

# RQIA Management Plan 2024-25



**The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)** is Northern Ireland’s independent health and social care regulator.

**RQIA’s** relationships, with people in Northern Ireland, the Department of Health, HSC bodies, independent health and social care providers and other Regulators are driven by **RQIA’s Duties** to:

- Keep the Department informed about the provision of health and social care services, in particular their availability and quality;
- Encourage improvement in the quality of those services;
- Protect the interests of those with mental health conditions and learning disabilities; and
- Register, inspect, and enforce adherence to regulations and standards for service providers that fall within the scope of RQIA’s statutory powers.

## RQIA Outturns: 2023-24

Services Registered with RQIA	Services Provided by HSC Trusts	Reviews
Inspected <b>100%</b> of all operational adult care homes at least once	Inspected <b>5</b> Acute Hospitals	RQIA Review of the Governance arrangements in place to support safety within Maternity Services in Northern Ireland
Carried out <b>167</b> out of hours inspections at nursing, residential care and children’s homes	Reviewed <b>7,473</b> assessments forms and <b>1,107</b> detention forms in line with our responsibilities under the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986	Census of Bed Availability in Registered Care Homes in Northern Ireland
Inspected <b>92%</b> of all Domiciliary Care, Nursing, and Adult Placement Agencies & Day Care Settings	Carried out <b>2</b> Prison Healthcare inspections in co-operation with Criminal Justice Inspection NI	“Working Collaboratively to Reduce Harm” RQIA System Inspection of a Local Health and Social Care System - Southern Health and Social Care Trust Area
Carried out <b>106</b> inspections of Independent Hospitals		

## This work took:

 **An annual budget of £10.48m**  
- **£9.31m** from DOH  
- **£1.17m** from registration and annual fees

 **A total of 134 staff**  
(**127.21** whole time equivalent)

To view RQIA's Strategic Plan 2022-28, scan the QR code below:



## How to Contact Us



RQIA's headquarters is:

James House,  
2-4 Cromac Avenue,  
Gasworks,  
Belfast,  
BT7 2JA



028 9536 1111



[info@rqia.org.uk](mailto:info@rqia.org.uk)



@RQIANews



[www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)



### Concerns

Do you, your family member or a friend use a health and social care service? Have you concerns about the care provided? We want to hear from you -

You can contact our Guidance Team, who will provide you with help and advice.



028 9536 1990



### Whistleblowing

Do you work for a health and social care body? Do you have concerns about your workplace?

You may make a whistleblowing disclosure to RQIA. In doing so, you can be protected under The Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998.

Any information given to us is passed to the appropriate person in RQIA, who will decide what action to take next. Further guidance is available on our website: [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)



028 9536 1990



# RQIA Strategic Objectives and Actions 2024-25

## RQIA's Core Purpose

To secure and to improve the safety and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland

What we will do in 2024 to 2025 to achieve our core purpose

Strategic Objectives	Actions to Achieve Outcomes
SCRUTINY: Register, Inspect, Report and Enforce	<p><b>Registered Services</b> The HSC financial climate and how Regulation is funded, affect ability to deliver a frequency based model of inspection for Registered Services, which is what the legislation requires. We also assert that patient safety should also consider the intelligence we receive and that some services may require more frequent inspection based on risk. <b>This year we will continue to adopt a blended approach, with a frequency of inspections for registered services, coupled with an intelligence led and risk based approach to additional inspections.</b></p> <p>We will develop a proposed approach to changing <b>how Regulation of registered services are funded</b> and submit this to the DoH to consider a proposed process for implementation.</p> <p><b>HSC Services (Services not required to Register with RQIA)</b> For Services provided by the HSC Trusts that are not Registered with RQIA, and therefore not subject to regular inspections, we will carry out a number of planned service Reviews, and a number of planned Investigations and Inspections of HSC services, based on information we we have received and in dialogue with the DoH and stakeholders. While RQIA cannot provide a reactive / emergency response service for issues arising in HSC Trusts, <b>we will review and vary the planned Inspections and Investigations as needed, consider the intelligence we have received , and undertake a quarterly review of the plan for the period ahead, providing some flexibility to respond to emerging issues.</b></p> <p><b>Mental Health Services</b> We have developed and are testing a Protocol for inquiring into potential for detriment in care and treatment for patients living with mental disorder (this is defined in the MH Order 1986) in the community, in their own home or with family. <b>We will publish this Protocol this summer and continue to develop our scrutiny and reporting of services where people are detained. We will establish a Mental Health Committee of the Authority</b> to give further focus to this programme of work.</p> <p><b>National Preventive Mechansim</b> We will continue to collaborate with Northern Ireland and national members of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) to ensure the protection of the rights of all those in places of detention.</p> <p><b>Childrens Services</b> We have begun to publish Childrens Services Inspection Reports on a pilot basis, seeking views and feedback from stakeholders. We will evaluate this and <b>develop a sustained publication approach for these services.</b></p> <p><b>Listening and Acting</b> Having established the <b>Inspection Support Volunteer</b> roles in 2023/ 24, working with Volunteer Now and Ulster University we will evaluate this first phase, consider how we can maximise the benefits for patients, families and others, and consider potential to expand this beyond our Care Homes Inspections.</p> <p>We will <b>update our Speaking Up for Patient Safety (Whistleblowing) Policy</b> and promote our role, where health and social care staff can report issues of patient safety concerns or wrong doing, with protection for some disclosures.</p> <p>We will <b>encourage Registered service providers</b> to tell their patients, service users, families, carers and others about their RQIA Inspection findings and what action they are taking to address issues found; and we will seek feedback from Providers on our approach to Inspection.</p> <p>We will improve how we seek the <b>views and experience of families</b> in the care and support of their loved ones in receipt of services.</p>



