



## 10 Steps to Start a **CQC-APPROVED BUSINESS**

Your simple, step-by-step plan to launch a compliant,  
confident care company — without the overwhelm

*From Frontline to Founder.*

# You Know You're Ready. HERE'S WHAT TO DO NEXT.

You've worked in care long enough to know how things should be done.

You care deeply.

You lead with purpose.

And more than anything, you're ready to build something of your own — a business that reflects your values, your standards, and your vision for care.

**But there's just one problem:**  
**"Where do I start?"**

Starting your own care company — and getting approved by the CQC — can feel overwhelming.

There's paperwork, policies, systems, decisions, and deadlines.

It's easy to feel like you're capable of running a service...  
but not sure how to launch one.

This guide is here *to help.*

We've broken it down into 10 clear steps — no fluff, no jargon.

Whether you want to do this on your own or with support, this is your **blueprint.**

And if you decide you'd rather not do it alone, that's where **Big Sister** comes in. We co-own the business with you, fund the setup, and support you every month — so you can start strong and grow with confidence.



# Ready? Let's build something brilliant.

## Step 1

### Choose Your Business Model & Services

Before you register anything, write a policy, or speak to the CQC — you need clarity on what kind of care business you're starting. This is the foundation. It shapes your registration, your policies, your team, and your future.

**First, decide what type of care you'll provide:**

#### Domiciliary Care (Homecare)

- ♥ Providing personal care and support in people's own homes.
- ♥ CQC-regulated and high in demand across the UK.

#### Supported Living

- ♥ Helping people live independently with tailored support (often for those with learning disabilities, autism, or mental health needs).
- ♥ CQC may regulate this if personal care is included.

#### Specialist Care

You may choose to support:

- ♥ Dementia
- ♥ Palliative care
- ♥ Brain injury

- ♥ Mental health
- ♥ Complex needs

This can help you stand out — but requires clear policies, training, and sometimes additional regulation.

#### Next, consider:

- ♥ Who do you want to support? (Older adults? Adults with disabilities? Young people?)
- ♥ Where will you operate? (Specific boroughs, counties, or regions?)
- ♥ What scale are you starting with? (A few clients, or building a team from the start?)
- ♥ How will you differentiate yourself? (Quality, speed, specialism, values?)



**Big Sister helps you define your model clearly from the beginning** — so your registration, marketing, and operations all align with your vision.

**Once you're clear on the services you'll provide, you're ready to make it official.**

## Step 2

## Choose Your Business Model & Services

**You've got the vision — now it's time to make it real.**

Before you can apply to the CQC or start working with clients, you need to legally register your business.

Don't worry — this step sounds more complicated than it is. With the right guidance, it can be done in a day.

### Register Your Company with Companies House

Most care businesses operate as **limited companies (Ltd)** — it gives you protection and credibility.

- ♥ Go to <https://www.gov.uk/set-up-business>
- ♥ Choose a company name (something professional and unique)
- ♥ Register your company structure (Ltd)
- ♥ Assign yourself as a Director
- ♥ Get your Company Registration Number (CRN)



**Big Sister helps every partner** choose the right name, set up the company, and file correctly from day one.

### Open a Business Bank Account

Once registered, open a business account in your company's name.

- ♥ You'll need this to handle payments, payroll, insurance, and client invoices

- ♥ Keep personal and business finances completely separate

### Get the Right Insurance in Place

Before CQC registration, you'll need:

- ♥ Public Liability Insurance
- ♥ Employers' Liability Insurance (if hiring staff)
- ♥ Professional Indemnity Insurance
- ♥ Medical Malpractice Insurance (optional but wise)

These policies prove to the CQC that your business is protected and prepared.

### Think Long-Term: You're Not Just Creating a Job — You're Building an Asset

How you set up your business affects your tax, legal protection, and future value.

Doing it right from the beginning saves a lot of headaches down the road.



**Once your business is legally set up,**  
you're ready to start building your internal foundation —  
policies, systems, and compliance.

## Step 3

# Develop Your Policies & Procedures

This is where your care company starts to take shape — on paper, and in practice.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) doesn't just want to know what you plan to do.

They want to see how you'll do it — safely, legally, and to a high standard.

**That's where your policies and procedures come in.**

## What Are They?

**Policies** = Your rules and commitments

**Procedures** = The step-by-step of how you deliver those commitments

**Together, they prove you know how to:**

- ♥ Keep people safe
- ♥ Follow regulations
- ♥ Manage risk
- ♥ Lead a team
- ♥ Deliver quality care

## What Do You Need?

Here are the core policies the CQC expects to see:

- ♥ Safeguarding Adults
- ♥ Infection Control
- ♥ Medication Management
- ♥ Complaints Handling
- ♥ Confidentiality & Data Protection
- ♥ Whistleblowing
- ♥ Recruitment & Induction
- ♥ Health & Safety
- ♥ Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- ♥ Business Continuity Plan
- ♥ Service User Involvement
- ♥ Risk Assessments

Depending on your services, you may also need policies on end-of-life care, mental capacity, lone working, and more.



