



The Regulation and  
Quality Improvement  
Authority



# Annual Quality Report 2018-19

## **Contents**

Introduction	2
Foreword	2
Strategic Goal 1: Transforming the Culture	3
Strategic Goal 2: Strengthening the Workforce	8
Strategic Goal 3: Measuring the Improvement	11
Strategic Goal 4: Raising the Standards	24
Strategic Goal 5: Integrating the Care	26
Looking Ahead	28

## **Introduction**

This is RQIA's sixth Annual Quality Report, which provides an overview of how we align our quality improvement activities to Quality 2020's five strategic goals:

- Transforming the Culture
- Strengthening the Workforce
- Measuring the Improvement
- Raising the Standards
- Integrating the Care

Our report highlights examples of practice which we consider are significant in assuring and improving the quality of health and social care for all those in receipt of these services.

## **Foreword**

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), as Northern Ireland's scrutiny and improvement body for health and social care (HSC), has a clear vision for how we support and ensure care is safe, effective, compassionate and well-led. We believe that people in Northern Ireland should experience a better quality of services as a result of our inspections, audits and reviews.

We register and inspect a wide range of independent and statutory health and social care services. We assure the quality of services provided by the HSC Board, HSC trusts and agencies - through our programme of reviews. We also undertake a range of responsibilities for people with mental ill health and those with a learning disability.

We are committed to working closely with providers of health and social care services so that they can deliver improved care. We also are dedicated to hearing and acting on the experiences of patients, clients, families and carers. It is only by working in partnership with users and providers of care that we can encourage and influence improvement.

Through our work, RQIA provides assurance about the quality of care, challenges poor practice, promotes improvement, safeguards the rights of service users and informs the public through the publication of our reports.

RQIA has four core values that underpin how we work. In all that we do we will be FAIR – fair and accountable, and act with integrity and respect. We live these values in how we do behave with service users, providers, carer and the general public, and in how we act with each other.

RQIA is committed to contributing to the delivery of the Department of Health's Quality 2020 strategy through our programme of inspections and reviews, which aim to support and encourage continuous improvement in the quality of Northern Ireland's health and social care services.

This report describes RQIA's progress in the areas of quality and continuous improvement in 2018-19 to support the delivery of the Quality 2020 goals.

**Prof Mary McColgan**  
**Interim Chair**

**Olive Macleod**  
**Chief Executive**

## **Strategic Goal 1: Transforming the Culture**

***We will make achieving high quality the top priority at all levels in health and social care. We will promote and encourage partnerships between staff, patients, clients and carers to support decision making.***

### **Governance and Assurance**

RQIA's Board is responsible for the oversight of corporate performance and governance arrangements in the organisation. Through regular board meetings, our board members assess corporate performance reports, which detail the organisation's progress against strategic and operational aims and objectives, and our commitment to quality improvement.

Our programme of internal audit provides our Board and the Department of Health with assurance on our governance arrangements. During the year, we audited the following areas:

- Performance Management
- Financial Review
- Compliance with DoH Permanent Secretary's Instructions Regarding Travel 2018-19
- Risk Management 2018-19
- Inspections 2018-19

RQIA's response to address the recommendations arising from each audit are shared with board members through RQIA's Audit Committee, which monitors progress through its meetings, and provides assurance to the full board. In their annual report, the Head of Internal Audit reported that there is a satisfactory system of internal control designed to meet RQIA's objectives.

### **Policy Development**

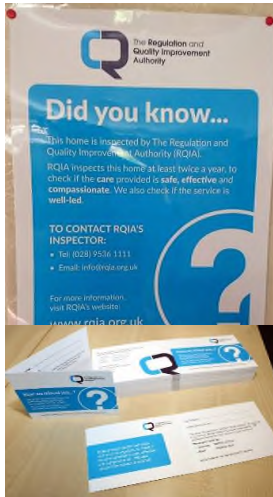
This year we commenced a review of our inspection methodology which aims to improve the format and accessibility of our inspection reports, and our use of information to inform inspection scheduling and decision-making.

To ensure we direct our resources at services with the highest regulatory risk and focus our inspection programme appropriately, in partnership with Ulster University progressed the development of framework to identify, quantify and respond to regulatory risks more robustly. This risk-adjusted, dynamic and responsive (RADaR) approach brings together intelligence - including incident notifications, and complaints and whistleblowing information – and the inspector's knowledge of the service to help determine the frequency and urgency of inspection. Through this approach we aim to identify services where the quality of care is poor - or changing - and may require additional inspection.

## Driving Quality Improvements for Service Users

### Hearing the Voice of the Public

As the majority of our inspections are unannounced, we want to ensure we capture the first hand views of service users and families, who may not be aware that an inspection is taking place.



During the year we distributed posters for permanent display in every care home highlighting RQIA's role in inspecting the service, and providing our contact details to allow service users, their families and staff to speak to our inspector for the home.

We also introduced calling cards, which our inspectors leave in bedrooms and day rooms, inviting service users and their families to tell us about their personal experiences at the home.

This feedback provides RQIA with a unique insight into the care provision and helps us to present a fully rounded view of a service in our inspection reports.

Our inspectors also distributed leaflets to support people wishing to raise concerns about a service, explaining the roles and responsibilities of RQIA, HSC trusts and the service provider in simple terms. These new approaches have received positive feedback from the public.

To help support people choosing a service, we interviewed Geraldine Milligan, a member of the public, who spoke about her personal experiences of choosing a care home for her husband. You can watch Geraldine's Story on RQIA's website: [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk), or on YouTube channel.

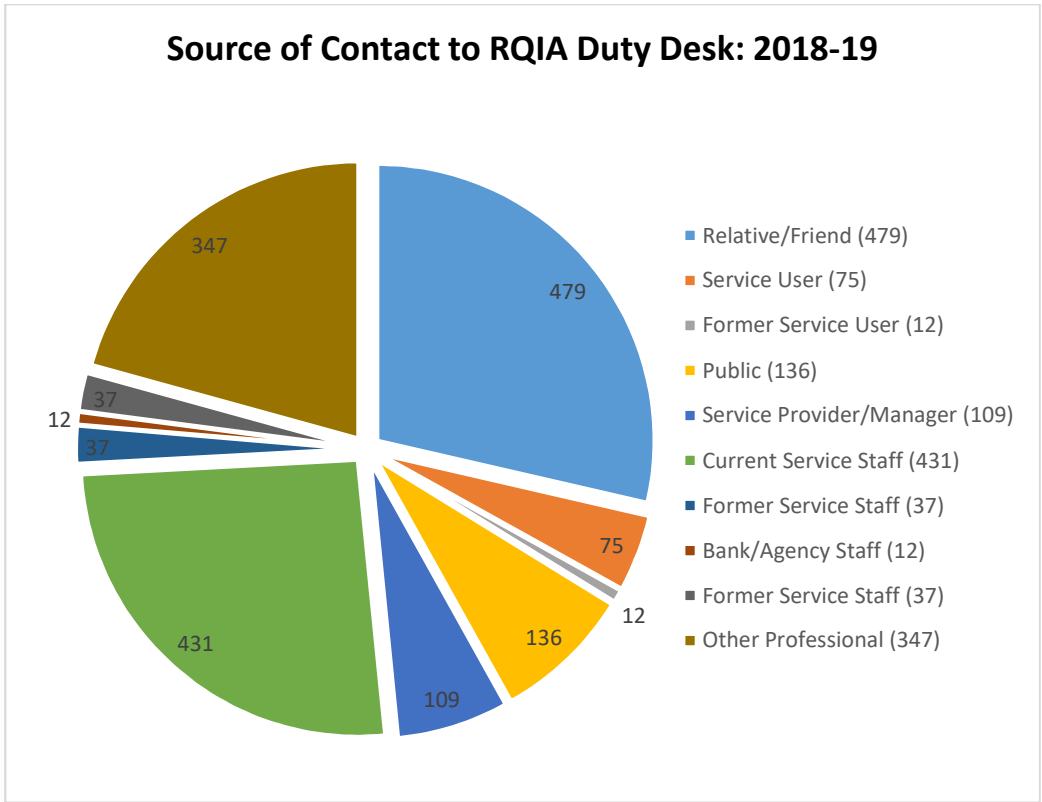


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### RQIA's Duty Desk

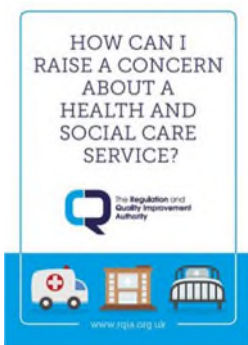
Each day we have an inspector on duty responding to calls from service providers and the public. During the year we received over 1,600 calls – around 700 from members of the public raising queries or concerns about care service.

