



The **Regulation** and
Quality Improvement
Authority



About Us

Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care



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Quality Improvement
Authority

Who We Are

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is the independent body that regulates and inspects the quality and availability of Northern Ireland's health and social care (HSC) services.

We were established in 2005 under The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 to drive improvements for everyone using health and social care services.





What We Do

RQIA has three main areas of work:

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

We have four stakeholder outcomes, which define how we work to demonstrate our effectiveness and impact as a regulator:

- Is care safe?
- Is care effective?
- Is care compassionate?
- Is the service well-led?

Who We Inspect

RQIA registers and inspects a wide range of health and social care services.

These include:

- nursing, residential care, and children's homes
- domiciliary care agencies (care in your home), including supported living
- day care settings/centres
- independent health care including:
 - » independent hospitals, hospices and clinics, and private doctors
 - » private dental services
 - » fertility treatments
 - » clinics providing certain laser or intense pulsed light (IPL) cosmetic treatments or eye surgery
- nursing agencies
- independent medical agencies
- residential family centres
- adult placement agencies
- voluntary adoption agencies
- school boarding departments and young adult supported accommodation (inspected only)

Our Inspections

RQIA inspects nursing, residential care and children's homes at least twice a year, while other services are inspected at least once a year. During our inspections, most of which are unannounced, we assess the quality of the services provided against regulations and associated Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) care standards.



Through our inspections, we aim to ensure the safety, comfort and dignity of those using these services. Following an inspection we ask the service provider to make any changes we consider necessary through a quality improvement plan. We publish this information in a report of our findings, available on our website, www.rqia.org.uk.

Where necessary, RQIA may take enforcement action to drive improvements.

This may include the issue of notices of failure to comply with regulations; placing conditions of registration; taking action to impose fines; prosecuting or closing a service.

RQIA Independent Health and Social Care Reviews

RQIA reviews a wide range of services across health and social care. Our review programme takes into consideration relevant standards and guidelines, the views of the public, health care experts and current research.

During our reviews we examine the service provided, highlight areas of good practice and make recommendations for improvement. We report our findings and share any lessons learned across the wider health and social care sector. In addition, when required, we carry out reviews and investigations to respond to specific issues of concern or failures in service provision.

Hospital Inspections

RQIA undertakes a programme of inspections at acute hospitals, which examine the quality of care and leadership within specific wards or clinical areas. We also conduct an ongoing programme of infection prevention/hygiene inspections at a range of health and social care facilities, including hospitals. The reports of our inspections highlight both good practice and areas of concern. This allows us to help drive improvements for all those using these facilities and services.

Mental Health and Learning Disability

RQIA has a specific responsibility to assess the health and social care services provided to people with mental ill health or a learning disability. Our responsibilities include promoting good practice; preventing ill treatment; remedying any deficiency in care or treatment; terminating improper detention in a hospital or guardianship; and preventing or redressing loss or damage to a patient's property. We talk directly to patients and ask them about their experiences.



These views inform our wider programme of announced and unannounced inspections. Using a human rights based approach to inspection, we examine the quality of these services, and make recommendations for improvement.

Radiology Inspections

RQIA is responsible for monitoring, inspecting and enforcing the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (IR(ME)R) to protect service users against the dangers of ionising radiation in medical settings.

Our inspectors examine and report on arrangements in hospitals, dental practices and chiropractic services using x-rays and certain types of scanners.



RQIA's Inspection and Review Reports

On our website, www.rqia.org.uk, you can access a wide range of information about the work of RQIA, including all our published inspection and review reports for health and social care services. This information, including copies of our reports, is also available on request from RQIA.

Engaging with the Public

RQIA is committed to listening to and acting on the views and opinions of the public. We listen to the views of people, which help us to report on the quality of health and social care services.

RQIA's Human Rights Approach

A human rights based approach is central to RQIA's role in encouraging continuous improvements in health and social care and safeguarding the rights of service users. In support of this, we have developed a range of indicators to help us assess the quality of care against standards, and to ensure service users and their carers know their rights in relation to their care.

RQIA's Role in Places of Detention

RQIA is responsible for the oversight of health and social care in Northern Ireland's prisons, children's secure accommodation and mental health and learning disabled facilities.

Given this role, RQIA is one of four organisations in Northern Ireland designated as a national preventive mechanism (or NPM) by the UK government to ensure the protection of the rights of all those in places of detention.

Influencing Policy

Many of our inspection and review reports contain recommendations that aim to drive improvements in the quality of health and social care services. Our recommendations directly influence the actions of both service providers and commissioners, and have led to new policies being developed and implemented by DHSSPS, and by other health and social care organisations.

Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN)



GUIDELINES AND AUDIT
IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK

The Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN) joined RQIA in 2015. GAIN's role is to promote leadership in safety and quality in health and social care. Outcomes for patients, clients and carers are improved through the development and integration of regional guidelines and audit, and their implementation.

Complaints about Health and Social Care Services

If you have a complaint about a health and social care service, in the first instance you should raise your concerns directly with the service provider. They should aim to resolve the complaint, and where necessary they may involve the commissioner of the service (generally the local health and social care trust). Support is also available from the Patient and Client Council. If you do not achieve a satisfactory resolution, you may refer your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

Whistleblowing

If you work for a health and social care service and wish to make a whistleblowing disclosure about a concern or wrongdoing within that service, you can contact RQIA for help. We take all intelligence that comes to our attention seriously, whether through inspection, complaints or whistleblowing. We assess this information to determine what action may be required to protect those using health and social care services in Northern Ireland.



Complaints about RQIA

We are committed to responding to and addressing complaints about RQIA in a timely and effective manner, and learning from them to improve how we work. You can contact us in writing or by telephone - our contact details are listed to the right.

Feedback about RQIA

RQIA welcomes your feedback on any aspect of our work to ensure we continue to improve the quality of the wide range of services we provide.

Keep Up to Date

For the latest news visit our website, www.rqia.org.uk, and follow us on Twitter @RQIANews.

Contact Us



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