**Big Sister gives you a full suite of CQC-compliant policies** — customised to your business model and ready to submit.



## Make Them Personal

Don't submit generic templates. Tailor your documents so they:

- ♥ Reflect your actual service
- ♥ Include your company name, logo, and values
- ♥ Match your Statement of Purpose (which we'll tackle next!)

## Why This Step Matters

Your policies show the CQC (and future clients or commissioners) that you're not just passionate — you're prepared.

**Strong documentation = stronger application = faster approval.**



**Once your policies are underway,** you're ready to write one of the most important documents in your whole application.



## Step 4

# Create Your Statement of Purpose

If your care business had a heartbeat, this would be it.

Your **Statement of Purpose** is one of the most important documents in your entire CQC application. **It explains:**

- ♥ Who you are
- ♥ What services you provide
- ♥ Who you support
- ♥ Where you operate
- ♥ Why your service exists

It's your chance to show the CQC — and your future clients — what makes your service unique, compliant, and person-centred.

## What It Must Include (CQC Checklist)

**According to CQC guidance, your Statement of Purpose must cover:**

- ♥ Your service name and business address
- ♥ The legal status of your organization
- ♥ Your Registered Manager and Nominated Individual
- ♥ Aims and objectives of the service
- ♥ The types of services you'll provide (e.g. personal care, treatment of disease)

- ♥ The locations where services will be delivered
- ♥ The people you intend to support (e.g. older people, adults with dementia)
- ♥ Your contact details

### A commitment to the CQC's five key questions:

- ♥ Safe
- ♥ Effective
- ♥ Caring
- ♥ Responsive
- ♥ Well-led



**Big Sister gives you** a high-quality Statement of Purpose template and works with you to get it spot-on.

## How to Make it Stand Out

- ♥ Keep it professional but warm — let your passion show
- ♥ Avoid vague phrases — be clear and specific
- ♥ Make sure it aligns with your policies, your branding, and your website

## Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ♥ Copying another provider's document
- ♥ Forgetting to update the business address or contact details
- ♥ Leaving out the aims and objectives
- ♥ Using jargon — keep it accessible and real

This document will form the foundation of your application and will also appear publicly once you're registered. It's worth getting right.



**Once it's complete,** you're ready for the person who'll help bring it to life: your Registered Manager.





## Step 5

# Appoint a Registered Manager

Every CQC-regulated care business must have a **Registered Manager** in place.

This is the person responsible for the day-to-day delivery of care — and proving to the CQC that your service will be well-led from day one.

In most cases, that's you — and if so, don't worry. You're more ready than you think.

## Who Can Be a Registered Manager?

**To be accepted by the CQC, the person must:**

- ♥ Have relevant care experience
- ♥ Hold (or be working toward) a Level 5 in Leadership for Health & Social Care
- ♥ Demonstrate strong knowledge of compliance, safeguarding, and leadership
- ♥ Be confident speaking about policies, risk, care planning, and regulation.



**If you don't yet have your Level 5, that's okay —**  
you can often still apply if you're enrolled or have equivalent experience.

## What You'll Need to Provide

**As part of the application, you (or your appointed manager) must submit:**

- ♥ A CQC Registered Manager form
- ♥ Your CV and full work history
- ♥ A DBS check (less than 12 months old)
- ♥ Proof of qualifications
- ♥ A passport or ID
- ♥ Two references

## Be Prepared for an Interview

The CQC will often invite the Registered Manager to an interview before approving the application.

**Expect questions about:**

- ♥ Your service model
- ♥ Safeguarding and risk management
- ♥ Staffing, training, and quality assurance
- ♥ How you'll meet each of the five Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs)



**Big Sister offers 1:1 coaching and mock interview prep,** so you walk in confident and ready.

## What if I Don't Want to Be the Registered Manager?

That's totally okay — but you'll need to:

- ♥ Recruit or partner with someone qualified
- ♥ Ensure they are fully involved in the application process
- ♥ Be ready to demonstrate how you'll work together to deliver safe, effective care

Once your Registered Manager is appointed and prepared, you're nearly ready to submit.



**But first — you'll need to make sure your premises and systems are in place and ready for business.**



## Step 6

# Prepare Your Premises & Systems

Before the CQC says yes, they need to know where your business will operate from — and how you'll manage care safely and securely.

