



**What standards you have  
a right to expect from the  
regulation of your dentist**

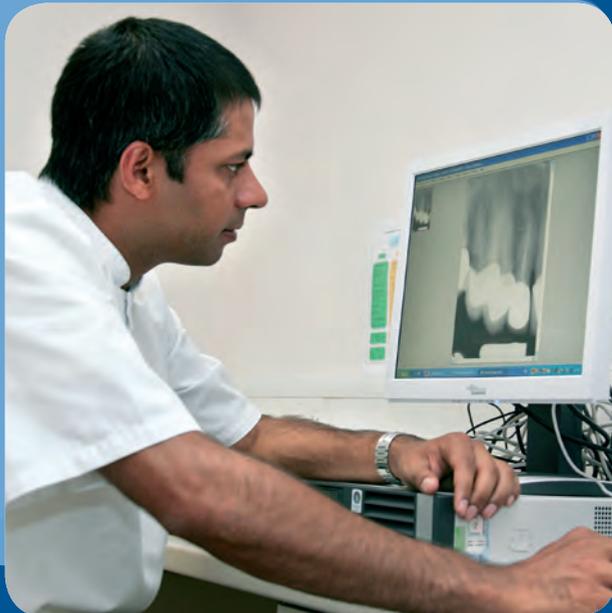
## About this booklet

This guide is for you if you receive treatment or care from a dental practice in England.

It helps you understand what standards of care you have a right to expect from your dental practice and what you should do if you receive poor-quality care.

We are the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England.

This guide explains how we work to make sure that dental practices meet government standards of quality and safety and the action we can take if we find dental practices are not meeting standards.



## Registering and inspecting dental practices

By law, all dental practices which provide care and treatment in England are responsible for making sure that the care and treatment they provide meet government standards of quality and safety.

We register dental practices if they can show us that they are meeting government standards.

If dental practices are not registered with us, they will not be able to provide services.

We inspect dental practices to check that they continue to meet the government standards and we take action if they don't.

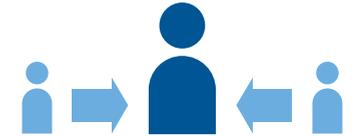
On the following pages we summarise what standards you have a right to expect from your dentist.



## 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 dental care and treatment.
- You will get support if you need it to help you make decisions and staff will respect your privacy and dignity.
- Before you receive any treatment you will be asked whether or not you agree to it.

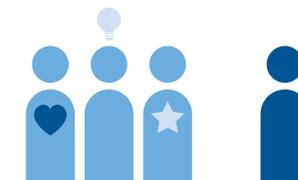
Gunes and his family belong to a large Turkish community in the South East of England. They are registered with a local dental practice which has employed a Turkish-speaking dental nurse in response to demand. Gunes' family have a basic knowledge of the English language but communicate more effectively in Turkish. When Gunes' nine-year-old son needed to have a tooth out, he and his son could understand what was involved and why the procedure was necessary, so they agreed for the dentist to go ahead with the treatment.



## 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 dentist agree will make a difference to your dental health and wellbeing.
- Where appropriate, before or after your dental care or treatment you will be advised what is best for you to eat and drink to meet your dental-health needs.
- Your dental care needs are co-ordinated if you move from one dental practice 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.

June is 80 and can no longer get to her regular dentist. A care worker provides June with personal and nursing care in her own home. June's doctor identifies an alternative dental practice which employs dentists to visit people in their own homes. June contacts them and finds it easy to book an appointment for treatment in her own home because the practice agrees to send a dentist to her home at a time which fits in with June's care schedule. When the dentist arrives at June's home, she knows about June's dental history as June's regular dentist has shared this with her.



### 3 You can expect to be safe

- You will be protected from abuse or the risk of abuse.
- You will be cared for in a clean environment where you are protected from infection.
- Where appropriate, you will get the medicines you need, when you need them, and in a safe way.
- You will be treated in a safe and accessible place.
- You will not be harmed by unsafe or unsuitable equipment.

A dental practice is not accessible for people who use a wheelchair or have severe difficulty walking because it is on the second floor of a building and can only be reached by a narrow flight of stairs. It is not possible to have a lift installed in the building. The practice met with a local disability group, and on their advice made improvements such as fitting secure handrails to the staircase and installing a buzzer at the door to call for help. Since the practice is still not accessible for some people, it has agreed to provide a basic home treatment and assessment service for any existing patients with disabilities. People who want to register with the practice are told about the stairs and, if necessary, referred to an NHS Helpline for advice about more accessible services.

