

# Inside CQC: Mary Cridge

**Mary Cridge, recently appointed Deputy Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care at the Care Quality Commission, introduces herself and explains why making a difference to people's lives has been the driving force behind her career choices.**

Hello, my name is Mary and in September I joined the Adult Social Care team, taking up the post of Deputy Chief Inspector in our Central region. Prior to that, I was part of our Hospitals Directorate for five years, working in the South West with a great team and, I'm pleased to say, leaving a trail of improvement behind us. I'm grateful for the opportunity to write for the Inside CQC column this month and have the chance to tell you a little about myself, my background in health and social care and what I hope to bring to my new role.

I would describe myself as a professional regulator having worked in regulation for many years, in both the private and public sectors. I have covered everything from electricity supply, legal services, charities and health and social care. I joined the Healthcare Commission before the CQC was born, just at the point when the first annual health checks were introduced. I have stayed in regulation because I have seen the very positive impact that good regulation can have; driving improvement, raising standards and making things better both for those delivering a service and those receiving it.

All of the roles I have held, and the organisations I have been part of, have had a focus on aiming to make a difference to people's lives. This is, and will remain, the key driver in my career and it is one of the reasons I took on my new role. As well as leading our Central team I am also leading on change and quality improvement within adult social care.

I have another role at CQC as our Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, which I took on in 2016. If my career in regulation has shown me anything, it is that there is an incredibly strong correlation between the culture of an organisation – including the experience of the people who work there – and the experience and lives of people who receive the service.

There is a large and growing body of evidence which shows that people will have a better experience and better outcomes in a place where the staff are well engaged, feel comfortable to challenge their colleagues and are able to speak up. I am a passionate believer in a positive speaking-up culture; creating a place where it is safe to come up with a new idea, safe to have a

drastically different opinion to others, and safe to make a mistake but learn from it. I believe that all providers should have a strong focus on making the culture of their organisation open and honest, no matter what their size.

In her [\*\*last column\*\*](#) for Care Management Matters, Kate Terroni talked about innovation and the benefits it can bring to services in health and social care. As the adult social care lead on change and improvement at the CQC, I know that my role will involve speaking to lots of stakeholders and providers about what new innovative practices they are using to overcome challenges, including using new technologies.

Technology can transform a service, there is no doubt about that, but I also always stress that we must get the basics right as the core of a good service. A big part of this is working across the health and care sectors to create a smoother patient journey; cross-sector working is becoming more and more prevalent as time goes on and is definitely a priority for CQC going forward.

Thank you for reading my first column for Care Management Matters and I hope this has given you a bit of an insight into what I will bring to my new role. I hope to have the opportunity to write for you again and share with you some more of my views on hot topics in adult social care.

**Mary Cridge is Deputy Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care at the Care Quality Commission. Share your thoughts and feedback on Mary's column below.**