### Source of Contact to RQIA Duty Desk: 2018-19



In each case we listen to the caller, provide advice and record details of the call on our i-Connect information system. Where specific concerns are raised we assess the information provided and determine how best to respond. This may include following up the issues raised with management of the service; conducting an unannounced inspection to validate the concerns and where necessary taking enforcement action.

### Complaints about Health and Social Care Services



While RQIA does not have legal powers to investigate complaints about health and social care services, we take each concern brought to our attention seriously. If a concern is raised with us about a health and social care service, we use this information to inform our inspection or review work.

We share the information received with our inspectors for the service, to determine whether there are any issues that require the immediate attention of RQIA. Through our inspections we also ensure that each provider has a complaints and investigations procedure in place. We also provide advice and guidance to support the public in raising a complaint about a service, providing useful contacts for organisations that can help - including local health and social care trusts and the Patient and Client Council. Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the service’s response to their complaint, they may raise this matter with the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman

## **Whistleblowing**

Anyone wishing to raise concerns about wrongdoing in their workplace can bring these to the attention of RQIA under public interest disclosure legislation. During 2018-19, we were contacted by telephone, email and in writing by almost 130 staff, from a range of statutory and independent health and social care settings, who wished to raise concerns about the services being provided in their workplace. These included: concerns around the quality of care provision, issues relating to staffing, and how services were being managed and general care concerns. While some wished to remain anonymous, many staff provided their name and contact details, allowing us to seek further information on their concerns.

This provides RQIA with valuable intelligence and insight into services, and in each case we considered the information carefully to determine what action was required. Where necessary, we conducted unannounced inspections, to follow up on concerns about the quality and safety of care. In a number of cases this led to formal enforcement action to address the concerns identified and drive improvements in the quality for those using these services. In other cases we found no evidence to substantiate the allegations.

## **Commitment to Excellence**

RQIA is strongly committed to ensuring that all our work is of the highest quality. We operate within a shared culture of excellence, underpinned by four core values that underpin how we work. In all that we do we will be fair and accountable, and act with integrity and respect. We live these values in how we do behave with service users, providers, carer and the general public and in how we act with each other.

We are an Investors in People accredited organisation and we support our staff through regular supervision meetings and our appraisal programme, where we discuss performance and celebrate success.

## **Listening to our Staff**

We hold regular staff meetings, led by our chief executive and executive management team, where the latest news is shared with all staff. These provide a platform for staff to share examples of best practice with colleagues across RQIA. They also provide senior management an opportunity to listen to staff and encourage them to be involved in decision making, problem solving and innovation. Our staff also contribute to the agenda to ensure their relevance to employees at all levels. Following the meeting a minute is circulated to all staff to ensure those unable to attend are kept fully informed.

## **HSC 2019 Staff Survey**

The biannual regional HSC Staff Survey was launched in early March 2019, providing all staff an opportunity to have their say about what is working well within RQIA and also listen to where positive improvements could be made. The results of the survey will be available during 2019-20, and we will develop and implement an action plan to take forward any recommendations for RQIA.



## Complaints about RQIA

During 2018-19, we received six complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction relating to the RQIA, including one anonymous complaint. These were managed in line with our complaints policy and procedure. To ensure learning from complaints, we disseminate any lessons from complaints to relevant staff.

## Communications and Engagement

RQIA's Communications and Engagement Strategy 2018-21 provides a framework to support the further development of RQIA's communications and engagement to increase awareness of RQIA's role and achievements and to increase stakeholder involvement in our activities. This is supported by a detailed annual workplan describing RQIA's communications and engagement activities which support the delivery of this strategy.

## Public Awareness of RQIA

During 2017-18 RQIA participated in the Department of Health's Northern Ireland Health Survey for the first time. Around 3,350 people were interviewed over the course of the year, and the results will form a benchmark for future surveys.

Of those surveyed, around one in three people were aware of RQIA.

Awareness of RQIA's main functions was as follows:

- 27% - registration and inspection of HSC services
- 22% - mental ill health or learning disability responsibilities
- 24% - reviews of HSC services

Awareness levels among those surveyed was:

- highest in the 55-64 age group
- slightly higher among women than men
- highest in the Western Trust area

Around 2% of those surveyed had previously contacted RQIA, of those around half had contacted us in person, and 78% were satisfied or very satisfied with this contact.

## Engaging with the Public



RQIA continues to explore platforms to engage with key stakeholders. During the year we attended 10 Pensioners Parliament events across Northern Ireland. Here, we had the opportunity to engage directly with over 1,000 older people, discussing our role and providing information and advice on how our work supports improvements in health and social care services.

## Political Engagement

RQIA continued its engagement with representatives from the main political parties, through meetings with representatives, including their health and social care spokespersons, to discuss the role of RQIA and specific areas of interest.

In partnership with the GMC, Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, NISCC, Patient and Client Council, and Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care, RQIA continued its attendance at the main political party conferences. These provide us with an opportunity to engage directly with party members, local councillors, MLAs and MPs on our ongoing work, and to highlight RQIA's relationships with other systems and professional regulatory bodies.

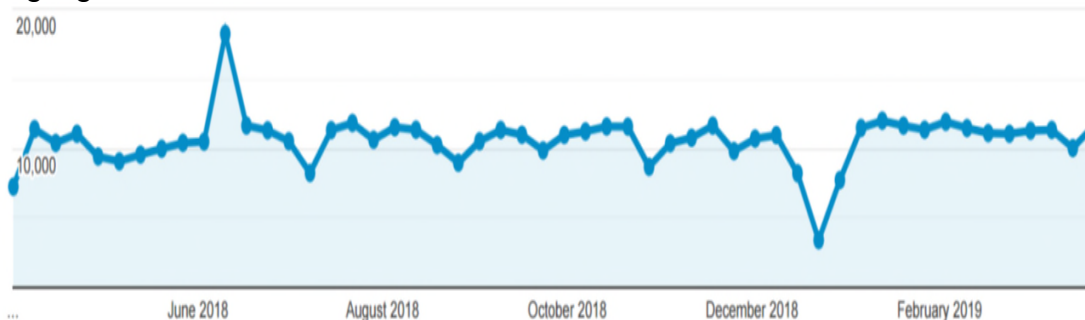
## Digital Communication



During 2018-19, web traffic increased, with around 185,000 unique visitors to [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk), a 12% increase on the previous year, resulting in over 550,000 webpage views. Throughout the year we continued to add new content to our website to support service providers and the public alike.

We have published over 11,000 inspection reports for care services which are available through our interactive map, or directly through the search function. These continue to be the most visited part of our website, with around 220,000 page views during the year.

We also direct traffic to our website via [@RQIANews](https://twitter.com/RQIANews), our Twitter account, where we highlight when new content is added.



Web Traffic: April 2018-March 2019

Each month we publish a list of recent inspection reports made available online over the previous month.

