

Commission  
for Social Care  
Inspection

*CSCI*

*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

Commission for Social Care Inspection



# Care homes for older people

## **national minimum standards**

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## **national minimum standards**

- What should I expect from my care home?
- What rights do I have?
- Who will listen to my complaints?

If you are living in a care home, or know someone who is, then you might want answers to these questions.

In 2002, the Government introduced new national minimum standards for care homes for older people in England. They will be reviewed by 2006 to make sure they are improving care, but it's important to know what they mean for you.

The standards set out the quality of care, service and facilities you should expect from a care home. They also include advice on what to do if you are unhappy or concerned about something you experience or see in a care home.

We are the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). Our inspectors monitor the national minimum standards. We employ inspectors to check the quality of care homes, and they work from offices across England.

**If you are concerned about the care you or someone you know is getting, or if you have any questions, please call our helpline on 0845 015 0120 for completely confidential advice.**

Here are some examples of the national minimum standards to give you an idea of the service and care you should expect from a care home.

## Privacy and dignity

- I have the privacy I need when bathing, washing, or going to the toilet. [standard 10.1]
- All staff treat me with the respect I deserve. [standard 10.5]

You have the right to privacy and dignity. You have the right to make private phone calls. No-one should open your personal mail without your permission. Staff shouldn't call you by the wrong name, and they should only use a pet name if they ask you first.

*“No-one had ever called me Carrie apart from my husband. I hated it when the staff at my care home started to call me that. I didn't like to complain because it sounded petty, but my son had a quiet word and they now call me Mrs Towers.”*

## Choice and control

- I am able to deal with my own finances, but I can also choose to have someone else look after them for me. [standard 14.2]
- Wherever possible, I am involved in planning my care. [standard 7.6]

You have the right to control your own finances. Staff should not treat your money as if it was their own, and they should not force you to do anything you don't want to do.

## Meeting your cultural and spiritual needs

- My ethnic, religious and social needs are understood and met. [standard 4.3]
- I can follow my religious beliefs. [standard 12.2]

You have the right to eat food that is prepared in line with your faith, and to worship when and where you want to. You also have the right not to take part if you don't want to.

*“As my father gets older he prefers to speak in his mother tongue – which in our case is Hindi. We found a home that employs people who speak Hindi and that knows how to cater for Hindus. It's comforting to know.”*

## Health and well being

- I can register with any doctor I want. [standard 8.10]
- Any medicine a doctor prescribes for me is kept safe and managed safely by staff. [standard 9.6]
- I can take exercise when I want to. [standard 12.3]

You have the right to control your medicine. Staff should not give you medicine without you knowing, for example, by putting sleeping tablets in food.

*“When my mother first went into a care home, she asked if she was allowed to go out. The staff assured her that she was – it’s her home, not a prison! Of course, they’re always careful that they monitor her situation in case she needs assistance.”*

## Social life and activities

- When my relatives come to visit, I can take them into my room if I want to. [standard 13.2]
- I can have visitors at different times of the day and as often as I want. [standard 13.4]

You have the right to a social life. You should be allowed to go for a walk or to the cinema if you want, or to play cards if that's your hobby. It shouldn't be a problem for your friends to visit you in the evening – you should be able to see who you want, when you want.

*“My friend Chris works all day and can only come and see me in the evening. He asked if this was OK, and the staff assured him that it was fine – there are no ‘visiting times’ here – after all it’s my home. They don’t just let people traipse in and out though as they have to look after our safety too.”*

## Meals

- My meals look and taste good. [standard 15.4]
- I have a varied diet and I can choose the food that I eat. [standard 12.2]
- I have time to relax and enjoy my meal. [standard 15.8]

You have the right to enjoy your food. Staff shouldn't hurry you or be impatient, or make you eat food that has been blended because it is easier for them. It would also be wrong to make a vegetarian eat meat.

*“My sister is partially blind now, but her care home makes sure the food on her plate is colourful and varied, which makes a big difference. Imagine white fish in white sauce with mashed potato and cauliflower if you can’t see properly!”*

## Your home

- My home is clean, comfortable, safe and well maintained. [standard 19.1]
- If I use a wheelchair, there is enough space for me to get through doors without hurting my hands or getting stuck. [standard 22.5]
- I can choose not to share a room if I don’t want to. [standard 23.6]
- The home controls the water temperature so it is not too hot or too cold. [standard 25.8]

You have the right to feel comfortable in your home. You might not want to share a room, or have a room on the ground floor, or you might want to be closer to the garden. You may not always be able to have exactly what you want straight away, but you do have the right to ask.



*“When I had to start using a wheelchair it upset me that I couldn’t get out into the garden. It was easily solved by the manager, who arranged for a ramp to be built from the door by my room down to the garden.”*

## **Your comments and suggestions**

- The home values my comments and considers them when they make decisions. [standard 33.6]
- Staff have explained the complaints process to me and I feel I can make a complaint if I need to. [standard 16.1]

You have the right to complain if you are not happy about the way you are treated. The same applies in a care home. The staff have a duty to take your complaint seriously and do something about it. If they can’t, they should explain why not, and give you a good reason.

*“I was worried about complaining or making suggestions because I didn’t want to be a nuisance, but my friend persuaded me that I should. I had a chat with the manager who was really helpful. Now I take part in our residents’ and relatives’ forum, which is really interesting and I can have my say.”*

## Protection from harm and abuse

- Staff should protect me from being harmed by anyone working, visiting or living in my home. [standard 18.1]
- No one should discriminate against me because of my sex, age, disability, race, culture or religion. [standard 18.1]

You have the right to feel safe, and to be treated with dignity and respect. It is against the law to harm someone physically or mentally, or to discriminate against someone for any reason. All staff have a duty to treat you politely, fairly and with respect.

*“When I visited my mother she was very upset by the way she had been treated by a member of staff, and had bruises on her arm where they had bathed her. We made a complaint to the Commission for Social Care Inspection, who carried out an investigation that resulted in the member of staff being dismissed.”*

# How to make a complaint

If you are unhappy about any part of your care, or if you are worried about an older person you know in care, then the care home should want to put things right. All care homes must have a clear complaints procedure that is available to everyone. This should be displayed where everyone can see it. Staff must reply to complaints within 28 days.

If you are not happy with the way your home deals with your complaint, or you are worried or not sure about who to talk to, you can call the CSCI helpline for advice. You can talk in confidence with our trained advisors. We will keep your name or details confidential if you want us to. We will then follow up your concerns with the care home, working with them, where appropriate, to help solve the problem.

If it is necessary we can take legal action to protect you. You must always contact the CSCI if you suspect someone is being abused or harmed in any way. This could be physical, verbal, emotional or financial abuse.

**Our confidential helpline number is  
0845 015 0120.**

To find out more about what we do,  
call the CSCI national helpline number  
**0845 015 0120**, or visit our website at  
**[www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)**

You can get a full copy of the national minimum standards for care services for older people from The Stationery Office, or you can read and download them from the Department of Health website at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

**Enquiry Line** 0845 015 0120

**Write to us at** CSCI, 33 Greycoat Street,  
London, SW1P 2QF

**Email** [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk).

**Visit our website** [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

