

# Appointment of Director of Strategy and Engagement

May 2026

Ref: ACQE

# About the CQC

The CQC regulates and inspects health and social care services, including hospitals, GPs, dentists, ambulances, mental health services, care homes, and home care. We register providers, monitor performance, rate services, and take action to protect people who use them. Across all our work, we listen to experiences, involve the public, safeguard vulnerable people, including those under the Mental Health Act, and publish our independent views on quality. We also collaborate with other organisations and public bodies to improve care across the system.

## Our commitments, values and behaviours

Our approach, developed with colleagues, providers, the public, and stakeholders, defines why we exist, what we aim to achieve, and how we lead, work, and behave. It underpins and supports all we do as an effective regulator. You can read more about our commitments, values and behaviours [here](#).

The 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.

## How we are run

The CQC's Board is its senior decision-making body, provides leadership and ensures we are successful and sustainable, and sets our [strategy, purpose and values](#). Our Board members' biographies can be found [here](#).

The Executive team is responsible for our day-to-day running, overseeing the delivery of our business plan objectives, and ensuring we use our resources properly and manage our performance well.

We have also re-introduced the Chief Inspectors and a restructured Board to provide stronger oversight and accountability. The four Chief Inspectors are dedicated to specific sectors: Hospitals (secondary and specialist); Primary Care and Community Services; Adult Social Care and Integrated Care; and Mental Health.

# Our context

While our mission remains unchanged, the path to delivering it has undergone a significant and necessary reset. Following the rollout of our single assessment framework and new digital infrastructure, the CQC experienced operational pressures including reduced inspection numbers, delays in publishing inspection reports, and backlogs in provider registration processes. This led to a series of rigorous, independent examinations that now form the blueprint for our current trajectory.

Our programme of change is informed by four pivotal reviews, each addressing a specific facet of our operational grip:

- [The Dash Review](#): Focused on our operational efficiency, highlighting the urgent need to address inspection backlogs and resolve the friction within our digital assessment tools.
- [The Richards Review](#): Provided a vital clinical and professional steer, recommending a return to sector-specific expertise. This includes re-establishing the role of Chief Inspectors and ensuring our assessments are led by specialists with deep knowledge of the specific services they are inspecting.
- [The Gill Review](#): Emphasised the ‘human’ element of regulation, rebuilding the weight of professional judgement and ensuring our prioritisation is clear, consistent, and transparent.
- [Care Provider Alliance \(CPA\) Review](#): Highlighted opportunities to strengthen the Single Assessment Framework by improving clarity and consistency in inspections, enhancing inspector expertise, and improving communication and reporting, particularly to ensure the approach is practical and supportive for smaller providers.

## Improving How We Work

Work on our recovery is already underway. Throughout 2025, the [Improving How We Work](#) programme has been providing focus to our recovery. We have begun realigning our assessment teams into sector-led pods, investing in the specialist training of our inspectors, and refining the assessment framework to ensure it is both agile and evidence-based.

Our aim is for the CQC to emerge as not just functional, but exceptional. This involves:

- **Restoring credibility**: Ensuring the Richards Review recommendations are embedded so that providers once again see the CQC’s judgements as expert-led and fair.
- **Digital optimisation**: Transforming our data systems from a source of friction into seamless support that enables inspectors to work more efficiently and effectively.
- **Public trust**: Closing the loop between inspection and impact, ensuring that the public can once again rely on a timely, accurate, and real-time view of care quality across England.

## Job purpose

The Director of Strategy and Engagement will lead campaigning, public affairs, and the strategic approach to stakeholder engagement for CQC and provide thought leadership to ensure the organisation's voice is clear, credible, and influential across all audiences.

The role holder will be responsible for developing and delivering our strategic approach to campaigning, public affairs, and stakeholder engagement.

This role is pivotal in shaping, developing and communicating CQC's long-term strategy, supporting the Chief Inspectors to influence national policy, and building trust with the public, health and social care providers, government, and other key stakeholders. Through high-impact communications and engagement, the Director will champion and promote improvements in the quality of care across England.

Directly accountable to the Chief Executive, the Director of Strategy and Engagement will contribute to the overall strategic leadership, planning and direction of the organisation.



# Role accountabilities

## Strategic Planning

- Lead the development of CQC's long-term strategic plan in collaboration with executive leadership. Ensure the long-term strategic plan is evidence-based, forward-looking, and responsive to both national priorities and local needs.
- Provide strategic insight to the Executive Committee, including horizon scanning and scenario planning to inform decision-making and ensure the organisation remains agile and resilient in a changing external environment.

## Internal and External Engagement

- Develop and deliver engagement strategies that build understanding, trust, and support, strengthening two-way relationships with staff, providers, stakeholders, and communities.
- Oversee the production of authoritative, accessible, and timely external publications and communications that accurately portray the state of health and social care in England, and support the organisation's strategic objectives.
- Lead crisis communication efforts and ensure preparedness for potential public and stakeholder challenges.
- Design and deliver a high-impact engagement and communications strategy that enhances CQC's visibility, credibility, and influence across the health and social care landscape, ensuring consistent and compelling messaging across all channels.

## Stakeholder Engagement and Influence

- Support the Chief Executive and Chief Inspectors in maintaining strong, transparent, and constructive relationships with the Department of Health and Social Care, Ministers, and other key partners, ensuring CQC's voice is heard and respected in policy and regulatory discussions.
- Build and sustain strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including other arm's-length bodies, providers, professional bodies, and advocacy groups, to promote collaboration, share best practice, and influence system-wide improvement.
- Ensure that public, provider, and stakeholder feedback is systematically captured and integrated into strategic planning and service improvement, reinforcing CQC's commitment to transparency and accountability.

