



What can
you expect
from a **good**
home-care
agency?



If you (or a member of your family or a friend) receive personal care in your own home (home care) from an agency in England, this booklet will tell you what you can expect from a good service.

Personal care means help with things like eating, washing and using the toilet. It does not include household tasks like cleaning, cooking or shopping, although many agencies do these as well. There is a separate booklet like this one for people who receive care in a care home.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC)

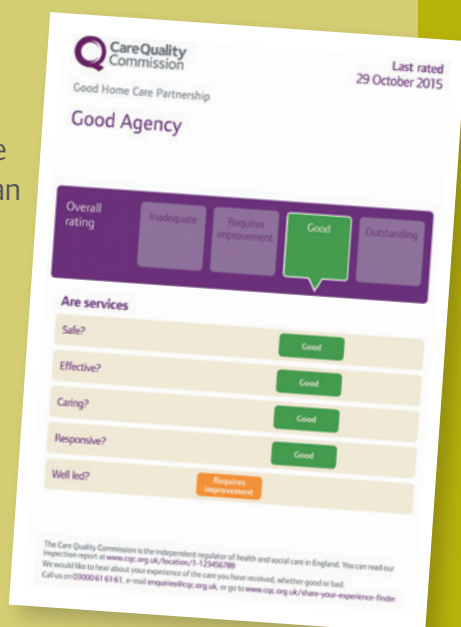
Our job is to monitor and inspect health and adult social care services such as home-care agencies, care homes and hospitals. We inspect these services to make sure they give you high-quality care and we give them a rating of 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'. If a service needs to improve, we will take action to make sure this happens.

When we inspect each service, we always find out whether or not it is:

- safe;
- effective;
- caring;
- responsive to people's needs; and
- well-led.

This booklet describes what you can expect from a home-care agency if it was rated as **good** in each of the areas listed above. Some exceptional agencies perform even better than this and will be rated outstanding for one or more of these five areas. Others may require improvement or, where we have found more serious issues, we rate them as inadequate.

We combine these ratings to give each agency a single overall rating. Each agency must display our ratings in its office using a poster like the one here and on its website. You'll see that a good agency may still have areas that need improvement, but we still think they're good overall. Ask the agency to display their ratings if you can't see them.





You can expect a good home-care agency to keep you **SAFE** because...

- You feel safe and protected by staff, but you also have as much freedom as possible to do the things you want to do – regardless of your disability or other needs.
- Staff protect your dignity and human rights and respect you as an individual.
- There are enough staff to make sure you receive a reliable service that is not rushed. Staff have the right mix of skills to make sure you are kept safe.
- If the person caring for you needs to change at short notice, you are told so that you know who to expect.
- You are protected from being bullied, harassed, harmed or abused. Abuse includes neglect and financial abuse.
- Staff deal with incidents and accidents quickly and openly (and investigate them if necessary) and they learn from mistakes.
- Staff give you your medicine safely and store it correctly. Where possible, the agency involves you in reviewing your medicines and supports you to be as independent as possible.
- Any equipment that the agency uses is well maintained. You should feel confident that your belongings are safe and secure.



You can expect a good home-care agency to be **EFFECTIVE** because...

- You are introduced to any staff who are going to provide your care.
- The staff are chosen because they can provide you with the right care, based on their knowledge, qualifications and skills.
- You are always asked to give your consent (permission) to care, treatment and support in a way you can understand. If appropriate, your friends and family are also involved in decisions about your care.
- Staff take steps at the right time to make sure you stay in good health.
- Staff know about your health needs and personal preferences. They regularly involve you in decisions about your care and treatment and give you as much choice and control as possible.
- Staff make sure you get the right food and drink you need, and that you have enough of it.
- You are regularly asked for your views about the service you receive, and your feedback is consistently good.



You can expect a good home-care agency to be **CARING** because...

- Staff know about your background, likes, hopes and needs. This includes any needs you have because of your age, disability, sex (gender), gender identity, race, religion or belief, or sexuality (whether you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual).
- You are encouraged to express your views, no matter how complex your needs are.
- You have access to advocates (people who can speak on your behalf).
- Staff treat you with dignity and respect. They have time to develop trusting relationships with you and are concerned for your wellbeing.