These lists were accessed over 8,500 times during 2018-19, an increase of almost 50 per cent on the previous year.



## Strategic Goal 2: Strengthening the Workforce

***We will provide the right education, training and support to deliver high quality service. We will develop leadership skills at all levels and empower staff to take decisions and make changes.***

### External Accreditation

Since 2018 RQIA has held International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001 accreditation, which provides evidence internally to RQIA's staff and board and to our external stakeholders that we have robust governance systems and processes in place to deliver our core functions to this international standard. To ensure a continued focus on quality, our processes are subject to ongoing audit.

RQIA also holds Investors in People (IIP) accreditation - the standard for people management. The IIP performance model provides a pathway to future progress, and a journey of continuous improvement, which aligns with RQIA approach to quality improvement.

### RQIA's Staff

Following a Workforce Review in 2016-17, we restructured the organisation to ensure we align our staffing resources to deliver our Business Plan objectives. During the year we established two new directorates: Assurance; and Quality Improvement, and a Business Support Unit to provide the support services to the two directorates.

RQIA has 122 staff who are responsible for the effective delivery of our work programme and the achievement of our corporate objectives. The staff composition, by headcount, is 76% female and 24% male.



hscrecruit.com

### Inspector Band 7

Are you interested in driving quality improvement in health and social care across Northern Ireland?

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is the independent regulator of health and social care in Northern Ireland. Through our programme of inspections, reviews and audits, we support quality improvement in health and social care services.

We are offering an exciting opportunity for nurses, social workers and allied health professionals with drive and ambition to join RQIA's inspection team, as a Band 7 Inspector, on a permanent basis (full-time or job-share), or as a member of our bank staff. The successful applicants will join our enthusiastic team of inspectors, responsible for supporting and driving quality improvement in care homes, domiciliary care, dental practices, independent health, hospitals and mental health wards. The results of your work will also help members of the public, in those care services that meet their individual needs.

**Salary:** Band 7 (£23,077 - £40,964 gross total)

**Location:** RQIA has office bases in Belfast and Omagh for further information, and to make an application, visit [www.hscrecruit.com](http://www.hscrecruit.com)

The closing date for applications: **19th June 2018**. Interviews will take place **late June, early July 2018**. We are an equal opportunities employer.

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

During 2018-19, 24 members of staff left RQIA through retirement, the voluntary exit scheme (VES) and taking up new opportunities.

In June 2018 we advertised for qualified nurses, social workers and allied health professionals to join RQIA as inspectors. This attracted a high level of interest, with over 120 applicants. During the year, we recruited a cohort of new inspectors - to join our teams inspecting care homes, independent health care, hospitals and mental health and learning disability wards.

RQIA continued its participation in the ADEPT Clinical Leadership programme for a fourth year. During the year, RQIA, in partnership with Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA), appointed a clinical leadership fellow. During their placement, they worked on a range of projects, bringing clinical expertise to RQIA's work programme.

## **Staff Policies**

RQIA has a duty of care to every member of staff, supported with a comprehensive range of human resources policies and procedures. In addition, RQIA ensures compliance with relevant employment legislation in this area, including: Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and The Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

To ensure that our staff are equipped to deliver against the objectives within RQIA's Business Plan, organisational learning development activities continued throughout the year. This included a range of mandatory and job-specific training for staff across RQIA. RQIA ensured that all staff have equal access to all career and organisational learning development opportunities in line with RQIA's Equality of Opportunity policy and the Agenda for Change terms and conditions.

RQIA takes a partnership approach to working with staff in conjunction with trade union representatives through its Joint Negotiating and Consultative Forum. The forum continued to meet during the year, acting as a reference group for good practice and a focus for consultation and negotiation on policies and issues affecting the organisation.

We are committed to working with the Equality Commission in all aspects of equality and diversity in employment and occupation. RQIA is an equal opportunity employer and its policies and procedures are developed in line with equality legislation to ensure equal treatment for all.

During 2018-19 RQIA continued its participation in a Disability Placement Scheme, facilitated jointly by the Business Service Organisation's Equality Unit and Supported Employment Solutions, a consortium of seven voluntary sector organisations. This aims to support the development of participant's confidence and social and communication skills, and prepare them for future employment.

This year RQIA hosted two participant for a 26-week placement in our administration support teams. During the placement they attended "How to get that Job" training, providing information and skills to apply for jobs, and mock interviews to allow participants to develop interview skills. Feedback from our participants, placement managers, and support officers was highly positive, and we will continue our involvement in this scheme.

## Staff Training

To ensure that staff are equipped to deliver RQIA's business objectives, organisational learning development activities continued throughout the year. This included a range of mandatory and job-specific training for staff across RQIA. Our staff's individual training needs are also identified through annual appraisal where opportunities for professional and personal development are discussed. This ensures that each staff member has an opportunity to avail of training for their specific roles, to ensure that their knowledge and skills remain up-to-date.

In November 2018, we held our annual learning week for all staff to support them in their daily work. This included sessions on: a patient's perspective of health and social care; child and adolescent mental health; children's rights; child sexual exploitation; learning disability; gender identity; nutrition and hydration; the deteriorating patient and early warning systems; falls management; preventing pressure damage; and safeguarding

## Sickness absence

During 2018-19, 2,267 days were lost through sickness, an absence rate of 7.78% against a target of 7.11%. This compares to a rate of 7.48% in 2017-18. This figure includes a significant level of long term sickness absence. RQIA manages all sickness absence in line with its attendance management policy and associated procedures.

## Social, Community and Environmental Matters

Throughout the year, RQIA continued its focus on energy reduction, recycling office waste, promotion of healthy lifestyles and use of public transport.



Christine English from Autism NI presenting to RQIA staff

On a monthly basis we organised collections for a range of health-related charities, including a coffee morning for MacMillan Cancer Support Northern Ireland. We also held awareness events for staff with a focus on autism and multiple sclerosis in partnership with Autism NI and the MS Society.



## Strategic Goal 3: Measuring the Improvement

***We will improve outcome measurement and report on progress for safety effectiveness and the patient/client experience. We will promote the use of accredited improvement techniques and ensure that there is sufficient capacity and capability within the HSC to use them effectively***

### Regulation of Services

#### Registration and Inspection of Health and Social Care Services

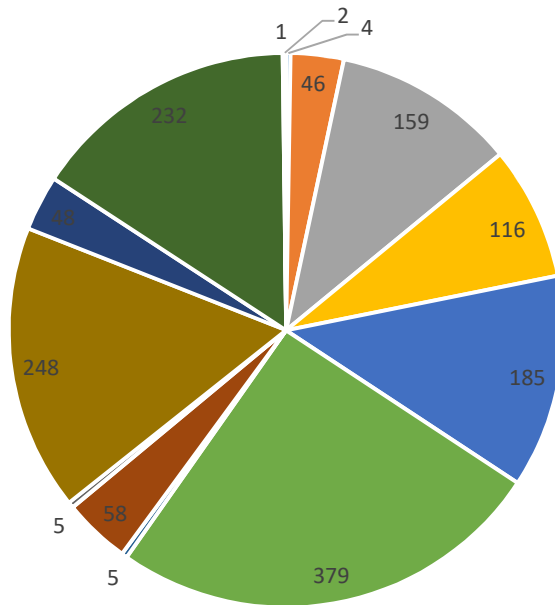
RQIA is responsible for the inspection of health and social care services under a range of powers. We register and inspect care homes; children's homes; domiciliary care and nursing agencies; residential family centres; adult day care services; private dental clinics; hospices; and independent hospitals and clinics. These are known as regulated services. At 31 March 2019, 1,488 services were registered with RQIA, an increase of 40 from the previous year.

