

Summary: AI and Care Webinar with CQC

Purpose of the Session

The webinar marked the launch of the **AI Alliance in Care**, bringing together care providers, regulators, researchers and technology partners to discuss the responsible use of AI in adult social care. The event focused on CQC's recently published position statement on AI in health and social care.

Key Speakers

- **Katie Thorn (Digital Care Hub)** – Hosted and moderated the session.
 - **Caroline Green (Institute for Ethics in AI, University of Oxford)** – Introduced the AI Alliance in Care and the principles of responsible AI.
 - **Moritz Flockenhaus (CQC Regulatory Policy Manager)** – Explained CQC's role, expectations and future plans regarding AI.
 - **Daniel Casson (Digital Care Hub)** – Led the Q&A discussion.
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Main Messages

1. CQC Supports Innovation but Focuses on Outcomes

CQC's primary concern is not the technology itself, but whether it helps people receive **safe, effective and compassionate care**.

Key points:

- CQC does **not approve or certify AI products**.
- It regulates providers, not technologies.
- Providers must demonstrate that AI improves outcomes for people using services.
- AI should **support, not replace, human decision-making**.

2. Responsible AI Must Align with Care Values

Caroline Green highlighted a definition of responsible AI in social care:

AI should support and not undermine fundamental care values such as human rights, independence, choice, control, dignity, equality and wellbeing.

Both Oxford's work and CQC's approach place the experiences of people receiving care at the centre of AI adoption.

CQC's Expectations for AI Use

CQC's position statement highlights several themes:

- Safety
- Transparency
- Choice and informed consent
- Fairness and impartiality
- Good governance
- Human oversight

Providers should be able to explain:

- Why they are using AI.
 - What benefits it delivers.
 - How they know it is safe.
 - How risks are being managed.
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Training and Skills

Moritz acknowledged that AI literacy requirements will differ depending on role:

- Frontline care workers
- Supervisors
- Registered managers
- Senior leaders

What matters is that everyone using AI has enough understanding to be confident it is helping deliver quality care.

CQC is also:

- Running internal AI upskilling programmes.
 - Training inspectors to understand AI risks and benefits.
 - Working to create more consistency in how innovation is viewed during inspections.
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Consent and Service User Choice

A major issue discussed was informed consent.

Questions raised included:

- How much information should people receive about AI use?
- What happens if someone does not consent to AI-supported care?
- Can alternative, non-AI options be provided?

Moritz stressed that providers must ensure individuals receive enough information to make informed decisions.

Evidence and Demonstrating Benefit

One recurring theme was the lack of robust evidence connecting AI use to improved outcomes.

Examples discussed:

- Ambient voice technology.
- Predictive monitoring systems.
- AI tools that identify changes in wellbeing.

Moritz noted that:

- Efficiency savings are not the same as improved care outcomes.
- Providers need evidence showing that AI delivers tangible benefits for people receiving care.
- CQC wants providers to share examples and evidence of successful use.

Regulation Challenges

Several challenges were identified:

Understanding Emerging Risks

CQC needs better ways to identify new AI risks quickly.

Current difficulties include:

- Limited visibility of harms occurring outside England.
- Delays in reporting and learning from incidents.
- Lack of comprehensive mechanisms for tracking AI-related issues.

Regulatory Gaps

Not all AI tools fall under existing medical device regulations.

This creates uncertainty around:

- Responsibility.
- Safety oversight.
- Accountability.

Moritz emphasised the need for regulators to work together, including:

- MHRA
 - Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)
 - Equality and Human Rights Commission
 - Government departments
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Ethical Use of AI

CQC is not prescribing one specific ethical framework.

Instead, providers should be able to demonstrate:

- How they assessed ethical risks.
- Why they believe their AI use is ethical.
- What safeguards they have implemented.

Simply stating compliance with a standard is less important than showing thoughtful consideration and governance.

Accountability

CQC's position is that:

- CQC regulates organisations, not individual professionals.
 - Responsibility generally sits with the provider and registered manager.
 - Professional regulators may have separate expectations for individual practitioners.
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Learning from AI-Related Harm

If harm occurs:

Providers should ask:

- How was the harm identified?
- What governance failures contributed?
- What lessons can be learned?
- How can recurrence be prevented?

Moritz stressed that technology is only one part of the picture; organisational processes and governance are equally important.

Future Priorities

For CQC

- Continue engagement with providers.
- Gather examples of AI being used successfully.
- Strengthen collaboration with other regulators.
- Develop approaches for identifying emerging risks.
- Integrate AI considerations into future assessment frameworks.

For Providers

- Collect evidence of positive outcomes.
- Share best practice and lessons learned.
- Ensure robust governance and consent processes.
- Engage with regulators to shape future guidance.