



What can
you expect
from a **good**
care home?



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

Care homes provide residential care for many people, including older people, disabled people, people with a learning disability, people with long- or short-term health conditions or people with drug or alcohol problems. Some care homes also provide nursing care. There is a separate booklet like this one about care in your own home.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Our job is to monitor and inspect health and adult social care services such as your local care homes, GP practices and hospitals. 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 care home if it was rated as **good** in each of the five areas listed above. Some exceptional homes 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 to give each home a single overall rating. Each home must display our ratings, so look out for a poster like the one here. You'll see that a good care home may still have areas that need improvement, but we still think they're good overall. Ask your care home to display the poster if you can't see it.





In a good care home, you can expect to be **SAFE** because...

- The home and any equipment are well maintained and managers look for ways to improve safety. You should feel confident that your belongings are safe and secure.
- There are always enough staff on duty with the skills needed to make sure you are safe.
- You are protected from being bullied, harassed, harmed or abused. Abuse includes neglect and financial abuse.
- Staff deal with incidents and accidents quickly and openly (and investigate them if necessary) and they learn from mistakes.
- You feel safe and protected by staff, but you also have as much freedom as possible to do the things you want to do – regardless of your disability or other needs.
- Staff give you your medicine safely and store it correctly. Where possible, the home involves you in reviewing your medicines and supports you to be as independent as possible.
- The home is kept clean and hygienic to prevent any risk of infection to you or other residents.



You can expect a good care home to be **EFFECTIVE** because...

- You are regularly asked for your views about the quality and choice of the food and other aspects of the home, and your feedback is consistently good.
- Staff make sure you get the right food and drink you need, and that you have enough of it.
- Staff have the right knowledge, qualifications and skills to carry out their role so that you have a good quality of life.
- You are always asked to give your consent (permission) to your care, treatment and support in a way you can understand. Where appropriate, your family and friends are also involved in decisions about your care.
- Staff know about your health needs and personal preferences and give you as much choice and control as possible.
- Staff speak with health and social care professionals, such as GPs, and take the right action at the right time to keep you in good health.
- You are asked for your likes and needs when the home is adapted or decorated. Any changes to the home are made to help you to be as independent as possible.



You can expect a good care home to be **CARING** because...

- Staff know about your background, likes, hopes and needs. This includes any needs you have because of your age, disability, sex (gender), gender identity, race, religion or belief, or sexuality (whether you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual).
- You are encouraged to express your views, no matter how complex your needs are.
- You have access to advocates (people who can speak on your behalf).

- Staff also know your wishes for your care at the end of your life, if this applies.
- Staff treat you with dignity and respect. They spend time with you, develop trusting relationships and are concerned for your wellbeing.
- You have enough privacy.
- Your family and friends can visit you.



You can expect a good care home to be **RESPONSIVE** to your needs because...

- Your care, treatment and support are set out in a written plan that describes what staff need to do to make sure that you receive personalised care.
- You, and your family and friends where appropriate, are actively involved in developing this plan. For example, you should be able to have a choice about who provides you with personal care, such as help with washing and dressing.
- As your needs and preferences change, your plan is changed, and all those who need to know, such as your care staff, are kept up to date.
- The plan includes information about the whole of your life, including your goals, your abilities and how you want to manage your health. You may also have a health action plan.
- Staff work hard to prevent you from feeling lonely. They do this by helping you to keep in contact with your family and friends.
- Staff also help you keep up your hobbies and get involved in the community if you want to.
- If you need to visit hospital, staff plan this well with you to make sure it goes as smoothly as possible.
- If you have any concerns and complaints, staff always take them seriously, investigate them thoroughly and respond to them in good time.



You can expect a good care home to be WELL-LED because...

- You know who the manager is, and anyone else in charge.
- Managers know what their responsibilities are and are always honest, including when things go wrong.
- Staff know what is expected of them and are happy in their work.
- Managers are available to support their staff.
- Staff have the confidence to report concerns about the care that colleagues, carers and other professionals give. When this happens they are supported and their concerns are thoroughly investigated.

What to do if you have concerns about your care home

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

- **Raise your concerns with the care home**

You should tell the managers of the home about your concerns. If they cannot deal with your concerns straight away, you can use their formal complaints process.

By law, every care home must have an efficient process for handling complaints. If you are not happy with the way the home handles your complaint, you can contact your local council if they pay for your care.

If you are not satisfied with the response from the care home or the council, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman by phoning **0300 061 0614** or visiting **www.lgo.org.uk**. This applies if you pay for your own care or if the council pays for it.

- **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

Our inspections of care homes are usually unannounced. We talk to people about their experiences of care, as well as talking to the staff and checking 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 care home is not meeting the standards of care that everyone has a right to expect (called the fundamental standards). The care home must tell us what it will do to put things right. We can also:

- issue a fine or formal warning;
- stop the home from accepting any new residents; and
- take action to close the home (in extreme cases).

How we keep you informed

Check our website to see our ratings for your care home. You can search by the care home's name 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).