## Organisational Culture and Leadership

- Lead and inspire high-performing, multidisciplinary teams, fostering a culture of innovation, inclusion, and continuous improvement that reflects the CQC Way and supports the organisation's mission.
- Collaborate with cross-functional teams to promote alignment and support organisational objectives.
- Act as a visible and values-driven leader, modelling integrity, openness, and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of leadership and decision-making.
- Contribute to the wider corporate leadership of CQC, collaborating with peers across directorates to drive cross-functional initiatives, break down silos, and enhance organisational cohesion and performance.
- Act as a trusted advisor to the Chief Executive, contributing to cross organisational leadership and decision-making, with particular focus on communications and external relationships.

# Person specification

## Specific skills and experience

- Proven experience of leading the development and implementation of complex organisational strategies in a large, multi-stakeholder environment.
- Demonstrated ability to influence national policy and shape strategic direction at a senior level.
- Significant experience in leading external affairs, public affairs, and communications functions, with a track record of enhancing organisational reputation and influence.
- Strong media handling skills and experience acting as a senior spokesperson in high-profile or politically sensitive contexts.
- Demonstrable success in building and maintaining effective relationships with senior stakeholders, including government departments, regulators, providers, and the public.
- Experience of working with Ministers, senior civil servants, and other public sector leaders to influence policy and system-wide change.
- Deep understanding of public policy development, regulatory frameworks, and the use of evidence and data to inform strategic decision-making.
- Experience of integrating public and stakeholder insight into policy and service design.
- Proven ability to lead and inspire high-performing, multidisciplinary teams, fostering a culture of inclusion, collaboration, and continuous improvement.
- Strong personal integrity and commitment to public service values, including transparency, accountability, and equity.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to convey complex ideas clearly and persuasively to diverse audiences.
- Politically astute, with the ability to navigate complex systems and manage sensitive issues with discretion and authority.
- Educated to degree level or equivalent experience.

## Essential criteria

- Proven experience in a senior leadership role within the public sector.
- A demonstrated, successful track record in the development and implementation of strategic initiatives in the public sector.
- Heightened political awareness and experience of operating at Director or Board level in a politically sensitive environment or organisation.
- Demonstrated ability to lead dispersed teams and drive a values-based culture of continuous improvement.
- Excellent stakeholder engagement and communication skills, with experience reporting at board level.

# Leadership behaviours

## Excellence

- Takes responsibility for effective delivery of service area outputs, securing quality outcomes and continuous improvement.
- Understands the characteristics of high-performing teams and drives delivery in a way that is supportive of our values.
- Simplifies complexity and makes decisive decisions.
- Links clear and realistic individual goals to those of the organisation and the team.
- Demonstrates pride in the organisation and its purpose.
- Effectively manages performance, engaging staff through the provision of constructive feedback and recognition.
- Understands the need for effective management of resources to secure best value and mitigate risk e.g., financial and management information. Uses management assurance and risk management practices appropriately.
- Facilitates creative thinking and innovative problem-solving, promoting the importance of continuous learning and improvement.

## Caring

- Demonstrates a visible and accessible approach, investing time with teams and individuals in order that they feel valued and supported.
- Adopts a coaching approach, practising robust and honest conversations, giving and receiving feedback on performance.
- Acts with emotional intelligence to improve employee wellbeing and satisfaction in the workplace.
- Demonstrates dignity and respect by valuing the contribution of all team members.

## Integrity

- Puts the purpose of the organisation at the heart of everything done.
- Strives to do the right thing, through role-modelling an authentic leadership style and ensuring actions reflect promises.
- Takes a constructive approach to mistakes as part of a learning experience and has the confidence to speak up when things don't seem right.
- Values different styles, perspectives, backgrounds and experiences, supporting a diverse, open and inclusive culture.
- Acts as an ambassador for the service area, the directorate and CQC, demonstrating the highest professional standards in relationships with both internal and external stakeholders.

## Teamwork

- Facilitates the sharing of best practice across CQC, promoting cross-organisational learning and genuine collaboration.
- Maximises team strengths to enhance team performance.
- Champions change by building adaptable and resilient teams. Involves others in developing solutions, is responsive to feedback and evaluates the impact of change.
- Effectively communicates and shares information in a timely manner to bring about sustainable, positive improvement.
- Understands how to link performance management and development so that teams and individuals are supported with their professional and personal growth.

# Terms of appointment

## Salary

£95,000-113,625.

## 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.

## Home, office and hybrid working

This role is offered on a hybrid working basis as a minimum requirement, with flexibility to agree a contractual base location, which may be home-based or linked to the nearest CQC office. Reasonable adjustments will be considered in line with individual needs.

Given the seniority and public-facing nature of the role, there will be an expectation of significant in-person working. This will include regular attendance in London, time spent across the CQC's offices (including Leeds, London and Newcastle), and visits to provider premises as required to support effective leadership, engagement and delivery.

## 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](#)



# How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the CQC on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [roles.saxbam.com](https://roles.saxbam.com) using code **ACQE**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form.

The closing date for applications is **midday on Monday 15 June 2026**.

The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete this as part of the application process.

## **Due diligence**

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.

## **GDPR personal data notice**

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your sensitive personal data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.



