



About us

What we do and how we do it

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What we do

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

We make sure that the care provided by hospitals, dentists, ambulances, care homes and home-care agencies meets government standards of quality and safety.

We also protect the interests of vulnerable people, including those whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.



We put the views, experiences, health and wellbeing of people who use services at the centre of our work, and we have a range of powers we can use to take action if people are getting poor care.

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How we do it

We register health and adult social care services across England and we inspect them to check whether or not standards are being met.

Our inspections take place regularly and at any time in response to concerns. They are almost always unannounced.

During our inspections we ask people about their experiences of care, talk to care staff, and check that the right systems and processes are in place. We judge whether the standards are being met or not and we publish reports of our findings on our website.

In between inspections we continually monitor all the information we hold about a service. The information comes from our inspections, the public, care staff, care services and from other organisations.

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Enforcing standards

If we find that a service isn't meeting the government standards, we take action to make sure it improves. We have a range of powers we can use. We can instruct care managers to produce a plan of action to make improvements or we can do the following:

- Issue a warning notice, asking for improvements within a short period of time.
- Restrict the services that the care provider can offer.
- Restrict admissions to the service.
- Issue a fixed penalty notice.
- Suspend the care provider's registration.
- Cancel the care provider's registration.
- Prosecute the care provider.

We work with local authorities, regulators and agencies, and sometimes the police, to make sure the necessary action is taken.

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Safeguarding and working in partnership

We work in partnership with a number of organisations. We share information in order to respond quickly and jointly when we identify risks to people's safety and wellbeing.

We work closely with Monitor, the Foundation Trust Network and the Foundation Trust Governors' Association. We talk regularly to charities, representative groups and voluntary organisations, and listen to the issues that most concern them. We have relationships with 150 LINKs (local involvement networks, to be known as local HealthWatch from October 2012) as well as overview and scrutiny committees for health and social care.

We are in regular contact with local authorities in England, particularly to monitor concerns about people at risk of abuse. We work in partnership with local councils to take action when we need to.

We also inspect children's services jointly with Ofsted, youth offending services with HMI Probation, and prison healthcare with HMI Prisons.

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Monitoring the Mental Health Act

We also protect the rights and interests of people who are detained under the Mental Health Act.

Our Mental Health Act Commissioners make sure that the powers under the Mental Health Act are used properly. They check that people are being lawfully detained and are well cared for.

The commissioners visit patients detained in hospital and meet them in private to find out about their experience of care. They can also meet patients who are on a community treatment order.



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Involving people who use services

We work with local groups and national organisations to make sure that the views and opinions of people who use services are heard.

We use 'Experts by Experience' (people with experience of using, or caring for someone who uses, care services) to help us by taking part in our inspections and contributing to our reports.

The public, carers, local groups and care staff provide us with important information about their experiences of care services, or when there is an immediate threat to someone's safety and wellbeing.

You can tell us about your experience of care services directly or by contacting a local support group.

You can share information with us through our website at www.cqc.org.uk, by phoning our national helpline on **03000 616161**, or by writing to us using the email and postal addresses at the back of this booklet.

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Complaints

Although we urge you to tell us about your experience of care (as explained on page 7) our role as regulator means that we do not settle individual complaints ourselves. If you have a complaint about a care service, the first thing you should do is to tell the management of that service.

By law, every provider of care services must have an efficient procedure for dealing with complaints.

If you are not happy with the way the managers of a care service have dealt with your complaint there are a number things you can do.

- If your complaint relates to a service provided by the NHS, you can contact the Health and Parliamentary Ombudsman at **www.ombudsman.org.uk**.
- If your complaint is about a service provided by a care home or home care agency, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman at **www.lgo.org.uk**.

To find out more, visit our website at **www.cqc.org.uk** and see our booklet 'How to complain about a health or social care service'.

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Keeping people informed

On our website at www.cqc.org.uk we publish information about whether or not the services we regulate meet the government standards of quality and safety. If our inspectors have asked services to make improvements, we update our website to let people know if the necessary action has been taken.

On our website you can search for any hospital, care home, home-care agency or dentist to check whether they are registered to provide services and how they meet government standards.

On the next page is an example of a hospital on our website, showing how it meets government standards and how you can tell us about your experience of care at the hospital.

Information about care homes, home-care agencies and dentists is available in just the same way. Search by the name or address of your care provider.



Search by name for your hospital or service.

Click here to share with us your experience of the hospital or service.

Summary of how the hospital or service is meeting the standards according to our most recent check.

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The government standards of quality and safety

There are 16 government standards of quality and safety. You can find full details on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

Here is a brief summary of what you can expect.

1. To be involved and told what's happening at every stage of your treatment or care. Before you are given any care or treatment, you are asked if you agree to it. Staff always respect your privacy and dignity.
2. Care, treatment and support that meets your needs – you get a treatment and care plan that is right for you, including appropriate food and drink.
3. To be safe – you will be protected from abuse, given medicines safely and looked after in a clean and hygienic environment.
4. To be cared for by staff with the right skills and support to do their jobs properly.
5. The management of your care service to routinely check the quality of its services – to make sure they continue to meet government standards, listen to and take action on any complaints that you have, and keep your personal records safe.

We have published a series of guides to help you find out more about what standards to expect from the regulation of care.

You can download them from our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

- What standards you have a right to expect from the regulation of your hospital
- What standards you have a right to expect from the regulation of your care home
- What standards you have a right to expect from the regulation of agencies that provide care in your own home
- What standards you have a right to expect from the regulation of your dentist
- How to complain about a health care or social care service
- Complaining about the Care Quality Commission.

How to contact us

- Phone us on: **03000 616161**
- Email us at: enquiries@cqc.org.uk
- Website: www.cqc.org.uk
You can give us feedback online.
- Write to us at: **Care Quality Commission, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PA**

If you would like this publication in different languages or formats (for example, in large print or spoken) please go to our website or contact us.

CQC-005-50000-STE-022012

