

# Your rights as a family carer of someone in hospital

What you can expect from  
a good hospital

# Introduction

We are the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England. Our job is to inspect health and adult social care services such as your local hospitals, care homes and GP practices. 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.



## The Women's Institute and CQC

The Women's Institute has worked throughout its 101 year history to ensure that families can access the health and social care services they need. At the 2016 NFWI Annual Meeting, you and your fellow members chose to take part in *Carers Welcome* – a campaign for the rights of family carers to have better access to their loved one with Alzheimer's disease or dementia who has been admitted into hospital. Thirty-six per cent of WI members



have caring responsibilities, so it is important that you know what you are entitled to as a carer in the hospital setting should the situation arise.

We are working with the Women's Institute to make sure more family carers know what they can expect from a good hospital. We also need you to feedback to us when hospitals are not meeting the standards that you have a right to expect. CQC inspectors can't be everywhere at once, so we rely on people like you to give us feedback about your care experiences.

# Ratings

In most cases, our inspection reports include ratings. These can help you to compare services and make choices about care. There are four ratings that we give to health and social care services: outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.



## **Outstanding**

The service is performing exceptionally well.



## **Good**

The service is performing well and meeting our expectations.



## **Requires improvement**

The service isn't performing as well as it should and we have told the service how it must improve.



## **Inadequate**

The service is performing badly and we've taken action against the person or organisation that runs it.

By law, care providers have to display the ratings we give them. They must display them in the places where they provide care, somewhere that people who use their services can easily see them. This might be the main entrance to a hospital or the waiting area of a GP surgery. Ask the hospital to display the poster if you can't see it. They must also show their ratings on their website, if they have one.

# Carers' rights in hospitals

A carer is someone who provides unpaid support to a partner, relative, friend or neighbour who couldn't get by without their help. This could be due to old age, frailty, disability, a serious health condition, mental ill health or substance misuse.

Carers play an important role in working with care providers as they are often an expert source of knowledge about the



needs and behaviour of their loved one who is receiving care. Carers have certain rights as set out in the NHS Constitution. Carers are supposed to be consulted in all decisions regarding the care of their loved

one and they are also, where appropriate, to be involved in their loved one's care and treatment plan. Carer involvement is really important for patients with dementia or other cognitive impairments, who often find the hospital environment frightening and confusing.

However, we know that in too many situations, hospitals are not providing adequate family or carer support. Our 2014 thematic review of care between hospitals and care homes for people with dementia found that 61% of inspected hospitals did not involve people with dementia or their families in care decisions.

# What you should expect

Support for carers is an important feature that CQC has to see in order to award a good or outstanding rating. The best services we see value the contribution that carers can make, proactively consider their needs, and are able to deliver services that embed their viewpoints at every stage. Good practice varies considerably and there is no one 'right' way to involve carers. However, some good practice that CQC may look for on inspection includes:

- Carers are offered an opportunity to complete a carer's feedback survey
- Carers are shown around the ward and explained the hospital routine
- Carers are able to book appointments with nursing and medical staff to discuss care
- Carers are allowed extended or special visiting times.

## **Examples from our inspection reports:**

*"A relative we spoke with told us they lived a considerable distance from the hospital but they had received a regular daily telephone call updating them of their relative's progress."*

*"During the ward round patients would be given a brief summary of what had been discussed. Patients and their relatives had the opportunity to complete a section titled 'questions you want answering' and these would be followed up at the next ward round."*

## Tell us

We don't take up formal 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. We use the information when we are inspecting health and social care services to make sure that they are meeting the fundamental standards. If they are not, we take action against those responsible.

You can find details of the ways you can contact CQC to tell us about your care on the back cover of this leaflet.

**If you live in Wales:** CQC only inspects services in England. WI members who live in Wales should contact the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) or the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), which serve a similar function to the CQC with regards to social care and healthcare respectively. Like the CQC, the CSSIW and HIW rely on feedback from the public to do their job. Contact CSSIW by visiting [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk) or HIW by visiting [www.hiw.org.uk](http://www.hiw.org.uk) or phone **0300 7900 126**.

## Thank you

CQC believes that everyone has the right to safe, effective and high quality care. We wish your Carers Welcome campaign continued success and encourage you to feedback to us about your experiences as carers to help ensure health and social care in your community remains safe and effective.

Check our website to see our ratings for your hospital. You can search by the hospital's name, place 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.

## How to contact CQC

Fill in our online form at



[www.cqc.org.uk/tellus](http://www.cqc.org.uk/tellus)



[enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)



Call CQC **03000 616161**

Write to us at:

Care Quality Commission

Citygate

Gallowgate

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 4PA

Follow us on Twitter: **@CareQualityComm**

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