



**What standards you have  
a right to expect from the  
regulation of your hospital**

# About this booklet

This guide is for you if you need treatment, care and support in a hospital in England.

It helps you understand what standards of care you have a right to expect in hospital and what you should do if you receive poor quality care.

This guide explains how we work to make sure that hospitals meet national standards of quality and safety and the action we can take if we find hospitals are not meeting standards.

## About us

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

We make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care and we encourage care services to improve.

We monitor, inspect and regulate services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety and we publish what we find, including performance ratings to help people choose care.

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.

# Registering and inspecting hospitals

By law, all hospitals in England must make sure that the care and treatment they provide meet national standards of quality and safety.

We register hospitals if they can show us that they are meeting national standards.

If hospitals are not registered with us, they will not be able to provide services.

We inspect hospitals to make sure they are meeting the standards. We can inspect a hospital at any time if there are concerns about the care it provides. Our inspections are almost always unannounced.

If we find a hospital isn't meeting the standards, we take action and then re-inspect it.

On the following pages we summarise what you should expect when a hospital is meeting national standards of quality and safety.



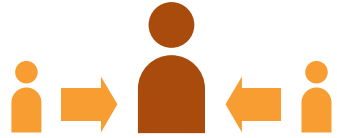


## **1 You can expect to be respected, involved and told what's happening at every stage**

- You, or someone acting on your behalf, will be involved in discussions about your care, treatment and support.
- Before you receive any examination, care, treatment or support, you will be asked if you agree to it.
- You will get support if you need it to help you make decisions, and staff will respect your privacy, dignity and independence.

### **Example**

One NHS hospital provides a breast-screening service. Because many of the women going for screening don't speak English, the hospital provides information in appropriate languages to make sure that everyone understands what to expect. Everyone is treated with respect and can decide whether they want to be screened.



## 2 You can expect care, treatment and support that meets your needs

- Your treatment and care plan is right for you.
- You will get the food and drink you need to meet your dietary needs.
- Your care needs are coordinated if you move from one service to another.
- Staff respect your cultural background, sex (gender), age, sexuality (whether you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual person), religion or belief, and your disability, if you have one.

### Example

An elderly patient's care plan shows that he is at risk of falling and needs to build up his strength with a high-protein diet. When he is transferred from the large general hospital to a local hospital for rehabilitation, the general hospital tells the local hospital about the patient's needs. They make sure that his bed has safety rails and that he continues to get the special diet he needs.

**What you can expect when a hospital is meeting national standards of quality and safety**

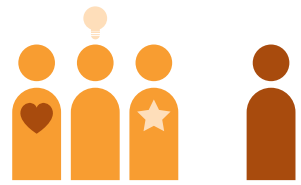


## **3 You can expect to be safe**

- You will be protected from abuse or the risk of abuse, and staff will respect your human rights.
- You will be cared for in a clean environment where you are protected from infection.
- You will get the medicines you need, when you need them, and in a safe way.
- You will be cared for in a safe and accessible place that will help you as you recover.
- You will not be harmed by unsafe or unsuitable equipment.

### **Example**

One hospital has a strict policy about cleanliness and controlling infection. All staff are trained in controlling infection, particularly in how to handle equipment, such as oxygen masks, that is designed to be used once and then thrown away. The hospital's infection-control policy is regularly reviewed and updated as needed.



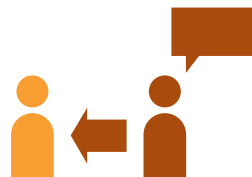
## 4 You can expect to be cared for by staff with the right skills to do their jobs properly

- Your health and welfare needs are met by staff who have the right skills to do their job.
- There will always be enough members of staff available to keep you safe and meet your health and welfare needs.
- You will be looked after by staff who are well managed and have the chance to develop and improve their skills.

### Example

All the clinical staff at a large NHS hospital are registered with the appropriate professional bodies – such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the General Medical Council. Staff have regular training to make sure they continue to be able to provide care to patients. The managers of the hospital plan staff rotas to make sure there are enough staff available. They also have plans in place to maintain good staffing levels even when staff are off sick.

**What you can expect when a hospital is meeting national standards of quality and safety**



## **5 You can expect your hospital to routinely check the quality of its services**

- The managers at your hospital continuously monitor the quality of the services.
- Your personal records will be accurate and kept safe and confidential.
- You, or someone acting on your behalf, can complain and will be listened to. Your complaint will be dealt with properly.

### **Example**

Staff at a hospital's maternity ward regularly assess and monitor the quality of care they provide. One of the ways they do this is by reviewing comments and complaints they have received from patients and their relatives. They also regularly gather the views of patients and staff through surveys.



## What to do if you think your hospital is not meeting national standards

If you, or someone you care for, experiences poor care you can:

- raise your concerns with the hospital, including making a formal complaint; and
- tell us about the matter.