This doesn't mean you need a big fancy office.

In fact, many successful care businesses start from a home-based HQ.

**What matters is that your setup is:**

- ♥ Safe
- ♥ Organised
- ♥ Professional
- ♥ Fit for purpose

## Choosing a Premises

**You'll need to give the CQC a registered service address, which may be:**

- ♥ A home office
- ♥ A rented business space
- ♥ A virtual office (if paired with secure systems and clear access to records)

**Whichever option you choose, it must:**

- ♥ Be safe, clean, and compliant with health & safety
- ♥ Allow for secure storage of confidential information
- ♥ Be accessible for future audits or inspections



**Big Sister helps you select the right setup —**  
and ensures it meets all CQC expectations.



## Set Up Your Systems

You'll also need to show how you'll manage the core operations of your care service. This includes:

- ♥ **Care Planning Software** – for assessments, risk, daily notes
- ♥ **Rota & Scheduling Tools** – for managing staff availability
- ♥ **Secure Data Storage** – GDPR-compliant, password-protected
- ♥ **Business Phone Number** – not a personal mobile
- ♥ **HR & Training Tracking** – to evidence staff development and supervision
- ♥ **Audit Tools** – for monitoring quality, feedback, and incidents

## Show You're Ready to Deliver Quality Care

When the CQC assess your setup, they want to know:

- ♥ You've thought about how care will be delivered
- ♥ You have systems in place to manage that care safely
- ♥ You're organised and ready, not just enthusiastic

This is the step that makes your care company real. It shifts your idea from a dream into an operating service.



**Once your premises and systems are set,** you're ready to think about the people who will power your service.





## Step 7

# Build Your Team (or Your Plan to Recruit)

You don't need a full roster of staff before you apply to the CQC. But you do need to prove that you have a clear, compliant, and realistic plan for how you'll recruit, train, and manage your care team.

The CQC wants to know:

- ♥ Who will deliver the care?
- ♥ How will you make sure they're safe, skilled, and supported?
- ♥ What systems are in place to protect staff and service users?

Let's break it down.

## You Can Start Small

Many care businesses launch with just the Registered Manager and one or two part-time carers — and grow from there.

That's completely fine.

**What matters most is that you:**

- ♥ Understand your staffing needs
- ♥ Have job descriptions ready
- ♥ Can demonstrate a safe recruitment and onboarding process

## What Your Recruitment Plan Should Include

- ♥ A sample job description
- ♥ Your vetting process (DBS, references, interviews)
- ♥ Your induction and training programme
- ♥ Your ongoing supervision and appraisal process
- ♥ Your strategy for staff retention and creating a great team culture



**Big Sister gives you** templated recruitment packs and helps you build your HR systems from day one.





## Documents to Prepare

Even if you don't have staff yet, be ready to submit:

- ♥ Sample contracts of employment
- ♥ Staff handbook
- ♥ Training matrix (what will staff be trained in, and when?)
- ♥ Policies on supervision, whistleblowing, lone working, etc.

## Don't Forget Leadership

The CQC will assess your ability to lead and manage a team.

Even if you've never been a business owner before, your Registered Manager (whether it's you or someone else) must show strong leadership behaviours.

Once your team (or recruitment plan) is in place, you're ready to submit your CQC application — the official step to becoming a registered provider.



## Step 8

## Submit Your CQC Application

This is the big one — the moment where you formally ask the Care Quality Commission to register your business.

It might feel intimidating, but if you've followed the steps so far, you're more prepared than most.

Let's walk through the process.

### What You're Applying For

Most new care businesses apply for registration to provide:

- ♥ Personal care under Regulated Activities
- ♥ At a single location (your office or home HQ)

You'll be applying as:

- ♥ A provider (the business)
- ♥ With a Registered Manager (you, or someone else)

### Where to Apply

All applications are made through the CQC Provider Portal:

- ♥ <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/registration/apply-register>

You'll need to:

- ♥ Create an account
- ♥ Fill in the provider application

- ♥ Complete the Registered Manager form
- ♥ Upload supporting documents
- ♥ Pay your registration fee



**Big Sister handles the submission process with you —** reviewing everything line by line before you click submit.

### Documents You'll Need

- ♥ Statement of Purpose
- ♥ Full policy set
- ♥ Business continuity plan
- ♥ DBS check
- ♥ Insurance certificates
- ♥ CQC application forms
- ♥ Proof of ID and right to work
- ♥ References
- ♥ Location information (lease, address, etc.)
- ♥ Any qualifications or training records

## Don't Forget the Fee

Registration costs vary by service type but expect to pay around **£1,000–£1,500**.

This is a one-off fee to process your application.

