CQC - the three M’s

Now is the time to look at the three M’s: measure, monitor and maintain says Seema Sharma

T
his article explores the key outcomes and performance indicators expected by CQC in the area of quality and management. Practice management system responses take time to prepare and practices need to start to think seriously about next level systems now to avoid quick fix for poor systems. As CQC looks ahead for NHS and private practices, our aim at Dentabyte is to assist practice managers and owners to meet the new requirements by implementing sound management structures that will stand them in good stead when registration becomes mandatory.

Defining Quality
Quality is divided into three domains: Safety, Clinical Effectiveness and the Patient Experience. Practices will be expected to have a quality policy or statement and to submit incident reports to the Care Quality Commission. These would include near misses and health and safety breaches. Measurement, monitoring and maintenance of quality is best done with a regular systematic approach to audit.

Quality indicators for safety
Dental practices have a duty to ensure that safety and safe-guarding patients and team members is a priority at all times. (CQC Section 3)

Safety is a wide-reaching subject covering general health and safety, infection control and use of radiation in dentistry, all of which should be audited in practice at least annually.

The Department of Health have produced a comprehensive infection control audit tool for practices to use covering:
• Prevention of blood-borne virus exposure
• Decontamination
• Environmental design and cleaning
• Hand Hygiene
• Management of dental devices eg water lines
• Personal protective equipment
• Waste Disposal

This can be quite daunting to use, but help is available from trained personnel to assist with implementation of all safety measures. All practices should also be compliant with the new vetting and barring scheme and local child protection pathways, and a range of other health and safety audits are available from the author as well as many large dental organisations.