



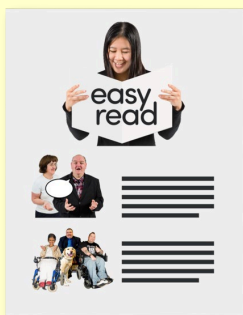
Department
of Health &
Social Care

Our report on the Rules about visiting people in care services

Regulation 9A



Easy read booklet



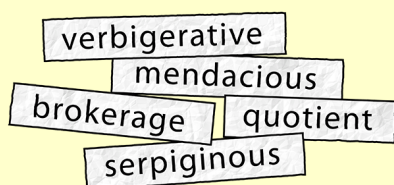
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It has words and pictures.



You might want help to read this booklet. You can ask someone to help you.

words

Some words are **black and bold**. This means we think they are difficult words.



Black and bold words are thicker and darker. We explain what they mean in a box like this.



Blue words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

Who we are



Department
of Health &
Social Care

We are the **Department of Health and Social Care**. We help run **health and social care services** in England.



Health and social care services are places that give people care like **care homes, hospitals** and **hospices**.



A **care home** is where people live and get care from trained staff.



A **hospital** gives care to people who have problems with their health.



A **hospice** gives care to people who are very unwell and may not get better.



In this booklet we call health and social care services, **care services**.

What this booklet is about



We want to make sure everyone who is in a care service can have people visit them.



In 2024, **CQC** made some changes to how friends and family can visit people in care services.



Last year we asked lots of people what they thought about the changes.



This booklet tells you what we found out.

CQC and Regulation 9A



CQC stands for **Care Quality Commission**.



CQC checks that care services give people the help they need.



CQC made **Regulation 9A** to help people in care services have visits from friends, family and carers.



Regulation 9A is a set of rules for care services to follow about how they must let people have visits from friends, family and carers.



In this booklet we call Regulation 9A, **the new rules**.

More about the new rules



Care services started to use the new rules on **6 April 2024**.

The new rules try to make sure that

- if you stay in a care service, you can have visits from people you want to see
- if you live in a care home, you have visits outside the care home
- if you go to an **appointment** where you do not need to stay overnight, you can have someone **accompany** you.



An **appointment** is the time and date you agree to talk to someone like a doctor.



Accompany means to go with someone to an appointment and give them support.



This means care services cannot stop people coming to visit unless there is a good reason.



Care services can only say no to a visit if it could really hurt the safety or **wellbeing** of the person being visited.



Wellbeing means how happy and healthy you feel.

Why visits are important



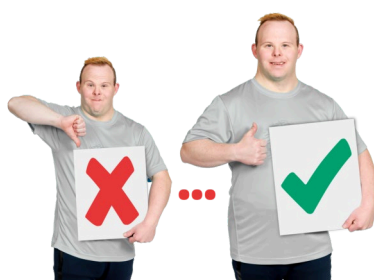
Being visited and accompanied is good for everyone. It is part of a good care service.



If a care service stops people coming to visit, this can be a warning sign that something is wrong.



The COVID pandemic helped us learn how important visits are. We know that people were hurt by the visiting rules. We do not want to forget the lessons we learnt then.



The new rules were written to make sure people can have visits because we know this will make the care they get feel better.

About our review



We decided to carry out a **review** of the new rules after 1 year.



A **review** is when you look at how good or bad something is.



We asked lots of people what they thought about the new rules. This included people who use care services, visitors and care workers.



We wrote this report to tell you what we found out and how well we think the new rules are working.

What we found out



It is important to be able to have people visit or accompany you.

This helps make sure you are treated well and can help you get better.



The new rules helped care services.

The new rules reminded care services about what to do and helped them check they are doing the right thing.



The new rules are not followed all the time.

Some people said visitors were not allowed in some care services, but it was difficult for us to find out why.



General visitors and care supporters are different.

Sometimes you might need a loved one to visit you to support your care and wellbeing. This is different from a general visitor coming to keep you company.



The rules need to be clear for different types of visitors.

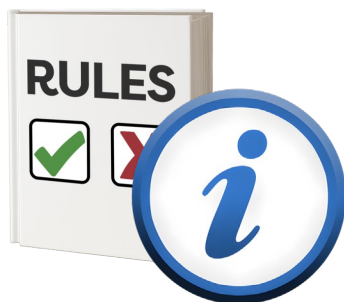


More people need to know and understand the new rules.

