**When will the new inspections begin?**

The CQC is inspecting practices as part of its new look regime. It will begin handing out ratings from October this year.

**Who will this affect?**

The CQC is going to inspect all providers of general practice, including out-of-hours providers, by April 2016.

It has picked 12 CCG areas to go first (Brighton and Hove, North East Essex, Cumbria, Enfield, Tameside and Glossop, Lincolnshire West, West Kent, West Cheshire, Merton, West London, South Warwickshire and Dorset) and it aims to inspect 25% of the practices and providers in each CCG in six-month blocks.

But practices inspected before October will have to be inspected again before April 2016, regardless of how the inspection went.

**What’s changed from the previous regime?**

Most significantly a GP, a specialist inspector and a nurse or practice manager will be part of every inspection. GP trainees and patients may also attend some inspections.

GPs will also be given ratings - modelled on those given to schools by Ofsted - in 42 different areas, and based on 11 fundamental standards. The CQC will determine practices’ ratings across six patient groups, five key questions and combinations of each. These will feed into the practice’s overall rating, which can be ‘outstanding’, ‘good’, ‘needs improvement’, or ‘inadequate’. Practices will be required to display their rating in the waiting rooms and the CQC will send a letter to the local area team with the results.

Other new elements include:

* Inspectors sitting in on consultations -  the CQC  said this wouldn’t be for every inspection, but that their inspectors ‘reserved the right’ to observe consultations with patient consent.
* Collecting evidence, this will be ongoing, but ‘information gathering’ (handbook page 10) will take place before inspections – including patient, area team and CCG feedback – and during, where they will interview staff and review the practices.
* ‘More rigour’, the GPC’s contracts and regulations lead, Dr Robert Morley, said that the new inspections would be ‘more rigorous’. He added that the whole process would be more stressful and time consuming.
* Two weeks’ notice, an extension on the two days for previous inspections, but the CQC reserves the right to make unannounced spot-checks where concerns have been raised.

**What will happen after the inspections?**

Where no regulations were breached but inspectors think improvements need to be made they will make recommendations, or issue enforcement actions.

Practices that are found to be inadequate in a number of areas will be put in ‘special measures’ unless they improve within six months. This will allow the CQC, in partnership with NHS England, to set out clear expectations for improvement, including a timescale to sort out problems.

If there is still no improvement with a further six months, the practices will have their registrations removed.