#### Number of Registered Services by HSC Trust at 31 March 2019

Service Type	BHSCT	NHSCT	SEHSCT	SHSCT	WHSCT	Total
Adult Placement Agencies						4
Children's Homes	12	8	10	8	8	46
Day Care Settings	29	25	21	29	55	159
Domiciliary Care Agencies						116
Domiciliary Care Agencies –Supported Living Services						185
Dental	95	86	67	73	58	379
Independent Clinics	3		1	1		5
Independent Hospitals	24	9	9	8	8	58
Independent Medical Agencies						5
Nursing Homes	46	67	54	48	33	248
Nursing Agencies						48
Residential Care Homes	46	60	57	31	38	232
Residential Family Centres	1					1
Voluntary Adoption Agencies						2
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>1,488</b>

We also inspect 24 young adult supported housing services and 6 school boarding departments, however, these services are not required to register with RQIA.

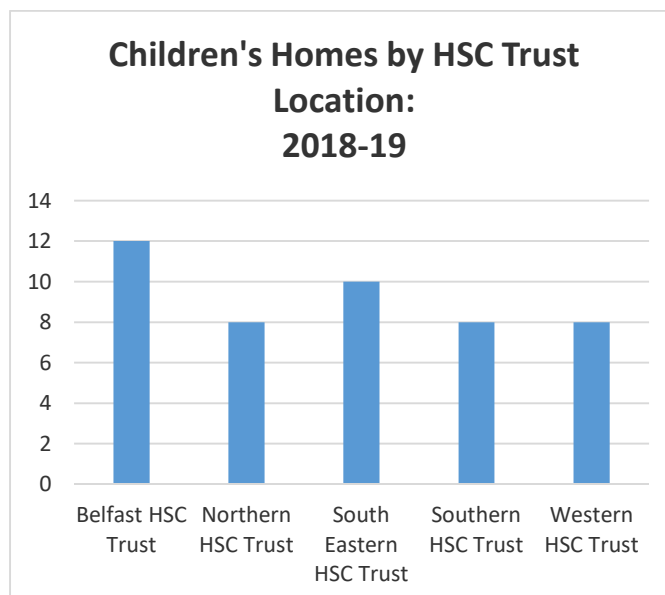
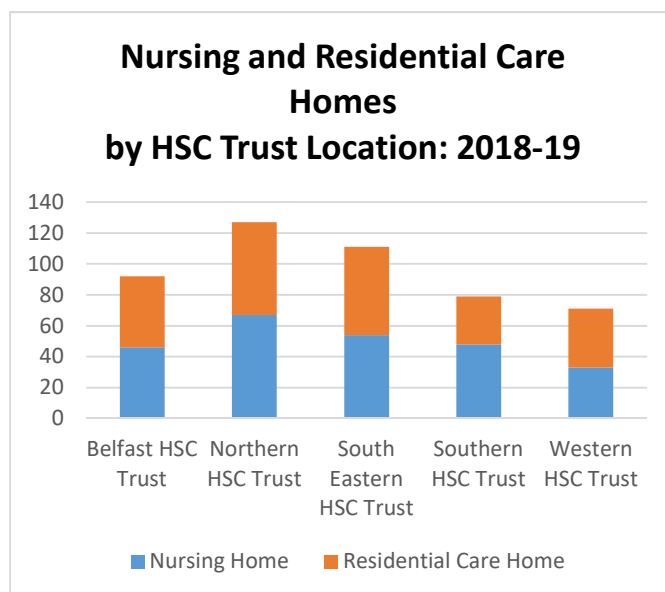
### Services Registered by RQIA, 31 March 2019



- Adult Placement Agency (4)
- Children's Home (46)
- Day Care Setting (159)
- Domiciliary Care Agency (116)
- Domiciliary Care Agency – Supported Living (185)
- Private Dental Service (379)
- Independent Clinic (5)
- Independent Hospital (58)
- Independent Medical Agency (5)
- Nursing Home (248)
- Nursing Agency (48)
- Residential Care Home (232)
- Residential Family Centre (1)
- Voluntary Adoption Agency (2)

Under a range of separate powers we also carry out inspections of hospitals; mental health and learning disability wards; and prisons, assessing arrangements to ensure the delivery of high quality care.

The following charts show the distribution of care homes for adults and children across Northern Ireland, by their (HSC trust) location



The table below describes the maximum number of registered places by selected service type at 31 March 2018

Type of Service	Number of Registered Places
Children's Homes	298
Day Care Settings	6,527
Nursing Homes	11,362
Residential Care Homes	4,643

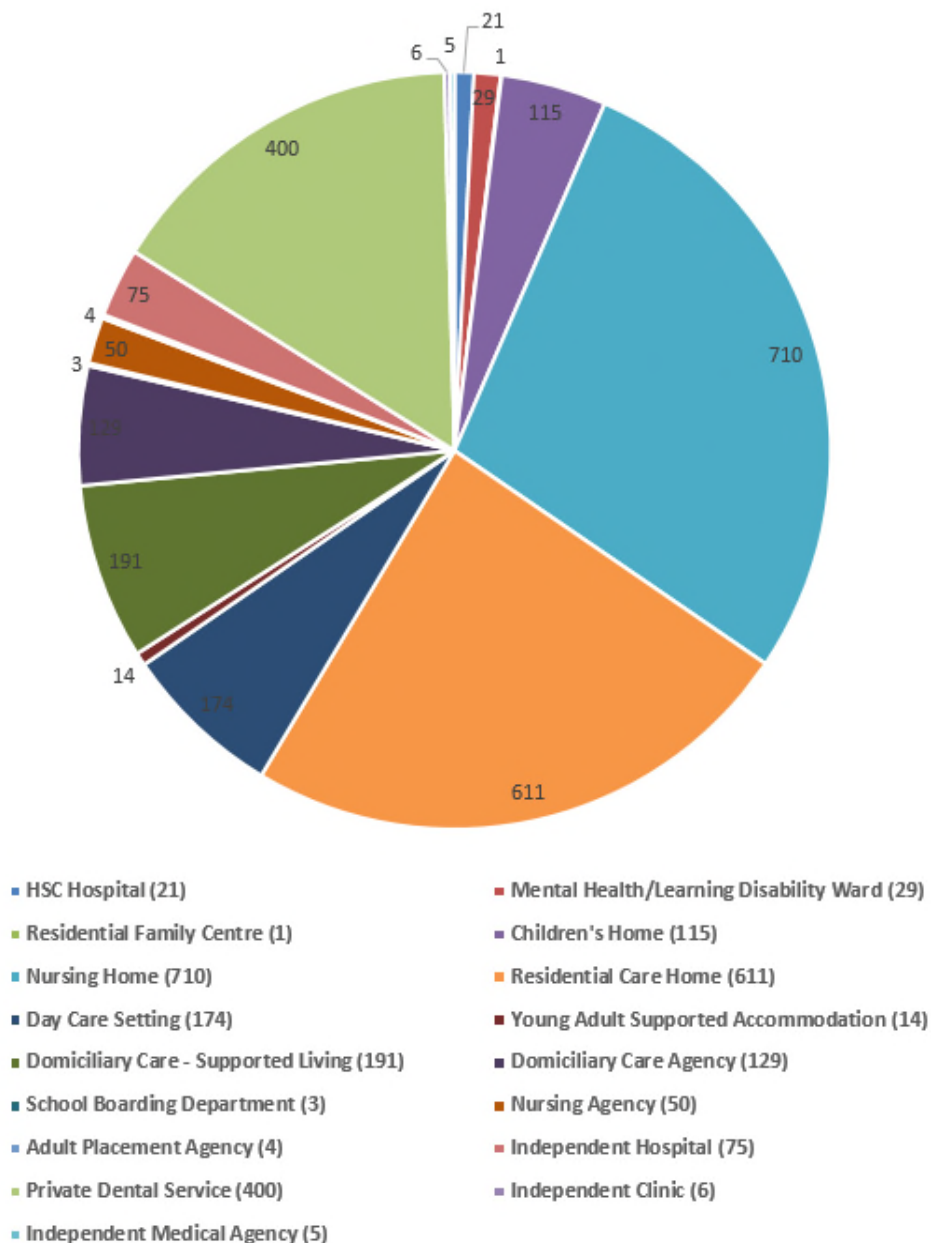


## How We Inspect

We have a team of experienced nurses, social workers, pharmacists, estates and finance officers, who examine care, medicines management, estates issues, and arrangements for safeguarding service users' finances.