Some people in care and their families and care workers do not know about the new rules.



It is often only the people who make decisions who know what the rules are.



People in care and their visitors need clear information about the new rules and staff need better training.



Decisions and information are different in different places.

Care homes, hospitals and hospices make different decisions about when to stop visiting. This might be because they do not understand the rules.



Sometimes care services think they do not have to follow the new rules.



Information needs to be better.

People who use care services need to be included in decisions.



Checking care services follow the rules is difficult.

Some people said they do not know how to complain or are scared.



People said CQC needs to do more to check the new rules are followed.

What needs to be better



The new rules helped lots of services do the right thing about visitors.



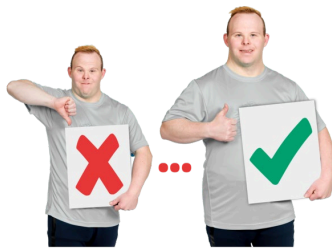
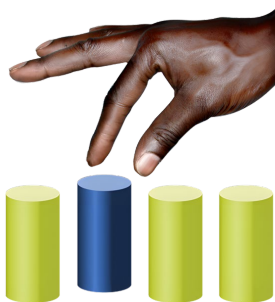
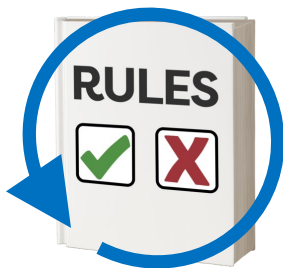
But some things still need to be better, like



- what information the Department of Health and Social Care collects
- making sure people know and understand the rules
- being clear about how decisions are made
- how care services tell people when they cannot visit
- making the difference between general visitors and care supporters clearer
- how we check that the rules are followed.



What we want



We want

- the new rules to work well for everyone
- to make sure everyone who is in a care service can have people visit them
- care services to get better at understanding and following the rules
- people to have more choices about their care
- everyone to understand how important visitors are
- to make sure the rules are understood in the same way everywhere.

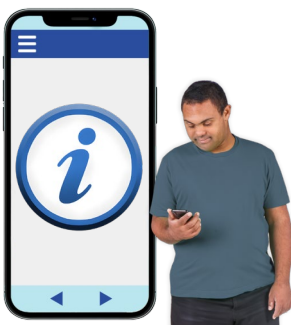
To make these things happen, we want to change how people think and act so everyone follows the new rules and knows visitors and helpers are part of the team.

What we will do



We will

- give better information to care services to help everyone understand the new rules and include visitors in care plans
- make the questions in our **Capacity Tracker** easier to understand so we can collect better information
- help care services use our information in their staff training
- work with CQC to keep making sure care services follow the rules.

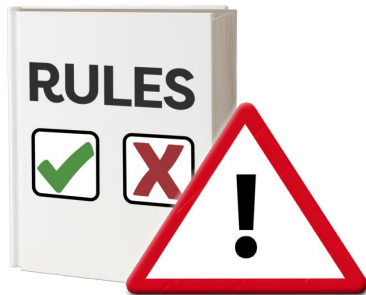


The **Capacity Tracker** is the website we use to collect information about visits in care homes.



We will also

- keep checking how well the new rules are working
- look at changing the law to make sure families and care services work together over visits
- set up a group of people who have used care services, visitors and care staff to work together to make clear information
- make sure people who use care services and their visitors get clear information and can take part in decisions
- check the new rules will work if there is another pandemic.



Health and care partners



Another organisation called **NHS England** was working on another set of rules called the **health and care partner policy**.



This policy was about care services and families working together. Lots of people told us the work done for this policy was very good.



This work has stopped because we are joining together with NHS England.



NHS England will think about what people said about this policy and what should happen next.

Thank you



Thank you to everyone who filled in our survey, joined discussion groups or sent us information. What you said helped us write this report.



Lots of people told us what they thought about the new rules. This will help us make care services better for everyone.

Thank you to A2i for the words
www.a2i.co.uk (reference 44073)

The full version of this document is called
**“Post Implementation Review Report - Regulation 9A:
Visiting and accompanying in care homes, hospitals,
and hospices”**