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

- Your dental health and welfare needs will be met by staff who are properly qualified.
- 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 have the chance to develop and improve their skills.

Dental nurses and hygienists at a dental practice with two large surgeries are encouraged to develop their professional skills. The practices have a rota that allows all staff to schedule time for training into their week. Each dentist has a plan for Continuing Professional Development and is up to date with the requirements of the General Dental Council. Managers of the group keep a record of all the training their staff take. They are confident that everyone who visits the practices is cared for and treated by staff who have the right knowledge and skills to do their jobs properly.



## 5 You can expect your dental practice to routinely check the quality of its services

- The managers of your dental practice regularly monitor the quality of its services to make sure you receive the care 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.

A dental practice run by two partners recently took over another local, private practice. When the practice changed hands, the partners found there was no process in place for reviewing and learning from patients' complaints and feedback. They quickly set up a new procedure for dealing with complaints. They wrote to all registered patients to explain the new procedure and how to make a complaint. When we inspected the practice under its new management, we were satisfied that it was meeting this government standard of quality and safety and we shared this information with the public on our website.

## What to do if you find your dental practice is not meeting government standards

### Tell us about your experience

Our role as regulator means that we do not settle individual complaints ourselves. However, we still want you to tell us about your experience of care, whether or not it meets standards. If you tell us, you can help us improve local care.

You can tell us about your experience either directly or through a local support group such as your LINK (local involvement network, to be known as local HealthWatch from October 2012).

You can get in touch with us through our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk) or by phoning our national helpline on **03000 616161** or by writing to us using the email and postal addresses at the back of this booklet.

### How to complain

If you have a complaint about a dental practice, the first thing you should do is to tell the management of the practice. By law, every dental practice must have an efficient procedure for dealing with complaints.

If you are still not satisfied and your complaint is about an NHS dentist, you can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman on **0345 015 4033**. The NHS Constitution at [www.nhs.uk/NHSConstitution](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSConstitution) explains your rights.

If you pay for your own treatment and you are still not happy with the way your dentist has dealt with your complaint, you can contact the General Dental Council on **0845 612 0540**.

Find out more in our complaints booklet on our website.

## How we take action

Our inspectors visit dental practices on a regular basis and whenever there are concerns. We look at people's experiences of the care they receive rather than checking systems and processes.

If we find services aren't meeting the government standards, we take action to make sure the dental practice makes necessary improvements. If services do not improve, we can:

- issue fines or formal warnings; and
- suspend or cancel a dental practice's registration.

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

We update our website when the dental practice has made the necessary improvements to meet the government 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 that care provided by dentists, hospitals, ambulances, care homes and agencies which provide home care meets government standards of quality and safety.
- 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.

## How we keep you informed

On our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk) we publish details of how the dental practices we regulate meet government standards of quality and safety. You can search for any dental practice to see how your dentist is performing against the standards you have a right to expect.

The screenshot shows the Care Quality Commission website interface for a dental clinic. The page is titled "Your dental clinic" and includes a search bar at the top. Below the search bar, there are sections for "Our latest checks on standards", "Our inspector's assessment of what people say about this care service", and "Please tell us your experience". A table lists five standards with their overall status: 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 required), 4. Standards of staffing (Overall ✓), and 5. Standards of management (Overall ✓). A key to the latest checks on standards is provided at the bottom left. On the right side, there are sections for "Your dental clinic", "On other websites", "Organisation that provides this care", "Other services nearby", and "Other services run by the provider".

Search by name for your dental practice

Click here to share with us your experience at this dental practice.

Summary of how the dental practice is meeting the standards according to our most recent check.

## 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
- How to complain about a health care or social care service

## How to contact us

Write to us at:

**Care Quality Commission**  
**Citygate**  
**Gallowgate**  
**Newcastle upon Tyne**  
**NE1 4PA**

Phone us on: **03000 616161**

Email us at: **[enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)**

Our website: **[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)**

If you would like this publication in different languages or formats (for example, in large print or spoken) please go to our website or contact us.