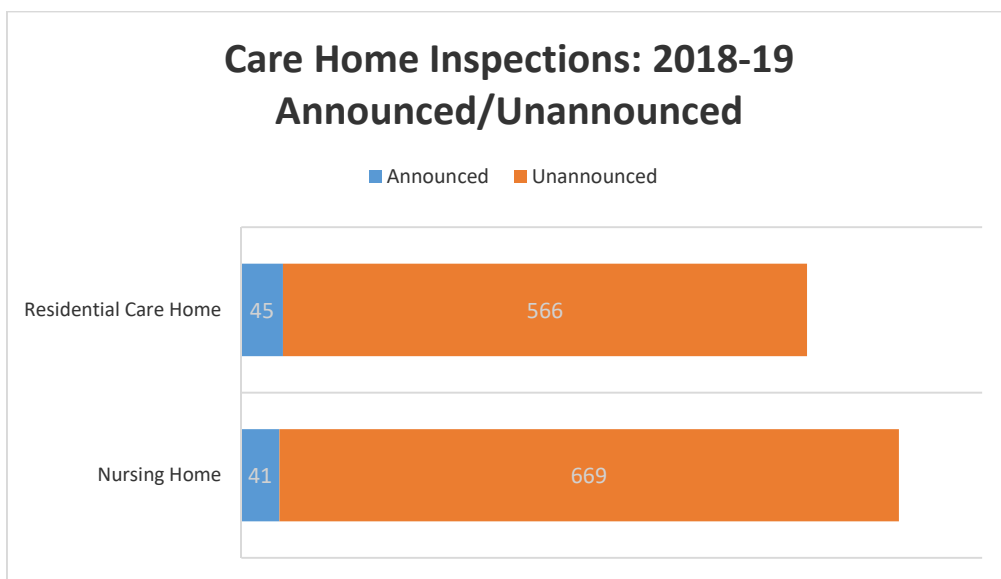
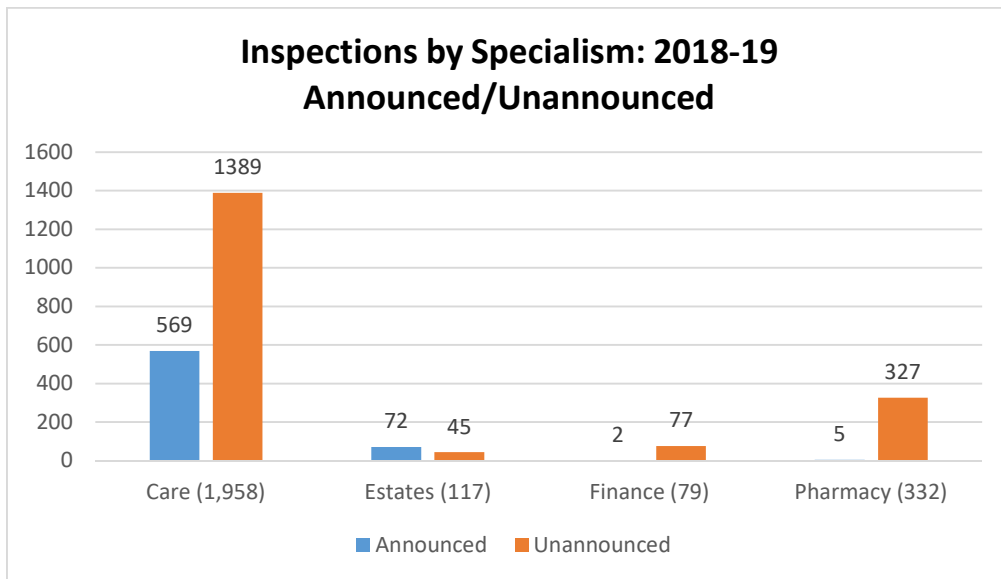
The majority of our care inspections are unannounced, taking place with no advance notice to the provider, with over 93% of all care home inspections unannounced.

**Inspections by Service Type: 2018-19**



In our inspections we examine compliance with regulations and care standards, and assess: is care safe, effective and compassionate. We also consider whether the service is well managed.

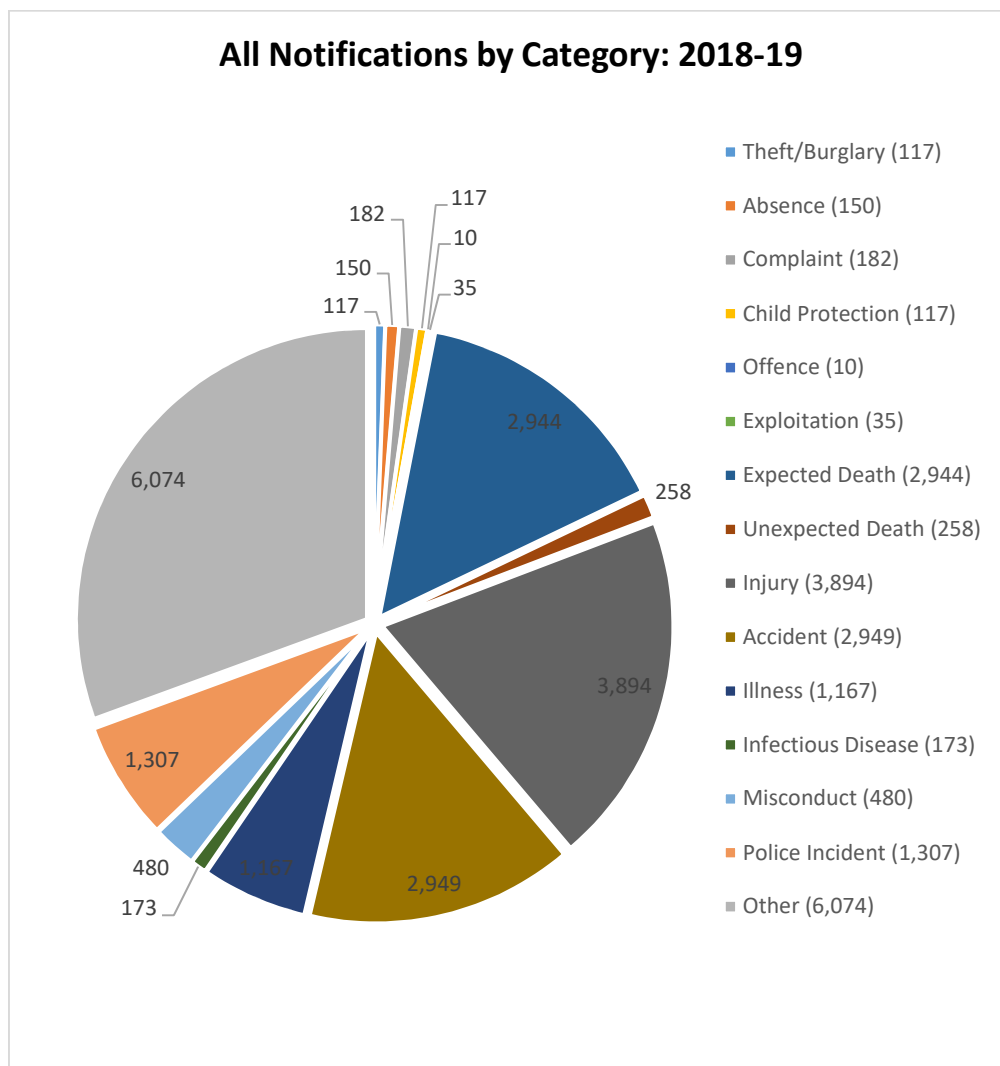
Given the importance of the manager’s role, we will only register a new service where a permanent manager has been registered by RQIA.



