



About us

What we do and how we do it



We are the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.

We make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care and we encourage care services to improve.

We register health and adult social care services that meet the ‘fundamental standards’ of quality and safety.

Before a care provider can carry out any of the activities that we regulate, they must register with us and satisfy us that they will be able to meet a number of legal requirements, including the fundamental standards on the next page. Activities we regulate include the treatment, care and support provided by hospitals, GP practices, dental practices, ambulance services, care homes and home-care agencies.

You have a right to expect the following fundamental standards.

You **must have enough to eat and drink** to keep you in good health while you receive care and treatment.

You **must have care or treatment that is tailored to you** and meets your needs and preferences.

You **must be treated with dignity and respect** at all times while you're receiving care and treatment.

The **place** where you receive care and treatment **and the equipment** used in it **must be clean, suitable and looked after** properly.

You (or anybody legally acting on your behalf) **must give your consent** before any care or treatment is given to you.

You **must not be given unsafe care or treatment** or be put at risk of harm that could be avoided.

You **must not suffer any form of abuse** or improper treatment while receiving care.

The provider of your care **must have a system to handle and respond to complaints.**

The provider of your care **must have enough suitably qualified, competent and experienced staff** to make sure they can meet these standards.

If something goes wrong with your care and treatment, the provider of your care **must tell you what has happened, provide support and apologise.**

The provider of your care **must have plans that make sure they can meet these standards.**

The provider of your care **must display their CQC rating** in a place where you can see it.

The provider of your care **must only employ people** who can provide care and treatment **appropriate to their role.**

We monitor and inspect services to see whether they are safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

Once a service has registered with us, we monitor it continuously. The information we gather, which includes the views of the public, helps us decide when, where and what to inspect.

Inspections give us an opportunity to talk to staff and people who use services. They also allow us to observe care and to check the systems and processes that the service uses. We may also look at people's records to see how their needs are managed, following strict rules about protecting their information.

There are five questions we ask of all care services. They are at the heart of the way we regulate and they help us to make sure we focus on the things that matter to you. We ask the following 'key questions' of each service.

- **Is it safe?** Are you protected from abuse and avoidable harm?
- **Is it effective?** Does your care, treatment and support achieve good results and help you maintain your quality of life, and is it based on the best available evidence?
- **Is it caring?** Do staff involve you and treat you with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect?
- **Is it responsive?** Are services organised so that they can meet your needs?
- **Is it well-led?** Does the leadership of the organisation make sure that it's providing high-quality care that's based around your needs? And does it encourage learning and innovation and promote an open and fair culture?

We protect the rights of people made vulnerable by their circumstances, including those whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.

We are responsible for monitoring and reporting on the use of the Mental Health Act (MHA), and our findings guide our ratings of services. We visit people whose rights are restricted by the MHA, and act on any matters of concern. We also provide a service to safeguard (protect) patients who refuse their treatment or are considered to be unable to give their consent.

We listen to and act on your experiences.

Information about your experience of care is very important to us. It helps us to make sure that health and social care services in England provide people with safe, effective, compassionate and high-quality care. It also helps us prevent poor care and abuse happening in the future. See the back page for how to contact us.

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 the powers to investigate or resolve them. The only exception to this is for people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.

We involve the public and people who receive care in our work, and we work in partnership with other organisations and local groups.

We involve people who use health and social care services in all areas of our work, including our inspections. Some of the organisations we work with include Healthwatch England, NHS Improvement, NHS England and Ofsted.

We publish information about the quality of individual services, including reports and ratings, to help people choose their care.

After each inspection, we produce a report and publish it on our website. The reports set out what our findings on each of the five key questions mean for the people who use the service. We describe the good practice we find, as well as any concerns we have.

In most cases our reports include ratings to help you understand how good each local service is. Our ratings are:



We give the service an overall rating which it must display to the public.

We also give a rating for each of our five key questions.

We take action if care services are failing to meet the fundamental standards.

If we find that care has fallen short of the fundamental standards, we use our powers to:

- protect you from harm and make sure you receive care that meets the standards you have a right to expect; and
- make sure services improve.

The actions we take depend on how serious the problems we have identified are and how they affect the people who use the service.

We may do the following.

- Give care providers notices setting out what improvements they must make and by when.
- Hold the care provider to account by:
 - issuing simple cautions;
 - issuing fines;
 - prosecuting cases where people are harmed or placed in danger of harm.
- Limit what the care provider may do for a set time.
- Place a care provider in 'special measures', which gives them a clear timetable within which they must improve the quality of care they provide or we will take further action (for example, cancel their registration).

We publish regional and national views of the quality of health and social care, and encourage improvement by highlighting good practice.

As a regulator and inspector we can provide a unique view on the quality of health and adult social care in England, helping to share learning and encourage improvement across the sectors. We carry out and publish reviews and specific inspection programmes that focus on particular aspects of health and social care, including:

- the experiences of certain groups of people;
- how different services work together to care for people; and
- the quality of particular services, or all services, in an area.

How to contact us

Call us > 03000 616161

Email us > enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Look at our website > www.cqc.org.uk

Write to us > Care Quality Commission, Citygate,
Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA

Follow us on Twitter > @CareQualityComm

Please 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 make sure your information is protected and kept secure. 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 (see www.cqc.org.uk/privacy).



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