



# Complaining about the Care Quality Commission

October 2016

## About the Care Quality Commission

We are the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Our job is to register, monitor and inspect health and social care services, such as local doctors, hospitals and care homes. We do this to make sure they give you care that is safe, effective and caring.

When we inspect each service, we judge how good it is and we publish a report about it on our website, which includes a rating of 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'. If a service needs to improve, we will take action to make sure this happens.

## Introduction

We encourage and welcome your comments and suggestions about how we are doing our job. We value your feedback and use it to improve how we work as an organisation, and how our staff carry out their roles.

This booklet explains what to do if you think we have got something wrong and want to complain to us. It also explains how we will handle your complaint.

## Our standards of service

If you complain to us, we will:

- listen carefully to your concern
- be polite and helpful
- deal with your complaint fairly and efficiently
- tell you how we are getting on with your complaint
- admit any mistakes we have made and put matters right whenever possible
- try to help you to find the right organisation to talk to if we cannot deal with your complaint ourselves.

## Complaints our National Complaints Team can deal with

We **can** deal with complaints from anyone directly affected by the way we carry out our work, including complaints about members of our staff or people working for us. You can also make a complaint on someone else's behalf (such as a relative or someone you care for).

This includes where you think we have:

- made administrative mistakes (such as providing the wrong information or taking longer than we said we would to do something)
- behaved in an unprofessional way
- not followed the proper procedures or met the right standards that we are supposed to work by.

## Complaints our National Complaints Team cannot deal with

There are some issues raised with us that our National Complaints Team **cannot** deal with. These include complaints about:

- Evidence and ratings from our inspections. These are handled under separate processes, which can be found on our website at: [www.cqc.org.uk/content/requesting-review-ratings](http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/requesting-review-ratings).
- The enforcement action we take if we find that a care provider or manager is not meeting fundamental standards. These are also handled under separate processes, which can be found on our website at: [www.cqc.org.uk/content/enforcement-action-and-representations](http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/enforcement-action-and-representations).
- Working for CQC from current or former CQC employees. These are handled by our Human Resources team.
- Contractual or commercial disputes.
- The Government, the Department of Health, NHS bodies, local councils and other organisations that we work with.
- The fees that care providers pay to us to remain registered, as this is a legal requirement. The only exception to this is where we have made a mistake and charged the wrong fee.
- Complaints about providers of health and social care (see below).

## Complaints about providers of health and social care

We are responsible for checking that every care provider that is registered with us meets fundamental standards of quality and safety. However, the duties that we've been given by Parliament do not include dealing with individual complaints about providers' services.

We have published a separate leaflet and a web page that explains how to complain about a care provider at: [www.cqc.org.uk/content/complain-about-service-or-provider](http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/complain-about-service-or-provider)

Our website also has information about how to report a serious concern, both as a member of the public at: [www.cqc.org.uk/content/report-concern-if-you-are-member-public](http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/report-concern-if-you-are-member-public), and as a member of staff at a care service at: [www.cqc.org.uk/content/report-concern-if-you-are-member-staff](http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/report-concern-if-you-are-member-staff)

## How we will handle your complaint

We want to make sure that if you tell us something has gone wrong, you feel that we will handle it efficiently and helpfully.

We will look at your complaint as soon as we receive it. Our National Complaints Team will aim to resolve complaints within seven working days where possible. If we decide that we cannot deal with your complaint, we will aim to explain our reason within seven working days also.

Not all issues can be resolved quickly, and in some cases we will need to carry out an investigation. We will talk with you about how we will handle your complaint and whether we need more information to help with our enquiries. We will also give you the name and contact details of the person handling your complaint.

Once we fully understand your complaint and what you would like to see happen, we will try to complete the investigation and provide a written reply within 30 working days. This will tell you everything we have done, or plan to do, to put things right. If we cannot reply in that time, we will tell you about the delay and explain the reason for it.

### Recording complaints

To improve our customer service, we keep a record of all the complaints we receive. This helps us decide the best way to sort out new problems. We also

share what we learn from complaints with staff across CQC, making sure people cannot be identified. See the back page for more information about how we handle your information.

## Support in making a complaint

### Advocacy services

If you would like help in making your complaint, you can contact a local advocacy service to support you throughout the complaints process. For a list of advocacy services in your area you can contact your local council or Citizen's Advice Bureau – [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

### Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is a free service that looks at complaints from individuals about public organisations. You can tell them about your complaint at any time, but they may encourage you to go through our procedure before they look into your complaint.

If you want the ombudsman to look at your complaint, you must ask a Member of Parliament to send it to them.

To find out more, visit the Ombudsman's website at [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk) or ring their helpline on 0345 015 4033.

## Data protection and freedom of information

We will handle your information in line with the law. The Data Protection Act 1998 gives you the right to see some of the information that we hold about you (personal data), such as letters or emails. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, you can also see other information, such as our policies and procedures or statistics about our work.

If you are not satisfied with the way we respond if you ask for information, you should contact our information access team by emailing [information.access@cqc.org.uk](mailto:information.access@cqc.org.uk). If you are still not happy with the way we have dealt with your request, you can complain to the Information Commissioner. To find out how, visit the Commissioner's website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk) or ring their helpline on 0303 123 1113.

## How to contact us

If you have a complaint about CQC, please contact our National Customer Service Centre who will quickly pass it on to our National Complaints Team.

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

Email us at: **[enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)**

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

Look at our website: **[www.cqc.org.uk/contact](http://www.cqc.org.uk/contact)**

Please contact us if you would like to receive this publication in other formats or languages. If you need help to make a complaint, we can arrange for an interpreter, translator or signer to support you.

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