# RQIA Strategic Objectives and Actions 2024-25

## RQIA's Core Purpose

To secure and to improve the safety and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland

What we will do in 2024 to 2025 to achieve our core purpose

Strategic Objectives	Actions to Achieve Outcomes
<b>IMPROVE:</b> Safety and quality of services	<p>We will develop our <b>Inspection methodology</b> so that we encourage a <b>culture of openness, listening and taking action</b>, and also identify where we find good practice relating to Patient Safety culture in organisations and report our findings.</p> <p>We will contribute to the development of the regional Adult Protection Bill for N Ireland and seek to secure compliance by organisations implementing consistently the existing regional Adult Safeguarding Protocol.</p> <p>We will co-operate fully with ongoing <b>Public Inquiries</b> to assist their investigations, deliberations and findings and we will undertake Reviews that help assess the effectiveness of services embedding recommendations and learning from the Public Inquiries.</p> <p>We will contribute to the redesign of the <b>system for identification of learning from Serious Adverse Incidents (SAI)</b>, collaborating with others to ensure effective involvement of all stakeholders is embedded in the process and subsequently assess compliance with implementation of a new approach.</p> <p>We will explore with the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the DoH, the potential to realign the <b>Regional HSC QI programme and Team from PHA to RQIA</b>, to further enable the RQIA core function 'to encourage quality improvement'.</p>
<b>BUILD:</b> Partnerships to strengthen safety	<p><b>We will improve how we engage with the wider public, service users and families, as partners in patient safety, encouraging, supporting, listening to concerns and queries, acting on information and promoting how to contact us, while developing our web site to ensure it is accessible and informative.</b></p> <p>We will build on our relationships with professional Regulators and commence the adoption of the <b>'Emerging Concerns' Protocol</b> with the aim to work better together for patient safety.</p>
<b>INFORM:</b> Service Transformation	<p>We will meet with health and social care policy leads, with Commissioners, other regulators and political leaders, so that we are informed about issues and plans of other organisations, share our plans and encourage modernisation of Regulation for health and social care in N Ireland through updating the legislation and how Regulation is funded.</p> <p>We will <b>plan, host and participate in Networks and Roundtable Events</b> and activities that engage with political, professional and community leaders and service users, to encourage shared understanding, and service improvement focussed on Patient Safety.</p>

Key Enablers
<p><b>Workforce</b> Sustain a stable workforce through active retention and recruitment; support the safety, health and wellbeing of all who work within RQIA; develop people as leaders across the organisation and equip for future roles; continue to develop our Human Rights training and embed in procedures.</p>
<p><b>Finance/ Resources</b> Work within our allocated funding to make the optimum use of resources to secure patient safety, and advocate for a new approach to funding service Regulation.</p>
<p><b>Digital and Intelligence</b> Develop our ability to capture and analyse intelligence we receive, and seek out information from other trusted sources, to improve access to information on patient safety and target our efforts on greatest risk.</p>



## About RQIA



### RQIA role relating to Registered Services

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is the Northern Ireland regional regulator for health and social care services, RQIA was established under legislation in 2003, referred to as the 2003 Order, and began operating in 2005. The legislation required 'Registered and Regulated' services, listed in the 2003 Order, to Register with RQIA, pay a registration fee and an annual fee. Those fees were set in legislation in 2005 and have not changed. RQIA then inspect those services, and publish our Inspection Reports on our web site. The Inspection Reports set out our findings against the relevant Regulations and Standards, and where improvements are required, these are included. RQIA can take Enforcement Action relating to Registered Services, including cancelling their Registration.

### RQIA's role relating to HSC Trust Services (that are not Registered)

RQIA also have powers to Review, Investigate and Inspect services provided by the HSC Trusts in N Ireland. These are services that are not required to register with RQIA and are not subject to a routine, frequency based inspection programme. RQIA publish reports of those Reviews and Inspections we do carry out, though any actions to address improvements needed is part of the relationship between the HSC Trust and the Department of Health, through the Accountability arrangements.

### Mental Health Services

In 2009, the responsibilities of the Mental Health Commission were transferred to RQIA. The legislation underpinning this is the Mental Health Order 1986, and it more recently has begun to be updated through the Mental Capacity Act, some parts of which have been implemented. Under our Mental Health role, RQIA are required to visit people who are detained in Mental Health Hospitals and to keep under review the care and treatment of all patients, both hospital and those living in the community, in their own home or with family, and inquire into situations where there may be detriment in care or treatment provided.

### Whistleblowing to RQIA

Staff who work for a health and social care service in N Ireland and wish to make a disclosure about a concern or wrongdoing within that service, can contact RQIA to whistleblow, or make a disclosure, under: [The Public Interest Disclosure \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1998](#). This Order protects workers who wish to bring wrongdoing within their workplace to the attention of an appropriate authority. Details how to contact RQIA are in this document, and on our web site [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)

### National Preventive Mechanism

RQIA is one of 21 organisations that make up the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM - UK). NPM is the national preventive system established under The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). The organisations within NPM are mandated to conduct regular monitoring visits to all types of places (where their remit allows) where persons are deprived of liberty. Through these visits, NPMs are able to identify concerns and take steps to prevent abuse.



## How to Contact Us



**RQIA's headquarters is:**

**James House,  
2-4 Cromac Avenue,  
Gasworks,  
Belfast,  
BT7 2JA**



**028 9536 1111**



**[info@rqia.org.uk](mailto:info@rqia.org.uk)**



**@RQIANews**



**[www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)**