## What Happens Next?

Once submitted, the CQC will:

- ♥ Review your application
- ♥ Contact you if anything is missing
- ♥ Request further documents (if needed)
- ♥ Schedule an interview with the Registered Manager

Approval time can vary but typically takes **8–16 weeks** depending on how complete your application is. However, an assessment interview can take much longer.



**Once your application is in**, it's time to get ready for that all-important CQC Interview.



## Step 9

# Prepare for Your CQC Interview

After your application is submitted, the CQC will likely invite your Registered Manager (that may be you!) to a phone or video interview.

This is your opportunity to demonstrate that your service is:

- ♥ Safe
- ♥ Well-led
- ♥ Compliant
- ♥ Ready to start

It's not designed to catch you out — it's designed to check that you're prepared and understand your responsibilities.

With the right preparation, you'll walk in feeling confident and clear.  
What the Interview Covers



## Expect questions around:

- ♥ Your Statement of Purpose
- ♥ The care you'll provide and how it meets service user needs
- ♥ How you'll manage safeguarding, incidents, and complaints
- ♥ Your recruitment and training processes
- ♥ Your understanding of CQC's 5 key questions:
  - » Safe
  - » Effective
  - » Caring
  - » Responsive
  - » Well-led
- ♥ Your governance systems and how you'll monitor quality



**Big Sister provides 1:1 mock interviews to help you** prepare your answers and practice your delivery — so nothing takes you by surprise.



## Top Tips for Success

- ♥ Know your own application inside out — especially your policies and Statement of Purpose
- ♥ Be honest — if you're still building something, say so (and explain how)
- ♥ Refer to real processes — not just theory. The CQC loves practical, real-world answers
- ♥ Use the CQC key questions as a guide — frame your answers around them

## After the Interview

If everything goes well, you'll receive:

- ♥ Any follow-up requests
- ♥ A final review from the CQC team
- ♥ And (drumroll please...) your registration certificate

That means you're officially approved to operate as a CQC-registered care provider.



### **There's just one final step:**

getting your business ready to launch — clients, marketing, systems, and ongoing support.





## Step 10

## Get Registered and Get Started



### You've made it.

You've done the work, submitted your application, passed your interview — and now, you're officially a CQC-registered care provider.

This is where the real journey begins.

You're no longer preparing to start a business — you've started one.

Now it's time to bring it to life.

### What Happens Next?

Once you're registered, you can:

- ♥ Begin recruiting staff
- ♥ Start marketing your services
- ♥ Onboard your first clients
- ♥ Apply for local authority and NHS contracts
- ♥ Build a team and reputation that reflect your values

It's exciting — and yes, it can be overwhelming. But remember: **you've already done the hard part.**

### When Do You Get Your CQC Rating?

You do not receive a rating (e.g. Good, Requires Improvement, etc.) at the time of registration.

#### Instead:

1. After your application is approved and you're registered (Step 10),
2. You'll begin delivering care, building up clients, and maintaining your compliance
3. Then, after a period of time (usually within 6–12 months), the CQC will conduct your first full inspection
4. It's this inspection that results in your official rating

#### Until then:

You'll appear on the CQC website as a registered provider but will be listed as:

### "No rating yet – service not yet inspected"

This is totally normal for new providers. You can begin trading and growing while you wait for your first inspection.

### Your Focus Now Should Be On:

- ♥ **Client acquisition** – getting your first few clients onboard

- ♥ **Marketing** – building local awareness, social media, and partnerships
- ♥ **Compliance** – keeping your systems, policies, and training up to date
- ♥ **Cash flow** – tracking income and reinvestment
- ♥ **Growth planning** – laying the foundation for long-term success

## And If You Don't Want to Do It Alone...

Big Sister was created for this exact moment — when you're ready, approved, and ambitious... but unsure how to grow without burning out.

We step in as your co-owner and growth partner.

### We help with:

- ♥ Funding setup costs
- ♥ Creating your marketing strategy
- ♥ Writing tenders and finding contracts
- ♥ Hiring and managing your team
- ♥ Building systems for sustainable, scalable success



**You bring the passion and leadership.** We bring the infrastructure, funding, and ongoing support.

## Want to Build Smart, Not Solo?

Book a Discovery Call with Big Sister to explore whether our co-ownership model is the right next step for you.

**Book a Meeting: *Email your Availability***

You've already proven you can build something incredible.

**Now let's make sure it grows —**  
*with a Big Sister beside you.*



A large, stylized pink plant graphic is located in the bottom right corner. It consists of a large pink semi-circle at the base, with a vertical white line extending upwards from its center. At the top of this line are two pink, teardrop-shaped leaves, one on each side.

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