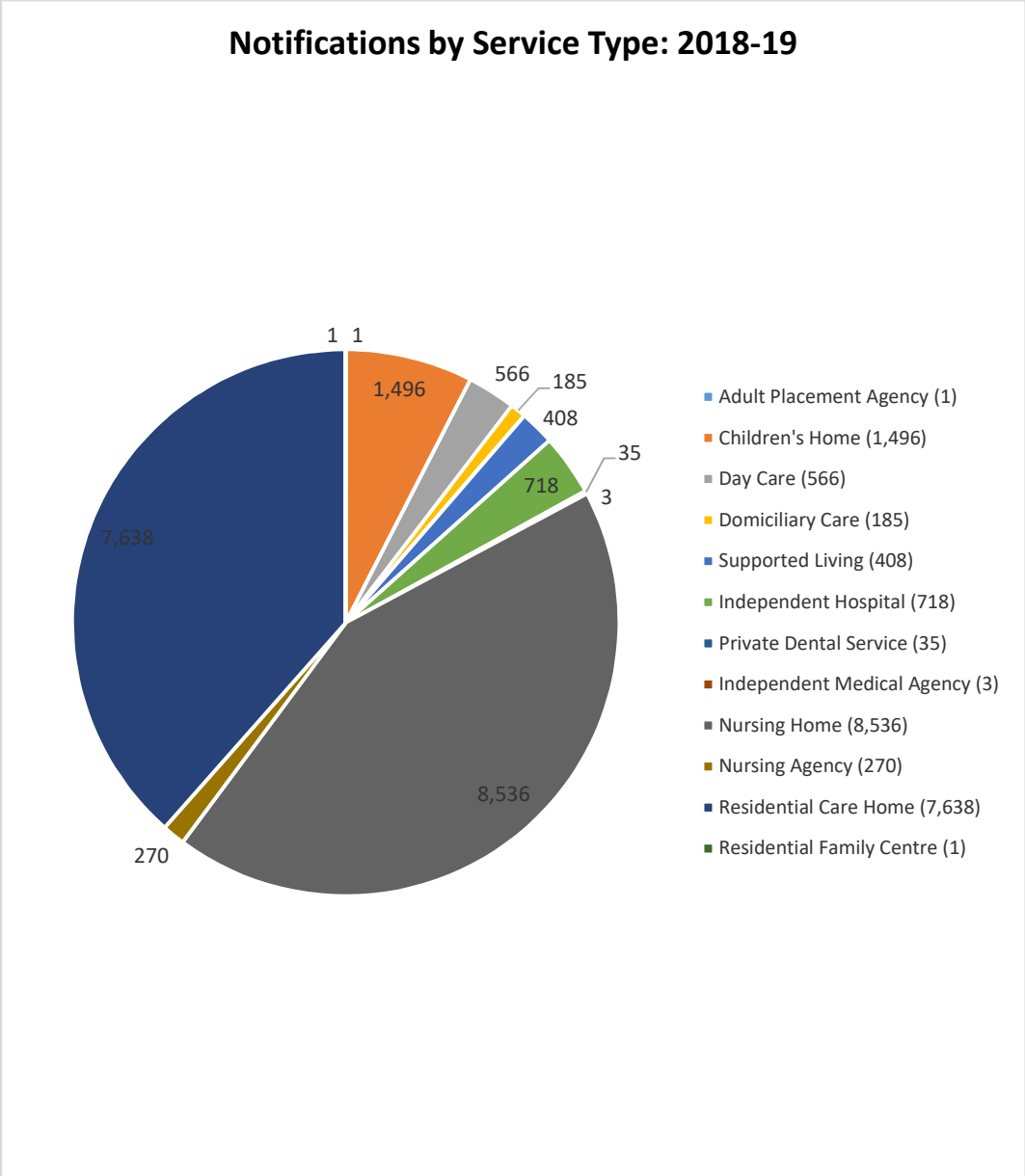
While most of our inspections at regulated services are conducted by individual inspectors, our hospital and prison inspections involve multidisciplinary teams, including peer and lay involvement. This year we have extended this approach to mental health settings, where our teams inspect hospital sites rather than individual wards. This allows us to assess governance arrangements for the provision of care across a hospital, identifying both areas of good practice and issues that require attention by the HSC trust.

## What Information We Use

When preparing for an inspection, our inspectors review information about the service held on RQIA's i-Connect information system. This includes details of the regulatory history of the service - such as inspections and enforcement; intelligence about the service including complaints or compliments from the public, whistleblowing from staff members; and statutory notifications from the service relating to incidents at the service.



All service providers are required to communicate with RQIA via a secure online web-based portal, for issues relating to our inspections and incident notifications. There are currently over 2,500 registered users on this system – including service providers and managers, and each day around 100 users connect and communicate with RQIA via this portal.



**What We Are Looking For**

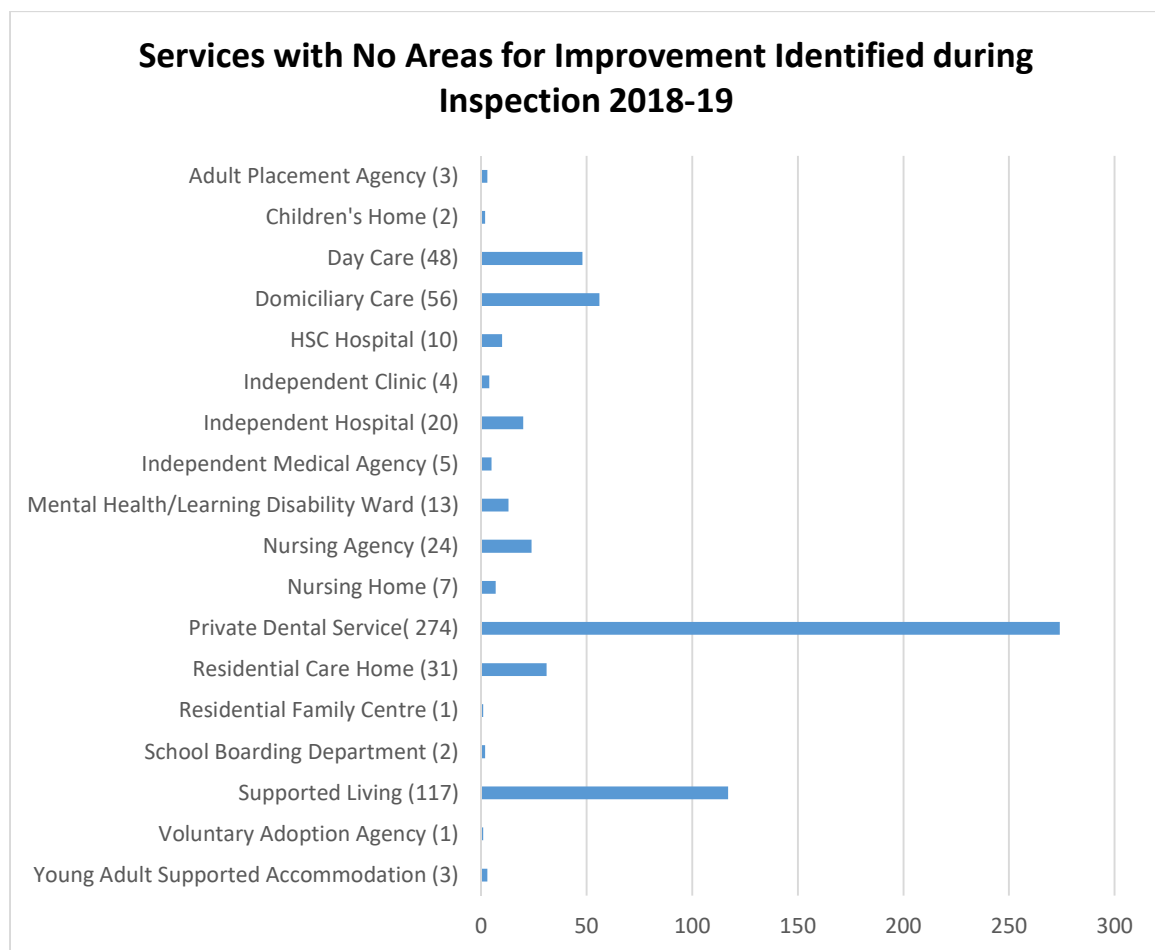
During an inspection we assess performance against standards, guidelines and regulations. In our assessment of the service we observe practice and review records of care. To get a fully rounded view of the service, we talk to management, staff and visiting health care staff such as GPs, tissue viability nurses, social workers and care managers to hear their views and experience of working at the service. The most important people in any service are those in receipt of care, and we also talk to service users, carers, and friend and relatives to give a voice to their views of the care provided.

