About CQC

March 2026

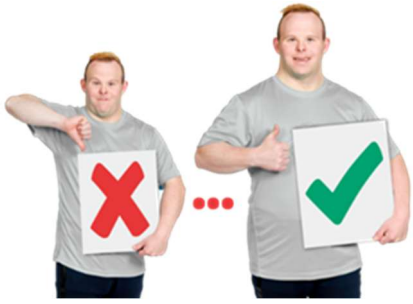
Easy read version of ‘About CQC’

What we do and how we do it

About this booklet

We are the Care Quality Commission (**CQC**). We check services like hospitals and care homes to make sure they give good health and social care to people.

Services must register with us (go on our list) and follow the law about giving good care.



We can act to make sure poor services get better.

What you should expect about the care you receive

When services give you care or treatment they should:

- give you care and treatment that is right for you

- treat you with respect

- only treat or care for you if you agree (or someone who can speak for you agrees)

- give you safe care or treatment

- make sure you have enough to eat or drink

- look after the buildings and equipment properly

- deal with complaints properly

- have plans to help them meet good levels of care

- have enough staff who are well-trained and understand how to give good care

- only have staff who can do their job properly

- say sorry, tell you what happened if something goes wrong, and give you support

- put up a sign that shows a CQC **rating** or score for the service in a place where you can see it.

How we check services

Once a service is on our register (list), we keep on checking it. This includes carrying out inspections of care services.

We check services by:

- listening to the public

- talking to staff

- talking to people who use the service

- look at what happens in the service

- looking at people's records to see how they are cared for, making sure their information is kept safe.

We ask these 5 key questions of each service:

1. Is it safe?

2. Is it effective (meaning it gives good results)?

3. Is it caring?

4. Is it responsive (meaning it meet's people's needs)?

5. Is it well-led (meaning it is managed well)?

Difficulties in mental health services

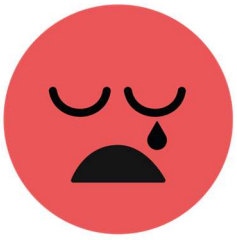
We write our findings in a report about each service we check. These reports are on our website.

We give each service a **rating** or score of:

- Outstanding (meaning really good)

- Good

- Requires improvement (meaning it needs to get better)



- Inadequate (meaning it is poor)

How we protect people's rights who are at risk of harm

We look after the rights of people who are vulnerable (at risk of harm).

This includes people who:

- are treated under a law called the Mental Health Act

- say that they do not want treatment

- cannot agree to treatment for themselves.

How we involve people

We listen to and act on what happened to you when you used a care service. This helps us to make sure people get good and safe care and stops people getting poor care.

We involve the public and people who use care services in all areas of our work, including when we check a service.

We also work closely with care organisations and local groups, like Healthwatch England, NHS Improvement, NHS England and Ofsted.

But we cannot make complaints about services for you, unless you are being treated under the Mental Health Act.

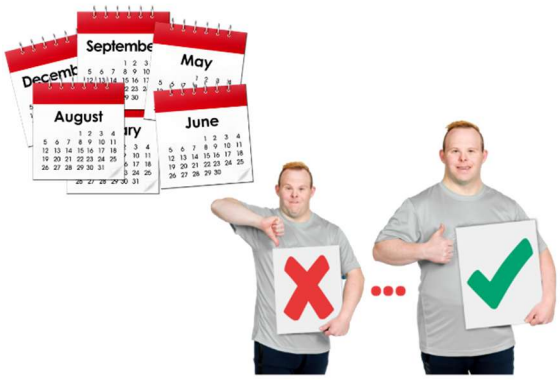
What we do if a service does not give good care

If a service does not give you the care you should be able to expect, we can:

- protect you from harm and make sure you get good care

- make sure the service gets better.

What we do depends on how serious the problems are and how they affect the people who use the service.



We may:

- tell the service what they need to do better and by when

- fine them

- take them to court if people are harmed or in danger

- say which care they can give or even taking them off our list.

Other things we do

As we find out what health and social care is like in England on our inspections, we help to share learning and ask services to improve.

We write reports on subjects like:

- what happened to groups of people when they were cared for

- how different services work together to care for people in an area.

How to contact us

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Our website:

www.cqc.org.uk

Write to us:

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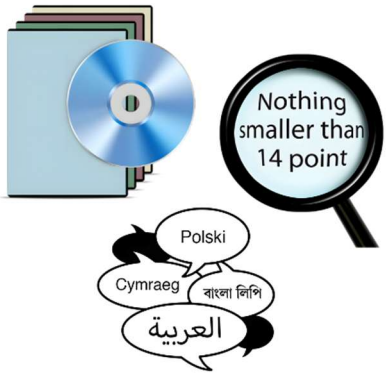

Please ask us if you would like this booklet in a different language or format.

We will keep to the law and our rules to make sure your personal information is safe.

We will only share your information if you say we can, or if there is a really good reason for sharing it.