

This is the second in a series of emerging insights on the theme of Care Practice.

Experiences have varied across care homes and care at home contexts with respect to support and relationships with regulators during the pandemic.

### 1 Experiences of support and relationships with regulators

The availability of support from regulators through increased opportunities for regular contact has been perceived to be useful. However, there has been a lack of practical support to enable meaningful and positive changes to care practice at the speed the pandemic has required.

For care homes challenges have been experienced in relation to regulatory bodies attempting to balance scrutiny and support. However, where that balance has been felt to work there has been positive impacts on partnership and collaboration towards service improvements.

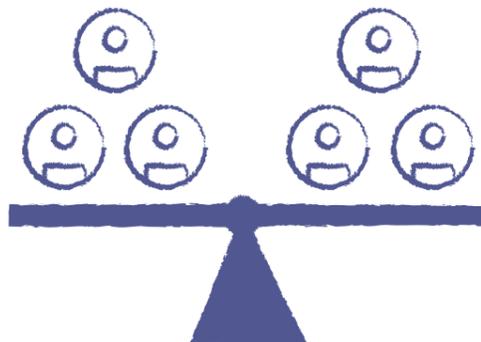
*"From the beginning it was a relief to realise that we were to be supported and not subjected to over zealous scrutiny."*

- Care Home Perspective

For care at home access to information and advice from regulators, and the resulting impacts on the logistics and planning of care have been challenging. Whilst many providers have experienced positive relationships with regulators locally, there continues to be a sense of significant relationship imbalance impacting the ability to give constructive feedback and build trust.

*"It seems to me they slipped very quickly into the sort of blame culture rather than supporting improvement"*

- Care at Home Perspective

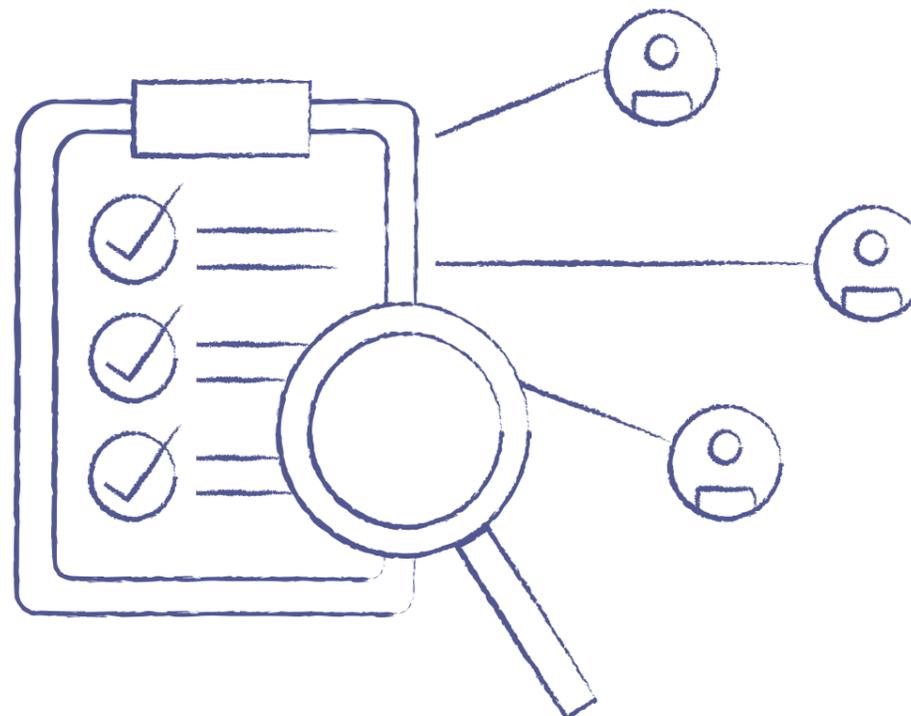


### 2 Expectations and dynamics

Coping with the different demands and expectations of different bodies with a role in regulation has been very challenging. The requirements on services, including through guidance and reporting, reflect a lack of understanding of the sector and have therefore felt incompatible with the delivery of care, particularly during a pandemic. In relation to the changes in service regulation, many commented on the role of the Care Inspectorate who were described as having 'lost their place' within the regulatory landscape.

*"We need to work together, not with them dictating to us what we should be doing particularly when we have been doing quite well for years without the extra instruction."*

- Care Home Perspective



### 3 Opportunities for regulatory bodies

There is an opportunity to re-assess and re-evaluate the role of regulation, particularly in relation to avoiding duplication across the different regulatory bodies and in providing clear access to information to support improvement. Many responses across the surveys and sessions revealed learnings from the pandemic experience that could be taken forward by regulatory bodies in relation to collaborative working, both among the regulators and between the regulator and the provider. For example, the lack of consistent information held on regulatory websites and the language used by each individual regulator could be reviewed to support access to consistent information via a centralised point.

*"The problem you've got is, I'm in the middle of a pandemic, I still need to run a service, I still need to make sure it's fine, I'm going in and out of websites, getting two different messages, having to phone people, people coming back to me, I need an answer, I want it all in the one place and I want the same answer from the two bodies"*

- Care at Home Perspective

Challenges of duplication also extend to information received from different sources and in relation to requests for information, with different formats required by different bodies in terms of documentation and reporting. The potential to use technology in regulation to reduce bureaucracy, enhance efficiency and improve data was highlighted. These improvements provide opportunities to enhance regulatory practice and experience, as well as make a positive impact to people and services across the sector.

*"Too many people wanted to communicate with us, Care Inspectorate, local authority, public health - every day, forms, forms, phone calls."*

- Care Home Perspective