



Keeping people's teeth and mouth healthy when they live in a care home



Easy read version of 'Smiling matters: Oral health care in care homes – Summary of our review'



Who we are and what we do



We are the Care Quality Commission (CQC). We check care services like care homes and hospitals.



We check that they are:

- doing a good job and the people who use the services are safe and being looked after properly.



About this report



We looked into how well care homes and dentists were following some rules called '**NICE guidelines**'.



NICE guidelines are about caring for people and keeping them healthy. For this report, we looked at the guidelines for keeping people's teeth and mouth healthy.



Our inspectors visited 100 care homes. They talked to people who use services and their families to find out how well they are supported to keep their teeth and mouth healthy. They also talked to managers and staff.



What we found out



About 1 in every 6 care homes said they never asked about the health of people's mouth and teeth when they arrive at a care home for the first time.



Some people's care plans were very good and others were not. Only 1 in every 4 care plans we looked at fully talked about caring for people's teeth and mouth.



Most homes supported people to brush their teeth two times a day if they needed it. But others did not.

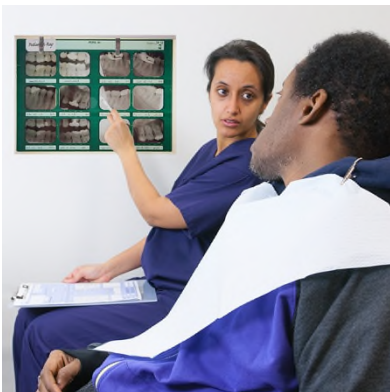


One family member said:

“My mum’s breath used to smell and it was because no-one helped her to clean her teeth. At her new care home, her breath is better and she seems much happier.”



Nearly half of the care homes said that staff do not receive training to support people to keep their teeth and mouth healthy.



Some people’s care plans did not say who their dentist is or when they have had a check-up or treatment.



That means staff cannot support people fully. And it might mean people get ill – for example if they cannot eat properly.



Dentist

1 in 3 people could not always be seen by an NHS dentist. This is partly because dentists may not want to, or be able to, treat people in their care home.



Some dentists may also feel that they do not know how to treat some people, like those with dementia or with a learning disability.



What we think needs to change to make things better for people in care homes



People who use services and their families need to know more about the importance of keeping their teeth and mouth healthy.



Care home staff need better training about the guidelines for keeping people's teeth and mouth healthy.



Dentists need better guidelines on how to treat people in care homes.



The NHS and other organisations need to make it easier for people to get check-ups treatment from their dentist when they need it and where they need it.



What to do if you have any questions



You can read more about this at:

www.cqc.org.uk/oralcare



Email us your general questions at:

enquiries@cqc.org.uk



You can call us on:

03000 61 61 61