



# **What can you expect from a good GP practice?**

**LARGE PRINT VERSION**

This booklet tells you about the standard of care that you (or a member of your family or a friend) can expect from a good GP practice in England.

## **The Care Quality Commission (CQC)**

Our job is to inspect health and adult social care services such as your local GP practices, hospitals and care homes. We inspect these services to make sure they give you high-quality care and we give each one 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 (or a member of your family or a friend) should expect from a GP practice if it was rated as **good** for each of the five areas above.

When we give a rating, we also check how a GP practice meets the needs of specific groups of people such as older people or families and children. Some exceptional services perform even better than this and will be rated outstanding for one or more of these five areas. Others require improvement or, where we have found more serious issues, they are rated as inadequate.

We combine these ratings to give a single overall rating to your GP practice. Each GP practice has to display our ratings, so look out for a poster. A good practice may still have areas that need improvement, but we still think they're good overall. Ask the practice to display the poster if you can't see it.

### **You can expect a good GP practice to be SAFE because...**

- There are always enough staff on duty with the right skills, knowledge and experience.
- Staff look out for signs that your health could be getting worse and then take steps to improve it. They ask other staff for advice where necessary.
- If something goes wrong with your care or treatment, you receive an apology and the practice tells you what

it will do to improve and stop the same thing happening to other people.

- The practice encourages its staff to be open and honest about safety, and supports them to report concerns and incidents.
- Staff take particular care to make sure that children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable are kept safe from harm.
- Your personal records are complete and accurate, and they are stored securely to keep them confidential.
- The practice has plans for how to deal with emergencies and busy periods.

## **You can expect a good GP practice to be EFFECTIVE because...**

- Doctors and other staff understand what you need to keep you as healthy as possible.
- Staff have access to the information they need to help them manage your care, such as your medical records.
- The practice regularly monitors how well it is performing so that it can improve your care and treatment.

- Staff work effectively together and with other local teams and services to meet your needs.
- If you are referred to a different service, all the information about your individual needs is shared quickly.
- You are always asked to give your consent (permission) to your care or treatment. Staff will support you to make decisions about treatment if you need them to.
- Staff actively support you to lead a healthier life. For example, you have access to health checks and help to return to work.

## **You can expect a good GP practice to be CARING because...**

- You are treated with dignity, kindness and respect and you feel that staff are supportive and caring.
- Details of your medical condition are explained to you in a way that you can understand.
- You are involved in decisions about your care and treatment and staff spend time talking these through with you.

- Staff are compassionate when you need help and they respect your privacy.
- The practice helps you to manage your own health and to stay as independent as possible.
- Staff help you and those close to you to cope emotionally with your care and treatment, and they understand your personal, cultural and social needs.

**You can expect a good GP practice to be RESPONSIVE because...**

- The practice thinks about people's different needs and makes adjustments where possible when planning services.
- Staff take into account things such as your age, disability, sex (gender), gender identity, race, religion or belief, or sexuality (whether you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual).
- The appointment system is easy for everyone to use and, as far as possible, you are able to have an appointment at a time to suit you.
- The practice tries to avoid long waiting times, delays and cancellations. Staff tell you about any changes or disruptions that may affect your care or treatment.

- It is easy for you to make a complaint or raise a concern. If you do, your complaint is taken seriously and the practice responds quickly and makes any necessary improvements.

## **You can expect a good GP practice to be WELL-LED because...**

- Providing safe, high-quality, compassionate care is important to the people in charge of the practice.
- The practice is open about how well it is performing.
- The practice listens to your views and uses your feedback to improve the way it provides services.
- Staff are encouraged to raise concerns and the practice listens to what they have to say. Any concerns are investigated and acted on.

## **What to do if you have concerns about your GP practice**

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

- **Raise your concerns with the GP practice**  
You should tell the practice manager about your concerns. If they cannot deal with your concerns

straight away, you can go through the practice's formal complaints process.

By law, every GP practice must have an efficient process for handling complaints.

If your complaint is about NHS treatment and you are not happy with the way your GP practice handles 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)**. Your rights are explained at **[www.nhs.uk/NHSConstitution](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSConstitution)**.

If you pay for your treatment privately and you are not happy with the way your GP practice has dealt with your complaint, you can contact the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service by phoning 020 3713 1746 or visiting [www.iscas.org.uk](http://www.iscas.org.uk). You can also find more information on the General Medical Council's website at [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org).

- **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**

When we inspect a GP practice, we talk to people about their experiences of care, as well as talking to 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 GP practice is not meeting the standards of care everyone has a right to expect (called the fundamental standards). The practice

must tell us what it will do to put things right. We can also:

- issue a fine or a formal warning; and
- take action to close a GP practice (in extreme cases).

### **How we keep you informed**

Check our website to see our ratings for your GP practice. You can search by the practice'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. 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).