



**What standards  
to expect from  
the regulation of  
your care home**

An introduction to important changes to  
how adult social care services are regulated

## About this booklet

This guide is for you if you (or a member of your family or a friend) receive care, treatment or support in a care home.

The guide does the following.

- Explains important changes to the way care homes are regulated.
- Tells you about new essential standards of quality and safety that care homes must meet, and how we monitor these standards.
- Tells you what to expect from the new standards, and what to do if you find that your care home is not meeting them.
- Helps you find out where to go for up-to-date information on how we consider your care home to be performing.



## What's changing in the way care homes are regulated?

The law that regulates health care and adult social care in England has changed.

The law now says:

**Everyone who provides services in care homes must make sure their services meet new essential standards of care that protect your safety and respect your dignity and rights.**

The law strengthens the protection you have if you receive care, treatment or support in a care home or at home. (There is a separate booklet like this one for people who receive care at home.)

As the regulator, we license the providers of care homes which meet the essential standards, and our inspectors check whether the providers continue to meet these standards.

There is a wide range of action we can take if we find that care homes are failing people.

On the next few pages, we briefly set out what you can expect from your care home. The full details are in the regulations that accompany the new law, and in our own guidance. Details of how to get more information are given on page 14 of this booklet.



## 1 You (or someone acting on your behalf) can expect to be respected, involved in your care and support, and told what's happening at every stage

- You will be involved in discussions about your care, treatment and support. You will get support to help you make decisions and staff will respect your privacy and dignity.
- You will be given opportunities, encouragement and support to help you live as independently as possible.
- Before you receive any examination, care, treatment or support you will be asked whether or not you agree to it.

Harpal has autism. This affects his communication and social skills. He recently took part in a pilot of a scheme for young people preparing to move to adult residential care. A personal care plan was designed. He and, as Harpal had asked, his mother were fully involved in contributing to it.

Harpal's communication skills were helped by having a 'buddy' of a similar age to take him out for leisure activities, including a local youth club, so Harpal could form friendships with other young people from the Sikh community. He was also assigned a keyworker – a member of staff from the care home to help him become more independent.

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

- Your personal needs will be assessed to make sure you get safe and appropriate care that supports your rights.
- You will get the care that you and your social care professional agree will make a difference to your health and wellbeing.
- You will get the food and drink you need to meet your dietary needs.
- If you have more than one care provider, or if you are moved between services, you will get co-ordinated care.
- You can also expect your care home to meet your needs relating to the following.
  - Your cultural background and the language you speak.
  - Your sex (gender).
  - Your disability.
  - Your age.
  - Your sexuality (whether you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual person).
  - Your religion or belief.



The new law is stronger in protecting your rights under the Human Rights Act 1998. You now have important new rights to take action against your care-home provider if rights such as your right to privacy and to not be discriminated against have not been met.

Alice was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease four years ago. After a long spell in hospital, she and her husband George were given the choice of Alice staying in hospital or moving to a residential care home. They both chose to have Alice move to a care home. The residential care home Alice and George chose was fully briefed by the hospital about her medical and personal needs – her room was adapted to keep her safe, and her GP was consulted and involved throughout. As Alice is a vegetarian, this fact was included in her care plan. A vegetarian option was added to the daily menu. Her husband told us how satisfied he was with the support Alice received during the move from hospital to the care home.



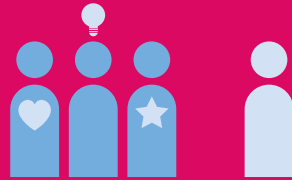
### 3 You can expect to be safe

- You will be protected from abuse or the risk of abuse, and staff will respect your human rights.
- You will 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.
- You will not be harmed by unsafe or unsuitable equipment.
- You will be cared for in a clean environment where you are protected from infection.

The regulations now also make sure that care homes protect you from diseases related to health care such as MRSA and clostridium difficile.

Olive had been partially sighted all her life and now she was losing more of her sight. Residential care was recommended but Olive was anxious about moving to a new environment and not being able to properly see the people who were caring for her. She decided to move in for a trial period.

Olive's care home was well adapted to meet the needs of residents with poor sight. She found she had all the equipment she needed, such as task lighting and magnifiers, and there were trained staff to help her feel secure in the home and to trust the people around her. She decided to move into the home.

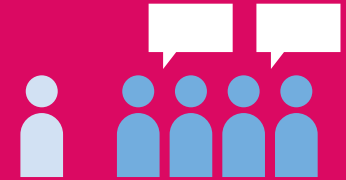


#### 4 You can expect to be cared for by staff with the right skills to do their jobs properly

- You will be cared for by staff who have the knowledge, skills and experience needed to meet your health and welfare needs.
- There will always be enough members of staff available to keep you safe and meet your needs.
- You will be looked after by staff who are well managed and who have the chance to develop and improve their skills.