At the conclusion of our inspection we provide verbal feedback to the management of the service, highlighting both areas of good practice and issues that require attention. This is followed up with a formal written report, which details our findings and where necessary includes an action plan of areas for improvement.

## Outcome of Inspections

We publish the findings of all our inspections (excluding those for children's homes) on our website [www.rqia.org.uk/inspections](http://www.rqia.org.uk/inspections), and our individual inspection reports should also be available on request from each of service we inspect.

During 2018-19, 621 services (42% of all services) were operating in line with relevant legislation and standards, with no areas for improvement highlighted by our inspectors. This is welcome increase from 37% of all services inspected in 2017-18.



## Hearing the Voice of the Public

As the majority of our inspections are unannounced, we want to ensure we capture the first hand views of service users and families, who may not be aware that an inspection is taking place.

During the year we distributed posters for permanent display in every care home highlighting RQIA's role in inspecting the service, and providing our contact details to allow service users, their families and staff to speak to our inspector for the home.

We also introduced calling cards, which our inspectors leave in bedrooms and day rooms, inviting service users and their families to tell us about their personal experiences at the home.

This feedback provides RQIA with a unique insight into the care provision and helps us to present a fully rounded view of a service in our inspection reports.



Did you know ... poster on display in a care home; RQIA Have we missed you? calling cards

Our inspectors also distributed leaflets to support people wishing to raise concerns about a service, explaining the roles and responsibilities of RQIA, HSC trusts and the service provider in simple terms. These new approaches have received positive feedback from the public.



Geraldine Milligan on RQIA's YouTube channel

To help support people choosing a care service, we interviewed Geraldine Milligan, a member of the public, who spoke about her personal experiences of choosing a care home for her husband. You can watch Geraldine's Story on RQIA's website: [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk), or on our YouTube channel.

## RQIA's Review Activity

Each year RQIA undertakes reviews of services, in response to current events, or to examine the emerging and developing needs of our wide range of stakeholders. These include those initiated by RQIA and others commissioned by the Department of Health. In planning and reporting on the findings of our reviews, we focus on whether care is safe, effective and compassionate; and the quality of leadership within a service. The findings from each review are submitted to the Department of Health for their attention and consideration.

Our review recommendations aim to support and drive quality improvements across Northern Ireland for those in receipt of these services. In addition, our recommendations also aim to influence policy in a range of areas across health and social care.

## Governance Arrangements for Child Protection in the HSC

In May 2018, we published the findings of our Review of the Governance Arrangements for Child Protection in the HSC in Northern Ireland. We review the implementation of the 28 recommendations from our previous child protection review to assess the effectiveness of the current arrangements in Northern Ireland. We found significant progress had been made to support improvement in outcomes for vulnerable children and their families in Northern Ireland. We also found evidence of strong leadership and a committed workforce, and noted some concerns in relation to workload, which includes often complex cases, and the management of unallocated cases. The review team made 14 recommendations to support further improvement in child protection arrangements across the HSC.

## Neurology



In May 2018, in response to the recall of patients at the Belfast Trust who were part of the caseload of a specific neurologist, the Department of Health tasked RQIA to undertake a review of governance of outpatient services in the Belfast Trust with a particular focus on neurology and other high volume specialties. As part of this review, we visited outpatients units across the Belfast Trust and met with senior management and frontline staff. We also wished to engage with people using outpatients services at the Belfast Trust.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, we invited service users to provide details of their experiences through an online survey. Feedback from this engagement has helped inform the findings of our review team. We will submit our review report to the Department of Health in early 2019-20, prior to its publication. We have also been asked to commission a parallel piece of work to ensure that the records of all patients or former patients of this neurologist who have died over the past ten years are subject to expert review. Preparation for this highly sensitive review commenced in late 2018, and it is anticipated that our review will commence in early 2019-20, following the announcement of our terms of reference and review team membership.



## **Inquiry into Hyponatraemia Related Deaths**

Following the publication of Justice O'Hara's Inquiry into Hyponatraemia Related Deaths (IHRD), RQIA was tasked with leading and facilitating the regional IHRD Assurance Working Group, part of the DoH-led programme on implementation of IHRD Recommendations. This group, chaired by Olive Macleod, RQIA's Chief Executive, with support from Dr Lourda Geoghegan, Director of Improvement Medical Director, provides independent assurance on progress of the eight workstreams arising from the IRHD.

During the year, six of these workstreams presented details of their workplan to address the inquiry's recommendations to the assurance group.

## **Ongoing Review Work**

During 2018-19 work continued on the following reviews:

- Review of Governance (Corporate and Clinical) relating to Health Services delivered by Independent Sector Hospitals in Northern Ireland
- Review of Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs)
- Review of Out-of-Hours (OOH) General Practitioner (GP) Service
- Review of Implementation of Clinical Guideline CG174 Intravenous Fluid Therapy in Adults in Hospital
- Review of Renal Services
- Review of how Trusts Commission Services from the Independent Sector
- Review of Developing Eyecare Partnerships
- Review of General Paediatric Surgery
- Review of Acute Emergency Mental Health
- Review of Use of Restraint and Seclusion



## Strategic Goal 4: Raising the Standards

***We will establish a framework of a clear evidence-based standards and best practice guidance. We will establish dynamic partnerships between service users, commissioners and providers to develop, monitor and review***

### RQIA Clinical Audit Programme

To promote leadership in safety and quality in health and social care, each year, we invite applications from the HSC community for funding to undertake regional clinical audit, guidelines and quality improvement (QI) projects. Outcomes for patients, clients and carers are improved through the development and integration of audit, guidelines and QI projects, and their implementation. During 2018-19 projects included: asthma; NICE clinical guidelines; and the performance of ultrasound imaging systems within Northern Ireland audits. QI projects included: reducing the delays in medication administration; an app for physical health monitoring in patients with mental health conditions; and development of guidelines on planning birth at home.

### Public Involvement in our Work

RQIA is committed to effective engagement with the public and stakeholders to achieve improvements in the safety and quality of services. During inspections and reviews, working in partnership with RQIA staff, our lay assessors observe the care provided and talk to patients, their relatives or carers about their experience of the service. This brings a fresh insight and public focus to our assessment of services. During the year, our lay assessors joined us in around 80 inspections at a care homes, mental health and learning disability services; and as part of our Review of Governance Arrangements in Outpatients Services in the Belfast Trust.

