement should cover the following:

- How your previous experience makes you suitable for this role?
- What strengths will you bring to the role?



Panel information

Panel

- Stuart Dunn, Director of Mental Health
- Kim Forrester, Director of Mental Health
- 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 all 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 diverse 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.