You can expect a good home-care agency to be **RESPONSIVE** to your needs because...

- Your care, treatment and support are set out in a written plan that describes what staff need to do to make sure you receive personalised care.
- You, and your family and friends where appropriate, are actively involved in developing this plan and it reflects your personal choices. For example, you should be able to have a choice about who provides you with personal care, such as help with washing and dressing.
- As your needs and preferences change, your plan is changed, and all those who need to know, like other services, are kept up to date.
- The plan includes information about the whole of your life, including your goals, your abilities and how you want to manage your health. You may also have a health action plan.
- If you need to visit hospital or use another service, staff plan this with you to make sure it goes as smoothly as possible.
- If you have any concerns or complaints, staff always take them seriously, investigate them thoroughly and respond to them in good time.





You can expect a good home-care agency to be **WELL-LED** because...

- Staff know what is expected of them and are happy in their work.
- Staff are supported by their managers, and can easily meet other staff members to share views and information.
- Staff have the confidence to report any concerns they have about the care that colleagues, carers and other professionals give. When this happens they are supported and their concerns are thoroughly investigated.
- Staff and managers work effectively with others who may be involved in caring for you, such as your local council.
- Managers know what their responsibilities are and are always honest, including when things go wrong.

What to do if you have concerns about your home-care agency

If you, or someone you care for, experience poor care you can do the following.

- **Raise your concerns with the home-care agency**

You should tell the managers of the agency about your concerns. If they cannot deal with your concerns straight away, you can use their formal complaints process.

By law, every home-care agency must have an efficient process for handling complaints. If you are not happy with the way the agency handles your complaint, you can contact your local council if they pay for your care.

If you are not satisfied with the response from the agency or the council, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman by phoning **0300 061 0614** or visiting **www.lgo.org.uk**. This applies if you pay for your own care or if the council pays for it.

- **Tell CQC**

We want you to tell us about your experiences of care. It helps us decide when, where and what to inspect, and to take action to prevent poor care happening to others in future.

We also want to hear about good experiences of care. See the back cover for the best way to tell us about all your experiences.

Local support groups, such as a local Healthwatch, and voluntary and community organisations also give us information about people's experiences of care.

However, it is important to know that we cannot make complaints for you or take them up on your behalf because we do not have powers to investigate or resolve them.

How we carry out inspections and take action

When we inspect a home-care agency, we talk to people about their experiences of care, as well as talking to the staff and checking the systems and processes that the agency uses. We may also look at records about the care that you receive – we must follow strict rules about protecting your information. We often involve other experts in our inspections, including members of the public who have experience of using care services. We call these people 'Experts by Experience'.

We will take action if we find that a home-care agency is not meeting the standards of care everyone has a right to expect (called the fundamental standards). The agency must tell us what they will do to put things right. We can also:

- issue a fine or formal warning; and
- take action to close the agency (in extreme cases).

How we keep you informed

Check our website to see our ratings for your home-care agency. You can search by the agency's name, place or postcode. Our latest inspection report will describe the good practice we have found, any concerns we have, and any action we have asked it to take to improve. You can also:

- tell us about your experiences of care;
- sign up for emails when we publish new inspection reports;
- sign up to our monthly e-newsletter to get our latest news; and
- join our public online community to help us do our job better.

How to contact us

Call us on: **03000 616161** (national rates apply)

Email us at: **enquiries@cqc.org.uk**

Look at our website at: **www.cqc.org.uk**

Write to us at: **Care Quality Commission, Citygate,
Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA**

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook:

 **@CareQualityComm**

 **www.facebook.com/CareQualityCommission**

Download this booklet in other formats on our website. Contact us if you would like this booklet in another language or format.

How we use your information

If you have given us your contact details we will always make sure your information is protected and treated securely. We will not usually share your information without your permission, but there may be exceptional circumstances where we need to do this. We will keep any details you give us in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and our Code of Practice on Confidential Personal Information (which we publish on our website).

