How well hospitals followed the Mental Health Act in the last year
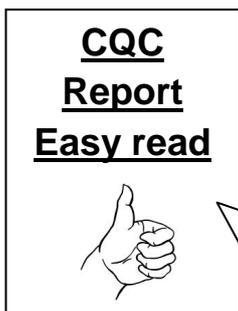
Easy read report   (November 2016)

This is an easy read version of the report called 'Monitoring the Mental Health Act 2015/16'.

It is written by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). We check services like hospitals, doctors' surgeries and care homes to make sure they are giving good health and social care to people.
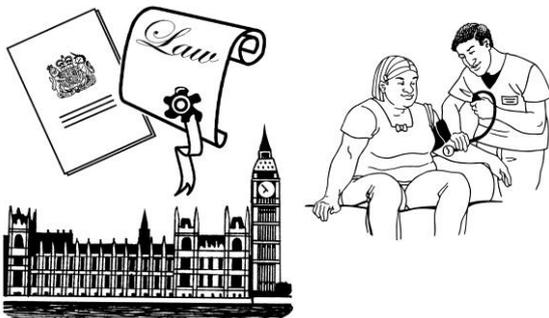
This report tells you how well mental health hospitals followed the law called the Mental Health Act 1983 (MHA) to care for patients between Spring 2015 to Spring 2016.

CQC Report Easy read

About the report

There are 57 NHS hospitals and 161 private hospitals that give mental health services to patients in England.
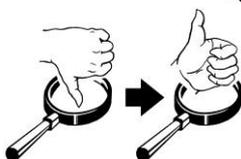
A law called the Mental Health Act 1983 (MHA) tells hospitals how they can care for their patients.

In the last year, CQC made more than 1,300 visits to hospitals, and spoke with over 4,200 patients to ask what their care is like and to look at how the hospitals care for their patients.

We told hospitals to take 7,000 actions to make services better.

We saw many examples of good care, and met many good staff who give the best support and treatment to their patients.

Code of Practice

But not all hospitals give good care. The level of care is different in all hospitals and some hospitals don't follow the 'Code of Practice'.

Code of Practice

The Code of Practice is a list of rules on how to care for someone.

We will make sure that our teams use our powers from the law to improve the care given to patients and to help staff get the training and support they need to do this.

Important goals to make changes for better care


This report is the 7th report about how well hospitals are following the MHA each year. But we are finding that we talk about the same findings about the hospitals every year – that they are still not all giving good care to their patients.

All organisations and groups need to make changes to make sure patients get good levels of care and treatment under the MHA.

1. Hospitals
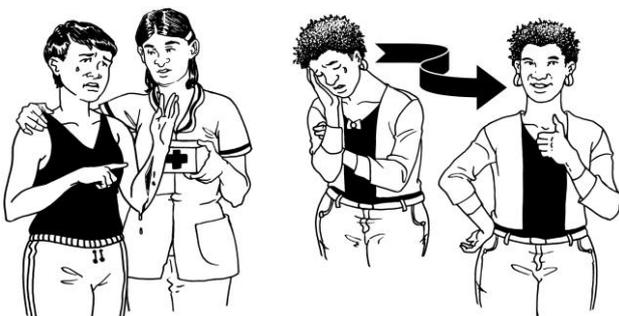
Hospitals need to do more to follow the MHA so that patients get better care. This includes:

- having good managers,

- giving training and support to their staff so that they have a good understanding and knowledge of the Code of Practice,

- letting patients have a say in what care they want from the moment they start using their services.

Hospitals need to look at how to follow the MHA better by keeping their patients safe from harm and helping them to get better.

2. Local health organisations

Local health organisations should:

- look at the agreements they make with hospitals to make sure they follow the MHA and the Code of Practice,

- think about ways to help hospitals give good care to patients in their areas,

- always ask patients about their views and experiences, and contact other local groups for their help.

Agreements with Hospitals

Code of Practice

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3. The government and other national organisations

The Department of Health and national organisations should work together to find better ways to give patients good care and look at how they can treat patients as early as they can.

Organisations called NHS England and NHS Improvement need to:

- make sure that hospitals follow the MHA

- look at how they can treat patients as early as they can

- give care plans for patients who come to the hospital many times, so less patients come to the hospital in 5 years' time.

- find ways to make sure fewer people from Black and ethnic minority groups, and others have to come to hospital.

All organisations must work with an organisation called NHS Digital so they have more information about how the MHA is working for patients and what different groups think about going to hospital.

The managers of these organisations should also make sure they fill in and correctly record information about their organisation.

National organisations should work with other organisations that look after patients with mental health problems to find ways to make their services better.

What CQC will do

CQC will check and use its powers to help hospitals improve their use of the MHA so patients get good care.

We will:

- work closely with NHS Digital, NHS England, NHS Improvement and the Department of Health to have more reports about the areas we check during 2017. This will include checking hospitals to see why more patients are visiting them and looking at how hospitals are giving care to patients.
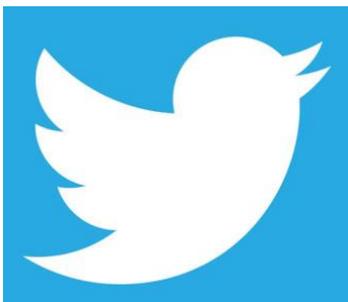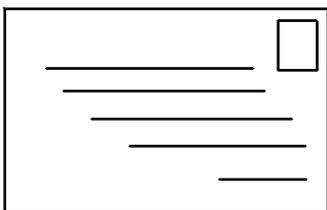
- write more information for CQC staff to help them check if hospitals know about the MHA.

- find out how we can get better at looking at information about equality when we do our checks on hospitals.

How to contact CQC

If you would like this report in another format or language, or you would like to tell us something, you can contact us at:

Phone: **03000 61 61 61**

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

Website: **http://www.cqc.org.uk**

Post:

Care Quality Commission

Citygate

Gallowgate

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 4PA

Twitter: **@CareQualityComm**