

Information return guidance

We will send this guidance as part of our information return request.

Purpose of the local authority information return

This information return is a key part of our assessment of how a local authority is carrying out its adult social care functions in England. Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 describes those functions.

It enables us to review some key documents, information and data before our on-site activity. These will help us plan the assessment, or form part of the evidence we assess. Where relevant, we show which quality statements items relate to. Our [assessment framework](#) for local authority assurance describes the quality statements.

During the assessment, we may need to request more information if we need it to assess a quality statement.

All the information we gather helps us to assess each local authority. It also helps us understand national trends, issues, performance and innovation across England.

Some of the information will inform our national reporting, such as our annual State of Care report. This will be anonymised unless a local authority gives consent.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) allows local authorities to lawfully provide personal data. This applies where we need the data to carry out our statutory duties. It includes special categories of personal data.

Documentation required

Each local authority's arrangements for delivering Care Act duties will be different. You will have various policies, processes, strategies and other documentation to support this. We do not expect you to have a specific document for every item listed in the information return. Documents may have different titles or information may be within other documents. For example, corporate strategies or partnership documents. We encourage you to use your existing documents and direct us to the relevant sections as needed.

If any of the required information is already available publicly, please provide a link to that information – there is no need to reproduce it. You can add a link to external information against the relevant item on the form below and return the form to us.

- Do not create new documents for this information return. Use existing information that best meets the information request.
- Only include information that most closely relates to the requested items. Don't provide extra information. This will avoid us looking at unnecessary information that may not inform the assessment.
- Data requested (for example, IR3 on compliments and complaints) should cover the last 12 months. You should only include data from outside of this period if an exceptional example falls just outside the 12-month period.

- To keep information succinct please do not provide:
 - Terms of Reference from meetings or forums
 - blank template documents and forms
 - duplicate documents (just refer to the IR number where you attached a particular document)
 - contracts or service specifications
 - agendas for meetings
 - multiple action plans and minutes relating to the same topic (only the most recent one)
 - embedded documents
- References to 'people' include both those who use care services and unpaid carers.
- Redact any personal information.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is an opportunity for your local authority to:

- assess and judge your own performance in relation to the quality statements
- use evidence to support your judgements
- highlight key successes, risks and challenges
- identify actions needed to address the most pressing risks.

The Local Government Association (LGA) and ADASS have produced [guidance to help develop an adult social care self-assessment](#). This has an accompanying workbook. Their guidance states that:

“The completion of an objective, honest and authentic self-assessment of a council’s strengths and areas for improvement is a valuable opportunity to focus improvement planning and delivery in a way that ensures local ownership.”

In our assessment framework, ‘self-assessment’ is an evidence item in the ‘Feedback from staff and leaders’ evidence category. It forms part of the overall evidence we will gather and use to assess each of the 9 quality statements.

We will not provide a self-assessment template. You may share your self-assessment in any format you choose, or you can use the comprehensive [self-assessment workbook](#) developed by the LGA and ADASS to support local authorities to prepare for CQC assessments.

There is no mandatory requirement for local authorities to produce a self-assessment for CQC to review. **However, if you choose not to complete a self-assessment, we will need to spend more time in the on-site part of our assessment. This is because we will need to gather and analyse required evidence from various sources.**