Starter checklist: how to start a domiciliary care agency in the UK

General guidance only, not legal or regulatory advice.

Checked June 2026 — verify each step against the official sources (CQC, GOV.UK, Companies House, ICO, Skills for Care).

1. Set up the business

- [ ] Decide your business structure (most agencies: limited company)
- [ ] Register the company with Companies House
- [ ] Register as an employer (PAYE) with HMRC and open a business bank account
- [ ] Appoint an accountant who understands care
- [ ] Register and pay the data protection fee with the ICO

2. Get ready to register with CQC

- [ ] Identify and secure your registered manager (and nominated individual)
- [ ] Write your Statement of Purpose
- [ ] Put your core policies and procedures in place
- [ ] Arrange enhanced DBS checks for everyone who needs one
- [ ] Take out insurance: employer's liability (min £5m), public liability, professional indemnity

3. Register with CQC

- [ ] Create your CQC provider account and complete the application
- [ ] Submit the registered manager application with evidence
- [ ] Prepare for the fit-person registration interview
- [ ] Wait for your decision — deliver no personal care until it is granted

4. Build the operation

- [ ] Choose your care management system (compare options first)
- [ ] Recruit, reference and induct your first carers (Care Certificate, mandatory training)
- [ ] Set your pricing from your true cost per hour, including travel time
- [ ] Line up your first clients (local authority framework and/or private)

5. Stay compliant from day one

- [ ] Keep care plans person-centred and current
- [ ] Make sure daily notes match the care plans
- [ ] Hold a working-capital buffer to cover payroll before income arrives
- [ ] Diarise reviews, audits, and your CQC annual fee and notifications