



What  
standards  
should you  
expect from  
your **dental  
practice?**





**This booklet tells you about the standards of care you should expect from your dental practice in England and what you should do if you have concerns. This can help if you are looking for a local dental practice. It can also help you to understand what you should expect from a service that you already use.**

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

Our job is to monitor and inspect health and social care services such as your local dental and GP practices, hospitals and care homes. We do this to make sure they give you high-quality care. 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 following pages describe what you (or a member of your family or a friend) should expect from a dental practice that is safe, effective, caring, responsive to people's needs and well-led.



## You can expect your dental practice to be **SAFE** because...

- Staff keep records of your treatment and these are accurate, complete and up to date.
- Staff notice if your dental health could be getting worse and take steps to improve it.
- Staff give you medicines safely and store them correctly.
- There are always enough staff on duty with the right knowledge, skills and experience to make sure you are safe.
- The premises and equipment are kept clean and hygienic to prevent any risk of infection to you or other patients.
- If staff have any concerns about safety, they raise them. They record any incidents that happen and, if you have a complaint, the practice deals with it in the right way.
- If something goes wrong with your care or treatment, the practice apologises and tells you how it will learn from it and stop it happening to other patients.



## You can expect your dental practice to be **EFFECTIVE** because...

- Staff always discuss the reason for your appointment with you, and they know your medical history.
- Staff clearly explain the different options for your treatment, as well as any costs involved. This helps you decide what treatment is best for you.
- When you make decisions about treatment, you are not discriminated against, for example because of your age, sex (gender), gender identity, disability, race, religion or belief, or sexuality (whether you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual).
- The practice refers you to more specialist services if you need them. When this happens, the practice passes on all your relevant medical information.



## You can expect your dental practice to be **CARING** because...

- Staff treat you with dignity and respect at all times.
- Staff take time to listen to you and involve you in making decisions about your care.
- You have enough time to think and ask questions before agreeing to care and treatment.
- You have enough privacy.
- If you experience any pain, distress or discomfort, staff respond in the right way.



## You can expect your dental practice to be **RESPONSIVE** to your needs because...

- Appointments are scheduled at times that suit you as much as possible.
- The appointment system is easy to use and you can get emergency treatment, including out of normal working hours.
- The practice asks you what you think about the service and considers your different needs when planning services.
- Staff take account of things such as your age, religion or disability and make adjustments where they can.
- The practice tries to avoid delays and tries not to keep you waiting too long for an appointment.
- It is easy for you to make a complaint. The practice tells you what to do if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint.



## You can expect your dental practice to be **WELL-LED** because...

- The person in charge of the practice monitors the quality and safety of its services and takes steps to solve any problems.
- The practice supports its staff and shares information with them so that they can all learn new things and improve how they work.
- The practice is honest and open about how well it is performing in providing high-quality care for its patients.
- Your care and treatment records are complete and accurate, and they are stored securely to keep them confidential.
- The practice values your views and uses your feedback to improve its services.



## What to do if you have concerns about your dental practice

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

- **Raise your concerns with the dental practice**

You should tell the practice manager about your concerns. If they can't deal with your concerns straight away, you can use their formal complaints process.

By law, every dental 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 dental practice handles your complaint, look online for your local NHS area team. If you are still not happy, 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 dental practice has handled your complaint, you can contact the Dental Complaints Service by phoning **08456 120540** or visiting **[www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk)**.

- **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 dental service we talk to people about their experiences of care, as well as talking to staff and checking the systems and processes at the practice. We may also look at records about the care that you receive – we must follow strict rules about protecting your information. We usually involve other experts in our inspections, including specialists who work in dental care.

We will take action if we find that a dental 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 dental practice (in extreme cases).

## How we keep you informed

Check our website to see the details for your dental practice. You can search by the practice's name, place or postcode. If we have inspected your practice, you can read a report that describes the good practice we have found, any concerns we have and any action we have asked it to take. 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).

