From the Chief Executive

Ian Trenholm  
Chief Executive  
Care Quality Commission  
151 Buckingham Palace Road  
London SW1W 9SZ

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I write on behalf of the members of the NHS Confederation across the English healthcare system to ask for a temporary suspension of all planned CQC inspections.

We do appreciate the steps you have already taken, focusing your inspections where you believe they are needed most and indicating that you will consider reducing what you require of providers in advance of inspections. You have also indicated that your teams may decide to postpone inspections based on latest intelligence, although that of course does not take into account the significant preparation that is required.

Our members recognise the value of the inspection regime but given the current and future impact of COVID-19 infections on frontline services, we believe it would make sense now to halt inspections until the situation eases.

Members are focusing all their energies on containing the virus and making sure that they are prepared to care for the much larger number of patients who will require their support in the next period.

Apart from the inevitable distraction that an inspection will impose, current preparations to manage the outbreak inevitably involve significant changes in the way services are delivered. Any inspection in the coming period would involve assessing services and teams operating in circumstances which are atypical, and which are bound to have an effect on the normal patient experience.
I do hope you will be able to do this. It would certainly be welcomed by the NHS and other parts of the healthcare system and be seen as a proportionate step which will help the service during this difficult period.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Niall Dickson CBE