

What can  
you expect  
from a **good**  
**hospital?**



**If you (or a member of your family or a friend) receive care, treatment or support in a hospital in England, this booklet will tell you what you can expect from a good service.**

## The Care Quality Commission (CQC)

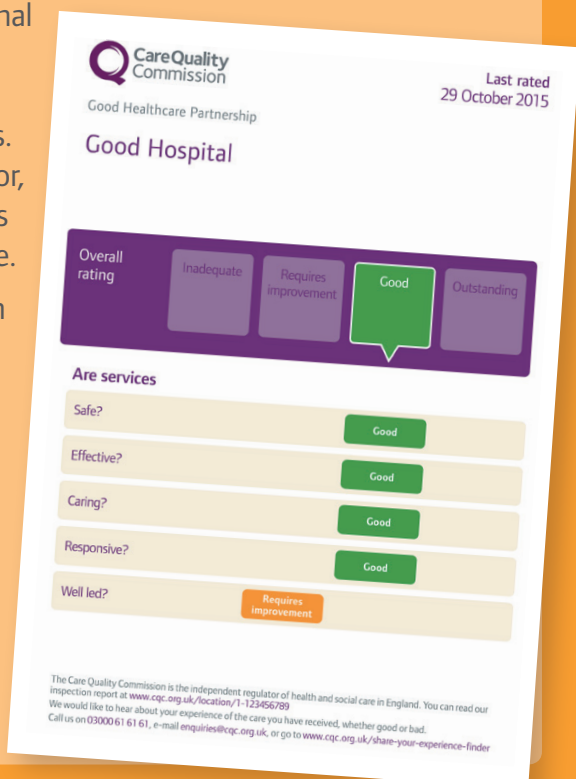
Our job is to inspect health and adult social care services such as your local hospitals, care homes and GP practices. We inspect these services to make sure they give you high-quality care and we give them a rating of 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'. If a service needs 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 should expect from a hospital service, such as surgery or outpatients, if we rated it as **good** in each of the five areas listed above. Some exceptional services 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 for each service to give a single overall rating to your hospital. Each hospital must display our ratings, so look out for a poster like the one here. You'll see that a good hospital may still have areas that need improvement, but we still think they're good overall. Ask the hospital to display the poster if you can't see it.





## In a good hospital, you can expect to be **SAFE** because...

- There are always enough staff on duty with the right skills, knowledge and experience.
- Staff keep checking any possible risks to your safety. For example, they look out for signs that your health could be getting worse and then take steps to improve it.
- If something goes wrong with your care or treatment, the hospital investigates how it happened and why, you receive an apology, and the hospital tells you what it will do to improve and stop the same thing happening to other people.
- Staff take particular care to make sure that children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable are kept safe from harm.
- Staff ask for advice from their colleagues where necessary.
- Your care records are complete and accurate, and they are stored securely to keep them confidential.
- The hospital has plans for how to deal with emergencies and busy periods.
- The hospital is clean and staff make sure that the risk of infection is as low as possible.



## You can expect a good hospital to be **EFFECTIVE** because...

- Staff understand what you need to keep you as healthy as possible. This includes making sure you have enough to eat and drink.
- Staff have the right knowledge, qualifications, skills and experience to treat you in line with professional guidance.
- Staff have access to the information they need to help them manage your care, such as your medical records, and they help you to understand your treatment.
- You are always asked to give your consent (permission) to your care or treatment. Staff will support you to make decisions if you need them to.
- Different teams work together to make sure your care is well co-ordinated.
- The hospital compares its results with other hospitals and it compares well.



## You can expect a good hospital to be **CARING** because...

- You are treated with dignity, kindness and respect and you feel that staff support and care about you.
- You are involved in decisions about your care and staff spend time talking with you.
- Your care, treatment and health condition are explained to you in a way that you can understand.
- Staff are compassionate when you need help and think ahead to plan what you might need.
- Staff help you to manage your own health and to stay as independent as possible.

- Staff help you and those close to you to cope emotionally with your care and treatment, and they help you to keep in contact with your friends and family.
- You have enough privacy.



## You can expect a good hospital to be **RESPONSIVE** to your needs because...

- The hospital thinks about your individual needs when planning your care and treatment.
- It makes adjustments where possible to take account of things such as your age, disability, sex (gender), gender identity, race, religion or belief, or sexuality (whether you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual).
- As far as possible, you are able to use services at a time to suit you.
- The appointments system is easy for everyone to use.
- The hospital tries to avoid long waiting times, delays and cancellations.
- Staff tell you about any changes or disruptions that may affect your treatment.
- It is easy for you to make a complaint or raise a concern. If you do, the hospital takes it seriously, responds quickly and makes any necessary improvements.



## You can expect a good hospital to be **WELL-LED** because...

- Providing safe, high-quality, compassionate care is important to the people in charge at every level of the hospital.
- The hospital is open about how well it is performing.
- The hospital listens to your views and uses your feedback to improve the way it provides services.
- The hospital encourages its staff to raise concerns and listens to what they have to say. Any concerns are investigated and acted on.



## What to do if you have concerns about your hospital

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

- **Raise your concerns with the hospital**

You should tell staff at the hospital about your concerns. If they cannot deal with your concerns straight away, you can go through the hospital's formal complaints process.

By law, every hospital must have an efficient process for handling complaints. If you have a complaint about an NHS hospital, you have rights, which are explained at **[www.nhs.uk/NHSConstitution](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSConstitution)**.

If you are not happy with the way your NHS hospital deals with your complaint, you can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman by phoning **0345 015 4033** or visiting **[www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)**.

If you are not happy with the way a hospital that is not run by the NHS deals with your complaint, you can contact the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service by phoning **020 3713 1746** or visiting **[www.iscas.org.uk](http://www.iscas.org.uk)**.



- **Tell us**

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 hospital we talk to people about their experiences of care, as well as checking the hospital's systems and processes. 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 hospital is not meeting the standards of care everyone has a right to expect (called the fundamental standards). The hospital must tell us what it will do to put things right. We can also:

- issue a fine or a formal warning;
- stop patients being admitted into care services if they are at risk of serious harm; and
- take action to close a hospital (in extreme cases).

## How we keep you informed

Check our website to see our ratings for your hospital. You can search by the hospital'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).