### Raise your concerns with the hospital

If you have concerns about the care being provided by a hospital, the first thing you should do is tell the management of the hospital. If your concerns cannot be resolved straight away, you can go through their formal complaints process.

By law, every hospital must have an efficient procedure in place for dealing with complaints. If you have a complaint about an NHS hospital, your rights are explained at [www.nhs.uk/NHSConstitution](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSConstitution).

If you are not happy with the way your hospital deals with your complaint, you can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman by phoning **0345 015 4033** or visiting [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk).

Find out more in our complaints booklet on our website.

### Tell us

Our role as regulator means that we do not settle individual complaints ourselves, but we still want you to tell us about your experiences of care. Your information helps us decide when, where and what to inspect.

When we find that a hospital is not meeting the standards we will take action. You can tell us about concerns even when you do not want to make a complaint to the hospital. We also want to hear about good experiences of care.

The best way to get in touch with us is by filling in our 'Share your experience' form online at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk). You can also phone us on **03000 616161** or write to us at the address shown on the back of this guide.

You can also tell us about your experience of care through a local support group such as your local Healthwatch.

## **How we carry out inspections and take action**

When we carry out an inspection we talk to people and look at their experiences of care, as well as checking systems and processes. We often involve other experts in our inspections, including people with experience of care. We call these people 'experts by experience'.

If we think that services aren't meeting national standards, we take action. We make the hospital tell us what they will do to put things right. We can also:

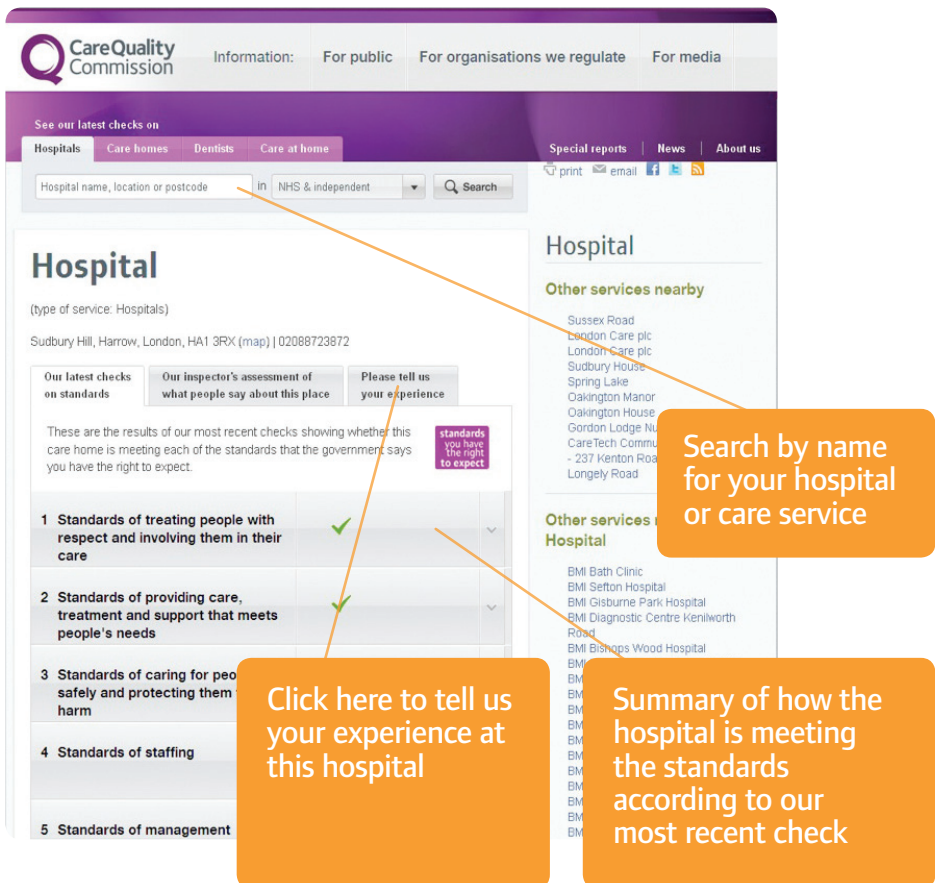
- issue fines or formal warnings;
- stop patients being admitted into care services; and
- suspend or cancel a hospital's operating licence.

We publish any formal action we have asked a hospital to take on our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

We update our website when the hospital has made the improvements needed to meet national standards.

On our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk) we publish details of how the hospital services we regulate meet national standards of quality and safety. You can search for your local hospital to check how it is performing against the standards you have a right to expect.

- an email from us when we inspect, and publish reports on, hospitals you are interested in; and
- our monthly e-newsletter to get the latest news from us.



## Other booklets available from our website

- 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 dental practice

## How to contact us

Call us on: **03000 616161**

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

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

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



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Please contact us if you would like this booklet in another language or format.