### RQIA Membership Scheme

In 2018 we launched our Membership Scheme, inviting the public to join with us to help design and deliver the best ways of sharing the information we gather.

We want to ensure that our inspections and reviews help with the choices service users might have to make and the questions that they should be asking when they receive care.



In March 2019 we held our inaugural Membership Forum where we discussed how we can improve how we involve the public in our work, and improve the accessibility of our information to ensure this can help to support the public when making choices about health and social care services.

Feedback from attendees was very positive, and we are currently considering next steps which will include involving membership focus groups to help shape our inspection reports and improvements to our website.

## Strategic Goal 5: Integrating the Care

***We will develop integrated pathways of care for individuals. We will make better use of multidisciplinary team working and shared opportunities for learning and development in the HSC and with external providers.***

### Partnership Working

RQIA has strong and effective partnerships with its peer organisations including health and social care systems regulators, inspectorates and professional regulatory bodies across the UK and Ireland. Through this engagement we share best practice in regulation, and we benchmark our work with peer organisations.

At a local level, we continue to develop positive relationships with our sponsor body – the Department of Health, and other health and social care organisations including: the HSC Board, HSC trusts, the Public Health Agency; Northern Ireland Social Care Council; Patient and Client Council; NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency; NI Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery and Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency. We participate in regular one-to-one liaison meetings to share learning and to discuss areas of common interest and issues of concern.



Olive Macleod, RQIA Chief Executive and Eamonn Donaghy, Chief Executive Age Sector Platform.

We also work in partnership with other stakeholders including: Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland; Education and Training Inspectorate; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons; Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY); Age Sector Platform; the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland; and The Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

During the year we also continued constructive engagement with a range of stakeholder representative organisations, including: the Independent Health and Care Providers; UK Homecare Association; British Dental Association; and the Association for Real Change.

We have memoranda of understanding with a range of partner organisations which support information sharing and cooperation in joint working. In early 2019, we signed a new memoranda of understanding with NICCY to support openness and transparency when working on areas of mutual interest.

## Sharing Best Practice: Engagement with Other Organisations

In June, we held Building Sustainable Partnerships, a workshop to support improvements in communication and information sharing between health and social care organisations.



The event was attended by representatives from the Department of Health, Health and Social Care Board and the five local HSC trusts, and provided an opportunity for those present to clarify organisational roles and responsibilities around safeguarding, and emphasised the importance of information sharing in order to keep people safe. At the workshop we were joined by Marie Paterson, Head of Quality and Improvement at the Care Inspectorate, who provided examples of best practice from a Scottish perspective.

Marie Paterson, Care Inspectorate Scotland addresses delegates at RQIA's Building Sustainable Partnerships workshop, Bellaghy, June 2018



In November, colleagues from Healthcare Inspectorate Wales visited our offices to meet with RQIA's information team to share learning. Here we discussed team structures; our use of technology (including our i-Connect information system) to support the assessment of risk in services, and how this links with the development of our new RADaR approach to focusing inspections where they are most needed.

RQIA and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales Information teams sharing best practice, November 2018



## Support and guidance for care providers

As the regulator for health and social care services we are part of a wider system for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of those in receipt of care.

In support of those delivering front-line services, during 2018-19, RQIA held a number of events providing advice and guidance to service providers.



RQIA's Winter Pressures Workshops for care home providers held in Omagh and Belfast

Every year we read reports of winter pressures on health and social care services. To help ease these pressures and support effective preparation for the winter season, we published a short information leaflet for care homes and domiciliary care services.

We also held a series of workshops across Northern Ireland in partnership with the Royal College of Nursing, Public Health Agency, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and the regional emergency preparedness group.

Here we provided information on recognising and responding to the deteriorating patient; managing flu like illnesses; and business continuity. This was supported by online resources, including videos of the presentations and other useful information.

In order to highlight the importance of medicines management in care settings, we held joint information sessions with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence for care home and domiciliary care providers.

We also worked in partnership with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and the Public Health Agency, providing training seminars on medicines management and frailty for domiciliary care workers.



In the area of mental health, in June, in partnership with The Royal College of Psychiatrists and British Psychological Society we held a workshop to discuss confidentiality and information sharing in acute mental health assessments.

We also held our seventh annual workshop with the Royal College of Psychiatrists, where we discussed our new approach to inspections for mental health services and colleagues from across Northern Ireland showcased improvement projects, including Towards Zero Suicide – A Mental Health Collaborative.

Left: RQIA, Royal College of Psychiatrists and British Psychological Society members meet in Belfast to discuss confidentiality and information sharing, June 2018

In early 2018, new Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations were introduced, which aim to protect service users against the dangers of ionising radiation in medical settings such as hospitals, dental practices and chiropractic services.



Joint IR(ME)R workshop with RQIA Regional Medical Physics and Public Health England, November 2018

To support those using x-ray and scanning equipment, in November, we held a joint workshop with Regional Medical Physics and Public Health England, highlighting the implications of the new regulations for services.

## Looking Ahead

The ongoing absence of the Assembly has impacted on the ability of the health service to introduce new policy and legislation; but work continues on the programme of reform introduced following the Bengoa Report. Given our position as the only regional body charged with reporting on the quality and availability of health and social care services, RQIA aims to be a central tenet in the Delivering Together programme.

In 2018-19 the Department of Health commissioned RQIA to undertake work following the recall of neurology patients in the Belfast HSC Trust. This will continue in 2019-20 with the review of the casenotes of deceased patients. We have also been commissioned to undertake other reviews to support policy development in areas such as prison healthcare and the statutory duty of quality on HSC bodies.

The Department of Health has begun a review of our founding legislation, and in the first phase will look at what is regulated in Northern Ireland and why. In the coming year we reaffirm our commitment to work with them as a key stakeholder in this important work – particularly to reinforce a rights-based approach to our work. We continue to review and revise how we do our business in RQIA. In 2019-20, we will focus on our inspection methodology to ensure we are working effectively to promote improvement in the services we inspect across the HSC and independent sectors.

In 2018-19, we invested substantially in Human Rights training for all inspection staff. This training was bespoke to RQIA and the contexts within which we work. In 2019-20, we will ensure that our inspection reports include reference to the human rights issues relevant to people placed in the settings and services we inspect and review, and we will evaluate the impact of this investment in training.

Our Membership Scheme is now established and through this we will examine what co-design and co-production looks like for RQIA.

As part of enhancing our stakeholder engagement we will involve providers in our work, and in the first instance have designed a provider survey in conjunction with the Independent Health and Care Providers to determine their experience of registration and inspection. We will use this information to inform our improvement work going forward, and develop and agree a shared view of quality.

We will undertake a range of activities to support improved outcomes where we can. We have planned work on our systems and processes; our use of intelligence; supporting and empowering our staff through learning and development activity; effective use of enforcement where necessary; building and improving our relationships with all our stakeholders; and undertaking internal improvement as part of our commitment to being a learning organisation.

We look forward to the challenges during 2019-20 and will meet them with a commitment to recognising and sharing good practice where we find it and encouraging improvement where necessary.

During 2018-19, in partnership with Ulster University, we continued to progress the development of our risk-adjusted, dynamic and responsive (RADaR) framework to identify, quantify and respond to regulatory risks more robustly. This approach brings together intelligence - including incident notifications, and complaints and whistleblowing information – and the inspector’s knowledge of the service to help determine the frequency and urgency of inspection.

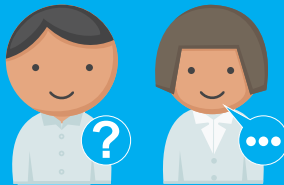
Through this approach we aim to identify services where the quality of care is poor or changing and may require additional inspection. This will enable us to focus our resources on services with the highest regulatory risk and to focus our inspection programme appropriately.







The **Regulation** and  
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