An individual occupational therapy service is provided to people with complex needs who live in a residential care home. Therapists are always available to support residents to be as independent as possible. Managers work in partnership with both the local authority and the local university to make sure their therapists develop their skills to the highest level.

At the same time, occupational therapy graduates from the university are given training placements within the care home and have a chance to network and share best practice. Their placements include training on how to promote equality and the rights of people living in the care home.



#### 5 You can expect your care-home provider to routinely check the quality of their services

- Your care-home provider will monitor the quality of their services to make sure you are safe.
- Your personal records, including medical 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 acted on properly. (Details of how to make a complaint are given on the next page.)

The regulations now make sure you are supported to make a complaint when you need to, and your care-home provider must settle the complaint with you (or your representative) in a satisfactory way.

We inspected a care home after several people living there, and their families, had contacted us to express their concerns. We asked the managers of the care home to take steps to improve their service, and we published this information on our website. When we inspected the home again we found that managers now hold a monthly meeting with residents and their families to get feedback on the quality of care. If a complaint is made the managers take it extremely seriously and settle it quickly.

People who live in the care home, their families and their friends now tell us they find their concerns are acted on quickly. They find the meeting with the care home very useful and they are satisfied with the high standard of care they continue to receive. We have now updated our website to state that the care home is meeting all the essential standards of quality and safety.



## What to do if you find your care home is not meeting the essential standards

There are two things that you, or someone acting on your behalf, can do. You can complain to your care-home provider, and you can give us feedback on the care you receive.

### How to complain

If you have a complaint about a care home, nursing home or any other adult social care service, the first thing you (or someone acting on your behalf) should do is to tell the management of the home or service.

By law, every care home and adult social care service must have an efficient procedure for dealing with complaints. When we assess care homes we check how well they deal with complaints. Care-home providers must send us a copy of any complaints they have received, together with information about how they have settled them.

If you are not happy with the way your care-home provider has dealt with your complaint, there are a number of other actions you can take. If your council pays for your care, you can complain to them. If you pay for your own care you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman.



## How to tell us about your experience of care

Our role as regulator means that, although we make sure that care-home providers deal with complaints properly, we do not settle individual complaints ourselves.

But we do want to hear your feedback.

Feedback means telling us about your experience of care, treatment and support. We take feedback from you or your family and friends extremely seriously. It helps our inspectors make decisions about how well care-home providers are meeting the essential standards, and helps us to respond quickly to any concerns.

We are interested to learn about good or excellent standards of care as well as instances where care has been poor.

You, or someone acting for you, can tell our staff in your area about your experience. To find out how to contact them, you can either phone our national call centre on 03000 616161 or you can contact us online at [www.cqc.org.uk/tellus](http://www.cqc.org.uk/tellus).

If your care is provided by the NHS or your local authority, you can also contact your Local Involvement Network (LINK), which will soon be called Local Healthwatch. They can send information direct to us.

## How to find out how well your care home is meeting the essential standards

If you live in a care home, you can find out how well its management is meeting the new essential standards of quality and safety by:

- visiting our website at [www.cqc.org.uk/findcareservices.cfm](http://www.cqc.org.uk/findcareservices.cfm); or
- asking your friends, family, care workers or representatives to check our website for you.

Find the care home you are looking for by typing in its name or location.

You can also use our directory of care-home providers to help you choose a care home by searching for and comparing the standards of homes in your chosen area.

If you do not have access to the internet, you or someone acting for you can speak to our staff in your area. To find out how, phone us on 03000 616161.

## About us

We are the Care Quality Commission, the independent regulator of health care and adult social care services in England. We also protect the interests of people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.

We focus on people who can find themselves in vulnerable circumstances, including older people and people with mental health problems, learning disabilities, physical disabilities or long-term health conditions.

We regulate the following.

- Providers of care homes for people over 18 who need help to maintain their independence and wellbeing. This includes nursing homes. Care homes can provide residential care for the following.
  - People with long- or short-term health conditions.
  - Disabled people and people with learning disabilities.
  - Older people.
  - People with drug or alcohol problems.
- Providers of care services for adults living in their own home.
- Providers of medical treatment to people of all ages, including treatment provided in hospitals, by ambulance services and by mental health services. We will eventually include primary care providers such as GPs and dentists.
- Providers of services for people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.



## Other publications in this series

[What standards to expect from the regulation of agencies that provide care in your own home](#)

[What standards to expect from the regulation of your NHS hospital](#)

## Where to find more information

You can read the new regulations by searching for Health and Social Care Act 2008 at:  
[www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

You can read our full guidance for service providers at:  
[www.cqcguidanceaboutcompliance.org.uk](http://www.cqcguidanceaboutcompliance.org.uk)

You can read a summary of our full guidance at:  
[www.cqc.org.uk/publications.cfm?fde\\_id=15412](http://www.cqc.org.uk/publications.cfm?fde_id=15412)



# How to contact us

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CQC-164-50,000-STE-032011



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