



**What standards you have a right to expect from the regulation of agencies that provide care in your own home**

# About this booklet

This guide is for you if an agency in England provides personal care to you (or a member of your family or a friend) in your own home. (Personal care means help with things like eating, washing and using the toilet. It does not include household tasks like cleaning, cooking or shopping, although many agencies do these as well.)

This guide helps you understand what standards of care you have a right to expect from these agencies and what you should do if you receive poor quality care.

There is a separate booklet like this one for people who receive care in a residential care home.

This guide explains how we work to make sure that agencies that provide personal care in the home meet national standards of quality and safety and the action we can take if we find they 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 agencies that provide care in the home

By law, all agencies in England that provide personal care to people in their own homes are responsible for making sure that the care they provide meets national standards of quality and safety.

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

If agencies that provide personal care in someone's own home are not registered with us, they will not be able to provide services.

We do not register agencies that only provide an introductory service to people looking for a care worker.

We inspect agencies to make sure they are meeting the national standards. We can inspect an agency at any time if there are concerns about the care it provides. Our inspections are almost always unannounced. If we find that an agency isn't meeting the standards, we take action and then re-inspect it.

On the following pages we summarise what you should expect when an agency that provides care in the home is meeting national standards of quality and safety.



What you can expect when an agency that provides care in the home 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.
- You will get any support you need to help you make decisions, and staff will respect your privacy and dignity.
- Before you receive any examination, care, treatment or support, you will be asked whether or not you agree to it.

## Example

Peter, a widower, is 80 and lives alone. In recent months he has needed daily help with personal care and household tasks. He and his daughter researched agencies that provide care in the home.

The agency they chose met Peter in his own home for a discussion about his needs before he made a decision. Peter and his daughter were consulted over how many hours of support he needed each day, and they agreed a care plan which met his needs.



## 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 worker or health worker agree will make a difference to your health and wellbeing.
- Your care needs are coordinated if you move from one care provider 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

Yasmin has multiple sclerosis. She has help from an agency care worker, Josephine, who has looked after Yasmin's needs at her home for the past five years.

Yasmin's care was recently reviewed by the agency and Yasmin asked for Josephine to be included in the consultation. Together they agreed that Yasmin's needs had changed and she needed more support.

The agency agreed a new package of care to make sure that although her health condition was changing, her independence and mobility were maintained as far as possible.

What you can expect when an agency that provides care in the home 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.
- Staff will make sure that equipment needed for your care is properly maintained.

### Example

Alan, now 70, was diagnosed with a muscle disease five years ago and has gradually lost the ability to walk and to handle and lift things. Until six months ago, Alan's partner David had cared for Alan, but David died suddenly. Alan was considering getting support from an agency but was very nervous about having people he did not know in his house. He was also worried about people having access to his personal possessions.

The agency that Alan chose talked to him about all the checks they make on staff to make sure they are suitable to work with people. This includes getting references and making a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check – which means that records are checked to see if people have any form of criminal conviction. Alan was reassured by this, and felt confident about agency care workers being in his 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.
- You will be looked after by staff who are well managed and have the chance to develop and improve their skills.

### Example

An agency provides personal care to young adults with learning disabilities, in their own homes.

The agency makes sure the staff they employ have the right qualifications, skills and experience to be able to provide care that meets the needs of their clients.

The agency keeps a record of evidence of their staff's training, qualifications and experience.

What you can expect when an agency that provides care in the home is meeting national standards of quality and safety



## 5 You can expect the agency providing personal care to routinely check the quality of its services

- The managers of your agency will continuously monitor the quality of its services to make sure you receive the support you need.
- 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

Mohammed, who is 22, has cerebral palsy and learning difficulties, and needs care at home. The agency that provides Mohammed's care gave him their easy-to-read complaints and compliments procedure. They also gave a version of the same booklet to Mohammed's family and friends. The booklet clearly sets out how Mohammed can complain if he is not happy with any part of his care. His family knows what to do if they do not think that the agency has responded properly to their or Mohammed's concerns.



## What to do if you think an agency is not meeting national standards

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

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

### Raise your concerns with the agency

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

By law, every agency that provides personal care in the home must have an efficient procedure for dealing with complaints. If you are not happy with the way the managers of the agency deal with your complaint, you can contact your local council if they pay for your care.

If you are not satisfied with the response from the agency or the council, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman by phoning **0300 061 0614** or go to **[www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)**. This applies if you pay for your own care or if the council pays for it. 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 is valuable to us. It helps us decide when, where and what to inspect.

When we find that an agency 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 agency. 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 an agency isn't meeting national standards, we take action. We make the agency tell us what they will do to put things right. We can also:

- issue fines or formal warnings; and
- suspend or cancel an agency's registration.

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

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

# How we keep you informed

On our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk) we publish details of how the agencies we regulate meet national standards of quality and safety. You can search for any agency that provides personal care to people in their own homes, to check how it is performing against the standards you have a right to expect.

You can also sign up to receive:

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

The screenshot shows the Care Quality Commission website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the CQC logo and the text 'Information: For the public For organisations we regulate'. Below this is a search bar with the text 'See our latest checks (or tell us your experience)' and tabs for 'Hospitals', 'Care homes', 'Dentists', 'Care at home', and 'More'. The search bar contains the text 'Care home name, location or postcode' and 'All types of care home'. A callout box points to the search bar with the text 'Search by name for 'care in your home''. Below the search bar, the main content area is titled 'Your care at home' and includes a brief description of the service, a map, and a table of inspection results. A callout box points to the 'Please tell us your experience' button with the text 'Click here to tell us your experience of this agency'. Another callout box points to the table of inspection results with the text 'Summary of how the agency is meeting the standards according to our most recent check'. The table shows five standards with overall ratings: 1. Standards of treating people with respect and involving them in their care (Overall ✓), 2. Standards of providing care, treatment and support that meets people's needs (Overall ✓), 3. Standards of caring for people safely and protecting them from harm (Overall ✗ Improvements), 4. Standards of staffing, and 5. Standards of management.

Standard	Overall Rating
1 Standards of treating people with respect and involving them in their care	Overall ✓
2 Standards of providing care, treatment and support that meets people's needs	Overall ✓
3 Standards of caring for people safely and protecting them from harm	Overall ✗ Improvements
4 Standards of staffing	
5 Standards of management	

## 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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Scan this code on your phone to visit the site now.



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

